

## Special meeting

### HUNTERDON COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

Main Street County Complex, Second Floor  
Flemington, New Jersey 08822

**April 05, 2010**

The special meeting of the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders convened in open session at 7:35 p.m. in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.

**PRESENT: MR. MENNEN, MR. MELICK, MR. HOLT, MR. SWOREN, MR. WALTON.**

Also Present: Kim Metz, Michael Yates, Shelly Sobel.

Absent: Rhonda Paradis.

#### **CONVENE**

Director Mennen announced: "This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice has been given by posting throughout the year a copy of the notice on Bulletin Boards on the First and Second Floor of the Main Street County Complex, Building #1, Flemington, New Jersey, a public place reserved for such announcements. A copy was faxed on or before March 31, 2010, to the Hunterdon County Democrat, Lambertville Beacon, The Express, Courier News, Trenton Times, Hunterdon Review and Star Ledger, newspapers designated to receive such notices and by filing a copy with the Hunterdon County Clerk."

#### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

#### **FOR DISCUSSION**

Director Mennen reviewed the action of the Board of Chosen Freeholders on March 31, 2010 whereby a majority of the Board voted to direct the three Freeholder members of the Board of School Estimate to "effectuate the will of the people as expressed by this Board and to therefore vote to keep the levy on the taxpayers of Hunterdon County flat in the Polytech Budget".

Mr. Melick moved and Mr. Walton seconded a motion Ronald Sworen voluntarily step down from the Board of School Estimate representing the Freeholder Board.

Mr. Sworen expressed his concern and discomfort regarding this resolution. He explained he was unable to be at the March 31, 2010 meeting and first questioned who wrote the resolution concerned the County paid County Counsel to develop and if County Counsel was not involved was it developed illegally with more than two Freeholders.

Director Mennen responded no to both inquiries.

Mr. Sworen read from a prepared statement (see attached) and communicated no Hunterdon NJEA members have responded to the Governor's request to take cuts, many of Polytech's academic initiatives are contractual, the public relations consultant referred to was in last years budget, he as one of the liaisons to Polytech is listening to the Board of School Estimate.

Mr. Sworen referred to Title 18 of the mechanism to appoint Board of School Estimate members in January and that he has been advised by an attorney that the Board of Freeholders cannot remove him from the Board of School Estimate. The case law referred to is not specific to Vocational Type II schools.

Mr. Sworen made final comments that while he supports the Governor and the reduction in spending initiatives are necessary he believes in the Polytech Budget. They have experienced state aid loss and reduction in staff and this increase in their budget is \$50,000 or \$1.00 per household.

Mr. Sworen communicated he would not voluntarily step down from the Polytech Board of School Estimate. He contends the Board of Freeholders cannot take legal action without legal advice.

Mr. Holt repeated his concerns from the March 31, 2010 discussion in which he abstained. Mr. Holt did recognize that the Board of Freeholders has the authority to tax and the Board of School Estimate does not and questioned whether the March 31, 2010 resolution only applied to this year. He went on to continue to question the validity of the majority of the Board of Freeholders' action and articulated he would be voting no to tonight's action.

Director Mennen asked Mr. Melick if as a result of Mr. Sworen's indication he will not voluntarily step down if he wished to amend his motion.

Mr. Melick moved and Mr. Walton amended their motion to have Mr. Sworen removed from Polytech's Board of School Estimate.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. MELICK, MR. WALTON, MR. MENNEN.  
(NAYS) MR. HOLT, MR. SWOREN.**



Mr. Melick moved and Mr. Mennen seconded a motion to replace Mr. Sworen on the Board of School Estimate with Robert Walton for the remainder of 2010.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. MELICK, MR. MENNEN MR. WALTON.**  
**(NAYS) MR. HOLT, MR. SWOREN.**

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Director Mennen opened the meeting to the public.

Several Polytech employees and two Board members (L. Blanke, J. Formalarie, Bob DeVoto, Leslie Zakarowski and Bob Maytak) expressed concern and disagreed with the Board's decision to remove Mr. Sworen from the Board of School Estimate.

Director Mennen did acknowledge that this was for the Board of School Estimate only, not the liaisonship to Polytech.

Those present recognized Mr. Sworen's support of vocational education.

There was also present a citizen who support the action taken by the Board (L. Reiner) which reaffirmed the majority of the Board of Freeholders resolve to work with the Governor to reduce spending.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Director Mennen adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Denise B. Doolan  
Clerk of the Board