

REGULAR MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2015

6:00 PM

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item

1. **CALL TO ORDER BY DIRECTOR** at 6:00 PM

2. **ROLL CALL** Freeholder Mudrick; Freeholder Phoebus; Freeholder Vohden; Freeholder Director Crabb; County Administrator, Steve Gruchacz, County Counsel, John Williams and Clerk of the Board, Catherine Williams.

Freeholder Graham arrived at 6:07 PM

3. **MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

4. **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

"Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 Adequate Notice as defined by Section 3D of Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, has been made by regular mail, such notice being submitted on September 17, 2015 from the Administrative Center of the County of Sussex, located at One Spring Street, Newton, New Jersey to the following:

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|--------------------------|------------|
| New Jersey Herald | WSUS Radio |
| New Jersey Sunday Herald | WNNJ Radio |
| Star Ledger | |

and is also posted on the bulletin board maintained in the Administrative Center for public announcements and has been submitted to the Sussex County Clerk in compliance with said Act."

5. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were no Public Hearings.

6. **PROCLAMATIONS/CERTIFICATES/PRESENTATIONS**

A. Proclamations/Certificates

1. Proclamation in recognition of November 1, 2015 as the 15th Annual Salute to Military Veterans Day.

486-2015

2. Proclamation declaring November 10, 2015 as "Worldwide NET Cancer Awareness Day".

487-2015

MOTION made by Freeholder Phoebus to approve these Proclamations, seconded by Freeholder Vohden and passed unanimously.

B. Presentations

1. Presentation of "Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Award" to Chaplain Ernest M. Kosa by Frank Arminio of the Friends of the Chapel of Four Chaplains, Inc..

2. Acknowledging the retirement of Walter P. Chadwick, Jr., County Correction Officer for the Sheriff's Office, who retired after 19 years with the County; Ellen Struble, Supervising Library Assistant at the Library, who retired after 29 years with the County.

Mr. Arminio came forward and spoke about Ernie's accomplishments and why he deserved this award. He then said as a representative of the Chaplain he was pleased to present the Legion of Honor Award to Chaplain Ernest M. Kosa. Mr. Arminio addressed the Freeholders and said that they have a special community here and this is one state that they truly care about veterans.

Mr. Kosa came forward and expressed his gratitude as a Chaplain.

7. PUBLIC SESSION FROM THE FLOOR

(Please note: Everyone is asked to keep their comments to 5 minutes or less)

MOTION made at 6:30 PM by Freeholder Phoebus to open the floor to the Public, seconded by Freeholder Graham and passed unanimously.

Comment from Neil Kenny

Mr. Kenny resides in Green Township and said there has been some vandalism to the political signs in the area. He said that he doesn't know if it is county wide but it is annoying to him. I think we need a strong word statement. Whatever sign I put on my property is my 1st amendment right and just because you might not like what I say or who I support does not give you the right to supersede that. I look at it as a constitutional issue and I can get very inappropriate with people.

MOTION made at 6:35 PM by Freeholder Phoebus to close the floor to the Public, seconded by Freeholder Graham and passed unanimously.

8. FREEHOLDERS' COMMENTS

Comments by Freeholder Vohden

- **Boy Scouts Award Dinner**

Freeholder Vohden attend the Boys Scout Annual Award dinner at Perona Farms. The turnout was great. They exceeded their goal to raise \$100,000 by more than \$123,000.

- **Sussex County Community College Foundation Scholarship Ball**

Freeholder Vohden attended the event at the Red Tail Lodge in Vernon, NJ. They had a really good turnout.

- **Northeastern PA Commuter Rail Meeting**

Freeholder Vohden attended this meeting at the Pocono Manner as a Board Member and with another member of the NJ Transportation Planning Authorities who handles federal issues. The meeting was held to discuss the Lackawanna Cutoff Rail Service from Andover through Pennsylvania in Scranton. People in attendance at the meeting were Congressman Cartwright from PA, the Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation, the Chief of Government of External Affairs from New Jersey Transit and the Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration. This person is the highest ranking person in that agency. All comments were in favor of continuing the cutoff through Pennsylvania. It was clear after the meeting that one of the reasons why they want to put this through is to relieve the traffic on Rt. 80.

- **New Jersey Business Industries Associations and Employer Legislative Committee**

Freeholder Vohden spoke at this meeting and presented an update on the Highlands Regional Master Plan Review.

- **Legislative Update Meeting**

Freeholder Vohden gave an update on the Highlands Regional Master Plan Review.

- **New Jersey Association of Counties Meeting**

Freeholder Vohden attended this meeting in Trenton. There was a presentation by the State Employment and Training Commission from the NJ Department of Labor Work Force. Their goal is to make sure New Jersey has a skilled innovative work force that will drive economic growth which is very important in Sussex County. The presentation focused on a new regional plan for work force regions. There are three maps that are proposing new region designations. There was also a presentation on Bail Reform and Re-entry.

- **Veterans**

Freeholder Vohden said he received a letter from Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen about the ongoing efforts to establish a Veteran's Community Based Outpatient Center, CBOPC. That is a community outpatient clinic in Sussex County. Congressman Rodney is urging the New Jersey Healthcare System and has determined that there is substantial need for a clinic in this area. Every county in the state except for Sussex and Warren has a CBOPC. The veterans are looking for an affordable space in Sussex County. They need 400 sq. feet which would provide counseling and other benefits to veterans.

Comments from Freeholder Mudrick

- **Retirees**

Freeholder Mudrick acknowledged the six retirees from the county. In total it amounts to 154 years of service to the County of Sussex.

Comment from Freeholder Phoebus

- **Veterans**

Freeholder Phoebus asked Director Freeholder Crabb if they could compose a letter to send to our two congressmen about how the federal government wants to charge for Veteran cards. In Sussex County we give veteran cards out for free. Lorraine Hentz had an idea that if they could put it on their drivers' license that they are a veteran. The letter can show support that we do not feel the federal government should be charging.

- **25th District**

Freeholder Phoebus said she attended the meeting. She mentioned all who were in attendance. They discussed the timeframe about the cutoff and why is it taking so long. This has been going on since 1991. The two issues that came up were 1. A bank for when you are working in wetlands you have to buy from these two banks in New Jersey which is a cost of about \$3 million. They feel there should be no problem with that. It is just a time issue. 2. They are also working with a property owner with a storm water drain under the entrance to his property. They are looking at 2018 for rail service commuters from Sussex County.

- **Swartwood Lake Association**

Freeholder Phoebus attended this meeting along with Freeholder Vohden. She felt it was very successful. She said it is an endangered plant the Asian Lotus,(a lily pad), but it has taken hold of Swartwood Lake and they can't do much with it because it is on the endangered plant list for the State of New Jersey. It has overtaken an area over by the North Shore area.

They have figured out something where they can reduce the area and cut channels through so you can get to the residence along the North Shore and the Boat House Restaurant. The plant life that is not on the endangered list they agreed to the Lake Plan that is in place and they can use a harvester and the State will pay. It was nice to see that we have a working relationship with the Deputy Director of the Department of Environmental Protection.

Comment by Freeholder Graham

- **Hopatcong Fire Parade**

Freeholder Graham attended this and he said it was remarkable to see all of the equipment and the fireman and the pride that is taken by these people in what they are doing. They are all volunteers.

- **Jail Study Meeting**

Freeholder Graham said that we are not coming to any conclusions at all but I wanted to let the people know that we are taking into consideration all the changes that are happening in our County and in the State.

- **Lorraine Parker**

Freeholder Graham had a meeting with Lorraine Parker, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. It was a very good meeting. The college has had a lot of challenges. It is the best deal you can ask for. We are less expensive than all the surrounding counties. We need to turn the table on what is going on at the college. I support the college.

- **SCMUA and the Technical School**

Freeholder Graham attended a meeting about the possibility of being able to hook up to a sewer connection from the school going up. Everyone in the room was extremely cooperative.

- **Transit meeting**

Freeholder Graham said there are so many people in this county that cannot go from point a, b, and c without that New Jersey Transit. A big part of our population is seniors and they need this transportation. This is a necessary part of our government and money is brought in by the money from the casinos. I applaud Carol Novrit for all that she has done.

- **SCCC**

Freeholder Graham said we are getting a new college president on November 2, 2015. Please, everyone greet him with enthusiasm.

- **Resolution**

Freeholder Graham spoke about the resolution being passed today in the Borough of Hopatcong and he said this is growth. This county is behind the growth.

- **Highlands Committee**

Freeholder Graham said he respects Freeholder Vohden and thanked him for all that he does with that committee.

Comments from Director Freeholder Crabb

- **Hopatcong Fire Parade**

Freeholder Director Crabb said that all of the firemen are volunteers. In fact Sussex County is one of the counties left that have all volunteers. If there was one paid fire fighter that would completely blow out the budget of the town they were in. He said this was his 35th county parade. He said this is one of the best parades in the county.

- **SCUMA Pipe**

Freeholder Director Crabb said what they are going to do by the vocational school where the older railroad bed is that goes through the old cemetery (we will not be touching that) but where it comes out and crosses under the older railroad that used to take kids to Newton High School before there was Franklin High School.

That is where the pipe will go. It will be a lot less expensive to put the pipe in an existing railroad trail bed and will lend itself for improvements.

- **Friends of the NRA dinner**

Freeholder Director Crabb said one of the things they did this year was to provide the opportunity for disabled veterans to attend for free. The Franklin Rifle Club was able to put together to host ten disabled veterans, a whole table for this dinner. It is completely sold out this year.

- **Solar Settlement**

Freeholder Crab said it was based on an assumption that a breakeven level of \$150 per SREC would be needed to maintain. Over the last several weeks the SREC's have been climbing in value consistently. It went up \$10 today. It is up to \$255. Sunlight General is in discussion not only with Somerset County, Morris County and Rob Maikis here to possibly lock it in at these values and what it will mean to the incremental \$6.5 million. This is good news.

9. **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. RESOLUTION RE: PAYMENT OF BILLS
488-2015
- B. RESOLUTION RE: AUTHORIZATION FOR THE FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR AND CLERK OF THE BOARD TO FILE AND EXECUTE THE UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND (USF) COUNTY WELFARE AGENCY (CWA) ADMINISTRATION GRANT AWARD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,014.00 FOR THE PERIOD OF JULY 1, 2015 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2016
489-2015
- C. RESOLUTION RE: AUTHORIZATION FOR THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX TO SUBMIT THE AREA PLAN GRANT AGREEMENT DoAS16AAA002 WITH THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, DIVISION OF AGING SERVICES
490-2015
- D. RESOLUTION RE: AUTHORIZATION OF PUBLIC SALE OF COUNTY PROPERTY AND DESIGNATION OF AN ON-LINE AUCTION SERVICE THROUGH NEW JERSEY STATE CONTRACT
491-2015
- E. RESOLUTION RE: AUTHORIZATION FOR ADOPTION OF THE 2016 THROUGH 2019 SUSSEX COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE SERVICES PLAN AS REQUIRED BY THE NJ DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
492-2015
- F. RESOLUTION RE: RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE INSERTION OF ANY SPECIAL ITEM OF REVENUE IN THE 2015 BUDGET OF THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX RELATING TO THE 2015/16 MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL COUNTY GANG, GUN, AND NARCOTICS TASK FORCE GRANT AWARD #JAG 1-19TF-14 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$47,601.00
493-2015
- G. RESOLUTION RE: RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE INSERTION OF ANY SPECIAL ITEM OF REVENUE IN THE 2015 BUDGET OF THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX RELATING TO THE 2015/16 RIGHT-TO-KNOW GRANT AWARD #EPID16RTK20L FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$9,380.00
494-2015
- H. RESOLUTION RE: AUTHORIZATION FOR THE FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR AND CLERK OF THE BOARD TO EXECUTE THE
495-2015

MODIFICATION OF A SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENT, ATTACHMENT "A", WITH THE FRANKLIN CONGREGATE NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR THE PROVISION OF THE CONGREGATE NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2015 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$25,700.00

- I. **RESOLUTION RE: 496-2015** AUTHORIZATION FOR THE FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR AND CLERK OF THE BOARD TO EXECUTE THE MODIFICATION OF A SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENT, ATTACHMENT "A", WITH THE HOPATCONG CONGREGATE NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR THE PROVISION OF THE CONGREGATE NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2015 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$25,700.00
- J. **RESOLUTION RE: 497-2015** AUTHORIZATION FOR THE FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR AND CLERK OF THE BOARD TO EXECUTE THE MODIFICATION OF A SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENT, ATTACHMENT "A", WITH THE VERNON CONGREGATE NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR THE PROVISION OF THE CONGREGATE NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2015 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$25,700.00
- K. **RESOLUTION RE: 498-2015** AUTHORIZATION FOR THE FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR AND CLERK OF THE BOARD TO EXECUTE THE MODIFICATION OF AN AGREEMENT # 2, ATTACHMENT "A", WITH RES-CARE NEW JERSEY, INC. D/B/A RESCARE HOMECARE FOR THE PROVISION OF CERTIFIED HOME HEALTH AIDE SERVICES FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2015 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$56,058.00
- L. **RESOLUTION RE: 499-2015** AUTHORIZATION FOR THE FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR AND CLERK OF THE BOARD TO EXECUTE THE MODIFICATION OF AN AGREEMENT # 2, ATTACHMENT "A", WITH CATHOLIC FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR THE PROVISION OF WEEKDAY AND WEEKEND HOME DELIVERED MEALS FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2015 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$118,924.00
- M. **RESOLUTION RE: 500-2015** AUTHORIZATION FOR THE FREEHOLDER DIRECTOR AND CLERK OF THE BOARD TO EXECUTE THE MODIFICATION OF AN AGREEMENT # 2, ATTACHMENT "A", WITH NEWTON MEDICAL CENTER FOR THE PROVISION OF FOOD SERVICE FOR THE CONGREGATE NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2015 TO DECEMBER 31, 2015 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$91,441.00
- N. **RESOLUTION RE: 501-2015** AUTHORIZATION TO PROVIDE FOR THE PURCHASE OF COMPUTER HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE SUPPORT REQUIRED BY THE DIVISION OF INFORMATION SERVICES
- O. **RESOLUTION RE: 502-2015** APPROVING PARTICIPATION WITH THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY IN THE COUNTY PROSECUTOR INSURANCE FRAUD REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF THE INSURANCE FRAUD PROSECUTOR
- P. **RESOLUTION RE:** AUTHORIZATION FOR THE FREEHOLDER

503-2015

DIRECTOR AND THE CLERK OF THE BOARD TO AMEND CONTRACT MODIFICATION #1 WITH CENTER FOR PREVENTION AND COUNSELING FOR THE PROVISION OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE SERVICES FOR THE CITIZENS OF SUSSEX COUNTY

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Sussex has reviewed the Consent Agenda consisting of various proposed Resolutions and determined that adoption of the said Resolutions is in and will further the public interest.

MOTION made by Freeholder Vohden to adopt the Resolutions, Seconded by Freeholder Phoebus. Freeholder Graham abstained on Check# 63770 of the Bill List.

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting - October 14, 2015

MOTION made by Freeholder Mudrick to approve the Regular Meeting October 14, 2015 minutes, seconded by Freeholder Graham. Freeholder Phoebus abstained due to being absent from the October 14th meeting.

11. APPOINTMENTS AND/OR RESIGNATIONS

None for tonight.

12. RESOLUTION

- A. RESOLUTION RE: PROVIDING TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF CR 613
504-2015 IN SPARTA TOWNSHIP
- B. RESOLUTION RE: APPROVING POLICY FOR THE
505-2015 DESIGNATION OF AN ALTERNATE PURCHASING AGENT FOR THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX
- C. RESOLUTION RE: AUTHORIZING THE FREEHOLDER
506-2015 DIRECTOR AND THE CLERK OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE BOROUGH OF HOPATCONG AND GREENTREE OF HOPATCONG, LLC THE DEVELOPER OF BLOCK 30707, LOTS 2 & 3, TO ADVANCE A PROJECT WHICH INCLUDES STREETSCAPE AMENITIES ALONG A PORTION OF CR607, A.K.A. RIVER STYS ROAD IN THE BOROUGH OF HOPATCONG.

MOTION made by Freeholder Graham to adopt the Resolutions, seconded by Freeholder Vohden and passed unanimously.

13. AWARDS OF CONTRACTS/CHANGE ORDERS/BIDS

A. Awards of Contract

- A. RESOLUTION RE: AWARDING A CONTRACT EXTENSION
507-2015 THROUGH THE COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING PROCESS FOR THE COUNTY PRESCRIPTION SAVINGS PROGRAM (CPSP)

MOTION to awards the contract made by Freeholder Vohden, seconded by Freeholder Graham.

On Roll Call the vote was

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Freeholder Graham | Yes |
| Freeholder Mudrick | Yes |
| Freeholder Phoebus | Yes |
| Freeholder Vohden | Yes |
| Freeholder Director Crabb | Yes |

14. FINANCIAL

None for the tonight.

15. PERSONNEL

- A. Personnel Agenda

MOTION to accept the Personnel Agenda made by Freeholder Mudrick, seconded by Freeholder Vohden and pass unanimously.

16. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

- A. Other

Steve Gruchacz reported on the follow-up on security. Ron Tappan and Joe Biuso are working on the locations for the panic buttons and they will be in relatively soon.

17. COUNTY COUNSEL

- A. Capital Projects
- B. Litigation
- C. Contract
- D. Other Matters

John Williams did not have anything to report on.

18. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Freeholder Phoebus said she received a letter from Shoprite Ronetco in regards to Partners in Caring who helped bag groceries for their Hunger Event. The final total that was raised through donations was \$15,430.49 which will go a long way for those in need.

Freeholder Vohden said there are continuing major economic and demographic changes taking place in Sussex County; and everywhere I go, the discussion eventually turns to these issues and what the Freeholders are doing about it. The first was school enrollment. When this was first brought to their attention back in January of 2014 from the James Hughes report as part of the Sussex County Economic and Demographic study, it was reported that from 2005 to 2013 our school enrollment was down 21%. Then in 2014 it dropped to 22.5%. The latest statics on line show that state enrollment is down 1.5% and in Sussex County is down more than 24% and school budgets are still rising. There are more teachers and staff than there were last year.

Second item, Equalized Tax Evaluations. The 2015 Sussex County Abstract of Ratables has been recently released. The Equalized Tax Value for Sussex County has again declined for the 7th consecutive year, and is now down more than 21% since 2008.

Third, Foreclosures/Lis Pendens. When I first started tracking Lis Pendens in April 2014, there were 7,600. At our reorganization in January there were 8,800, today there are more than 9,800. 18% of the homes in Sussex County are in foreclosure.

Freeholder Vohden then gave some farming facts from the US Farm Census. There are 885 farms in Sussex County that have total sales of about \$100,000. That is people making farmland assessments. The average farm is 69 acres; and the average farm is 57 years old but there are only 46 farms in Sussex County with total sales over \$100,000 gross income. Gross income is probably \$50,000 a year. You really can't pay to send a kid to go to college on \$50,000 a year. The startling fact is the net average income for a farmer in Sussex County is minus \$1,200. That is in a county where the average

household income is \$87,000. Every economic study that is done says that we in Sussex County should depend on our farming and agri-tourism for future development, future income. He said he doesn't think farming is sustainable or viable in Sussex County. We don't have the land, we don't have the markets; it is good for our agri-tourism. It is great that we have people coming out here but they come out for the day. The farmers are not doing that well.

Fourth, we have the continuing problems of declining population, declining home values, loss of retirees, millennials and our wealthiest residents. The loss of business and industry and everywhere you go the heroin problem is a topic of conversation.

I realize that government is hardly ever an answer to a problem, but I believe that we as County Freeholders have a responsibility and an obligation to search for solutions to county problems. I believe we can provide leadership in following the issues and making information available to the Sussex County public.

I have been reminded that the economic situation in the County is improving. I would like to be shown where that is happening in any significant way. I would like us to do better.

A lot of people believe these economic and demographic issues are going to resolve by themselves and are cyclical and eventually will turn around. I lived in Newark when it went from one of the top cities in the country and then through the Newark riots and everybody said it was cyclical, buy property in Newark, we will all get rich and it hasn't happened and that was in 1967. It isn't coming back. I don't want to see it happen here. My father's favorite saying was, "Some people make things happen, some people let things happen and some people ask what happened? We do have a choice. We don't have to wait for things to happen. We can be proactive and prevent some of the county's problems.

I have never met an elected official that didn't want to cut taxes and make a better life for all of us. We can do that. I would like to make a suggestion that for future meetings we have a discussion of setting up work stations to work towards solutions that the county faces. We sit down and work closely with our state senator, with our Assembly members to help them with the issues that they are fighting for in Trenton, Have meetings with our municipalities to help solve our common problems, become more involved in the NJ Association of Counties and the New Jersey League of Municipalities, work sessions with our Chamber of Commerce, Farm Bureau, the Forestry Association, with other groups that help the residents of Sussex County. We should get more involved with Crime Stoppers to get more involved with drug abuse.

We should get involved and comment on the proposed changes with the regulations that affect Sussex County.

In my comments tonight, I reported on the NJ Workforce Regions. New regions are being designated. (He showed maps) Last week the DEP released a 288 page new water quality management rule. This rule reduces red tape and allows for more economic opportunity. It provides the County Planning and the local planning agencies with flexibility. It is great for Sussex County. Jeff Tittle and the environmental lobby are calling the rules an assault on clean water. Last week the Senate has voted to override the proposed rules and it will not go to the Assembly. We should be more involved with resolutions and support of our legislators, we should be submitting comments and we should be attending the public comments events held on this issue. This is very important for Sussex County.

Highlands Regional Master Plan

We should get more involved in every regional plan that includes Sussex County. We come out as the no growth plan in every report. We have to change that. The revisions to the Master Plan could help us in giving us some relief from these stringent and strict regulations that are affecting the cutoff. Changes would allow us to get relief from the regulations as they stand. We the property owners, the land owners, the people who are impacted Sussex, Warren and Hunterdon County would like to see changes in our favor. The Highlands Council is out voted by the group who thinks that regulations are not strong enough; that we are getting away with stuff that we shouldn't be doing up here. Even though there are items that are not mentioned in the Highlands Act such as climate change, global warming, and scenic vistas. The Highland's Coalition has six or seven paid consultants at every Highland's meeting. They have a huge membership. It is a coalition of 80 environmental groups from the Sierra Club on down and they are pushing

for stricter regulations. We are out voted on every issue. Unless we get people behind us, the freeholders from the counties making comments, bringing up issues that can be supported good new science or new legal bills, we are going to get further restrictions up here. We have to monitor a lot of these environmental groups that would bring us further restrictions. We had someone last week tell us that you can no longer stock trout other than major brook trout in some of our trout streams.

Freeholder Phoebus said that is a big problem especially if they change the category to a National Recreation Area. I did contact Scott Garrett's office and they did contact me from Washington and they had no idea that this was going on. They checked everything and they said there are no Bills pending or being talked about regarding changing the category of this park.

Freeholder Vohden said you have groups like the Geraldine Dodge Foundation that has 2 billion dollars that they give out for grants mostly to environmental conservation groups. Out of Philadelphia, you have the William Penn Foundation that has 2 billion dollars and they are spending \$35 million in the upper watershed area in Northern New Jersey to bring us regulations to the rest of Sussex County that is not impacted by the Highlands Act. They have given grants to the State of New Jersey Fish and Wildlife. We have to stay on top of this. They will destroy us up here.

Here are two examples of what I think we can accomplish.

Freeholder Phoebus brought it up about our meeting last Friday at Swartswood Lake to discuss the weed problem with a Deputy DEP Commissioner and four other DEP representative along with Senator Oroho, Gail, myself and two people from the Swartswood Lake. The State overrode some of their environmental regulations because pressure was put on them. That is what we have to do. We have to work with the legislators, work with the DEP, and we have to be strong and provoke them. In every economic study done, we are the no growth area.

The Highlands Council contacted a consulting firm to do an economic study on the Highlands Region. We all see what is happening up here. The economic study came back saying there has been no negative or positive affect on the Highlands by the Highlands Regional Master Plan. How do we feel about that? We need to make comments.

Freeholder Graham said he has been on the economic committee and attended a long meeting last year and sat down and looked where we had potential growth for the county but with the buffer zones, steep slopes and all the other regulations out there. Just a simple thing if you want to hook up to a pipe, what is that going to create.

Freeholder Phoebus said she got to spend some time with Mount Olive's Mayor Rob Greenbaum; that town is just busting out. That is on the border of Sussex County. They have a sewer service. They have a good aqua filter for water. They have a huge redevelopment area. They have a very active group that keeps pushing all of this. I think the Freeholder Board and with the help of 24th District and also getting together with some of the town's planning board is a really good way to go. We have to get actively involved in this.

Freeholder Phoebus said when we had that meeting with the DEP it blew my mind. I have been working with the DEP for a long time. The DEP just looked at the people and said "change it!"

The school enrollment issue.

Freeholder Vohden said he believes the tax payers in Sussex County should be aware that enrollment is down over 24% and school budgets are continuing to go up. I think we should be talking to, and meeting with, if possible, our Executive County Superintendent of the Sussex County Office of Education, our municipal elected officials and school board members to discuss this serious issue that is important to all the taxpayers of Sussex County. 65 to 75% of municipal taxes go to funding education; when you have 25% down in enrollment and the budgets go up year after year.

Freeholder Graham said I think we made a mistake. When we took away the ability to vote on school budgets we took away the actual effect of knowing what the actual budget is. I have seen some aspects of the school budget that concerns me. If the school was a business, they would be going out of business. The budgets are growing out of proportion.

Freeholder Vohden said we did a great job; we said we don't want any further development, we want to go to larger lot zones, we don't want kids in our school, well look what we did, and we did a great a job.

Freeholder Graham said nobody saw the demographics. I remember the mid 2000's in Stanhope because we were going to over populate the school. The school went from having 435 to 335, who saw it coming?

Freeholder Phoebus said I have a daughter who is a millennium and she is looking to buy a home with her family and she will look at the home and the house itself is in the price range that they can get a mortgage for but then they will look at the taxes and it changes things so then they look at existing homes in lake communities and older developments before they got into this large lot because those homes are selling like hot cakes because their taxes are affordable.

Freeholder Graham said we are talking about things that are municipal issues. Freeholder Vohden said we should do some work sessions and invite the people in and see what we can do to help them make some changes. We are elected official and people think we have that authority maybe we should think that way.

Freeholder Graham said I like that way of thinking.

Freeholder Vohden said I brought this up so maybe over the next few meetings we can start having more conversations like this and see if we can do anything.

Freeholder Graham said there are a lot of times when we have these back and forth discussion and we come from different angles and it is good to vent it out from different angles because if you are all on the same page just for the fact of not disagreeing than there is an issue. You have to start with the facts and sometimes they are sticky things. There is growth potential but it will be in small steps for Sussex County. We need a balanced approach. I don't know what the changes will be going into the next generation but we can't snap our fingers and make something else happen.

Freeholder Vohden said but we can't sit and make things happen.

19. **NEW BUSINESS**

None for tonight.

20. **PUBLIC SESSION FROM THE FLOOR** **(Please note: Everyone is asked to keep their comments to 5 minutes or less)**

MOTION made at 7:34 PM by Freeholder Graham to open the floor up to the Public, seconded by Freeholder Phoebus.

Comment by Glen Haul

Mr. Haul said he enjoyed the conversation by the Freeholders. He brought up the point that Freeholder Phoebus brought up about talking to Scott Garrett's office. They never seem to know about this. I personally talked to him about it. They said they would keep an eye on it. I don't know why they say they don't know anything about it. The Skylands Magazine last month had a big article about it. What it appears he is doing is trying to make the recreation look absolute. We can't handle the traffic. That is not true; the recreation area handles people very well. My son is living in it, I live next to it. I find it so disingenuous that we say we have 5 million people come through a year.

Freeholder Phoebus said didn't they arrive at these numbers by taking an average amount of people going over Dingmans's Ferry Bridge which are commuters and then they averaged the amount going over the Delaware Water Gap Bridge which is also going in different directions. That is how they came to this 5 million and it also included coming down Rt. 209.

Mr. Haul said what he is trying to present is that this area can't handle this and it needs to be changed. To me that is so false. You don't see those people in the recreation area. I do know this same scenario went on at Big Cypress where John Donahue used to work and they wanted to change it to a National Park Reserve. So when it is a National Park Reserve it is up to the superintendent on what activities will take place. Right now congress has designated what goes on; the superintendent cannot change it.

Basically they are giving misinformation that the area is not being used correctly and visitors are not getting a good experience. He said everyone I know who used it is quite happy with it. I hope this Board will research that because if it does become a National Park, the Fish and Wild Game will interfere with it and do other things.

Mr. Haul said he gave himself a project and that was to read the Sandyston early minutes from 1800's on up. When you read those minutes, there only objective were the roads. This was up to the 1950's. When you talk about the roads and maintenance we do on them, I used to contract to Sussex County; I did contracting for snow plowing back in the '70's. One of our concerns with plowing was that we didn't wear the blade out; we did a really good job in trying to save blades; they are expensive.

I see the trucks going down past my house, no snow, blade down, no snow. I am not saying give up maintenance but I am saying there is a lot of waste like that. Things like that can be looked at.

Freeholder Crabb said we will pass that on to Engineering and DPW.

Mr. Haul said back to the school enrollment. My wife works as a secretary for the school for 27 years and we have watched the enrollment at Sandyston go down from 227 to 147 kids right now. They almost have a teacher and half per classroom where before you had fewer teachers for more students. It's like we have to keep to doing more and more when we don't.

Comment by John Snyder

Mr. Snyder from Sandyston came forward and had a question about the flower in Swartswood Lake. He wanted to know if it was native to New Jersey.

Freeholder Phoebus said no.

Freeholder Vohden said he believes it is native to the south of here. There is a rumor that the American Indians brought it to Swartswood Lake.

Freeholder Phoebus said the one thing that she did say what if this was an endangered species, how has this thing grown and taken over this lake? I was told after the meeting that once a plant goes on the endangered species list you cannot get it off. This is by state.

Freeholder Vohden said if you can find this plant in five other lakes, you can fight to get it taken off the endangered list.

Discussion ensued on this topic.

Mr. Snyder brought up the Skylands Park and how people would rather have an empty park then help them out and the car wash by the State Police, they had a beautiful red roof on that building and Frankford Township called them in and said we approved a beige roof on that building. What I am trying to say it is not only the state, the federal government, we have people right here and I just don't understand their mindset.

Comment by Herman Terpstra

Mr. Terpsta from Wantage came forward. He said he agrees on the school enrollment issues. My wife drives a school bus and I see what is going on in the schools. Every year, less buses, less drivers; these people need those jobs. You go to these meetings and the attendance is very low. You guys are doing your best but you need the public behind you. I don't understand what is going on. I go to these meetings and I can't get to this meeting all the time because our town meeting meets at the same time. I think it was great to acknowledge Ernie. I have a few farms but I am thinking of closing the doors. Another thing that will stop is currently we have a lot of farmers who rent their land out to hunting clubs and that is going to stop. The biggest problem we have in Sussex County is New York State because of the ton limit they put on Rt. 94. It is taking the business out of Sussex County. He complimented the NRA on hosting a nice dinner.

Freeholder Phoebus asked Mr. Terpstra about the green light program for the veterans.

Mr. Terpstra said you put the light on now until November 11, 2015 and it shows your support for veterans.

Comment by Neil Kenny

Mr. Kenny from Green Township came forward. He said he was glad he stayed. He asked what the Veterans card is. I have a card so I wanted to make sure it was the same thing. The one thing I wanted to address was farmland assessments that people get. It seems to me that people who can afford to pay the taxes are getting these breaks. There is an alpaca farm in Blairstown and they live off the proceeds from their animals, but they don't have 5 acres so they can't qualify for the tax assessment.

My other issue is, I am a retired school teacher so I understand the school issues; my point is what are you paying for? You have a superintendent that has one junior high school and one high school and he is in the \$200,000 category, for what I say. It seems to me that they leave the urban areas, but they bring the urban problems with them. He said if you own a tree farm let's see who is working the tree farm, probably no one they just want the credit. If you chip away at these little things it will make a difference down the line. Thank you for your time.

Comment by Kate Afron

Ms. Afron from Sparta came forward and said she is here as a student. She said she was thrilled to hear Mr. Graham talk about his support for Sussex Community College because I am a graduate. I am now commuting down to Ramapo where I am in my senior year and I will graduate in May with a degree in social work. I have been told there is a new president at SCCC and whatever you can do to get that college competitive is a huge resource to this community. My daughter just graduated from Sparta High School 2015 and a very large percentage of Sparta High School graduates have gone on to Sussex County Community College based on the cost of colleges. My other concern is the Lackawanna Cutoff; whatever you can do. My husband commutes to Manhattan and takes a bus currently from Sparta and he is on the bus tonight in the rain and it will take him 2 plus hours to get home. Whatever you can do to further that, I am sure it will be huge for this county.

MOTION made at 8:08 PM by Freeholder Phoebus to close the meeting to the Public, seconded by George Graham and passed unanimously.

21. EXECUTIVE SESSION – (Closed Session – If Necessary)

MOTION made at 8:11 PM by Freeholder Mudrick to go into Executive Session, seconded by Freeholder Graham and passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION RE: PROVIDING FOR AN EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION NOT 508-2015 OPEN TO THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 ET SEQ.

WHEREAS, the subject matter(s) about to be discussed may be excluded from the public portion of the meeting by Resolution of the Board of Chosen Freeholders as an exception to the "Open Public Meetings Act" pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (b); and

WHEREAS, it appears necessary for the Board of Chosen Freeholders to discuss such matter(s) in Executive Session.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Sussex, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) and N.J.S.A. 10:4-13 that the Board at this time enter into an Executive Session from which the public shall be excluded; and

E IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the general nature of the subject(s) to be discussed relate to the following item(s) authorized by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) as designated below:

_____ (1) **Matters Required by Law to be Confidential:**

_____ (2) **Matters Where the Release of Information Would Impair the Right to Receive Funds:**

_____ (3) **Matters Involving Individual Privacy:**

_____ (4) **Matters Relating to Collective Bargaining Agreements:**

_____ (5) **Matters Relating to the Purchase, Lease of Acquisition of Real Property or the Investment of Public Funds:**

_____ (6) **Matters Relating to Public Safety and Property:**

X (7) **Matters Relating to Litigation, Negotiations and the Attorney Client Privilege:** Potential agreement with the Town of Newton

