

Commissioners' Board Meeting Minutes December 16, 2021

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met on Thursday, December 16, 2021, at 7:00 P.M. 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 Kevin S. Barnhardt and Commissioner Michael S. Rivera in attendance. Also present were Christine M. Sadler, County Solicitor, Ronald R. Seaman, Chief Administrative Officer and Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk.

Commissioner Leinbach opened the meeting with a moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

MEETING HOST WELCOME FROM MUHLENBERG TOWNSHIP

Michael Malinowski, Chair, Muhlenberg Township Board of Commissioners, thanked the Commissioners for their meeting in Muhlenberg Township and their willingness to work together to resolve issues. Mr. Malinowski spoke about the rich history of Muhlenberg Township. He indicated Muhlenberg Township is a First-Class township and gave a breakdown of the First-Class qualifications. Mr. Malinowski discussed the Economic Development in Muhlenberg Township and plans for future projects. Mr. Malinowski informed the Board of Commissioners that Jim Dietrich Park won an award and is the pride of Muhlenberg Township. He spoke about the methods in place that allows them to communicate with the residents of Muhlenberg Township.

Commissioner Barnhardt and Commissioner Rivera thanked Mr. Malinowski and Muhlenberg Township for all their work and partnership with the community.

Commissioner Leinbach thanked Mr. Malinowski for hosting the county Commissioners and serving as a great example of a Township that takes its future seriously. He complimented Muhlenberg on Dietrich Park, which has become one of the best parks in the County.

PRESENTATION

Chief Financial Officer Robert Patrizio presented the Board of Commissioners the proposed 2022 Berks County Budget. Mr. Patrizio stated that his office has continued to work on and refine the Budget and adjusted specific revenue and expenditure lines. Mr. Patrizio indicated that since November 18, 2021, proposed 2022 Budget presentation, the Budget has been made available for public inspection for more than 20 days and reported that neither his office nor the Board of Commissioner had received any public comment on the budget presentation. Mr. Patrizio stated the changes made do not rise to the level that would require the Budget to remain open for the additional ten-day period. Mr. Patrizio recommended the Budget to the Board of Commissioners without a tax increase, keeping the millage at 7.657.

Commissioner Barnhardt applauded the efforts of the Finance Department and others who have worked day in and day out to make sure we come up with a solid budget. Commissioner Barnhardt expressed his displeasure with allocating \$500,000 to the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance ("GRCA"). Commissioner Barnhardt stated that he asked for a six-month update in August and has yet to receive any updates on how GRCA uses the money. He believes we are excessively funding GRCA when we could be investing resources in other areas in much need of funds. Commissioner Barnhardt stated that he is troubled by the allocation of \$500,000 of

taxpayer money when we have not seen metrics or measurements of what the money is being used for. Suggested we back down the funding to \$250,000 to GRCA and use the other \$250,000 to fund the passenger rail study.

Commissioner Rivera and Commissioner Leinbach commended Mr. Patrizio and his staff for putting together another great, fiscally conservative, and responsible Budget. Also commended Department Heads and Row Officers for coming together and addressing spending, which allows for a no-tax-increase. Commissioner Leinbach noted that there had been a total increase in taxes of just about 10% in the last fifteen years. Commissioner Leinbach said it is worth celebrating the County's Aaa+ rating.

At this time, the Commissioners announced they submitted their letters disclosing any conflicts of interest to the Chief Clerk.

Commissioner Rivera motioned to adopt the 2022 Budget as presented. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Barnhardt but noting his objection of the \$500,000 to Greater Reading Chamber Alliance. The motion carried and the following resolution was approved.

452.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing adoption of the 2022 Berks County Budget, and further establishing the 2022 Real Estate Tax rate at 7.657 mills.

Commissioner Rivera wanted to clarify that what we are proposing is no tax increase for the County Real Estate Taxes, we do not control taxes for the Municipalities or School Districts.

Berks County COVID-19 Data Report - Brian Gottschall, Director of Department of Emergency Services

Mr. Gottschall reported that we continue to see enormous growth in the community of COVID cases. The vast majority on the Country is on the high spread. Pediatric cases continue an upswing. Our hospitals look a little better than they did last week across the board. Influenza numbers continue to rise, and we continue to recommend the Flu vaccine. COVID variant Omicron is more transmissible but not more virulent. The current vaccines appear to be more protective against the Omicron variant. Reminded everyone that the public COVID Drive-Up testing site continues, and it has been extended another week through December 29th. Please visit www.doyourpartberks.com for the most up to date information.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of December 9, 2021 Commissioners' Board Meeting were approved as presented.

Commissioner Leinbach noted an Executive Session was held December 15, 2021 and dealt with litigation.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

No Comments

Agenda Items

1. A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt, seconded by Commissioner Rivera and all voted unanimously to approve the items listed below:

453.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing 2021 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$11,949 and 2021 Appropriations in the amount of \$6,000,000 per listing dated December 10, 2021.

454.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing Human Resources Recommendations dated December 16, 2021 as follows:

1. Authorize the appointment of Jacqueline Shiffert to PC012343 Senior Financial Analyst – Budget & Finance, effective 12/22/2021. Rate of \$50,000/annually. Salary range Minimum \$48,443; Midpoint \$64,591; Maximum \$80,739. Replacement for Joe Famiglietti who transferred. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11400.
2. Authorize the appointment of Alexa Antanavage to PC011258 Law Clerk I – Court Administration, effective 12/29/2021. Rate of \$54,000/annually. Salary range Minimum \$40,078; Midpoint \$53,438; Maximum \$66,797. Replacement for Matthew Fessler who separated. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11600.
3. Authorize the appointment of Jennifer Gombar to PC011150 Judicial Administrative Assistant – Court Administration, effective 12/29/2021. Rate of \$53,047/annually. Salary range Minimum \$33,721; Midpoint \$44,961; Maximum \$56,202. Replacement for Penny Cushing who transferred. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11600.
4. Authorize the appointment of Jaime Matos to PC011264 Law Clerk I – Court Administration, effective 12/29/2021. Rate of \$54,500/annually. Salary range Minimum \$40,078; Midpoint \$53,438; Maximum \$66,797. Replacement for Lynne Beust who transferred. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11600.
5. Authorize the promotion of Carmen Bloom from PC010123 Assistant County Solicitor to Supervising Attorney – Solicitor's Office, effective 12/10/2021. Rate of \$74,000/annually. Salary range Minimum \$61,235; Midpoint \$81,647; Maximum \$102,059. New position

created by Salary Board on 12/4/2021. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11020.

6. Authorize the promotion of Wendy Pennington from PC013385 Human Resources Generalist to PC013316 Benefits Manager – Human Resources Department, effective 12/20/2021. Rate of \$57,500/annually. Salary range Minimum \$46,641; Midpoint \$62,188; Maximum \$77,735. Replacement for Christie Bennett-Zellers who separated. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11410.

- 455.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing the award and the Director of Contracts and Procurement to execute, a one (1) year contract as a result of ITB# 21-28-JRGW, Inmate and Resident Clothing, for the participating members of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Counties Cooperative Purchasing Board (SPCCPB) including Berks County, as follows:

Bob Barker Company, Inc.

7925 Purfoy Road
Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina 27526

Line Items: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18a, 18b, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40, and 51

Estimated Annual Expenditure – Grand Total: \$325,381.63

Estimated Annual Expenditure – County of Berks portion:
\$156,758.89

The County reserves the right to extend the agreement for two additional one-year terms upon mutual agreement of both parties at the unit prices herein.

- 456.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing the appointment of Lissette Martinez, Reading, Pennsylvania to the Berks County Children & Youth Services Advisory Board for a 3 year term expiring on December 31, 2024.
- 457.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair to execute Letter of Understanding between District Attorney's Office, Berks County, Pennsylvania and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State Police to work law enforcement initiatives and establish the administrative framework for the reimbursement of certain overtime hours incurred by members of the Pennsylvania State Police Troop L.
- 458.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing Pamela Seaman, Administrator, Berks County Office of Mental Health And Developmental Disabilities, to complete and execute the Department of Human Services' Annual Notification Form for Assisted Outpatient

Treatment, indicating Berks County's intent to opt-out of Assisted Outpatient Treatment for the calendar year 2022.

- 459.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing Brian Gottschall, Director, Department of Emergency Services to execute Letter of Engagement and any and all documents related to the Provisioning of Next Generation 911 ("NG911") Services for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania ("Commonwealth"), acting through the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency ("PEMA") and Berks County ("County"), to set forth expectations, define interoperability, roles and responsibilities, and the necessary steps to review, amend, or establish new methods and processes to successfully implement and sustain NG911 statewide.
- 460.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing the execution of the following three agreements pertaining to the proposed settlements for all opioid litigation against pharmaceutical distributors McKesson, Cardinal Health, and AmerisourceBergen ("Distributors") and against manufacturer Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and its parent company Johnson & Johnson ("Janssen"):
- 1) The Participation Agreement for the Distributors' settlement;
 - 2) The Participation Agreement for the Janssen settlement; and
 - 3) The Participation Agreement for the intrastate allocation of settlement funds.
- 461.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing Alan D. Piper, Transportation Planner, to execute PA Department of Environmental Protection Chapter 105 Permit Application and General Information Form for the Peach Street Bridge Replacement Project over Sacony Creek, Kutztown Borough (County Bridge 10-B).
- 462.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of the Lease Agreement extension between the County of Berks and Earthrise Enterprises, Inc., Reading, Pennsylvania, for the leasing of space on the 2nd Floor of the County Services Center for the operation of a snack shop, the lease term should be extended for one (1) year expiring December 31, 2022.
- 463.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing the reappointment of Christian Y. Leinbach, as Commissioner Director to the Berks County Conservation District for a one (1) year term expiring December 31, 2022.
- 464.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing the On The Road Commissioners' Meetings for 2022 on the following dates and locations:
- March 31, 2022 @ Hamburg High School
June 30, 2022 @ Cumru Township Building
September 29, 2022 @ Birdsboro Borough Hall
December 15, 2022 @ Rockland Township Building

- 465.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing the reappointment of Piper Sherburne, Alburdis, Pennsylvania, as Public Director, to the Berks County Conservation District Board for a four (4) year term commencing January 1, 2022 and expiring December 31, 2025.
 - 466.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing the appointment of Larry Kehl, Fleetwood, Pennsylvania, as Farmer Director, to the Berks County Conservation District Board for a four (4) year term commencing January 1, 2022 and expiring December 31, 2025.
 - 467.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing appropriation in the amount of \$3,000,000.00 to Reading Baseball LP, Berks County, Pennsylvania, from the County General Funds, for facility improvements.
 - 468.2021 Adopt a resolution authorizing appropriation in the amount of \$3,000,000.00 to Berks County Convention Center Authority, Berks County, Pennsylvania, from the County General Funds, for facility improvements.
- 2. Motion to authorize execution of Contract Agreements/Amendments as set forth on attached listing dated December 13, 2021.
 - 3. Motion to authorize execution of the payments and electronic transfers as set forth on Controller's Office vouchers listing dated December 16, 2021.
 - 4. Motion to authorize execution of the payments and electronic transfers for week ending December 23, 2021, subject to final review and approval of the Chief Administrative Officer.
 - 5. Motion to authorize execution of employee payroll disbursements dated December 21, 2021 and January 4, 2022.

Reports

- 1. Commissioner Leinbach read the Treasurer report, prepared and submitted by the Treasurer's office.
- 2. The Controller's two-week report was not presented.

Report of Chief Administrative Officer - Ronald R. Seaman

Ronald R. Seaman added his congratulations and thanked Mr. Patrizio and his staff for all the work on the budget and their cooperation in reviewing the capital requests. Mr. Seaman gave a list of the dates remaining for the Holiday Lights at Gring's Mill and wished everyone a Happy Holiday Season.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Rivera

Commissioner Rivera reported that on January 25th, the Berks Latino Workforce will be hosting a job fair from 10-2 @ 450 S. 6th Street. Further information will be forthcoming.

Commissioner Barnhardt

Commissioner Barnhardt indicated that we will be having a Commissioners' meeting on December 23rd. Wished everyone a Happy and Safe Holiday Season.

Commissioner Leinbach

Commissioner Leinbach also wished everyone a Happy and safe Holiday and a blessed New Year.

Row Officers' Comments

No comments.

Public Comment

See attached Q & A

Commissioner Leinbach addressed Mr. Archer by indicating he reached out to Jim Gerlach, President & CEO, and Deb Millman, Vice President of Development for the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance. He asked them to publicly present a report for 2021 to the board of Commissioners in early January 2022.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carmen Torres, Chief Clerk

Source	Type	Identity	Timestamp	Conversation Id	Content
Moderator	Announcement	IS Production (ISProduction@countyofberks.com)	11/19/2021 20:55	e3a5753f-3227-4449-9a20-a2134ba5fa32	Public comment will be accepted in person and through the Q&A function. Please include your first name, last name and municipality for all comments. Please comments without name and municipality will not be considered. Each citizen can submit one comment. Comment length is dictated by limitations of the platform being used (Teams Q&A, Facebook, YouTube). In person comments will be accepted first, followed by comments submitted virtually. The meeting comment period is limited to a total of 30 minutes including both in person and virtual comments. This time period may be extended at the discretion of the Board. Please be concise. Comments that are germane to County business will be read during the meeting and should not be considered to be interactive dialog with the Commissioners. The County Solicitor shall be the final arbiter of whether a comment is germane and should be read. Any Commissioner response to public comment will be done at the discretion of the Commissioners. To learn more about our host, Muhlentberg Township, please go to https://www.muhlentbergtp.com/ For more information from the CDC please go to https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html Berks County Courthouse and Government Services Center For more information about vaccines and boosters in Berks, please go to https://www.doyourpartberks.com/
Moderator	Announcement	Berger, Heather (HBerger@countyofberks.com)	12/17/2021 0:04	fbfb34f4-3d3e-4bd7-b877-6cc38d4b4e5db	No municipality given - Kelly Angstadt Thank You! Great presentation!
Moderator	Announcement	Berger, Heather (HBerger@countyofberks.com)	12/17/2021 0:33	6840d309-8844-4d36-90aa-66b1c20d9411	No municipality given - Kelly Angstadt Thank You! Great presentation!
Moderator	Announcement	Berger, Heather (HBerger@countyofberks.com)	12/17/2021 0:34	00e251f0-f79c-4130-a68b-b4c82b50eftda	Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt has raised an excellent point regarding his concern that the GRCA budget amount needs to be called into question due to the GRCA's lack of responsiveness to the county. Just because it has been budgeted does not, I presume, require that the monies actually be awarded to this outfit. Where is the accountability? Thank you for your questions and comments. This Q&A is closed as the public comments have been addressed.
Attendee	Question	IS from Facebook (Unverified)	12/17/2021 0:43	6fab548b-8bdd-4e41-b5cc-94e5b9c5312a	on Facebook and again no municipality - Jenn Rivera Thank you for your service to the Berks.
Attendee	Question	IS from Facebook (Unverified)	12/17/2021 0:43	78ce8369-e3a0-4a09-bc66-5c1be513b649	
Attendee	Question	John Archer, The Spring Township (Unverified)	12/17/2021 0:45	927116a1-a8a1-4354-a7cf-a53900613505	
Moderator	Announcement	Berger, Heather (HBerger@countyofberks.com)	12/17/2021 0:58	cr1e83cd9-3240-4f3b-8ab2-0822a213044e	