

Budget/Operations Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2020

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, March 5, 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, Chief Clerk Maryjo Gibson.

1. Adopted Budget 5-year Forecast –
Chief Financial Officer Robert Patrizio presented a summary of his five-year 2020 adopted budget forecast. Mr. Patrizio prepared two scenarios for the Board's consideration, with the main difference being one scenario included the IGT (Intergovernmental Transfer) for the Berks Heim and the other did not. Neither version included jail renovations or construction or a tax increase for any year.
Mr. Patrizio focused on key assumptions on various aspects of the forecast.
2. Facility Discussion– In attendance was Matt Salkowski, Interim Director of Facilities and Operations
 - a) Courthouse Entrance Doors Quote – Mr. Salkowski reported he received two quotes for the Court Street exterior and interior entrance doors. One quote is to restore the original patina finish and the other quote would be to polish the doors. Because of the historical nature of the Courthouse, the Commissioners would like the doors restored to the original patina finish, and directed Mr. Salkowski to obtain two additional proposals for the work.
 - b) Muhlenberg Green – Follow-up discussion on the Agricultural Center Scope of Work/RLP. The Commissioners are still undecided on what direction to proceed on configuration of tenant space at the Ag Center and the costs involved. Mr. Salkowski received a fee proposal from Muhlenberg Greene Architects to further define and provide an analysis of the space and renovation requirements for the Ag Center. This analysis would define the existing facility's capacity for expanded tenant space and renovations required by the federal government's proposal to house the NRCS and FSA. All the Commissioner agreed this decision requires further study and analysis, and agreed to move ahead with the Muhlenberg Greene proposal. The proposal will be ratified and approved at the March 12, 2020 Commissioners' Board Meeting. The Commissioners also directed Mr. Seaman and Mr. Salkowski to meet with the Conservation District to determine if the Conservation District has any interest in accepting our offer for leasing space in the Ag Center

3. Constable Audit Scope of Work –
On January 16, 2020, by Resolution No. 18-2020, the Commissioners authorized the County Solicitor and Chief Administrative Officer to identify a firm or firms to engage in a forensic audit of the Berks County Constable System.
On February 19, 2020 the Commissioners received a letter proposal from Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC (ZA), setting forth ZA's scope of work. After review of the proposal letter, the Commissioners had some questions and directed Ms. Sadler and Mr. Seaman to go back to ZA and explain exactly what the County is looking for and to redefine their scope of work. The Commissioners would like the audit to encompass one entire year of the constable system.
4. CGL –
As a result of the Commissioners pausing the building of a new jail last week, they asked CGL for provide a cost of what pausing the project would be. Ms. Sadler reported CGL estimated the cost for delaying the project until 2028 would be close to \$80,000,000. In addition, should there be any type of catastrophic failure in the Jail, CGL reported the cost for repairs could be in the millions of dollars. Based on CGL's report, Commissioner Leinbach believes it is a huge risk to wait, and wants to move forward immediately.
Commissioner Barnhardt and Commissioner Rivera would like more time to evaluate all the options, and said they could have their review and decision by next Friday, March 13, 2020.
5. Coronavirus Discussion –
Mr. Seaman reported to the Board the steps the County is taking to ensure the County is prepared to handle the Coronavirus outbreak. Mr. Seaman advised the Commissioners he is preparing a resolution for next Thursday's meeting establishing a 'chain of command' in dealing with the County's response. Mr. Seaman reported Brian Gottschall, Director of Emergency Services, is working closely with PEMA and FEMA, and the County is preparing for immediate release a countywide distribution fact sheet with recommendations provided by the CDC. Mr. Seaman informed the Board the County's homepage now has information and link to a resource page.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk