

**MINUTES****FEBRUARY 16, 2000**

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in regular session in its offices in the Administration Building, Belvidere, New Jersey on Wednesday, February 16, 2000 at 7:10 p.m.

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

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"**.

Under public comments on agenda items, Reggie Regrut of Phillipsburg spoke to the board regarding Resolution #P1. He asked Director Stone what procedure is being used now permitting the public to inspect the minutes of executive session.

County Counsel David Wallace advised the board that these issues were also brought up by Mr. Regrut at a previous meeting. He again advised the board that this issue is involved in litigation between the County and Mr. Regrut. No decision has yet been made by the appellate division on this issue and also, Mr. Regrut is violating an order that instructed him not to speak to the freeholders or any other county employees about this issue. He is to direct his questions to County Counsel Wallace only.

Mr. Regrut then proceeded to ask Freeholder Dickey and Freeholder DeBosh the same question that he asked Director Stone. He was advised by all three freeholders that they are not at liberty to answer his question. Director Stone told him that the board will not answer any more questions of this nature at this time.

The discussion of the PIG grant applications began at 7:25 p.m.

Duane Copley remarked that he thought that the resolution the board adopted was a good and fair resolution; allowing townships to participate in this program and it addressed the sidebar discussions on ancillary costs.

Mr. DeBosh asked if the cost would be spread over 10 years and Duane said yes. Mr.

**MINUTES****FEBRUARY 16, 2000**

Copley pointed out it is hard to estimate appraisal costs as it varies quite a bit. The last appraisal ran about \$6,000 per farm. There are only about 100 appraisers on the list for the state.

Mr. Marvin asked if any of these duplicate what the CADB has worked on and Duane said yes there is some duplication. Mr. DeBosh asked if Washington Township was 3%, with 17% from the county and 80% from the state and Duane said yes.

Mrs. Dickey asked Duane when he received the PIG applications and Duane said in October. There was a deadline of November 15th. Susan asked if they were submitted to the Ag Development Board as part of the proposed rules and Duane said they were submitted simultaneously, working off the guidelines. One of the guidelines was if the township was using county money, the applications had to be approved by the County Ag Board.

Susan said that in Hunterdon County, the county and the municipality split the balance. She asked Duane how many farms are being considered and Duane said six or seven.

Mr. DeBosh asked has the board decided if they go over the PIG grants, what will the Ag Board do. Duane said the recommendation might be to the effect that the municipalities take a look at other farmlands in the area and would like to include these. Susan asked if there is greater funding for PIG grants than regular funding. Duane said no, they could be as high as 80%, based on the value of the easements.

Tim Brill and Greg Romano from SADB said they are willing to answer any questions and to give status on the rules and regulations on the procedures. They are in the middle of proposing and adopting regulations of the program funding allocation procedure to be discussed at their February meeting.

Mrs. Stone said her big concern is there are no guidelines to follow. The County Ag Board did a resolution with the attorney's approval.

Mr. Brill said they are working with a sub-committee to develop formal regulations. The comment period ends tomorrow. He feels the program is giving an opportunity to lock in land at today's prices.

Susan asked if the ag development area was defined by the ag development board and approved by the state and Mr. Romano said yes. To get on the list, send qualifications and attend a one-day seminar every two years.

Mr. Marvin asked if they have projected the total funding for the year 2001 and they said no that has not been established yet. For the year 2000, it is 9% or \$7.5 million statewide.

Bob Zelle, Mayor of Greenwich Township said they added 166 acres and sent two additional applications (but not full applications). Tim Brill said that the committee would grant preliminary approval if the applications are received by November 1st, with the ability to adjust if necessary.

**MINUTES****FEBRUARY 16, 2000**

Mr. Romano said that 50% of the survey, title and appraisal costs will be reimbursed at the end. Mrs. Stone said that her concerns are that they have 22 municipalities and we have to be fair. Mr. Zellely said that Greenwich has contributed more than anyone else. Mr. DeBosh said that we have to work something out to treat everyone fairly and preserve as much farmland as we can.

Mr. Zellely said that the farmers in Greenwich are willing to go with a 10-year payout. Mrs. Stone said we have to work together, the county is trying to be fair. We have to look at the total picture of the 22 municipalities and we have to set some procedures.

Tim Brill said that Assemblywoman Myers put in her legislation that preserving the land is just the first step to preserve the farming industry.

Mrs. Dickey asked if the Ag Development Board put together a list of the potential farms we need to look at and could they project the number of farms over the next few years. Duane Copley said that he can speak to the traditional plan. They have some resource maps and he thinks farmland preservation is a valuable program but the fund has become limited over the years. They are not able to attract the farms they would like to attract for a variety of reasons. They know where the good farms are but there is a lot between what they would like to do and what they can do. Everyone should remember that this is a valuable program.

Mrs. Dickey said that Hunterdon County does a lot of aggressive work to preserve farms and she thinks we need to be more aggressive. Mr. Copley said the state is not interested in satellite farms.

Mrs. Stone said that she thinks that we now have a very good idea on what the Ag Board is working on this year. This is a commitment she will make to preserve as many farms as we can. Duane said that copies of all the applications have been received (if county funds were requested) by the County Ag Development Board.

Dave Dempski of Washington Township asked where are they to go from here. They have heard nothing from the county, there has been no dialogue between the township, the county or the state. What is the true municipal match? If they can submit farms into the traditional program, do they meet the criteria? He said he will get a zoning map and he will work with the county and the town planning board to get his township back in the program.

Mr. Copley said that regarding the letter with reference to zoning, there is a host of zoning information needed. It is imperative to receive this for the ranking.

Mrs. Stone said she did speak to the planning department and Washington Township has benefited greatly from the county; over \$1 million in Washington Township for farmland and \$900,000+ for open space and recreation. Greenwich Township also benefited; \$1 million+ and \$520,000 pending for farmland. Pohatcong received the least; \$52,000. The county has used the money wisely.

**MINUTES****FEBRUARY 16, 2000**

Bob Zelley said that regarding the Hamlen farm, this is a county project, not a Greenwich Township project. They did not want this.

Mrs. Stone said the county has put a lot of money into Greenwich Township. Debbie Pasquarelli asked if she could get a copy of the figures and Mrs. Stone said yes. Mrs. Stone also said that the county is working on the bridge area on the Hamlen property and we are doing exactly what we have been encouraged to do.

Reggie Regrut said the answer is to raise taxes. Urban sprawl is the problem. Bob Zelley disagreed and said that the townships should ask for additional taxes to catch up to the county.

Dave Dempski said he appreciates the open space bought there.

Mrs. Dickey said other counties require municipal participation and we should too.

Bob Canace said he opposes this. It would greatly slow down the process. Duane Copley has been very aggressive. It would be difficult to pursue the traditional program. The biggest incentive to the farmer is when can you close!

Dave Dech, WC Planning Director, said there is no requirement for PIG to get county funding. Why are these applications going through the County Ag Board? Can they go straight through to the state?

Tim Brill said the municipalities can go directly to the state but funding is needed.

Assemblywoman Connie Myers said that statewide there are 20 PIG applications; 16 from Hunterdon and Warren Counties. Out of the \$75 million requested, \$27 million is from Warren County. The acreage we are looking to preserve is 8500. We must try to save the land, and we need support. We need to try to preserve the land in the north. The original intent was to go through the ADB's, not a county vs. the municipality. Ms. Myers said this is a good program for the county and it will be better when the regulations are in place.

Steve Kehayes of Pohatcong Township said that four applications have been submitted. People should hang in there, we have to maintain a cooperative relationship.

Mrs. Stone thanked everyone for coming and reminded them that we have to work together.

**RESOLUTION 149-00**

On motion by Mr. DeBosh, seconded by Mrs. Dickey, the following resolution was adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held February 16, 2000.

**RESOLUTION TO PAY BILLS.**

**Be and it is hereby resolved** that Master Voucher Certificate  
**For Certification/Ratification for Payment No. 2000-6 dated February 16, 2000**  
 In the amount of \$ 2,113,388.51 including bills and

**MINUTES****FEBRUARY 16, 2000**

Investments, is approved subject to the review of the vouchers  
By the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

2000-6	\$ 979,844.60
PAYROLL 1/27	462.80
PAYROLL 2/10	1,074,343.61
UNIFORM	<u>58,737.50</u>
TOTAL	\$ 2,113,388.51

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. Dickey: yes Mr. DeBosh: yes Mrs. Stone: yes

On motion by Mr. DeBosh, seconded by Mrs. Dickey, and there being no further official business to come before the board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

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

**ATTESTED TO:**

**NAOMI J. STOUT, DEPUTY CLERK**