

Budget/Operations Meeting Minutes January 16, 2020

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, January 16, 2020, at 3:00 P.M. in the Commissioners' Boardroom, 13th floor of the Berks County Services Center, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

Commissioner Chair Christian Y. Leinbach called the meeting to order with Commissioner Kevin S. Barnhardt and Commissioner Michael S. Rivera in attendance. Also present were County Solicitor Christine M. Sadler, Chief Administrative Officer Ronald R. Seaman, Chief Financial Officer Robert Patrizio, Human Resources Director Jessica Weaknecht, First Assistant County Solicitor J. Chadwick Schnee, and Chief Clerk Maryjo Gibson.

The following items were discussed:

1. New position request from Workforce Development Board- Dan Fogarty, Director of Workforce Development, and John Moser, Assistant Director, submitted a request for a Fiscal/Quality Assistant Coordinator position to support both Mr. Moser and Megan Noll, the Fiscal Officer. This would increase the staff size to 6.5 from 5.5. Mr. Fogarty stated while the number of contractors has stayed relatively the same, the number of contracts has drastically increased due to higher base funding and new sources of grant funding requiring more contracts or the delivery of the grant funded services. The position will be 100% funded through federal workforce grants submitted through the State and will have no cost to the County general fund. Mr. Patrizio asked if the Federal funding and new sources of grant revenues decline with a corresponding decline in the number of contracts to the prior year levels, will the position be eliminated. Mr. Fogarty said he would want to keep the positions and would cut services and hours to avoid any general fund cost. Mr. Fogarty reported he has met with Human Resources who approves the position. After a brief discussion, the Board approved the position, which will be listed on the Salary Board Creation Agenda sometime in March.

2. Epler School Discussion – Cathy Wegener, Director of Parks and Recreation, Brendan Lederer, Assistant Director, and Park Board Members Becky Ellis, Heather Schoener and Erin Brown attended the Meeting. Ms. Wegener commented the purpose of their attendance was to get an update and direction and information on the Epler School. Commissioner Barnhardt reported on January 6, 2020, the Bern Township Supervisors met and waived the Land Development Plan and we are expecting a waiver of the Storm Water Management Plan. Commissioner Barnhardt also is asking the Board to approve and execute the Agreement with American Geo-Tech, which is needed to properly locate the concrete pad. Commissioner Barnhardt noted the Friends of Epler School met this past Monday and set up a 501(3)(c), set their Mission Statement and created a governing Board of 7. When questioned about financing of the move, Commissioner Barnhardt confirmed the moving fees will be shared by the

Greater Berks Development Fund and the County of Berks, and he has constantly been stressing to the Friends that they should aggressively start fund raising to support the upkeep and maintenance of the building. He said the on-going upkeep and operation of the Epler School will be the responsibility of the Friends and not the Parks Department staff. He did admit, when asked, should the Friends disband, then it would become a cost to the county.

Commissioner Leinbach, while he didn't support this action, said he realizes Parks and Recreation is one of the few areas where the taxpayer gets a return on their tax dollar. Therefore, he will not tie this project to the elimination of the Parks Environmental Education programming. . He stated he wants any recommendation regarding the environmental programming to come from the Park's Board with Park's Advisory Board input.

When asked by Ms. Wegener who will be responsible for making the repairs to the School, Commissioner Barnhardt responded the Friends. Commissioner Leinbach was adamant the back of the building must be properly repaired as soon as it is set on the foundation by the County. He wants the exterior to look good but does not want anything done to the interior.

Also discussed by the Board was the need to have a stronger policy in place concerning this issue of locating donations of assets in County Parks so the County isn't faced with this dilemma in the future. It was agreed that Facilities will oversee this project and work closely with Parks.

Commissioner Barnhardt reported he will also meet again with Kim Murphy from Berks Nature regarding environmental education program.

No decision was made regarding the Environmental Education programming.. The Commissioners asked for feedback on what other Counties are doing.

3. Solicitor Sadler reported the Solicitor's Office put together a very abbreviated Request for Information ("RFI") for use of the Berks County Youth and Recreational Facility.
Ms. Sadler stated this process must move quickly because of the closeness of the Spring Season. Ms. Sadler distributed copies of the RFI to Ms. Wegener and Mr. Lederer and asked for their review and comments to her by next Tuesday morning, January 21, and release of the RFI package being sent out that afternoon. Having reviewed the RFI, the Board approved moving forward with this process. Ms. Sadler noted she would like to set February 3, 2020 as the deadline for submission of proposals to her and evaluated by representatives from the Solicitor's Office, the CAO, Purchasing and Budget.
4. Permission was granted to Mr. Lederer to move forward with obtaining a proposal from a turf management company from Lancaster to do an analysis and standard operating procedures for the Youth Recreational Fields.
5. Berks County Sustainable Energy Park –
Tim Stover and Bob McCarthy, principals of Paradigm, attended the meeting to seek assistance from the Commissioners regarding a project they are involved in dealing with residual waste from manufactures. They are seeking a permit for 500 tons a day to create diesel fuel and bio char, and are hoping to locate their

facility in Cumru Township. They have identified the perfect sight, former GenOn plant and have had difficulty securing feedback from the owners regarding their offer to buy the sight Mr. McCarthy stated negotiations with the owner of the facility has not shown progress the last couple of months and asked if the Commissioners could offer any assistance.

Commissioner Leinbach offered to contact one or two of the owners of GenOn and also will reach out to Ken Pick.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk