

MINUTES**JANUARY 26, 2001**

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in special session at the Warren County Community College, 475 Route 57 West, Washington, NJ on Friday, January 26, 2001 at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Director DiMaio at 7:42 a.m. and upon roll call the following members were present: Freeholder John DiMaio, Freeholder Michael Doherty and Freeholder James DeBosh. County Administrator Steve Marvin also attended.

Mr. DiMaio made reference to being in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Mr. DiMaio said that the freeholder board had been invited to participate in this joint meeting by the Board of Trustees Chair John McCann in a December 2000 discussion.

Mr. Doherty stated that he is behind the community college and is all for improving the institution but he believes that there are alternatives to the expansion plans including a potential merger with the County College of Morris. As this was one of the planks of his freeholder campaign platform and he was successful, he believes it is incumbent upon him to continue to research alternatives.

Mr. DeBosh stated that he has a different viewpoint. With the expansion plan at a cost of \$3.00 per year to the taxpayer, and in view of declining debt service costs, along with a projected tax decrease this year, this indicates that the expansion plan should go forward. He is concerned that a merger would leave us dominated by Morris County Trustees, costs may be uncontrollable, class locations inconvenient, etc. This issue has already been tested in court and it is a waste of money to continually pursue it.

Mr. DiMaio said he wants to encourage regional services as this is an overall plan throughout New Jersey and believes it is possible that a merger could expand curriculum. There are other county financial obligations which must be considered including court facilities and open space.

Mr. McCann then stated that he has two questions for the freeholder board: 1. Is there a line item in the county budget for the expansion project this year? Mr. DiMaio, following a brief conversation with Mr. Marvin, said there is no such line item this year. 2. Will a member of the Board of Trustees be on the freeholder's proposed committee researching alternatives? Mr. DiMaio responded that - yes, one trustee would likely be appointed to the committee and that he wanted to keep the committee relatively small in number.

Mr. McCann then read excerpts from an extensive press release released on behalf of the trustees and including a fact sheet regarding the expansion project.

Comments from the public were then solicited. The head of the County College Business and Industry Office expressed concern for loss of training capacity.

Marianne Van Deursen stated that as elected officials, fiscal responsibility is great but that campaign promises can be superseded by the facts once known and the freeholder should review

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all issues before stopping the expansion.

An un-named Warren County Community College graduate views the freeholder position as a shot at the faculty and stated that all his college credits transferred to Rutgers and asked everybody to tone down the negative rhetoric.

Mr. Doherty stated that his efforts are directed not at the college but at big government in New Jersey in general. He wants to reduce taxpayer burdens and says while it is difficult to say no to worthy projects; it must be viewed as part of a whole.

Mr. DiMaio stated that he is not anti-college, he is anti-duplication of services.

John Howard said that none of this is a new issue, it has all been the subject of considerable previous research and that new freeholder boards always want to revisit history.

Robert Shandor stated that this is all echoes of the past regarding Sue Dickey and that he was forced to resign as a trustee and that if the freeholders want to look to cut expenses, they should look at county government for efficiency rather than the college.

Marianne Van Deursen said that education equals ratables growth.

An un-named faculty member stated that all of the employees of the college fully honor the tenets of the mission statement and that any merger has the potential to undo that.

Dr. Arnold Hyndman thanked the freeholder board for coming to the trustee meeting and expressed his interest in a continuing dialogue with the freeholder board. He stated his support of the freeholder's directly speaking to their constituents and expressed his hopes that the Board of Trustees be given an opportunity to assist in planning for the future.

A brief discussion was then held for the Board of School Estimate Meeting to be held on February 14th and it was confirmed to be at 8:00 p.m.

On motion by Mr. Doherty, seconded by Mr. DeBosh, and there being no further official business to come before the board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

ROLL CALL: Mr. DeBosh: yes Mr. Doherty: yes Mr. DiMaio: yes

ATTESTED TO:

Naomi J. Stout, Deputy Clerk