

HUNTERDON COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

71 Main Street, Freeholder's Meeting Room, 2nd Floor

Flemington, New Jersey 08822

March 29, 2017

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders convened at 4:00 p.m. in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.

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

Director Lanza 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 March 23, 2017, to the Hunterdon County Democrat, Star Ledger, Trenton Times, Courier News, the TAPinto 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

BUDGET WORK SESSION

Janet Previte, CFO, provided a brief overview on promotions and Salary & Wage requests. If the County does absolutely nothing, they will start out at 24.3 million dollars. She expects about 2.6% in increases to that number just by the virtue of the fact the 2% or \$1,100 raise, most of which is contractual.

About 55% of County employees are below the 55K threshold and qualify for the \$1,100 increase. Before the County does anything, talking about promotions or new staff, there is the obligation for a \$630,000 increase just based on that 2.6%. Ms. Previte noted that they are at about \$814,000 so there is a difference of about \$180,000.

Mr. Holt asked if the differential is based upon what is reflected in the sheet that they have already gone through from the Budget Committee and recommendations from staff. One item he would like to highlight is that in 2016 the County did not have the County Administrator Salary in the budget, so of the \$180,000 differential \$150,000 of that is administrative.

Brad Myhre, Human Resources Director, went through the 2017 Promotions and Salary Adjustments and Work-Week changes. There was a request for a salary increase for the Tax Administrator, which the committee was supportive of it. After deliberation, the Board agreed on a 4% raise.

There was a discussion on the Health Services Division and the plan to cut \$100,000 from that budget.

The Board discussed the Administrator position which can be brought to \$120,000 due to the position not being filled for an entire twelve months. Mr. Walton noted that \$30,000 will need to be made up in next year's budget, placing the County immediately in a hole.

Mr. King stated he is in favor of 4% raises for those who are requesting the larger percentage raises (6% and higher).

Mr. Walton asked if there is an evaluation for those being considered for higher raises.

Mr. Myhre confirmed that there is a numerical evaluation completed for these employees.

There was a discussion about promotional increases within the Superintendent of Schools and Buildings and Maintenance which was opposed by the Budget Committee.

The Board also discussed a Senior Park Naturalist promotion and a Senior Park Ranger promotion. Both were approved.

Mr. Walton questioned how the rest of the Parks budget would shake out with these changes.

Mr. Myhre stated that Park's overall budget is up, but that is because the majority of the employees earn under \$55,000 a year and will be eligible for the larger raise.

There was a discussion regarding increases for two positions in the Engineering Division which was part of an employment agreement.

Also, discussed were five Senior Bridge Repairer positions within Public Works with three of the five being approved and those promotions will be decided by the Department Head.

There was a discussion regarding Road Supervisors in the Public Works Department which the Budget Committee opposed because of the Supervisors contract. There was also discussion about a Road Repairer 3, which the Committee supported.

Discussion took place regarding increases for Department Heads and Confidential Aides. \$1,100 was approved for Confidential Aide.

The Board discussed the use of seasonal employees noting the Budget Committee revised the number to 4 seasonal employees for a total of 640 hours per season worked; which is consistent with 2016 spending level. The rest of the positions in Parks, Vector Control, Roads and Bridges remain at the same levels as 2016.

Also discussed were requests for Backfills and new Positions. The positions listed for approval are all requests that require a fill. The potential for savings is hiring under what the previous salary was in the position.

There was a discussion on Librarian 1 positions; they were both full time. Only one position will be back filled as full time and the other will be filled as a part-time position.

There was a discussion regarding a Program Development Specialist, which will be repurposed as a Veterans Service Officer, which will require a bump in the existing salary. There has not been any movement with the CWA on this position.

There was a discussion on the Social Worker Aging position which will be filled soon and there is a large savings in that backfill.

There was a discussion on the Administrative positions in Elections; they are combining two positions into one and increasing that staff member to 14 hours per week.

There was a brief discussion on the County Administrator position.

There was a discussion on the paralegal position in the Office of County Counsel. The position will be upgraded from a part-time position to a full-time position due to the shift of Adult Protective Services work that has been shifted from the Division of Social Services. The decision was made to decrease the proposed amount by \$5,000.

The Board discussed the addition of a Human Resources Specialist position. The suggestion was to keep the dollar amount in the budget but allow the new Administrator to have some input on the staffing issue in Human Resources.

There was a discussion on the Senior Receptionist in Administration and the same decision was made for that line item; leave the line item and wait for the new Administrator to begin.

Mr. Myhre gave a brief introduction of the Operating Expenses budget document. The biggest increase is in the Administration Department, which is due to the new Administrator salary. The success story is in the Purchasing Office which decreased by 32% due to the consolidation within the Finance Department. The Human Resources budget reflects a large increase due to the proposed new position. The County Clerk is up by 6% but that is offset with new revenues from passport processing.

There was a brief discussion on the Information Technology increase, as well as the Board of Taxation increase which will go down due to the decision on the Tax Administrator's salary request.

Director Lanza questioned the difference between the 2017 Request and the 2017 Recommendations which appear to be consistently above the asking.

Mrs. Previte clarified that most of these departments missed items in Salary and Wage and consistently undershoot their numbers. The Recommendations columns are corrections made by Finance and Human Resources to more accurately capture the numbers.

There was a discussion on the Office of Emergency Management and Communications which are both up due to the 2.6% raises in the under \$55,000 employee salaries categories and the new Division Head which was not reflected in the 2016 budget.

There was a discussion on the Sheriff's Department which was a larger increase which takes in to account the existing vacancies, new contracts and retroactive payments.

There was a discussion on Roads and Bridges stating there is a large increase in Bridges with the proposed adjustments. There will need to be a separate discussion with the department and to also look at the additional help in the summer to back those numbers down.

There was a discussion on Buildings and Maintenance noting the decrease in that budget due to a restructuring of the staff.

There was a discussion on the flat budget in Vehicle Services and how that was accomplished.

There was a discussion on the Health Services Division and the possibility of additional savings. The goal is to identify those savings and bring it back to the Freeholder Board.

There was a discussion about the Division of Senior Services and the increase which was a result of the additional Receptionist.

Discussion took place on the Human Services Department increase which will be revisited. There was a new hire and promotions. Mr. Myhre wants to look into the backfills further with the Human Services Administrator

A discussion on the Public Health Nursing increase is mostly being driven by adjustments in the contract.

There was a discussion on the Parks and Recreation Division and the 12.37% increase. There was a staff reassignment and two promotions. There will be a hold on one of the promotions until there is a retirement but Parks also absorbed an employee that was transferred from Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

There was a discussion about the Rutgers Cooperative Extension budget increase which is due to contractual obligations.

Overall, there was a 3.35% growth, not taking into consideration the discussions that were held earlier in the meeting.

Ms. Lagay asked when these numbers would be complete so that the budget process can be moved forward.

Mrs. Previte stated the Budget Document should be complete next Tuesday for initial review. The piece still missing is from the grants.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Director Lanza adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana A. Gootman
Deputy Clerk of the Board