

MINUTES**July 5, 1995**

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in regular session on Wednesday, July 5, 1995 at the Frelinghuysen Township Municipal Building, Main Street, Johnsonburg, New Jersey.

The meeting was called to order by Director Susan Dickey at 7:15 P.M. Upon roll call the following members were present: Freeholder Susan Dickey, Freeholder Ann Stone and Freeholder Kenneth Miller.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Director Dickey.

Director Dickey read the following statement: "ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING 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/GAZETTE, BLAIRSTOWN PRESS, THE NEWS, STAR-LEDGER AND THE EXPRESS-TIMES 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".

A. OPEN DISCUSSION

The Township Committee members were late in arriving. In an effort to allow more time, the Director began the meeting and asked if there were other issues beside those listed on the agenda which any residents wished to discuss.

A resident asked about the status of the tipping fees and the direction of trash to the PCFA, and how recent court decisions might affect these costs.

Mr. Miller explained that there are 22 districts in N.J., each of the counties and the Hackensack area, each with a franchise. The PCFA has control over solid waste in the county under an agreement with the BCF.

Carbone vs. Clarkstown casts doubt on these franchises. Some cases are still pending in court. It looks like the judge may uphold the Supreme Court decision, but only on C&D waste. A final decision may be postponed until October or November. The federal government may grandfather states with waste flow systems already in place. The PCFA has a request in to lower the tipping fee from \$113 to \$109 per ton.

Another question was if the incinerator has been profitable and beneficial to the county.

Mr. Miller said it was profitable for the operator. The PCFA gains only enough to pay expenses, it is not allowed to make a profit. He believes it has been good for the county as burning garbage reduces the waste volume by 75%, and therefore uses much less landfill space. The PCFA may get approval to co-mingle ash and raw waste, which will save money in the long run as it would require a lesser number of cells in the landfill.

A citizen stated she received her new tax bill, and talked about the cost of income tax versus property tax. The biggest problem for senior citizens in the township are taxes and transportation. It is time to put a cap on taxes.

Mrs. Dickey responded that the taxes went up to pay for borrowed money, and to

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attempt to stabilize the tax rate for the future. For next year's budget, we are looking to budget for what we can afford rather than what we would like to do. In response to a questions as to where the open space tax was being directed, Mrs. Dickey indicated that this was approved in a public referendum. Up to 2 cents per year can be taken for farmland preservation, parks, open space, etc. It can be less than 2 cents, but not more.

Mayor Rydell said some towns put money into their budgets to help buy farmland. Would that give more incentive to the county to buy in those municipalities. Mrs. Dickey responded no, that would have nothing to do with how the county appropriates the funds.

1. Intersection of Rt. 519 and 661.

Assistant Engineer Bernaski described the plans to upgrade the intersection. Within several weeks, the contractor will begin on this area, with a new overlayment and construction of directional islands to steer traffic. Also, the bank will be cut back to improve visibility.

A resident stated this looks like an urban solution, and there was no contact between the county and municipal officials.

Mr. Bernaski said the solution is not to narrow the road, it is a 38 foot road with a 50 mph limit.

The resident stated he though the local community should be involved as they may have suggestions to solve the problem which could be cheaper or better.

Another resident complained that the county should have extended the guardrail on another project near Silver Lake as there are people going down to the railroad area and dumping. Mr. Bernaski indicated that the county cannot legally block off access to a lane. Mrs. Stone said the County Health Department issued a summons to the State DOT and they have issued a work order to clean up the area and post signs.

Mr. Bernaski stated that the speed limit is 40 mph and if the drivers went that speed there would be no trouble, but they go 55 mph and that causes the problems. Mrs. Stone asked for the possibility of restricting trucks on the Silver Lake road.

Mr. Bernaski said the county roads are secondary to state roads, and can't restrict trucks on all county roads. If we did, how would that affect economic development? Truck traffic is tough on the roads, but there is little option.

The resident asked about additional signage about the curves, driveways, etc.

The response was that road speed limits are set by what the road can handle, not what you want to set.

Mrs. Dickey asked if the county had looked at a 4-way stop.

Mr. Bernaski responded that he was not sure, but there may not be enough traffic for a 4-way stop.

Mr. Miller said that the problem is aesthetics of the community versus safety factors

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by design. This plan was approved by state DOT.

Mayor Rydell asked how many 4-way stops are in the county and how well do they work. Mr. Bernaski said there are 3 or 4, and they seem to work well.

Other residents spoke about DOT standards, and they felt the local community could have provided valuable input, perhaps to save money on the project. Mayor Rydell supported the county plan and if the islands don't work, they can be taken out.

Mrs. Dickey asked that we review this design for effectiveness later. Mr. Bernaski agreed, and said they can look at signage as well. Mayor Rydell indicated that the county should do this job and also look at a 4-way stop.

2. County Route 612

Mr. Bernaski reported there are preliminary plans for alignment of the route from Johnsonburg to Allamuchy. This will be a minimum upgrade for a 35-40 mph speed limit. The road will be widened to 26 feet. Most of the existing alignment will stay, except near a stone house, then it will go behind a barn to get away from a knob in the road. The county will get appraisals for the property in 1-2 months.

A resident stated we should keep some natural curves to keep speeds down rather than straighten all the road. We can use curves, signs and guardrails. Mayor Rydell said he would like to have the County Engineer come to a Township meeting when the plan is done.

Another resident made numerous comments about a contract having already been awarded without consultation with residents. She thought this might be nepotism and government shenanigans.

A resident questioned the use of open space money, feeling the BCF should try to get money to farms that don't necessarily score high on the ranking sheet. Mrs. Dickey said she would talk with the Agriculture Development Board to use some money for low rated farms. 20% of the open space funds can be given to municipalities if they apply.

3. Road Traffic Circulation Plan

Mr. Bernaski said this item was mostly a Planning Department item. He brought some information on road data and accidents.

Joan Shellinger said she retired to Warren County from Sussex. She is appalled at the taxes, and doesn't know how long she can remain in her home. She sees small things where money could be saved. An example was the Warren Crier, published by the Office on Aging. The material is not very useful and it could be printed on both sides of the paper.

Mrs. Dickey stated she would pass along this concern.

The resident also said she thought the county should cut back on staff. Another attendee asked about tourism. Mrs. Dickey mentioned the workshop held in June and it was well attended. They are working on improving tourism.

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A suggestion was made that perhaps the county could buy development rights to protect views and vistas, so that these areas would stay on the tax rolls.

There was a discussion on reducing taxes. It was noted that the county should not try to make up for reductions in federal and state funding.

A question was asked about how the state determines the aid to public schools and judges the wealth of a community. It was suggested that the County Superintendent of Schools be consulted for an explanation, however it was believed that they used the data from the census and the income indicators in that information.

A number of residents stated they felt it was a good policy for the Freeholders to come to local areas for these discussions.

On the Federation Agreement, Mrs. Dickey reported on the meeting and that another session was scheduled for 7/27/95. She explained that Phillipsburg's collection was available to other county residents. The expansion is to cost \$2.9 million, and the question is, is this the correct way to go. There will need to be further discussion to resolve the issues.

Mayor Rydell thanked the Freeholders for coming, and the Board expressed its gratitude for the participation by the residents.

On motion by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mrs. Stone, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M.
ROLL CALL: Mr. Miller: yes Mrs. Stone: yes Mrs. Dickey: yes

ATTESTED TO:

Naomi J. Stout, Deputy Clerk