

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in Budget Session in its offices in the Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building, Belvidere, New Jersey on January 29, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Director Gardner and upon roll call, the following members were present: Freeholder Jason Sarnoski, Freeholder James Kern, III and Freeholder Richard Gardner. Also attending were County Administrator Alex Lazorisak and County CFO Kim Francisco.

Following the flag salute, Mr. Gardner read the following OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT statement: “ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING *OF JANUARY 29, 2020* WAS GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT BY FORWARDING A SCHEDULE OF REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS TO THE WARREN COUNTY CLERK, THE STAR-LEDGER, AND DAILY RECORD AND BY POSTING A COPY THEREOF ON THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS. FORMAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN BY THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS AT THIS MEETING. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IS ENCOURAGED. IN ORDER TO ASSURE FULL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, THOSE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO WISH TO ATTEND THE MEETING SHOULD SUBMIT ANY REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE.”

The group turned to CFO Kim Francisco for the latest updates to the budget. He said he checked with the auditor, who confirmed the traffic study discussed during the January 25, 2020 budget meeting did qualify as a capital expenditure. Going through the numbers again, he said he found \$50,000 in an old account. He budgeted an additional \$50,000 to a new Traffic Impact Study line item in the Capital Improvement Program. Mr. Sarnoski said he wanted Hope Township mentioned in the traffic study line. Mr. Lazorisak said a resolution awarding a professional services contract to WSP USA was being prepared for the February 11, 2020 Freeholder meeting agenda. Money received from developers will go into escrow to help offset costs incurred.

Slight adjustments were also made to the following line items, as decided at the previous budget session: Volunteer Fire Company Training, Aid to Ambulance Squads, and Dossier Fleet Maintenance Program. The total amount to be raised by taxation remained the same.

Mr. Francisco said all cap calculations were in compliance. The Sheriff was scheduled to attend the final budget session on February 1, 2020 to finalize his budget, after having met with Mr. Francisco and Mr. Kern on January 31.

Mr. Lazorisak distributed a list of personnel requests that had been submitted by department heads, including whether or not each one was recommended for approval. Recommendations were based on advice from the County Administrator, Personnel Director, and CFO. While this list contained a few unclassified titles, most unclassified personnel would be addressed at a later date. Two percent increases were already built into the budget across the board for unclassified employees.

Regarding the Bridge Division, Mr. Lazorisak said he recommended holding off on all requests until Rich Frinzi's position was filled and the division reorganized.

A significant number of salary adjustment requests were being denied because the employees were ineligible due to civil service rules. These were individuals that had been granted raises or promotions in recent years. Evidently numerous department heads were ignorant of the law. Mr. Lazorisak said he was aware some of these employees on the list have stepped up and deserve it, "But unfortunately, the law is the law," he said. Mr. Kern expressed concern about employee morale, and requested that department heads be cautioned against giving false hope to the employees. Mr. Lazorisak agreed. He reminded the Board that this was his first year as Administrator, and said in the future, he would advise department heads to first approach himself and the Personnel Director with requests of this nature.

Mr. Lazorisak went through a list of potential new positions, alluding to the aim of rebuilding benches. Some notable items included a Senior Engineer being recommended for the Planning Department, as a Principal Planner was to be transferred over to Land Preservation. An engineer on staff in Planning can do all the reviews instead of relying on the Engineering Department. In the Prosecutor's Office, the advice was to deny the request for a new full-time Investigator, but a new Agent position in the Cyber Crimes Unit was recommended, with a start date of July 1, 2020.

An Assistant Superintendent for Weights & Measures was recommended, as only a superintendent or assistant can seal gas pumps and scales. There are new requirements for testing gas pumps. It used to be two tests per pump; now two tests per grade per pump are required. "They used to do that in two hours; now it takes them two days," Mr. Lazorisak said. "This is absurd," said Mr. Gardner. Hopefully revenue would help offset this additional burden. Mr. Sarnoski said, "I'm all for making sure

that the public is getting what they're paying for at the gas pump, but this is where the state just overregulates and it becomes business-unfriendly."

Three positions were being abolished (two in Corrections, one in Finance), but they were all vacant, so no one was losing a job.

Mr. Sarnoski said he wanted a couple of days to examine the list and ask additional questions. Mr. Lazorisak said he felt we could comfortably grant the requests as recommended. "We have to build the bench... we've been running thin," he said. Mr. Sarnoski said while we like to keep salary expenses relatively low, we have to be a bit more competitive on our salaries to find good people. Mr. Kern thought opening up these positions would be good in terms of building morale.

Discussion then focused on the Sheriff's Office. Mr. Francisco said the Undersheriffs won't get any increases until the labor contract is settled. "We've got to make it work," said Mr. Francisco. "There's only so much in the pot," said Mr. Kern. The plan has to be sustainable for a least three years. Mr. Francisco said his plan for the office goes out five years. The Sheriff's OE will have to be cut in years four and five, but not drastically. "He can make it work," Mr. Lazorisak said, "It's reasonable."

Mr. Gardner complimented Mr. Francisco for the "excellent work" on the budget. Considering the substantial surplus, Mr. Gardner said he had done some research back to 2008 and 2009 and looked at the numbers, and thought it would be reasonable to cut the amount to be raised by taxation by a half percent to one percent. Mr. Sarnoski wanted a bit more time to consider everything, go over some details with the CFO, and discuss it further at the next meeting.

Mr. Kern said when he was mayor, his municipality kept taxes flat and the county kept taxes flat. "That really shined a spotlight on the biggest culprit, the school board," he said.

Mr. Francisco noted two recent developments that were favorable: the sale of a piece of property for \$2 million (which is slated to go into capital) and the inmate agreement with Hunterdon County, which is estimated to generate about \$1.3 million per year.

RESOLUTION 71-20

On motion by Mr. Kern, seconded by Mr. Sarnoski, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS PROVIDING FOR A MEETING NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 at 7:33 p.m.

Recorded vote: Mr. Sarnoski yes, Mr. Kern yes, Mr. Gardner yes

On motion by Mr. Sarnoski, seconded by Mr. Kern, the Board adjourned Executive Session and returned to Open Session at 8:14 p.m.

On motion by Mr. Kern, seconded by Mr. Sarnoski, and there being no further business before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

**THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
OF THE COUNTY OF WARREN**
Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building
165 County Route 519 South
Belvidere, NJ 07823

RESOLUTION 71-20

On motion by **Mr. Kern**, seconded by **Mr. Sarnoski**, the following resolution was unanimously adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held on January 29, 2020.

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION OF
THE WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
PROVIDING FOR A MEETING NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF
THE NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12**

WHEREAS, the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders is subject to certain requirements of the *Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6*, et seq., and

WHEREAS, the *Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12*, provides that an Executive Session, not open to the public, may be held for certain specified purposes when authorized by Resolution, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Board hereby excludes the public in order to discuss such matters. The general nature of the subjects to be discussed are as follows:

(1) *Matters Relating to Litigation, Negotiations and Attorney-Client Privilege*: Items to be discussed include: Status of various litigation: Covanta/PCFA Negotiations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board shall disclose to the public, as soon as practicable, the contents of the discussions after the final disposition of the matters discussed.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Sarnoski yes, Mr. Kern yes, Mr. Gardner yes

I hereby certify the above to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren on the date above mentioned.

_____, Clerk
Alex J. Lazorisak