

MINUTES**April 2, 1997**

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in regular session on in the Alpha Municipal Building, 1001 East Boulevard, Alpha, New Jersey on April 2, 1997 at 7:07 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Director Stone and upon roll call the following members were present: Freeholder Ann Stone, Freeholder Susan Dickey and Freeholder Stephen Lance.

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

The Director 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.

Mrs. Stone indicated that there were no set agenda items, and acknowledged that Mr. Dech and Mr. Hicks were asked to be present.

Klara Tarsi, Clerk, asked Mr. Hicks about identifying the boundary lines at the triangle strip of land on Route 519 near Alpha Lumber. She wanted to know the county property lines, as there are problems with another owner in the area. She said that a street light was also needed at the site. Alpha has ordered a one-way sign.

Mr. Hicks responded that the county had not looked at the street lighting. If the individuals park vehicles in a no parking area, it is an enforcement issue. We have looked but have not identified a sight problem. We will check on it again.

John Slack from Pohatcong talked about the bridge on Rt. 639, and asked about the status of the Shackletown Bridge. Mr. Dech said it had been dropped from DOT, but was now reinstated on the construction program. It is set for design in 1998, right of way in 1999 and construction in 2000.

Mr. Slack said the bridge is unsafe with bolts sticking up one and one-half inches, it needs to be fixed and can't wait for several years to be reconstructed. Can't the county go back to DOT?

Mrs. Stone said the Mr. Hicks can give the background on this situation. It is totally frustrating, as it has been in the process for 15 or 16 years.

Mr. Dech said it's because it is a federal aid project, it needs to be reviewed due to its historical site nature. It all relates to the source of funding being used.

Mrs. Stone said we want it not only on the list, but want it to be a priority.

MINUTES**April 2, 1997**

An Alpha resident suggested the county send a letter to DOT that if there is an accident, the suit would cost more than the cost of repairs.

Mr. Dech indicated we wrote, but maybe we need to request a temporary fix.

Another Alpha resident asked about a stop light at Rt. 519 and High Street. He has been begging for the people of Alpha for many years.

Mr. Hicks reported that we have done the delay studies, and are not finding excessive delays at the peak hours. A signal may create more delays due to the red time. We will put the facts together and present it to Alpha and the freeholders.

The Mayor of Alpha reiterated that he brought this matter up at the mayors' meeting, as it is a bad intersection. They can't get out onto 519 and it also would slow down people on 519. They will request that the county lower the speed limit on the county road. He requested Mr. Hicks share with Alpha the report to the freeholders. Mr. Hicks said he will give a copy to the town engineer also.

The chief of the Huntington Fire Department addressed radio problems in his area. He said the center does not trip his pagers 50% of the time. There are transmission problems and nothing is being done about them. Communications does not put tactical messages over the radio. They think it's not an important issue.

Mrs. Dickey asked if they refuse to do it. The response was they refuse. The local people put out the messages. They can put a message out for a pie sale, but not for a drill. He has talked with Pat Rivoli but can't solve the problem. He is not the only chief with the problem. He offered to hook up the old tower. He was bringing the matter to the attention of the freeholders.

Mr. Lance asked if a reason was given for the refusal to run the messages.

The chief said he was told the chiefs voted on what will be put on the air. He doesn't remember any such vote. He felt they shouldn't have to have a local fireman put messages over the air. Other municipalities also have this problem.

Mrs. Stone said the county is working on improving the radio signals.

A resident asked about the amount of the taxes for the 1997 budget. Mrs. Stone said the amount to be raised was the same as in 1996.

Mrs. Stone asked Mr. Dech to explain the regions on the Open Space Committee.

Mr. Dech said the first meeting will be April 21 at 7:00 PM at the Administration Building. The group will make recommendations on the use of 25% of the allocation from the trust fund. Extra copies of the rules were provided.

Mayor Fey asked for an explanation of how the fund worked.

MINUTES**April 2, 1997**

Mr. Dech explained the four categories: 25% farmland preservation; 25% Board of Recreation for open space; 25% discretionary; 25% municipal and non-profit. The committee would prioritize projects within funding limits. It is not a loan, basically a grant. The committee may give a higher priority to projects where the municipality puts up some money. There is about \$560,000 now in the municipal trust fund for land acquisition, open space.

Mrs. Stone reported that the county has purchased more land in the past several years than at anytime in its history. Farmland preservation is handled by the Agricultural Development Board. Mr. Lance said that about 3,000 acres are in farmland preservation. Additionally, about 11% of the land area in the county is in federal and state parkland, mostly in the northern end of the county. Mrs. Stone said most of the county land is in the southern end.

A resident asked what we are going to do with the incinerator. We were nice to N.J., and now its going down hill. Mrs. Stone responded that it is a difficult situation. She was not in favor of the burner either, but it is now here and must be dealt with.

Mr. Lance said he was glad to see PCFA lobby Somerset. The electricity sales of \$250,000 per month now will likely go down due to deregulation. Mrs. Dickey took an opposite position. She said we are the sole county with this problem. Mr. Lance indicated the feds are trying to change the law on flow control.

A question was raised about shared services, such as allowing the county street sweeper to be used by municipalities. Mrs. Stone responded that she couldn't say yet if it might be available, she would have to talk to Mr. Ulmer. Mr. Hicks said we would have to set up a program, and address issues like the operator, liability, etc.

There is going to be a meeting with some municipalities on April 17 at 9:45 in Mansfield Township. It may be helpful if the county purchasing agent attended.

Mr. Matthenius mentioned the area around the new school in Pohatcong. Water comes down the driveway, across 519 to Rt. 78. This may be a problem as it crosses the highway twice. Mr. Hicks said he would work on the issue. He said the plan will be to collect as much on-site as possible, then move it to 519. He is familiar with the problem. If additional work is needed, we'll put money in future budgets. The county will keep an eye on the construction.

Another resident mentioned water across the road on 627. Mr. Hicks reported the road department was to shoot the next cross drain, hopefully this year.

A Pohatcong resident asked if the county had hired an emergency management coordinator yet. Mrs. Stone said it was in process, but not yet accomplished. The resident asked the county to make it a priority to look into the communications problems.

Klara Tarsi asked for an update on the request for some municipalities to join the county health plan. Mr. Dinger explained the first hurdle would be to determine if it were

MINUTES**April 2, 1997**

legal for municipalities to be a member of a county health plan. BSW has thus far indicated that it appears not to be legal. If it is found legal, then there are numerous other details to work out such as union agreements, billings, etc. Because of the nature of the plan, a municipality may not save money by joining the county.

In response to a question, Mrs. Stone reported that all the county school budgets had been approved by the Boards of School Estimate. The freeholders tried to keep all the budgets as low as possible to maintain the tax rate.

Mayor Fey thanked the freeholders for bringing in the budget with no tax increase. Also, he expressed appreciation for the freeholders having held the first regional meeting in Alpha. Mrs. Stone expressed gratitude for Alphas' playing host.

Mrs. Dickey mentioned that there is a bill, A-2827, which now has two sponsors. It is referred to as the "Builders' Bill". The BCF had been opposed to the bill, and the Planning Board was also opposed. This bill puts authority into one individual, not the local boards. It includes a 5 year grandfathering on site approvals. It extends preliminary approval from 3 to 5 years.

Mr. Fey said the State League of Municipalities lobbied against this before. He asked that a copy of the resolution in opposition be sent to him.

Mr. Lance asked Mr. Dech for an update on the railroad museum letter. Mr. Dech said there is a lobbying effort to locate the state museum in Phillipsburg.

A resident asked if the light in front of Shimer Manor School could be changed to allow the crossing guard to have a three-way stop signal. Any help would be appreciated.

Mrs. Stone thanked all who attended, and said she would look into their concerns.

On motion by Mrs. Dickey, seconded by Mr. Lance, and there being no further official business to come before the board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Lance: yes Mrs. Dickey: yes Mrs. Stone: yes

ATTESTED TO:

Naomi J. Stout, Deputy Clerk