

**HUNTERDON COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS**

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

**November 16, 2015**

The regular meeting of the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders convened 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, MR. HOLT.**

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

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 November 12, 2015, 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."

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There were no items for Executive Session.

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders recessed at 5:01 p.m. and reconvened in Open Session at 5:30 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

**PUBLIC WORKS**

Director King recognized Harold Bush in the audience.

Mr. Bush explained to the Board that he has requested a hardship consideration for a road opening permit for sewer hookup, for a family home his father is building on South Main Street, (County Route 611) which was paved in July of this year.

Tom Mathews, Director of the Department of Public Works, recommended that the road be opened to connect sewer, water and gas. He would like to limit the disturbance into the new road and accomplish this with one trench.

Director King explained the Board tries to restrict reopening roads within five years of pavement, but will consider a waiver upon Mr. Mathews' recommendation.

Mr. Lanza moved and Mr. Holt seconded a motion to approve the hardship waiver to permit a road opening on County Route 611 in Flemington Borough.

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

Mr. Bush thanked the Board for their consideration, as well as Mr. Mathews, for all of their help.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Director King opened the meeting to the public.

John Anderson, representative of Jersey Central Power and Light, informed those present that PSI Orientation at Raritan Valley Community College, will take place tomorrow, for any prospective linemen or substation workers. He expects a few hundred people to attend, based on attendance at the previous orientation in Brookdale.

**HUNTERDON COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Delores Van Pelt, Liz Lowe and Joanie Coffaro of the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Class of 2015 came before the Board to present their feasibility report for expansion of the winery business in Hunterdon County.

Hunterdon's history is farming and in the nineteenth century, peaches were the main crop; with New Jersey shipping 750,000 bushels per season. Half of the four million peach trees in New Jersey were located in Hunterdon County. The future of farmland in Hunterdon is prime real estate for wine grape production. 93,021 acres of land in the County are deemed "most suitable" for wine grape growing and an additional 38,473 acres of land are deemed "moderately suitable." The soil composition is heavy clay, gravel with a low water table. Hunterdon County also has the appropriate climate for grape growing – particularly those that are cold, hardy, moisture tolerant and mold resistant. Grape growing season lasts approximately 160 to 180 days and the climate in the area is an adequate combination of sunlight and heat.

Hunterdon County currently has several successful wineries, all with different business models. New Jersey is the seventh largest wine producing state in the country. New Jersey wineries are crafting wines that have earned recognition for their quality from critics, industry leaders, and in national and international competitions. The wine industry has experienced a 46% increase in consumption with the millennial generation.

The business environment of wineries is as follows: (1) The startup cost is approximately \$15,000 per acre excluding land cost. (2) A new winery will begin to break even between year 7 and 9. (3) Wineries earn 65-95% of their income from wine tasting and on-site purchases. (4) Income also comes from hosting events on the premises. (5) Employees generally range from 2 to 10 full time staff with a higher number of staff working April through October.

There are many complementary activities and businesses in the area. The outdoor recreation at Spruce Run and Round Valley Reservoirs, as well as the river-towns tourism are an added benefit to having a winery in Hunterdon County. Also, it is only a one hour drive to either New York City or Philadelphia from Hunterdon. Research shows that costumers of wineries typically travel a 30 to 40 mile radius.

Hunterdon County has many successful wineries and vineyards, proving that the climate and soil can produce excellent grapes. The amount of farmland in the County makes the opportunity for growth endless. Wine tourism has emerged as a popular and fast growing industry and agri-tourism is strong within Hunterdon. Hunterdon's strategic location between two major metropolis areas also makes it ideal for wineries.

Freeholder Walton commended the group for their work on the project.

The Board thanked Ms. Pelt, Mrs. Lowe and Ms. Coffaro for their presentation. It was recommended that the Chamber work with the County's Economic Development Strategy team.

### **FINANCE**

Ms. Lagay moved and Mr. Holt seconded this:

**See Page 11/16/15-2A**

### **RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Requesting the Division of Local Government Services insert an item of revenue in the 2015 Budget for the Municipal Alliance Program, in the amount of \$181,380.

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

### **PUBLIC WORK (continued)**

Mr. Mathews approached the Board to provide and update on various County Road and Bridge projects.

#### **Roads**

- Paving began on 10 and 512 in Califon Borough, from Route 513 to Tewksbury/Califon line. The project has been a little backed up, but should be on track by the end of the week.
- County Route 513 from Main Street to Voorhees State Park in High Bridge, the drainage will be done over the winter and is scheduled to begin. The project will be finished in the Spring.

#### **Bridges**

- County Bridge C-26 on Cratetown Road in Clinton, the superstructure is still under construction. The bridge closed in August and is anticipated to re-open before Christmas.
- County Bridges K110/111, the collapsed bridge on Route 519, the substructure is still under construction.

#### **In-house Projects**

- Culvert B-424, deck replacement, the roadway closed on November 9<sup>th</sup> and it will be reopened on Friday, November 20 2015.
- Culvert K-139 on Union Road, a total culvert replacement, closed on October 13<sup>th</sup> and will be reopened on Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Parking Lots**

- Communications Center parking lot is under construction and paving and landscaping will begin this week. The location should be back in working order by the end of the month.
- The North County Library parking lot has been resurfaced and striping will take place shortly.

### **FOR DISCUSSION**

Director King reported he would like to see the elimination of fees collected in the Health Division and the Planning Services Division; which he views as redundant taxing. In order to eliminate these fees, an ordinance would be to be adopted.

Director King confirmed that the Planning Services Division is in agreement with this plan of action.

Mr. Walton understands the motivation of cutting fees and championing the small business owner but he does not believe the tax is being paid twice, as this is an extra government process that they, the taxpayer consume. The site plan reviews help offset the additional burden placed on government to ensure the project was done. The taxpayer is also the primary beneficiary of this process because they have their project built. The public benefits to a great degree, as well as the developer. Mr. Walton does not believe the fee was initiated as double-taxing, but as a matter of capturing the extra government consumption.

Tom Mathews expressed concern explaining that last year there was discussion to raise the fees for the work that the County does. A design engineer could submit as little as possible and then

revise the design from comments made by the Engineering Department. Mr. Mathews waiving the fee for large businesses that come into the area, but for the smaller subdivisions, it is labor intensive and suggested the fees remain in place. .

Director King reassured Mr. Mathews that the municipal process would not go away and the issue that affects the County is when there is a County road in contention.

Tom Mathews informed the Board that his office reviews all site plans and major subdivisions.

Director King stated traffic work associated with County roads is in the County's requirement to review. Costco, as an example, would be paying for those services through the taxes they pay on a piece of land. The County does not hire anyone, unless an outside agency is needed to do a traffic study, other than that, the existing staff does site reviews.

Mr. Walton feels that depending on the volume of the work, if that work were to go away, would the County eliminate a staff member.

Freeholder Holt left the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

Sue Dziamara commented that the statutory requirement, that affects county roads and facilities, is a statutory obligation so it doesn't go away. Whether a fee is charged or not, the review and evaluation of the application will be identical. She does not see changing the way the Planning Services Division does business and does not see a reduction in staff needs; the workload and evaluation process remains the same.

Director King said the work is being done either way, fee based or not fee based, and the people who are asking the County to do the work are either taxpayers or future taxpayers.

Director King clarified that what Mr. Walton was arguing was that the site plan reviews are in addition to the base level services.

Mr. Walton responded in part, yes, stating that Costco is a tenuous example because there are two beneficiaries – the company and the public who use the County road, despite never setting foot inside Costco.

Freeholder Walton said his concern is that without the fee, those submitting plans for review will submit continuously in hopes of getting most of the work done by County employees.

Mr. Mathews explained that an application is supposed to go to the municipality first but sometimes the process gets circumvented and people submit to the County first too in order to get comments before submitting to the municipality.

Director King said he does not think the fee issue is going to solve the issue of how designs are being submitted.

Shana Taylor, County Counsel asked for clarification as to what should be listed in the ordinance.

Director King directed Ms. Taylor to get clarification from the Planning Services Division and the Public Works Department.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

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."

Items held at this time, Check #151673, 151674 and 151670.

Mr. Lanza moved and Ms. Lagay seconded a motion to approve claims in accordance with the Claims Register dated November 16, 2015, absent Checks #151673 and #151674 and #151670.

**See Page 11/16/15-3A**

### **CLAIMS REGISTER**

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

Mr. Lanza moved and Ms. Lagay seconded a motion to approve the regular session minutes of October 20, 2015.

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

Mr. Lanza moved and Ms. Lagay seconded these:

**See Page 11/16/15-3B**

### **RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Amanda Rossi appointed full time Sheriff's Officer, Sheriff's Office.

**See Page 11/16/15-4A**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Rhonda Kelly appointed full time, Senior Receptionist, Department of Human Services.

**See Page 11/16/15-4B**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving salaries for employees covered under the CWA Supervisors Bargaining Unit.

**See Page 11/16/15-4C**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving a Professional Services Agreement with Malick and Scherer, P.C., for engineering services for a Multi-Use Path across Prescott Brook, a tributary to the South Branch of the Raritan River, in Clinton Township, connecting the Arboretum on the east side of Route 31 with the South Branch Reservation on the west side, in an amount not to exceed \$180,000.

**See Page 11/16/15-4D**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Authorizing the County's Chief of Staff to sign all administrative documents to transfer the County's Health provider to Aetna.

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

Mr. Lanza moved and Ms. Lagay seconded a motion to approve Check #'s 151673 and 151674, in accordance with the Claims Register dated November 16, 2015.

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

Mr. Lanza moved and Mr. Walton seconded a motion to approve Check #151670 in accordance with the Claims Register dated November 16, 2015.

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

**GRANTS**

Mr. Lanza moved and Ms. Lagay seconded this:

**See Page 11/16/15-4E**

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, Approving a Memorandum of Understanding with the NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness and the NJ Northwest Region Counties (Hunterdon, Somerset, Sussex, Warren) regarding federal funds in the amount of \$346,989.96; (\$230,000 to develop a Multi-Discipline Rail Emergency Response Plan; \$116,989.96 to develop a Regional Damage Assessment Plan).

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

**FREEHOLDERS COMMENTS/REPORTS**

Director King advised it is important to remember the veterans who are deserving of love and admiration for the work they have done in answering the call of duty.

Director King also commented on the recent attacks in Paris which have many of residents on edge; this is an opportunity for America to shine with its idealism and that we are inclusive and have a right to freedom, pursuit of happiness, and that there is nothing that can happen to deter those pursuits.

Freeholder Lanza recognized his favorite veteran Colonel Steven M. Lutz, retired from U.S. Army, who Mr. Lanza will be quartering shortly.

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Director King opened the meeting to the public.

No one from the public wished to address the Board.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Director King adjourned the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,