

Commissioners' Board Meeting Minutes April 23, 2020

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, April 23, 2020, at 10:00 A.M. DES Media Room, DirectLink Technology Center, 2561 Bernville Road, Reading, PA, 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 Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk.

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

Commissioner Leinbach noted anyone wishing to comment on a published Agenda items should email their comments to comments@countyofberks.com. The comments will be monitored by Mary Buerer, his Executive Assistant.

Commissioner Leinbach noted the COVID Leadership Team continues to hold daily calls at 1:00 p.m. dealing with personnel and emergency related issues.

Commissioner Leinbach noted there were no calls on Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020, and last Sunday, April 19, 2020.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of April 9, 2020 Commissioners' Board Meeting were approved as presented.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

None.

Commissioner Leinbach commented on the editorial in this morning's Reading Eagle dealing with the Commissioners' holding of public events and news conferences. Commissioner Leinbach believes the article made a legitimate point, while praising the County's Do Your Part-Stop the Spread campaign, criticized holding the events in public settings as being not appropriate and inconsistent.

Commissioner Leinbach stated the Commissioners are learning what best practices are as they go, and the Commissioners have not interjected any politics, but are working with best information they have to make the best decisions possible, and are unified to do what they believe is right for Berks County businesses, employees and its residents.

Both Commissioner Barnhardt and Commissioner Rivera echoed Commissioner Leinbach's comments, with Commissioner Rivera adding we are doing our best to help Berks County get through this the best way possible.

Agenda Items

1. A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt, seconded by Commissioner Rivera, and all voted unanimously to approve the items listed below:
Commissioner Leinbach noted a number of the following items are being ratified because of the current circumstances, as a number of decisions had to be made prior to today's Commissioners' Meeting, and now must be formally ratified.

123.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing the following Budget Transfers/Appropriations:

- 2019 Appropriations in the amount of \$407; 2020 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$9,538 and 2020 Appropriations in the amount of \$1,821,000 per listing dated April 13, 2020.
- 2020 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$340,539 per listing dated April 20, 2020.

124.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing Human Resources Recommendations per listing dated April 23, 2020 as follows:

1. Authorize the promotion of Elizabeth Monick from PC010662 County Caseworker Supervisor I to PC010998 Manager of In-Home Services – Children and Youth Services, effective 04/29/2020. Rate of \$71,000/annually. Salary range Minimum \$57,802; Midpoint \$77,070; Maximum \$96,337. Replacement for Sophia Harbove who separated. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 22000 – 23200.

125.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, to execute the Blue Cross Administrative Services Group Contracts letter for 2020 health insurance benefits.

126.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing the appointment of Rafaela Lopez, Reading, Pennsylvania to the Children and Youth Advisory Board to fill the remainder of a 3 year term which will expire on 12/31/2021.

127.2020 Adopt a resolution of the County of Berks recognizing and approving the LERTA within the Township of Ontelaunee in compliance with Act No. 76 of 1977 (72 P.S. § 4722 et seq.), known as the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act ("LERTA"); and setting a maximum exemption amount and a schedule.

- 128.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of a letter of support to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation on behalf of Carbon County, the sponsoring agency for the grant funding, for their grant application for the Federal Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Community Traffic Safety Project program. The grant is shared with counties who adopt a letter of support, and provides the ability to conduct educational programs to the public in general and in schools, as well as police departments and PennDOT.
- 129.2020 Adopt a resolution ratifying, confirming and approving execution of a letter in support to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency ("PCCD") on behalf of Clare of Assisi House with respect to its grant application to PCCD 2019/2020 Byrne JAG Single Solicitation of Local Initiatives to provide reentry programs and practices to female ex-offenders who face tremendous barriers to community re-integration and are at high risk for recidivism.
- 130.2020 Adopt a resolution ratifying, confirming and approving execution of letters in support to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development- Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources on behalf of the Board of Supervisors of Ruscombmanor Township with respect to their application for a Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program Grant to provide financial assistance for a project involving improvements to Rueben Strauss Park and the Richard Seidel Park located in the Township.
- 131.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of the Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Furloughs between the County of Berks ("County") and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, District Council 88 ("AFSCME"), memorializing an understanding and agreement between the County and AFSCME regarding temporary furloughed Appointed, Court-Related and Residual bargaining unit employees.
- 132.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of the Memorandum of Understanding between the County of Berks and Berks Connections/Pretrial Services, to provide reentry services in regard to the Second Chance Act Community -Based Reentry Program at the Berks County Jail.

- 133.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing the reappointment of Mitchell Darcourt, Wyomissing, Pennsylvania, as Chairman of the Berks County Board of Assessment Appeals for a one (1) year term expiring December 31, 2020.
- 134.2020 Adopt a resolution ratifying, confirming and approving execution of the Onsite Deposit Service Agreement between BB&T Bank and the County of Berks for the service of remotely depositing checks in accordance with the terms and conditions of the original agreement between the parties.
- 135.2020 Adopt a resolution ratifying, confirming and approving execution of Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency ("PCCD") Subgrant application 33007-Capital Case Indigent Defense, to provide for activities that will enhance defense strategies for indigent defendants in capital cases.
- 136.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, to execute a letter of support to the Department of Human Services Office of Long-Term Living ("OLTL") on behalf of the Berks County Area Agency on Aging for their letter of commitment to support P4A Response to OLTL Application and Enrollment Services Request for Application.
- 137.2020 Adopt a resolution ratifying, confirming and approving Robert Patrizio, Chief Financial Officer, execution of the Agreement for Release of Collateral between Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association Insurance Company ("PMA") and the County of Berks that removes the requirement for a Letter of Credit to insure the County will pay claims under the deductible for fully insured worker compensation policy years.
2. Motion ratifying and confirming execution of Contract Agreements/Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator per listing dated April 20, 2020. Commissioner Leinbach reported there are 13 contracts and referenced the departments.
3. Motion authorizing payments set forth on Controller's Office vouchers payable listing dated April 14, 2020, for week ending April 14, 2020, and April 21, 2020, for week ending April 22, 2020.

Reports

1. County Treasurer A. Dennis Adams, CPA, was absent. Commissioner Leinbach presented the prepared weekly Treasurer's report.
2. County Controller Sandy Graffius was absent. Commissioner Leinbach presented the Controller's weekly report.

REPORT OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

No report this week.

REPORT OF CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Nothing to report.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**Commissioner Barnhardt**

Commissioner Barnhardt was happy to report he received his mail-in ballot Tuesday and voted; again, encouraging everyone to take the opportunity to file for a mail-in ballot. The deadline to apply is May 26 and the last day to submit the ballot is June 2, 2020. Commissioner Barnhardt reported Election Services has mailed out 12000 ballots, and reported that out of 1200 poll workers, almost a third have declined to work June 2. Commissioner Barnhardt thanked Debbie and her staff who have been working tirelessly. Commissioner Barnhardt also reported several polling places are not available, noting in Wyomissing two polling places, the Wyomissing Library and the Highlands, have been moved to the Crown Plaza. In the City there are currently four polling places that are unavailable for June 2, and will be moved to the Santander Center, and will also be a location to pick up supplies, drop off supplies when polls close, and hold some training classes.

Commissioner Barnhardt reported the League of Women Voters has volunteered to help scan ballots, and the County is discussing additional safety steps for existing polling places. Commissioner Barnhardt commended all the organizations and businesses that are stepping up to support the County's efforts. There are still 11 polls that need to be relocated, and Commissioner Barnhardt will provide updates.

Commissioner Barnhardt said at the last meeting the Commissioners discussed the rate of taxation of County bills, and yesterday he participated in a Zoom meeting with CELG and about 133 representatives to discuss the County's plan to move the flat rate period to June 30, and there also seemed to be a majority support by municipal officials to move municipal billing out to September 30. The Commissioners sent a letter and a sample resolution to the municipalities and hope they will all adopt the resolution.

Commissioner Barnhardt again encouraged everyone to go online and complete the 2020 Census form.

Commissioner Rivera

Commissioner Rivera thanked everyone for doing their part to *Do Your Part - Stop The Spread* campaign.

Commissioner Rivera participated in a call with the BCIU and Superintendents of school districts and thanked them for their work in continuing to educate our children making sure they are ready to graduate and are ready to move forward next year.

Commissioner Rivera thanked the healthcare workers and first responders for doing their job, and the businesses that are following the guidelines and taking care of their employees and customers.

The *Do Your Part - Stop The Spread* campaign is going strong, as well as the social media campaign.

Commissioner Rivera reported to date the COVID Help Center has had 1738 calls and 579 emails.

Commissioner Rivera mentioned yesterday was Administrative Assistant's Day and thanked his Administrative Assistant Barbara Lopez for all she does, and also acknowledged Mary Buerer and Jessica Blauser, Administrative Assistants to Commissioner Leinbach and Commissioner Barnhardt.

Commissioner Leinbach

Commissioner Leinbach mentioned the mask he is wearing was made by Elite Sportswear, a local business, who reconfigured their manufacturing facility to make cloth masks. The County did purchase the masks.

Commissioner Leinbach thanked another local business, 8 Oaks Farm Distillery, a family, veteran owned business in New Tripoli, who donated 100 cases of hand sanitizer to DES for distribution to appropriate County departments and first responders.

Commissioner Leinbach thanked everyone for what they are doing, asked everyone to go to www.DoYourPartBerks.com and read the message the County is delivering.

ELECTED OFFICIALS' COMMENTS

No elected officials were present.

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

Commissioner Leinbach read the three (3) public comments received via email:

William Sturm – Mr. Sturm comments dealt with the County's Recycling Center. While Mr. Sturm understands and supports the need for social distancing, the closure of the facility is short-sighted, and believes the closure will have a negative effect on the earth and environment because recyclables are being thrown in the trash and not be recycled. Mary Buerer forwarded Mr. Sturm's email to Jane Meeks, Executive Director of the Berks County Solid Waste Authority, who responded to Mr. Sturm. Ms. Meeks advised Mr. Sturm the main goal in have the facility closed during these uncertain times is to keep their employees safe, so that once the Stay-At-Home Order is lifted by the Governor they can reopen as quickly as possible. Ms. Meeks also reminded Mr. Sturm most recycling haulers are still providing curbside services; and directed him to contact Cogle's Recycling in Hamburg and Total Recycle in Birdsboro to see if they are open for drop-off services.

Bill Landis – Mr. Landis emailed that school; county taxes should be given an extension of the due date by at least 2 months.

Mary Buerer responded by informing Mr. Landis the County Commissioners already acted at the last Commissioners' Meeting by adopting a resolution moving the discount period from July 1, to October 1, but the County has no jurisdiction to move the school tax deadline.

Phyllis Yoder, Reading – Asked for an application for back tax payment hardship. Mary Buerer directed Ms. Yoder to the Tax Claim Bureau, and Stacy Phile responded and advised there is no application for the Hardship Agreement, it will be offered to everyone by default.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:44 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk