

Commissioners' Board Meeting Minutes March 12, 2020

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, March 12, 2020, at 10:00 A.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 and Chief Clerk Maryjo Gibson.

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

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 5, 2020 Commissioners' Board Meeting and March 5, 2020 Budget/Operations Meeting were approved as presented.

Commissioner Leinbach announced an Executive Session was held March 9, 2020 dealing with real estate.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

None.

Agenda Items

In response to the emergence of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), Commissioner Leinbach presented and read the DECLARATION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY for the County of Berks (Declaration of Disaster). The Declaration of Disaster sets forth the County's preparedness and coordination efforts, and will be posted on the County of Berks and Department of Emergency Services homepages.

County Solicitor Sadler explained the County is a leader in this particular area, and Berks County school districts and local municipalities are looking to the County for leadership. Ms. Sadler also explained because the County is a public body and must abide by the Sunshine Law, this Declaration of Disaster allows the County Commissioners to meet with appropriate County staff on an as needed basis and to make crucial and timely decisions as events are constantly evolving.

Chief Administrative Officer Ronald R. Seaman stated the County is making sure we have the resources and the supplies necessary to carry out all County government functions when supplies are limited. Brian Gottschall, Director of Emergency Management, has been reaching out to County partners, BCIU, healthcare professionals, municipalities through the Center for Excellence in Local Government (CELG).

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Mr. Seaman emphasized for the general public, this Declaration is not cause for alarm or panic but allows the County to relax the standards imposed on the County to make valid rational decisions in an ever-changing climate. Mr. Seaman also announced he issued a press release that effective today only visits that are absolutely necessary will be allowed at the Berks Heim, and letters are going out to employees and family members that are absolutely necessary.

Commissioner Leinbach reported Brian Gottschall, Director of Emergency Services, has been working on this since early January with the CDC, PEMA, FEMA and local health officials, and will continue to do so to provide County leadership with the most current information on COVID-19.

Commissioner Barnhardt commented that with the Primary Election on April 28, the County has ordered thousands of gloves for individuals to use in the polling places, and encouraged people to use the mail-in ballot option as allowed by Act 77. Commissioner Barnhardt also received one comment about live streaming public meetings, and has contacted Heather Adams at BCTV, who will be working with the County to make this happen.

Commissioner Rivera thanked Brian Gottschall for all his hard work he has put into making sure the County has the most up-to-date and accurate information to provide County residents in order to contain and limit the spread of COVID-19. Commissioner Rivera provided the County's website for the most current information www.berksdes.com.

Linda Wolesslagle, Cumru Township and President of Berks Democratic Women, thanked the Commissioners for taking this emergency action and asked for clarification on large group gatherings. Commissioner Leinbach replied to be cautious of the number of people in a small confined area.

A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt to approve the Declaration of Disaster Emergency as presented. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera, and all voted unanimously to approve said Declaration.

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

95.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing 2020 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$10,000 and 2020 Appropriations in the amount of \$747,175 per listing dated March 9, 2020.

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- 96.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing Human Resources Recommendations per listing dated March 12, 2020 as follows:
1. Authorize the appointment of Patrick Manley to Certified Legal Intern – Public Defender’s Office, effective 03/18/2020. Rate of \$48,000/annually. New position created by Salary Board on 03/05/2020. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11570.
 2. Authorize the appointment of Marianne Hertzog to PC011162 Judicial Coordinator – Court Administration, effective 04/01/2020. Rate of \$40,547/annually. Salary range Minimum \$31,912; Midpoint \$42,550; Maximum \$53,187. Replacement for Lisa Heltzinger who transferred. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11600.
 3. Authorize the appointment of Amy Rothermel to PC011260 Law Clerk I – Court Administration, effective 04/01/2020. Rate of \$53,500/annually. Salary range Minimum \$40,078; Midpoint \$53,438; Maximum \$66,797. Replacement for Ann Pipkin who separated. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11600.
 4. Authorize \$250 uniform/clothing allowance for Lieutenants and Sergeants – Jail System, effective for the pay of 4/14/2020. Budget 10000 – 12090.
- 97.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, to execute the Agreement between Weber Business Services, LLC, Greencastle, Pennsylvania, and the County of Berks to provide training presentations for department heads, managers and supervisors on April 24, 2020.
- 98.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing and approving Public Health Emergency Leave Policy, Section 9.8. This Policy revises and replaces the Pandemic Leave Policy, Section 9.8, effective March 13, 2020.
Commissioner Leinbach noted this action is related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- 99.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, to execute the 2019 Court Interpreter Services Grant from the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts ("AOPC") in the reimbursement request amount of \$491,250.50, to provide on-site in-person courtroom interpreting services at the Court of Common Pleas and Magisterial District Judge levels.
- 100.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, to execute the 2019 Senior Judge Reimbursable Costs Grant from the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts ("AOPC") in the reimbursement request amount of \$45,840, to offset the costs of Senior Judges and their staff.
- 101.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, to execute Change Order HHMOT79688D dated February 21, 2020 to Motorola Solutions Contract # VESTA 911 Communications System and Services Agreement signed December 27, 2019. The Change Order modifies Change Order No. HHMOT79688C authorized by Resolution No. 78-2020 to reflect the correct Contract #. This is a no-cost Change Order.
- 102.2020 Adopt a resolution ratifying, confirming and approving Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, execution of the letter proposal with Muhlenberg Greene Architects, Ltd., Wyomissing, Pennsylvania, to provide an analysis of the leasing space and renovation requirements for the Berks County Agricultural Center.
- 103.2020 Adopt a resolution ratifying, confirming and approving execution of a letter of support on behalf of the Schuylkill River Greenways to The Wyomissing Foundation for grant application to the Wyomissing Foundation seeking funding to conduct a feasibility study of the Reading to Hamburg gap in the Schuylkill River Trail (SRT).
- 104.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of the Amendment to Agreement for Professional Services between the County of Berks and Carl Engelman, Jr., Leesport, Pennsylvania, to provide certain legal services on behalf of the Berks County Assessment Office requiring legal representation in proceedings involving the Berks County Board of Assessment Appeals.

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105.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of the 4th Extension to Agreement to Utilize Premises between the County of Berks and the Township of Bern for use of the County of Berks' Recycling Center by the Township of Bern for a three (3) year period expiring September 30, 2023.

106.2020 Adopt a resolution hereby establishing the following Chain of Command with respect to the County's response to the COVID-19 emergency:

1. Board of County Commissioners
2. Ronald R. Seaman, Chief Administrative Officer-
Chief County Spokesperson
3. Brian Gottschall, DES Director- Chief Information
Resource Person/Logistics Coordinator
4. Public Relations

2. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator per listing dated March 9, 2020. Commissioner Leinbach reported there are 8 contracts and referenced the departments.
3. Motion authorizing payments set forth on Controller's Office vouchers payable listing dated March 10, 2020 for week ending March 11, 2020 and the payment of electronic transfers and employee payroll.

Reports

1. County Treasurer A. Dennis Adams, CPA submitted a prepared weekly Treasurer's report.
2. The Controller's weekly report was presented by County Controller Sandy Graffius.

REPORT OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Robert Patrizio reported the Budget/Ops Meeting will begin at 2:15 p.m., and there will be discussions on a proposal from WSK Associates regarding the new security system at certain County facilities; a discussion on a proposal for the replacement of parking garage gates from Overhead Door, and a discussion by the Planning Commission Staff on the federal B.U.I.L D. (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) Grant.

REPORT OF CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Nothing to report at this time.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**Commissioner Barnhardt**

Commissioner Barnhardt reminded everyone Census 2020 will begin April 1, and today the Federal Government will start mailing postcards. Commissioner Barnhardt also clarified the questionnaire does not ask questions on salaries or financial questions. Commissioner Barnhardt mentioned the Berks Complete Count Committee will be applying for a \$15,000 grant, and thanked everyone for their efforts. Commissioner Barnhardt reported as a result of the RFP for an ADA Survey of County Polling Places, the County received five responses, which will be reviewed and evaluated for a recommendation next week.

Commissioner Rivera

Commissioner Rivera mentioned every Monday on BCTV there is a program called County Connections, and this coming Monday evening at 6:30, he will have Debbie Olivieri, Director of Election Services, as his guest to discuss navigating the election process in Berks County in 2020.

Commissioner Rivera announced for Exeter Township residents, they will be receiving two tax bills instead of one this year. County Treasurer Dennis Adams commented it is because of the implementation of the Homestead/Farmstead Exemption, and is only for this year.

Commissioner Leinbach

Commissioner Leinbach reported there was a department head meeting Tuesday to discuss what the County is currently doing internally to address COVID-19. Commissioner Leinbach noted the cleaning staff is now sanitizing the buildings every day instead of every other week, which will cost more in compensation and supplies, but it is essential to keep the buildings clean. Commissioner Leinbach said County employees can also help by keeping their work areas clean.

ELECTED OFFICIALS' COMMENTS

Berks County Recorder of Deeds Mary Kozak issued a warning to Berks County residents of a solicitation currently being sent from a private company offering to provide copies of deeds and other records for fees much higher than the Recorder's Office charges. Ms. Kozak advised her office charges \$.50 per page and \$10 for a certified copy.

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

Danielle Leazier, a Nurse at the Berks Heim, talked about a recent Right to Know Request filed by the Freedom Foundation for certain information about County employees, and asked why the employees weren't notified. First Assistant County Solicitor Schnee responded by reassuring Ms. Leazier no personal information was released, only position, salary information and names which is considered public information under the Right to Know Law.

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Commissioner Barnhardt advised Ms. Leazier he did notify union officials at the Heim of the receipt of the request.

Solicitor Sadler advised Ms. Leazier that she had conversations with the law firm representing the union and employees about what information the County would release.

Crystal Kowalski, Wyomissing, commented on building a new prison and asked if Mr. Patrizio could provide the funding mechanism, so the public can understand where the funds are coming from.

Commissioner Leinbach clarified for Ms. Kowalski, at last week's Budget/Ops Meeting the Commissioners were asked to respond to the Solicitor with answers by the end of the day tomorrow whether or not to proceed with CGL. Commissioner Leinbach said again no decision on not waiting has been made.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:50 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk