

HUNTERDON COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

71 Main Street, Freeholder's Meeting Room, 2nd Floor

Flemington, New Jersey 08822

December 07, 2010

The regular meeting of the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders convened at 3:10 p.m. in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.

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

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

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 mailed on or before November 29, 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."

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Melick seconded these:

See Page 12/07/10-1A RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to meet with representatives of the County's insurance carrier concerning the settlement of the case entitled: Kobner vs. Hunterdon County. (7).

See Page 12/07/10-1B RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss the case entitled: Farneski vs. Hunterdon County, and in which there maybe related discussions concerning Errickson vs. Hunterdon County and Nugent vs. Hunterdon County, as they all involve the Prosecutor's Office. (7).

See Page 12/07/10-1C RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss personnel issues including layoff of County personnel and related discussions with the CWA Union concerning those layoffs and possible budgetary savings associated with them and alternatives to layoffs. (4) (7) (8).

See Page 12/07/10-1D RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss the vacancy in the Public Safety Department for an OEM (Office of Emergency Management) Coordinator. (8).

See Page 12/07/10-1E RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss land acquisition matters involving the Chigounis property in Franklin Township, wit regard to the replacement of County Bridge F-45, on White Bridge Road. (5).

See Page 12/07/10-1F RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss the possible land acquisition of the Pelio property and Kuhl/Kadezabek property. (5)

See Page 12/07/10-1G RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss the negotiations with the Prosecutor's employee unit and other related law enforcement negotiations. (4) (8).

See Page 12/07/10-1H RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss negotiations with the Hunterdon Medical Center regarding the contract terms to provide public health nursing and health education services. (7).

See Page 12/07/10-1I RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss a proposal from AT&T Wireless with regard to providing telecommunications tower on County property. (7).

See Page 12/07/10-1J RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss the review of executive session minutes for July 06, 2010, July 20, 2010, August 03, 2010, August 17, 2010, September 07, 2010, September 20, 2010, October 05, 2010, October 19, 2010, November 03, 2010 and November 16, 2010 to determine what portion of those minutes should be released.

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

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders went into Executive Session at 3:17 p.m., recessed at 6:06 p.m., and reconvened in Open Session at 6:10 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT

Director Mennen opened the meeting to the public.

Forestry Management Plan

Troy Ettel, resident of Readington Township and the Director of Conservation and Stewardship with the New Jersey Audubon came before the Board explaining his support for the County's Forestry Management Plan at the Round Mountain North Section of Deer Path Park. Mr. Ettel stated he also wrote the Board back on November 15, 2010 expressing the support of the New Jersey Audubon for the plan which the County developed. The County's plan was a good plan and it was difficult. What Hunterdon County has done in its parks has always shown great innovation and a lot of thoughtfulness towards the natural resources. It was unfortunate that the County at the last meeting completely dismissed that plan.

Mr. Ettel advised the New Jersey Audubon has had the opportunity to work with Hunterdon County on two plans where the Audubon brought in both federal and private sector funds to implement plans, mentioned the South Branch project where no County funds were used to put the project in play and stated that the innovation and plan used at Round Mountain could be used as a model for future plans, as it modeled the New Jersey Forest Stewardship criteria set forth by the United States Forest Service.

Mr. Ettel is aware a resolution was adopted at the last meeting to completely dismiss the plan and he asked the Board to reconsider that resolution and if the Board does not; he asked that the Board not give up the stewardship of forest lands in Hunterdon County.

Mr. Ettel stated the Audubon has funding available to get stewardship plans reviewed by a third party called the Forest Stewardship Council and offered that service to the Board. He stated that Hunterdon County was always held up as a stewardship model and was one of the best county's the Audubon has ever worked with, Hunterdon's Parks and Recreation Department is incredible but now Hunterdon is being used as a bad example of what can go wrong in meetings. It should not be that way.

Mr. Walton stated he made the motion to withdraw the resolution at the meeting on November 16, 2010 and explained that one of the key factors is that he believes the County got off on the wrong foot as calling this a stewardship plan because in the 2009 minutes it was called a revenue generator. If Hunterdon is looking to do something that is stewardship for the land to have it titled as a revenue generator sets the wrong tone and makes people think the County is looking to sell as much wood as possible for the money and not take care of the area. Mr. Walton stated if this remains titled as a revenue generator people are going to continue to push back so the County needs to start over fresh. His intention was to start over without the taint of profit and do it purely for stewardship.

Mr. Ettel is concerned because the perception now is that this type of thing should never be done again. He feels this is a dangerous precedent to be setting especially when there is a State Forest Stewardship bill. He asked the Board to remember the certification process as it can help the Board in this process and stated it is globally recognized.

Mr. Walton again advised his thinking is to start from scratch and remove the profit motive and do it because it is the right thing to do for the land.

Director Mennen thanked Mr. Ettel for his letter and his offer.

Deer Hunting

Margaret Anderson asked to bring to the Board's attention the issue of the Heron Glen Hunt event for participants needing assistance handling firearms. Mrs. Anderson stated that valid reasons for terminating this event were presented to the Freeholders on January 15, 2008. Since then, opposition to using firearms with assistance has received media attention and letters documenting public opposition to these events. She asked the Board to review copies of the letters sent to the Freeholder Board, which she had written to the State Department of Community Affairs and the Office of Recreation.

Mrs. Anderson presented the Board with signed petitions requesting termination of these events including a tentative hunt to be held in January 2011. There are currently over 160 signatures with signed sheets still outstanding.

Mrs. Anderson offered to answer any questions for the Board. She advised that the State of New Jersey already provides liberal and accessible opportunities to hunt both for the disabled and those who hunt.

Mrs. Anderson stated she has been talking with Director Mennen and Freeholder Walton about this issue and said they have been most helpful. She would like more information regarding the appointment of County Risk Managers and how that occurs.

Mrs. Anderson said reason for thinning the herds have been addressed many times in the past. In the Fish and Game code herds are maximized deliberately for recreational purposes. The County should not feel obligated to the Americans for Disabilities Act.

Director Mennen thanked Mrs. Anderson for dropping off the petitions and further told Mrs. Anderson if she had anything else in writing she would like to leave with the Clerk of the Board that the Board could have the opportunity to peruse in the ensuing few weeks, please feel free to do so.

Mrs. Anderson said her case has been presented everywhere and the County has it, just check the Parks and Recreation Director's files and the Freeholders' files for the data.

Director Mennen advised that he and Mrs. Anderson have discussed the issue of the Risk Manager in the past and he believes he asked Mrs. Anderson for specific questions. Director Mennen said he has responded to Mrs. Anderson's questions but it sounds like there are more questioned and he asked her to reach out to the Mrs. Doolan and provide her with the specific questions and he will provide answers.

Mrs. Anderson agreed to that.

Mrs. Anderson advised people are against making this hunt a permanent fixture.

Director Mennen stated the Control Hunting Program is reviewed on an annual basis. There is nothing permanent, everything is reviewed annually.

Preservation/Prall Homestead

Frances Gavigan, East Amwell Township resident, honored the Board for all the preservation the Board of Chosen Freeholders is doing. The County's agenda today seems to be dealing with a lot of presentation.

Mrs. Gavigan recently became aware of a situation with a preserved property in East Amwell Township, which was not preserved by Hunterdon County and it isn't the responsibility of the County's professionals, and is a property which was built in the 1770's, the Prall Homestead, is slated for a vote to be demolished this Thursday at the State Agricultural Development Commission (SADC) meeting. Her concern aside from the loss of this era of a home in favor of a brand new "McMansion" is the fact that the proposed resolution will place this 3,500 square foot outside of the envelope, placed in the middle of a field. The property was purchased knowing the easement and in the early 2000 began the nibbling away of the easement language which was approved without anyone knowing about it and now they are back again. Mrs. Gavigan is hopeful the SADC will not grant this.

Mrs. Gavigan said the issue raised is managing and monitoring what is going on at the State, County and local levels between communities, the County and state agencies for all land that is preserved with taxpayer dollars is an area of opportunity that needs to be reviewed to make sure there aren't things being applied for that all groups aren't aware of.

Mrs. Gavigan said all parties need to apply stewardship and monitoring of what has been preserved and to send a message to the SADC to not approve a one acre lot, outside of the envelope, in the middle of a field because that goes against the concept of easement. Mrs. Gavigan stated her concern is that easement language is already under siege in litigation across the County and other areas.

CWA

Adam Liebttag, Frenchtown Borough resident and President of the CWA Local 1036, informed the Board that based on their meeting last week, he feels the union and County maybe moving in a positive direction on the matter of layoffs. He recognizes that the County has taken action on a couple of the union's recommendations and hopes to see more action on those recommendations soon.

Mr. Liebttag advised he reached out this afternoon asking for one more meeting before the end of the year and he realizes the Board has been meeting and did not get that message yet. The union maintains its position that there are line item reductions that the Union between the 2009 budget to the 2010 and the 2010 to the 2011 budgets.

Mr. Liebttag informed the Board that he will be talking with the union membership this week to bring them up to speed on the status of the discussion with the County representatives. He will also talk with the membership on where they want to go.

Director Mennen asked Mr. Liebttag to provide the County Administrator with available dates to meet before he leaves this evening, as the next meeting is December 21, 2010.

Lois Stewart, Flemington Borough resident, questioned if there is information that could be shared with the public about whether the union has decided if they would be reopening their contract.

Director Mennen recommended Mrs. Stewart have a sidebar conversation with Mr. Liebttag on that issue, as this Board cannot speak on what the Union's intentions are. He explained the County and Union did discuss a number of items in a collaborative fashion in a meeting last Friday, December 03, 2010. He agreed with Mr. Liebttag that the talks were productive and he is confident that they will continue to have productive talks.

HUNTERDON COUNTY POLYTECH

Present: Kim Metz, Polytech Superintendent came before the Board with Brian Petrilak who is a student enrolled in the Animation/Commercial Arts program. Mr. Petrilak explained what he is learning in the Animation/Commercial Arts program and how it will benefit him in the future with his college studies. He briefly went through the AutoDesk, Murals, 3D, as well as increasing strength in math and physics.

FINANCE

Margaret Pasqua, County Treasurer informed the Board that the County Auditor from Samuel Klein and Company is present this evening in case the Board has any questions about the audit.

Mr. Melick asked the auditor to rate the County on a scale of one to ten as far as a government entity in getting things done the right way.

The Auditor stated no one is perfect but he would rate Hunterdon County between eight and nine. It is a very high rating. Hunterdon County has very good internal controls with a good Finance Department and everyone has been very cooperative.

Mrs. Pasqua questioned if the Board wished to discuss the couple of recommendations made by the auditor.

The Auditor advised that two of the three recommendations are already being addressed.

Director Mennen said the recommendations are self explanatory and the Board has had the opportunity to review them. He confirmed with the Auditor and County Treasurer that controls are in place to resolve the issues so the departments are not repeat performers.

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Holt seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-4A

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Acknowledging compliance with the Division of Local Government Services, in connection with the 2009 Audit

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

Mr. Holt moved and Mr. Sworen seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-4B

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Requesting the Division of Local Government Services insert an item of revenue in the 2010 Budget for the State Health Services Grant, in the amount of \$70,000.

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

PURCHASING

Item #1, for Requisition #25265 pulled at this time.

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Sworen seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-4C

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving Requisition #25277, using State Contract #A-53804, with Motorola, for an extended warranty on Communications services, in the amount of \$31,074.96. (Department Operating Budget).

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

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Sworen seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-4D

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Authorizing the award of County Bid #2010-25, for Maintenance, Service and Supplies for County Copier Equipment, for the Department of Central Printing, Mail and Information Services, to Ditto Copy Systems, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$30,580.07.

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

PLANNING/FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Sworen seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-4E

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Authorizing a Contract for Sale of Development Easement from Gulick Home Farm, LLC, on Block 14, Lot 33.05, in West Amwell Township, consisting of an estimated 17 acres, (SADC - \$79,900; County - \$24,650; Township - \$24,650), total amount of \$129,200.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-5A

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Authorizing a Contract for Sale of Development Easement from Louis L. Zuegner III and Jeanne K. Zuegner, on Block 17, Lot 34, in East Amwell Township, consisting of an estimated 77.5 acres, (SADC - \$604,500; County - \$201,500; Township - \$201,500), total amount of \$1,007,500.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-5B

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Authorizing a Grant Agreement for the acquisition of a Deed of Easement from Irvin Hockenbury and Vilma Hockenbury, on Block 81, Lots 2, 2.01 and block 82, Lot 4, in Raritan Township, consisting of 17.1650 acres, (SADC - \$196,821; County - \$65,607; Township - \$65,607), total amount of \$328,035.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-5C

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving Municipal/County Cost Sharing Agreement with Alexandria Township, for the acquisition of a Development Easement on the Rosenfield Farm, Block 18, Lots 14 and 14.09.

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

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Sworen seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-5D

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving an allocation from Capital Ordinance No. 08-10, in the amount of \$500,000 for Clinton Township's purchase of Block 7, (new) Lot 31.01 (n/f/ Windy Acres).

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

Mr. Holt moved and Mr. Sworen seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-5D

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving, upon the recommendation of the Open Space Trust Fund Coordinator, a request from the New Jersey Audubon Society, to assign and convey its real property interest, in Block 33, Lot 40.01, (n/f Roerig Parcel), in Bethlehem Township, subject to a Conservation Restriction.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Holt seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-5E

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving, upon the recommendation of the Open Space Trust Fund Coordinator, a request by the Delaware and Raritan Greenway Land Trust, to assign and convey its real property interest, in Block 43, Lot 4 (Plumb Brook parcel), in Raritan Township, subject to a Conservation Restriction.

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

Mr. Holt moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-5F

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving, upon the recommendation of the Open Space Advisory Committee, a Municipal Grant program application for an allocation of County Open Space Trust Funds, in the amount of \$12,766.62, for Frenchtown Borough, in connection with the open space acquisition of Block 52, Lots 24, 36.05 and 36.06, comprising of 147.369 acres, in cooperation with the NJDEP Green Acres program, NJDOT and the Hunterdon Land Trust.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-6A

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving, upon the recommendation of the Open Space Advisory Committee, a Municipal Grant program application for an allocation of County Open Space Trust Funds, in the amount of \$4,000, for Lambertville City, in connection with the preservation of Block 1093, Lot 2.01, (Arnett Park), consisting of 0.201 acres of land on Cannought Hill.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-6B

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving, upon the recommendation of the Open Space Advisory Committee, a Municipal Grant program application for an allocation of County Open Space Trust Funds, in the amount of \$192,750.62, for Lebanon Township, for municipal debt service and indebtedness incurred for a farmland cost share contribution to preserve Block 35, Lots 87 and 91.12 (Grossman-Wolff) and Block 41, Lot 10 (Sekel), comprising of 149.074 acres, in cooperation with the State Agriculture Development Committee, the USDA Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection program.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-6C

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving, upon the recommendation of the Open Space Advisory Committee, a Municipal Grant program application for an allocation of County Open Space Trust Funds, in the amount of \$46,181.45, for Union Township, for municipal debt service and indebtedness incurred in connection with the acquisition of Block 22, Lot 20 (Milligan Farm), comprising of 83.913 acres.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-6D

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving, upon the recommendation of the Open Space Advisory Committee, a Municipal Grant program application for an allocation of County Open Space Trust Funds, in the amount of \$27,133.82, for West Amwell Township, in connection with the open space acquisition to preserve Block 8, Lots 20 and 36, (Toll Bros. South), comprising of 126.196 acres, in cooperation with the State Agriculture Development Committee, the Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance, and the CADB.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-6E

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving, upon the recommendation of the Open Space Advisory Committee, a Nonprofit Grant program application for an allocation of County Open Space Trust Funds, in the amount of \$407,800, for the Delaware and Raritan Greenway Land Trust, representing 20% of the estimated purchase price for an open space acquisition in East Amwell Township (LANWIN Development Corporation), consisting of 89 acres. This property is within a designated state Natural Heritage Site and adjoins several preserved farm, and is being preserved in cooperation with the NJDEP Green Acres Program, East Amwell Township and private foundation funding.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-6F

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving, upon the recommendation of the Open Space Advisory Committee, a Nonprofit Grant program application for an allocation of County Open Space Trust Funds, in the amount of \$78,380, for the Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance (HLTA), representing 20% of the estimated purchase price for an open space acquisition in Kingwood Township (Trstensky) consisting of 26 acres. This property is associated with the HLTA's Lockatong Creek Greenway Initiative, and is being preserved in cooperation with the NJDEP Green Acres Program and Kingwood Township.

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

FOR DISCUSSION

Robert Thurgarland, Director of Central Printing, Mail and Information Services and Frank Joseph Bell, AIA, County Project Administrator came before the Board concerning the Paris Grant and the Paris Grant project.

Paris Grant municipal reorganization project.

Mr. Thurgarland informed the Board there has been an increase of the municipal reorganization project of a not to exceed \$22,500, which is from the volumes PARIS has seen in going out to all the municipalities. The County's estimates for the bid was based on the previous years estimated volumes but more records have been found that need to be treated and it is done on an hourly rate. The project has been moving smoothly and Mr. Thurgarland has received good feedback from the County's municipal clerks.

Mr. Thurgarland would like this project wrapped up by the end of the year and stated the vendor feels they will have this project completed in that timeframe and this is their estimate. Mr. Thurgarland confirmed with John Davenport, County Purchasing Agent, that no formal action is needed this evening, that direction is being sought.

Mr. Davenport stated if the Board is willing to take formal action subject to the receipt of the modification with the New Jersey Institute of Technology to perform this work.

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Holt seconded a motion approving, subject to formal receipt, a modification with the New Jersey Institute of Technology to perform additional work, in an amount not to exceed \$22,500, as part of the Paris Grant Municipal Reorganization project with Hunterdon's municipalities.

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

Paris Grant Records Center expansion project.

Mr. Thurgarland reported on the Paris Grant funded Records Center expansion project. He has had discussion on this project with the County Administrator as this project has been in the works for a number of years. The bids came in at \$1.7 million and the County has received \$1.4 million in Paris Grant funds available causing a \$300,000 grant funded shortfall. The Finance Department has said this would not impact the 2011 budget but it would impact the 2012 budget.

Director Mennen confirmed with Mr. Thurgarland and Mr. Bell that the reason the project is \$300,000 short is not because the bids came in higher than estimated because this project was stripped down to bear minimum; it is because the level of Paris funding from the state was reduced.

Mr. Thurgarland explained when the County applied for funding; the Committee recommended total funding of \$1,409,000.00 which would have given Hunterdon \$435,000 more than what was needed. While the Paris panel would have preferred to recommend full funding, it was compelled to recommend partial funding due to the limited amount of funds available during that grant cycle.

Mr. Bell added that the cost estimates for the bid came in on budget that the County expected them to come in at.

Mr. Thurgarland stated that part of the grant funding is the municipalities, during the application process, all leveraged a portion of their Paris funding towards the reorganization project and the balance to go towards the expansion of the Records Center for the shared service storage of records. He noted that was done by resolution by each participating municipality.

Mr. Melick questioned what would happen if the County waited a year to expand the Records Center.

Mr. Thurgarland responded that Hunterdon County has to return the Paris funds of \$1.4 million if it is not to be used by the end of the year.

Mr. Thurgarland informed the Board that an administrator from the Paris Grant, from the state, came up to his office last week and they reviewed these numbers. The project was extended until the end of this year, December 31, 2010. The County has already encumbered \$1.1 million of Paris funds and it needs to encumber the other funds this year so that Paris will consider the project from a grant perspective completed otherwise the funds have to be returned. Paris is not going to extend the project another year.

Mr. Sworen confirmed Mr. Thurgarland is looking for action to move forward on the project and that the County will provide the additional funding for the project

Mr. Thurgarland and Mr. Bell discussed the amount of grant funds received, the amount of funds in capital ordinances to make up the difference, leaving an amount of \$162,000 that still needs to be provided for the project. He needs to submit something to the state by December 10, 2010, for the State Records Committee meeting on December 16, 2010 showing the project will move forward or the grant funds have to be returned.

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Sworen seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-7A

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Recognizing the County of Hunterdon received a shortfall in PARIS grant funds towards Hunterdon's Warehouse/Records Retention Center project and states that in the face of that shortfall that the County of Hunterdon intends to move forward with the project

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

Shared Services Web Hosting for Municipalities (draft proposal).

Mr. Thurgarland reported on a request received from a township in connection with Freeholder Walton's letter regarding additional shared services which is on the County's webpage. One of the suggested potential items for shared services was the hosting of Information Technology/web hosting/email hosting services. A proposal for these services was drafted by Carrie Moore, Jacque Rochelle and Amy Jo Seeley of Information Services. He questioned if the Board wants to move in that direction of shared services for the municipalities with the potential of hosting or assisting the municipality in managing their websites or emails. Mr. Thurgarland would recommend easing into this by using the County's current vendor to see how many municipalities wanted to participate first; rather than investing in any equipment initially. A breakdown of suggested costs was provided to the Board.

Mr. Walton confirmed the County would be able to obtain a lower rate for the municipalities who participate for these services and the County would just be a pass through agency. He confirmed a template could be provided for the municipalities if they want and if they prefer something more, they would be on their own.

Mr. Sworen feels this is a good idea.

Mrs. Moore stated the municipality would have to transfer management of their URL to the County's management vendor, which would be a minimal charge to the municipality.

Mr. Thurgarland would recommend municipalities submit their updates weekly rather than daily. That is something that would have to be worked out with the individual municipalities or they could do their own updates.

Mr. Sworen does not want to see the Information Services Division getting overburdened in taking over the whole management responsibility if the municipality can do the updates themselves.

Mr. Melick said this project has very good intentions but the County is in the cut back mode and he thinks this maybe premature. Whatever is done could probably be done in the outside marketplace. He would rather look at this in the middle of February after the Board has a chance to look at the budgets more thoroughly and know better where the County is going.

Mr. Melick does not want to make any commitments at this time for services.

Mr. Thurgarland confirmed this is a proposal and he was looking for expressions of interest.

Mr. Walton would like to move forward and solicit interest from the municipalities, to see if one or more towns are interested.

Mr. Holt said the reality of this is that any shared service project the County undertakes, the real test of whether it is viable or not, is that the taxpayers see a savings no matter which budget it impacts (County or municipal). If the County budget happens to go up but the overall budget of 26 municipalities goes down, there still needs to be a commitment by local officials that those monies will not go to someplace else.

Mr. Melick questioned how the County could make a municipality make such a commitment.

Mr. Holt isn't sure but his statement is in response to what Mr. Melick said about looking at individual budgets. He feels that everyone has to understand that all of us share in the responsibility of the budgets, on the County level and municipal level.

Mr. Walton asked how the County can be sure that the fee charged will cover the costs for the service and then some.

Mrs. Yard volunteered to help Mr. Thurgarland draft a letter of interest to the municipalities and explain that this is a conceptual idea that the Freeholders are exploring and see if there is any interest. It doesn't mean that because someone receives a letter that this will happen because the County is only seeing what the interest is.

Director Mennen questioned how the costs were arrived at. He doesn't want the County to run the risk of not really representing what the County's true costs are.

Mrs. Moore explained the only true cost, which was scaled down, was the monthly rate for the maintenance. She confirmed it would end up costing the County. Most company charge \$200 to \$1,000 a month for maintenance of the website.

Director Mennen said for private industry to perform the same function would charge a municipality up to \$1,000 and the County is offering the service for \$25.

Mrs. Moore advised that currently municipalities have volunteers that do the work for them and the few municipalities that have requested this shared service do not have volunteers to do the work or they no longer have the staff to do the work.

Director Mennen is agreeable to seeing if any municipality wishes to avail themselves to an opportunity. He questions if the costs by private industry is a true snapshot and true picture of the costs to the County. Shared services are great and the County should use them when it can and find them when possible but it needs to be done with a realistic vision of what the costs are. Shared Services carry with them shared costs.

Mr. Thurgarland said the discussion this evening is to get the Board's guidance on whether this is something the County wants to see if there is interest in. He agreed that the dollars presented this evening need to be revisited.

Mr. Walton asked if the County could communicate back to the municipality that expressed interest with the structure of the package without the costs and then the County could come up with what the real costs are and a chart of accounts showing the real costs, or at least a chart of costs that the County wants to pass on to municipalities.

After further discussion, the Board directed Mr. Thurgarland to work with Mrs. Yard on a draft proposal letter to the municipalities.

Mr. Walton left the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

In-Kind Printing Request from Bloomsbury Borough.

Mr. Thurgarland informed the Board that an In-Kind Printing Request has been received from Bloomsbury Borough to produce the Township's directory. This is the County's 18th participant in the printing program. Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Holt seconded a motion granting authorization to the Division of Central Printing to produce a directory for Bloomsbury Borough.

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

ADDITION ITEM - Furlough Plan

Director Mennen explained the following action is a result of the discussion with CWA representatives last week.

Mr. Holt moved and Mr. Melick seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-9A

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Authorizing the submission of a voluntary Furlough Plan to the New Jersey Division of Civil Service.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Director Mennen announced: "All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Hunterdon and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately."

Item #130821 in claims was held at this time.

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Holt seconded a motion to approve claims in accordance with the Claims Register dated December 07, 2010, minus #130821.

See Page 12/07/10-9B

CLAIMS REGISTER

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Holt seconded a motion to approve #130821 in the Claims Register dated December 07, 2010.

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

#130821 in the Claims Register was held at this time.

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Holt seconded a motion to approve the regular session minutes of September 21, 2010, October 19, 2010, November 03, 2010, November 16, 2010 and December 01, 2010.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Holt seconded these:

See Page 12/07/10-9C

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Marie McGovern appointed temporary, as needed Assistant Prosecutor, Prosecutor's Office.

See Page 12/07/10-10A

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving a no cost time extension to the subcontract for the FY2005 Local Scoping project for the Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation of County Bridge RQ-179, on Stanton Station Road, in Raritan and Readington Townships.

See Page 12/07/10-10B

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving the appointment of John Lazarus to the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition.

See Page 12/07/10-10C

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving appointments to the Hunterdon County Youth Services/Juvenile Justice Commission.

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

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITION

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Melick seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-10D

PROCLAMATION

RESOLVED, recognizing Dr. John McGuire for serving on the Board of Trustees of Raritan Valley Community College, since 1986 when Hunterdon and Somerset created the Bi-County Community College known as Raritan Valley Community College.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Melick seconded this:

See Page 12/07/10-10E

PROCLAMATION

RESOLVED, recognizing Jay William Chardoussin attaining the designation of Eagle Scout.

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

GRANTS

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Holt seconded these:

See Page 12/07/10-10F

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving a Subgrant agreement with the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice, for the Sexual Assault Examiner/Sexual Assault Response Team (SANE/ SART) project, in the amount of \$51,418 in federal funds and a County match of \$12,855.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Holt seconded these:

See Page 12/07/10-10F

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving a grant award for the Public Health Preparedness grant, for the period of August 10, 2010 through August 09, 2011, in the amount of \$376,239.

ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. SWOREN, MR. HOLT, MR. MENNEN.
(ABSTAIN) MR. MELICK.
(ABSENT) MR. WALTON.

FREEHOLDERS COMMENTS/REPORTS

Planning Board Breakfast/December 07, 2010

Mr. Holt congratulated the Planning Department on this morning's County Breakfast Talk on Solar Farm: Follow Up, which was well attended, close to 200 people. The Planning Board did an excellent job.

Deer Removal program

Mr. Melick thanked George Wagner who assisted this Board on an initiative to save money on the removal of dead deer on County roads. Mr. Wagner secured funds for a truck; there is a Corrections Officer who drives the vehicle and inmates who pick up the deer. Mr. Melick advised it costs the County \$2,164 roughly, to dispose of the deer once they are picked up and they go through the Transfer Station. He is talking about 708 deer, picked up from January 2010 to present and if the former contractor was doing the pickup it would cost the County \$48,000. The County has saved approximately \$46,000.

Mr. Melick said this is 708 deer on all County roads, not counting municipal roads or state highway; he feels there are at least 2,000 killed on the roads within Hunterdon County each year.

Planning Board Breakfast

Mr. Sworen also thanked the Planning Board staff saying this morning's breakfast was the largest ever attended, over 160 people preregistered; there were people from other counties coming in to see how to arrange a breakfast like Hunterdon is doing. This is a high quality program.

Mr. Sworen stated all the presentations and information from this meeting can be found on the County's website.

CWA

Director Mennen publicly thanked Adam Liebtag, John Sieler, George Glasshoff and Don for meeting with the County last week. He confirmed that Mr. Liebtag has provided the County Administrator with available dates to meet within the next week or so. Director Mennen thanked them for their time and cooperative nature in which everyone met and stated he is looking forward to continuing in that spirit of collaboration.

Director Mennen confirmed that discussions between the CWA Union representatives and the County will continue.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Planning Board Breakfast

Frances Gavigan, East Amwell Township resident, echoed what Mr. Sworen reported on the Planning Board meeting; it was a very good presentation and it was easy to download from the County's webpage.

Mrs. Gavigan stated the potential for the road from Ringoes to Sergeantsville being branched with solar panels is a concern and the impact on that. She advised she is all for solar but there are problems in the draft A&P's such as set backs – 150' from the property line. If one farmer has multiple lots and can get 10 acres on each one of them, then there will be little clusters of solar farms with 7' high fences taking away from the rural. Solar is to farming as industrial is to parks.

Bridge E-174/East Amwell Township

Mrs. Gavigan reported on receiving an email from John Glynn, Director of Roads, Bridges and Engineering with plans for the drainage around E-174. All but one of the trees can be saved. The property owner, Mr. Kelly, is happy and asked her to express thanks to Director Mennen and the Freeholder Board for acting to be responsive to the community. There are still challenges in terms of the detention basin at the golf course because of high bedrock.

Union Membership

Gary Deemer came before the Board expressing his opposition to layoffs.

Director Mennen explained, as he did at the November 16, 2010 Freeholder Meeting, that the plan and the timelines associated with submission of those plans to the New Jersey Division of Civil Service and the approval process that flows from those plans necessitated that the process be started. The County is continuing to have dialog and it has been very fruitful dialog with the Union representatives to this point. The CWA Union President, Mr. Liebtag reiterated that at the beginning of today's meeting. No one wants to see anyone laid off so the County and the Union will continue to meet and work and endeavor to find ways to avoid that happening. Director Mennen stated he has seen excellent progress in that regard so far and he is certain if the members attend their Union Members meeting this week, that Mr. Liebtag will brief the membership on some of those initiatives and discussions which are just the starting point, not the end point.

Director Mennen is aware that there have been several discussions about other opportunities, not the least of which were some that were made personally available to Mr. Deemer and two other individuals that the County Administrator participated in and Mr. Liebtag also had similar discussions with Mr. Deemer. The County is working any way it can to find opportunities which will alleviate the need for people to go home without having a job, without having a paycheck or benefits. That continues to be an ongoing dialog.

Mr. Deemer told Director Mennen he appreciates what he is doing.

Gordon Johnson told Director Mennen that after the November 16, 2010 meeting he went home and wrote a letter which he read to the Freeholder Board. Mr. Johnson offered the followings ways to avoid layoffs: 1) Continue to offer early retirement or retirement packages; 2) make use of surplus money; 3) cut spending by four percent in each department; 4) take four percent off of capital expenditures; 5) total tax that was collected exceeds total expended to date – use a percentage of that money; 6) reserve fund; 7) surplus; 8) discuss with other counties and townships what they are doing to prevent layoffs; 9) reserve harsh decision making until the actual figures are known; and 10) ask management and appointed position to band with the union and make sacrifices.

Director Mennen said regarding furloughs, it was indeed the Freeholders' stated intention and desire to move forward with a furlough plan. It was a mysterious turn how this became a discussion about layoffs and the reason for that is a decision from PERC (New Jersey Public Employees Relations Commission) regarding the matter of Belmar where PERC said that furloughs are no longer the purview of the governing body but have to be the subject of open negotiations. The County is of the belief that it has been stated to the County that there is no desire on the part of the Union to engage in those discussions. That is an issue for the Union membership to deal with the Union representatives.

Director Mennen informed Mr. Johnson that it was the County's desire to have furloughs but the state has forced the County's hands with regard to this issue. The County has already taken steps with regard to early retirement and the County continues to have further dialog digesting and ultimately incorporating suggestions made by Union leadership with regard to that program. At the meeting last Friday, it was stated publicly by Freeholder Holt and the Freeholder Board embraced the concept that further discussion about the use of additional surplus was and continues to be on the table. Regarding cutting capital expenditures, the amount of capital expenditure undertaken by Hunterdon County in 2010 is but a fraction of what it was a few years ago and next year looks to be even bleaker on the capital side for expenditures. There will be emergency replacements only and project which can be funded through grants and other initiatives.

Director Mennen assured Mr. Johnson that much of what he has suggested is already being considered both unilaterally on our own initially and in conjunction with the union going forward. He is sure this will continue to be a source of discussion at the next meeting which has now been set for December 14, 2010 in the morning.

Director Mennen said the County is listening and has thought about a lot of this already. This Board is and has been open minded and continues to have dialogue with the union.

Budget

Lois Stewart, Flemington Borough residents, asked if there will be any accounts that have funds left over in them this year that can be forwarded to the next budget.

Director Mennen advised that isn't known as the year has not ended. This Board has made it very clear that any accounts which are unexpended of a high degree (40% or 50%) the County will reduce that budget in the next year. If a department does not expend what is budgeted on an annual basis, in the face of a 10% reduction one year and a 5% reduction the next year, and through this three year process the Board has looked at department budgets and where there were lines items that were unspent to a high degree. Those budgets have been chopped year, after year after year. There are only a few left at this point because the County has been reducing budgets for the last couple of years.

Director Mennen confirmed for Mrs. Stewart that any unused funds will be returned to surplus.

Flu Shots

Mrs. Stewart asked if all the flu vaccine has been used by the County for its clinics.

Director Mennen understands that the initiative to distribute the "mist" flu vaccine at the County's Touch-A-Truck event which had a younger target audience who are more appropriate for the use of the mist went well. He does not believe it used the entirety of the stock. He has made it clear to the Health Department that it is unacceptable to have any of that vaccine discarded this year as was done in years past. He is quite certain the Health Department will comply.

Mr. Sworen added that the Health Department also had a clinic at the County's Senior Center.

Mrs. Yard was directed to have the Health Department provide an update at the next meeting on the dispensing of the flu vaccine.

Recycling

Mrs. Stewart asked about recycling.

Mrs. Yard advised Mrs. Stewart will be do a follow up and report back at the next meeting.

Trail Grants

Mrs. Stewart asked if the County has applied for trail grants through the Parks and Recreation Department.

Mrs. Yard informed Mrs. Stewart that the County has applied. She specifically spoke with the Acting Director of Parks and Recreation, Carol Bodder, about this and an application has been filed.

Solar

Mrs. Stewart recalls mentioned at the last meeting was a solar project with Municipal Utilities Authority of Raritan Township but it wasn't known if Green Acres would approve solar.

Mrs. Yard explained that is an initiative that Freeholder Walton is taking the lead on with Raritan Township. It is still moving forward. The Planning Board Director, Sue Dziarama and the County Project Administrator, Frank Bell, are on the Sustainable Committee with Mr. Walton. They did have to get questions answered on whether Green Acres be used because it is through Raritan's Utility Authority.

Forestry Management Plan

Mrs. Stewart about the letters regarding trees listed on the Freeholders' Correspondence List. She questioned how many letters have been received in support and how many are opposed.

Director Mennen said subsequent to the November 16, 2010 action, he believes the body of letters received run about 80% saying the plan should not have been terminated and should have continued and 20% saying they are opposed.

Mrs. Yard advised those letters are available and she will provide a tally for Mrs. Stewart.

Mrs. Stewart read a poem regarding trees. She stated Hunterdon County has a certain ambiance and she would hate to see it destroyed. She questioned the status of the Committee set up.

Director Mennen informed Mrs. Stewart that her question is the same as his. The way the discussion on November 16, 2010 proceeded starting as taking a step back and then went to something more definitive and extreme. He takes Mr. Walton's comments in the earlier part of the meeting this evening were in response to Mr. Etzel of the Audubon, was speaking in favor of the plan.

Director Mennen explained the Board of struggling with the fact that there was competing science and there were people, who in his view had a level of credential that said they should have some level of authority to be able to speak on the issue. It would appear that in the manner in which the County was receiving the information that there was direct conflict and diametrically opposed opinions. At the end of the day if the science says it is good for the regeneration of a forest to do something, we don't know what the something is, than the County should have the benefit of that information because the County is a steward and stewardship requires doing what is right for the long term health of the forest. Director Mennen doesn't know what the answer is. He thought if the State Department of Environmental Protection blessed the plan that it meant it must be good for the environment. This Board heard plenty of people with good credentials who thought otherwise. Director Mennen feels at some point in time this Board ought to hear from people who have a level of expertise in this area to further the initiatives to be good stewards of the land.

Open Space Tax

Mrs. Stewart questioned if the Freeholders would consider cutting the Open Space Tax.

Director Mennen asked his colleagues with Freeholders Holt, Sworen and Mennen advising they would not cut the Open Space Tax as the taxpayers voted for this referendum.

Freeholder Melick said he would cut the Open Space Tax by 1% because of the value of the land is going down by half. There is a recession which has affected the real estate market. The County could purchase just as much land with a 1% reduction. The problem is the people at Green Acres don't realize this and they are accepting high appraisals that were generated before 2008 using comparables from years before.

Surplus

Fred Alby questioned what the County's surplus is used for and there is so much why it can't be used for the budget.

Mr. Melick said the County does not have that much in comparison to the total expenditures. The rule of thumb years ago was surplus be one quarter of was to be spent. The County has established a Triple A credit rating by having surplus. Surplus is like a savings account, there are times during the year when tax revenues, especially in August, when they are slow coming into the County but the County still has to pay its bills. They are also slow coming into the County in January and February.

Mr. Melick said the Freeholders have high hopes of making savings on the budgets. The County has been budgeting very tightly for the last two years. By budgeting so closely, less money is coming back to the County on unspent accounts. Next year may not be any better than this year.

Mr. Alby questioned how short the County is.

Mr. Holt advised Mr. Alby that the County asked the Finance Department to provide projections on anticipated revenue for the year and the County Tax Administrator was asked to provide an idea of what the value of properties will be. This year the Tax Administrator informed the Board that it should anticipate a 4% reduction in assessed values. When you take the 4% reduction in assessed values plus the decrease in revenues from Finance and then some of the changes in payments which have increased in other areas; the target number arrived at \$4 million. This Board has no alternative except to work on that number and figuring out if that number comes into place how the County will deal with it. As this economy has slid this Board over the last three or four years begin looking at the budgets in January and February but over the past two years this Board has begun reviewing and cutting budgets in July and August.

Mr. Holt said there is an element that has not existed in the last 20 plus years – surplus is used to allow the County to rise and flux within the economy. If the economy is good then surplus is built up and if it goes sour, then you peel away at the surplus to try to maintain. Surplus is an element that is used to keep from spiking tax rates up and down.

Mr. Holt explained the County is currently held at a 2% CAP and fixed costs are currently greater than 2% of the County's budget which means just covering the fixed costs chew up surplus. This Board has to tackle that problem before it can tackle anything else. It also means if the 2% CAP remains in place for any long term period of time, as the surplus is decreased, that the County will never be able to generate the savings to rebuild the surplus. That also means that another employee will never be hired and things won't get done. The 2% CAP is currently the single biggest challenge this Board has in front of it because it takes what has been a standard budget process over the past 20 years and now the budget is CAPped on how much it can be raised.

Mr. Holt said there is a commitment on this Board to talk about using additional surplus. Using surplus is definitely on the table for consideration. It is the 2% CAP that makes it a greater challenge to use more surplus because it is known it can't be built back up again by either the County or municipalities.

Mrs. Yard advised when the County set its objective Finance advised there would be a \$1 million shortfall and that was if everything stayed the same. Then the Tax Administrator came in and advised 4% which is \$775,000 for every percent it goes down. A target of \$3 million was used as a guide but that number changed twice today already. Everything that is happening has the County at the calculator running the numbers.

Mrs. Yard stated the Freeholders did authorize a retirement incentive and two more people have volunteered to retire today. This is helping the County lessen or even avert layoffs.

Mrs. Yard reported the County is asking Roads, Bridges and Engineering for \$100,000 out of his budget; \$35,000 is being taken out of the Freeholders' Miscellaneous Budget, and \$75,000 is coming out of Buildings and Maintenance's Budget. There are amounts that won't be budgeted for next year and the calculator is running. It started out with \$4 million because of the implication of the changes. The Budget Review Team made a commitment to start chipping away at the figures and the Union President is helping and the goal is to lessen that \$4 million number and the County is getting closer to the goal. Mrs. Yard explained the Board is looking at this as the rainy day. The best way to reduce is through attrition with the retirements so people don't have to lose their jobs. Mrs. Yard assured those present that there are other retirement incentives being discussed.

Director Mennen stated, as he said on November 16, 2010, the number is \$4 million. The County has started by pulling together a package of savings. He feels everyone wants to know what is needed to be found to save a job. Of the \$3 million identified in savings, \$1.35 million of that roughly is personnel the layoff plans. As the County is working whether it is through the retirement incentive or the ongoing dialog with CWA, as savings are identified that chip away from the \$1.35 million and he assured those present that there has already been some chipping, the number is coming down. After the County meets with the Union again on December 14th perhaps everyone will have an even better handle on the number. Director Mennen said the County still has 90 days to do this that will go to continue to avert or lessen the need for layoffs.

Director Mennen said the County has not found the up to 30 jobs yet but some have been found. He feels the County will have a better handle on the numbers over the next few days and when the meeting takes place on December 14, 2010, the County will have some harder, firmer numbers.

Mr. Melick said the County needs a better economy; the housing prices have to see an uptake. People need to come to Hunterdon to purchase homes. The problem is values are down for homes and people are fighting to have their properties reassessed/revalued. To see how bad Hunterdon County is hurting all you need to do is walk Main Street in Flemington and look at all the for sale and for rent signs.

Herman Smith said if the County Freeholders are committed to averting layoffs then why is the Board looking at privatizing areas of the County's workforce.

Mr. Melick said the Freeholder have a responsibility to provide services for the public and to protect their interests, the best way possible. Also, the County has a responsibility to its workforce to do the right thing. The Freeholders are caught between the taxpayers who want the best possible service and safe roads at the best price.

Patrick Masterson said people come to work for the County for security not high pay.

George Glasshoff asked if any of the Freeholders look at their tax bill when you pay it. Mr. Glasshoff stated he is willing to put another penny into the County tax dollars to save a job. His taxes might go up \$60 a year but he's willing to do that to save a job. He stated his taxes are \$10,000 a year and \$8,000 of that goes to Hunterdon Central Regional High School, it goes for school taxes, not to the County. He is willing to put his penny in to save people's jobs.

Mr. Glasshoff doesn't understand why the Freeholders want to keep the tax rate flat because the people of Hunterdon County will re-elect this Board no matter what because this is a republican County. The average taxpayer is not going to care about an increase in taxes of a half cent or one cent.

Mrs. Stewart recommended only increasing the taxes by a half cent to save jobs.

Solar Energy

Eric Abeshaus, President of MetroTek Electrical Services, approached the Board stating he is a solar energy and renewable energy expert. He offered to lend his expertise to Freeholder Walton. He designs appropriate solar installations without 7' high fences; which would not only save the County money but also offset greenhouse gases as well.

Director Mennen confirmed Mr. Abeshaus was at a Freeholders' meeting about four weeks ago and provided his information to the County Purchasing Agent, John Davenport.

Director Mennen asked Mr. Abeshaus to leave his business card with the Clerk of the Board, Mrs. Doolan, who will provide his information to Freeholder Walton and Frank Bell, AIA, the County Project Administrator.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Director Mennen adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise B. Doolan
Clerk of the Board