

HUNTERDON COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

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

January 22, 2013

The regular meeting of the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders convened at 9:30 a.m. in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.

PRESENT: MR. WALTON, MR. KING, MR. MENNEN.

ABSENT: MR. HOLT, MR. MELICK.

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

MOMENT OF SILENCE

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders held a moment of silence to recognize the passing of former Readington Township Police Chief James Paganessi.

Mr. Melick came into the meeting at 9:32 a.m.

FLEET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Director Walton reported that the Fleet Management Committee met; along with a member of the County Prosecutor's staff to discuss a replacement schedule for all vehicles in the County's fleet.

Mrs. Yard reported, on behalf of the Fleet Management Committee, saying they met with Det. Kevin Burd. Their capital request asks for 5 vehicles (3 SUVs and 2 undercover vehicles). 2 of the SUVs' would be replacements for two Crown Victoria and one would be a replacement for a SWAT vehicle.

Mrs. Yard reported there was a discrepancy in the County's records, as Garage Services had identified three vehicles which needed to be replaced using the County's criteria of mileage and/or repair of each vehicle. John Glynn, Director of Roads, Bridges and Engineering was asked to talk with Garage Services to identify if all 5 vehicles needed to be replaced.

Mrs. Yard advised the agreement which the Prosecutor had entered into with the Board of Chosen Freeholders was discussed with Det. Burd and he did a fine job in showing each vehicle and the assignment of the vehicles, with the exception of the 5 replacement requested vehicles. Mrs. Yard feels the only difference of opinion was the County was saying 3 replacements while the Prosecutor's Office says 5.

Mrs. Yard stated that using the County's criteria, there was discussion from Fleet Management that it would cost \$711,000 to replace all vehicles countywide, if the Board wanted to adhere to the criteria for mileage and repair schedule. Fleet Management discussed if the Board were to only provide \$300,000 in the budget, how would that be utilized. Mr. Glynn and the Fleet Management Committee think if the Board was able to give \$400,000 then the County would be able to recommend to the Board that 4 of the 5 requested vehicles for the Prosecutor get recommended for approval; with 3 coming from capital and the 4th would be purchased with the dollars from two insurance settlements for two of the total cars by the Prosecutor's Office; and to also use the dollars in the VOCA grant line item because the County wants to purchase 2 of their low use mini vans. Mrs. Yard stated the County is getting a decision from the grant administration in Trenton to detail how this can be done.

Mrs. Yard advised if the Board were to approve the \$711,000 on Countywide vehicle replacement; then the 5th requested Prosecutor vehicle would be purchased. If the Board were to only approve \$400,000 then 4 of the 5 requested vehicles by the Prosecutor's Office could be replaced.

Mrs. Yard stated there used to be a member from the Prosecutor's Office on the County's Fleet Management Committee and suggested there again be someone from the office on the Committee. Even though the Prosecutor is a somewhat autonomous office, the bottom line is that the overall budget is approved by the governing body and all requests in the fleet have to be considered.

Michelle N. Masicola-Verish, Prosecutor's Office advised if funding is returned to the VOCA grant, it has to be returned to that line it, it can't be used to purchase vehicles for the detectives to drive. The funding would have to go towards either training or education.

Director Walton questioned what other vehicles, besides the Prosecutor's Office vehicles are a part of the \$400,000.

Mrs. Yard explained for the record, that would include the 4 pickup trucks for Roads and Bridges; 1 Parks vehicle and 3 (capital) of the five vehicles plus alternative funds would have to be found for the other 2 requested vehicles. If the Board says \$400,000 then the Fleet Management Committee would have to meet again to determine the priorities.

Mrs. Yard stated if the Board proactively places money into the fleet account each year so when these vehicles really need replacement, the funds would be there.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. King moved and Mr. Melick seconded this:

See Page 01/22/13-2A

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss the Tax Administrator's position.

See Page 01/22/13-2B

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, Executive Session to discuss an update on negotiations with the 4-H Fair Committee.

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

DEPARTMENT HEADS/DIVISION MANAGERS

Crime Scene Vehicle (\$40,000)

County Prosecutor, Anthony Kearns, came before the Board to explain a crime scene vehicle will be purchased out of Homeland Security Grant Funds and it will need to be outfitted with various equipment.

Det. Burd advised in 2011 the County received a Homeland Security Grant showing there was approximately \$56,000 that was preliminary approved for this purchase provided it would come back before the Board again with the specifications. As of last Friday, those specifications were received in the Prosecutor's Office from a GSA vendor. Based on the funding from Homeland Security, the Prosecutor's Office is looking at the purchase of the vehicle plus an estimated \$40,000 to outfit that vehicle. Since then, it looks like there maybe additional funding from the 2011 Homeland Security Grant and he is working on identifying additional funds in order to put this package together to purchase the vehicle completely outfitted through Homeland Security funding. He will be reviewing the recently received specifications with the Prosecutor's crime scene people and he will supply a better report to the Board in the near future.

Director Walton confirmed with Mrs. Browne that in the Prosecutor's Capital Requests is \$10,000 for SWAT Radios; \$5,000 for undercover surveillance items; and \$5,000 for polygraph equipment, equally \$20,000.

Director Walton confirmed for Mr. Mennen that the Board can accept the recommendation as presented or it can be held while the Board looks at all the capital requests or the Board can ask the Prosecutor's Office to get a firm number.

Director Walton asked the County Prosecutor if getting 4 out of 5 vehicles for his department, would be detrimental to his department.

Prosecutor Kearns informed the Board that he did not ask for anything he did not need. There is a need for those vehicles. The Freeholders will ultimately decide what the County can do. Prosecutor Kearns advised he justified in his report that there was a real need for the 5 vehicles.

Director Walton advised he would support the five vehicles for the Prosecutor's Office and asked the Board for comments.

Mr. King agreed to support the Prosecutor's request for vehicles.

Mr. Mennen asked the Prosecutor if he was more open minded this year, than in previous years to discuss the use of vehicles.

Prosecutor Kearns advised he is going to stick with the agreement which was negotiated last year.

Mr. Mennen suggested holding this discussion in abeyance at this time. The County has in the past tried to reduce budgets by 10%.

Director Walton directed Mrs. Browne to keep the number in the budget as is, until she is directed to make cuts.

Mr. Melick said the issue here really is revenue and the ability to pay. The County's ratable base is shaky and those numbers tell the Freeholders what the bottom line will be. He wants to ask the taxpayers what they can fund.

Director Walton instructed Mrs. Browne to put \$400,000 for vehicles in the budget at this time.

Prosecutor's Capital
Garage Facility

Director Walton stated the Prosecutor is asking for \$100,000 for a garage facility for police vehicles and also \$80,000 to house a SWAT vehicle.

Director Walton advised one of the items in the budget for Public Safety is to do an architectural study for the Fire School Academy. Part of that layout has the potential of hosting these facilities and that would take the \$100,000 and \$80,000 out of the Capital Budget this year.

Prosecutor Kearns stressed that the need is present and he can be flexible on how this is accomplished. The need goes back to 2006 in a report calling for those types of facilities because the situation will arise where those facilities are needed in order to properly preserve evidence and prosecute a case. He wants to be flexible and work with the Board on getting this accomplished.

Equipment Purchase

Director Walton questioned if the Board has any comments on the \$20,100 equipment purchase request for the Prosecutor.

Director Walton stated items on pages 30, 31, and 32 will not be part of the capital budget and can be removed.

Prosecutor Kearns stated he has been working with Mr. Glynn on alternate solutions regarding vehicle storage.

Director Walton confirmed with Prosecutor Kearns that more than 25% has been cut from his budget and asked if there is a possibility of further cuts.

Director Walton asked Prosecutor Kearns to address the need for polygraph equipment.

Prosecutor Kearns asked Det. Burd to address this issue for the Board.

Headsets

Det. Burd informed the Board that this past year and last, each County is to receive approximately \$100,000 in Homeland Security funding, to be used towards maintenance fees. All of the headsets and earpieces the SWAT team members use are going on 5 to 6 years old and the repair costs are getting very close to what it would cost to replace them. The headsets costs between \$800 to \$1,000 each. The office currently has 20 headsets and they have seen better days. The purchase of headsets will be spaced out over several years.

Polygraph

Prosecutor Kearns informed the Board that his office is sending a detective to be trained in polygraph. His office does not currently have a polygraphist. This is a significant tool used in investigative processes. If his office needs a polygraphist on short notice that could cost up to \$3,500 for someone to do that. It is responsible for this to be available to his office when the need arises and the need does arise and it serves as a significant investigative tool. Prosecutor Kearns stated the polygraph his office currently has is very outdated.

Surveillance Equipment

Prosecutor Kearns explained his office is in need of undercover body wire to be used in developing a case.

Mr. Mennen stated he is far more inclined to fund these items as he can see the relationship to law enforcement easier than he can with the matter of vehicles.

The Prosecutor and the members of his staff left the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Vision 2020

Mrs. Browne reported that at the February 12, 2013 meeting the Vision 2020 will be presented.

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders went into Executive Session at 10:01 a.m. and reconvened in Open Session at 10:38 a.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Director Walton adjourned the meeting at 10:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise B. Doolan
Clerk of the Board