

**SALEM COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
APRIL 16, 2008 MEETING MINUTES**

At 7:32 PM, Director Ware opened the meeting. Robin Weinstein led with a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Director Ware stated that adequate notice pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act had been given of this meeting and read the Open Public Meeting Act Statement.

On roll call, the following Freeholders were present: Freeholders Lindenmuth, Timberman, Bobbitt, Acton, Sullivan, Hogan, and Director Ware.

Motion was made by Deputy Director Lindenmuth to dispense with the reading of the Minutes of the April 2, 2008 meeting and that the Minutes are received, approved and recorded in the Minute book. Freeholder Timberman seconded his motion. The motion carried by a hand vote of 7/0.

Motion was made by Deputy Director Lindenmuth that the Rules of the Board be temporarily waived for resolution number 14 on tonight's agenda. Freeholder Timberman seconded his motion, which carried a hand vote of 7/0.

PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING NATIONAL INFANT IMMUNIZATION WEEK

The foregoing Proclamation was read by Clerk of the Board Gage and presented by Freeholder Hogan to Blanch Hogate, Director of the Health Department.

PROCLAMATION – ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

The forgoing Proclamation was read by Clerk of the Board Gage and presented by Freeholder Hogan to Brenda Banks and Maggie Vaughn of the Health Department.

Freeholder Charles R. Sullivan gave a presentation of the 2008 Salem County Budget via power point and speech as follows:

Good evening! As the Chairman of the Finance Committee it is my responsibility to present the completed budget to the entire Board of Chosen Freeholders. This budget process was particularly long and tenuous as we completed a modified zero-based budget review, as well as having to deal with the changes to the process that was mandated by the State. However, while we faced challenges with this budget, I am proud to report that through teamwork, persistence, and innovation- we are able to introduce this evening a budget that is fiscally responsible to the needs and expectations of our residents, as well as maintaining the services that our residents rely upon.

[Chart of Tax Rate over Time]

This budget has the lowest spending increase in over 7 years, even in the midst of the astronomically high costs of insurance, fuel, and other fixed costs. Additionally, we are able to lower the tax rate by an additional penny, which amounts to \$540,000 less being generated through taxes. Throughout this administrations tenure we have been able to lower the tax rate by millions of dollars, amounting to eight cents.

[Salem County Government]

The old adage is that “A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.” This administration of the Freeholder Board has taken giant strides in bringing fiscal responsibility to County government by lowering the tax rate, consolidating resources, sharing services, and ensuring compliance to State and Federal mandates, as well as our ultimate responsibility to the people who elected us. While we have come so far, there is so much more to do. The problems that we face were not created overnight and they will not be able to be fixed overnight. However, we believe that through hard work and sacrifice we can transform County government into a streamlined fiscally responsible engine for economic growth, social services, and public safety.

[Listing of 5-8 Departments Cuttings Costs]

Freeholder Director Ware has said it many times that we are not interested in big or small government arguments, rather we want to have an effective government. Effective government needs to be responsible to the needs of its constituents, prudent with fiscal resources, and innovative in planning for the future.

Our County departments have demonstrated that they know how to stretch a dollar and this year’s budget will test their resourcefulness even more. Many departments introduced budgets to us with no spending increase, and now they are finding that their budgets are less than what they proposed. Our residents have demanded that we cut spending, and I said that we would take the bull by the horns, and that is what we did. Working in a bi-partisan fashion, we dramatically reduced many of the operational line items.

[Surplus over Time]

The County surplus is healthy, but not exorbitant. This year we used \$8 million of the \$16.8 million surplus. Surplus is created when we bring in more revenue than we anticipated and used less money than expected. The resourcefulness of our County departments and economic development initiatives has given us this surplus, but we need to be mindful of what we use to balance the budget. Therefore, the Freeholders are only using the amount of surplus that we can anticipate putting back next year. Additionally, a surplus is needed in order to account for unexpected emergencies that may arise from time to time.

[Property Tax Average Residential Assessment Chart]

While we have been able to lower the tax rate by another penny, we know and acknowledge that taxes for individual homeowners will not go down. The Freeholders only have the power to control the tax rate and spending. In New Jersey, the way we fund government is inherently dysfunctional. As your property values go up—your taxes will go up—even if the tax rate goes down. However, if we did not lower the tax rate, your taxes would go up even more. We continue to urge our legislators and the governor to fix this broken system so that the people of New Jersey and Salem County receive the tax relief that they need and deserve.

[Strategic Planning Quote from Kathleen Pereles]

While the taxation system is fundamentally flawed and beyond local governments control—what is in our control is strategically planning for our future so that we can consolidate and streamline government functions and expenditures. Our business community has known for years the value of strategic planning to meeting organizational objectives without breaking the bank. Following their lead, the Freeholders, along with our County departments, have embarked upon a strategic planning initiative to develop a comprehensive three-year road map for progress and prosperity. This summer, our Department Heads will be developing their plans and submitting them to the Freeholders for their review in the fall. Properly completed plans will be required for budget submissions to be processed. We are serious about planning because we believe there is no other way to remain viable in this changing climate.

Dr. Kathleen Pereles has been our facilitator on this process and this is what she said our initiative:

“The Salem County Freeholder Board has demonstrated that they are forward-thinking by engaging themselves and their departments in the strategic planning process. If more government entities followed their lead, our governments would be more efficient and our society would be much better off. After having worked with the Board, I can say without reservation that the residents of Salem County are fortunate in having such a unified and committed group of individuals to represent them.”

[Budget Development Chart...before Freeholder Hearings, add Finance Committee Hearings with Departments]

This year we welcomed our two junior Freeholders to serve on the Finance Committee: Freeholders Hogan and Acton. Together, we worked on this budget, together we made tough choices, and together we agreed that this is a fair budget. Throughout the departmental meetings, budget meetings, and freeholder meetings- we worked together. I am proud to say, as a former member of the minority party, that we were transparent and inclusive and I do not recall any major issue that would prevent this budget from being adopted with a 7-0 vote.

[Chart of Insurance, Health Care, Public Safety Costs]

Spending is a two-headed beast: operational and salaries. Our salaries and fringe benefits are governed by collective bargaining agreements that are set to expire this year, and so they are currently beyond our means of controlling. However, this year's rounds of negotiations will reflect the tough economic times that this country and county are going through.

One of the growing line-items is our Sheriff's Department and Correctional Facility. Specifically within the Correctional Facility, they are faced with 24-hour operations and forced overtime. This year's budget addresses these problems in a prudent and measured fashion.

This year we adopted a new budget process with our constitutional officers since they are their own appointing authority. Rather than dictating what they can or cannot have, we have given them a lump sum of money and have instructed them to report to us, the funding agent, how they want the money allocated between operational and salary line items.

[Chart of Tax Rate over Time]

This is my last budget as a Freeholder and I am proud of the process and proud of the result. This Board has a mandate to keep Salem County on the right path and this budget accomplishes it. Together, we need to work to keep Salem County viable for future generations. Thank you.

R. 2008-227
ADMINISTRATIVE

2008 SALEM COUNTY BUDGET

Deputy Director Lindenmuth motioned for the Introduction of the 2008 Budget, seconded by Freeholder Timberman. On discussion, Freeholder Acton read from the following prepared statement:

“I want to thank the Freeholder Board for putting me on the Finance Committee. I want to commend our Treasurer, Joanne Bell, County Administrator Gage, Deputy Administrator Weinstein, Freeholder Sullivan and Freeholder Hogan for all their hard work and dedication to this budget process.

But, I am unable to support this budget as presented.

There are many areas in this budget where spending appears to be reduced: including roads & bridges, equipment, the railroad, IT, and purchase of new vehicles, just to name a few. But, this just isn't the case.

*You might ask, how are these cuts being accomplished, what programs are eliminated?
My response would be, the same way the state of New Jersey did it!*

They didn't reduce government; they are borrowing through long-term bonding to fund the perceived cuts.

The Governor of New Jersey said it best; it was irresponsible to borrow huge bond amounts to fund the annual budget expenses because you can't spend more than you have available.

There are increases also: it appropriates for the office/storage building in Mannington, the one that we told no additional payments would be made and the lease was cancelled last year. There is a 350% increase in the engineer's contract.

I don't think the citizens would agree to borrow \$10 million more dollars to pay for things not budgeted in this year's current appropriations.

We don't want the same fiscal approach that New Jersey chose, here in Salem County?

Buy now and pay for years to come with interest. We are not spending less; we are spending more, and a lot more in the end with interest.

Next year you will begin to pay for this years deferred spending along with all the returning obligations that will cause a balloon of taxation!

So at this time I will not support this Budget."

Freeholder Sullivan noted that Freeholder Acton was denying the voice of the people by voting against the introduction. And further noted that the committee worked very well together and that she never opposed any of the budget suggestions. Freeholder Hogan also expressed displeasure noting that Freeholder Acton only opposed one social program and that had contractual obligations that she herself voted for. Deputy Director Lindenmuth noted that Freeholder Acton was not vocal in her discomfort with the budget, and discussed at length the need to borrow money, like a mortgage for big ticket items that the county could no longer afford in their yearly budget. Director Ware thanked Freeholder Sullivan for all of his hard work on this, his last budget.

Roll Call Vote as follows: - Lindenmuth-for; Timberman-for; Bobbitt-for; Acton-against; Sullivan-for; Hogan-for, Ware-for. Six for and one against.

Ordinance No. 2008-2
ADMINISTRATIVE

BOND ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF
CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY AND EXISTING FACILITIES LOCATED AT
13 RAMAH ROAD, FAIRFIELD TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY, TOGETHER WITH THE
COMPLETION OF VARIOUS RENOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS AT SAID FACILITIES
FOR USE BY THE SALEM COUNTY SPECIAL SERVICES SCHOOL DISTRICT;
APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF \$6,000,000 THEREFORE;
AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OR
BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES OF THE COUNTY OF SALEM, NEW JERSEY IN THE
AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF UP TO \$6,000,000;
MAKING CERTAIN DETERMINATIONS AND COVENANTS;
AND AUTHORIZING CERTAIN RELATED ACTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE FOREGOING

Motion for Introduction of Bond Ordinance 2008-2 was made by Deputy Director Lindenmuth, which was seconded by Freeholder Timberman. On roll call, the motion was carried by a vote of 7/0. The Public Hearing and adoption is scheduled for Wednesday, May 7, 2008.

CORRESPONDENCE

GENERAL

Joseph Picciano, Deputy Director Preparedness, Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness – notice of the status of Salem County's progress in completing the projects identified within the FY06 Homeland Security Grant Program spending plan

Michael J. Hill, Secretary, South Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council – copy of the March 19th Minutes and notice of the next meeting

Mannington Township Planning/Zoning Board – notice that Cricket Communications, Inc. has filed an application for use variance, height variance, and preliminary and final site plan approval for permission to place six telecommunication antennas

Ada N. Jackson, Office Manager, First Managed Care Option – copy of the savings report for March

Lenora Boninfante, Recording Secretary, Southern New Jersey Freeholders' Association – resolution opposing Governor Jon Corzine's proposal to eliminate the New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Buena Vista Township, Atlantic County – resolution opposing the elimination of the State Agriculture Department

Cape May County – resolution recognizing National County Government Week

Cape May County Agriculture Development Board – resolution opposing Governor Corzine's proposal to eliminate the New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Cumberland County – 2 resolutions:

- Resolution requesting that the Appropriations Committee of the U.S. Senate and Congress amend the Fiscal Year 2009 budget to include greater funding for the low-income home energy assistance program
- resolution opposing Governor Jon Corzine's proposal to eliminate the New Jersey Department of Commerce

Hunterdon County – 2 proclamations:

- April 2008 as National Autism Awareness Month
- May 2008 as Alpha-1 Awareness Month

West Amwell Township, Hunterdon County – resolution opposing the governor's proposal to eliminate the Department of Agriculture

Somerset County – resolution strongly opposing the proposal of the elimination of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture under the Fiscal Year 2009 New Jersey State Budget, as introduced by Governor Jon Corzine on February 26, 2008

Somerset County Agriculture Development Board – resolution strongly opposing the elimination of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture under the Fiscal Year 2009 New Jersey State budget, as introduced by Governor Jon Corzine on February 26, 2008

Sussex County – resolution opposing the proposal of New Jersey Governor Jon S. Corzine to eliminate the Department of Agriculture in the proposed New Jersey 2009 Fiscal Year Budget

Union County – resolution recognizing National Autism Awareness Month

Warren County Planning Department – letter opposing the elimination of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Elsinboro Township – 2 resolutions:

- Resolution endorsing an increase in State Police surcharges to fund State Budget shortfalls in lieu of reliance upon local purpose tax increase
- Resolution opposing the elimination of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture

Nancy A. Miles, resident of Ephrata, PA – copy of a letter sent to Governor Corzine opposing the closure of Parvin State Park

Dorothy J. Robinson – copy of a letter sent to Lisa P. Jackson, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection opposing the closure of the New Jersey State Parks in New Jersey

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

For the Month of March

Adjuster
Consumer Affairs (Weights & Measures)
Emergency Services
Planning Board

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION MINUTES

Salem Community College Board of Trustees March 13th Minutes

Mental Health Board April 8th Minutes

Commission on Women March 11th Minutes

Youth Services Commission/Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition April 2nd Minutes

Motion was made by Deputy Director Lindenmuth to accept and file the correspondence, departmental reports, and the committee and commission reports and be made a part of the Minutes. The motion was seconded by Freeholder Timberman. The motion was carried by a hand vote of 7/0.

Motion was made by Deputy Director Lindenmuth that all Bills and Claims, when properly signed and audited, be paid and charged to their respective accounts. The motion was seconded by Freeholders Timberman. The motion was carried by a hand vote of 7/0.

Motion was made by Deputy Director Lindenmuth that the Treasurer's Report be received and filed, subject to audit, and that a copy be made available to the public, upon request, for its review. Freeholder Timberman seconded his motion. The motion carried a hand vote of 7/0.

Director Ware stated that if no Freeholder objected, the resolutions would be read in bulk.

R. 2008-228
ADMINISTRATIVE

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CHANGE IN MEETING TIME FOR
REGULAR FREEHOLDER MEETINGS OF
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18TH, JULY 16TH, AND AUGUST 20TH, 2008
IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETING LAW

R. 2008-229
ADMINISTRATIVE

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING PETTY CASH FUND FOR
PUBLIC INFORMATION/HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICE

R. 2008-230
ADMINISTRATIVE
RESOLUTION FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF PATHOLOGISTS AND MEDICAL INVESTIGATORS
FOR THE COUNTY OF SALEM

R. 2008-231
ADMINISTRATIVE
RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF AN INCREASE IN THE ALLOCATION OF
CHAPTER 51 DOLLARS FROM \$9 MILLION TO \$18 MILLION FOR THE PROVISION OF
ALCOHOL EDUCATION, REHABILITATION AND ENFORCEMENT SERVICES
TO SALEM COUNTY RESIDENTS WHO ARE IN NEED

Deputy Director Lindenmuth moved for adoption of these four resolutions, with Freeholder Timberman seconding his motion. As there was no discussion, the motion for adoption of the foregoing resolutions carried a hand vote of 7/0.

R. 2008-232
FINANCE
FINANCE RESOLUTION CANCELLATION OF CHECK

R. 2008-233
FINANCE
EMERGENCY TEMPORARY RESOLUTION PRIOR TO ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET

Freeholder Sullivan moved for adoption of these two resolutions, with Freeholder Hogan seconding his motion. As there was no discussion, the motion for adoption of the foregoing resolutions carried a hand vote of 7/0.

R. 2008-234
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
RESOLUTION AWARDDING A CONTRACT FOR SUPPLYING AND DELIVERING
VARIOUS FOOD ITEMS FOR THE SALEM COUNTY NURSING HOME
(\$200,000 – Sysco Food Services of Philadelphia, LLC)

R. 2008-235
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR AND CLERK OF THE BOARD
TO SIGN APPLICATION FOR HEALTH SERVICES GRANT FOR THE
SPECIAL CHILD HEALTH SERVICES/EARLY INTERVENTION UNIT

R. 2008-236
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR AND CLERK OF THE BOARD
TO SIGN APPLICATION FOR HEALTH SERVICES GRANT FOR THE
SPECIAL CHILD HEALTH SERVICES/CASE MANAGEMENT UNIT

Freeholder Hogan moved for adoption of these three resolutions, with Freeholder Timberman seconding his motion. As there was no discussion, the motion for adoption of the foregoing resolutions carried a hand vote of 7/0.

R. 2008-237
PUBLIC SAFETY

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
EXECUTING AND ACCEPTING A GRANT FROM THE
NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE FOR THE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE
(Cops in Shops)

Deputy Director Lindenmuth moved for adoption of this resolution, with Freeholder Bobbitt seconding his motion. As there was no discussion, the motion for adoption of the foregoing resolutions carried a hand vote of 7/0.

R. 2008-238
PUBLIC WORKS

RESOLUTION APPROVING PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE
CONSTRUCTION OF A FLASHING BEACON AT THE INTERSECTION OF
RICHWOOD ROAD, COUNTY ROAD #609 AND MONROEVILLE ROAD, COUNTY ROAD #604
IN UPPER PITTSBORO TOWNSHIP AND THE
INTERSECTION OF HOOK ROAD, COUNTY ROAD #551 AND
PITTSFIELD STREET, A LOCAL ROAD, IN PENNSVILLE TOWNSHIP
FOR THE COUNTY OF SALEM

R. 2008-239
PUBLIC WORKS

RESOLUTION APPROVING PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE
RESURFACING OF PENNSVILLE-AUBURN ROAD, COUNTY ROAD #551, PHASE II
IN OLDMANS TOWNSHIP FOR THE COUNTY OF SALEM

R. 2008-240
PUBLIC WORKS

RESOLUTION APPROVING PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE
2008 ROAD STRIPING PROGRAM FOR THE COUNTY OF SALEM

R. 2008-2421
PUBLIC WORKS

RESOLUTION AWARDING CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING SERVICES
FOR SEDIMENT TESTING AT AVIS MILL LAKE FOR THE COUNTY OF SALEM
(\$11,000 – Princeton Hydro, LLC)

Freeholder Bobbitt moved for adoption of these five resolutions, with Freeholder Sullivan seconding his motion. As there was no discussion, the motion for adoption of the foregoing resolutions carried a hand vote of 7/0.

Under New Business, Freeholder Acton noted that the Salem Community College Gala, which was recently held, raised over \$60,000 for the foundation.

Freeholder Hogan again noted the work of the budget committee Treasurer Joanne Bell.

As there was no further business, motion was made by Deputy Director Lindenmuth to adjourn the meeting, with Freeholder Timberman seconding his motion. The Freeholders unanimously adjourned the meeting at 8:10 PM.