

Berks County Operations Minutes
January 11, 2022
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 Operations meeting minutes of December 14, 2021 and January 4, 2022 were approved as presented.

9:30am – 10:00am

Berks County Jail Project - CGL - Kevin Barnhardt, Commissioner. Decision is requested.

Commissioner Barnhardt began by stating that everyone is fully engaged and active in the renewal of the jail project. Partnered with CGL, the Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB), Board of Commissioners, Steering Committee, and community will serve collectively as essential players throughout each phase and the entirety of the process. Members of the CGL team were then introduced to touch upon the upcoming components, broken down into three phases:

1.3 – Needs assessment of population projections and public relations, budgeted at approximately \$84,000.00:

- Rick Davidson and Babette Macy acknowledged that public outreach must be very resourceful from the onset. As the project progresses, responsiveness and accessibility are vital to securing transparency and success among the community and the justice system. A project website is expected to be implemented as one of the better methods of communication to enable ongoing contact with most of the community.

2.0 – Architectural and operational programming, budgeted at approximately \$31,000.00:

- Chloe Jaco described this phase as all that is desired to be onsite, to which an outline and thoroughly detailed recipe of all space should be developed. The purpose is to identify every goal of the county for future implementation. Assurance was given that LEAD certifications, being understandably necessary, will be sought.

Commissioner Leinbach noted that CGL is acting as an owner representative and will not be building the jail. Commissioner asked CGL to explain the role of the owner representative and what they get out of it. Mr. Davidson stated that CGL is the County's advocate for getting the highest quality at the lowest effective price. They will guide the County, be the eyes and ears and work in detail to manage the entire project.

2.1 – Financial model and procurement method, budgeted at approximately \$136,000.00:

- This phase incorporates strategies being put forth to best determine how to cost effectively move forward with all aspects of the project. The focus is on total cost over the project's life, rather than one phase at a time. A thirty-year lifespan will be utilized to model the cost-out efforts. Upon compilation, there will be choices put forth before the Board of Commissioners for final decision.

Commissioner Rivera wanted to clarify that when we discuss the options, this is for the jail's construction and not about managing or running the jail. Commissioner Leinbach indicated that he opposes the privatization of the jail, and there are very few private jails in the nation. He also does not support bringing in a for-profit entity to own the building and lease it back to the County.

A few items were noted jointly among the Board and CGL to clarify and enhance understanding. Those being that 1. CGL is a company comprised of architects, construction professionals, planners, and facility experts whose common goal is to advocate on behalf of Berks County to get the best service available, for the best cost, and work throughout as cohorts and supporting eyes and ears; and 2. Building new over renovating is preferred to explore a more flexible design, molded to embrace, allow for change and incorporate current best practices that will act as the backbone and key to longevity. The new jail should be resilient and stand the test of time and beyond, for hopefully 50+ years.

Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to approve the 1.3, 2.0, and 2.1 CGL components pending final review and approval by Solicitor's office, ultimately to be brought to a Commissioners Meeting for approval. Commissioner Rivera seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

See Q&A attached.

Commissioner Leinbach asked that we make the documents available and post them on the County website in response to Crystal Kowalski's comments.

There being no further business, Commissioner Leinbach adjourned the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk