

Operations Minutes October 19, 2021

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, October 19, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. via Microsoft Teams Live pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

The following matters were discussed:

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of October 5, 2021 Operations Meeting were approved as presented.

Agenda Items:

1. Census 2020 Demographic Information Update – Mike Golembiewski, Planning Department – Informational Only

Mike Golembiewski, Planning Department presented the board with an overview of the 2020 Census Demographic data collected. The data gave us basic information and for the first time it gave us group quarters information and housing units occupancy. The numbers presented are meaningful, but we should focus on the trends which will give us a bigger indication on the growth. The City of Reading is gaining in population as well as the County as a whole. The numbers show a clear trend that Berks County is increasingly more diverse. The increase in population also means more needs for services. Data is important because of funding, representation of Elected Officials, redrawing of voting districts based on population. We need to attract young people because as individuals retire and positions become available, we can fill them with a younger generation.

2. Discussion on County American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funding Request Process - Begin a conversation on what process/criteria the County might use in determining the allocation of the funds and how requests might be submitted and may be prioritized. Michael Rivera, Commissioner, Ron Seaman, CAO, Pam Shupp Menet, Deputy CAO/Economic Development Director and Karra Mayo, Grants Coordinator (Informational Only)

Karra Mayo, Grants Coordinator gave an update on where we stand with the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Berks County ARP funding totals \$81,680,000, we received the first allocation of those funds totaling \$40,903,085 and will receive the remaining balance in May 2022. In addition, School Districts and Municipalities received additional funding. We are in the information gathering stage and several committees have been established to address the details of specific or area of specialization. The committees will oversee a cross-community collaborative approach to address the needs of Berks County's residents and the vulnerabilities of its economy. Ms. Mayo indicated the next step is the application process which is still being discussed and has not been finalized. Ms. Mayo provided her contact information for anyone needing additional information regarding ARP.

Commissioner Leinbach indicated the Commissioners are aware of the need for funding and although we have received multiple requests for funding, only two have been approved with very specific limitations. The two approved are the Convention Center Authority and Reading Fightin Phils (not the stadium but the team), who are specifically tied to lost revenue calculations. There is an application process in place and the Commissioners will vote on the applications received through the committee process.

Commissioner Rivera indicated the applications will be scored to determine the ranking and who will get funding. We want to make sure the process we are using is available to everyone. Wants to clarify that some of the focus categories will have to be looked at to make sure they do not fall within other funding.

Commissioner Barnhardt stated that we need to clearly identify what short, medium and long range goals and objectives will be. Indicated that we need to define the committees and who will take the lead. We need to take another look at the subcommittees to make sure we look at capital projects and where they should reside.

Comments

See Q&A attached

Mike Golembiewski indicated that the data was not collected and cannot be reported.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Rivera, to adjourn. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Barnhardt, and the meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk

Source	Type	Identity	Timestamp	Conversation Id	Content
Moderator	Announcement	Berger, Heather (HBerger@countyofberks.com)	10/14/2021 23:26	22b85b78-5963-4d9e-a464-bf543ab50860	Public comment will be accepted in person and through the Q&A function. Please include your first name, last name and municipality for all comments. Any comments without name and municipality will not be considered. Each citizen can submit one comment. Comment length is dictated by limitations of the platform being used (Teams Q&A). In person comments will be accepted first, followed by comments submitted virtually. The meeting comment period is limited to a total of 30 minutes including both in person and virtual comments. This time period may be extended at the County's discretion. Please be concise. Comments that are germane to County business will be read during the meeting and should not be considered to be interactive dialog. The County shall be the final arbiter of whether a comment is germane and should be read. Any response to public comment will be done at the County's discretion.
Attendee	Question	Sam Roxbury, Wyoming (Unverified)	10/19/2021 14:13	1b999387-4a7e-40ae-b068-475c1dac4b3f	Regarding the census, any numbers for the demographic changes in the counties' LGBTQ population.
Moderator	Response	Leinbach, Christian Y (Cleinbach@countyofberks.com)	10/19/2021 14:18	1b999387-4a7e-40ae-b068-475c1dac4b3f	no. We will have Planning answer this in more detail after the current presentation(Sam Roxbury, Wyoming (Unverified) asked "Regarding the census, any numbers for the demographic changes in the counties' LGBTQ population.")
Attendee	Question	Anonymous (Unverified)	10/19/2021 14:22	b59841d-d80c-4824-937e-be88ba13b801	Sam Roxbury, Wyoming. - I asked because as the quality of life is declining in surrounding larger cities for members of that community, the LGBTQ population offers population increase and tax revenue, with less funding needed in schools.
Moderator	Announcement (Archived)	Berger, Heather (HBerger@countyofberks.com)	10/19/2021 14:38	330ab9e6-ebca-45ea-839f-728b28f87a0	Find more County of Berks America Reactie Plan information at https://www.co.berks.pa.us/Depty/Commissioners/Pages/ARP.aspx Berks County's ARP website: www.countyofberks.com/ARP
Moderator	Announcement	Berger, Heather (HBerger@countyofberks.com)	10/19/2021 14:39	fa893233-aa21-4cd3-bb62-8b54f6537380	All ARP related inquiries and application submissions (once finalized and open): ARP@countyofberks.com
Moderator	Announcement	Berger, Heather (HBerger@countyofberks.com)	10/19/2021 14:52	72321504-2acd-4082-a086-e07769cab134	Thank you for your questions and comments. This Q&A is closed as the public comments have been addressed.