

HUNTERDON COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

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

Flemington, New Jersey 08822

October 19, 2010

The regular meeting of the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders convened at 2:52 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 October 13, 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."

DISCUSSION – PREVIEW 2011 BUDGET, continued

Budget Review Committee: Kim Browne, Finance Director, Cynthia Yard, County Administrator, Margaret Pasqua, County Treasurer and Cheryl Wieder, Human Resources Director came before the Board.

The Finance team came before the Board to present the following strategies for reduction in the 2011 County Budget:

1. Mandated vs. Discretionary: 2009/2010 Update.
2. Continue Full Hiring Freeze.
3. Reduce Funding for Human Services Provider contracts/In-House funding.
4. Administrative Reviews.
5. Library.
6. Phone Review.
7. Fire School Training.
8. Morris County Detention Center.
9. Cultural & Heritage Commission.
10. Transportation.
11. Freeholder Walton's request of a 1% reduction in all operating budgets.
12. Park Concerts.
13. Consider reducing surplus by any remaining shortfall.

Tom Efstathiou, County Tax Administrator came before the Board to answer basic questions on tax appeals and to provide an estimate of the reduction in ratable for 2011.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Holt seconded these:

See Page 10/19/10-1A RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss the Sheriff's Trust Fund and mediation. (7)

See Page 10/19/10-1B RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to review the Executive Session minutes of July 06, 2010, July 20, 2010, August 03, 2010, August 17, 2010, September 07, 2010 and September 20, 2010.

See Page 10/19/10-1C RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss appointments to Polytech and the Raritan Valley Community College Search Committee. (8)

See Page 10/19/10-1D RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss the Sheriff's request for a salary increase for Undersheriff Russo, which is part of the litigation currently pending to increase the salaries of unclassified people in the Sheriff's Office. (7)

See Page 10/19/10-1E RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss meetings with the Department Managers Association to discuss the terms and conditions of employment. (4)

See Page 10/19/10-1F RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss the vacant position of a Parks and Recreation Director. (8)

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss legal issues in regard to actions which could be taken to save costs and reduce the budget which would not be appropriate in public since they involve legal issues and/or negotiations and/or personnel. (4)(7)(8)

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

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders went into Executive Session at 3:56 p.m., recessed at 6:04 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.

Stefani Donation to the County Library

Arnold Shapack of Beaver's Road in Tewksbury Township addressed the Board regarding the recent donation, of \$860,000.00, to the County Library by Anneliese Stefani on behalf of herself and her husband Dario, who were residents of Raritan Township. The Stefani's placed no stipulations on how the money should be spent. 24 Hunterdon communities provide yearly support to the Hunterdon County Library through the dedicated Library Tax. Each library its unique needs and knows best how to allocate resources to meet their community's requirements. Mr. Shapack recommended that each of the 24 libraries that provide funding to the County Library's Tax funds be granted funds in proportion to their percentage share of support to the County system. An example is that Alexandria Township has contributed 3.9% of the County's funding in 2009, 2010 and would receive 3.9% of the Stefani bequest; Clinton Township has contributed 11.2% and would receive that amount from the bequest. Bequest funds are to add to Library services not replace regular township support. Towns must agree to maintain normal library funding or at least not reduce normal library funding in any percentage greater than any other towns does.

Director Mennen advised that Mr. Sworen is the County's liaison to the Library Commission and advised Mr. Shapack if he has not already provided his comments to the County Library Commission that Mr. Sworen would do so on his behalf.

Forestry Management Plan

John Klotz, Readington Township resident and Chair of Readington Township's Open Space Advisory Board, commented on the Forestry Management Plan for Round Mountain.

Director Mennen informed Mr. Klotz that the Forest Management Plan was going to be the subject of not an agenda based discussion but he was going to bring this up later in the meeting. He hopes that his remarks and the action and concurrence he is seeking from the Freeholder Board would serve to allay some of the concerns that are about to be raised.

Director Mennen stated the agenda is not that long and asked Mr. Klotz to wait until a little later in the meeting as this matter will be discussed.

Mr. Klotz confirmed with Director Mennen that he would be allowed to have input at that time.

Scenic Byway

Frances Gavigan, East Amwell Township resident, asked the Freeholder Board consider a scenic, countywide byway, a crossroads of the Revolution designations. There will be a resolution coming from East Amwell Township's governing body to that effect. Mrs. Gavigan informed the Board that there are groups that want to get together across the County to build a coalition towards that byway designation, and integrate that it into the Master Plan and also some of the roadway approaches. This kind of designation can potentially have far reaching results and may support individual communities if they are having a particular zoning or eminent domain issue. The historic component and the scenic issue might be a useful factor.

HUNTERDON COUNTY POLYTECH

Present: Kim Metz, Polytech Superintendent came before the Board with Fernanda "Nanda" Stephan.

Ms. Metz informed the Board that in addition to the 450 high school students served by Polytech, they also serve about 800 to 900 adults through the year. Adult programs are focused on industry recognized credentials.

Ms. Metz introduced Nanda Stephan who graduated from the Adult Education Esthetics Program (skin care program).

Mrs. Stephan stated she is a resident of Tewksbury Township, with a daughter who just went off to college and a 15 year old at home. Four years ago her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and in order to supplement the family income, she stated attending Polytech and Mrs. Stephan said it was the best thing she has done. Since graduating she is employed by another graduate of Polytech, who has a medical spa in New Hope, Pennsylvania. She has worked for three years. She was able to finish the Polytech program, receive her license in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania as a licensed technician.

Mrs. Stephan has recommended the Polytech program to many of her friends. She feels the Polytech School has been a wonderful experience in her life. She is able to supplement the family income and care for her mother. She has had three offers of work since August 2010.

PURCHASING

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Holt seconded this:

See Page 10/19/10-3A

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving Requisition #31591, using Quote #0066-2010, with Strober Roofing and Metal Works, for roof replacement, for Buildings and Maintenance in the amount of \$19,600.

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

John P. Davenport, III, County Purchasing Agent informed the Board that Requisition #PROS.792226, has been pulled from the Agenda in order to obtain more information.

PLANNING/FARMLAND

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Melick seconded this:

See Page 10/19/10-3B

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Authorizing final approval for the acquisition of a development easement from Irvin Hockenbury, on Block 81, Lots 2 and 2.01 and Block 82, Lot 4, in Raritan Township, (SADC-\$196,308, County-\$65,436, Township-\$65,436), total amount of \$327,180.

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

ROADS and BRIDGES UPDATE

John P. Glynn, Director, Roads, Bridges and Engineering updated the Board on various County road and bridge projects.

- Work started on the County Routes 519/650 project; curbs and inlet work is ongoing for County Route 650.
- On Monday, October 25, 2010 resurfacing work will start on Route 579.
- The second footing should be poured on County Bridge R-123, in Readington Township tomorrow. The beams should be completed on Friday.
- County Bridge E-163 in East Amwell Township should open late tomorrow, October 20, 2010. This is the small bridge between Routes 202 and 179.
- The contractor will be back doing the drainage projects on Route 513 on November 01, 2010.
- Mr. Glynn updated the Board on the revised horizontal alignment for County Bridge E-174 in East Amwell Township. There is a public meeting tomorrow at 4:00 p.m. with the stakeholders at the bridge. The County has worked with the stakeholders, Bucharthorn Consulting, and the Township in gathering inputs and the product will be presented tomorrow.
- The truss reconditioning for County Bridge RQ-164 on Rockafellow Mills Road is about 2/3rds assembled and it should be completed assembled by the end of October with the project being opened by the middle of December 2010.
- The County is working with the State Department of Transportation and the testing agency on the stimulus project for County Route 512.

FOR DISCUSSION

Mr. Glynn reminded the Board of a report he presented to the Board on the Choir School building in the past two weeks. If the report is acceptable to the Board then he will contact the Purchasing Department in order to have the project advertised for sale.

Director Mennen confirmed the Board has had an opportunity to review the report on the Choir School as presented by Mr. Glynn. He confirmed the building has already been declared surplus.

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Melick seconded a motion to approve the report as was presented by Mr. Glynn and authorize the Purchasing Department to advertise for sealed bids for the building.

Director Mennen recognized Lois Stewart at this time.

Lois Stewart, Flemington Borough resident questioned who will be handling the bidding process and if there are any stipulations on maintaining the exterior of the building.

Mr. Glynn advised that in the report there are several items that are mandated by the Cultural and Heritage Commission and the building will be deed restricted such as the façade, certain features to the interior, and more which will all be considered with the sale.

County Counsel DeSapio confirmed if and when a minimum bid price is set it will need to come back to the Freeholder Board for authorization.

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

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."

Mr. Holt moved and Mr. Walton seconded a motion to approve claims in accordance with the Claims Register dated October 19, 2010.

See Page 10/19/10-4A

CLAIMS REGISTER

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

Mr. Holt moved and Mr. Walton seconded these:

See Page 10/19/10-4B

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving the acquisition of a right of way of the fee simple title from Mark Gogal, on Block 19, Lot 27 and Block 23, Lot 5, in Clinton Township, in connection with Bridge C-32, on County Route 629, in the amount of \$20,295 for 1.845 acres at \$11,000 an acre.

See Page 10/19/10-4C

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving application for payment #33, for Bid #2005-47, for the Addition and Alteration to the Communications/Emergency Services Building, with DeSapio Construction, Inc., in the amount of \$23,757.69.

See Page 10/19/10-4D

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving an agreement with Somerset County for Juvenile Home Detection, in the amount of \$88 per diem, effective through December 31, 2011.

See Page 10/19/10-4E

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving the submission of the "Hunterdon County 2011 Request for Application Update and County Alliance Plan, upon the recommendation of the Local Advisory Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, to the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

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

Mr. Melick moved and Mr. Holt seconded this:

See Page 10/19/10-4F

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving the appointment of Mary Elizabeth Warner to the Raritan Valley Community College Search Committee, to fill an unexpired term through December 31, 2010.

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

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Melick seconded this:

See Page 10/19/10-4G

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving the appointment of Laurence B. Molloy to the Hunterdon County Vocational School District Board of Education, known as Polytech, for a four year term, effective November 01, 2010 through October 31, 2014.

Mr. Sworen said that while he feels that Mr. Molloy will be a valuable resource for Polytech looking at his qualifications; he wants to acknowledge that Judith Formalarie has been a valuable person on the Polytech Board; and she has served as Vice Chairperson and has done a lot for the school during her term. He was hoping she would be reappointed to that term and perhaps become Chair of the Polytech Board. Her unique position with the state has been very helpful to the School and Polytech will lose that relationship.

Mr. Sworen wanted to publically thank Judith Formalarie for her tremendous service to the Polytech Board.

Director Mennen believes this Board will entertain a proclamation at a future meeting to formally and officially thank and recognize Ms. Formalarie for her service.

Mr. Holt said when this position was discussed, it was recognized that the lease on Bartles' Corner (a location for Polytech) was renegotiated a firm stance was taken for a 3 year lease with two 1 year options. Both the Freeholder Board and the Polytech Board need to come to concurrence as to position, size and shape of Polytech in Hunterdon County. A plan needs to be put together that arrives at a final conclusion for Vocational Education. Approximately \$250,000 a year is spent to rent space at Bartles Corner.

Mr. Holt confirmed these two Boards need to come to a conclusion on vocational education. It is imperative that remain a priority of this Board and the Polytech Board. He is hopeful the new makeup of Polytech will embrace this goal.

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

COUNTY SHERIFF

Sheriff Deborah Trout and George Muller came before the Board.

Sheriff Trout informed the Board that she recently received a letter concerning postponing the start of the work she had decided on in connection with the COPS grant. She responded in a letter and she is here tonight to see where things stand. She is ready to go with the grant; she has met with several security companies, the Marshal's Service, the New Jersey Sheriff's Association security team. Everyone has looked at where the cameras will be placed in the Justice Center that needed to look at it.

Director Mennen confirmed the correspondence requested Sheriff Trout consult with the incoming Sheriff because the implementation of any of this would certainly happen, if not entirely so but predominantly so under his presumptive watch. The election is still two weeks away.

Director Mennen advised the Sheriff that the correspondence also asked that she meet with the Court House Security Committee, which is a body that has been used multiple times between this Board and the Sheriff with the endorsement of the courts to look at security issues. He told the Sheriff he is not sure why she finds that request to be objectionable.

Sheriff Trout said she doesn't find it objectionable. In her letter back to the County Administrator and the Freeholder Board, she stated that they have met with Chief Brown on several occasions and on one occasion they went over the complete plan. This has also been discussed with the incoming Undersheriff a couple of times and they see where the cameras will be placed and the logic behind it. Sheriff Trout stated that Chief Brown and Bob Smith are present this evening and the Freeholders can ask them. She doesn't believe there is a problem with the plan. She has been told it looks good.

Sheriff Trout stated her office has not met with the Court House Security Committee on a whole. This has been discussed with the Trial Court Administrator, Eugene Farkas and he brought in Ernie Colmer, the state level Administrative Office of the Courts Director and they went over the entire plan. Sheriff Trout stated that Mr. Farkas and Mr. Colmer were impressed with the plan and they said at the meeting at it would greatly improve both the interior and exterior of the building. Sheriff Trout further said, they told her that this should be done as soon as possible to take advantage of when the courts are closed: Thanksgiving week and Christmas week, so no one will be disturbed and overtime won't have to be used if the work were to be done at night.

Sheriff Trout added that Judge Cicconi has seen the plan. She questioned why there would be a further delay.

Director Mennen questioned how long it would take to convene with the Court House Security Committee. He is asking because that has always been used as a rationale any other time there was a dispute; there was general acceptance to defer to their input and to their participation. This Board is simply saying as a matter of consistency if the Court House Security Committee is okay with the plan, then that is fine. Director Mennen said he doesn't understand why more input is a bad thing. He understands Sheriff Trout's issue with regard to timing and wanting to get this done during a time when the courts are closed.

Director Mennen told Sheriff Trout that in the time it took her to write this letter and come before the Board, the meeting could have taken place and this could have been done.

Sheriff Trout responded by saying that in the time it took to write the original letter, it could have been approved but that aside; she doesn't think, depending on the schedules of the people involved, that it should be that long of a time period. Again, she has no problem with what they would have to say because if the experts say there is no problem with this plan she doesn't see where a County level committee is going to find anything wrong.

Director Mennen asked the Sheriff what kind of lead time she needs to implement this.

Sheriff Trout stated if they were going to take advantage of Thanksgiving and Christmas weeks, they need to start soon; like last week. She isn't saying it can't go another week or so but she would like to get this started.

Director Mennen advised this Board meets again in two weeks and asked the Sheriff to take the two weeks in order to have the meeting with the Court House Security Committee and then come back before the Freeholder Board and be done with this.

Sheriff Trout again asked why postpone this as the grant was approved, everything has been approved, her office has talked with everyone the Freeholders originally wanted them to talk to and now when the purchase orders have been placed; now there are other people the Freeholders want her to talk to. They have talked with the main people higher than the committee itself. They have talked to the incoming Sheriff. There is no need to delay this any further.

Mr. Melick informed the Freeholder Board that he would like to be involved in the Court House Security Committee meeting. Mrs. Yard explained that she represents the Freeholder Board on the Committee.

Director Mennen informed the Sheriff that this is not an attempt to be obstructionist; it is an attempt to get it right. To get it right the first time. Routinely, he told the Sheriff, that she has herself pointed the Freeholders in the direction of the Court House Security Committee when talking about the number of officers needed and things of that sort.

Sheriff Trout interrupted Director Mennen saying that has nothing to do with cameras.

Director Mennen said the County cannot cherry pick when it wants to take the opinions from someone when it suits our own purposes. Unless the Sheriff is telling him that taking two weeks is a deal breaker; then why not meet with the Court House Security Committee.

Sheriff Trout advised she isn't saying she won't meet with the committee, she doesn't understand why the delay. This project still has to be put out to bid. She questioned how the cameras can be put out to bid, choose a vendor and get the project ready to go before Thanksgiving. She doesn't see who on the committee, whether it is a Freeholder, County Administrator, the Public Defender, someone from the Prosecutor's would know better than state and federal court security specialists.

Director Mennen feels the people on the County's Court Security Committee have local knowledge; they use the building and some of their offices are located in the building.

Sheriff Trout told Director Mennen she will do whatever he says is normal.

Director Mennen polled the Board that if the Court House Security Committee gives its approval, that this project will be green lighted and moved forward.

Mr. Sworen confirmed with Sheriff Trout that the grant has been awarded and she needs approval to go to bid. He confirmed that the bid has been prepared and are ready to go. He asked the timeframe for getting the bids back.

John Davenport, County Purchasing Agent, advised the bids have to be on the street for at least 10 days; a project of this nature would probably be left on the streets for three weeks or longer. Once bids are received, they would be evaluated by the Sheriff's Office and a recommendation would be provided to his office, which would do contracts, and the vendor has 10 days to execute the contracts. It could take 35 to 40 days.

Mr. Sworen confirmed with Mr. Davenport that the timeframe for which the project is on the street can be shortened. Mr. Sworen confirmed that the location of the cameras and wires can be found in the specifications for the project.

Mr. Davenport assured the Freeholder Board that he could be ready to bid the project within a week and if something occurs at the meeting, then he could put out an addendum to the bid.

Director Mennen said the net result of meeting with the Court House Security Committee could be something that could alter the bid specifications. He is looking to get the highest level of input. Director Mennen said in speaking for himself and his colleagues can speak for themselves. Director Mennen explained he would rather see the input from the Court House Security Committee go into this project.

Mr. Holt would like to see the Court House Security Committee convene immediately and he suggested that the incoming Sheriff also be involved in that meeting. He would approve this project subject to this meeting taking place and concurrence by the committee.

George Muller, Confidential Aide in the Sheriff's Office advised that he has been involved with this project. He has been taking courses with the National Sheriff's Association, Court House Security; he's gone to training with Lt. Barrett who has written books and he is probably the most recognized expert on court house security systems in the United States. He has visited a number of court houses in New Jersey to view their security/camera systems.

Mr. Muller stated they have met with the top man in the State of New Jersey, Mr. Colmer is in charge of the security of all the court houses in the entire state. Mr. Colmer said this is an outstanding plan. Mr. Muller said in Mr. Colmer's estimation this is the best security system and cameras he has seen in the State of New Jersey. The County has grant funds coming in that the taxpayers don't have to pay for. The timeline is getting shorter but if the Freeholders feel they want to convene a committee which Mr. Colmer would attend and the president of the Bar would

attend but if they don't understand the security or where the gaps are and where the breaches of security are in the building, and they can be shown, they can't appreciate what is there. He explained there are problems in the elevators and people have banged them and damaged switches. Since there are no cameras in the elevators, we don't know who did it. There is no security on the outside of the building either. Mr. Muller continued to explain the expense if officers have to be called in during the evening while people pull wires through the building.

Mr. Muller feels the Sheriff is willing to meet anytime with the Court House Security Committee to go over the plan. He doesn't want to see the project delayed and feels that would be a misuse of public funds. He asked the Board to allow this project to go out to bid and then meet and show people whatever they want to see.

Mr. Sworen feels it would be prudent to move this project this evening based on the bids going out after the Court House Security Committee meeting.

Director Mennen said this discussion is trying to assure that the consultation happens. Director Mennen informed Sheriff Trout that the tenor of her letter to the Freeholders is clear that she thought it was a worthless waste of time. He stated he is paraphrasing the letter.

Sheriff Trout said not worthless but yes a waste of time.

Director Mennen said there is now some agreement that the Sheriff will meet with the Court House Security Committee and that is progress. If there is a way where County Counsel is comfortable and the Purchasing Agent is comfortable, in continuing to advance the process and yet allow for that real consultation, the give and take to happen, he doesn't have a problem. He feels that is progress from when he received her letter.

Sheriff Trout stated it is not progress in the cameras.

Mr. Muller added that in the grant, it is spelled out the number of cameras and locations for them in the Justice Center, saying this would be a review process by the committee because modifications to the grant would put it in jeopardy. The County has to live with the number of cameras, both upgrades and new cameras that were in the Cops grant which was approved by the Freeholder Board.

Director Mennen asked County Counsel what the next step will be to memorialize moving forward with having a consultation to get the project moving forward.

County Counsel DeSapio informed the Board that a resolution is needed authorize the Purchasing Department to issue bid documents for the procurement of the system. The award of the contract will be contingent upon the approval of the specifications by the Court House Security Committee. Mr. DeSapio confirmed the Court House Security Committee will meet before the Purchasing Agent takes the bid and if it does not meet before the bids are due, then the bid date will be put off but he doesn't feel that will happen.

Sheriff Trout agreed that will not happen.

Director Mennen asked Sheriff Trout if she would do him a favor: "over the next five business days, send me an accounting of any and all badges or I.D. cards listed through your office under the auspice of the current administration." Sheriff Trout stated she would.

GRANTS

Mr. Glynn informed the Board that with regard to the first item under Grants, concerning County Bridge F-45; there is a need to acquire the right of way for the project.

Lois Stewart confirmed with Mr. Glynn that before a grant is submitted, that the County has to decide to do a project. She asked if the residents have willingly accepted the F-45 project.

Mr. Glynn explained there have been several meetings held in connection with Bridge F-45 on White Bridge Road, in Franklin Township. He can't say the residents are willingly accepting the project but they understand the project and there is a consensus that the project will advance. The grant submission is the next step to get the right of way in order to construct the project.

Mr. Holt moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 10/19/10-7A

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving the submission of an electronic grant application for County Bridge F-45 on White Bridge Road, in Franklin Township, to the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

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

Mr. Holt moved and Mr. Melick seconded this:

See Page 10/19/10-7B

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving the submission of an electronic grant application for Hunterdon County Bridge RQ-179, on Stanton Station Road, in Raritan and Readington Townships, to the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 10/19/10-8A

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving a Subgrant award for the Multi-Jurisdictional County Gang, Gun and Narcotics Task Force grant, through June 30, 2011, with the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, division of Criminal Justice, in the amount of \$51,734.

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

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Holt seconded this:

See Page 10/19/10-8B

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving a renewal application for a General Operating Assistance grant, with the New Jersey Historical Commission, for Cultural and Heritage Commission, through June 30, 2011, in the amount of \$13,162 and with County funds of \$42,609, for the purpose of preserving and promoting Hunterdon's historical significance throughout support of County history-related projects, programs and attendant admission.

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

Mr. Holt moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 10/19/10-8C

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving a modification to the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), for the Musconetcong Watershed (Point Mountain South), to control invasive species and remediate failing water structures.

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

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

See Page 10/19/10-8D

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Approving an amendment to Area Plan Grant #10-061, for Caregivers Support Group, increase in federal funds of \$3,378 and state funds of \$1,922.

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

PROCLAMATION

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Sworen seconded this:

See Page 10/19/10-8E

PROCLAMATION

RESOLVED, Recognizing Evan Xavier Kaplan for attaining the designation of Eagle Scout.

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

CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs. Yard informed the Board that a letter was received from Michael Helbing, expressing interest in taking residence in the stone cottage at the Mountain Farm section of the Teetertown Preserve, in Lebanon Township.

Director Mennen advised there is a process the County uses to accept bids on residential buildings.

Mrs. Yard explained the Mountain Farm stone cottage was vacated by the former Parks and Recreation Director recently. The Freeholder Board will need to decide how to handle this residence. She agreed there is a process in place. This gentleman works in the Parks and Recreation Department who wanted to put his letter of interest into the County.

Mr. Walton confirmed that the Freeholder Board is going to need to decide what services are to be provided by whoever will reside at this facility.

Mrs. Yard advised the County does have Occupancy and Maintenance Agreements where individuals perform certain tasks and their rent is calculated down.

Mr. DeSapio said the County has put out bids as was done with the house at the Route 12 property.

Mrs. Yard stated the Board has to determine what the actual needs are or if it should be opened up as an Occupancy and Maintenance Agreement or if it should be bid. Mrs. Yard will provide a copy of the agreement used for the Board's information.

FREEHOLDERS COMMENTS/REPORTS

Forestry Management Plan

Director Mennen thanked those who wished to speak earlier concerning the County's Forestry Management Plan. There has been some local concern expressed about the limitation of that plan and Director Mennen suggested that the County take a step back and do a full scale review of the plan but not by ourselves but do it with a working group that represents the stakeholders, such as Don Donnally who is a County employee who developed the plan, Emile Devito with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation has offered his services, a representative from the Open Space Advisory Committee-Dr. Kelly who is also a resident of the township, and a representative from the Parks Advisory Board. Director Mennen advised because certain issues/questions have been raised with regard to allowances or restrictions which flow from the Green Acres portion/funding he would suggested that Kevin Richardson also be involved.

Director Mennen explained the idea would be for a collaboration of this working group to talk about the Forestry Management Plan and to see if there is a way to make the plan better. This group could spend weeks meeting, discussing and collaborating if need be and then jointing report back to the Freeholder Board so that the Board can make an informed decision after being provided the benefit of the knowledge base that those individuals bring to the table.

Director Mennen would like to make this a plan which meets everyone's objective and so everyone would be satisfied, including the user groups that have a interest in the property.

Director Mennen noted he has been onsite and has walked the property with Readington Township Committeewoman Julia Allen.

Mr. Walton advised he has walked the site with Committeewoman Allen, Mayor Shamey and a representative from the New Jersey Conservation Foundation over the weekend. He also walked the site this morning with Don Donnally from the County Parks and Recreation Department. The County needs to find a way through this that includes the concerns of the residents of Readington Township. The plan has to meet the goals and objectives of sustainable land management. Mr. Walton would support further meetings concerning the plan by the individuals mentioned by Director Mennen.

Mr. Sworen stated he too has walked the property this past weekend and agrees there are some issues. At this point he agrees with Director Mennen that the County needs to take a better look at the Forestry Management Plan with other experts.

Mr. Holt stated he has an appointment to walk this property in the next week. He concurs with Director Mennen also that further evaluation is needed.

Mr. Melick agreed with the Board that now would be a good time to further look at the plan. There is no hurry to further the project at this time. He has spent time in the woods over the years and is aware of what happens in forests and stated trees are a renewable resource. Nature is amazing.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

John Klotz, Readington Township resident and is a citizen member of the Township's Open Space Advisory Committee. He agrees in general where the County is going short term. He would like to see the focus more on relooking at ways to deal with problems which the Forestry Management Plan is supposed to deal with rather than tweaking the logging. There is a serious question whether logging this property is the way to go; starting with the devastation it will cause to people trying to use this park; what it will do in terms of the invasive re-growth; the problem with the regeneration of the deer and the fact that there are several species of native plants.

Mr. Klotz stated that while there is regeneration from logging, it could be 75 to 100 years before another mature forest is seen there. This is not a farm where forestry is part of the operation and you are trying to keep trees healthy this is a park where people are supposed to see nature happening; to be able to see what happens when trees get old, die, fall down and other trees take their place. He stated if there are problems with diseases that does need to be taken into consideration and dealt with.

Mr. Klotz urged that the County relook at the problems that this process is supposed to solve. He asked the Board to look at this without damaging this mature forest. He feels it is one of the most mature in the area.

Director Mennen said he envisions the collaborative processing doing that.

Betty Anne Fort, resident of Readington Township, suggested the County put someone from the Township Committee on the group who is going to be looking at the plan.

Director Mennen thanked Ms. Fort saying that was a good idea. He would like to see the Readington Township Committee itself recommend who will serve on the committee.

Andrea Bonnet, East Amwell Township resident informed the Board that she has a problem with removing trees. She has been involved with trying to protect the largest, contiguous forest in central New Jersey which is the Sourland Mountains. When trees are removed the deer eat the baby trees so there are no trees. In Hopewell Township someone was able to get a Forest Management Plan approved and the State Forester inspected it and it required having 25 seed trees per acre supposedly so the forest would regenerate itself. She has aerial photographs of this property and it is completely bare. Her point is there are some Foresters who are terrific and then there are some who will sign off on anything. Please do not take the word of one forester.

Beatrice Muir, Readington Township Committee, concurred that a member of the Township Committee should be a part of this reevaluation group. She is personally, very concerned because this area is used by Readington residents as well as, County residents. She has taken both Girl and Boy Scout troops through the area for a plant identification program and has thank you letters for that. There are rare and endangered species in this forest and it is a headwaters area for aquifers that people depend on for their drinking water. There are multi issues and impact on issues in regards to the area marked for logging. The dollars that have gone into this program are Green Acres dollars. Personally, she can think of half a dozen ways she could recommend to the Freeholders to save enough money to cover the income that would be generated at \$65 per tree on this current plan.

Ms. Muir advised the Board she is ready, willing and able to help out in any way she can. She appreciates the Board's consideration and hopes this will come to a conclusion that is beneficial to the County and all residents, with regard to that particular forest.

Frances Gavigan, East Amwell Township resident, recommended when input is being sought, to also include the recreational groups. Mrs. Gavigan suggested a plan where people adopt a tree or rescue a tree.

Mrs. Gavigan congratulated the Freeholder Board on their responsiveness and what is being done in dealing with the problem before it becomes and issue.

Frank Ace, Readington Township resident and is on the Environmental Commission for the township. He is concerned about the project and appreciates Director Mennen's suggestion of stepping back and taking another look with more input. He would like to see the project abandoned and a substitute approach be adopted.

Mr. Holt advised that four years ago when Assemblyman Peterson was sitting on the Freeholder Board, he recommended that there needs to be developed a plan that would ensure maintenance. There maybe a need to look at Open Space and Green Acres and develop a plan which would make sure the properties are in the best condition they could possibly be in. It isn't just a matter of buying land and leaving it; sometimes a second step is needed which provides maintenance on the properties. The Open Space Referendum in 2008 included language that allowed for funding to be used for maintenance if necessary.

Mr. Holt said this Board in 2009 asked employees and residents to provide creative ideas and recommendations on how to raise and save revenue to provide them to the Freeholders. Out of that discussion came the idea of foresting in order to improve the forests and to generate revenue. Mr. Holt does not think the amount of money to be raised was ever the consideration on moving forward on this plan but that is where the idea came from. He said there was a interest which has been peaked which maybe good for the forested lands the County has and through the process we have just gone through, the thoughts are it may not be good for the forested lands. This is the issue today.

Mr. Holt advised he has talked with Director Mennen numerous times this past week on this issue and he feels the process the County is willing to go through now, will arrive at a conclusion that is at the best interest of the property being discussed. This process will assist the County in what may or may not be done in the future with regard to other pieces of forested land.

Julia Allen, Readington Township Committee, understands how this was presented and how it came to be. She said logging a hardwood forest on Green Acres land for revenue which was set aside with public money for preservation for \$65 a tree for 100 year old oaks is a betrayal of the public trust. Ms. Allen said the Board has to realize how this can look to other people. She understands how this was presented and how it came to be and she asked the Freeholders to step back and look at it. If a hardwood forest is left alone, for the short term, it has its own natural systems that are in play.

Director Mennen said for the record, this collaborative effort has been discussed. He confirmed that each of his colleagues is in agreement that the County will proceed on the collaborative effort.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Director Mennen adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise B. Doolan
Clerk of the Board