

**County of Berks
Commissioners' Workshop Agenda
March 10, 2026**

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

CALL TO ORDER – 9:30 a.m.

NOTICE:

Public comment will be accepted in person. Please include your first name, last name and municipality for all comments. Any comments without name and municipality will not be considered. The meeting comment period is limited to a total of 30 minutes. 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 dialogue 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 13, 2026, Commissioners' Workshop meeting minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

AGENDA ITEMS

1. 2026 Bond Issuance Presentation and Timeline Overview

Laura Jones, Chief Financial Officer

Michael D. Vind, Senior Managing Director, FSL Public Finance, LLC

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURNMENT

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Commissioners' Workshop Agenda
January 13, 2026**

The Berks County Board of Commissioners met in a Workshop session on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 9:30 A.M. in person at the Services Center 13th Floor Boardroom, pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public.

Commissioner Chair, Christian Y. Leinbach called the meeting to order, with Commissioner Vice Chair, Michael Rivera, and Commissioner Dante Santoni, Jr. in attendance. Christine M. Sadler, Esq., County Solicitor; Kevin S. Barnhardt, Chief Operations Officer, and Jessica Blausner, Chief Clerk, were also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The December 9, 2025, Workshop meeting minutes were approved as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

No comments.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Merchant McIntyre – Strategic Plan for Federal Grants and Lobbying Efforts

Kevin Barnhardt, COO, provided a brief overview of the collaboration between Berks County and Merchant McIntyre. He introduced Katie Peterson, J.D., Partner and General Counsel, and Yasmine Sadoudi, Senior Government Relations Associate with Merchant McIntyre & Associates. Katie and Yasmine presented the Federal Funding Strategy for Berks County. Their objective is to help the county with federal advocacy, grant writing, and lobbying to reduce Berks County property taxes and support current priority projects. A summary of their presentation is attached.

The Commissioners support taking the next steps in extending the agreement between the County of Berks and Merchant McIntyre & Associates for an additional 12 months.

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy (Draft) Review

Tim Smith, Chief Information Officer, along with Shelly O'Neill, Deputy Chief Information Officer, presented the Commissioners with a draft Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Policy. Also present were Derek Smith and Sydney Dougherty, Assistant County Solicitors. Tim Smith explained that he is a member of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) Policy and Governance Committee, which developed a general draft policy for all counties to customize. During the meeting, the need for an additional policy to address recordings and transcripts was discussed.

The Commissioners agreed to proceed with the draft policy and consult CCAP and National Association of Counties (NACo) for information on policies about recordings and transcripts.

PUBLIC COMMENT

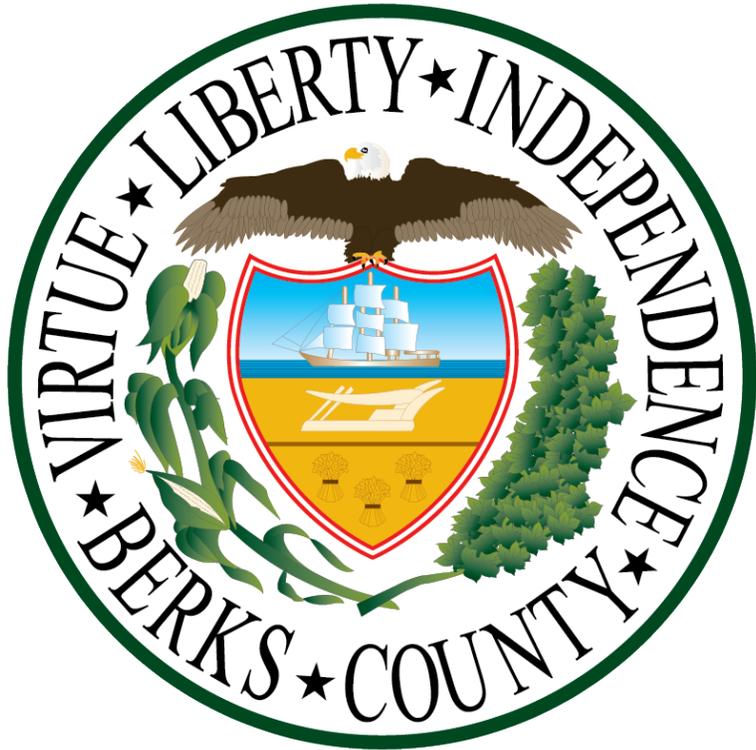
No comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Rivera adjourned the meeting at 10:30 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Blausen, Chief Clerk



Berks County Federal Funding Strategy

January 13, 2026

Presented By:

Katie Peterson, Partner and General Counsel
Yasmine Sadoudi, Senior Government Relations Associate

Who We Are

- Full-service, Washington, DC-based government relations firm specializing in federal grants forecasting, grant writing, and federal advocacy.
- Focused on delivering transformative results for non-profit clients in the higher education, health care, and local government sectors.
- Core team of experts with decades of experience in the Congressional and Executive branches, non-profit sector, private industry, and more.

Our Work with Berks County

- MM entered into a contract with the County in November 2025 to assist with securing federal funds and advocate for Berks County before Congress and the Administration.
- MM team members conducted a virtual Resource Inventory with Berks County department heads and project leads.
- Comprehensive Federal Funding Strategy and Federal Grants Grid.

Priority Funding Areas

Surface Transportation and Infrastructure

Airport Infrastructure and Improvements

Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

Public Safety

Economic and Community Development

Recommendations

- Move forward with select federal grant applications from the Federal Grants Grid.
- Directly engage federal agency leadership and staff on selected federal grants to gain critical intel and insight on current and upcoming federal grant programs.
- Advocate for specific Berks County priorities and needs in annual federal appropriations and key authorizing legislation with the PA Congressional delegation, Committee staff, and targeted PA members who sit on relevant Committees of jurisdiction.

Congressional Champions

Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D, PA-06)



Rep. Madeleine Dean (D, PA-04)



Sen. John Fetterman (D-PA)



Sen. Dave McCormick (R-PA)



CDS/CPF Funding Mechanisms

Available to House and Senate Members for FY27 Appropriations:

- CJS Department of Justice – Byrne Discretionary
 - Supports projects that improve the functioning of the criminal justice system, prevent or combat juvenile delinquency, and assist victims of crime (other than compensation).
 - Funds may not be used for construction or equipment.
 - No cost share required.
 - FY26 Avg. Award Amount: \$734,000
- EPA State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) – Clean Water State Revolving Fund
 - Assists with the construction of and modifications to municipal sewage treatment plants and drinking water treatment plants.
 - Requires a non-federal cost share of 20%.
 - FY26 Avg. Award Amount: \$1.6 million
- THUD Federal Railroad Administration – Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements
 - Provides grants to assist in financing improvements to passenger and freight rail transportation systems.
 - No cost share required.
 - FY26 Avg. Award Amount: \$1.25 million

Thank you for the opportunity to partner with Berks County.

Any further questions?

