

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in special budget hearing session in its offices in the Administration Building, Belvidere, New Jersey on January 10, 2002, at 7:33 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Freeholder Director Doherty and upon roll call the following members were present: Freeholder Michael J. Doherty, Freeholder John DiMaio and Freeholder James DeBosh. Also attending were County Administrator Steve Marvin, Personnel Director Jerry Coyle, CFO Charles Houck, Fiscal Analyst Dan Olshefski, and Deputy Clerk Tammy M. Lynn.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Director Doherty.

Director Doherty 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 EXPRESS-TIMES, STAR-LEDGER, THE STAR GAZETTE, BLAIRSTOWN PRESS AND THE NEWS 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**”.

They began budget review with Susan Lennon Director of Office on Aging and her assistant Kim Francisco. Mr. Doherty asked her to explain the Jack Program. She gave a history it began in the latter years of 1980's. Her department receives \$1,000,000 thru the Title 3 Act and that is where the Jack Program was developed. Warren County was designated by the Department of Health and Senior Services to receive funds necessary in assisting the elderly. This funding allows the elderly to be able to stay in the comfort of their own homes. She confirmed that there are no income limitations only Liquid assets reported on applications will determine if the Warren County Senior citizen can be qualified. After review of the department staffing, case ratio document she distributed, Mr. Doherty asked how many clients are currently be served. Mr. Francisco verified they are currently servicing 138 senior care cases. Mr. DeBosh asked if these are all the seniors with care needs. Ms. Lennon replied they are the ones that have

been qualified for the Jack Program. However, her department has a list that is continuing growing and the staff works on to get their applications processed. Sometimes her department finds other programs to qualify the seniors who ask for assistance. She advised that sometimes the other programs her department has access to results in excess grant revenues too. Mr. DeBosh asked if there was a rule for the excess revenue use. Mr. Olshefski and Mr. Houck confirmed no, all excess funds goes into the County general surplus account.

Mr. Doherty requested how she would accommodate space in her department for the additional caseworker shown in the 2002 budget Salary and Wage. Ms. Lennon explained that she would not need additional space, she formulated a schedule to share desk space with the caseworkers since the position requires them to be out with the seniors. Also she has set up an extra area for the volunteers to work from in her office. They continued review of the whole Salary and Wage items. Mr. Francisco explained that the 2001 record comparison is not accurate since there was one employee out sick most of the year. The nurse in their

department is required to process assessments for their department to acquire certain funds, she did all of that and covered for the sick employee. They recognize her ability to continue on double duty may create lost revenues for 2002 and wish to suggest this position. Mr. Olshefski reaffirmed their department had leftover Grant funds from 2001 to cover this request. The expected revenue was \$20,000 however they received \$95,000, which was the basis for the 2002 budget changes. Mr. Doherty advised he would like to see them phase in this position, based on their caseload for 2002. Mr. DiMaio stated he would like a follow up report sometime in October 2002 to determine the department structure for their 2003 budget proposal.

The Board began review of the Nutrition Program with Ms. Lennon and Mr. Francisco. Mr. Doherty explained he understands the importance of providing meals to our elderly citizens however, feels we may have some overlap of services. Ms. Lennon confirmed this during her past year of review and advised the Board they have begun the process of issuing lay off notice to the drivers. It was found that the County Transportation service is available to the Nutrition Program. She further advised there are staff reductions due to death and retirement with no plans to replace. She explained that there are times site managers are all out, this had to do with length on employment and earned vacation/sick/personal days. She tries to step in whenever she can and advised the Board that steps are being taken to correct this problem. If the Board would allow her request, she has one person under the manpower program creating a database of the whole Nutrition attendees, this one person would free up all the extra time spent by the site managers to

manually record the data everyday at the sites. The Board suggested that if this was accepted then the site manager positions could be reduced from a 40 hour week to a 20 hour week. Ms. Lennon agreed that could be accomplished once she has all the training completed with each site manager. Mr. DiMaio stated that it was his understanding the Nutrition Program was placed under her authority just last year. He complimented her ability to streamline noticeable improvements of efficiency for the program. Mr. Doherty suggested eliminating the Admin. Secretary position since that person was out on illness for over 4 months. Mr. Marvin suggested not doing this, that it would create terrible bumping rights within the Office on Aging department. Mr. Doherty asked why do some Nutrition sites have kitchen aide volunteers and some show paid kitchen aides. Ms. Lennon explained there are 2 dedicated 89 year old women that have taken ownership in their sites that a minimum wage allowance was created by the previous director. Mr. DiMaio said he would like to think about it before he would consider having these two positions removed from their budget proposal.

Mr. Debosh complimented their Nutrition program presentation, willingness to reduce the budget and show ways to reduce staff without elimination of services. Mr. Doherty agreed with Mr. Debosh and thanked Ms. Lennon and Mr. Francisco for voluntarily reducing their department needs before tonight's meeting.

The Board met next with the Environmental Health Director, John Hawk. He was assisted by Claude Mitchell dept. program facilitator and Paul Wegmann dept. finance keeper. Mr. Hawk gave a history of the department was formed 30 years, but within the past 10 years he did not replace 4 position that were vacated due to retirement or resignation, their grant revenues increased \$100,000 in the past 5 years, he believes his department will have some overtime situations since the Anthrax scare started and he incorporated that in his proposal. Mr. Marvin explained their new grant application for Bioterrorism will bring \$42,500 for 2002 since the grant fiscal year runs July to June. Mr. Hawk explained some services the provides through out the year are, Septic plan reviews, inspections for current and new home construction for wells, septic systems, other work the provide is described under the NJ Administrative Standards and he gave some examples. Mr. Doherty asked for a breakdown of the fees for all

the inspections. Mr. Hawk gave a breakdown by type with an approximate total of \$500,000 a year in revenue. Mr. DiMaio asked to review the 2 positions for Bioterrorism. Mr. Hawk explained it is not shown on their spreadsheet because they were not sure if the grant would be awarded. Mr. Olshefski explained that the 2001 Grant reduction is The largest cause for the 2002 Salary and Wage increase. Mr. Coyle explained to the board that over the last ten years when requirements occurred promotions were

granted to the remaining staff. However, he did concur that there remained savings for Salary and Wages until now. Mr. Olshefski distributed a new fact sheet showing the new fee schedule anticipated revenue for 2002. Mr. DiMaio confirmed that it looks good \$220,000 increase from 2001. Mr. Hawk responded that they are determined to stay within our budget for 2002. Mr. Paul followed with their staff have varied degrees and have ongoing continued Education programs. This allows them to design a rotating inspection program, it serves two advantages: staff morale, eliminates routine inspection boredom and the ability to keep a smaller staff.

Mr. Olshefski asked Mr. Hawk for the status of the Bioterrorism Grant vehicle, since it was removed from their budget. Mr. Hawk explained he has to go back and review his options to see how they can get that filled since that segment of the grant was removed.

Mr. Doherty thanked Mr. Hawk and his assistants for bringing some understanding of their department to the Board.

The board took a five (5) minute break at 10:00 p.m.

The board returned to open session at 10:06 p.m.

Mrs. Dot Harth, Director of the Public Health Nursing Association began her department review with the Board. Mr. Doherty apologized to her for the delay in the original schedule. Mr. Olshefski gave an overview of the Salary and Wage records went from \$1,800,000 in 2001 to \$2,200,000 in 2002 with offset revenues of \$1,700,000 from the visiting Home Care services. However, there is an anticipated \$250,000 of increased revenue to cover the difference. Mrs. Harth confirmed the revenues come from Medicare, Medicaid and private HMO's. She gave the Board a brief history of the reimbursement procedure changes from 1997 Audits now allow consistency that show profit without much fluctuation of funds. She explained how she improved management processing of billing to guarantee they arrive; in 1997 they would receive \$2,500 every 6 months and now they receive \$2,500 within 60 days now. Mr. DiMaio wanted clarification that he was told Medicare encourage getting patients out of Hospitals. Mrs. Harth confirmed that it is true however, that is why her department is a necessary service for the county residents. Her department is able to provide the additional care the patient still needs while they are at home. She added that her department has seen requests for care change from 25,000 cases in 1993 to approximately 40,000 case visits in 2001. She wanted the Board to know that is why her staffing and

professionalism is so crucial. There is more paper work to process in order to get the added revenues. She described an example of what her Case managers most important responsibility is to design efficiency schedules for all the Nurses that provide the home visit care. Mr. Doherty asked if the Nurse productivity is on a reimbursement revenue schedule. Mrs. Harth responded no, her department uses the Industry Standards when they organize the Nurse scheduling which is 5.5 visits a day and her department maintains a 5.6 visit a day schedule. They are exceeding the Industry Standards and confirmed this department is a Licensed Health Care Medical Facility. Mr. Olshefski explained that their Home Health Division is revenue generated and their Health Mandate Division is not. However, he confirmed Mrs. Harth's consistent

communication with him keeps her at immediate notice to apply for any new Grants that maybe available. Mr. DeBosh asked how patient lists are received. Mrs. Harth explained they come from Hospital referrals, Commercial Agency referrals, Private Practice Doctor referrals and the D.Y.F.S. Agency. Mr. Doherty asked if there were any backup programs in Warren County if her staff is not able to service a patient. Mrs. Harth confirmed there were 2 private agencies. However, they have difficulty providing the same quality service PHNA offers. Regarding referrals from Hospitals, she explained the patient has the final choice of service. Mr. Doherty asked for a comparison of PHNA vs. Private Agency services and costs. Mrs. Harth advised them that she feels PHNA offers far more a cost savings to the patient because her department does not need additional staff for Administration, Information Data Clerk, CFO it is just another segment of Warren County staff doing multiple tasks to assist all its departments. The Private Agency would have additional costs for proper staffing. She finalized by explaining that she feels the PHNA program has a much better efficient service system that also maintains cost savings for the taxpayer and shows accountability with continued direction from the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Mr. DeBosh shared his concern that he sees the Home Health Care division generates a surplus, which offsets the Health Mandate Division, to suggest patients utilize the private care agencies for Home Health Care services would cause the PHNA possibly to loose the surplus revenue it receives. Mrs. Harth confirmed the PHNA Trust account is over \$2,000,000 right now which covers the contracted services. Mr. DiMaio noticed her report showed four (4) vacant positions. Mrs. Harth explained she was approved for hire to cover a retirement position in October 2001, however the notice of Hiring Freeze issued November 2001 she decided to wait until after the budget processing. She also explained some clerical positions were abolished, others were due to retirement or resignation. Mr. Doherty asked how she could accomplish that with less staff. Mrs. Harth explained she developed an encouraging schedule for her staff, was able to boost

moral through some new Continued Education programs and did more of the grant application work herself.

Mr. Doherty thanked her explaining her department and changes she implemented recently. Mrs. Harth left the meeting.

Mr. Doherty requested to review upcoming meeting schedules and departments to speak with yet. Mr. Marvin for January 12, 2002 and January 16, 2002. The Board realized they will need another meeting added to the schedule for January 19, 2002, Mr. Marvin confirmed that will be advertised.

Mr. DiMaio asked if the Board has to fund more than the Warren County School Superintendent and clerical help. Mr. Marvin read the statute and agreed that was the only obligation he could find.

On motion by Mr. DeBosh, seconded by Mr. DiMaio, and there being no further official business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 p.m.  
ROLL CALL: Mr. DeBosh: yes, Mr. DiMaio: yes, Mr. Doherty: yes

**ATTESTED TO:**

**Tammy M. Lynn, Deputy Clerk**

