

# HUNTERDON COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

71 Main Street, Freeholder's Meeting Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Flemington, New Jersey 08822

**February 26, 2013**

The regular meeting of the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders convened at 9:33 a.m. in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.

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

**ABSENT: MR. KING.**

## **OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

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 mailed on or before November 13, 2012, to the Hunterdon County Democrat, Star Ledger, Trenton Times, Courier News and the Express Times, newspapers designated to receive such notices and by filing a copy with the Hunterdon County Clerk."

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

## **CAPITAL BUDGET REVIEW**

### **Vision 2020-Public Safety and Health Services**

George F. Wagner, Director of Public Safety and Health Services advised the Hunterdon County Department of Public Safety was created in 2005 as a move to consolidate public safety and health services provided by the County and the department currently consists of the Divisions of Emergency Services, Emergency Management, Fire Marshal, Corrections and Public Health. The mission of the Department of Public Safety is to provide a wide range of preventative, protective and emergency services aimed at maintaining the quality of life for the general public.

Mr. Wagner stated when he was tasked with formulating a 2020 Vision, he wanted to look at the historical perspectives that his divisions generate their share of statistics and numbers. In order to look at the future we have to look at the past to determine if there are any trends and try to envision what the future might be. Also in order to have vision, he believes a good foundation is necessary. Every employee is made to understand and operate under are the core values. The core values are you don't lie, cheat, or steal. His department does annual integrity checks of everyone in the Department of Public Safety, including himself. The foundation is important as well as moral and ethical values.

Mr. Wagner explained when he was tasked with the 2020 Vision, he broke it down into specific divisions and his vision for Corrections would be preventative maintenance of the existing infrastructure; identify alternative job titles as labor and staffing is the most expensive cost for Corrections. The law enforcement pension now exceeds 70% and the fringe benefit package is costly.

Mr. Wagner reported that when he became Warden of the jail in 1994, the design capacity was for 78 inmates and if infirmary beds were counted, brought the count up to 82. Shortly thereafter the facility was double bunked and the present capacity is 156. Back in 1994 the average commitment capacity at the jail was around 1800 a year and as of 2011, it dropped down to around 1100 commitments a year.

Mr. Wagner believes the County's present jail would suffice up to and including 2020 with the commitments and average daily population as is. Due to the fact the facility is 30 years old, the County should start looking at the infrastructure. He is working with the Facilities Management Committee and the Finance Office on the original control panel for the jail. That control panel is in need of repair/replacement. The County's Division of Buildings and Maintenance is assisting the Jail Administration in addressing the sewer issues. One of the issues is that the population capacity exceeds the capacity of the sewer line.

### **Emergency Services/Communications**

Mr. Wagner stated his vision for Emergency Services/Communications is to continue to modernize the system. Dispatching today is very different from when the system was started back in 1976. Hunterdon County had New Jersey's first countywide dispatch center which handles every police, fire, rescue, sheriff, prosecutor, swat team call. The nature of communications has changed because originally the goal was to tell people where to go, where the fire or emergency was and today with the complexity of mutual aid/fire boxes and the expectations of ourselves and the individual organizations has changed, as well as the community has changed. Mr. Wagner stated Hunterdon County does 125,000 dispatches per year and handle in excess of 240,000 phone calls. With technology today there could be an accident up on Route 78 and dispatch will receive 100 phone calls because everyone has a cell phone and a dispatcher has to vet out if the same accident is being reported, or a different accident and such. Modernizing the system continues but also be able to identify opportunities that become available with technology. An example would be that during Hurricane Sandy, Emergency Services was able to send out 213,000 reverse 911 calls out to the community. That was one person with a computer reaching out to 213,000 people. The County Emergency Services has other technology such as I Am Responding, which is a Homeland Security program that was put out to the Fire and Emergency Management Services Agencies. The organizations

are expected to maintain the individual membership lists and as firefighters or rescue members came or left the organization they would have to be added or deleted from the system, so they receive their individual text messages with I Am Responding, so basically they maintain their own data bases.

Mr. Wagner advised the theme at Emergency Services has been to use technology and make it more user friendly so that the dispatcher can concentrate on dispatching a call. Emergency Services is constantly working on recruitment and retention. He thanked the Board for allowing him to have one of the few departments that can continue to recruit. There is a new set of dispatchers every six months who are trained on County's policies and procedures and over the next five months they are trained in service.

#### Emergency Management

Mr. Wagner reported that the Division of Emergency Management continues to recruit and retain volunteers to augment the County workforce. Examples of that are the County's CERT Team, CART Team, Fire and EMS Coordinators and the Haz-Mat Team.

#### Fire School/Training Center/Emergency Services

Mr. Wagner stated discussions have been held with the Board concerning the Fire School/ Training Center and continuing to provide required and requested training for Emergency Services. Presently being explored are alternatives to the Fire School location. Since the last meeting, he has met with Frank Bell, AIA, Director of Land Use and Facilities Management, in getting a structural engineer on site in order to perform an evaluation. Mr. Wagner and Mrs. Yard are working on answering the questions the Board posed in reference to shared services and whether contiguous counties would be willing and/or able to enter into shared services by law.

Mr. Wagner advised the requirements from either the State Division of Fire Safety, PEOSHA, the New Jersey Department of Health, are requiring more and more training for volunteers. The County facilitated mutual aid agreements because there are some organizations in the County that are staffed and some are not and someone has to meet the challenges when there is an emergency.

#### Health Services

Mr. Wagner reported that Hunterdon County continues to explore all alternatives in the health services area for the delivery service method. Currently, the County's Health Division Officer is attending classes to obtain a Health Officer credential. At this time the County is utilizing a shared service with Sussex County for a shared Health Officer until the County's division manager obtains his credentials. Mrs. Yard stated in addition to classroom learning a health officer must also have administrative experience, which the County's Health Manager is getting.

Mrs. Yard informed the Board that in Somerset County they have shared costs to the participants of Somerset's 911 Center. That information was found in the Star Ledger newspaper.

Mr. Mennen questioned if anything was ever done concerning the Hunterdon Medical Center and shared services.

Mrs. Yard stated nothing has been done with the Hunterdon Medical Center. Currently the County dispatches calls for the Hunterdon Medical Center out of county for them. Mrs. Yard advised the County was looking to barter with the Hunterdon Medical Center or have a shared arrangement for training or an in-kind relationship since the County was dispatching calls and there is a value for that service.

Mrs. Yard also informed the Board that the County is looking to maximize, since there is a designated County Volunteer Coordinator, Jeanne Ferrari, and she is currently assigned to Senior Services as the Mr. Fix-it volunteer coordinator is out on leave. Ms. Ferrari will be going into every area looking at volunteers and programs and then making recommendations to the appropriate party to maximize the County's volunteer services.

Mrs. Yard suggested all directors and department heads should be looking volunteers in order to maximize the volunteer contribution to the County.

Mrs. Yard reported she is on the Board of Trustees at the Hunterdon Developmental Center and the County should look to them to determine if there is a way they can provide training. They have a training department that trains for emergencies.

Mrs. Yard informed the Board that Mr. Wagner and Mr. Rainey (Health Services Manager) have been assigned by her to make sure that after the budget is adopted that the Board consider a shared service model in the Health Department with municipalities. They have developed a fair and equitable system which provides a basic service for health. She explained the approach used in other counties which includes a menu of services. There would be fees assigned for services. This concept is being worked on and a presentation will be made to the Board sometime in April or May 2013.

Mr. Melick asked Mr. Wagner if he had any ideas on what training the Hunterdon Medical Center could provide in exchange for the services the County provides with dispatch.

Mr. Wagner reported that the hospital used to provide Emergency Management Training at one time, as well as Haz-Mat Training.

Mr. Melick feels the County needs to put down on paper what it provides to the HMC and ask them for a response and ask them what they would barter for those services.

Mr. Holt agreed the relationship with the HMC is different than it was five years ago but there are mutual benefits to be had by the County and HMC. He feels the County should go to the HMC with a plan on what the County needs and what the HMC needs and it should be an even exchange. We need to ask them how to make this happen so we can work together.

Mrs. Yard and Mr. Wagner will meet to discuss an approach to the HMC concerning the dispatch services the County provides and the value for the service. Mr. Wagner can recalculate the number of calls and place a value on that service.

After further discussion, Mr. Holt volunteered to meet with the Hunterdon Medical Center on this matter with Mr. Wagner's calculations for services and suggested recommendations for training.

#### Health Services

Mr. Wagner informed the Board that before Christmas 2012, Health Services personnel met to identify what the core services are and what the challenges were. There are less people in Health Services now but they are providing more services, more efficiently. The septic reviews are starting to skyrocket. The personnel have been cross-trained. A private/public partnership was developed so that people can have flu shots and other vaccines if they choose. He is very proud of the Health Services Division and the personnel.

Mr. Wagner advised when the Health Division was brought under the Department of Public Safety they became one cohesive team and everyone is working together and that was evidenced during Hurricane Sandy when everyone was up at Route 12.

#### Grants

Mr. Wagner informed the Board that he continues to identify grants; the Homeland Security Grants are less and less and will be used for maintenance purposes.

#### Tower Sites

Mr. Wagner stated when he was tasked with Vision 2020, he had to take into consideration towers. This year the primary objective is to replace the original 1976 tower. Knowing about the challenges in the communications system, the Whitehouse/Readington area seems to be an area of concern. His 2020 team is looking toward a diversion in taken existing County Park property in order to use it for another purpose. In order to address the Whitehouse area he will be making a request in 2014 for a tower to be placed on the Cushetunk Mountain Reserve property. Mr. Wagner explained they would not be going into pristine wilderness and cutting trees to erect a tower. Currently the water company or DEP, has a garage there with dump trucks and it would be the perfect site for the tower. If the Board approved a tower in the area, he would apply for a diversion.

Mrs. Yard informed Mr. Wagner that obtaining a diversion is time consuming and suggested if the Board embraced this recommendation, that he start that process now.

Frank J. Bell, AIA, Director of Land Use and Facilities Management recommended another site to Mr. Wagner at the Tower Hill property in Bethlehem Township. Also, there are vendors who are willing to erect the tower at their costs and the County can hang their equipment. A tower in this area would take care of the Whitehouse/Readington area.

#### Vision 2020-Land Use and Facilities Management

Mr. Bell came before the Board concerning the Divisions of Buildings and Maintenance, Parks and Recreation, Rutgers' Cooperative Extension, and Planning.

Mr. Bell advised when he started looking at his divisions, he looked at how to share all their services and what they had in common. Planning, Parks and Recreation work well together because of long term master plans for the parks system; plus the purchase and maintenance of property. Rutgers fits in as its Department head is part of the County's CADB (County Agricultural Development Board) and they also work on the preservation and recommendations for property.

Mr. Bell will be looking at how these groups can better work together in order to get more information and better information so when property purchases are made, they are smart purchases.

Mr. Bell advised the maintenance Division of Parks and Recreation has been moved into the Division of Buildings and Maintenance. So now, Buildings and Maintenance is also looking at purchases of properties because the properties need to be maintained and they can estimate the cost and time for such.

Mr. Bell stated that Rutgers teaches people about food stamps and nutrition and they can be beneficial to Social Services but Rutgers also has farmers on properties maintaining it.

Mr. Bell reported that the Division of Buildings and Maintenance began working on a facilities review last year; a preventive maintenance schedule has been put into place; and they are developing a comprehensive space inventory because the County owns many properties throughout the County which would also show time spent on repairs and what properties are needed and how they are being used.

Mr. Bell has already looked at Building #1 at the Route 12 County Complex and counters in the restrooms need to be replaced. They will be looking at the walls, floors and ceiling also. Mr. Bell assured the Board that they will be repairing items, one item at a time and he will make sure money will be budgeted for the items over a period of time.

Mr. Holt stated the County needs to start to place funds in the budget each year in order to maintain its buildings. He confirmed with Mr. Bell that the maintenance work is being done in-house.

#### Parks and Recreation

Mr. Bell advised there are many camping opportunities available in the County's Parks, especially Echo Hill.

Mr. Bell stated he would like to look into having volunteers assist in maintaining trails at the various Parks. He and Shana Taylor, County Counsel are looking at how that can be done, along with the County's Risk Manager, to determine how that can be done so that the County is property insured. There are various Trail Commissions and Committees that would like to work with the County on maintaining trails and clean them up.

Mrs. Yard stated currently it is County policy to now allow volunteers to use power tools because if it is allowed the County would have to have a higher insurance coverage. The County would have to weigh out if the end justifies the means. Mrs. Yard stated she has already had this conversation with Ms. Taylor.

Mrs. Yard informed Mr. Bell that Jeanne Ferrari the County's Volunteer Coordinator is going to be assigned 10 hours a week in every area that has volunteer programs. She would be able to do research and determine what is available.

Mr. Bell reported that the County's Parks and Recreation Division will be looking at funding opportunities that go through the state.

Mrs. Yard advised that Parks and Recreation does have a Trust Account that can be used for salaries or for equipment that is programmatic in nature. That is a valuable resource which Parks and Recreation has built up.

Mrs. Yard recommended Mr. Bell take a hard look at the Parks Advisory Board and the Open Space Advisory Board (OSAC) in order to maximize their services. In 2000, when the Board of Recreation Commissioners became a Department the Freeholder Board at that time, extended an olive branch to the existing Board of Recreation Commissioners asking if they would like to be a part of the Parks Advisory Board. Through the years the Advisory Board had no real purpose or function, they would make a recommendation and nothing would come of it. Mrs. Yard stated it is a waste of a resource if the County doesn't make this Advisory Board productive. There have also been discussions about combining OSAC and the Parks Advisory Board as they look at similar matters.

Mr. Holt agreed combining OSAC and Parks Advisory Board makes a great deal of sense. The Board should set a path for them and part of that should be to have guidelines to complete the County's Park System. The County needs to establish what is the completion point and determine how many acres of parkland does Hunterdon County need to have and complete it. The County needs to complete its Open Space Program and also the Farmland Preservation Program. The County needs to figure out what is needed for stewardship for these properties and the referendum should take care of that. Mr. Holt questioned if trail maintenance is not included in stewardship of the land.

Mr. Holt recommended the Board start to look at stewardship, overall, and develop a model because in five to ten years, all that will be needed is funds for maintenance, not for acquisition.

#### Cleaning Crew

Director Walton informed the Board that emails have been received about once every three months concerning the cleaning service the County is using and what kind of progress is being made with them.

Mr. Bell advised daily meetings have been held with All Clean and Pete Maddalena of Buildings and Maintenance. Mr. Bell has also been involved with All Clean. He is aware of email exchanged recently concerning the cleanliness of some of the buildings, one of them being the Justice Center. Mr. Bell investigated at the Justice Center and was unable to see what was complained about. In general, the building was clean. However, there are some items his office is trying to clear up such as the Library and the Justice Center need to be cleaned twice a day because of foot traffic, especially at the libraries. The restrooms in the libraries are high use areas. Currently being developed is a checklist where Mr. Maddalena physically inspects a building and talks with a manager.

Mr. Bell advised when the bid for cleaning services was done, the Rutgers' Cooperative Extension was located in the Route 31 County Complex and they are now located in a separate building at the Route 12 County Complex so All Clean was not scheduled to clean that building. The contract had to be modified to pick up a 5 day cleaning for the Rutgers' building.

Mrs. Yard reported that Mr. Bell, she and Mr. Davenport have met with the head of All Clean and a conscience decision was made with All Clean that the contract would be extended with the understanding if the County wasn't satisfied that the contract would not be extended again. Mrs. Yard feels overall the buildings are as clean as they were when the County had its own staff.

#### Planning/2020

Mr. Holt questioned what Planning does today that it did not do 5 or 10 years ago.

Mrs. Yard stated the governing body has the responsibility to use their limited resources to determine what must be done and what the right things are especially in discretionary services. The Planning Services is driven by initiatives or things the Board has expressed a want for. A governing body's responsibility to choose what will be done with limited resources is reflective in the list prepared for Planning for shared services, and the rail line, and such.

Mr. Holt advised Mrs. Yard is correct that the Board wants Planning to continue working on Farmland preservation, Open Space and Cultural and Heritage.

Mr. Bell informed the Board that in the budget there is \$20,000 for a tent at the Heron Glen Golf Course and the Purchasing Department is going to get quotes for a used tent and someone would maintain the tent for \$5,000 a year. He feels the cost of the tent would be no more than \$2,500. Mr. Bell recommended purchasing a tent which would save around \$15,000 a year.

Mr. Holt expressed interest in looking at the specifications for the quote as he has experience in that area.

#### County Administrator/Merit Based System

Mrs. Yard advised she has talked with the Board about a Merit Based System. The senior managers and Mrs. Yard have been working hard on this. The performance appraisal tool is being rolled out in July 2013. She doesn't need the Board's approval to do that. This is just a tool.

Mrs. Yard stated when she first came to the County one of her charges was to make sure that evaluations took place on a regular basis. It is now time to kick that up a notch. Mrs. Yard is currently using Denise Doolan and Jeannie Ferrari as test subjects for this project. She briefly went over the appraisal tool that will be used which identifies whether people are meeting their expectations or exceeding them or not meeting them. In performance management you have to look at behaviors (how work gets done) and results (what gets done). It is important to measure results.

Mrs. Yard advised if this appraisal system/Merit Based System is brought on to use, the Board has to be committed to continue to use this merit based system. In looking at uniform benefits, by comparing the contracts the County has with various employees, it was felt the County should be recognizing people who are doing a good job and who isn't doing the job. It will be difficult to negotiate this into a contract because people don't want their salary increase tied to how they do their job.

Mrs. Yard reported the 5 senior staff has suggested this system should focus on the supervisors so that twice a year there would be an evaluation using this tool. This tool is generic to everyone used to identify what spells success. Mrs. Yard went thought the form to be used for the Merit Base System. This will make supervisors be responsible and the directors will be responsible to make sure their division managers are doing what they should be. Mrs. Yard has offered to have workshops with the directors and their division managers to talk about how they can identify the performance metrics for success.

Mrs. Yard stated she is asking the Board to consider piloting this program in 2013 with unaffiliated, non-contractual employees. If the Board agrees, then the Merit Base System would be started in 2014 countywide. If this is done, then the Board would have to put in the budget money for those merit base raises. The purpose of this system is to groom and develop staff.

Mr. Holt stated the County has lost employees and in order for that to be a sustainable model in Hunterdon County we have to do something like this in order to attract the best workforce possible.

Mrs. Yard will keep the Board posted on the Merit Base System as she moves it forward.

#### FINANCE

The Board discussed a resolution to exceed the County Budget Appropriation limits and to establish a CAP bank and directed the Clerk of the Board to place it on the March 5, 2013 agenda for the Board to consider.

Mr. Holt moved and Mr. Melick seconded this:

**See Page 2/26/13-5A**

#### **RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Rescinding the petty cash fund for the Clerk of the Board, as it is no longer necessary.

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

#### NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Mennen moved and Mr. Holt seconded this:

**See Page 2/26/13-5B**

#### **RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving Appointments to the Solid Waste Advisory Council.

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

Director Walton asked the Board to review the Capital Budget requests and then directed the Clerk of the Board to schedule a budget session on March 05, 2013, prior to the next meeting at 1:00 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Director Walton adjourned the meeting at 11:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Denise B. Doolan  
Clerk of the Board