

## **Budget/Operations Meeting Minutes January 23, 2020**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, January 23, 2020, at 2:00 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. CGL Proposal – Commissioner Leinbach stated the purpose of this meeting is to discuss CGL's Owner Representative Proposal, including the master agreement and first two scopes of totally in \$500in the aggregate. The Commissioner Leinbach wanted to make sure the proposal would address the following:
  - Cost of Ownership
  - Cost of operations
  - Cost of Variables such as inmate programming options
  - Comparison of lease versus County ownership over 30, 40 and 50 years.
  - Will incorporate current and future trends in criminal justice, mental health housing of minors/PREA, technology trends and current laws in other states that might have a favorable impact on our average daily population if enacted in Pennsylvania.

Commissioner Barnhardt commented he does not want to over build the Jail. He wants to see price points at a smaller jail size than was initially presented.

Mr. Davidson stated he thought it was reasonable to look at a size of 1,100 with a design that would allow for Pod expansion up to 1,314 later, provided the county had a plan for spikes in population. Mr. Davidson pointed out adding additional pods would take some time to build. He assured the Commissioners all their concerns and requirements would be delivered as part of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 scopes of work.

Mr. Patrizio asked if Phase 1 would include cost estimates that show the cost of construction at lower ADP capacity with the current staffing ratios and average square feet per inmate with the incremental costs difference for both construction and operations of changes to the staffing ratio and average square feet per inmate and Mr. Davidson said it would.

Mr. Davidson stated the current proposal runs through completion of the construction contracts and stated there would be a Phase 3/Scope of Work, should

the County wish to retain CGL as the Owner Rep for the construction period. Mr. Davidson said the value CGL returns on investment is the lack of change orders during the construction process, ensuring the contractors build what is designed, remain on site and deliver the project on time. He offered to provide references and the Commissioners accepted this offer. It was agreed the Commissioners would provide their questions to Mr. Seaman, CAO by January 24, 2020. It was further agreed the County would complete these reference checks by January 31, 2020 and give CGL a decision by February 3, 2020.

Mr. Davidson stated should CGL be awarded the work, he would require a half day workshop with the Commissioners and their steering committee on or before February 28<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Leinbach pointed out a Jail Construction Task Force must be appointed consisting of CGL, Court Administration and the Judiciary, the District Attorney, Sheriff, CAO and Budget. Ms. Sadler asked the Board to provide her with five dates and a block of mornings from 9 to 12. CGL will prepare and distribute a syllabus for the meeting.

An additional discussion ensued regarding forms of ownership, County build and own and Real Estate Transaction Model (i.e. County Lease model). Mr. Davidson stated the real estate transaction model could be a not for profit or governmental authority.

2. Courthouse/Services Center Security-Commissioner Leinbach/Sheriff Weaknecht  
Commissioner Leinbach opened the discussion by commenting this is something he has been advocating for, is long overdue and believes it is necessary to have armed sheriff deputies at the three main entrances, one in the Courthouse and two at the Services Center. Sheriff Weaknecht agreed this is needed as well taking an entire look at the County security system. Sheriff Weaknecht stated the task would require five new deputy positions and at this point in time, staffing will be a challenge due to current vacancies. He stated he has five open positions; the training academy is full until the fall of 2020 and it will be difficult to fill ten positions should this plan be approved. He stated once he had five more deputies hired, he would staff the three new posts. Mr. Patrizio pointed out this means the County likely will incur overtime pay rates because until the Sheriff has filled ten positions, he will have to mandate OT pay to cover all his posts. Commissioner Barnhardt said he was not yet ready to make a decision and needed more information. He requested a cost impact analysis, the services the Sheriff would forgo when at less than full complement to staff the security check points, and a report of confiscated weapons by our contracted security guard firm SGI. Ms. Sadler stated SGI can provide this information.  
A discussion ensued regarding the current screening policy and its applicability to different groups of employees. It was agreed by all that the current policy needs to be reviewed to ensure the integrity of this proposed plan. It was agreed Mr. Seaman will convene a meeting of the Security Committee and report back to the Commissioners within two weeks.

After discussion, the Commissioners were not ready to make a decision, although Commissioner Leinbach and Commissioner Rivera support the idea, they would like to see the financial impact and revisions to the current security policy.

3. County PR Expertise – Commissioner Leinbach

Commissioner Leinbach introduced Michele Drager of the Drager Group, and asked Ms. Drager to attend to discuss public relations planning and responses to the media and public in dealing with crises.

Commissioner Leinbach disclosed he has known Michele for twelve years, having worked with her when he was at West Lawn Printing.

Ms. Drager submitted a proposal to the Board that included two topics; Public Relations and Crisis Communication Counsel. Ms. Drager briefly discussed her proposal and talked about the importance of being prepared for a crisis, vital on being transparent and to have a core message.

The Board made no decision on the proposal.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk