

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 18, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by Director Richard Gardner and upon roll call, the following members were present: Freeholder Jason Sarnoski, Freeholder James Kern, III, and Freeholder Richard Gardner. Also attending were County Administrator Alex Lazorisak, County CFO Kim Francisco and County I.T. Director Robert Sidie.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Director Gardner, who then read the following statement: "ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING *OF JANUARY 18, 2020* 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."

Mr. Francisco had one brief update to the budget overview. A letter received from Belvidere Ambulance Corps in late April of 2019 sought an increase to its annual appropriation. Every squad in the county is appropriated \$1,000 per year, and this request arrived too late to address in the 2019 budget. When the county owned Warren Haven, Belvidere received \$3,000 annually. Mr. Lazorisak said they do respond to a lot of calls, as does Oxford, concerning the jail and courthouse. The Board was amenable to considering it, and asked Frank Wheatley for a breakdown of calls for both squads for the prior year.

Moving on with the agenda, Warden Ken McCarthy came before the Board to discuss budgetary needs of the Correctional Center. Mr. Francisco noted he suggested a \$50,000 increase to OE because the healthcare contract went up. Mr. McCarthy explained the need for new ballistic/stab vests for all officers every five years, and that the cost per vest has increased.

The video system at the facility requires repair after a surge knocked it out. There are 88 cameras in the jail and some cannot be viewed from center control.

Coming in at an estimated cost of more than \$26,000, Mr. Lazorisak recommended putting in an insurance claim.

The Warden had requested one new vehicle, an unmarked SUV for multiple purposes, including prisoner transport. Once received, he would turn in one of the department's older vehicles.

Capital requests included an exterior lighting project to enhance security, a lock project, and an air handler.

Regarding staffing, of 62 officers, Warden McCarthy was prepared to abolish one position. Currently down eight officers, he said only six people picked up applications. The Civil Service list system was a factor, as the most recent list was three years old, and people may have moved on.

Mr. McCarthy thanked the Freeholders for pursuing the shared services agreement with Hunterdon County for the provision of adult inmates. He said it was a "good move" that will generate about \$1.3 million a year, based on 40 inmates per day. Outsourcing would have been less expensive, but that would have cost at least 35 offices their jobs. He said his officers were appreciative.

These revenues will not be realized until 2021. Mr. Lazorisak reminded the Board that this revenue will help subsidize the existing costs of the Correctional facility with Bail Reform in mind. "This isn't a \$1.3 million windfall," he said. "I know," said Mr. Sarnoski. This portion of the meeting concluded at 9:19 a.m.

Acting Prosecutor James Pfeiffer was next. His foremost requests were a Pharos system; a used TRT vehicle; a 3-D type scanner and more equipment for the Cyber Crimes unit.

Mr. Pfeiffer said the Cyber Crimes Unit is "exploding," with every investigation involving technological devices. He said there is no way around it in today's environment. In three years, equipment is obsolete, and it is hard to keep up. Apple is not helpful. Mr. Pfeiffer said it is out of our control, it costs money, and it is going to continue. Mr. Sarnoski asked about shared services. Mr. Pfeiffer said he should look into it, and intended to, but would prefer to keep it in Warren County. Located between Hunterdon and Sussex, he would like to house it here.

Regarding personnel, the Prosecutor sought a detective and agent for the Cyber Crimes Unit. However, he was hoping to cut back on the Fugitive Unit, with some of

that work shifting over to Corrections. If that occurs, he said he could probably make do with the agent. One case alone involved looking through 20,000 images. Someone has to view each one. Another case involved 68 different devices. We really need that agent, he said. He had to replace a person in Major Crimes. He said it is hard to find employees.

While not requesting it for 2020, Mr. Pfeiffer said at some point, he was going to need a new Assistant Prosecutor position. There hasn't been a new AP position for 20 years. Now, with Bail Reform and the crime rate up, defendants have to have a trial within 180 days. He planned to request this next year.

The Acting Prosecutor hoped to save money in transporting costs. He said within 250 miles we do it ourselves, and may use Corrections to help. Beyond that distance, it is expensive, especially if it is on a weekend or holiday, or if there are medical issues involved. He was looking at alternatives for transporting people accused of less serious crimes from faraway states like California.

Mr. Gardner asked about drug lords in Pennsylvania. Mr. Pfeiffer said Bethlehem has gotten a lot better, Allentown was still a mess, and Easton's West Ward was problematic. He said the spillover to Phillipsburg was going to happen. With Bail Reform in NJ, perpetrators are released. Not so in PA. Drug deaths in Warren County are down, from 30 to 18. There were 62 Narcan deployments in 2019, but even that is a downward trend, from 86 in 2018.

Sex crimes are a major problem in our county; we are number one in the state, in a way we don't want to be. There were 238 cyber tips on potential child pornography, and each one has to be investigated. It's "a major, major problem," said Mr. Pfeiffer, adding if he had one more detective they could be more proactive. Mr. Sarnoski recommended they work with Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Crisis Center.

Wrapping up, Mr. Lazorisak said adding both an agent and detective would bring the office's budget over the two percent cap, but he suggested bringing in an agent midway through the year. He liked the concept of retooling transports and eliminating redundancies. Regarding technology, Mr. Sarnoski said it has an upside and a downside. He was glad to see the office taking the lead.

This portion of the meeting concluded at 9:51 a.m., followed by a short break.

The group reconvened at 10:03 a.m. to talk about the Public Safety budget.

Department Director Frank Wheatley was joined by Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator Bill Hunt. Mr. Hunt began with a report on grants. The generator program is set to expire in April 2020, but these are Hurricane Sandy funds and he expected that to be extended. After meeting other obligations, \$8,900 will be left for the Hope Garage. FEMA acquisitions for flood plain properties will bring in \$510,805, with \$290,000 of that going to Hunterdon County. Twenty properties were originally involved, and we ended up with 13 completed this past year. The Hazard Mitigation grant will expire in April 2022.

Mr. Wheatley said the \$61,000 increase to his OE was mostly for the Fire Academy (\$46,000), which had never before truly had a line item budget, was seeking to expand and offer more courses, as well as some repairs and testing. In-county fire departments are not charged to attend the academy. Mr. Sarnoski said he supported the Fire Academy, but a 25 percent increase was hard to swallow without a detailed breakdown. Mr. Lazorisak said a detailed budget had never been followed, and concurred it was “too much in one shot.” He recommended a two percent increase for this year, monitor the programs and reexamine next year when we have more to base it on.

Focusing on personnel, Mr. Wheatley recommended one person for a merit raise, as she is third in line at the Communications Center and takes on other duties; and another person who takes care of social media, NJSP link, and creates plans is working out of title (“Dispatcher”) who he would like in Emergency Management.

Discussion of Capital ensued. The simulcast router is a project outstanding from 2018. The Jonestown tower is up, but not optimized. Mr. Sarnoski wanted details for the \$3 million Communications Center upgrade. He asked if there were other vendors to approach. Mr. Wheatley said yes, but TuWay has never let us down. He didn’t think it was prudent to spend money on a consultant to tell us TuWay was the best option. Mr. Lazorisak wanted to see a third party engineer that specialized in the area to oversee the upgrade. It would be a check and balance; it would be under that engineer’s license.

When asked about his biggest concerns, Mr. Wheatley mentioned the towers at Mountain Lake and Jonestown, and radio communications for Pohatcong and Franklin fire departments. If an agency wants to alter our communications programming in any way, Mr. Wheatley said the county is no longer responsible. He was advised to get that in writing. Regarding the Hackettstown Police Department, Mr. Wheatley reasserted that the problem lies solely with their building and is not a deficiency in our communications system.

This portion of the meeting concluded at 10:41 a.m. followed by a short break.

Upon return, with the Sheriff's Office budget up for review, Mr. Lazorisak advised going into Executive Session, as collective bargaining was going to be discussed.

RESOLUTION 43-20

On motion by Mr. Sarnoski, seconded by Mr. Kern, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS PROVIDING FOR A MEETING NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 at 10:45 a.m.

Recorded vote: Mr. Sarnoski yes, Mr. Kern yes, Mr. Gardner yes

On motion by Mr. Sarnoski, seconded by Mr. Kern, the Board adjourned Executive Session and returned to Open Session at 11:31 a.m.

Recorded vote: Mr. Sarnoski yes, Mr. Kern yes, Mr. Gardner yes

The Sheriff's OE remained flat from the prior year, but Mr. Francisco asked if we could cut about \$5,000 there, since the office stayed under budget last year and this would help to comply with the two percent cap.

Regarding capital, Mr. McDonald again requested an upgrade to the courthouse video surveillance system, emphasizing we were not in compliance and it was a liability issue. Mr. Lazorisak endorsed approval, recommending bringing in the local engineer who installed the system. The Sheriff was appreciative, and thanked the Freeholders for the lockdown emergency warning system implemented last year.

It was decided to table further budget discussion for now, to give the Sheriff an opportunity to go through his numbers again bearing in mind topics raised in Executive Session, and revisit this budget at the end of the process.

One final matter raised by Mr. Sarnoski was the Sheriff offering office space to the co-directors of Parent to Parent Addiction Services. Sheriff McDonald said they were using the office right next to the Undersheriffs one day a week to talk to their clients. "The judge had asked me to do that," said Mr. McDonald. Mr. Sarnoski requested a letter from the judge who suggested it. While Mr. Sarnoski supported this organization's mission, he was concerned about a slippery slope and wanted to

make sure the magnanimous gesture was implemented in the proper way, and we were covered in terms of liability. “We should have been notified,” said Mr. Gardner. The Sheriff apologized. Mr. Lazorisak did not recommend the practice, saying we have to be very careful with this. Even if the judge wants it, once the Freeholders agree to a nonprofit using the space, that sets a precedent. Eventually, if another nonprofit asks for the same courtesy and the answer is no, we could be open to lawsuits. The Sheriff said the Prosecutor’s Office also requested this. Mr. Sarnoski again asked Sheriff McDonald to obtain any such requests in writing and forward them to the County Administrator.

On motion by Mr. Kern, seconded by Mr. Sarnoski, and there being no further business before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

**THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
OF THE COUNTY OF WARREN**
Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building
165 County Route 519 South
Belvidere, NJ 07823

RESOLUTION 43-20

On motion by **Mr. Sarnoski**, seconded by **Mr. Kern**, the following resolution was unanimously adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held on January 18, 2020.

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION OF
THE WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
PROVIDING FOR A MEETING NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF
THE NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12**

WHEREAS, the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders is subject to certain requirements of the *Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6*, et seq., and

WHEREAS, the *Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12*, provides that an Executive Session, not open to the public, may be held for certain specified purposes when authorized by Resolution, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this Board hereby excludes the public in order to discuss such matters. The general nature of the subjects to be discussed are as follows:

(1) *Matters Relating to Collective Bargaining*: Items to be discussed include: PBA Local 280 – Sheriff’s Officers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board shall disclose to the public, as soon as practicable, the contents of the discussions after the final disposition of the matters discussed.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Sarnoski yes, Mr. Kern yes, Mr. Gardner yes

I hereby certify the above to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren on the date above mentioned.

_____, Clerk

Alex J. Lazorisak