

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 29, 1999

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, September 29, 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.

PROCLAMATION 608-99

On motion by Mrs. Stone, seconded by Mr. Lance, the following proclamation was adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held September 29, 1999.

PROCLAMATION MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK OCTOBER 3 - 9, 1999.

WHEREAS, MENTAL ILLNESS AFFLICTS OVER 20% of Americans of all ages and backgrounds and is a treatable infirmity; and

WHEREAS, depression is a serious mental illness that affects more than 17 million Americans each year with common symptoms that include feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, restlessness, and instability, changes in sleep patterns and appetite, loss of energy and thoughts of death and suicide; and

WHEREAS, fewer than half of those suffering from depression actually seek appropriate treatment which, if received, allows them to lead significantly improved lives; and

WHEREAS, the Warren County Mental Health Board as the designated body to advise county and state government on matters related to the mental health of all county residents, recognizes the importance of treating mental illness and supports the following community facilities who serve Warren County residents regardless of their ability to pay:

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The Family Guidance Center of Warren County
 Easter Seals Society of New Jersey
 Catholic Charities
 Warren Hospital
 Bridgeway House
 Hunterdon Behavioral Health

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren , joins with the County of Warren Mental Health Board and other concerned organizations throughout the state and county in proclaiming the week of October 3 – October 9, 1999 as **MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK**.

Susan A. Dickey, Director
 Board of Chosen Freeholders

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

RESOLUTION 609-99

On motion by Mr. Lance, seconded by Mrs. Stone, the following resolution was adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held September 29, 1999.

**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF RIGHT-OF-WAY
 ALONG COUNTY ROUTE #629,
 ROCKPORT ROAD, MANSFIELD TOWNSHIP.**

WHEREAS, road work along County Route #629 in Mansfield Township will require additional right-of-way for roadway improvements; and

WHEREAS, an equitable cost for acquiring the parcel as negotiated by the Office of the County Engineer; and

WHEREAS, the property owner is agreeable to the purchase price through discussions with the County Engineer's Office; and

WHEREAS, the right-of-way area, owner and negotiated price is as follows:

1. Right-of-way of 0.10 acres being part of Block 1001.01, Lot 13.01, owned by Joseph F. Lange and Gina Lange, for the negotiated price of \$4,000.00.

WHEREAS, adequate funds are available in account in account 801-02850.172 and certified by the County's Chief Financial Officer.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren does hereby approve the purchase of the needed right-of-way for the negotiated prices.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County engineer be authorized to have the deed executed for the purchase of the property.

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.

Naomi J. Stout Deputy Clerk

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

At approximately 7:45 p.m., Pat Rivoli, Director of Public Safety, gave the board an overview of the Communications Center.

Pat reported that \$257,030 has been invested since November 1998 in equipment upgrades and studies. Pat also listed the maintenance and repair contracts in the amount of \$212,530 and the projected contracts for the year 2000 in the amount of \$97,000.

Pat reported that several unfounded rumors have been circulated, one of them being that the county doesn't have maintenance contracts on any of its communications center equipment when actually the county maintains nearly a quarter of a million dollars in annual contract. Another rumor was that the county doesn't have a support and repair contract on its radio network, also not true, as in 1998 and 1999, the county contracted with an insurance company but as this did not work out for various reasons, the county agreed to return to the support/repair plan offered by our radio vendor.

The other rumor was that the county is scavenging computer parts from other 9-1-1 consoles to keep primary consoles up and running. This is partly true as we did "borrow" parts from some of our spare call-taker consoles which weren't being used. New spare parts were ordered and we now have a good inventory of spare keyboards, mice and PCs.

The county has a 9-1-1 Communications Committee, a Police Communications Subcommittee, a Fire Communications Subcommittee, an EMS Communications Subcommittee and Municipal Communications Subcommittees. In 1998, the center answered a total of 149,767 calls, with 17,332 being 9-1-1 calls and 131,944 on the non-emergency lines. The communications center staff is drafting a set of recommendations on how to address non-emergency calls and will be presenting them to the various subcommittees for comment. Policies and procedures will then be incorporated into the new inter-local agreements to be presented to the municipalities in December of 1999.

There is a high percentage of turnovers in the center; in 1998 it was 57%. We feel this is caused by low pay and stress even though our starting pay is comparable to other counties at \$24,000 annually.

The recently completed Armitage Study recommends training, organizing and restructuring the organization, revising job descriptions and to utilize "Management by Objectives".

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A staffing recommendation has been submitted that will analyze call volume, user expectations and turnover rates, will provide assistance to overburdened administrative staff by "sharing the workload" and to provide a "career path" for employees. Pat also pointed out that there is a Radio Network Study in progress.

Pat pointed out, from a memo from Ed Bruder, that eight municipalities have not updated their maps in quite a while and some of them have not updated them in the past two to three years. This is a very serious concern. He asked that the affected municipalities take care of this as soon as possible.

Ben Ritter, Councilman from Belvidere, asked about the high turnover of staff. Pat said that 50% left for better pay, some left due to burnout, change of career, etc. We now have some new people and they seem to be working out very well. The 1999 turnover rate is down from last year. Even though \$24,000 is the starting pay, it takes forty years to get to the top of the range where in other counties it takes ten years. Mr. Ritter asked if we have a length of time that employees have to work after they are trained and Pat said we have no policy on this at this time.

Ron Farber, Knowlton Township, asked about the status on the towers. Pat said they would like to get all dispatchers on the same channel. The presentation ended at 8:17 p.m.

On motion by Mrs. Stone, seconded by Mr. Lance, a resolution is to be prepared for the October 13th meeting appointing Keith Matlock to replace Ralph Dorio as the Firemen's Association representative to the WC Communications Committee.

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

Chris Pessolano, Purchasing Director, spoke to the board about Cooperative Purchasing. The first report submitted by Chris was in June 1999 and even though the municipalities expressed great interest in forming a cooperative, only five mayors responded.

Chris sent another letter in August 1999 and received responses from eight municipalities, the Community College, the Vo-Tech and the PRMUA. Based on this interest, a resolution was prepared to form the WC Cooperative Pricing Council with the county as the lead agency. The next step is for the municipalities and other government entities that wish to join, adopt resolutions in order to join the Cooperative. These resolutions are then forwarded to DCA for their approval and when their approval is received, we can begin the day to day operation of the Cooperative.

Chris asked the interested parties to respond with their estimated usages by October 15th. Based on this, we expect to be ready to go by November 1st. We have received some proposals on electric deregulation and we should have some definitive information by the October 13th meeting. Now is the perfect time to do this and Chris feels we can save considerable money.

Mr. Lance thanked Chris Pessolano for all the hard work he put into this plan and he

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feels that a lot of money can be saved for the county by forming this cooperative.

George Beatty of Hope spoke to the board about their continuing concerns regarding truck traffic in Hope on Rt.519/521. The residents are putting a lot of pressure on the council about this situation which has become noticeable on a 24 hour basis, starting very early in the a.m. and continuing until late at night.

Mrs. Dickey said that putting a weight limit in the road is an option. Mr. Lance suggested that we contact the Superintendent of the State Police and try to have them enforce the through traffic law.

Dave Dech said that the Solid Waste Management Plan lists the routes to use to get to the landfill, the incinerator and the recycling center.

Mrs. Stone said that enforcement is the answer.

Mike Moyer, Belvidere Planning Board, said that as the county gets more built up, there seems to be no communication between the townships regarding zoning. The developer of the Brookfield Estates is proposing that a sidewalk be put in on Route 623 that will stop at the Belvidere line. Belvidere was not included in the planning process and they have sent a letter to White Township saying they are not in favor of this for a variety of reasons. So far, approvals have not been granted.

Mrs. Dickey said that several bills have been introduced regarding this issue but have been put on the back burner. The developers are not in favor. Mrs. Dickey said that perhaps we can do something on the county level, we need to try to work together. Susan suggested to Dave Dech that this issue be placed on the next planning board agenda for discussion.

Dave Hicks suggested that they talk to White Township first and see if they can resolve the matter.

Ben Ritter said there has been no communication whatsoever.

Bob Resker of Allamuchy said that regarding the incinerator, are we being optimistic and Susan said yes. She said there is another bill pending (the Gibson bill) that will look at restructuring the debt for some relief.

Regarding the hiking trail, Allamuchy is prepared to donate part of this land to the county. He was told to attend the Board of Recreation Commissioner's meeting next Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. and they will talk to them about this.

Regarding Open Space, is the county actively pursuing this and should Allamuchy apply for money. Dave Dech said that the money is earmarked for this year but they should apply before the next deadline, which is July 15, 2000. Also, they should talk to Duane Copley about this. Mr. Resker said they are definitely going to make application.

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Ainsworth Scott, Mayor of Belvidere, and Ben Ritter, Councilman, spoke to the board again about the recent county truck study. They still feel that the trucks are using Belvidere as a short cut. This causes a lot of noise and speed. Mr. Koppenhaver and Mrs. Beil, Greenwich Street residents, spoke about the excessive speed on their street and the danger it poses to the children at the Third Street Elementary School. They feel the trucks are using the town as a short cut and it begins as early as 5:30 a.m. and goes on quite late.

Howard Ott, also a Greenwich Street resident spoke about the traffic situation on his street, mentioning speed and noise as his concerns.

Ben Ritter said they are looking for signage; a 4 ton weight limit except for local deliveries. Dave Hicks said that the town can make a town-wide weight limit but they will still need DOT approval. Ben Ritter asked if the freeholders can petition DOT to change the laws and Susan said yes. Ben asked if the county could do a countywide study on truck traffic.

Ben Ritter said that he was very disappointed with the truck study done this summer by the county's summer help. The report shows an average of 5 trucks a day and this is not true. He personally saw one person sunbathing and the other one sleeping so how could the report be accurate.

The topic of 9-1-1 under Blairstown was already covered by Mr. Rivoli's report at the beginning of the meeting.

Under freeholder comments, Mrs. Stone read a letter from Greenwich Township asking the board to support their Small Cities Grant Application to be utilized for rehabilitation of the Old School on North Main Street and requesting a letter of endorsement be faxed to Greenwich tomorrow for inclusion with their grant application. The purpose of this rehab is to make ADA modifications to the building so that the third floor can be used as a Senior Citizen Center.

On motion by Mr. Lance, seconded by Mrs. Stone, a letter of endorsement and support for Greenwich's grant application is to be prepared and faxed to them on Thursday, September 30th.

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

Bob Shandor spoke to the board about his concerns regarding the sewer line in the prism and right-of-way in the Morris Canal at Port Warren, proposed by Overlook at Lopatcong on the west side of Route 519. Mr. Shandor said that the county cannot give away this easement and we should have compensation or an exchange of property. He also complained because he did not receive any answer from the county after he faxed us his concerns.

Ron Farber of Knowlton Township again encouraged the freeholders to speak to GPU on their behalf regarding service.

He also asked that the resolution regarding the Wild and Scenic River designation be forwarded to Northampton County and the surrounding municipalities in Pennsylvania.

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Ann Stone asked if the date of Tuesday, November 16th would be o.k. for the Economic Development Business Awards Dinner and the board agreed to that date.

On motion by Mr. Lance, seconded by Mrs. Stone, and there being no further official business to come before the board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

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

ATTESTED TO:

NAOMI J. STOUT, DEPUTY CLERK