

MINUTES**JANUARY 12, 2002**

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in special budget hearing session in its offices in the Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building, Belvidere, New Jersey on January 12, 2002, at 9:07 a.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”.**

The Board began review of the Prosecutors Department '02 budget request. Prosecutor John Laky began discussing the 2001 budget reduction which had a disappointing finalization. Mr. Laky advised the Board that decision last year resulted in one position for the Sexual Assault and Rape Crisis team not being filled. He started his review of the Salary and Wage segment and gave the Board statistic and demographic comparisons for Warren, Hunterdon and Sussex Counties. Reaffirming that there are more citizens living below poverty level in Warren County that accounts for the different economic state of the Warren County citizens. It is unfortunate that this class of citizen produces a higher crime rate, juvenile offenders, drug trafficking, gang development, sexual abuse, violent character which clearly demonstrates the workload his department has to protect against. He further noted that the Warren County Municipalities have fewer Police Officers at the local level than Hunterdon and Sussex County Municipalities, which creates their department assistance needs. In relation to his courtroom schedule his staff is there on a day to day basis for defendant reviews, Indictment and Grand Jury proceedings. To carry out this responsibility it requires Detectives, Lawyers and Clerical Staff. He advised the Board that Warren County had more guilty pleas than Hunterdon and Sussex County. He explained the importance of his Investigation Unit workload for the Prosecutors Department: there were 154 total Sex assaults reported, 89 were opened investigations, 113 victims had made allegations that had to be followed up and processed. Out of the 89 cases 41 were closed, 19 arrests were made, 4 are in a pending file, 6 are on backlog for further investigation and 5 are still open. He advised the Board that this would not have been accomplished without the highly trained staff in his department who have the ability to talk with children. He told the Board that he is not able to pull any of his Narcotic and Crime Investigators to assist this department and the workload is growing. He mentioned that he saw a change from 6 years ago and is asking the Board to reconsider allowing him to get the additional position added to this unit.

His second concern was to remind the Board of our High Alert status since the September 11, 2001 attack. He knows his department will need to be prepared for new

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breathing devices, special clothing and apparatus. The Federal and State agencies are setting up the programs for proper training and that will reduce his departments' ability to serve the citizen during that time. He also explained other areas that will have staffing needs: Bio-Terrorism situations and he is noticing an increase in Computer Crimes that are not current staffed.

Mr. Laky went to his Operating Expense segment explaining the only change is for the increase in lease costs on some buildings his department occupies. Mr. Doherty asked how many locations do you have for your department. Mr. Laky explained there are six (6) right now and he also handed the Board an Organizational Chart packet that listed the breakdown of his staff in each building and what units are in each building. Mr. Doherty reviewed the list and asked questions relating to building lease costs, he noticed some units are split between buildings, was concerned where the utility costs on the County owned buildings comes in and noted there is a lot in the fugitive recovery and retention unit listed. Mr. Doherty further asked if there was any way the Sheriff's Department could pick up some of those responsibilities. Mr. Laky responded noting that he was not sure of the jurisdiction the Sheriffs Dept. had to return fugitives that left the County and noted his unit delivered 110 back for prosecution. This units responsibility is to process warrants, transport fugitives and run the NCIC Computer terminal to keep up on the warrant status. He finished by sharing with the Board that we need the Sheriff, Correction and Prosecutor Departments working together to share services with each other. Mr. Doherty asked who prosecuted the 58 cent theft trial? Mr. Laky responded you mean the man with 19 priors and 27 years of criminal history, I didn't but I wished I had, we do not need this class of citizen in our County. Mr. DeBosh commented that you couldn't convince him that this trial and its costs were valid. The Local Municipal Courts would have been a better service and expense to the citizens of Warren County. Mr. Doherty noted that he sees the Insurance Fraud staff had only 3 cases. Mr. Laky explained that this position was part of a Grant that controls this position and responsibilities to be carried out. He added that there were 2 other cases still open for investigation from the prior year.

Mr. Doherty and Mr. Laky discussed in detail cases, statutory regulations, current issues of concern, grant funding that was available and the staff breakdowns for the Sexual Assault Division, Narcotic Division, Juvenile, and Megan's Law units. Mr. Doherty asked if any of these units had layoffs as noted from their 2001 budget review. Mr. Laky responded no he did not however; he did not add the position that he was denied relating to the Sexual Assault unit. Mr. Doherty asked if there were bonuses given to the unclassified positions in his department. Mr. Laky explained how he utilizes his budget funds. He waits until the last quarter typically to see where the funds are, usually in September and if there are uncommitted funds, then he grants payroll increases to the unclassified positions in his department retroactive to January 1. Mr. DeBosh asked for the difference between an Agent vs. an Investigator. Mr. Laky explained the Agent is a non-law enforcement position that manages the grants, computer data, is a Trial Coordinator and schedules witness appointments.

Mr. Doherty and Mr. Laky began discussing the department vehicle use. Mr. Laky defended the importance of his staff having their vehicle as it is equivalent to a desk. They carry specific materials related to the type of investigation unit they work under. By having the vehicle it enables them to be at a crime scene a lot quicker to assist the local police and sometimes they arrive at the scene before the local police do. Mr. Doherty asked how many of those situations occurred. Mr. Laky advised approximately 215 cases over the last two (2) years. Mr. Laky noted that his department has 36 vehicles, last year he gave up 5 and he wanted the Board to know that they were all purchased with forfeiture funds except for 2 vehicles. Mr. DiMaio asked for an explanation of what High Alert response means. Mr. Laky reminded the Board of what happened during the Columbine High School situation and reaffirmed that his department is highly skilled to handle situations of this nature because of the

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rigorous training he has for his staff. Mr. DiMaio responded you are a Prosecution Department, what you described is policing. Maybe we need to allow the local police to secure the crime scene for municipal cases. Also we may need to expand the duties of the Sheriffs Dept. Mr. Laky gave some details relating to his department and Statutory Law that mandate their duties at particular local crime scenes. He was not sure that the Sheriffs Dept. would be able to enforce similarly. Mr. Doherty thanked Mr. Laky for taking the time on a Saturday to come before the Board.

The Board took a five (5) minute break at 11:25 a.m.

The Board returned to open session at 11:35 a.m.

The Board began review of the Cooperative Extension Department with Mr. Tietjen and Mrs. Rhinesmith. Mr. Tietjen gave a brief explanation of his duties relating to Scientific Agriculture and Resource Management. Mrs. Rhinesmith explained her duties relating to the Education services available to improve long term living for all County residents. Mr. DeBosh noted that their combined Salary and Wage and Operating Expense is \$298,000 for the 2002 budget. Mr. Doherty asked how many positions are totally funded by Warren County. Mrs. Rhinesmith responded their department has 5 clerical positions in comparison to Hunterdon County that has 7 positions. Mr. Tietjen also confirmed that Sussex County has more than Warren and Hunterdon Counties. Mrs. Rhinesmith explained to the Board that if she and Mr. Tietjen are doing their jobs they are out of the office servicing the citizens of Warren County. However, that would not be accomplished without the support staff in the office to handle the incoming calls and needs that they have. She further explained the duties of their support staff and Grant application processing. Mr. Doherty asked his fellow members if they had any questions, hearing none, he continued by asking about vehicle use. Mr. Tietjen advised they have 2 designated vehicles through the County Motor Pool program. Mr. Marvin confirmed they utilize the Motor Pool Program more than any of the other Departments. Mr. Doherty asked if they were Professors at Rutgers University. Mr. Tietjen stated they were and listed additional responsibilities they have in relation to support needs. Mr. Doherty thanked both Mr. Tietjen and Mrs. Rhinesmith for their time and the explanation of their department.

The Board began review at 11:47 a.m. with the Superintendent of Schools Mr. William King who was assisted by Samantha Grape. Mr. King told the Board that he was pleased to be there and appreciates the support that his Department has been provided. He gave a detail breakdown of his staff: 7 total with 4 as fulltime positions and 3 part time positions. He explained the statutory responsibilities the Board has to provide office space, Operating Expenses and the clerical support necessary. He further noted that this was regulated by Title 18A, Chapter 7. He briefed the Board regarding his responsibilities described in that regulation. His personal background as a 36 year Educator, with 32 years of administrative responsibilities and the last 5 years as Warren County Superintendent. He reminded the Board that the Operating Expense portion of his budget \$17,550 has been the same for the last 4 years.

There was some discussion relating to staff turnover and Mr. Jerry Coyle reported this department converted 2 fulltime positions into 3 part time positions. Mr. King explained that his department inherited 2 fulltime State employee positions, in part because of the Abbott Decision, to oversee the Phillipsburg School District however noted that he didn't request additional space for these positions. Mr. DiMaio asked if the county is entitled to reimbursement by the State for housing of these new positions. Mr. King explained no, but to compromise he moved some workstations around in his current area and that was how he was able to maintain the same Operating Expense costs for his department. He expanded in detail that the Statutory

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requirements are for Salary and Wage of clerical support and to provide housing of his department. The NJ Department of Education covers his salary.

The Board and Mr. King continued to review additional segments of his department relating to his additional responsibility as Supervisor of County School Superintendents for the Counties of Warren, Sussex, Hunterdon, Morris and Essex; the ability to reduce school election costs by combining it with regular general elections; the arguments about a year round school schedule and what that would impact relating to Teacher salaries. Mr. King responded with his ideas relating to these issues and summarized his position as Superintendent of Warren County Schools as being an advisory role relating to budget review issues and that he is not a hiring / firing component. Mr. Doherty thanked Mr. King and Ms. Grape for providing the information relating to their Department and they left at 12:23 p.m.

Mr. Marvin reported that Surrogate Susan Dickey couldn't make the January 16, 2002 budget hearing schedule due to other commitments.

There were no public comments or questions.

There were no press comments and questions.

Mr. Doherty stated that he would like to work on some directives for Mr. Olshefski and Mr. Houck. Mr. Marvin distributed the follow-up packets from the Directors for Building and Grounds, Roads and the Planning Departments. Mr. Doherty made suggestions that there needs some trimming back for the Environmental Health and PHNA programs. He added that the PHNA could phase in the idea of having some referrals sent to the Karen Anne Quinlan facility. Mr. DeBosh feels the Prosecutors Department could reduce their lawyer and detective positions without any loss of service to the public. The Board agreed that there needs to be a reduction in their Administrative Staff levels. Mr. Marvin suggested that they stop choosing staff positions and to set budget figures. The Board responded that they are working on rationalizing their position for Salary and Wage reductions, not choosing positions. The Board began discussing amongst themselves their reasoning for reductions in the Prosecutors Department positions: Investigator, Detectives, Transcriptionists and Domestic Violence Unit. Mr. DeBosh noted Domestic Violence situations and he has concerns that they are processed in Civil Courts and not Criminal Courts, they investigate but do not try the cases. Mr. Doherty noted the Transcriptionists could be hired on an as needed basis instead of full-time position. Mr. Coyle suggested that they look at reallocating the staff into the proper building to get the most efficient level of work performed. Mr. Marvin again explained lets talk dollars not positions. Mr. Doherty responded we will not tell Mr. Laky whom to cut, but it appears some clerks may be overloaded with work in one building and the others may not have enough work.

The Board then went to Salary and Wages: reduce it by \$611,000 with a breakdown given for each area. The Board discussed the Prosecutors Department vehicle use. Mr. Laky told us the vehicle is a perk for his staff. Mr. DeBosh confirmed Mr. Doherty's statistics that it means there are 8,000 vehicle nights in the course of a year vs. the records they were called out 215 time in the last two years. Mr. DiMaio calculated 38 cents per mile to travel back and forth to work and it concluded an estimated cost of \$127,604 wear and tear on the vehicles. Mr. Doherty suggested that a new formula on vehicle use be considered. He explained have a Duty Officer scheduled for each unit to receive the nighttime call out. Mr. DiMaio noted that way there would only be five (5) or six (6) vehicles used each night and that would cut back on the vehicle wear and tear. Mr. Doherty also suggested either cut back the fleet from 36 to 20, put the difference in the County Motor Pool or sell the extra and we can save on the cost of repair, maintenance and insurances. Mr. DiMaio asked if we could suggest this since the vehicles

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were obtained through forfeiture. Mr. Olshefski explained this will not effect the budget if some were placed in the Motor Pool.

Mr. Coyle asked about the PHNA outsourcing direction. Mr. Doherty explained he would like to see exiting patients from Hospitals be given the Private Sector services as an option. Mr. DeBosh wanted to know why make the suggestion? Mr. Olshefski advised that he could give the Board a sketch of what impact that will create sometime in early March of this year.

Mr. Doherty mentioned he would like to see the Environmental Health Dept. realign their inspections. Mr. Marvin reminded the Board not to direct specific cuts; lets' request the standard 10% reduction as was sent to the other departments. Mr. DeBosh followed with his concern there should be more streamlined direction, as he found some inspections are duplicated with local municipal and state inspections. Mr. Marvin advised he will let the Environmental Health Department know to reduce by 10% and suggest an increase of their fee schedule since that has not been changed for many years.

Mr. Doherty commented that the Rutgers Cooperative Extension programs are for children and Warren County Citizens. He did not see a need to change such a valuable service.

Mr. Doherty had some concerns relating to the Warren County Superintendent of Schools budget and suggested using use the 10% reduction directive. Mr. DiMaio commented to reduce it by \$7,500 not \$11,000. The Board agreed to fund the one (1) secretary for the Superintendent of Schools position, we will not provide clerical support for the Business Administrator and other staff the State assigns here.

On motion by Mr. DiMaio, seconded by Mr. DeBosh, and there being no further official business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.
ROLL CALL: Mr. DeBosh: yes, Mr. DiMaio: yes, Mr. Doherty: yes

ATTESTED TO:**Tammy M. Lynn, Deputy Clerk**