

SPECIAL MEETING

HUNTERDON COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

Main Street County Complex, Second Floor

Flemington, New Jersey 08822

February 14, 2012

The special meeting of the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders convened in open session at 9:00 a.m. in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.

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

CONVENE

Director Walton announced: "This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice has been given by posting throughout the year a copy of the notice on Bulletin Boards on the First and Second Floor of the Main Street County Complex, Building #1, Flemington, New Jersey, a public place reserved for such announcements. A copy was faxed on or before January 18, 2012, to the Hunterdon County Democrat, The Express, Courier News, Trenton Times, and Star Ledger, newspapers designated to receive such notices and by filing a copy with the Hunterdon County Clerk."

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

FINANCE – CONTINUATION OF BUDGET DISCUSSION

CAP Bank

Mr. Sworen moved and Mr. Holt seconded this:

See Page 02/14/12-1A

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Introduction authorizing the establishment of a CAP Bank. Public hearing for same to be held on February 28, 2012 at 9:30 a.m.

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

Fit Test Discussion

George F. Wagner, Public Safety Director, came before the Board because of a request from the Emergency Services Community that the County profit "fit testing". Fit testing is a requirement through Peosha where volunteers are annually fit tested for their self-contained breathing apparatus. There are two parts to the test, one is a medical clearance and the other is the actual testing. The County has equipment to provide the test and has the person who can administer the test. Mr. Wagner advised the Emergency Services Communities pay a vendor, approximately \$25 per test. Other counties offer this feature to their Emergency Services Communities through their Fire School. Mr. Wagner informed the Board he is interested in providing these services.

Mr. Wagner reported the County's Fire School is funded in excess of \$150,000 per year and provides various training necessary, to police, fire and EMS, in the community. The cost of the training continues to rise. The provision of this service was discussed internally and it can be done cheaper than an outside vendor. Mr. Wagner feels if an instructor were able to provide the fit testing, (around a cost of \$25 an hour) with four tests being done per hour and the Emergency Services Community would be charged \$10 per fit test, which would generate \$40 an hour and would offset the cost of the instructor.

Mr. Wagner has discussed this with the Human Resources Director and Finance to see if this could be done without being absorbed into the existing funding as that would cut some training programs. Finance has determined a fit testing program can not be done with revenues being charged against the costs. Kim Browne, Finance Director advised this was discussed with the Division of Local Government Services and there are quite a few restrictions.

Mr. Wagner stated this is a shared service concept and if the County is willing to share the costs, the Emergency Services Communities are willing to give revenue to offset those costs for a fit testing program. If the County can't have the revenue offset the direct costs, Mr. Wagner suggested taking existing residual funding from the Emergency Management budget, to be used as a trial program. He would like to demonstrate the costs of the program and the revenue achieved to offset the costs, to see if this would be a cost neutral program. He recommended a pilot program for the first year.

Mrs. Browne advised the Finance Office could set up a separate revenue account to track the costs for this program.

Mr. Wagner spoke with County Counsel in reference to a Hold Harmless provision protecting the County's interest, for anyone who does participate in the program.

Mr. Wagner reported that Director Walton provided preliminary numbers of 30 fire companies have an average of 20 members, which could be 600 potential firemen needing this fit test.

Mr. Mennen questioned why fire companies can't contract with the inspector so the County doesn't have to be involved.

Director Walton advised government is already involved because the municipalities are required by government to have fire companies and requires fire company members to have fit tests. If the County provides this testing, it saves taxpayers money. The vendors doing these tests charge more than the County would. In addition, the County already owns the equipment to do the testing. This is local government cooperating with each other to get a service which is currently being done by an outside vendor that the County can do within the confines of local government for less money. In the end, this will save taxpayers money because fire companies will be saving money. The County will see no loss on this program. The municipalities and fire companies will see a modest savings, which will benefit the taxpayer.

The Board confirmed the County currently has the equipment to perform the fit tests, so this would not be an added expense to the County.

Mrs. Yard confirmed with Mr. Wagner that the budget will have to be increased but it will be offset during the second year of the program. She confirmed this would not involve overtime for the instructors.

Mr. Mennen confirmed during the first year the funds would return to surplus with the potential, anticipated revenue offset in the second year, which can't exceed the previous year's revenue.

Mrs. Browne confirmed for the Board that a billing system can be set up for this program.

After further discussion, Mr. Holt moved and Mr. Sworen seconded a motion to provide the "Fit Testing" as a pilot program for the first year.

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

Discussion of Resource Allocation in the Planning Department

Sue Dziamara, Planning Director provided the Board with information outlining the percent of time spent by each individual in her department spends on certain programs and the requirements. The Planning department handles Planning Board meetings, CADB meetings, Farmland, Open Space, Cultural and Heritage. Farmland is a two person.

Mrs. Dziamara had discussions with the Open Space Trust Fund Coordinator on whether the farmland and open space salaries could be applied to the Open Space Tax Trust, in the same way the legal expenses are a part of the acquisition process. The work the Farmland and Open Space people do with regard to preparation and advancing the applications clearly falls under the professional realm and could be considered by the Board as a possible reduction.

Mr. Mennen confirmed with Mrs. Dziamara that some work done for Cultural and Heritage is tied to historic preservation can also be put towards salary.

Mrs. Dziamara spoke with Susan Craft of the State Agriculture Development Board, and the state uses the Garden State Preservation Trust for their professional staff. Ms. Craft also stated that many counties also use the Open Space monies collected to fund the professional level staff. Mrs. Dziamara feels that would be a reasonable expectation for Hunterdon. County Counsel's Office would have to comment on the appropriate way to do.

Mr. Mennen stated if Mr. Richardson is correct that the Planning staff's time can be offset, then they should be keeping their timecards and there should be an ability to offset the costs.

Mrs. Dziamara stated in 2012 she is looking for the Planning staff to provide increased support to the County's municipalities. Municipalities are asking how much more the County's Planning staff can do and if the County can provide services they are currently hiring outside professionals for. Mrs. Dziamara doesn't have that answer.

Mrs. Dziamara stated the North Jersey Transportation Authority, (NJTPA) just received a \$5 million HUD EPA grant and she anticipates the County will be participating in the process to make sure that Hunterdon County is not lost among the larger populated counties.

Mrs. Yard informed the Board that the mandated versus discretionary study has been done, and along with departments being deemed discretionary, they are no less valued in this organization. Also discussed, is that the Planning Director gets direction from the governing body. If there are discretionary services delivered, Mrs. Dziamara has always comes before the Board seeking direction. All grants the County receives are discretionary. The Freeholder Board sets the tone, tenor and the direction for departments. The Board determines how and what services are delivered.

Conferences, Trips, Meetings and Memberships

Mrs. Yard reported that each year departments have been asked to cut their budget line items for conferences, trips, meetings and memberships (805/810/815). Last year over these requests went from over \$100,000 down to around \$25,000.

Mrs. Yard reported the Finance Team has reviewed what is discretionary and what is mandated; very little is mandated for licenses/certifications.

Mrs. Yard advised if someone was in need of training to do their job better; and a one-day training was available, it is seldom denied.

Mrs. Yard stated the Finance Team has learned from last year, that it may have cut back a little too far regarding the 805/810/815 accounts. There are County Associations, such as for the Planners and Engineers, who get together and network and discuss concerns and problems that may not be unique to a county but maybe systemic for the whole state.

Mrs. Yard recommended to the Board that the Finance Team be allowed to view what departments have requested, since the budgets are due back today, and then a reasonable dollar amount be determined (such as \$500), and the department manager can determine what can be done with that.

Director Walton confirmed a financial cap would be assigned to these types of programs/associations/membership and it would be left to the discretion of the managers what will be done.

Mrs. Yard advised that amount would also include training because training is more important than anything else done.

Mrs. Yard suggested the Finance Team look at each budget, see what is reasonable, and provide the managers with a dollar amount to decide how that money should be spent. She feels the managers would respond favorably. Last year letters were sent out to associations asking if people could participate without cost and some said yes, and other said no. Some managers paid for their association dues on their own.

Mrs. Yard will report back to the Board after the budgets have been reviewed.

NJAC Discussion

Mr. Holt advised around three years ago the County did not continue its membership in the New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC). At that time, it was the right move due to the problems which existed within that organization. Mr. Holt has followed NJAC and with the change with the Executive Director and core changes, he feels that NJAC is meeting a criteria, and they have cleaned their house from a financial standpoint. John Donnado, NJAC's Executive Director, is meeting the criteria that NJAC represents all 21 Counties in New Jersey and is working for the benefit of the counties.

Mr. Sworen provided the Board with information on NJAC which he received at their last meeting. He and Mr. Holt attended NJAC's last meeting where Warren County Freeholder, John Gardner, was sworn in as president. Warren County also had issues with NJAC, as did Hunterdon and those issues have been taken care of by this organization through its recent changes.

Mr. Holt and Mr. Sworen recommend that Hunterdon County become an active NJAC member.

The Board will discuss this further at a later meeting.

Pino update on adjustment to Library cost

Note: The Pino report is used by the County as a guide to adjust for costs.

Director Walton stated there are services the County provides to the Library that comes from the County Tax which is not recognized or shown in the Library Tax. The County needs to arrive at a number which fairly represents what those costs are. Those costs should be paid for by the library tax and not paid for by the County tax. When a voter looks at his tax bill, he should have a reasonable idea as to what his tax dollars are going to. Currently the tax bills do not truly represent this. Director Walton would like to see some sort of glide path towards that number.

Mr. Sworen reported a telephone conference was held with Al Pino, himself and the Finance Office, to go over the figures. The Pino report has some things set up by square footage and other things are set by the actual costs, while others are set by the number of employees. The County has the ability to control those figures. Another issue looked at were actual costs, such as utilities for the Library and if it includes just the main branch or the main branch and north and south County branches. Accurate costs numbers have to be determined.

Director Walton feels the Pino Report is 80% correct in his cost projections.

Mrs. Browne advised the Library is charged 1/3rd of the Pino Reports projected cost for the Library.

Mr. Sworen said the taxpayers should pay a Library Tax which is reflective of what the costs are to run the Library.

Director Walton questioned if the Board should settle on a number and work towards it for budget purposes and as a secondary project, the County can look at the actual amount.

Mr. Sworen would like to gather information the Finance Department and other County sources which have the costs for the Library. He would do an analysis to determine where the costs are and he would then come back to the Board with a recommendation on what the true costs are, going back two years because information is being prepared for Pino today for the 2010 report. If there is going to be an allocation change for the 2010 report, the time to do that is now. The County is currently gathering information for Pino to do his report. Mr. Sworen hopes to have information back before the next six weeks is over.

Mrs. Yard confirmed this all comes down to the number which the County is asking the Library to reimburse the County.

Vehicle presentation

Mrs. Yard and John Glynn, Director of Roads, Bridges and Engineering came before the Board regarding vehicles.

Mrs. Yard reported there will not be any discussion regarding the Prosecutor's vehicles.

Mrs. Yard advised today's report concerns all the other County's vehicles which will be considered in two weeks when the Board has its capital discussion. Five vehicles have been requested in the capital budget, so the Fleet Management Committee reconvened to go over this issue.

Mr. Glynn stated the Fleet Management Committee feels there are two specific problems that need to be addressed (1) the aging vehicle fleet and (2) how to replace these vehicles. The fleet is aging quickly and it is costing the County more money to repair the vehicles. There are two cars currently on hold, waiting for direction. It is recommended to replace, up to 10 vehicles for 2012. The vehicles have been evaluated through the Fleet Management Committee, as well as mechanical services. There are rotted out frames; transmissions going; an accident damaged vehicle; a 1990 van used by Human Services which has \$3,200 worth of repairs in it and the book value is \$3,800. Mr. Glynn explained as an engineer looking at cost effectiveness and the cycle cost of vehicles, he is having a difficult time putting \$3,200 into a van that's only worth \$3,800. The accident vehicle is worth \$3,600 and insurance coming back on that is \$3,200 but it has 112,000 miles on it.

Mr. Glynn said the County needs to put together a plan on the replacement of these vehicles. The vehicles have not been replacing the vehicles in a timely fashion. The Freeholder Board approved a vehicle replacement policy around five years ago and it is a good policy but due to the economic situation it hasn't been applied. The County has pieced the fleet together and the County will continue to piece and patch the fleet. Mr. Glynn strongly recommended the Board start to replace the vehicles that absolutely need to be replaced.

Director Walton asked why the vehicles fall apart after 150,000 miles.

Mr. Glynn explained the major reason is corrosion because most vehicles are parked outside and face the elements year round and some of the reasons are mechanical, such as the rotted out brake lines and frames. The County purchases vehicles off of state contract. The County doesn't purchase top end vehicles but you have to consider the type of use the vehicles get. There isn't one consistent driver because a lot of the vehicles are shared within a department.

Director Walton questioned what steps are recommended so vehicles don't fall apart. Mr. Glynn will discuss this with the mechanical staff.

The Board further recommended the undercarriage of the vehicles be washed regularly in order to prevent corrosion, especially in the winter months when salt is on the roads.

Mr. Holt feels the County needs to place an annual allocation in the County budget to assure that vehicles can be replaced, when they are needed, so people are not driving unsafe vehicles.

Mrs. Yard informed the Board the County does have some old ordinances that can be used for the replacement program. This year it would cost \$116,000 to start the program for the purchase of 10 vehicles (cars and trucks).

Mr. Sworen would like the County to consider leasing vehicles, as a possible solution.

Mr. Glynn explained that vehicles have to be detailed, so he isn't sure how that would work. Mr. Sworen stated that is allowed and usually, there is a buyout at the end of the lease.

Mr. Glynn feels the Purchasing Agent has looked at that through the state contract but he will ask him to look again. It is hard to get close to the state contract price.

Mr. Mennen advised it is difficult to make a decision regarding vehicles because there is a number of qualified, general use vehicles that are going home, which should not be going home/used for commuting purposes. This Board does not feel vehicles should be used for commuting purposes. It is difficult to look at a request to purchase new vehicles when there are some vehicles that could be utilized to fill those voids for official business, as opposed for commuting.

Director Walton questioned if a police cruiser/crown Victoria could be a general use vehicle.

Mr. Mennen stated those vehicles are sold as surplus when the department is done with them.

Mrs. Yard reported to the Board that Labor Counsel is working with the Attorney General's Office concerning the Prosecutor's vehicles. The County has not heard back from the Attorney General's Office yet.

Mrs. Yard advised the Prosecutor's people still need vehicles during the day. The Fleet Management Committee agrees the number of vehicles going home/commuting, needs to be addressed to the satisfaction of the Freeholder Board. The Fleet Management Committee has not gone on record to say those vehicles should be available as general use County vehicles.

Mrs. Yard stated that Labor Counsel continues to negotiate with the Prosecutor's Office concerning vehicles.

Mrs. Yard advised the Board will needs to make a decision on its general use fleet vehicles.

Mr. Glynn stressed to the Board to replace two vehicles; one was involved in an accident and should be replaced with an SUV Explorer and the other is the Human Services van used to transport clients to medical appointments. A caravan is used because it is handicapped accessible. The SUV is for the Sheriff's Office and is used to pick up prisoners.

Mr. Mennen confirmed the County has \$132,000 in old ordinances that can be used to purchase replacement vehicles.

Mr. Holt moved and Mr. Sworen seconded a motion authorizing the replacement of a SUV for the Sheriff's Office and a replacement van for the Human Services Department.

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

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No one wished to address the Board at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

Mr. Mennen moved and Mr. Sworen seconded this:

See Page 02/14/12-5A

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss certain personnel issues.

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

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders went into Executive Session at 11:46 p.m. and reconvened in Open Session at 12:04 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Director Walton adjourned the meeting at 12:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise B. Doolan
Clerk of the Board