

MINUTES**JANUARY 8, 2000**

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 Saturday, January 8, 2000 at 9:40 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by Director Stone and upon roll call the following members were present: Freeholder Ann Stone and Freeholder James DeBosh. Freeholder Susan Dickey 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"**.

The board began discussion of the FY2000 Warren County budget.

Dave Dech, Planning Director, spoke to the board regarding the increases in his OE budget, which are the result of costs on properties and structures coming on line this year. He was asked how much could come out of the trust fund and Dave said he has a question about that and would like an interpretation from county counsel. It appears that there is no reason why we can't use the trust fund monies for maintenance costs. \$148,330 has been requested for maintenance. There will be money needed for removal of the stone wall on Jim Lee's property, rehabilitation of a stone wall and stabilization of the banks. The water company may put in a loop to connect Lee's property to another property. Mr. Marvin said that based on going with the water company, we won't put a well in and we can reduce the request by \$10,000.

Dave Dech said that we would also need porta-johns on the Lee property. There are grants available in the state historic trust but we don't know about a county match. Dave thinks most of the expense can be considered as maintenance costs. He feels that we can charge \$138,000 to the open space trust fund.

Dave said we could make the Lee house a museum, however, there are not a lot of artifacts, or we could make it a plane tenders house. Steve asked if the appraisal is eligible for open space trust fund money and Dave said he would be very uncomfortable with that. Mrs. Stone asked what is realistic for this year and Dave said he can't give a realistic figure at this time.

Under personnel requests, Dave has suggested the creation of a Chief Land Acquisition

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and Design Park Ranger/Maintenance Worker and a Principal Clerk Typist. He gave a breakdown of his staff: Jen does resolutions primarily, Marie does the administrative work (bookkeeping, grants, etc. He would move Greg Sipple to open space with a new salary of around \$45,000 to \$50,000, then replace Sipple with a Senior Planner and add the Park Ranger, the Principal Clerk Typist and one more position for the planning department. The total would be \$88,500 plus 30% for benefits for a total of \$110,000. It was pointed out that the county will generate \$120,000 per year into the 5% administrative set-aside category on the additional open space tax.

The allocation now of the trust fund monies is 25% for farmland preservation, 25% for open space and recreation, 25% for municipal and charitable conservancy, 20% for freeholder discretionary funds and 5% for administration. The revised proposal is 25% for the trust fund committee, 27-1/2% for Board of Recreation, 37-1/2% for the Ag Development Board and 10% for maintenance.

Mr. DeBosh said his recommendation is to put three new titles in open space and eliminate the assistant planner position. Mr. Dech said he really needs that position. He would like Bernie Rooney to be able to devote all his time to transportation. He is now split with doing census information. Also this new person could take over what Albert is currently doing to free Albert up for GIS (mapping). An assistant planner would be a major help to his department. Jim asked if we can increase our fees and Dave said they were raised last year. Steve said this is the subject for further discussion.

Under promotions, Tracy was hired as a Senior Clerk Typist and he is very pleased with her work. She has a good feel for what is going on and a promotion is warranted. Rich Miller was hired in 1988 as a Senior Planner and has received his professional planning license. He took over the development review process and is the staff representative for the municipal and charitable trust fund committee. He would like to promote him to the principal planning position. He would also like to add \$6,500 to the overtime line item this year. He would also like to move his staff from 35 hours to 40 hours. Pete said this would add 15% to the budget, around \$50,000.

Steve asked Pete, for next week, to cost out the whole picture; figure it both ways. Dave said he has one concern which is how much would come from the trust funds for salaries. Mrs. Stone said that people have to realize what it costs to preserve open space, we have to explain this to the people. Dave said he agrees with the maintenance costs.

Under public comments, Bob Shandor said he is recommending addition of the position of Secretary/Director for the Board of Recreation Commissioners and would like the board to consider Greg for that position.

Dave Hicks presented his requests. Mr. DeBosh asked him when the state money will be coming in and Dave said that the bridge bond will be in late summer or early fall. We can cut as needed and stall some things to next year. We will avoid bonding as much as possible. Between all three funds, we will have more than enough. In the bridge maintenance system, the big part is the hydraulic survey.

Regarding the JINS facility, it is approximately 9000 sq. ft. but needs to be expanded. We

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also will have to move the sewer line and expand the parking for at least 100 vehicles. To renovate the JINS facility is a \$3 million plus project. We need to figure around \$250,000 for design.

Mr. DeBosh asked about the courthouse annex renovations. Jim Durborow said we will be doing stucco repair, windows, the front porch and the roof. Mrs. Stone said that the annex is in dire need of repair; exterior repairs mostly.

Mr. DeBosh asked if \$300,000 will clean up the mess at the garage and Jim Durborow said hopefully. It depends on DEP requirements. Ann asked what we have spent so far and Steve said he will find out by the next meeting.

Ann asked about the purchase of a bucket truck and Steve said the old one is a piece of junk. Rick Miller wants to establish a tree crew, that is a part of his budget.

Steve asked whom the board wants to come in on Saturday, January 15 and it was decided to have Rick Miller at 9:30 a.m., the Prosecutor at 10:00 a.m. and Duane Copley and Dave Dech at 10:30 a.m. Jim will talk to Pat Rivoli. Steve will talk to Karen about the agencies coming in.

Under public comments, Gladys Blemmer asked why the \$60,000 for employee training is in the personnel budget. She was told that the training and tuition reimbursement are both in personnel as it seemed the logical place to put it.

Ann asked why the audit cost is up and Pete said that there had been no increase for a number of years and there has been quite a bit of extra work to be done. He mentioned that the board should review the current capital budget next week to see what to continue.

Dave Hicks said he has community college expansion plans from Dr. DeSanctis on the storm water management. He thinks they need to look at the whole picture, even though it will change in the future. A traffic study was done in late 1998 but now it gets greater usage, which will effect overall hours. We can put together a Chapter 12 project. He will need to do an access study. It takes one year to go through the permit process. It probably needs a traffic light there. Steve said the sewage needs to be looked at also.

Ann said that they reduced the budget today by \$138,000 just in the Planning Department.

Mrs. Stone also asked to have the public comments put on the agenda before the budget discussion at the budget meetings only. This will enable people to speak and leave and not have to stay for the budget discussion if they don't want to.

On motion by Mr. DeBosh, seconded by Mrs. Stone, and there being no further official business to come before the board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

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

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ATTESTED TO:

NAOMI J. STOUT, DEPUTY CLERK