

## **Berks County Operations Minutes October 4, 2022**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, October 4, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Boardroom, 13th floor of the Berks County Services Center, and via Microsoft Teams Live pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

Commissioner Chair Christian Y. Leinbach called the meeting to order, with Commissioner Michael S. Rivera in attendance and Commissioner Kevin S. Barnhardt participating via phone. Also present were Christine M. Sadler, County Solicitor, Ronald R. Seaman, Chief Operations Officer, and Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The meeting minutes of September 27, 2022, were approved as presented.

9:30am – 10:00am

2023 Health Care Contributions and Dental/Vision benefits enhancements - Wendy Pennington, Benefits Manager; Jessica Weaknecht, Human Resources Director; Kristin Scheffler, Human Resource Assistant Director; Pete Kareha, SVP, Employee Benefits Consultant & Sam Cooper, Sr. Account Executive - Decision requested

Wendy Pennington, Benefits Manager, introduced Pete Kareha, SVP, Employee Benefits Consultant, to present the 2023 health care contributions & premium changes for dental and vision for management confidential employees for 2023.

Mr. Kareha presented the board with the proposed enhancements to the dental plan, equating to a \$51,000 increase to the County. The proposed enhancements include an increase to the annual benefit maximum and orthodontia maximum from \$1,000 to \$1,500 and a change in the crown coverage benefit from a flat dollar amount to a 50% co-insurance.

On the vision benefits, the proposed changes reflect a \$16,000 increase per year to the County. The changes shorten the benefit frequency for exams, lenses, and frames from every two years to one (1) year or every 12 months.

Jessica Weaknecht, Human Resources Director, spoke about the changes being made after hearing feedback from employees.

Bob Patrizio inquired whether this was a projected increase in using data for active employees or a lower headcount due to the many vacant positions. Mr. Patrizio indicated that the amounts could be higher if we were to fill all vacant positions. Sam Cooper, Sr. Account Executive, indicated that the projected increase is based on the current employee headcount.

Mr. Peter presented an executive summary of the premiums for 2023, including an 18.1% increase in premiums. The increase is due to the significant rise in claims in the last twelve months. He displayed a graph showing the current employee contributions versus the contribution changes for 2023.

Commissioner Leinbach indicated that, looking at both sides of the issue, he understands the need for increasing premiums. Commissioner Rivera agreed and stated that if we do not increase now, we will have to do so down the road. Commissioner Barnhardt agreed with the premium increase but asked his colleagues if they wanted to wait and negotiate the insurance premium increase and the employee Reading Parking Authority increase together. Commissioners agreed to treat the insurance premium and parking increase separately.

Commissioner Rivera motioned to approve the dental and vision benefit enhancements for 2023 as presented today. Commissioner Leinbach seconded the motion. All three Commissioners voted in the affirmative, and the motion carried.

Commissioner Rivera motioned to accept the new insurance premiums. Commissioner Leinbach seconded the motion. All three commissioners voted in the affirmative, and the motion carried.

Commissioner Leinbach motioned to negotiate with the Reading Parking authority aggressively. Once we have the best price, the COO, HR and Budget should discuss the possibility of a limited savings benefit for County employees that utilize the Reading Parking Authority parking services. Commissioner Rivera seconded the motion. Commissioner Leinbach and Commissioner Rivera voted in the affirmative, and Commissioner Barnhardt voted no. The motion carried.

10:00am – 10:15am

Operation Green Light Presentation - Ken Lebron, Director of Berks County Veterans Affairs.

Ken Lebron, Director of Berks County Veterans Affairs, introduced Operation Green Light to the board and spoke about the program's mission. Mr. Lebron read the proposed resolution and asked for the help and support of all veterans by shining green lights from businesses or residences throughout the County from November 7th through November 13th each year. By displaying a Green Light, it will be a way to salute and honor our men and women in service and recognize all their immeasurable sacrifices.

Commissioner Leinbach indicated that he supports the program, which is a way to come together as a Country to support veterans.

Commissioner Rivera thanked Mr. Lebron for bringing veteran awareness to the community and participating in events. He encouraged all veterans to seek help by visiting the Berks County Veteran's office.

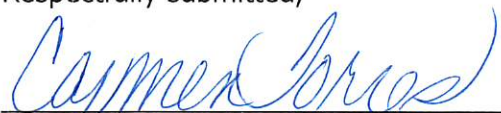
Christine Sadler, Berks County Solicitor, indicated that Commissioner Barnhardt fully supports the program and the resolution.

**Public Comments**

No comments.

There being no further business, Commissioner Leinbach adjourned the meeting at 10:06 a.m

Respectfully submitted,



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Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk