

Commissioners' Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, February 8, 2005

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, February 8, 2005 at 10:30 A.M. in the thirteenth floor Board Room of the Berks County Services Center, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

Commissioner Chair Judith L. Schwank called the meeting to order with Commissioner Thomas Gajewski and Commissioner Mark L. Scott in attendance. Also present were County Administrator William E. Dennis, Solicitor Alan Miller, Esq. and Chief Clerk Terry Styer.

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

II. PROCLAMATIONS/CERTIFICATES/PRESENTATIONS:

Commissioner Gajewski will present a Proclamation on behalf of the Commissioners for Spanish American War Commemoration on February 13, 2005 at the anchor from the Maine.

John Kramer Director, Center for Community Leadership of Berks County, Brian Heister, Cumru Police Department and President of the Berks County Chiefs of Police Association and John McCormick, Director of the Berks Youth Center, presented the **Berks Juvenile Crime Forums** initiative which was described as a county sponsored series of programs, scheduled for the spring of 2005 intended to inform and educate participants regarding the issue of juvenile crime trends with the ultimate goal of developing a local action plan for connecting youth with appropriate resources

III. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS:

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing exoneration of local Tax Collectors of uncollected 2004 Berks County Property Taxes in the total amount of \$2,346,218.56, representing 7160 unpaid accounts, per listing dated February 3, 2005, and forward to Tax Claim Bureau for collection of same. Nelson Long, CPA and Berks County Treasurer reported that these numbers of unpaid accounts are consistent with prior years.
- B. Adopt Resolution authorizing Judith L. Schwank, Chair of the Board, to execute The Emergency Food Assistance Program –TEFAP Inventory – Reimbursement Request Form for the First Quarter (Oct. Nov. & December) FFY 2004-2005, in the amount of \$6,586.98 for distributing 65,869.82 pounds of food at \$.10 per pound and to authorize Margaret Bianca, Executive Director, Greater Berks Food Bank to apply for the funds on behalf of Berks County.

Commissioner Schwank

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing support for the Blueprint for Local Tax Fairness: A Plan for Pennsylvania's Communities. Commissioner Schwank stated that we need options other than reliance on real estate taxes to run county government.

She added that tax fairness is not a panacea, we have to do our part to return fiscal responsibility to Berks County Government and suggested that we continue with that effort by including further cuts in department budgets with our Cost Containment Committee process; implement an early retirement package by mid-year to reduce the county workforce by 20%; develop a performance based budget process for 2006; implement, via a PA DCED (Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development) grant, a five-year fiscal plan; develop and institute performance audits in our larger county departments; establish a task force to review pension fund management; continue with the weekly fiscal update meetings that are open to the public; and, due to the fact that approximately 42% of our county budget is spent on Human Service needs, set a goal of lowering the costs and delivery of better services for the newly appointed Human Services Task Force. She then presented a spreadsheet analysis of the estimated costs for Berks County citizens for the various tax fairness solution plans currently under consideration.

Commissioner Gajewski indicated that he was pleased to support this effort to find an appropriate solution that will bring an end to the existing reliance on the real estate tax to fund government services. He said tax reform has been the topic of discussion since the 1980's and we are still attempting to find a solution. He wanted to be sure that the impact of any proposed change in the tax structure statewide ends with a positive impact on our citizens in Berks County, especially the "working poor."

Commissioner Scott said that tax fairness is a complex issue and he would support this resolution, but in addition to shifting the tax burden by implementing some type of tax reform, we need to continue to reduce expenditures. He said that the idea of a county sales tax could have negative macroeconomic implications between counties. He also said that we need to develop a simple, yet fair solution to this tax problem, not one that may become more burdensome to tax payers, such as the creation additional of complicated forms to file at the end of the year such as what has occurred with the Federal Government.

Commissioner Gajewski

- A. Adopt Resolution approving a Berks County peacetime Veteran graveside flag holder. Commissioner Gajewski asked Leigh Tallas, Director of Veterans Affairs to discuss this proposed new County Offering.

Commissioner Gajewski continued:

Leigh explained that the marker would be available families of deceased Berks County Veterans who served during peacetime as well as those markers for combat veterans. For those families with Peacetime Veterans that passed away prior to this date, the markers can be made available at the County's cost of \$6.00.

- B. Adopt Resolution reducing the bond limits and saving premium costs for the Berks County Controller.
- C. Resolution authorizing payment of invoices under the following Community Development Disbursement Vouchers:
 - 1. No. 2120 -Community Development Block Grant funds - \$16,523.00
 - 2. No. 485 – Home Grant Program - \$ 4,166.40
- D. Adopt Resolution approving an application to Penn DOT to encumber Liquid Fuels Funds for the Weidner's Bridge on Salem Road in Bethel and Tulpehocken Townships.

Commissioner Scott

- A. Adopt Resolution approving an Innovative HSDF Grant request for Office of Aging's In-Home-Care Management Program. Mary Henry-Moss explained that she was notified by the State that excess HSDF funds of \$100,000 not spent not used by County's in 2004 were available to Counties on a competitive basis. Kathy Frey Director of Administration, Office of Aging presented an application for those funds to be utilized to off set the costs of the County's In-Home Care Management program of which many citizens have been on a waiting list for services for approximately one year. Commissioner Gajewski suggested that the Board provide a letter of support for this application and commended Mary Henry-Moss for taking the initiative for this potential funding request.

IV. OTHER REQUESTS:**Budget Director:**

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing 2004 Budget Transfers in the total amount of \$597,847 and 2004 Budget Appropriations in the total amount of \$349,460 and 2005 Budget Transfers in the total amount of \$308,000 and 2005 Budget Appropriations in the total amount of \$50,000 per list dated February 4, 2005. Budget Director Patrizio reviewed the proposed transfers and appropriations.

Purchasing Department - Contract Coordinator:

- A. Motion authorizing execution of Contract Agreements/ Amendments as furnished by the Contract Coordinator, per listing dated February 7, 2005. Candace Noll presented the contracts for approval.

Human Resources Director:

- A. Adopt Resolution authorizing Human Resource recommendations dated February 8, 2005.

Purchasing Director:

- A. Adopt Resolution as a result of Invitation to Bid #04-14-KL a one-year contract for the furnishing of apparel items that will serve as uniforms for the staff of the Youth Detention Center. The award shall be made to Pennsylvania Correctional Industries with an office at 75 Utley Drive, Suite 102, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, 17011-0047 at their bid prices of:

Polo Shirt, Co-ed, burgundy, small - X-large	\$21.00 each
Polo Shirt, Co-ed, burgundy, 2X large	\$23.00 each
Polo Shirt, Co-ed, burgundy, 3X large	\$25.00 each
Polo Shirt, Co-ed, burgundy, 4x large	\$27.00 each
Polo Shirt, Co-ed, black, small - X-large	\$25.00 each
Polo Shirt, Co-ed, black, 2x large	\$27.00 each
Polo Shirt, Co-ed, black, 3X large	\$29.00 each
T-Shirt, Short Sleeve, large - X-large	\$ 6.50 each
T-Shirt, Short Sleeve, 2X large	\$ 8.50 each
T-Shirt, Short Sleeve, 3X large	\$ 9.50 each
T-Shirt, Short Sleeve, 4X large	\$10.50 each
Oxford Shirt, Long Sleeve	\$25.00 each
Pants, Men's Cargo Pocket, sizes 30 - 42	\$28.00 each
Pants, Men's Cargo Pocket, size 44	\$29.00 each
Pants, Women's Cargo Pocket, sizes 4 -18	\$28.00 each
Shorts, Co-ed Cargo, sizes 30 - 42	\$24.00 each
Shorts, Co-ed Cargo, size 44	\$25.00 each

As per the Invitation to Bid, the County may extend the contract for up to two additional one-year terms provided that the vendor agrees to hold the bid pricing fixed and firm. Estimated annual expenditure is \$4,289.00. Kelly Laubaugh, Senior Buyer indicated that the next low bidder, First Precinct Uniforms came in at \$948.18 higher than this bid

Solicitor

- A. Resolution authorizing execution of an Amendment to Commercial Office Lease for office space used by CareerLink at 501 Crescent Avenue, Reading, Pennsylvania.

Solicitor continued:

- B. Resolution authorizing the filing of a petition to intervene by the County in the Appeal to the Longswamp Township Zoning Hearing Board filed January 27, 2005 concerning the rezoning of two parcels known as the "Tercha" and "Radcliffe/Rohrbach" tracts and further authorizing David Balmer, Esq. to take all necessary actions to effectuate such petition to intervene.

Commissioner Scott asked if the majority of the board participated in any meetings regarding this matter in Longswamp Township. Solicitor Alan Miller indicated that he met in executive session with Commissioner Schwank, Commissioner Gajewski and all counsel involved in the Longswamp Zoning matter on Monday February 7, 2005.

V. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Berks County Register of Wills, Larry Medaglia presented a check in the amount of \$51,371 which represents a one time payment from the State who is releasing the interest earned in the County's escheats accounts.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENT/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 12:10 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L Styer, Chief Clerk