

## **Commissioners' Board Meeting Minutes November 17, 2022**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session on Thursday, November 17, 2022, at 10:00 A.M. in the Commissioners' Boardroom, 13<sup>th</sup> 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 Commissioners Kevin S. Barnhardt and Michael S. Rivera in attendance. Also present were Christine M. Sadler, Solicitor, Ronald R. Seaman, Chief Operations Officer and Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk.

Commissioner Leinbach opened the meeting with a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

### **PRESENTATION**

Robert Patrizio, Chief Financial Officer, presented the proposed 2023 Berks County General Operating Budget and highlighted the costs and savings for 2023. Mr. Patrizio stated that the work on the 2023 Budget began early in the year, and the goal is to present a budget that he felt was fair and responsive to the community's needs.

Mr. Patrizio noted that we refinanced debt before the rates went up, and we paid off our 2013 bonds which have helped lower our debt service. Mr. Patrizio noted that we are budgeting for the American Rescue Plan for 2023 budget year. The budget goal for 2023 is no new debt and maintaining a commitment to farmland preservation, education, economic development, library, and park systems.

Mr. Patrizio stated he is pleased to report that he is not recommending a tax increase for 2023 and will keep the tax rate at 7.657 Mill. He is also pleased that the County will be able to balance the operating budget without using reserves. He announced that the budget packet would be available in his office, the Commissioners' office and would be posted on the County website.

Commissioner Rivera commended Mr. Patrizio and his staff for all the hard work and presented the budget and did a great job. He noted that the Budget team is always looking at the budget and reviewing on where they can gain savings.

Commissioner Barnhardt commended Mr. Patrizio and his staff for presenting a stable financial outlook and keeping the Board on point. Commissioner Barnhardt noted that these discussions don't happen in the fall, but the budget is the number one issue the Commissioners deal with almost daily. He transitioned into the BCCF steering committee meeting later this afternoon. He noted that Pamela Seaman, MH/DD Administrator, is being appointed to the BCCF steering committee. He detailed a trip he took with members CJAB committee to Dauphin County Day Reporting Center to see their process and stressed the importance of a mental health focus. He indicated they would focus on right-sizing the new facility and work in partnership with CGL, Pam Seaman, and Bob Williams for Mental Health diversion and other diversity concepts. He stressed the significance of having a capital reserve fund balance that allows the County to catch up

on capital projects, especially County bridges and infrastructure, which have been neglected in prior years. He stated that moving forward, the main issue will be justifying the cost to the taxpayers for a new correctional facility.

Commissioner Leinbach thanked Mr. Patrizio and the Budget team for the work they do every day, noting that the Commissioners must rely on a professional team when it comes to the Budget and finances. He clarified that we are not delaying the new jail building but rather getting the size down to where it should be and focusing on mental health. He does not agree with releasing the inmates to allow them to work but returning them to jail. If they are trusted to go to work, they should be trusted to go back into the community with the correct assistance. He encouraged the public to view the Budget Presentation and the full draft Budget online, noting there could be some minor adjustments made before the final adoption December 15, 2022. The budget will be posted on the county website.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The November 3, 2022, Commissioners' meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Commissioner Leinbach noted that two Executive Sessions were held, one on November 14, 2022, dealing with personnel. Another session was held on November 16, 2022 dealing with personnel, litigation, and contract negotiations.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**

No comments

**AGENDA ITEMS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt and seconded by Commissioner Rivera to approve the agenda as presented.

Authorizing:

- 408.2022 Adopt a resolution authorizing 2022 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$479,248 and 2022 Appropriations in the amount of \$99,905 per listing dated November 11, 2022.
- 409.2022 Adopt a resolution authorizing Human Resources Recommendations dated November 17, 2022, as follows:
  - 2. Authorize the appointment of Angele Bingaman to PC013442 Office Manager – Recorder of Deeds recognizing the 1620 Rights of the Elected Officials to hire, fire and supervise its employees. The appointment is effective 11/18/2022. Rate of \$48,000/annually. Salary range Minimum \$38,538; Midpoint \$51,384; Maximum \$64,230. Replacement for Suzanne Miller who promoted. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11150.

3. Authorize the promotion of Emily Wangolo from PC013472 Deputy Director to PC013076 Executive Director, Department of Agriculture, effective 11/11/2022. Rate of \$87,849/annually. Salary range Minimum \$60,450; Midpoint \$80,599; Maximum \$100,750. Replacing Tami Hildebrand who is retiring. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 16550.
  4. Authorize the promotion of Lynn Evan from PC013248 Program Monitor Coordinator, Adult Probation to PC013371 Juvenile Court Operations Manager, Juvenile Probation, effective 11/14/2022. Rate of \$55,473/annually. Salary range Minimum \$39,853; Midpoint \$53,137; Maximum \$66,422. Replacement for Kristen Schlottman who transferred. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 12020.
  5. Authorize a salary adjustment for Kristen Ketch PC011069 Executive Assistant, Court Administration, effective 10/28/2022. Rate of \$59,850/annually. Salary range Minimum \$43,799; Midpoint \$58,398; Maximum \$72,998. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11600.
- 410.2022 Adopt a resolution authorizing the reappointment of Barbara Werner, Hamburg, Pennsylvania to the Berks County Children & Youth Services Advisory Board for a 3-year term expiring on December 31, 2025.
- 411.2022 Adopt a resolution authorizing the appointment of Pamela Seaman, MH/DD Administrator, to the Berks County Correctional Facility (BCCF) Steering Committee.
- 412.2022 Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, to execute the Social Service and Healthcare Professional Liability Renewal Application (d/b/a Partners in Parenting [PIP]) for Berks County Children and Youth Services effective January 8, 2023.
- 413.2022 Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, to execute the Letter of Engagement with Axiom Strategies, LLC, to provide automated recorded call services for the Berks County Commissioners' On The Road meetings.
2. Motion to authorize execution of Contract Agreements/Amendments as set forth on the attached listing dated November 14, 2022. There are a total of 22 contracts and the departments were listed.

3. Motion to authorize execution of the payments and electronic transfers as set forth on Controller's Office vouchers listing dated November 17, 2022.
  
4. Motion to authorize execution of employee payroll disbursements dated November 22, 2022.

**REPORTS OF TREASURER AND CONTROLLER**

1. Shirley Benzel, Office Manager, presented the weekly Treasurer's report.
  
2. Commissioner Leinbach presented the weekly Controller's report.

**REPORT OF CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER** – Ronald R. Seaman

He commended Mr. Patrizio and his team. He is happy with the capital program budget. He reminded everyone that we were only a few weeks away from the lights at Gring's mill.

**COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

Commissioner Rivera

Congratulated Kim Johnson, who retired from the YMCA in Reading. He gave a listing of events in the community taking place. He encouraged everyone to give thanks on Thanksgiving and meditate on the many blessings.

Commissioner Barnhardt

He thanked everyone who came out to vote on Election Day. He also thanked everyone who volunteered and worked on Election Day. He wished everyone a safe and joyous Thanksgiving Holiday.

Commissioner Leinbach

He thanked the Election staff and all other County staff for their work on Election Day. He encouraged everyone to keep their eye on the future of the Reading Regional Airport. He noted that since the Commissioners took over the RRA board, there has been an outreach of new proposals for the airport and named a few interesting entities. He wished everyone a very blessed Thanksgiving.

**ROW OFFICERS' COMMENTS**

No Comments

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Floyd Turner, Muhlenberg, spoke regarding Veterans Affairs. He commended Ken Lebron and the entire staff of Veterans Affairs. He thanked the commissioners for all their support and all Veterans and for supporting the projects at the Charles Cemetery.

Crystal Gilchrist, Montgomery County, spoke regarding the Storm Water issues throughout the PA Counties. She indicated that they are moving forward and making progress with the project.

**Commissioners' Meeting**

**November 17, 2022**

Commissioner Leinbach inquired into whether Ms. Gilchrist had reached out to the Conservation District. Ms. Gilchrist indicated that she has not reached out to the Conservation Districts for any of the Counties involved in the project, but she will start reaching out to them.

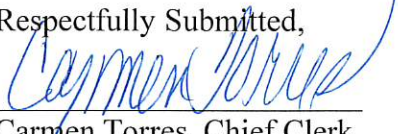
Commissioner Rivera suggested that Ms. Gilchrist include the Army Reserve of Engineers.

No virtual comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Leinbach adjourned the meeting at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk