

## MINUTES

March 31, 1999

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in special session in its offices in the Dumont Administration Building, Belvidere, New Jersey on Wednesday, March 31, 1999 at 7:35 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 SPECIAL 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".

County Administrator Steve Marvin, County Counsel David Wallace, County CFO Pete Houck, County Engineer David Hicks and County Purchasing Agent Chris Pessolano and Deputy Clerk Naomi Stout also attended this meeting.

Ben Ritter, Councilman from the Town of Belvidere, spoke to the board regarding Belvidere's requesting truck weight limits in Belvidere. They are looking for closure on this item which was first brought up about a year ago. They are asking the county to lower the weight limit on Rt. 620 at the intersection of Water and Market Streets. Very large trucks use this area frequently, mostly tractor trailers but some sludge trucks. They are not concerned about local traffic but these large trucks are using Belvidere as a short cut.

Dave Hicks said that they did preliminary studies on this last year. 15% of the total trucks are through trucks. He said he will have to wait until he gets his summer help to do the survey again. Truthfully he doesn't see a large number of through trucks.

Mrs. Dickey asked if we can post signs that read "local deliveries only". Mr. Hicks said that signage is not enforceable, only weight limits are enforceable. They do weight limits with a machine count on a 24 hour basis.

Mr. Lance asked when we can do the study and Mr. Hicks said probably not before mid to late May.

Mr. Ritter said that some of these trucks are 53 feet long and have trouble negotiating the corner. They just want to eliminate the trucks who have no purpose being in town, they

## MINUTES

March 31, 1999

are just taking a short cut.

The board said we would look into this and get back to them.

Tim McDonough from Hope said they are looking for an update on electric deregulation/municipal aggregation. The county should take the lead on this. The small towns won't be competitive as they are too small.

Chris Pessolano, Purchasing Agent, said that the bill is 120 pages long but he will try to sum it up. The rules will be written in about 90 days and will be written by BPU. Today was the day for the guidelines to be issued. There are no rules yet on the municipal aggregation.

There will be three options but the county may remain with the same vendor for three years; aggregation for county buildings or aggregation for townships.

Option #1 - the township can form a block to aggregate electricity, the residents will be notified and they can opt in or opt out and then they would be on their own to find a vendor. If you opt out, the governing body can adopt an ordinance of a resolution for all the residents to be in the aggregate pool without the written consent of the residents. After 15 days you have to notify the residents that they are included. After the 15 days, they can opt out. They want to award through the local public contracts law to the lowest bidder. This is written as low bidder with other factors considered. Then everything goes to BPU. They approve, then the rate payer advocate. It is a long procedure to award the contract. It is premature to comment at this time.

Mr. McDonough said he thinks the county should get started on this. Chris said that Monmouth has hired a consultant but they are not doing too much, it is too early. Not much groundwork has been done yet.

Mr. McDonough said that Hope is looking at the opt in process.

Chris said that the basic history of our electric usage is about \$790,000 per year; and a 5% savings would be around \$40,000.

Mr. Marvin said that the next step is to send a letter to all the townships and municipalities and ask if they want to go into the option process. Mr. McDonough said that after BPU sets the rules, an information packet should be sent to all concerned; then a letter should be sent regarding the opt in procedure.

Chris said that the townships should start getting the history of its building usages. He said that the southern counties - Salem, Gloucester, etc., have been talking about forming a co-op.

Susan asked how the sludge truck watchers group is doing and Mr. McDonough said there has been a noticeable improvement in truck traffic.

**MINUTES****March 31, 1999**

Frank VanHorn, Mayor of Knowlton, said that he is in favor of the opt out program. He would like to see the whole county go with other counties and form a large group.

Mr. VanHorn said that regarding sludge regulations, it should be county regulated as townships don't have the funds to do this. We should control the areas that we can control. Susan said it should be done by the Health Department.

Frank also spoke about cooperative buying and said it would help everyone. Knowlton purchased materials for their Road Department and saved a considerable amount of money.

Chris said that back in 1997, he sent out information packets and didn't get a good response. Cooperative pricing is difficult. We could award a contract and the townships could piggyback on our contract, this would be a better way to go.

Steve Lance said that our Road Department Supervisor is looking at a plan to rent out equipment as needed to the municipalities using our manpower. He also asked how soon the letter regarding the opt-in process would go out. Chris said probably mid April, he will send it to the town clerks, but they said to send it to the mayors.

Mayor Joe Thomas of Liberty Township said that he attended a meeting a month ago with representatives from the First Aid squads, etc. and the statistics that were given were pretty alarming. They are concerned about the turn over of dispatchers in our 911 center. Out of twenty employees, only four or five have a few years experience, ten were just out of training. When you have rookie dispatchers trying to communicate with chiefs and captains of squads with fifteen to twenty years of experience, you have a problem. We need experienced people at the 911 center. Mrs. Dickey said that she agrees. There have been two meetings since then and the communication committee is now being activated again. The county has hired Mr. Armitage to consult on this. He is reviewing the operation at the center and will try to determine why we are having such a great turnover.

Mr. Marvin pointed out that contrary to what has been circulating, the county does have maintenance on the 911 equipment. We have \$230,000 in maintenance contracts in use now and we have always had maintenance contracts on our equipment.

Mrs. Dickey said we are heading in a better direction now. Mayor Thomas said that we have major issues. We have dispatchers leaving for areas with a higher pay scale. Mrs. Dickey said that our pay scale is \$5000 higher than Hunterdon County. We have some collective bargaining issues to be worked out.

Pete Houck said that the county just signed a contract with Sprint for the telephone system. These upgrades will cost about \$1.8 million. \$250,000 for 911 has been budgeted this year.

Mrs. Stone said we should have the communication meetings more frequently so that we can keep on top of things. We were hiring part-time dispatchers when we need full-time people. We were training people and then they went elsewhere to work.

**MINUTES****March 31, 1999**

George Baldwin said that the problems at 911 have been escalating.

Mayor Thomas said that if the problem isn't the pay, maybe it's the supervision. He would like to see Ann Stone involved with this again. We should do exit surveys with the employees when they leave. Mr. Marvin said that is being done now. It was also mentioned that we don't pay the Road Department enough money. We have to look at that too. Mr. Marvin said we have a consultant looking at the salary ranges.

George Baldwin asked if someone from the board is going to the meeting on Monday night. Susan said she asked if she could attend and was told no and also no press. She is willing to go.

Mrs. Stone said she has offered her services, she has the time and is willing to serve.

Someone else mentioned that some of the people are concerned about whether the lack of back-up in the system is a problem.

Mr. Marvin said that there is a slot available on the communications committee for a municipal 911 coordinator. Susan asked when the next meeting is and was told April 24th.

Someone also mentioned that the dispatchers are under a tremendous strain so we have to try and maintain good working conditions. There will always be a big turn-over in this line of work.

Priscilla Kreger said that the administration should be studied first. What is the time schedule for a report. Mr. Marvin said a draft report is due late this month and a final report in late May. We only have one vacancy in 911 as of today. Sometime this year the renewal agreements will be at the five year limit. Draft agreements will be ready mid year.

Charlie Rydell said that the bridge in his area is almost done and the county did a very good job.

He asked about the construction on Rt.612, and Mr. Hicks said at the next meeting, we will have RFP's for the engineering services. The last phase will be in 2001.

Tim McDonough asked what Mayor Baker's topic is about. Pete Houck explained that the county sold bonds for capital improvement programs for \$5 million. Mr. Lance explained that these are one time items, non-recurring items.

John Murray, Planning Board in Belvidere, spoke to the board about shade tree funding.

Renee Mathez, Committeewoman from Knowlton Township, spoke to the board about open space and asked what the plan is to get money to match funds. Mr. Lance said that a 90-day Task Force on Open Space has been formed and they have had two meetings so far. The idea of installment purchasing and bringing in a consultant to examine the idea of an extra \$.02 open space tax. We need an additional tax this year for open space. In the next 42 days,

**MINUTES****March 31, 1999**

a report will be turned in. Mr. Lance said we will probably put a question on the ballot this year.

It was mentioned that we have a chance to make a giant step and we need to get our fair share of a piece of the pie.

Dick Dunlap said that the second round of farmland is going on this year. There is no mechanism for monitoring the proposals purchased.

Someone asked about the Economic Development Office and what the plans are. Susan responded that we are working on that now. We are reviewing the job description for the position of director and also the option of private/public partnership or the other option of contracting out.

Mrs. Stone said it is the county's responsibility to fill this position.

**RESOLUTION 243-99**

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 March 31, 1999.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION ON MARCH 31, 1999. 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.

**MINUTES****March 31, 1999**

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

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

The board went into executive session at 9:50 p.m.

The board came out of executive session at 10:47 p.m.

Nothing discussed in executive session has lost its confidentiality.

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 10:48 p.m.

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

**ATTESTED TO:**

**Naomi J. Stout, Deputy Clerk**