

## MINUTES

**JANUARY 27, 2018**

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 27, 2018 at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by Director Smith and upon roll call, the following members were present: Freeholder Ed Smith, Freeholder Jason Sarnoski and Freeholder Rick Gardner. Also attending were County CFO Dan Olshefski, Fiscal Officer Kim Francisco and County Administrator Steve Marvin.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Director Smith.

Director Smith read the following statement: **“ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING OF JANUARY 27, 2018 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.”**

Mr. Olshefski said we are getting down to the end of the budget process. He was very happy to report that the new FAST reporting system the State was trying to implement has been deferred due to a number of glitches, so this year’s budget will be submitted in the usual manner.

Warren County Community College President Will Austin approached with Trustee Dr. Phil Linfante and distributed a summary of their budget requests. Dr. Austin spoke of the tuition value being the lowest in the region; reviewed County funding levels since 2004; illustrated substantial growth in the Dual Enrollment Program over the last five years and went over revenue sources and assumptions. Noteworthy was a substantial increase in health benefit costs.

In addition to the request of two percent toward basic operating costs, an additional \$80,000 was requested to implement a new degree program in addiction counseling. Dr. Linfante said WCCC responds to what the community needs. With the opioid crisis and other drug addiction problems, people are seeking help from the local agencies. They are developing an Associate in Science degree in Addiction Counseling and the first course offered filled up immediately. The person being sought to teach it would probably be a psychologist.

Mr. Sarnoski expected there would be some good job opportunities for those earning this degree. Mr. Marvin noted this is not a one-time shot of funding. Dr. Austin said yes, it would be recurring. Mr. Smith agreed that the college does respond to the needs of the community with the Freeholder Board’s consistent support. Having established an Addiction Task Force, among other things, Mr. Smith thought it would be contradictory not to support this program. Mr. Gardner said it would be an opportunity for many people. This portion of the meeting concluded at 9:20 a.m.

**MINUTES****JANUARY 27, 2018**

County Engineer Bill Gleba was next. He said his biggest issue was juggling the Transportation Trust Fund money. We went from a little under \$2 million in County aid to more than \$4 million and on bridge funding, we went from \$1 million to \$1.615 million. "The aid is great," he said, but there are caveats associated with the funds. A vetting process goes through State systems, so we can't just fund whatever we want. There are restrictions. For example, the bridge funding can only be used for construction on a major bridge structure. It does not cover our minor structures and culverts. He explained a bit about the process and how long it takes.

He said resurfacing is an easy way to spend down the money and he would like to apply all of the \$4 million in County aid to that program. A number of road projects had been deferred for a variety of reasons. He planned to catch up in the current year. He had taken \$1 million out of the Road & Drainage line item as the County aid can be utilized along with the resurfacing program. Mr. Smith asked if it would be prudent to increase the cycle of the schedule. Mr. Gleba said there are roads that would benefit, but there is a system set up to do 14 miles per year on a 13-year cycle. Mr. Gleba said it is a balancing act. He thought the established schedule was okay for the time being. There may be room for improvement and preventative maintenance is important. Another consideration is increased traffic on certain roads over time.

Mr. Sarnoski asked how far ahead Mr. Gleba is projecting on capital projects. Mr. Gleba said he was comfortable with five years. Mr. Gardner asked about the Hughesville Dam and if the County was responsible for any cost for the project. Mr. Gleba said no; it is third-party funding. We did defer resurfacing there and hope to get it done this year.

A discussion followed regarding the intersection of Routes 57 and 519. Mr. Gleba said we're holding out for the NJ DOT to replace it; we're trying to baby that structure along. Mr. Sarnoski thought it was supposed to happen in 2021, but they haven't even purchased the easement next to it that they need to commence with the project. Storm water Management is an issue there as well as terrestrial crossings which contribute to the hold-up. The detour will also be difficult with weight restrictions on Liberty Road. Further discussion ensued.

One vehicle replacement had been requested to go out on job sites. Money is recouped on its use so it almost pays for itself. Mr. Gleba mentioned that long-time employee Mary Jane Grotenhuis has plans to retire this year and she will be missed, but an Administrative Assistant (Kristen) is set to take over her role. He requested promotions for two other employees. This portion of the meeting concluded at 9:50 a.m. followed by a short break.

Public Works was next, starting with the Buildings & Grounds Division headed by Liz Zukoski, along with department director, Alex Lazorisak. The presentation was brief. She said her OE was up a little due to rising paper costs; a multi-use Kubota machine was requested and she had formulated a personnel plan that she expected to implement without interference from Civil Service.

**MINUTES****JANUARY 27, 2018**

Bridge Division Superintendent Rich Frinzi then came forward. He said his OE has been status quo for about ten years and explained justification for a new chipper. His main concern was personnel as a long-time, valued employee (Norm) was set to retire and he planned to move people up in-house while still realizing a savings. He said his eleven men have a combined 275 years of experience. Mr. Lazorisak affirmed that Mr. Frinzi's crew is a fallback for him, having helped with a number of projects from sewer issues to ramp construction. "His guys are very versatile," said Mr. Lazorisak. Mr. Smith asked how the last year's new dump truck was working out. Mr. Frinzi said it was great and a crewmember (Dick) constructed a custom bumper with a winch for it which will come in handy to pull out trees.

Mr. Marvin asked about any progress on the Post House. Mr. Lazorisak said we are still on hold. They were working on an addition for Belvidere to move the Oxford Road Department into Belvidere so we can house our trucks. Then the Oxford Garage will be revamped to accommodate trucks currently at the Post House. Some are outside all year long.

Road Division Supervisor John Tate was next. He said his OE was basically the same and advocated for raises for three of his workers. Regarding capital, he said every other year, we try to catch up on equipment and trucks. Mr. Gardner asked about snow fencing. Mr. Tate said snow fences are good with wet snow; they do not do much for dry snow. There was mention of Watters Road in Mansfield. Mr. Tate said sometimes the farmers want them taken down so they have to comply. This portion of the meeting concluded at 10:22 a.m.

Attention then turned to capital projects throughout the county. Mr. Lazorisak said we are catching up and that's a good sign. He started going down a list of recommended projects including sidewalk and tree replacement at the Court House and park; Bank Building exterior painting; roof replacement at main Belvidere Garage; Oxford fuel pump upgrade including a protective canopy; door control replacement at the jail; carpet replacement reserve and replacement of Public Safety's Allamuchy Tower Control Building. He suggested starting to build a fund for sewer treatment plant reserves and for cleaning/repairing/decommissioning solar panels.

There was a lengthy dialog on building sewer treatment plant reserves in the Washington Township area including whether it would make sense for the 911 Center to hook in eventually. At the end of the day, Mr. Lazorisak said he didn't think we wanted to get into upgrading and expanding that sewer treatment plant. Reserve capacity is fine presently, but he thought it was prudent to start building a fund. We had to borrow money from Vo-Tech to replace pump stations last year. Mr. Olshefski said there is an additional line item to return that money this year.

Further discussion on the solar panels followed. The solar field collected about \$25,000-\$30,000 per year. What will be done with the panels when they reach end of life? It was unclear. Mr. Sarnoski requested an annual kilowatt hour trend. Mr. Olshefski and Mr. Lazorisak were going to work on that.

**MINUTES****JANUARY 27, 2018**

The installation of a truck wash, discussed last year, will probably not commence until 2019, so Mr. Lazorisak expected to ask for funding next year. The new library, so far, seemed to be coming in very close to what had been budgeted. The Court House roof should be completed in the spring.

Regarding Shippen Manor, its roof and gutters require repair. Mr. Lazorisak said if the Board wanted him to take care of maintenance there, he would, but he didn't want that decision to wait for five years. It seriously needs to be looked at and Andy Drysdale doesn't seem to have the requisite experience to ensure the care the facility requires. As for funding, repairs to the roof and gutters should come out of Historic Preservation stabilization funds. All agreed Mr. Lazorisak should take over, but the news should come from Freeholder Gardner as liaison.

Mr. Olshefski presented options of how to address the Technical School's capital requests. Mr. Smith reiterated his opinion that the locker room showers were in need of updating. The Superintendent of Schools' building was said to be falling apart with roof and chimney issues. The building could be of use to Vo-Tech as a green energy demonstration tool. Nine people currently work there. Mr. Lazorisak had no suggestions for an alternate location for them. It was decided that Mr. Smith and Mr. Lazorisak should schedule a meeting with Dr. Lamonte to evaluate options. Mr. Marvin thought the onus should be on her to approach the State DOE to find office space. Maybe the County could share in a lease.

Mr. Sarnoski and Mr. Marvin thought the three person Land Preservation Department should be relocated to the Dumont Building, next to the Planning Department downstairs.

Mr. Lazorisak was not yet fully prepared to talk about vehicles. He said he would have a report ready for Wednesday's meeting. In addition to the motor pool, other topics to be addressed at the final Budget Meeting were the Technical School, personnel requests, the Cap calculation and final wrap-up.

The Board talked about how much to potentially reduce the tax levy. A one cent reduction in Open Space is equal to about \$1 million. Likewise, one cent on the regular levy is about \$1 million. Mr. Smith was of the opinion that an extra \$2 million came in that people are paying for at the gas pump and should see in tax relief. Mr. Sarnoski said the municipalities take advantage of us by taking what we cut. Mr. Olshefski said he loved these conversations, contemplating how much the tax cut is going to be versus the position we were in a few years ago. Mr. Smith agreed it was a great discussion.

On motion by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Mr. Sarnoski, and there being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:29 a.m.

Recorded Vote: Mr. Gardner yes, Mr. Sarnoski yes, Mr. Smith yes

**ATTESTED TO:****Steve Marvin, Clerk of the Board**