

MINUTES**JULY 29, 1998**

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in special session in its offices in the Administration Building, Belvidere, New Jersey on Wednesday, July 29, 1998 at 7:14 p.m.

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

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"**.

The Director indicated that the first order of business was the presentation by the Warren County Community College and the Warren County Technical School on their plans for development and expansion.

Mr. William King, WC Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Vincent DeSanctis, President of the WC Community College and Mr. Frank Mancuso, Superintendent of the WC Technical School came forward for the presentation.

Mr. King made opening comments on behalf of the educational Coordinating and Planning Committee. The intent is to appraise the Board of Chosen Freeholders of a proposal to develop the educational park, and the committee believes this is the correct time to take the next step in development.

The original intention of the ECPC was to coordinate various activities among the various educational providers. Recently, the groups have worked together on technology/connectivity issues and how to make better use of developing technology. Most were using separate servers for internet access. Now there is the capability of separate service, although this is still in the early stages. The schools have outgrown their own facility space. The educational park is to coordinate with overlapping needs. Assemblyman Lance supports coordination of projects, and he may introduce legislation to assist in these endeavors.

There are four advantages to the educational park:

MINUTES**JULY 29, 1998**

1. Consolidation of services and sharing infrastructure such as parking lots, sewers, conference rooms, etc.
2. Savings on presently rented space, such as by the Special Services District and Technical School.
3. Opens space for other county agencies when presently occupied space is vacated by some of the educational participants.
4. Central location of functions.

Mr. Mancuso provided a background of history of the Technical School. Established at the present site in 1968, it is now more varied. Originally built for technical training, there is now a need to provide other courses, with more full time rather than shared time students.

The school must meet the New Jersey Department of Education requirements and standards. They don't have all the room needed to provide all the courses. Many students go full time because they get special attention. About 20% are special needs students, classified, and the state says they can only have ten such students in a class. They are open from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. with evening programs for adults.

They lease space across the street for several programs. That costs about \$10,000 per year to bus the kids over, as they cannot cross the road on foot. They want to bring these students back to the main school. The facility is driving the curriculum but the curriculum should be driving the facility. They plan to fill in between the two building wings and more construction at the rear of the building. They also plan a 650 seat auditorium. They do not have an architect's drawing yet, and they need to tell the state what the plan is before they can proceed. Once the state approves the specs, then they can get an architect to draft a plan.

Dr. DeSanctis opened his remarks with a statement that the schools have just reached agreement on a phone system. Since the building in 1994, enrollment has increased 20%. There is also a change in composition of students, with more full time students and in need of more services. The library for the WC Community College is cramped, and they also have members of the general public using the library. Technology does not replace bricks and mortar. Much of the growth in non-credit courses are during the day. They spend \$21,000 per year to rent a building for the Small Business Development Center. Rutgers Extension is not sure of its office space, nor is the County Superintendent of Schools. The WC Community College plan has not yet been approved by its Board of Trustees.

The first building would be a community services building, with career development, small business development center, large meeting area, cafeteria, extension office, superintendent of schools, etc., the current parking lot would become open for a quad, and the old cafeteria would become classrooms. It would be single story, with an ability to become two story. They need some sort of message from the Board of Chosen Freeholders to see if the thinking is being heard and what is the response.

Mr. Lance asked about a reference to a policy academy on the Technical School plans, and the response was it was just an idea, that maybe a police science program could be done in the future. Mrs. Stone ask Dr. DeSanctis about child care at the Learning Tree, and why

MINUTES**JULY 29, 1998**

a need for a site on campus. The response was that parents wanted the children close to them. There are about 350 - 375 full time and 600 - 700 part time students.

Mr. Mancuso said he couldn't guarantee state aid, and thought they might get about 30% of the cost. The state contributes about 48% of operations.

On the WC Community College side, the county pays 33%, the state 27% and tuition and fees pay the balance.

The Technical School has 52,000 sq. ft. presently, and propose 37,000 new. They project additional operating funds from the state at \$7.00 per square feet.

Mr Dinger informed the Board of Chosen Freeholders that the ECPC was not unanimous in these proposals, although the majority of the members had a vested interest in the projects. The reason he suggested the presentation was because of the costs associated, and that if the Board of Chosen Freeholders was not interested in pursuing these projects, the committee should not waste time making more plans for the immediate future. He cautioned that the county is facing many other capital expenses in the near future, such as the court house, etc.

It appeared that the county cost of the two presently proposed projects, totalling over \$12 million, would be about \$7.2 million. There might be other expenses for county infrastructure. That amount, borrowed for fifteen years was roughly estimated to cost \$700,000 per year in payments.

There were various comments from others present, including Mr. Pappas of Special Services, who said it made sense for an operation like his to be co-located. Mr. Tietjen said Cooperative Extension could use new space. Mr. Carney said the concept was excellent, but this is an evolving concept. A new headquarters for the library is not practical right now until the Phillipsburg federation is completed. There is the possibility of the state putting money up to build libraries in the future.

Mrs. Dickey opened the meeting to questions from the public.

Some comments revolved around controlling costs, and forgetting about the amenities and concentrating on necessities only. Others believed there was a need for more activities for county children, and that there was no greater priority than education and ongoing training for the new century, and for child care availability for low income working people.

Mr. King concluded the presentation. The main issue is a vision, and the problems are not going to disappear. The vision will serve the county well.

In response to Mrs. Stone, Dr. DeSanctis said the schools are not building together due to various needs, differences in rooms and that WC Community College is trying to develop a college environment. The WC Community College has a different set of people being served and the Technical School has a more stringent set of rules. Mr. Mancuso said they could perhaps hire one architect to do both plans.

MINUTES**JULY 29, 1998**

Former freeholder Ken Keyes made some comments regarding The WC Community College plans. He stated that each proposal has pros and cons, and asked what were the alternatives considered, if any. Many institutions have joined larger groups, yet we continue to develop a free standing unit. The WC Community College could build a second floor on the present building. The Technical School food service could serve WC Community College. There are alternatives other than building first, and getting the students, rather than the students leading to expansion of the building. They should not build on a projection of growth. Chapter 12 funds are never guaranteed. Mr. Keyes suggested that a non-binding referendum be placed on the ballot regarding this project, and provided a sample to the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Mrs. Dickey brought the discussion on the schools to a conclusion, and thanked all for their efforts and time. There are difficult decisions and there are many needs in the county.

Dr. DeSanctis cautioned on a referendum, as did Mr. Dinger. Mr. Lance said he ran on no tax increase, and the voters should be given a chance to voice their approval on this issue. Mrs. Dickey said that due to the size and scope of the project, she wanted to know the feelings of the public. There was additional discussion on the idea of a referendum, including the anticipated limited number of voters expected to participate this November.

Mrs. Dickey called for a break at 9:35 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 9:58 p.m.

Planning Director David Dech reviewed the resolution to place a referendum on the November Ballot regarding an increase in the open space tax. There would be three questions:

1. Should there be a one cent increase for farmland preservation
2. Should there be a one cent increase for other open space projects and
3. Should there be allowance to use up to 10% of the tax for maintenance.

Mrs. Blommer voiced an objection to any tax hike, stating that the state, county and municipality were all taking more money for these purposes now. Mrs. Stone said with more money from the other levels, the county needed more to contribute. Mrs. said that in a few years, we will need a parks department, increasing the budget again.

Harry Brown of Hackettstown, who is on the committee, said it would be preferable to just ask for two cents more, without dedicating half to farmland and half to the discretionary fund. Why change the system? You may not get urban support for dedicated tax for farmland, as they get no money for that item. He suggested merging the first and second question into one.

RESOLUTION 523-98

On motion by Mr. Lance, seconded by Mrs. Stone, the following resolution was unanimously adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held July 29, 1998.

MINUTES

JULY 29, 1998

RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE COUNTY CLERK PRINT UPON THE OFFICIAL BALLOTS TO BE USED AT THE NEXT ENSUING GENERAL ELECTION A PROPOSITION AUTHORIZING WARREN COUNTY TO AMEND THE WARREN COUNTY OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, AND FARMLAND AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION TRUST FUND BY PROPOSING AN INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF TAX TO BE COLLECTED AND THE USE OF FUNDS FOR PROPERTY MAINTENANCE PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the voters of Warren County, at the general election held on November 2, 1993, authorized, by public referendum, the establishment of a dedicated County Open space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund tax to raise up to two cents (\$.02) per one hundred (\$100) of total county equalized real property valuation; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1995, the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders enacted said County Open Space tax and established a county Open Space Trust Fund account for the acquisition of lands for county open space and farmland preservation purposes; and

WHEREAS, on February 28, 1997, the Legislature repealed N.J.S.A. 40:12-16 et. seq. and replaced them with N.J.S.A.40:12-15.1 et.seq., and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40:12-15.1 et.seq. places no restriction on the tax rate levy that may be imposed and adds maintenance of properties acquired for recreation and conservation purposes as an eligible purpose; and

WHEREAS, increasing the tax rate and adding maintenance as an eligible expense must be approved by the voters in a nonbinding referendum; and

WHEREAS, the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders has determined that a nonbinding referendum is appropriate at the next general election in which the public shall consider whether the County should be authorized to increase the existing trust fund tax rate pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:12-15.1 et. seq., and

WHEREAS, the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders has determined that a nonbinding referendum is appropriate at the next general election in which the public shall consider whether the County should be authorized to allocate portions of the Open Space, Recreation, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund for the maintenance of county property acquired for recreation and conservation purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders has approved the content of the referendum questions and interpretive statements to appear on the ballot;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders hereby request that the County Clerk, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 19:37.1, print upon the official ballots to be used at the next ensuing general election the following questions and interpretive statements:

GENERAL INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT

The following three nonbinding questions will give the elected officials of the County of Warren the sentiment of the voters concerning the voters' willingness to increase the amount each property owner will pay in taxes toward the Warren County Farmland Preservation Program, the Warren County Open Space Preservation Program, and the distribution of trust fund monies to municipalities and charitable conservancies. Currently, the County is collecting \$.02 per \$100 of the total county equalized real property valuation. The County will annually determine the rate, which if question 1, and question 2, are approved,

MINUTES**JULY 29, 1998**

may not exceed \$.04 per \$100 of the total county equalized real property valuation. As an example, at the \$.04 rate, the owner of a property assessed at \$100,000 would be contributing \$40 to the County Open Space, Recreation, and Farmland Preservation portion of the fund, and the second additional \$.01 or \$10 earmarked for the Farmland Preservation portion of the fund, and the second additional \$.01 or \$10 used for the acquisition of land for recreation, conservation, farmland and historic preservation purposes. This referendum will also determine the sentiment of the voters concerning the use of funds collected for the maintenance of county properties acquired for recreation and conservation purposes. The amount of funds allocated to the maintenance of county owned properties may not exceed 10 percent of the annual tax collected.

County Question 1:

Shall the County of Warren consider increasing the established Warren County Open Space, Recreation, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund tax from \$.02 per \$100 of total county equalized real property valuation to a rate not to exceed an additional \$.01 per \$100 of total county equalized real property valuation with the additional funds collected being directed to the Warren County Farmland Preservation Program?

INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT

This nonbinding referendum will give the elected officials of the County of Warren the sentiment of the voters concerning the voters' willingness to increase the amount each property owner will pay in taxes toward the Farmland Preservation portion of the Warren County Open Space, Recreation, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund tax. The County will annually determine the yearly rate, which if approved, may not exceed \$.03 per \$100 of the total county equalized real property valuation. As an example, at the \$.03 rate, the owner of a property assessed at \$100,000 would be contributing \$30 to the Warren County Open Space, Recreation, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund tax, with the additional \$.01 or \$10 earmarked for the Farmland Preservation portion of the fund.

COUNTY QUESTION 2:

Shall the County of Warren consider increasing the established Warren County Open Space, Recreation, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund tax from \$.02 per \$100 of total county equalized real property valuation to a rate not to exceed an additional \$.01 per \$100 of total county equalized real property valuation with the additional funds collected earmarked for open space, recreation, and farmland and historic site acquisition and preservation purposes?

INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT

This nonbinding referendum will give the elected officials of the County of Warren the sentiment of the voters concerning the voters' willingness to increase the amount each property owner will pay in taxes for distribution to the Warren County Agriculture

MINUTES**JULY 29, 1998**

Development Board, the Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners and to municipalities and charitable conservancies at the discretion of the Board of Chosen Freeholders for recreation, conservation, farmland and historic preservation purposes. Projects may include the acquisition of lands for the purpose of providing and/or protecting parkland, open space, natural areas, forests, and other ecologically and biologically sensitive areas, public indoor and outdoor recreation, the preservation and acquisition of historic properties, and the preservation of farmland. The County will annually determine the yearly rate, which if approved, may not exceed \$.03 per \$100 of the total county equalized real property valuation. As an example, at the \$.03 rate, the owner of a property assessed at \$100,000 would be contributing \$30 to the Warren County Open Space, Recreation, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund tax, with the additional \$.0 or \$100 earmarked for distribution to the Warren County Agriculture Development Board, the Warren County Board of Recreation commissioners, and to municipalities and charitable conservancies at the discretion of the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

COUNTY QUESTION 3:

Shall the County of Warren consider allocating funds for the maintenance of county lands acquired for recreation and conservation purposes from the Warren County Open Space, Recreation, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund tax?

INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT

This nonbinding referendum will give the elected officials of the County of Warren the sentiment of the voters concerning the use of funds collected for Open Space, Recreation, and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund to be allocated for maintenance of county properties acquired for recreation and conservation purposes. The amount of funds allocated for maintenance will be determined annually but may not exceed 10 percent of the annual revenue collected.

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

Under freeholder comments, Mr. Lance expressed appreciation for the flowers sent on the birth of his daughter.

Mrs. Dickey said she was working on a resolution regarding an urging of the PCFA to close the incinerator.

Mrs. Stone said she has been working on the problem of the Office of the Disabled and will provide details later.

RESOLUTION 524-98

On motion by Mrs. Stone, seconded by Mr. Lance, the following resolution was unanimously adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a

MINUTES**JULY 29, 1998**

meeting held July 29, 1998.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION ON JULY 22, 1998. 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: Mrs. Stone: yes Mr. Lance: yes Mrs. Dickey: yes

The board went into executive session at 10:27 p.m.

The board returned to open session at 10:55 p.m.

On motion by Mrs. Stone, seconded by Mr. Lance, and there being no further official business to come before the board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

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

ATTESTED TO:

NAOMI J. STOUT, DEPUTY CLERK