

Commissioners' Board Meeting Minutes July 9, 2020

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, July 9, 2020, at 10:00 A.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 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.

PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with the Legal Notice published June 18, 2020 in the Reading Eagle, a Public Hearing was held for approval of the Human Services Block Grant for Fiscal Year 2020/2021 for Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities.

Dr. Edward B. Michalik, Berks County Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Program Administrator, presented a PowerPoint of the proposed \$15.2 million Human Services Block Grant ("HSBG") for Fiscal Years 2020/2021 for approval by the Berks County Board of Commissioners.

Dr. Michalik said the County is in the 9th year of the HSBG program and enjoys full flexibility, but advised the Commissioners that amount could change based on what happens on the State level. Dr. Michalik reported the HSBG assists many County residents ranging in services dealing with Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, that include housing, vocational employment, transportation, crisis and emergency services. The grant also provides funding for Human Services Development for Aging, Drug and Alcohol Treatment, Child Abuse Investigations, The Homeless Assistance Program and to the Stepping Up and Data Driven initiatives.

Seeing no public comments, Commissioner Barnhardt motioned to end the public hearing. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera, and the motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhardt to accept Resolution No. 219.2020. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera, and the motion carried.

219.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of Appendix A, Fiscal Year 2020-2021 County Human Services Plan Assurance of Compliance form.

Commissioner Leinbach provided the platforms and rules for participation by the public in the Microsoft Teams Live Commissioners' Meeting.

Approval of Minutes

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The minutes of June 25, 2020 Commissioners' Board Meeting were approved as presented.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

None.

Commissioner Leinbach announced there was an Executive Session held July 8, 2020 dealing with personnel and litigation.

Agenda Items

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:

220.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing 2019 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$3,985,319; 2019 Appropriations in the negative amount of \$(590,497); 2020 Budget Transfers in the amount of \$1,089,000 and 2020 Appropriations in the amount of \$82,156 per listing dated July 6, 2020.

221.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing Human Resources Recommendations per listing dated July 9, 2020 as follows:

1. Authorize the promotion of Matthew Salkowski from Interim Director of Facilities and Operations to PC011074 Director of Facilities and Operations – Facilities and Operations, effective 07/08/2020. Rate of \$103,000/annually. Salary range Minimum \$69,793; Midpoint \$93,057; Maximum \$116,322. Replacement for Ryan Hunter who separated. This request meets the criteria of the Hiring Policy. Budget 10000 – 11030.

222.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing the award and the Director of Contracts & Procurement to execute as a result of Invitation to Bid #20-04-GR four contracts for the Berks Heim Boiler Project as identified herein:

General Construction**Balton Construction, Inc.**

25 East Main Street
Richland, PA 17087

Total Bid Not to Exceed Amount - \$1,168,564.00

Plumbing Contractor

Trefz Mechanical

619 Maple Avenue
Lansdale, PA 19446

Total Bid Not to Exceed Amount - \$132,139.00

Mechanical Construction

Tri-County Mechanical, Inc.

P.O. Box #100

East Texas, PA 18042

Total Bid Not to Exceed Amount - \$1,569,000.00

Electrical Construction

Albarell Electric, Inc.

901 West Lehigh Street

Bethlehem, PA 18018

Total Bid Not to Exceed Amount - \$196,000.00

- 223.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing the award and execution of a five (5) year Lease Agreement as a result of a Request for Proposals for County Farmland to Roger Zweizig, Zweizig Farms, LLC., Shoemakersville, Pennsylvania.
- 224.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of the Second Amended and Restated Agreement between the County of Berks and Community Care Behavioral Health Organization (No. PSA-2863-06) effective July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021.
- 225.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, to execute the Agreement between the County of Berks and Mission Critical Partners, Port Matilda, Pennsylvania, to provide network monitoring and on-site support of service aggregation routers to interconnect Reading Police Communications and the Berks County 9-1-1 Center for a twelve (12) month period from the effective date of the Agreement at a not to exceed fee of \$3,353.00 per month.
- 226.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing and approving Berks Community Television ("BCTV") to utilize a portion of the premises leased by the County of Berks at 601 Water Street, Temple, Pennsylvania, for the temporary storage of excess equipment owned by BCTV upon the County's receipt of a Certificate of Insurance form and an executed Hold Harmless Agreement, subject to final review and approval by the Solicitor's Office.

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- 227.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, to execute the Investment Advisory Agreement between the County of Berks and Sterling Capital Management LLC to implement and manage the Investment Policy Statement of the County of Berks; and be it further authorized that Berks County Treasurer A. Dennis Adams and Linda A. Weaver, Chief Deputy Treasurer, are authorized to instruct Sterling Capital Management on behalf of the County of Berks regarding daily portfolio activity and investment policy decisions in writing, and are further authorized to execute the Authorized Signers List. This resolution replaces Berks County Resolution No. 73-15 adopted March 12, 2015.
- 228.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, to execute the Custody Agreement between the County of Berks and Branch Banking and Trust Company (BB&T) for the General Fund Bond Account.
- 229.2020 Adopt a resolution of the Berks County Board of Commissioners declaring effective immediately that all in-County and out-of-County non-essential work-related travel is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to face to face seminars, conferences and trainings. Any non-essential work-related travel is to be cancelled and suspended until further notice. Travel planned but not yet booked (airfare, hotel, etc.) shall be held off until further notice. Travel that has been previously authorized is rescinded. Travel requests must be resubmitted after these restrictions have been lifted. Travel that is prohibited does not include travel that is necessary to obtain or maintain required certifications or professional licenses. Travel is permitted to carry out essential services, services required by Court order or travel to ensure the safety of the clients the County serves. Any exception to the travel policy must be approved by CAO, Ronald Seaman.
- 230.2020 Adopt a resolution ratifying, confirming and approving execution by Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, of the Contract with Osman Environmental Solutions, LLC, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to review and provide comments to the Public Notice published by the Pennsylvania Environmental Protection Agency "EPA" dated June 6, 2020, and/or submit said comments to the EPA on behalf of the County of Berks at a not to exceed fee of \$2,500. Commissioner Barnhardt clarified this review is for the Laureldale facility.

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- 231.2020 Adopt a resolution ratifying, confirming and approving execution by Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair, of the Hardware Maintenance and Support Services Agreement between Election Systems & Software, LLC ("ES&S"), Omaha, Nebraska, and the County of Berks to extend the support services that ES&S is providing for the voting machine hardware for a four (4) year period at a not to exceed cost of \$453,500.
- 232.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of the Memorandum of Agreement between Berks County and the Berks County Detectives Labor Organization extending the current Collective Bargaining Agreement for a period of one (1) year through and including December 31, 2021.
- 233.2020 Adopt a resolution authorizing execution of the Berks County Drug Court Initiative Grant Project Modification Request Amendment No. 1 for the period October 1,2019 through September 30,2021. This grant is to enhance the day-to-day operations of the Berks County Drug Treatment Court. There is no additional money being requested. The \$8,000 budgeted in year 1 for training is being moved to year 2.
- 234.2020 Adopt a resolution ratifying, confirming and approving Shelly O'Neill, Business Process Analyst and Project Manager of the HRMS Project, to execute Change Order PB001 dated June 8, 2020 for the AST Contract for the Human Resources Project Phase III. The Change Order allocates funds already included in the Project from a reporting needs "bucket" to identified scope at no additional cost.
2. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator per listing dated July 7, 2020. Commissioner Leinbach reported there are 31 contracts and referenced the departments.
3. Motion authorizing payments set forth on Controller's Office vouchers payable listing dated July 7, 2020 for week ending July 7, 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 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

None.

Solicitor Christine M. Sadler reported there were also Executive Sessions held June 30, 2020 and July 7, 2020, both dealing with litigation.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**Commissioner Barnhardt**

Commissioner Barnhardt thanked the Detectives Organization for agreeing to extend the CBA for an additional year due to COVID-19 pandemic, and thanked everyone involved in the move of the Epler's School to the Heritage Center.

Commissioner Barnhardt reminded everyone there is still time to complete the Census form online.

Commissioner Barnhardt reported the County will be receiving our \$38 million CARES Act allocation to offset the costs the County had to spend for outreach efforts due to COVID-19.

Commissioner Barnhardt mentioned the Community Needs Assessment Survey is posted on the County's homepage, and highly recommends if you have the ability to apply do so. The results of the survey will help the Board determine how to properly allocate the money. The deadline is Monday, July 13, but the Board is being very flexible with this deadline.

Commissioner Barnhardt reported contact tracing is going well, there are 6 functioning tracing teams and a back-up team, and 10 interns from KU are being trained. There are 178 contacts in the data base, and 19 have refused to date.

Commissioner Rivera

Commissioner Rivera thanked Dr. Michalik and Stan Papademetriou, Executive Director of the Council on Chemical Abuse, for all the work they are doing with mental health/developmental disabilities and addiction issues. Commissioner Rivera will continue to support their efforts.

Commissioner Rivera reported the Small Business Grant Program is still open and the deadline to apply is July 17, 2020.

Commissioner Rivera advised the moratorium on evictions for rent expires tomorrow, and reported the Rental Assistance Program will start back up. Commissioner Rivera noted there are a variety of programs, and the goal of the programs is to help people stay where they currently are living.

Commissioner Rivera mentioned that Berks County is now in the Green Phase and reemphasized to everyone, including businesses, to continue to wear masks, social distance and follow the guidelines set by the CDC

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Commissioner Leinbach

Commissioner Leinbach commented on recent newspaper headlines showing an increase and outbreak in coronavirus cases, and it is not because of increased testing.

Commissioner Leinbach urged everyone to continue to wear cloth masks as they do help slow the spread.

Commissioner Leinbach thanked the President Judge and District Attorney for investigating and acting swiftly in removing Constable Pete Dardas from his position as a constable regarding the horrific racist Facebook posts by the constable.

Commissioner Leinbach talked about and read a portion of the recent Court decision regarding a request of individuals to the emergency removal of the residents at the Berks Count Residential Center. The Court concluded the Petitioners failed to prove they have a clear legal right and found Department of Human Services ("DHS") acted reasonably in determining that an Emergency Removal Order was not warranted under the circumstances and entered a verdict in favor of DHS.

ELECTED OFFICIALS' COMMENTS

None

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

Only comments with a name and addresses were read. There were 24 comments which are attached hereto.

Commissioner Barnhardt responded to the following comments:

Risa Marmotella regarding drop boxes.

Commissioner Barnhardt referred her to the U.S. District Court Order. The Berks County Election Board does not support placing drop boxes throughout the County because they are not guaranteed to be safe and secure. Commissioner Barnhardt recommends submit either through the USPS or physically bring the ballots into the Services Center.

Mr. Dettlerline – daytime meetings

Commissioner Barnhardt responded the reason the Commissioners do not hold evening meetings like boroughs and townships is because the Commissioners work during the day. Borough and township officials are part-time and meet in the evening.

Commissioner Barnhardt commented on the recent Court Order regarding the BCRC, and defended Diane Edwards and her staff, who are hard-working, dedicated employees, who thoroughly enjoy engaging with the immigrants, and have created a safe and clean environmental because of COVID-19. Commissioner Barnhardt said the staff does not shine flashlights in the residents faces, but on the floor to check on the safety and well-being of the residents.

Commissioner Barnhardt does not believe in family separation, and clarified his comments Karen Shuey printed regarding his conversation with the Wolf administration regarding the BCRC.

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Commissioner Rivera addressed the following comments:

- Eviction extension. He has no update on whether there will be an extension.
- Costs for Rehabilitation – Suggested reaching out to Dr. Michalik or
- Mr. Papademetriou at the Council on Chemical Abuse on what options are out there.
- Echoed the comments of Commissioner Barnhardt regarding the BCRC. Ms. Edwards and her staff are doing their best to keep the residents safe.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:36 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk

Source	Type	Identity	Timestamp	Content
Moderator	Announcement	Lori Schneider (LSchneider@countyofberks.com)	7/9/2020 13:13	Public comment will be accepted through the Q&A function. Please include your first name, last name and municipality. Any comments without name and municipality will not be considered. Each citizen can submit one comment that is no more than 3 minutes per comment. The meeting comment period is limited to 30 minutes in total. Please be concise. Comments will be read during the meeting and should not be considered Will you do the righteous and courageous thing and shut down Berks Family Detention Center?
Attendee	Question	Liz Cates Bern Twp (Unverified)	7/9/2020 13:59	The June primary showed that Berks county voters have confidence in the mail in voting system, with over 39,000 voters choosing to vote safely from home. Will the county be looking into secure drop off boxes to
Attendee	Question	Risa Marmontello, Amity Township (Unverified)	7/9/2020 14:02	The June primary show the Berks County voters have confidence in the mail in voting system, with over 39,000 voters choosing to vote safely from home. Will the county be looking to secure drop off boxes to further
Attendee	Question	Risa Marmontello, Amity Township (Unverified)	7/9/2020 14:08	Commissioner Rivera, you said you were upset that protesters projected the sworn statements of detainees onto the outside of your house. You didn't like lights shining in your windows. I think everyone can understand that, because we all want to be able to live in peace. But do you realize that ICE shines lights in the faces of asylum-seeking families, including small children, every 15 minutes in the night? You were able to go back into your comfortable home that night, but the detainees are locked up in close quarters in the middle of a pandemic. You have said you're in favor of closing the facility, and yet you have done nothing to make that happen. People have been asking the Commissioners and the Governor to shut it down for years. For years, we have called, written emails and letters, collected petitions, visited your offices, even gotten arrested. The non-violent direct action at your home and that of Commissioner Barnhardt was a result of your inaction.
Attendee	Question	Troy Turner, Reading (Unverified)	7/9/2020 14:20	THE BERKS REPRESENTATIVE FAMILY RECENTLY PUT OUT STATEMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA CASING DOUBT ON THE USEFULNESS OF masks and told their followers to NOT wear masks. Commissioners Leinbach and Rivera, as Republicans, do you disavow and publicly condemn this unsafe and potentially deadly statement from the representatives of your party?
Attendee	Question	Chris Ellis, Reading (Unverified)	7/9/2020 14:20	Former Pennsylvania judge Michael Conahan who was involved in a despicable scheme to send children to a for-profit jail in exchange for kickbacks has been released from federal prison with six years left on his sentence because of coronavirus concerns. How in good conscience can you continue to incarcerate people during a pandemic while this guy, who did such tremendous harm to children, is set free? This is Kids for Cash all over again.
Attendee	Question	Jane Palmer, Wyoming (Unverified)	7/9/2020 14:21	A Commonwealth court judge has just denied a petition to release the detainees in Leesport, claiming there is insufficient evidence that they are not well cared for. Commissioner Barnhardt claims the same thing. And yet the sworn statements of detainees and immigration attorneys make it clear that detainees are sick and scared. Haitian asylum seeker P.M. says, "Since we arrived at Berks County Residential Center on March 18 along with my wife and my two-year-old daughter, my child has been severely sick, and my wife and I have reported it to the medical staff every day since we arrived. She has bumps all around her mouth, chin and lips. Sometimes they bleeds. Her throat is severely swollen so that she can't keep any food inside. She has been feverish. Even though we reported this to the medical staff every day, they did not start giving her medication until March Federal Judge Dolly Gee ruled that children in ICE detention must be released, but ICE has refused to do so.
Attendee	Question	Lou Spencer, Reading (Unverified)	7/9/2020 14:22	The concern now is that ICE may forcibly remove the children from their parents. Do you support family separation, and if not, what will you do about it?
Attendee	Question	Tobias Rhoades (Unverified)	7/9/2020 14:23	Constable Pete Dardas, recently exposed as a virulent racist, is doubtless not the only law enforcement official whose behavior should be brought to light. District Attorney John Adams, who to his credit has sanctioned Dardas, once said that "the city's a mess" and "not a nice f---ing place." It is clear that systemic racism requires systemic solutions. What will you and all county officers do to investigate all the ways systemic racism shows
Attendee	Question	Cometta Williams (Unverified)	7/9/2020 14:24	

FACEBOOK - ess Royer, Spring Township

Two comments -

First of all, even without a global pandemic that we here in the United States are handling fairly poorly, Berks County is absolutely in need of a health department. I appreciate and am thankful that you, the Commissioners, have maintained consistent messaging throughout the coronavirus pandemic in asking residents to wear masks, social distance, and be a part of Stopping the Spread. However we need to acknowledge that Berks County would benefit from stronger data, quicker reporting, and a more coordinated handling of complex health issues. What can we do to join our neighboring counties in protecting the health and wellbeing of county residents?

Secondly, I understand from your press conference yesterday that there is a fund available that tenants and/or landlords can access to make up for rent payments. Is this a county initiative and if not, how can Berks ensure there is nobody left out that needs that assistance? Are the funds coming from the state or federal Crystal Kowalski, Wyomingissing

Evictions are scheduled to resume on July 10th. Is there any discussion about pushing this date further out? Have we established a Countywide rent fund? How much total money is available to tenants?

Excellent presentation on all the wonderful work you're doing on the opioid crisis. Since that crisis continues and is layered on top of the coronavirus crisis, wouldn't this be a good time to convert the BCRC to a treatment clinic?

Facebook -

Lara Song Lara Song, Reading: Sworn statement from G.S.C, one of the detained asylum seekers the commissioners refuse to protect from a global pandemic despite Judge Gee's recent decision to release all children from family detention centers:

"I feel like we have been here for a while, we are scared that the new detainees that are coming will bring the virus to this facility. Our children live here."

"Last month, when I spoke to a female officer who introduced herself as Berks supervisor over the video call, she told us she promises they won't bring any new people until they

Facebook - Amy Levensgood, Amity Township. My question pertains to the Berks Detention Center and the current COVID-19 pandemic. How many people have been incarcerated there since Jan. 20th when the first case was identified in the US, and how many have been tested for the virus? Are families being provided with

Facebook - Celine Schrier - Centre Park: On June 26th Judge Dolly Gee ordered that the federal ICE detention centers release immigrant children being held, instead of complying they have been searching for a way to deport the parents and separate the children. Members of this board have publically stated that they support the shutdown of the center but have claimed it is not a priority at the moment. During the Covid-19 pandemic, there has never been a better moment for you to stand up bravely and clearly show us, which side you are on.

I implore you to look at yourself and ask a few questions: How can you claim the safety and freedom of these immigrant families is not a priority? Why do you uphold the income as more valuable than human lives? How can you claim that civil disobedience is more deplorable than imprisoning innocent families? Why do you deserve to have your privacy protected when you do nothing while it is stripped from immigrants? Berks

Attendee Question

Facebook and You Tube (Unverified)

7/9/2020 14:24

Attendee Question

Anonymous (Unverified)

7/9/2020 14:25

Attendee Question

Henry O'Leary, Cumru Township (Unverified)

7/9/2020 14:27

Attendee Question

Facebook and You Tube (Unverified)

7/9/2020 14:28

Attendee Question

Facebook and You Tube (Unverified)

7/9/2020 14:29

Attendee Question

Facebook and You Tube (Unverified)

7/9/2020 14:31

Facebook - Lara Song Maybe you'll take this statement from Quote from asylum seeker M.N. in Leesport:

"Which prison in this world keep a 3 years old toddler for no reason or a crime locked down during this worldwide pandemic. They have no right to do this to my baby. My baby is here because our lives were in danger. They have no right to keep my baby more than 20 days, but it has been more than four months. No judge is helping us. Everything is pending, and we are still here. I want someone to hear me. We are in pain."

Facebook - on the agenda item regarding travel:

Jess Royer, Spring Township - Is that just for nonessential work related travel? Not for tourism or anything

Jess - This only for county employees and county business(Facebook and You Tube (Unverified) asked

"Facebook - on the agenda item regarding travel:

A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT TO RELEASE PRISONERS FROM THE DETENTION CENTER, DETERMINING they're fine. The detainees have noted they are not fine so how do we release them and why have we not released them yet?

Facebook - Laura Knapp, Shillington: apologies, I forgot to post my name and location. You'll have forgive me.

Anyways to get back to my original point I posted before: you can have as many initiatives as you want for people coping with addiction. If people have to worry about the costs of rehab they're not gonna get the real

Facebook - Mark Dettlerline, City of Reading:

A United States Bureau of Labor Statistics report published in September of 2019 states that, "Eighty-four percent of wage and salary workers worked a regular daytime schedule in 2017-18" or first-shift. Almost all Township Supervisors, Township Commissioners, City Councils, School Boards, Zoning Boards, etc. meet in the evening. I am almost never able to attend these meetings because I have normal 8am-4pm work obligations. Is there a particular reason that the Berks County Commissioners think it is appropriate to continue to hold

7/9/2020 14:51 What's the county website to locate assessment for funds?

7/9/2020 14:54 Berks County Community Needs Assessment website

7/9/2020 14:54 communityneeds.countyofberks.com/results/main_page.aspx

7/9/2020 14:54 Small Business Grant Program for Berks County nhsbg.org/small-business-restart-grant-program/

7/9/2020 14:57 Berks Coalition to End Homelessness berksha.org/supportive-services/

7/9/2020 15:00 www.DoYourPartBerks.com

7/9/2020 15:00 cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html

Attendee Question

Facebook and You Tube (Unverified)

7/9/2020 14:31

Attendee Question

Facebook and You Tube (Unverified)

7/9/2020 14:33

Moderator Response

Christian Leinbach
(CLeinbach@countyofberks.com)

7/9/2020 15:20

Attendee Question

Bri Tyson, Reading (Unverified)

7/9/2020 14:42

Attendee Question

Facebook and You Tube (Unverified)

7/9/2020 14:44

Attendee Question

Facebook and You Tube (Unverified)

7/9/2020 14:47

Attendee Question

Anonymous (Unverified)

7/9/2020 14:51

Moderator Announcement

Christian Leinbach
(CLeinbach@countyofberks.com)

7/9/2020 14:54

Moderator Announcement

Christian Leinbach
(CLeinbach@countyofberks.com)

7/9/2020 14:54

Moderator Announcement

Christian Leinbach
(CLeinbach@countyofberks.com)

7/9/2020 14:57

Moderator Announcement

Christian Leinbach
(CLeinbach@countyofberks.com)

7/9/2020 15:00

Moderator Announcement

Christian Leinbach
(CLeinbach@countyofberks.com)

7/9/2020 15:00

Dear Commissioners,
First, I am concerned about long-term economic recovery of Berks County and Reading. I am hopeful that our Commissioners will, with their power, ensure that all communities — urban and rural — experience an equitable recovery. COVID 19 is hitting communities of color harder and making poverty an even bigger factor in terms of access to needed services. We need to respond with recovery funding where it is needed most. Thank you especially for everything that you are doing to prevent evictions.

How can we make our goal to have LESS people homeless, MORE people with access to recovery dollars, and a county where things are improving evenly?

Second, I am concerned about the continuing division created by detention of immigrant families in the counties' residential facility. There are no COVID 19 cases there now, thankfully.

However, there is much more to the argument for ending Berks' participation in the immigrant detention system, than even a pandemic can provide.

We can disagree about the degree and impact, but until our Federal government has a humane and comprehensive immigration policy, we are complicit in a system that is deeply flawed. According to Amnesty International, the US immigration detention system can be described as a "... purgatory of legal limbo where the core American value of due process does not apply ... Investigative news reports have exposed a litany of human rights abuses in the detention facilities, including physical violence, the use of restraints, and substandard medical care. ..."

This description is not acceptable. Our County should not continue participation in this flawed and controversial system. Instead, we should be making life better for our residents who need County services. Together, as a County, we should be discussing ways to work towards national immigration legislation as as US citizens.

I will remove any comments from the Commissioner

7/9/2020 15:14 Facebook - Celine Schrier - Centre Park: Do the right thing, Shut own Berks

7/9/2020 15:17 PA DOH Early Warning Dashboard health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx

7/9/2020 15:21 Facebook - Manuel Sanchez, Exeter #ShutdownBerks

7/9/2020 15:27 Thank you for our questions and comments. This Q&A is closed as the public comments have been addressed.

Attendee Question Jennifer Hanf, Mohrsville (Centre Twp) (Unverified)

Attendee Question Facebook and You Tube (Unverified)

Moderator Announcement Christian Leinbach (CLeinbach@countyofberks.com)

Attendee Question Facebook and You Tube (Unverified)

Moderator Announcement Lori Schneider (LSchneider@countyofberks.com)