

**County of Berks  
Operations Meeting Agenda  
January 28, 2025**

*Christian Y. Leinbach, Commissioner, Chair*  
*Michael S. Rivera, Commissioner*  
*Dante Santoni, Jr., Commissioner*  
*Kevin S. Barnhardt, Chief Operations Officer*  
*Christine M. Sadler, Esq., County Solicitor*  
*Amanda Bentzel, Chief Clerk*

**NOTICE:**

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. Any 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). 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.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approve the January 14, 2025, Operations Meeting minutes.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**

**PRESENTATION**

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

1. Pamela Menet, Director of Community and Economic Development, Kim Fies, Executive Director, Department of Agriculture, and Amanda Burkard-Sell, Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture will present an update on Growing Berks: “Agriculture’s Economic Impact and a Roadmap for Its Future” and will present the Agriculture Study.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Berks County Operations Agenda**  
**Meeting Minutes - Tuesday, January 14, 2025**  
**9:30 am**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Boardroom, 13th floor of the Berks County Services Center, and via Microsoft Teams Live and YouTube Live pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

Commissioner Vice Chair Michael S. Rivera, called the meeting to order, with Commissioner Dante Santoni, Jr. in attendance and Christian Y Leinbach, Chair present via Microsoft Teams Live. Also present were Christine Sadler, Esq., County Solicitor, Kevin S. Barnhardt, Chief Operations Officer, and Amanda Bentzel, Chief Clerk.

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The December 10, 2024, Operations Meeting minutes were approved as presented.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**

No Comments

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

1. Sue Kissling, Chief Assessor, and Edward Stock, Esq., Solicitor for the Assessment Board of Appeals will be presenting a proposal to modify the period for assessment appeals from July 1st to August 15th to June 15th to August 1st and commencing in 2025.

Sue Kissling introduced Laura Rosselli, Chairman of the Appeals Board, and Sharon Kehres, an Appeals Board Member, who were also present. They are requesting that the Commissioners modify the assessment appeal period. Specifically, they propose changing the dates from August 15th to August 1st, starting in 2025. The new time period would run from June 15th to August 1st.

Sue explained that the assessments team requires additional time at the end of the appeal period due to the high volume of appeals received as the deadline approaches, which creates a hardship for the staff. This change does not shorten the overall appeal period but rather shifts it to an earlier

date in the year. She pointed out that our county is currently the only third-class county with an appeal deadline of August 15th.

**Commissioner Rivera**

He questioned the process and asked what happens after August 15th.

Sue stated that the public must submit their tax appeals by August 15<sup>th</sup> and the assessment office then prepares for the hearings that commence in early August and run through October.

**Commissioner Santoni**

He questioned whether there is a deadline for completing everything.

Ed Stock stated that the entire process must be completed by October 31. He noted that numerous attorneys send mass mailings to taxpayers to encourage them to appeal their assessments, often waiting until the last day to submit multiple appeals. Due to this last-minute filing, they would like to move up the deadline. However, there will still be a 45-day period for taxpayers to submit their tax appeals. Ed also mentioned that if the date is changed, advance notice will be provided.

**Commissioner Leinbach**

He asked Christine Sadler what action would need to be taken to make this change.

Christine stated that this item can be added to the Commissioners' Board Meeting agenda for January 16, 2025.

Commissioner Leinbach motioned to approve having this listed on the Commissioners' Board Meeting agenda for January 16, 2025; Commissioner Santoni seconded the motion; there being no further discussion, the motion carried.

2. Authorizing:

**Budget**

05.2025 A. Adopt a resolution authorizing a 2024 appropriation in the amount of \$0 per listing dated January 10, 2025.

Commissioner Rivera stated the reason for the net zero amount is due to fiscal reasons in the background where the funds are coming from the federal level.

Christine Sadler stated the controller office is completing reconciliation for the 2024 year end closing and asked to have this approved before Thursday's Commissioners' Board Meeting.

Commissioner Santoni motioned to approve the 05.2025 Resolution as presented; Commissioner Leinbach seconded the motion; there being no further discussion, the motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Comments

Commissioner Rivera thanked Anne Marie Grill for her service and dedication to the County. Commissioner Santoni also thanked her and wished her luck.

Commissioner Leinbach thanked Anne Marie for her three years of service and wished her the very best.

Anne Marie thanked all the members of the leadership team and employees within the county.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Rivera adjourned the meeting at 9:49 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amanda Bentzel, Chief Clerk