

**Berks County Operations Minutes**  
**December 7, 2021**  
**9:30 am**

***Christian Y. Leinbach, Commissioner, Chair***  
***Kevin S. Barnhardt, Commissioner, Vice Chair***  
***Michael S. Rivera, Commissioner***  
***Ronald Seaman, Chief Administrative Officer***  
***Christine M. Sadler, Esq., County Solicitor***

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the November 30, 2021 Operations Meeting were approved as presented.

**9:30am – 10:00am**

***HB 1800 Election Reform Legislation- Christian Leinbach, Commissioner.***

Commissioner Leinbach expressed the frustration of Counties not being involved in the discussion of election reform. County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) has reached out to the Pennsylvania State leadership. Although the Senate seems to be open to discussion, the House has refused to talk to the Counties. CCAP is asking the legislators for counties to be brought to the table for election reform discussions. There are two critical points of discussion among other topics, and they are moving back the absentee ballot deadline for General Election to 14 days and being able to pre-canvass. Pre-canvassing consists of opening ballots and counting them but not releasing any data until after polls close on Election day.

Commissioner Leinbach recommends the Board send a joint letter to Bryan Cutler, Pennsylvania Speaker of House of Representatives, and Seth Grove, Pennsylvania House of Representatives, to express their need to communicate with Counties. We want to copy in the House and Senate Delegation along with CCAP. Counties need to be at the table to discuss Election reform, among other topics of the Election process.

Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to author a letter signed by all three Commissioners to be sent to Bryan Cutler, Pennsylvania Speaker of House of Representatives, and Seth Grove, Pennsylvania House of Representative. Commissioner Rivera seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

**10:00am – 10:30am**

***Berks County Recovery Survey and marketing budget - Kevin Barnhardt, Commissioner. Decision is requested.***

Commissioner Barnhardt informed the board that a small group of staff met regarding the potential of a community survey going out ahead of the ARP application process. The group looked at neighboring Counties and Cities for their surveys and thought to modify our survey Berks County needs. We are asking for approval to create the survey and a budget to go with it. The survey will be broken down into different areas, community support, community response, and infrastructure. The community should have input on what we do with the ARP dollars. It will be a 6-7 question survey, and Commissioner Barnhardt supports a \$10,000 level budget for the survey.

Commissioner Leinbach indicated he supports the survey in principle and believes it is vitally important to involve the community upfront for transparency. He expressed some concerns about the length of time the survey is open and asked Pam Shupp-Menet to speak on one of her concerns. Mrs. Shupp-Menet said we should contemplate using the ARP funds for impactful long-term investment projects and not necessarily fill a gap in programs/projects.

Commissioner Barnhardt indicated that the survey determines what the public wants and what they feel is a priority in their community. We want to hear from all community members as a whole and not only from the leaders of the community.

Commissioner Rivera indicated the dollars are coming from the Federal Government, but it is still County's dollars to disburse into the communities. He supports the survey and the \$10,000 budget.

Commissioner Barnhardt suggested that we send out the survey the entire month of January 2022 and hold a few town hall meetings regarding its purpose.

Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to support, upon final approval by the Board of Commissioners, a community recovery survey to be launched the month of January 2022 and to be complemented with a budget not to exceed \$10,000 for advertising and marketing. Commissioner Rivera seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

**10:30am – 10:45am**

***Introduction of S.E.T Initiative: The importance of learning what each County department does internally, how departments may intersect, and how to use this information to create internal and external efficiencies. Michael Rivera, Commissioner. Information only***

Commissioner Rivera stated that at the last S.E.T Initiative meeting, there was a discussion about having departments interact to better understand what they do and improve processes. Commissioner Rivera asked Justin Loose, Chief Information Officer, to explain how we can improve the collaboration between departments.

Mr. Loose spoke about ways departments can work with each other and discuss business processes to generate savings. We should look for opportunities to consolidate technology with departments that frequently interact with each other.

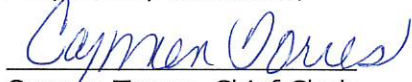
Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to formalize the S.E.T Cooperative Initiative. Motion seconded by Commissioner Rivera. There being no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

There being no further business, Commissioner Leinbach adjourned the meeting at 10:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carmen Torres". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk