

SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2014

5:00 PM

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item

1. **CALL TO ORDER BY DIRECTOR** at 5:01 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL** Freeholder Crabb; Freeholder Graham; Freeholder Mudrick; Freeholder Phoebus; Freeholder Director Vohden; John Eskilson, County Administrator; Dennis McConnell, County Counsel; Elaine Morgan, Clerk

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 March 19, 2014 from the Administrative Center of the County of Sussex, located at One Spring Street, Newton, New Jersey to the following:

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

MOTION made at 5:03 p.m. by Freeholder Phoebus to open the meeting to the Public, seconded by Freeholder Graham and passed unanimously.

There was no one present.

MOTION made at 5:04 p.m. by Freeholder Phoebus to close the meeting to the Public, seconded by Freeholder Graham and passed unanimously.

6. **EXECUTIVE SESSION (closed session)**

MOTION made at 5:04 p.m. by Freeholder Phoebus to go into Executive Session for Personnel issues, discussion regarding the appointment of the Clerk of the Board of Chosen Freeholders and action may be taken when the Board comes out of Executive Session, seconded by Freeholder Crabb.

On Roll Call the vote was:

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

RESOLUTION RE: REQUESTING EXECUTIVE SESSION (voice vote)
148-2014

A. Personnel

1. Discussion regarding the appointment of the Clerk of the Board of Chosen Freeholders and action may be taken when the Board comes out of Executive Session.

B. Contract

C. Litigation

D. Other Matters

It is anticipated that the deliberations conducted in closed session may be disclosed to the public upon the determination of the Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders that the public interest will no longer be served by such confidentiality.

MOTION made at 5:53 p.m. by Freeholder Mudrick to come out of Executive Session, seconded by Freeholder Phoebus and passed unanimously.

MOTION made by Freeholder Phoebus to return to open session, seconded by Freeholder Crabb and passed unanimously.

7. Discussion concerning restructuring of the Clerk of the Board's office.

Mr. McConnell said that the Board was here to discuss the possible consolidation of the Clerk of the Board's office and he believes that everyone has received and reviewed the proposed consolidations of the Office of the Clerk of the Board, so the Board can discuss that alternative that everyone has in their possession and which everyone has been able to review for some time.

Mr. Crabb asked Mr. Eskilson if the documentation that has been provided for the Board is the bottom line.

Mr. Eskilson said that the savings on an annualized basis would be about \$130,000.00; if you look at 2014, the savings would be \$68,000.00 because you have a split year.

Mr. Crabb said now that the Board can talk about finances, he can complete the sentence that he had in Executive Session that there is the opportunity to frame this as a pilot project, if he can't mention names.

Mr. McConnell replied that Freeholder Crabb could not mention names.

Mr. Crabb continued by saying that if this were to continue for two years, and the Board were at a point that it would be re-evaluating whether this was a wise move or not, there would be about 260K in savings; if the Board at that time decided that this didn't make sense and it's something that, especially with the potential advent of new candidates for senior positions coming in, may not think much of this either. He felt that to revert this plan would be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$100,000.00.

Mr. Eskilson replied, that probably it would be \$110,000.00 to \$120,000.00 fully loaded.

Mr. Crabb continued by saying that the savings along the way would be somewhere around \$250,000.00.

Mr. Eskilson said that the only thing that he would suggest would be that the opportunity for evaluation come at a point in about a year and a half because there is a Statutory appointment; so the Board had a three year appointment that normally you would have to deal with at that point, short of something really heinous occurring during that three year period. Mr. Eskilson pointed out that in this instance, the evaluation would come at a year and a half because the County Administrator's term ends in a year and a half; there is no salary associated with this consolidation, so the point there, of evaluation, would be, as the County Administrator the Board would like to reappoint you, but in order to do so, you must resign as Clerk or the Board can say it is not going to reappoint you as County Administrator, but you can stay on with the balance of your three year term as Clerk of the Board, but with no pay. So, the point comes, a year and a half hence if the Board is looking at this as a pilot program of sorts.

Freeholder Crabb asked even if there was no accrued savings of whatever figure, that that would be through this time, it would be about 100K to revert back, let's say that there's . . .

There was a short discussion concerning the savings associated with the consolidation.

Freeholder Phoebus said that if she understood this correctly, if the Board goes in this direction, it's not going to reimburse the Administrator for doing this job? We are going to expect him to do this for no increase in his salary?

Mr. Eskilson said that that's the numbers he was asked to present and that is what he presented.

Freeholder Phoebus said that she does not agree with that because the Board would be asking someone to pick up another full time person's job and yet you're not going to give them any kind of an increase.

Freeholder Crabb said that in this case, for this particular candidate, it's not that the Board is not giving one the Administrator has not asked for any.

Freeholder Phoebus said that the Administrator may ask for what he wants, but that doesn't mean the Board has to agree with that; she just can't believe that the Board would give a full time employee another full time employee's job and not going to bump him up; perhaps the Board could allow it for this year, but not going forward.

Freeholder Vohden responded by saying that every Freeholder before him received benefits there were increases in Freeholders' pay; he said we're all here, we are doing it for half of what the Freeholders got a few years ago so why are we doing that?

Freeholder Phoebus said if she were at her business and she had to give herself another full time person's job, she would be taking their salary or at least part of it; she just doesn't think this is fair; she thinks that the Board is asking an awful lot of someone.

Freeholder Crabb said that the Board is not asking; there was a short discussion.

Freeholder Crabb said this lends itself to this unique opportunity presented to this Board and the hallmark of this Board has always been to think outside of the box and with what seems to be significant potential savings on an ongoing basis, how can the Board, in his opinion, not consider making the size of government smaller.

Freeholder Vohden said that he is in favor of the consolidation; he ran for Freeholder to do what's best for Sussex County and the people of Sussex County; to reduce taxes; that's what the people are looking for and he believes one of the reasons they all got elected is because they all said, smaller government, less taxes, less government, more efficiency, mergers. Freeholder Vohden continued explaining why he was in favor of this consolidation.

Freeholder Phoebus said it is from the schools; 60%.

Freeholder Vohden continued by saying the schools should be doing their job; this Board can set an example here and show them every penny has got to be saved; save a penny wherever you can.

Freeholder Phoebus said there are schools that are doing that but it all falls back to Trenton and how the school funding is distributed around the State; there doesn't seem to be anywhere that we can get that changed; she said that's something that really has to be looked at. There was a short discussion.

Freeholder Phoebus asked to talk about the Plan, and asked if the Board adopts this Plan will it be adopted tonight?

Freeholder Vohden responded and said no.

Freeholder Phoebus asked if the Board would do this on Wednesday at the Regular Freeholder Meeting.

Mr. McConnell said yes and that the Board would have to direct staff to prepare an appropriate Resolution.

Freeholder Vohden said that this would be open for discussion again at that point.

Freeholder Phoebus asked how many jobs would the Board be doing away with by adopting this Plan.

Mr. McConnell said that right now the Board is only appointing the Clerk of the Board.

Freeholder Phoebus asked if just by not appointing the Clerk of the Board, there's this substantial savings?

Mr. Eskilson said that the majority of the savings is that; the Board would be consolidating two senior positions into one.

MOTION made by Freeholder Crabb to direct staff to prepare a Resolution to place on the Agenda for this Wednesday, March 26, 2014, to consolidate the Office of the Clerk of the Board of Chosen Freeholders with the Office of the County Administrator, seconded by Freeholder Mudrick.

Freeholder Mudrick said he was in support of this plan at this time and explained his reasons.

Freeholder Phoebus said that she feels that sometimes a person can be penny-wise and pound-foolish; she agrees that you have to reduce the footprint of government and feels that the past Freeholder Boards have done a very good job of it; but if this is what the Freeholder Board wants to do then she will support whatever the Board feels, but feels the Board will have to see how it works out.

Freeholder Vohden explained some of his reasoning why he feels that this is the right thing for Sussex County.

Freeholder Graham said that he completely agrees, in regards to reducing the footprint of government, especially on the County level, there's a lot of overlap, there's a lot of what he calls mission creep, where the mission of a particular department or whatever, takes on more than it was intended for and he thinks that has to be addressed. He said he doesn't disagree with anything that has been said regarding reducing a salary here or a salary there and when there is breakage, when people retire, you start to see that the function handled by a lesser paid person, he understood that part also; he also believes in the separation of departments particularly legislative and administrative; his agreement with saving money does not have a direct problem with disagreeing with having it all under the Administrator; he feels there's going to be savings, there could be inherent savings in this without doing this this way, but obviously this is where the votes are going to go, so that's where it's going to go; it's a pilot program, and we'll see how the pilot program works out; we'll meet back here in four or five years, either on that side of the table or on this side of the table and see how it went; but he thinks that when the Board talks about savings and people coming back and doing jobs for less money, it is the times. Freeholder Graham said he supports the concept, but he doesn't support the particular breach of the separation.

On Roll Call the vote was:

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

8. PUBLIC SESSION FROM THE FLOOR

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

MOTION made at 6:14 p.m. by Freeholder Crabb to open the meeting to the Public, seconded by Freeholder Mudrick and passed unanimously.

There was no one present.

MOTION made at 6:15 p.m. by Freeholder Phoebus to close the meeting to the Public, seconded by Freeholder Mudrick and passed unanimously.

9. **REMINDERS**

Wednesday

March 26, 2014

Regular Meeting

5:00 pm

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION made at 6:16 p.m. by Freeholder Mudrick to adjourn, seconded by Freeholder Phoebus and passed unanimously.

Elaine A. Morgan, Clerk

DATED: MARCH 24, 2014