

MINUTES

JANUARY 22, 2011

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren met in Budget Session in its offices in the Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building, Belvidere, New Jersey on January 22, 2011 at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by Director Chamberlain and upon roll call, the following members were present: Freeholder Everett Chamberlain and Freeholder Jason Sarnoski. Also attending were Fiscal Analyst Dan Olshefski and County Administrator Steve Marvin. CFO Charles Houck entered the meeting at 9:02 a.m. Freeholder Richard Gardner was absent due to an emergency on his farm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Director Chamberlain.

Director Chamberlain read the following statement: **“ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING OF JANUARY 22, 2011 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-LEDGER, AND DAILY RECORD 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 meeting began with Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Alex Lazorisak. Mr. Chamberlain wanted to go over Capital requests and Mr. Sarnoski also wanted to strategize to trim utilities expenses.

Funding was requested to replace concrete sidewalks at the Administration Building and Jail. When Mr. Chamberlain asked if he thought the condition was dangerous, Mr. Lazorisak said yes. He also said the crew needs to do more shoveling and less salting as excessive rock salt has likely shortened the lifespan of the concrete.

Regarding roof repairs at the Public Health Nurses headquarters, Mr. Lazorisak said there are some leaks and lead abatement to tend to. It should be addressed now before it gets even worse. Mr. Marvin inquired about a third floor fire escape for this facility. Mr. Lazorisak said he wasn't sure. Mr. Chamberlain thought the issue had been addressed by removing personnel from the floor.

Mr. Sarnoski said he would like to see a five year improvement schedule for all the various County buildings including the building, project and estimated cost. Mr. Lazorisak was in complete agreement, said he has already started on it and some of this year's budget requests were made with that timeline in mind.

Court Room #3 was then discussed with Mr. Lazorisak saying that the HVAC system may not work this summer. Regarding the fire alarm system, Mr. Chamberlain wanted assurances that a whole new system wouldn't be installed only to be torn out later due to renovations. Mr. Lazorisak said there may have to be some minor adjustments such as relocating heads, but nothing major.

In terms of utility costs, Mr. Lazorisak wanted to invest in higher efficiency lighting fixtures

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and install timers. He planned to start changing over in the smaller garages. Mr. Sarnoski thought it was a good idea. Mr. Chamberlain wanted to evaluate meter readings after implementation to evaluate the savings.

Problems plague the septic system at the 911 Center. It's a large system and Mr. Lazorisak recommended setting money aside now; eventually building a fund up to \$100,000 to replace it when it goes. The system at the Catherine Dickson Hoffman Branch of the Warren County Library was also a concern. Mr. Olshefski thought building up reserves such as this made sense. Mr. Chamberlain was concerned about the vulnerability of funds being set aside for future projects being raided for other purposes down the line. Mr. Olshefski said it would not be that simple. There is a process. Capital is earmarked for specific projects. Mr. Sarnoski reiterated he was in favor of planning for the future.

Regarding vehicles, it appeared a request for a new F450 for the lead carpenter was put off for another year, but a Durango in the motor pool was to be replaced.

Funds remained in the budget from last year for the sally port gate at the jail. Due to poor design, any replacement gate would likely be destroyed again, so rather than just installing a new gate, Mr. Lazorisak preferred to have the whole system redesigned by the Engineering Department and replaced.

An additional request not included on the schedule was asbestos abatement in the Cummins Building. Mr. Lazorisak thought \$10,000-\$12,000 would cover costs for the entire project including bid, design and removal. "Get it out of there," Mr. Chamberlain said.

Court House renovations were then discussed at length. Window replacements are recommended throughout the entire facility and can be included in the bid for Phase Two of renovations, but Mr. Lazorisak recommended proceeding with caution. The tricky part is relocating people. Asbestos abatement and lead paint are also big issues. Mr. Chamberlain thought historic preservation funds could be utilized. Mr. Olshefski reminded the Board that no money is currently in the budget for planning and design for Phase Two of Court House renovations. There was a general consensus that this would be significantly less expensive than the first phase; budgeting \$250,000 for engineering and architecture for this phase seemed agreeable. Phone and data upgrades as recommended by Barry Smith should be done before Phase Two.

Another facility requiring attention is the Alpha Garage. A different site should be pursued for the long term. It is not in the County's best interest to invest much money in the current garage.

Mr. Sarnoski asked if there were any other ideas to cut costs on utilities. Mr. Lazorisak said there are currently four separate contracts of security monitoring of fire and burglar alarms for various County facilities. He suggested combining them all on one bid. The county is paying about \$24,000 annually for monitoring. Mr. Chamberlain thought Warren Haven's Buildings & Grounds crew should take care of plowing and mowing at the Health Department. Mr. Lazorisak added that he was working on having small, out of the way garages such as Hope, to simply mow their own patches of grass in the summer.

Public Comment was then entertained. Elaine Reichart of White Township inquired about the utilization of Warren Acres. Mr. Chamberlain said it was empty except for two officers monitoring individuals wearing electronic tracking bracelets. This is one of the facilities being examined by the Projects Committee for possible uses. Some architectural and engineering plans have been submitted, but no decisions have been made yet. The topic will be discussed at the meeting on March 9, 2011. Ms. Reichart asked how the solar project by the jail was expected to

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effect utilities. Mr. Chamberlain said the payback of the project is projected to be 8-10 years. It will power about 10 percent of the jail.

Louis Cartabona of Alpha thanked the Board for doing a good job in performing due diligence as it continues to pursue the restoration of the Court House. He asked about rental space for voting machine storage. In addition to renting space to store voting machines, the County rents two buildings in Belvidere. Mr. Chamberlain said the County is seeking to get away from renting properties and this is part of the Project Committee's charge as he alluded to earlier. He lamented the purchase of the voting machines as recommended by the Board of Elections to comply with the Help America Vote Act. He wished we could go back to the ones we had before.

Mr. Cartabona asked how many people were on staff in the Buildings & Grounds Department and how many were union. There are 28 people including custodians, electricians, plumbers, carpenters and landscapers. The majority of them are union workers.

This portion of the meeting concluded at 10:07 a.m. and there was a short break before reconvening with representatives from Warren County Technical School.

The Freeholders welcomed Robert Glowacky, Warren County Technical School Administrator and Edmund Zalewski, Board Secretary/Business Administrator. Mr. Zalewski distributed data on enrollment, capital plans and surplus. Mr. Zalewski said maintaining a surplus of six percent of general fund expenditures is required by statute: N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-7.

Regarding enrollment, Mr. Glowacky said statistically there are about 1,000 eligible freshmen in the county and 220 applications have already been received. Due to limitations in the facility, we can only accept 100 to 125 of these. It would be nice to be able to accept 200. A cafeteria expansion was one of the unfunded projects cited. Some kids are eating lunch in hallways and outdoors. Mr. Chamberlain inquired about graduation numbers and the dropout rate. Mr. Glowacky said dropouts were minimal; this year less than 100 students will graduate and next year, he thought the number could grow to 125, even accounting for dropouts.

As enrollment grows, Mr. Chamberlain pointed out that more money will be generated through tuition. He asked if the current level of teaching staff was adequate. He was told the teaching staff was in place; more personnel would not be required, but we have to make room for the kids in the cafeteria and shops. It was also noted that with increased enrollment come higher transportation costs. Mr. Chamberlain asked if the restaurant could take some of the overflow. Mr. Glowacky said no, it is open to the public and is being fully utilized by the Hospitality/Culinary Program.

Mr. Chamberlain said historically, it seems as if all these projects are done piecemeal which drives up the cost and they never seem to end. Mr. Glowacky said since the work has to be done over the summer, they have to be done a piece at a time.

Certain listed projects: HVAC chillers, heat conversion from electric to gas, ongoing sinkhole repair, were discussed in detail.

With no County Budget funds currently devoted to capital projects for WCTS, Mr. Sarnoski asked how much was appropriated last year. The answer was zero. The last time the Freeholders funded capital at the school was two years ago. However, Mr. Chamberlain pointed out, \$302,375 in debt service was paid on the school's behalf.

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Mr. Sarnoski said if we want to maintain these facilities, we have to budget for capital, but \$1.4 million (the total rough estimate of the listed unbudgeted projects) is a lot. He said he would not be opposed to more modest capital expenditures to accommodate more students, but he wanted to see firmer numbers for each of the unbudgeted projects. Mr. Chamberlain had a different opinion. He said he thought most of the school's improvements could be funded by its own resources.

Mr. Marvin asked if there has been any feedback on tuition fees. Mr. Glowacky said there is a good relationship. Some of the sending school districts save money on students going to Tech. Everyone agreed that there needs to be more coordination in regard to transportation and someone really needs to push the issue. Mr. Chamberlain said he remembered years ago, the public voted on the WCTS Budget and wanted to get back to that. All other districts' budgets are subject to public vote.

Again opening up for Public Comment, Louis Cartabona asked about the Franklin Branch of the Warren County Library being located in the school and how it affects the WCTS Budget. Is there a lease agreement?

Mr. Glowacky said it is both the school library and the public library, so the school subsidizes heat, electric, air conditioning, custodial maintenance and a door replacement is pending. Mr. Chamberlain said, "It's all taxpayer dollars. I don't care how you look at it." As he had mentioned in a prior Budget Session, Mr. Cartabona reiterated that he thought there was a possibility that Prevailing Wage Laws for government projects may become a thing of the past, so he was in favor of holding off on major capital improvements. He thought a pay-as-you-go plan wherein the increased number of students would pay for themselves, was a good thing.

Regarding access through the library, Elaine Reichart asked if it was correct that any person in the county can enter the library, then the school, to use the restroom. Mr. Glowacky said that has been a security dilemma. We try to have some security measures in place, but it is not perfect. Library patrons need to be buzzed through a locked door by library personnel to enter the school.

Louis Cartabona said he thought the County should compensate WCTS for subsidizing the library. Mr. Chamberlain said Warren County already is by paying the bond on the construction of it.

On motion by Mr. Sarnoski, seconded by Mr. Chamberlain, and there being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.
Recorded Vote: Mr. Sarnoski yes, Mr. Gardner yes, Mr. Chamberlain yes

ATTESTED TO:**Steve Marvin, Clerk of the Board**