

# HUNTERDON COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

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

Flemington, New Jersey 08822

August 05, 2014

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders convened in Open Session at 5:00 p.m., in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings act.

**PRESENT: MR. KING, MS. LAGAY, MR. LANZA, MR. WALTON.**

**ABSENT: MR. HOLT.**

## **OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

Deputy Director King 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 July 30, 2014, to the Star Ledger, Trenton Times, Courier News, Express Times and the HC News (online), newspapers designated to receive such notices and by filing a copy with the Hunterdon County Clerk."

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Lanza moved and Ms. Lagay seconded these:

**See Page 08/05/14-1A**

### **RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Executive Session to discuss an employee in the Finance Department who has been Rice Noticed.

**See Page 08/05/14-1B**

### **RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Executive Session to receive a negotiations update for the CWA Supervisory Unit.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. WALTON, MR. KING.**  
**(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders went into Executive Session at 5:05 p.m. and reconvened in Open Session at 5:30 p.m.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Deputy Director King opened the meeting to the public.

Barbara Suchau, Raritan Township resident, stated she asked at the last meeting about the County Library being opened on Sundays and questioned if the Board supports that idea.

Deputy Director Holt reported that the Library Director has been out on sick leave, and the Board would like to give him the opportunity to come back and determine if this can be done through his budget.

Ms. Suchau asked about the steps in front of the Library and who is responsible for fixing them.

Deputy Director King explained those steps are currently under construction.

Frank J. Bell, AIA, Director of Land Use and Facilities Management explained the County's safety coordinator has placed barriers in front of the Library steps. A bid for repairs will be advertised and he will be talking to the Board about the work for the Library foyer/patio area at a later date.

Ms. Suchau asked about the routine resolution in the consent agenda regarding hunting. She feels this is not a routine matter and feels it should be recognized as controversial. She asked this resolution be held until another meeting so notice can be given to the public.

### **POLYTECH Update**

Dan Kerr, Polytech Principal came before the Board, as Dr. Kim Metz is currently away.

Mr. Kerr reported that members of Polytech have continued their strategy meetings, and have visited the Bergen, Passaic, Union, Morris and Somerset Vocational Technical Schools.

Mr. Kerr reported that Polytech currently has over 500 students applying for vocational education next year, (2015), and that will cause the school to be over capacity. At this time, 11 of the 21 programs have been closed for new students as they are filled to capacity. Polytech has programs including Law Enforcement, Nursing, Health Science, Criminal Justice, Teacher Academy which requires a GPA of over 3.0 to get into and these students are also enrolled as college students; as well as high school students.

Mr. Kerr advised Polytech held its annual retreat at Raritan Valley Community College last Tuesday. He thanked Freeholders King and Lagay for attending the retreat.

Mr. Kerr stated that Dr. Metz will provide the Board with Polytech's final strategic planning report shortly that will include short and long range plans. He thanked the Freeholders for their continued support.

**PURCHASING**

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Lanza seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-2A**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving Requisition #SUR.643, using State Contract #A-77003, with Dell, for probate system software license, for the Surrogate's Office, in the amount of \$144,808.29.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Walton moved and Ms. Lagay seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-2B**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving Requisition #40036776, using State Contract #A-77003, with Software House International, for a software system, for the Finance Office, in the amount of \$130,586.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MS. LAGAY, MR. LANZA, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Lanza moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-2C**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Authorizing the award of Bid #2014-12, for the Painting of various Bridges, to Aussie Painting Corp., in an amount not to exceed \$193,930.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. LANZA, MR. WALTON, MS. LAGAY, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Lanza moved and Ms. Lagay seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-2D**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Authorizing the award of Bid #2014-13, to furnish and deliver 1 new, unused Swap-Loader Hook-Lift Unit, to Henderson Products, Inc., amount not to exceed \$54,583.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. WALTON, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Lanza seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-2E**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Authorizing the award of Bid #2014-14, for the reconstruction of County Bridge E-174, to Konkus Corporation, amount not to exceed \$2,122,637.04.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Walton moved and Ms. Lagay seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-2F**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Authorizing the award of Bid #2013-26, for the Installation of Sanitary Sewer at the County Correctional Facility, to CMS Construction, Inc., amount not to exceed \$178,865.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MS. LAGAY, MR. LANZA, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Lanza seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-2G**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving Quote #0050-2014, for an agreement for construction engineering and inspection services for County Bridge E-174 and Approach Roadway of County Route 602 (Wertsville Road), over the Back Brook, in East Amwell Township, with Cherry, Weber and Associates, PC, in an amount not to exceed \$242,341.31.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

## **LAND USE AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Frank J. Bell, AIA, Director of Land Use and Facilities Management, updated the Board on various County facilities and projects.

- Emergency Services Training Academy (new), a meeting was held today on how to obtain quotes and set up a committee for review. The quotes are due back in September.
- Emergency Services Training Center (existing), doors are now onsite at the burn building. The Fire Marshal, Bruce Fuller is coordinating with the Bridge Shop to install the doors.
- Route 12 County Complex, Building #1, Fire Alarm System, the vendor was onsite today doing a review of the fire alarm panel and they should complete the installation of the new fire alarm panel and the heads.
- Route 31 County Complex, HVAC work for Buildings #2 and 3, bids are due on August 22, 2014.
- Sidewalk Repairs, permission to bid the project will be on the next agenda. This projects includes sidewalks at the Library Headquarters, the Jail, Court Street, North Branch Library, and other various curbs and sidewalks.
- Jail Grinders, the project is on today's agenda for approval by the Board.
- Justice Center, HVAC Renovations, the quotes will be reviewed carefully and this project should be ready for Board consideration on September 02, 2014.
- Generators, the vendor has completed the work to connect the Traffic Maintenance Building to the Haz-Mat Building. Mr. Bell is working with the Emergency Services Coordinator on the FEMA funded generators to power Route 12 Building #1, which is used as the county's shelter.
- Arboretum, well replacement, bids have been received and are being evaluated, the project should be awarded shortly.
- WIB, existing drawings for space for the One-Stop have been sent to the WIB for review and comment.
- Jail, Light Replacement, this project is now complete.
- Bridge Repair/Renovation, West Amwell Township, a meeting is scheduled on August 13, 2014, at 1 pm, with the New Jersey State Parks personnel and interested parties to visit the site.

## **FARMLAND PRESERVATION/OPEN SPACE**

Mr. Lanza moved and Ms. Lagay seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-3A**

### **RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving a Non-Profit application from the D&R Greenway, upon a recommendation from the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee, in the amount of \$30,000 (20% of purchase price), to acquire in fee simple, Block 35, Lot 18.01, in East Amwell Township, estimated 10 acres, for the East Jersey Developers Acquisition.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. WALTON, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Lanza moved and Ms. Lagay seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-3B**

### **RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving a Cooperative Assistance application, with East Amwell Township, upon a recommendation from the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee, in the amount of \$45,000 (30% of the purchase price), estimated 10 acres, for Block 35, Lot 18.01, known as the East Jersey Developers Acquisition.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. WALTON, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Lanza moved and Ms. Lagay seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-3C**

### **RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving a Cooperative Assistance application, with Delaware Township, upon a recommendation from the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee, amount of \$190,000 (estimated 50% of purchase price), estimated 26 acres, to acquire in fee simple, Block 42, Lot 3, known as the Reimer Farm/Dilts Park Expansion Acquisition.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. WALTON, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Items #4 and 5 for the Lebanon Township Museum and the Doric House are held at this time and are being referred back to the Open Space Advisory Committee for additional discussion and research.

Tom Merrel, of Lebanon Township came before the Board supporting the request for the Township Museum.

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Lanza seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-4A**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving a Historic Preservation application, upon a recommendation from the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee, with The Hunterdon Land Trust, for Block 49, Lot 2, for restoration and rehabilitation of the wagon house on the Case Dvoor Homestead, amount of \$99,550.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Lanza seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-4B**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving a Historic Preservation application, upon a recommendation from the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee, with the Quakertown United Methodist Church, for Block 37, Lot 35, for the restoration and exterior painting of the Quakertown United Methodist Church, in the amount of \$14,250.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Ms. Lagay moved and Mr. Walton seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-4C**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving a Historic Preservation application, upon a recommendation from the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee, with the 1759 Vought House, Inc., for Block 60, Lot 56.01, for the exterior restoration of the masonry of the Vought House, in the amount of \$15,000.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MS. LAGAY, MR. WALTON, MR. LANZA, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Lanza moved and Ms. Lagay seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-4D**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving a Contract for Sale of Development Easement, from Hill and Dale Farms, Inc., Block 38, Lot 1.04, Tewksbury Township, (SADC-\$956,046; County-\$318,682; Township-\$0; NJCF-\$37,492; FRPP-\$281,190), total amount of \$1,593,410.

Ms. Lagay questioned the amount of money for the purchase of this parcel.

Shana Taylor, County Counsel, explained this is the farmland preservation piece of the acquisition of a development easement. The County will not be the title owner.

Mr. Lanza reported that this paperwork must also go through the State as well for approval, as they are putting up the lion's share of this funding.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. WALTON, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

**FOR DISCUSSION**

**Ads for Link Buses**

Jennifer Shore, Human Services Administrator came before the Board regarding ads for the LINK buses, in order to generate revenue.

Deputy Director King explained this issue has been discussed by the Board before; there are vendors who do this for a living; and now it is being discussed formally.

Deputy Director King opened the meeting for questions.

Mr. Lanza added that the County is talking about advertising on the County's LINK buses which provides an opportunity to bring in revenue by virtue of advertising and any revenue helps the County take pressure off of the County's taxpayers. There is no a lot of money to be made through advertising but it is revenue.

Mrs. Shore explained that the amount to be received from the advertising would depend on the type of advertising bid for. The wrap style advertising does bring in more revenue and the entire fleet could be offered up for advertising. Clearly the more space offered in the bid and the more aggressive the County would be in the wrap style, the more revenue would be generated. Most of the Counties in New Jersey seem to generate on the size of the fleet. Mrs. Shore anticipates anywhere from \$25,000 to \$40,000 to be received after a 50/50 split with the vendor. The advertising would be on 30 LINK buses.

Mrs. Shore confirmed with Ms. Lagay that the County would have to go through the New Jersey Transit Advertising policy which restricts ads regarding tobacco, firearms, and any morally questionable materials. Also, the County does have in place an advertising committee who would meet on a regular basis to review the ads; so there are internal checks and balances.

Mrs. Shore stated in the contracts, is a drop out clause, so if at any time there is any advertising the County does not approve of, it will be removed immediately.

Mrs. Shore confirmed for Ms. Lagay that the County currently has a policy in place but it is at least eight years old and it will be revisited to make sure it is updated. The policy is similar to what New Jersey Transit has in place.

Mrs. Shore stated the County would need to be very specific in its bid specifications what it expects of the vendor doing the marketing. Discussions have been held regarding preferences for local businesses and have a certain amount of small ads set aside to insure local companies will be able to compete.

Mr. Lanza confirmed with Mrs. Shore that potential bidders may not bid if the County is too restrictive of what is allowed on the buses. Mrs. Shore stated the vendor is only going to make what the County makes.

Mrs. Shore informed the Board that RFP's have been obtained from other counties to see what have done. Discussions have been held with some brokers to see what kind of specifications they look to. The Purchasing Agent, John Davenport has been assisting in this process.

Deputy Director King suggested going through the RFP process to see what would be available and what type of competition there is for this market or the Board can review a draft RFP at the next meeting.

Mr. Walton stated he is against putting ads on the LINK buses. While he would like to lessen the burden to the taxpayers, he doesn't believe this will do that. He feels the County will spend \$30,000 to \$40,000 every year in administrating this in dealing with issues and controversies which will come up. Mr. Walton feels the County would only break even on this.

Mr. Walton stated a great deal of money is spent in Hunterdon County to make things look nice, from the sidewalks, to the streetscapes, to the bridges. The County spends a lot of money to make bridges pretty and not just functional. It is a contradiction to what the County does by making the LINK buses look like diner placemats. Hunterdon County is supposed to be a pleasing aesthetic place and this is countertuitive to that.

Mr. Walton could support aesthetically pleasing wraps that advertise the County's towns and shows a bucolic setting on the side of a bus. This would help the County with its CED's goals. He does not feel the County should waste time on bidding this.

Mr. Lanza does not feel this would be a blot on the County's landscape any more than it already is. Instead of the bleak color currently on the LINK bus there would be an ad that makes some revenue and does not cost the taxpayers anything.

Deputy Director King feels this venture is worth investigating. He does not feel the Board is convinced this is the right thing to do but he can see the QuickCheck Balloon Festival being advertised on the buses or the vineyard tours. This can be done with buses that depict things that are important to Hunterdon County. There is an opportunity here and its essential for the County to investigate that opportunity and he is interested in at least pursuing the RFP.

Mrs. Shore advised the reason this is being pursued, is so New Jersey Transit money would not be lost. New Jersey Transit is assisting counties in ways to have alternate revenue sources. Hunterdon has done the rideshare fees to bring in funds. This is one option that Hunterdon has not taken on as an alternate revenue stream.

Mrs. Shore feels an advantage to looking at advertising, is as the County is looking to expand transportation outside of the traditional Human Service model, changing the look of some of the buses might be advantageous in terms of marketing to new commuters or people who are not the typical LINK riders. The advertising is timely in that if it can be done with some wraps being developed, it will lend itself to getting more riders.

Mr. Lanza moved and Ms. Lagay seconded a motion authorizing the Human Services Administrator and the Purchasing Agent, to move forward with a Request for Proposals for ads for the LINK buses.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. LANZA, MR. LAGAY, MR. KING.  
(NAY) MR. WALTON.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Deputy Director King 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."

Checks #146537 and #17281 were held at this time.

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Lanza seconded a motion to pay claims in accordance with the Claims Register dated August 05, 2014, minus Checks#146537, #146437 and #17281.

**See Page 08/05/14-6A**

**CLAIMS REGISTER**

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Lanza seconded a motion to pay Check #146537 as listed on the August 05, 2014 Claims Register.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY.  
(ABSTAIN) MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Lanza seconded a motion to pay Check #146357 and #17281 as listed on the August 05, 2014 Claims Register.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MR. LANZA, MR. KING.  
(ABSTAIN) MS. LAGAY.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Lanza seconded a motion to approve the regular session minutes of May 06, 2014 and May 20, 2014.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Lanza seconded these:

**See Page 08/05/14-6B**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Frank Cordero appointed unclassified, full time Chief Investigator County Jail, Division of Corrections, Department of Public Works and Health Services.

**See Page 08/05/14-6C**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Sonia Noriega-Scielzo appointed full time, County Correction Officer, Division of Corrections, Department of Public Works and Health Services.

**See Page 08/05/14-6D**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Jesse Cvecich appointed full time, County Correction Officer, Division of Corrections, Department of Public Works and Health Services.

**See Page 08/05/14-6E**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Kenneth Fromm appointed full time, County Correction Officer, Division of Corrections, Department of Public Works and Health Services

**See Page 08/05/14-6F**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Scott Little appointed full time, County Correction Lieutenant, Division of Corrections, Public Safety and Health Services Department.

**See Page 08/05/14-6G**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Melissa Allen appointed full time, unclassified Confidential Aide, Engineering Division, Public Works Department.

**See Page 08/05/14-6H**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Edward Dufford appointed full time, Printing Machine Operator 2, Central Printing and Mail Division, of the Finance/Administrative Services Department.

**See Page 08/05/14-6I**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Douglas Sloyer appointed full time, Senior Traffic Maintenance Worker, Roads and Bridges Division, Public Works Department.

**See Page 08/05/14-6J**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Brian Stull appointed full time, Senior Technician MIS, Information Services Division, Finance/Administrative Department.

**See Page 08/05/14-6K**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Henry Wiczorek appointed full time, Principal Engineer, Engineering Division, Public Works Department.

**See Page 08/05/14-7A**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Keith Wieder appointed full time, Storekeeper, Roads and Bridges Division, Public Works Department.

**See Page 08/05/14-7B**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Keith Monahan appointed full time, Maintenance Worker 2, Buildings and Maintenance Division, Department of Land Use and Facilities Management.

**See Page 08/05/14-7C**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Eric Bentzinger appointed full time, Maintenance Worker 2, Buildings and Maintenance Division, Department of Land Use and Facilities Management.

**See Page 08/05/14-7D**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Dawn Paulmeno appointed full time, Program Development Specialist, Department of Human Services.

**See Page 08/05/14-7E**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, George Wagner appointed unclassified, full time Chief of Staff/Director of Public Safety and Health Services.

**See Page 08/05/14-7F**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Salaries for unclassified/unaffiliated and non-contractual employees.

**See Page 08/05/14-7G**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Salaries for the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

**See Page 08/05/14-7H**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Salaries for employees covered under the Collective Bargaining Agreement, for CWA Non-Supervisory employees.

**See Page 08/05/14-7I**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving the plans and specifications for Sidewalk Improvements at various locations, throughout the County.

**See Page 08/05/14-7J**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving the 2014/2015 Controlled Hunting Program.

**See Page 08/05/14-7K**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Authorizing the Freeholder Director to write to the New Jersey Commissioner of Health, regarding the closing of St. Luke's-Warren Hospital, regarding Hunterdon's concerns.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

**GRANTS**

Mr. Walton moved and Ms. Lagay seconded this:

**See Page 08/05/14-7L**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving a grant application for the County Environmental Health Act 2015 Fiscal Year Core Program, in the amount of \$266,000, (\$133,000 – state funds and a County Match of \$133,000).

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MS. LAGAY, MR. LANZA, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

A letter was received from the Raritan Township Fire Company, requesting permission to use the Library Headquarters parking area, on Monday, September 29, 2014, from 6:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. while they hold their Grill and Drill at the Little Angels Preschool. Also requesting permission to use the LINK for transportation to and from the Library. A cost has been established for this service. Mr. Walton moved and Mr. Lanza seconded a motion granting permission provided this event is coordinated through the County's Human Services Department and the Library.

**ROLL CALL: (AYES) MR. WALTON, MR. LANZA, MS. LAGAY, MR. KING.  
(ABSENT) MR. HOLT.**

## **FREEHOLDERS COMMENTS/REPORTS**

### **School Consolidation**

Mr. Walton advised there have been a lot of interest in the past several years for school consolidation. There have been letters to the editor in the Hunterdon Democrat and there has been the South Hunterdon Regional School Study which resulted in a ballot referendum which passed, so they are now a one school district instead of four school districts. There is an article on NJ Spotlight about the success of the South Hunterdon project. Mr. Walton would like to place on the ballot for this coming November, a nonbinding referendum that would ask the people if they believe their elementary school should consolidate into their high school to create a K through 12 Regional School. The South County School is doing remarkably well and are happy with what they have achieved. They believe this will be a better educational output for their children and savings are second.

Mr. Walton referred to an article in the newspaper recently about the lack of people running for the School Board and this would narrow that down. There are currently 26 school districts and he would like to see that reduced to 5. The districts that have support for consolidation should take the same action that South Hunterdon did.

Deputy Director King stated that he and Freeholder Walton are invested in the passion towards the idea that the school districts have involved on their own backyard concerns. Hunterdon's school districts are very good. The State's audit report came back and its secondary recommendation behind the idea that the County Executives/Superintendents of Schools should be doing their jobs. There is question whether there should be singular Countywide School Districts in each of the 21 Counties. The audit report said that consolidation is a requirement. The amount of money being spent on administration of the 145 districts is in excess of \$65 million. That is an extraordinary amount of money that is no going into the classrooms. Consolidation lends itself to a very acute process. Checks and balances have to be put into place and it would force people to consider whether funding should be going into the classrooms as opposed to going for administrative positions.

Deputy Director King stated in Hunterdon County school taxes come to 70% of the tax bill. If you are part of the aging population in Hunterdon County, this is a concern because you no longer have children in the school system. If you are part of the 18 to 34 year olds that the County is trying to attract, many don't have any children until after 34.

Deputy Director King stated that CEDS advises there is a need for the County to consider reduction in taxes and this is an area where the lion's share of taxes goes to and it needs to be addressed.

Mr. Lanza also agreed to school consolidation again, he is a resident of Lambertville, and in the South Hunterdon Regional District. This seems to be common sense that is sweeping over all parties and towns. There is no reason consolidation won't work in the other school districts in Hunterdon County.

Mr. Walton will work with County Counsel, Shana Taylor and the County Clerk, Mary Melfi, in outlining a question and referendum for the November Ballot. The Board agreed.

### **Cultural & Heritage**

Ms. Lagay acknowledged Cultural and Heritage who received a grant from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and they are in favor of the progress the County is making in terms of the arts and in particular looking at Flemington as an Arts District.

Deputy Director King stated this would not have been accomplished without Freeholders Lagay's consistent and supportive guiding hand. Freeholder Lagay spent hours writing the grant and visiting people in Trenton, showing them that Hunterdon is moving in the right direction. This was the first time that the County received an increase in the grant; while it was a small increase, it was an increase.

## **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Deputy Director King opened the meeting to the public.

### **Hunting**

Barbara Suchau, Raritan Township resident, asked for the record to reflect that regarding hunting, there have been shooting into houses in Raritan Township and in many other houses around the County, for example in Readington Township. Hunting is dangerous.

Ms. Suchau stated a petition was turned into Raritan Township last year with 450 signatures against hunting in Raritan Township. So this is a controversial issue.

Ms. Suchau stated many counties, all over America have been using sterilization of deer which costs no more than a hunting program costs the people.

Deputy Director King informed Ms. Suchau that her first statement was inaccurate, there are no reports of anyone firing into homes in Raritan Township. While there were two recent shooting incidents, neither one had anything to do with hunting.

Deputy Director King stated there was no incident in Readington Township reported that people were shooting into houses.

Ms. Suchau stated she reads the minutes of the New Jersey Fish and Wildlife meetings and she read that there.



#### Open Space/Farmland

Ms. Suchau asked questions regarding the Open Space and the Farmland Preservation programs.

Mr. Walton explained the Open Space program has several different avenues from which projects receive funding. The County does not limit projects from going through all those different avenues. The items listed on tonight's agenda have gone through two of those avenues which is why they were listed on agenda. Also, because they went through two different avenues, they require separate resolutions for consideration. These open space projects benefit Hunterdon County's landscape and keeps development at bay.

#### State/Government/Religion

Ms. Suchau asked if there is any issue regarding the separation between government, state and religion in the County's approval of the Historic Preservation Application for the Quakertown United Methodist Church.

Mr. Walton explained the County has frequently given money churches for the preservation of the historic architecture of the churches; whether it is a Jewish Temple or a Christian Church or any other denomination, as long as the funds are just being used for the historic architectural significant structure. Then it is not an issue of separation of church or state. The money is not provided to preach from the pulpit and it is not to provide food for the needy or to promote their policy. This is only to preserve the architectural structure.

Mr. Walton confirmed that this has been preserved in several judicial decisions.

#### Chief of Staff Position

Terry Wright, reporter, for the Hunterdon Democrat asked about the new job title for George Wagner of Chief of Staff/Director of Public Safety and Health Services.

Deputy Director King provided Mr. Wright with a Press Release on this new title, Chief of Staff and the duties it will entail. Mr. Wagner has proven for the past seven months his ability and his passion for doing what is necessary for Hunterdon County. Mr. Wagner has managed to organize the County's department heads and the organization as a whole, all 560 employees, in the direction that this Freeholder Board feels very confident in. Mr. Wagner has the full faith of the Board and the Board is excited to have him in this position.

Frances Gavigan, East Amwell resident, informed the Board that the feedback she has heard from various employees who have been less than happy in the past, is that Mr. Wagner is doing a wonderful job. People are being dealt with respect without the drama or trauma. This is a positive direction for the County. Ms. Gavigan commended the Board for giving Mr. Wagner the tools to continue doing a good job.

#### East Amwell Township properties (East Jersey Developers Acquisition)

Ms. Gavigan informed the Board that she has attended the Open Space meetings and the properties discussed today (East Jersey Developers Acquisition) are on the ridge of the Sourland Mountains and they are a part of large parcels being assembled for trail networks. These parcels are part of NJ DEP and County lands, so it is consistent with the East Amwell Preservation Plan, the County's Preservation Plan and the desire of people to prevent the heart of the Sourlands' from being broken up. This is a good purchase and it has the support of the community.

#### Hunting

Ms. Gavigan informed the Board that she lost 20% of her Asian Pear Orchard due to deer. She is definitely supporting the hunting of deer. Also, her Blueberry crop was decimated by deer. There needs to be more hunting in East Amwell Township and the surrounding areas, not less, in order to preserve crops, farms and landscaping.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Deputy Director King adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Denise B. Doolan  
Clerk of the Board