

*These minutes were approved by the Board of County Commissioners on May 10, 2023. Full texts of resolutions appear at the end of this document.*

The Board of County Commissioners of the County of Warren met in Budget Session in its offices in the Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building, Belvidere New Jersey on January 21, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by Director Ciesla at 9:00 a.m. Upon roll call, the following members were present: Commissioner Jason Sarnoski, Commissioner Deputy Director James Kern and Commissioner Director Lori Ciesla. Also attending were County Administrator Alex Lazorisak and Deputy Commissioner Clerk Tracy Matlock. County CFO Kim Francisco was absent.

After leading the flag salute, Director Ciesla confirmed with the County Administrator that the meeting notice complied with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

Ms. Ciesla turned to County Surrogate, Michael Docherty, to begin his presentation. Mr. Doherty gave an overview of the office and praised the probate clerks who guide the public through the probate process. He is requesting the Operating budget remain the same, but is asking for an increase in salaries. He's hoping the Board will consider compensating workers in his office for what they do and going the extra mile to help residents in time of need. All three Commissioners praised the Surrogate for the submittal of a responsible budget and the hard work of him and his staff.

The Board took a brief break at 9:19 a.m. and reconvened at 9:30 a.m.

Next on the agenda is the Public Information Department. Director Art Charlton started by going over the department's mission statement. Next, he went over some of the main duties of the department:

- OPRA requests
- Website maintenance
- Social media maintenance
- County Directory
- News Releases
- Veterans Recognition Program
- Media Events
- Advertising
- Warren County Farmer's Fair
- Tourism Program

Mr. Charlton noted one of the bigger functions is processing OPRA requests. He referred to a chart showing the gradual increase in OPRA requests since 2013, citing there has been a 320% increase in OPRA requests during this time period. He noted the annual number of OPRA requests has gone up drastically since 2018. During the years 2013-2017, they received approximately 211 requests, during the years of 2018-2022 the annual requests went up to 427.

Next Mr. Charlton went over website maintenance and showed some statistics about the number of pages involved in the website, the interactivity the public has with the website and the interaction his department has with social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

A brief discussion took place about how best to promote the County government and things going on within the various departments. It was suggested perhaps an electronic newsletter would fit the bill. Also discussed was the possibility of a public relations campaign.

At 10:35 a.m. the Board took a short break and reconvened at 10:42 a.m.

The Planning Department was next on the agenda with Dave Dech, Planning Director presenting his department's budget. He started with the creation of a GIS 3 position, the department is hoping to be able to advertise and fill. Mr. Dech introduced Ryan Conklin, Deputy Planning Director, to describe the position and where the department wants to go. Mr. Conklin defined the Geographic Information System (GIS) and said the new position would help to further bring the County Planning Department into the twenty-first century by allowing the department to gather and manage its own data and create internal and external web-mapping applications.

With the Planning Department having finished their budget presentation, Mr. Lazorisak turned to the Personnel budget requests saying they are mostly salary adjustments, promotions and several new positions. He also spoke to the re-organization of the library and the various abolishment and addition of the positions there.

There was no Public Comment.

There was no need for Executive Session.

On motion by Mr. Kern, seconded by Mr. Sarnoski, there being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.