

MINUTES

June 18, 1997

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in regular session in its offices in the Administration Building, Belvidere, NJ on Wednesday, June 18, 1997 at 7:12 p.m.

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

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

Director Stone 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".

Rosemarie Rosati, Assistant Vice President of Easter Seals introduced Alison Recca-Ryan who spoke to the board about a proposed foster care program for Warren County. Easter Seals has been a provider of mental health services for the county since 1984. Since 1989, therapeutic foster care programs have been used in Camden, Salem, Gloucester and Cumberland Counties. In 1992, Easter Seals started host home programs as an alternate to shelter care. The goal is to keep the kids in their own community. The host home families are required to be trained by DYFS and certified by DYFS.

The program tries to put the children in a two-adult household with one adult home at all times. Calls come in at all hours of the day and night and they do not refuse any child. The care ranges from 28 days to 6 months. They try to have the child continue their schooling in their own district if possible. A treatment plan is set-up within 48 hours. Intensive services are provided with involvement of the parents.

Mrs. Stone asked how many children are placed in one home and was told one or two at most. It is best to place only one to a family. This is done on a case-to-case basis and they try to place them in the most appropriate setting. The ages in the host home program are generally 11 to 17 and in the therapeutic foster care program, the age ranges from 6 to 19.

Mrs. Dickey asked how many homes are needed and Karen Kubert said approximately 4 to 6 homes. Mrs. Dickey also asked about funding. She was told that the Division of Mental Health and DYFS contribute to the therapeutic program but they need county money for the host home program. There are some fixed costs; a stipend to the host families and any monies left comes back to the county. The family is paid on a per diem basis.

Mr. Dinger asked how much money they are looking for from the county and Alison said the total cost of the program is \$159,000.

Mr. Dinger asked if the intent is not to come before the board at budget time for money and Karen said if she has to, she will. Henry said that they should look at redirection

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of resources, not at new resources.

Mrs. Stone suggested that they come back later after talking to the treasurer and the full board.

There were no public comments on agenda items.

RESOLUTION 414-97

On motion by Mrs. Dickey, seconded by Mrs. Stone, the following resolution was adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held June 18, 1997.

RESOLUTION TO PAY BILLS

BE AND IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that Master Voucher Certificate for Certification for Payment No. 97-16 dated June 18, 1997 in the amount of \$1,103,250.63 including bills and investments, is approved subject to the review of the vouchers by the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

97-16 \$1,103,250.63

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.

s/Naomi J. Stout, Deputy Clerk

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

County counsel had items for executive session only.

County Administrator Henry Dinger submitted three hiring requests and they were approved by the board.

Under freeholder comments, Mrs. Dickey had none at this time.

Mrs. Stone asked that research be done regarding a consent agreement from 1984 between the State of New Jersey and the county to handle solid waste. We were mandated to handle solid waste but not to build an incinerator.

At 8:00, Diedre Bryant, a reporter from WRNJ, Judith Weigant and Susan Lowman, Director of Substance Abuse at Hackettstown Hospital spoke to the board about the growing use of drugs in this area. Prosecutor John O'Reilly also appeared before the board with his concerns.

Ms. Lowman said that the teen and pre-teen drug use is a major concern in our community. The situation is much different than in the 60's when marijuana and alcohol were the drugs of choice. They are now used as a matter of course and heroin, not used by needle but in powder form, is the drug of choice. Heroin is readily available to any high-schoolers in the area. 50% - 80% of our youth are using drugs on a regular basis. It is a more serious problem that we ever believed it could be.

WRNJ aired a program on June 1st dealing with this program and interviewing some young people and their families. (This is a ten minute tape which was played for the board.) Many programs have been used over the years but nothing is really working. There is a community/parent movement going on at this time which tries to deal with early intervention and treatment.

Prosecutor O'Reilly said that drug use this year has gone up substantially. Between the

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ages of 13 and 18, there has been an explosion of drug use in all categories of drug use with the exception of LSD. Heroin has replaced the use of LSD.

He also pointed out that the youthful users are not the dregs of society but are top students, presidents of their class, presidents of the student council, the so-called upper class students. There are no facilities available in Warren County for drug rehabilitation for children. The kids have no fear of going into the city to buy drugs; it is a carefully run business, run by people in suits who treat their customers well, sell them good quality drugs so they will return and supply drugs that are 90% pure. The drug business is run by the cartels of Columbia and are run very well. The kids from the Hackettstown area go into New York City and the Phillipsburg area kids go into Philadelphia.

There is no facility to treat these kids. It is easy to lock up them up and throw away the key but you are just putting off the problem until tomorrow, you are not solving the problem. Part of the problem is funding. Programs are being cut all the time and the problem is getting out of hand. We need to move quickly but we need funding for treatment. Treatment cost for five days is approximately \$3,900.00. Every town in the county has a drug problem.

Susan Lowman said that Hackettstown Hospital is interested in an out-patient program; it is important to treat the kids on this basis. The state will help if the county kicks in first. Just on the treatment side alone would cost \$600,000 to \$800,000 per year. One of the things that we need to do is to educate the community on how to detect the early signs of drug abuse and then we need to change the value system. The community is responding but we need to set up more meetings to get people involved. We need to impress upon the community that the dealers are much younger, some as young as 11 - 13 years old.

Judith Weigant said that they are looking to get grants and they have met with Senator Schluter and Assemblyman Lance. They are looking for state money and also looking to the county for support in any way, financially so that it will attract state money.

Diedre Bryant said that they have contacted Marge Roukema for support and for the possibility of getting federal monies. There is a bill in the works to allow for application of federal funds.

Mrs. Stone said that the children are our future and this proposed program is excellent and she is very supportive of this program. Mrs. Dickey agreed.

There are quite a few fund-raisers scheduled; a concert in July, a golf tournament in October and the next meeting is set for June 24th.

The plan is to set-up two treatment group homes at a cost of \$600-800,000 which would house 6 - 10 kids each. Treatment would range from 28 days to 6 - 8 weeks. These would be 24 hour facilities with counsellors and a hospital program at Hackettstown Hospital for those who need it. We need to look at beds for those who need long-term residential treatment.

This group will soon be registered as a non-profit organization. Mr. Dinger asked what kind of support they are looking for. Do they have a number set aside? \$100,000 to \$150,000 is what they are looking for. They would not be coming back every year. They need help now!

Under closing public comments, Jim Cooper complimented the board on the new sign. There were no press comments or questions.

RESOLUTION 415-97

On motion by Mrs. Dickey, seconded by Mrs. Stone, the following resolution was

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adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held June 18, 1997.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION ON JUNE 18, 1997. THE GENERAL NATURE OF THE SUBJECT TO BE DISCUSSED INCLUDES VARIOUS PERSONNEL MATTERS; CONTRACTS; LITIGATION; LAND ACQUISITION; ATTORNEY/CLIENT PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS AND IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE ABOVE STATED SUBJECT MATTER WILL BE MADE PUBLIC AT SUCH TIME AS THE PUBLIC INTEREST PERMITS DISCLOSURE AND/OR WHEN A REQUEST IS MADE CONSISTENT WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT AND WITH STATUTORY AND COMMON LAW "RIGHT TO KNOW" PROVISIONS

WHEREAS, Section 7 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist, **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren in the State of New Jersey, pursuant to Section 8 of said act, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is:
 1. Various personnel matters
 2. Contracts
 3. Litigation
 4. Land acquisition
 5. Attorney/client privileged communications
3. It is anticipated that the above stated subject matter will be made public at such time as the public interest permits disclosure and/or when a request for disclosure is made consistent with the Open Public Meetings Act and with statutory and common law "right to know" provisions.
4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

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.

s/Naomi J. Stout, Deputy Clerk

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

The director called for a five minute break at 9:20 p.m.

The board returned to open session at 10:35 p.m.

Nothing discussed in executive session has lost its confidentiality.

On motion by Mrs. Dickey, seconded by Mrs. Stone, and there being no further official business to come before the board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 10:36 p.m.

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

ATTESTED TO:

Naomi J. Stout, Deputy Clerk