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COUNTY OF BERGEN
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HACKENSACK, NEW JERSEY
WORK SESSION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2024
COMMENCING AT 4:36 P.M.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

- GERMAINE M. ORTIZ, CHAIRWOMAN
- MARY J. AMOROSO, VICE CHAIRWOMAN
- DR. JOAN M. VOSS, CHAIR PRO TEMPORE
- RAFAEL MARTE
- THOMAS J. SULLIVAN
- STEVEN A. TANELLI
- TRACY SILNA ZUR

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

NONE

KIM O. FURBACHER, C.C.R., R.D.R.
P.O. BOX 213
ROCHELLE PARK, NEW JERSEY 07662-0213
201-336-6200

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ALSO PRESENT:

JAMES J. TEDESCO III
BERGEN COUNTY EXECUTIVE

THOMAS J. DUCH, ESQUIRE
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR/COUNTY COUNSEL

EDWARD J. FLORIO, ESQUIRE
COUNSEL TO THE BOARD

LARA L. RODRIGUEZ
CLERK TO THE BOARD

LUCINE BEYLERIAN
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & POLICY

STEVEN SPOTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & POLICY

KIM O. FURBACHER, C.C.R., R.D.R.
P.O. BOX 213
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1 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: The meeting is
2 called to order at 4:36 p.m.

3 Before we begin our meeting, I ask that
4 everyone please take a moment to silence their
5 phones.

6 Thank you.

7 Will the Clerk please read the Sen.
8 Byron Baer Open Public Meetings Act.

9 CLERK RODRIGUEZ: In accordance with
10 Section 5 of the Sen. Byron Baer Open Public Meetings
11 Act, adequate notice of this meeting has been
12 provided in the Annual Notice Schedule, which
13 contained the time, date, and location of this
14 meeting, copies of which Notices were forwarded to
15 the official County newspapers, to wit: The Herald
16 News and The Record, and a copy of which was posted
17 on the bulletin board in the Bergen County Justice
18 Center and Administration Building, One Bergen County
19 Plaza, Hackensack, New Jersey, and filed with the
20 Office of the Bergen County Clerk.

21 Roll Call

22 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Will the Clerk
23 please call the roll.

24 (At this point in the proceeding roll
25 call is taken with Commissioners Marte, Sullivan,

1 Tanelli, Voss, Silna Zur, Vice Chairwoman Amoroso,
2 and Chairwoman Ortiz present.)

3 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Evidence of a quorum
4 is present.

5 Pledge of Allegiance

6 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Will you all please
7 rise for the Pledge of Allegiance and remain standing
8 for a Moment of Silence.

9 County Executive, would you like to
10 lead us.

11 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: Thank you.

12 Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in
13 honoring America.

14 (At this point in the proceeding all
15 rise for a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance,
16 led by County Executive Tedesco.)

17 Moment of Silence

18 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: In a solemn pause,
19 we reflect on the life of Passaic County Sheriff
20 Richard Berdnik, whose unwavering dedication to
21 public service began in his youth, inspired by a
22 commitment to uplift his community through law
23 enforcement. Our heartfelt condolences extend to his
24 colleagues in Passaic County, his hometown of
25 Clifton, and, above all, his cherished family and

1 friends. Sheriff Berdnik's profound impact will not
2 be forgotten.

3 If you or a family member are
4 struggling with mental health, it's crucial to reach
5 out for help by utilizing the resources being
6 provided. The 988 hotline is available 24/7.

7 (Whereupon, a Moment of Silence is
8 observed.)

9 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

10 Presentation: Department of Public Safety

11 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Today we are honored
12 to commend some of our guests from our Department of
13 Public Safety.

14 I would like to invite Michael Bonelli,
15 Director of the Division of Safety & Security to
16 introduce our honorees and summarize their heroic
17 actions.

18 MR. BONELLI: Good afternoon, everyone.

19 As the Commissioner said, we're here to
20 honor security staff who performed in a superior
21 manner.

22 There were three separate incidents
23 that occurred in the latter part of 2023. I'll
24 summarize them briefly.

25 The first one, September 11, 2023,

1 4:30 p.m., upon completion of his tour, Chief Al
2 DeRosa was en route home in Wallington. In
3 Wallington, he came upon a pedestrian struck by a
4 motor vehicle, and this occurred only moments before
5 Al encountered him.

6 Chief DeRosa is a certified EMT
7 instructor. He radioed PSOK to advise Wallington PD
8 of the event and also indicated a need for both ALS
9 and BLS units.

10 For those who don't know, BLS is Basic
11 Life Support, ALS is Advanced Life Support.

12 The victim was a 67-year-old male who
13 was bleeding from the ear, so it indicated it could
14 have been a severe injury. Chief DeRosa was also
15 assisted by an off-duty state trooper and a RN nurse,
16 providing first aid to the victim. In addition to
17 providing medical assistance and preserving the
18 scene, even doing traffic, Chief DeRosa actually
19 helped the ALS people load the patient into the
20 ambulance.

21 So in recognition of his
22 resourcefulness, quick thinking, and first aid
23 response to a pedestrian struck by a motor vehicle,
24 Chief DeRosa is hereby commended for his exemplary
25 performance and contribution in a life/safety

1 situation.

2 The next one occurred in a similar
3 situation, October 20th, 2023, approximately 2:30 in
4 the afternoon. Security Guard Christopher Denton and
5 John Muller were on outside post at One Bergen and
6 they radioed that a pedestrian was struck by a
7 vehicle in front of One Bergen.

8 Hearing the radio transmission in our
9 downstairs security office, Director of Public
10 Safety, Ralph Rivera; Chief DeRosa; Lt. Brian Ferry;
11 Lt. Joe Aquino; Inv. Ed Brenner, and Sgt. Hernan
12 Santiago immediately responded.

13 Upon their arrival, it was determined
14 that two individuals that were riding the electric
15 motor scooter were struck by a vehicle turning into
16 One Bergen.

17 On the scene again, Chief DeRosa, who
18 is a certified EMT instructor, notified HUMC that
19 they needed ALS and BLS units.

20 In addition to providing first aid, all
21 our security people provided traffic safety and
22 preserved the scene until the EMT people arrived.

23 In addition to those duties, Sgt.
24 Santiago translated for the injured individuals who
25 didn't speak English. So, again, in recognition of

1 their immediate response and professionalism in this
2 life/safety situation, Inv. Brenner, Security Guard
3 Denton, Security Guard Muller, Chief DeRosa, Sgt.
4 Santiago, Lts. Ferry and Aquino are recognized for
5 their life/safety.

6 I also must point out Director Rivera
7 was on the scene, but having numerous state police
8 decorations, he modestly declined.

9 The last one occurred on November 28,
10 2023.

11 Security Guard Christopher Carnemolla
12 and Sgt. Richard Martinez were on the overnight tour.
13 Christopher Carnemolla was in Van Saun Zoo.

14 Part of the duties when you're in the
15 zoo overnight, we're there 27/7, but one our duties
16 is to check the temperature control in the enclosure,
17 the building that houses the monkeys.

18 In the course of his patrol, Security
19 Guard Carnemolla detected an anomaly with the
20 temperature and noted basically something was wrong.
21 Appropriately, he notified Sgt. Martinez on the
22 radio, who ultimately notified the Director of the
23 Zoo, Marianne Vella. She attempted to remotely
24 correct the situation, advising our people how to
25 correct the malfunction, and they couldn't, so

1 Director Vella actually responded to the scene in
2 person and fixed the climate control device. Very
3 significantly, the Zoo Director, Marianne Vella,
4 indicated that had Security Guard Carnemolla failed
5 to discover the problem, the result could have been a
6 catastrophic impact to these valuable animals. I
7 mean, simply put, these animals could have died.
8 Forget the dollar value, these are exotic, very
9 valuable animals in our zoo.

10 Again, he was diligent, and I always
11 point out, I always say to our people, "Diligence is
12 the opposite of negligence." So appropriately he is
13 recognized and Sgt. Martinez. So even though we
14 don't have an award specifically for saving animal
15 lives, Security Guard Carnemolla and Sgt. Martinez
16 are getting the Meritorious Service Award.

17 So if our people could come up and the
18 County Executive could present the awards.

19 (Whereupon, the presentation is made.)

20 [APPLAUSE]

21 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: I'd like to give a
22 heartfelt thank you to everyone for your unwavering
23 dedication in ensuring the safety of Bergen County
24 residents. Your commitment to public safety was
25 evident when faced with adversity, displaying quick

1 thinking, professionalism and immediately taking
2 action. Your efforts reflect the best of what Bergen
3 County represents and the positive impact you all
4 make on the well-being of our community, and it can
5 never be overstated.

6 Would any of my colleagues like to say
7 a few words?

8 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Well done.

9 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Thank you.

10 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: We love you
11 guys.

12 COMMISSIONER MARTE: Thank you.

13 [APPLAUSE]

14 Public Comment

15 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: I now move we open
16 the Commissioners meeting to the general public.

17 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: I second
18 that.

19 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: All in favor?

20 (All present Commissioners respond in
21 the affirmative.)

22 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Opposed?

23 (No response.)

24 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: We will now have the
25 Hearing of the General Public, with a three-minute

1 time limit in effect, in accordance with Bergen
2 County Commissioner bylaws.

3 For those members of the public who
4 would like to participate during the public comment,
5 please fill out a sheet to be recognized.

6 Would the counselor please explain the
7 process by which the public will be recognized.

8 MR. FLORIO: Thank you, Chairwoman.

9 If you're recognized to speak by the
10 Chair, please come to the podium in the front, state
11 your name, spell your last name, and I'll let you
12 know when your three minutes have expired.

13 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Does anybody want to
14 speak?

15 (No response.)

16 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: I move we close the
17 hearing to the public.

18 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Second.

19 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: All in favor?

20 (All present Commissioners respond in
21 the affirmative.)

22 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Opposed?

23 (No response.)

24 Presentation: Update on the 2023 Election

25 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: For the first time

1 in 30 years, the people of Bergen County had to learn
2 a new voting process due to the purchase of new
3 voting machines. Because the public has been so used
4 to voting in the same way for so long, a number of
5 issues arose during the last election requiring us to
6 meet.

7 This Board, along with the County
8 Executive, would like to hear from each election
9 official to understand what improvements will be made
10 to address our concerns and ensure this year's
11 election operates smoothly and efficiently. It is
12 critical that we have this conversation in a forum
13 open to the public so our residents understand how
14 we're working to improve their voting experience.

15 I'd like to recognize that we also have
16 a representative from Dominion in the audience with
17 us today.

18 We now invite County Clerk Hogan,
19 Superintendent of Elections Francica, and Board of
20 Elections Chairman Miller to join us at the table.

21 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: Thank you,
22 Chairperson.

23 I'm going to start off, we had our
24 meeting today, which we call a "postmortem meeting,"
25 and we've had a number of phone conversations,

1 emails, personal one-on-one conversations, so I thank
2 you for the opportunity, because the timeliness is
3 really great. We had our meeting today. There were
4 four Commissioners that were present at our meeting
5 today, and we thank you for attending, because you
6 hard it firsthand.

7 We all have distinct roles and they're
8 setup by state statute. We forwarded to you what
9 those distinct roles are and that's what you're going
10 to hear, what we actually do, and then we get
11 together and share, like we did today.

12 Today was the latest in a bunch of
13 meetings and communications. We met with the League
14 of Women Voters two weeks ago?

15 MS. FRANCIKA: Yes.

16 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: In a Zoom meeting,
17 and it was very positive, very informative. They
18 were very helpful for us, and that's how we want to
19 move on from here on in. We have meetings setup with
20 a committee of Bergen County municipal clerks in a
21 couple of weeks. We have two other meetings with all
22 the Bergen County municipal clerks, and we have a
23 statewide Homeland Security meeting that's also
24 setup. There's a lot of stuff going on. I'm going
25 to speak probably to the point where I shouldn't be

1 speaking about Homeland Security stuff, and then I'll
2 cut it short. Maybe if you have some questions, and
3 there may be some that we cannot answer, especially
4 this year because of security reasons. But I want to
5 tell you that we did top to bottom reviews, all of
6 us. We looked at our processes from last year and we
7 said in this presidential election year how are we
8 going to be able to improve upon those processes.

9 As you said, this is the first time in
10 30 years that we had new voting machines. We had no
11 time to ease them in. If I recall back, because I've
12 been around for a while, 30 years ago they were able
13 to phase-in the voting machines. So we did our
14 absolute best.

15 And, of course, there were some things
16 that didn't do as well as we would have liked, and
17 that's probably election night reporting. I don't
18 want to stay there until 3:30 in the morning waiting
19 for the results to come in. So we put some processes
20 together that I shared -- this is my office now --
21 that I shared with the other election agencies and
22 everyone else there today.

23 A. At 8:00 p.m., early voting results
24 will be released to the public, which they have been,
25 we'll continue to do that.

1 2. I propose today that the
2 vote-by-mail results be released at 8:15. I have to
3 have the approval of the Board of Elections to do
4 that, that the results are complete. We had a
5 discussion today.

6 MR. MILLER: You will have it, John.

7 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: Rich Miller said
8 he will have them, and he said it again on the record
9 we will have them.

10 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: 8:00 p.m. or
11 a.m.?

12 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: P.M.

13 So Rich Miller said by 8:15 we'll have
14 the results. If there's a problem, he'll
15 communicate --

16 MR. MILLER: Of course.

17 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: -- because there's
18 always a chance that something could go wrong.

19 What else did we have?

20 This was the first time this year that
21 we had consolidated reports, when we posted them from
22 the Board of Elections and from my office, so you
23 didn't have two different things to refer to. We're
24 going to fine tune that to make it even clearer this
25 year. It was not possible with two different

1 systems. We had manual entry before. So we're
2 talking about some of the positives too that happened
3 this year.

4 Now, the machine results. We can tell
5 you that on November 7, 2023, we had only about half
6 of the towns bringing their information, bringing
7 their results to us by 10:00. We can tell you the
8 final three towns arrived at or near midnight.

9 That's unacceptable. There was not
10 anything that we could have done to get them there
11 quicker, but we came up with a way.

12 I met with Sheriff Cureton. I have a
13 commitment from the Sheriff to provide us with ten
14 Sheriff's Officers and we'll supply all those
15 vehicles with ten members of my staff, the very well
16 trained members of my staff. They will pick up --
17 and we also have five other vehicles available that
18 will be picking up. We're hoping to target 25 to 30
19 towns that we can just pick up the SD cards, which
20 are the results. That's it.

21 SD, in case anyone wants to know, is
22 "secure digital" card. It's a small high capacity
23 flash memory card, and those are the brains of the
24 results.

25 We're going to pick those up. The

1 proper chain of custody, Debbie spoke to me when I
2 came up with this idea, is going to be done by
3 signing a form so that we have full control over it.
4 Those SD cards are not coming through the normal
5 drop-off, they're going to come through the side, the
6 loading dock, and this way it won't interfere with
7 the normal drop-off. Those 25 or 30 towns, the
8 clerks are going to still be responsible for bringing
9 all of the other information that has to come in.

10 The other clerks will be dropping off
11 their information in the regular process. We're
12 identifying the towns, especially the towns that have
13 contested races, those are the ones we're going to
14 pick up so there's no delay in that.

15 Now, there's an uploading change that
16 we've put together to increase timeliness and
17 efficiency. We're no longer going to upload, so we
18 don't need new scanners is what I'm saying. We're no
19 longer going to upload the entire ballot, just the
20 results.

21 And we went through this, we tested it,
22 it works good. We want the voters' choice. That's
23 going to speed things up quite a bit.

24 We've ordered three more Democracy
25 Suite workstations. Those are workstations that we

1 do for reports and for other things.

2 When Rich Miller is using his, I can't
3 use that workstation, when I'm using it, he can't use
4 it, so we need more because we all interface with
5 each other. It's all new to us this year. We got
6 three more SD card readers, bringing us up to nine
7 for both of those. So that's going to increase our
8 reporting.

9 The big concern was misreporting, where
10 a file was posted accidentally. We tried to jump
11 ahead and give the results in a nice format, which is
12 10x, where you see the graph and all that fancy
13 stuff. We're going to hold the 10x report until
14 after the election is certified. That will be the
15 final, permanent report. In the meantime, we're
16 going to use the systems that we're all accustomed
17 to.

18 And that probably wraps everything in
19 my office, unless I missed something.

20 I still don't have confidence,
21 especially in this presidential year with all the
22 craziness that's going to go on, I'm hesitant about
23 reporting remotely. I don't want electronic
24 reporting this year until it's 1,000 percent
25 perfected, because if it goes wrong, it can mess up

1 our whole election, so we're going to do it this way,
2 pick up the results.

3 Deb.

4 MS. FRANCIKA: Thank, you John.

5 Thank you for having us.

6 The big question is: How can we
7 improve the voter check-in and the voter's experience
8 on the machines.

9 I sent an email to all of you I think
10 on January 12th where we've isolated the problem. It
11 wasn't the machines that were the problem, it was the
12 voter card that activated the machines. Either the
13 voter would go to the machine and the card would work
14 or the voter would go to the machine and it would say
15 this card has already been used.

16 Why did that happen?

17 We found out why it happened. Either
18 the poll worker did not encode the card properly and
19 pulled it out too soon or the light report on this
20 poll pad was getting very, very wonky when it wasn't
21 encoding the card correctly every time.

22 I spoke to the CEO of KNOWiNK, along
23 with Dominion, on a FaceTime call, and he was giving
24 me all sorts of excuses. He's a lovely man, but I
25 said I can't have something that works 85 percent of

1 the time or 55 percent of the time, I need something
2 that works 100 percent of the time.

3 So he said, well, I can sell you a
4 bracket. I said I also don't want to spend a
5 gazillion dollars. I want something that I can fix
6 the problem right now. So I thanked him. Dominion
7 and KNOWiNK -- Wes Wagner, who used to work for
8 KNOWiNK, he was our trainer, went to the drawing
9 board and said listen, there's a way we can eliminate
10 these encoders that were causing the problem and just
11 move to the poll worker checks in, gets two voter
12 authorizations, one has a code on it, the poll worker
13 activates the ballot, the voter simply just walks in
14 and votes. It took seconds off, I mean 30 seconds
15 off the check-in. That's a lot of time. It was
16 taking 2 and 3 minutes to check in, and then the line
17 backed up and so it was getting to be a problem.

18 We tried it out on December 12th, as my
19 memo to you all says, and it worked fantastically.
20 In fact, it worked so well that Ellen Busteded from
21 Personnel ran down to my office the day after the
22 election, because it was a River Edge/Oradell
23 election, she said I wanted to tell you in person,
24 oh, my goodness, that was great. Everybody was
25 happy. The poll workers were less stressed. The

1 machines worked in synch. Everybody was happy, and
2 it worked.

3 So that's what we're doing from now on.

4 So now, because we changed the check-in
5 process, we had to change our voter instruction
6 video, which we have already done. Our animated
7 video has been edited to report the changes. We will
8 have it done for the clerks' meeting on January 30th
9 and we'll have all three languages done probably by
10 the first week of February and we will be promoting
11 that. The League of Women Voters, they call it our
12 little cartoon. They loved it. I said you are going
13 to love the second one even better. We told them
14 about the changes, they loved it and they will be
15 helping us promote it. So we found a problem, we
16 eliminated the problem.

17 We're also going to put a sign in the
18 Ballot Marking Device.

19 The second problem we had was paper
20 jams. Why did we have paper jams? Because the voter
21 grabbed the ballot and didn't wait for the green
22 checkmark on the screen. We're going to put signs in
23 three languages -- thank you, Chairwoman Ortiz -- in
24 three languages, magnetic signs in the Ballot Marking
25 Device facing the voter that says wait until you see

1 the green checkmark.

2 Mercer County did this, and it almost
3 eliminated the voter touching the ballot. That's
4 No. 1.

5 We also screwed together the paper
6 tray, which I know it sounds like a trite thing, but
7 when the poll worker was removing the paper tray to
8 put the paper in in haste, they were actually pulling
9 the paper tray apart. So we did a simple thing like
10 go to Ace Hardware and we bought some screws. We
11 screwed in the paper tray, we tested it about 100
12 times, and I think we've eliminated the paper tray
13 problem.

14 Now, Mercer County, I took something
15 from them. They are taking from us the new way the
16 voter checks in and the paper tray, we took from them
17 the sign in the BMD. So sharing best practices with
18 other counties has proven to be very, very
19 beneficial. I encourage everybody here to talk to
20 other clerks, you can talk to other boards, because
21 they have ideas that maybe we didn't even think of,
22 and it actually really, really worked.

23 We recommended to the board, and they
24 agreed that we should have two super board workers,
25 that's two supervisors at every polling location.

1 I ran into Michele DiIorgi and she told
2 me that Haworth was great but it could use another
3 supervisor. So if a little town like Haworth needs
4 another supervisor, that was a good indication that
5 we're all on the right track.

6 And we'll get to the poll worker
7 training. The board has assured us that they will be
8 training poll workers before the primary and before
9 the general, just because we have a new way to check
10 in, and we need to make sure that everybody is
11 trained and everybody is ready to work the elections.

12 We're delivering supplies to the clerks
13 ahead of time. Why? I don't want anybody to run out
14 of paper. I don't want anybody to run out of the
15 poll pad paper that prints out the receipts. Dave
16 Passante, our Royal Printing, who's here today, he
17 will be delivering all that paper ahead of time and
18 we will be putting a multitude of paper in the
19 machines for everybody.

20 Setting up the BMDs.

21 Now, the BMDs is the Ballot Marking
22 Devices, and I know this may sound a little crazy but
23 we're putting Day-Glo tape around the right plug they
24 need to plug into the machine. When you open up,
25 it's 5:00 in the morning, it's dark in there, so it's

1 going to glow in the dark and they'll know which one,
2 because we had a lot of people not knowing which plug
3 to plug in or what have you.

4 We will be increasing our call center.
5 More people answering the phones, more people in the
6 warehouse answering the phones, more roving Dominion
7 folks out in the field, and our equipment increases.
8 We've already done our list to upgrade our equipment
9 increases. All of the big locations will be getting
10 extra BMDs.

11 The scanners will always be two. Why?
12 I don't want a lot of SD cards floating around there.
13 That can be a proven disaster. So each ballot
14 scanner holds 4,000 ballots. So that's 8,000
15 ballots. I think we're safe that nothing is going to
16 overflow.

17 So we were increasing the Ballot
18 Marking Devices, because whether you had an AVC
19 machine or you had a Ballot Marking Device, it takes
20 seconds to check in, it takes seconds to scan your
21 ballot, but people are standing in there, sometimes
22 reading the ballot for the first time and they're
23 taking their time, and we have to account for that.
24 So there might be lines, but not because the machines
25 aren't working, there are lines because people are

1 making up their minds. So we are going to increase
2 the amount of machines that they will be choosing
3 their candidates on.

4 We also spoke to Mercer County about
5 how did you increase early voting, because I firmly
6 believe, and I agree with the County Executive, we
7 spoke about this, we have to increase early voting.
8 We have nine days of early voting. This year for the
9 primary, we have five days of early voting. So
10 Mercer County said, listen, we just advertised and we
11 increased early voting substantially.

12 I said I want to know where you
13 advertised, I want to know your ideas, because I
14 talked to Mr. Hogan, I mentioned it this afternoon to
15 the board, I think we need to advertise ferociously
16 because nothing bad ever happens at early voting
17 because they've been doing it since 2021. It's the
18 same equipment. They are our VIPs of poll workers.
19 And really the most voters we've ever gotten is
20 around 19,000 and change. So we can increase that
21 over the nine days and over the five days for the
22 primary, that would decrease the folks that come to
23 the polls on Election Day.

24 So outside of that, I don't have
25 anything else, unless someone has something to say.

1 Mr. Miller.

2 MR. MILLER: Thank you for having us
3 here. I'm joined with my other Commissioners, Denise
4 Ross, Margaret Frontera, and John Schettino, along
5 with our supervisor, Maryann Raymundo, along with
6 Clerk to the Board Alicia Perez.

7 Thank you for having us. I guess one
8 of the things that people were complaining about or
9 we heard some blow back on was poll workers. So what
10 we've done now, we're going to start training poll
11 workers the end of February. We're planning on
12 having a minimum training, like we did last year, of
13 25 to 2,600 poll workers. Last year we didn't call
14 in all the poll workers because we didn't think we
15 would need as many, but unfortunately a lot of people
16 just didn't show up and we can't help that. So what
17 we're going to do is have a substantial amount of
18 poll workers at every polling place this year. I
19 mean, we have 284 polling places, 550 plus districts,
20 so we're going to need a minimum, we figure, of at
21 least 2,500 people. So we will be doing that.

22 And besides my regular way of getting
23 people, like re-calling them from one election to the
24 other, what we did last year, we did a pilot program.
25 We went into Teaneck High School. I spoke to the

1 superintendent of schools, I spoke to the principal,
2 I spoke to the borough administrator, and he set us
3 up with getting about 35 students that were only able
4 to work from 11 to 7 because the state regulates,
5 unless they're 18 or older, they can't work longer
6 than that. So we had them come in, Wes gave a class
7 at Teaneck High School. Normally it takes two and a
8 half to three hours for a training class. I would
9 say these students were done in two hours and they
10 knew it inside out. They live with this. They live
11 with the Internet. They know everything that's going
12 on with it.

13 So what we're doing, this year we're
14 going to go into additional high schools throughout
15 Bergen County. I've already spoken to Melissa
16 Caminiti up in Paramus, because she was on the board
17 up there. So we're going to be going in there. And
18 then the Commissioners, we're going to sit down and
19 decide what schools we can do. Not that we wouldn't
20 want to go into all of them, but we physically can't
21 go to all of them. And the way that worked is we
22 took students, we had them go in the town that they
23 live in, so they didn't have to travel Election Day
24 and they didn't have to get there until 11:00 and
25 they left at seven, because if you think you're going

1 to get a high school student to be there at the polls
2 at 5:00, nobody is going to show up. So we said,
3 look, we're going to do this 11 to 7, and it worked
4 out great. We got nothing but rave reviews from
5 everybody on that. So we intend to expand that.
6 We're going to be going again into some of the
7 colleges. We had made some inroads there. We're
8 going to increase that a little bit. We're going to
9 push a little bit harder on that. So we feel between
10 that, and then we also have a portal that's going to
11 be going on the county website, so anybody that wants
12 to be a poll worker can sign up and get put on as a
13 poll worker and get trained.

14 Now, basically the state law says that
15 we have to train poll workers every other year. We
16 are going to be training them every year from here on
17 in, it's not going to be every other year. In fact,
18 we encourage people, if they have questions about it,
19 to come back for another class. So the classes will
20 be open to them, and we feel that will make some
21 good, positive results for us with the poll workers.

22 We have to understand, you know, when I
23 first got on board about 12 years ago, if we had
24 10,000 vote-by-mail ballots we were like, wow, that's
25 a lot.

1 I honestly feel this year talking to
2 staff and the other Commissioners, that we'll
3 probably get 100,000 vote-by-mail ballots in. So
4 it's going to be a lot of processing, a lot of work,
5 a lot of diligence, but we have the staff to do it,
6 we have the people to do it. I spoke to Mr. Duch
7 earlier today about we're going to need some extra
8 space to store ballots, because we don't have enough
9 room in our office.

10 We also encourage everybody to reach
11 out to their friends, etc., to get more poll workers.

12 Next month we're going to be going or
13 in March, I should say, we're going to be going down
14 to Atlantic City with the NJEO, New Jersey Election
15 Officials, and attend a seminar that they have down
16 there. We always interact with the other counties to
17 see what they're maybe doing that we're not doing or
18 most of the time it is what are we doing so they can
19 do it, but we will be going down there to interact
20 with them.

21 We're going to be working diligently
22 and we're going to make sure this election gets off a
23 little bit smoother than the one we had. As we go
24 along, we'll keep you posted if we have any problems.

25 Thank you.

1 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: Two things, if I
2 may just end.

3 This is the first time we've had a
4 paper backup in an election or had paper ballots that
5 are produced in the election. It's not something
6 that we all went out and wanted to pursue it or
7 anything, it came from federal and state rules. It
8 came from good government people, from activists, and
9 it's probably a good thing that if an audit is done,
10 we have a paper backup of the ballots. That's
11 something we didn't have before.

12 And the other thing is, we all work
13 together. We tease each other a lot, you know, but
14 somehow we all work together. We were all stressed
15 out last year together. So I want you to know that
16 we're going to pull this election off.

17 MS. FRANCIKA: And I have one more
18 thing to add. Thanks, John. I forget to say we're
19 planning demos, demos around the county. And in the
20 first couple of weeks of April, we're going to be
21 talking to our clerks at our municipal clerks meeting
22 and we're going to have the first three weeks of
23 April where we're going to come to their towns,
24 because that's before the primary. And in the months
25 of July and August, that will be before the General

1 Election. In September, we will be at the senior
2 picnic doing a demo, and we will also keep the month
3 of September for all the mock presidential elections
4 that they've done over the years where we will bring
5 our equipment to the schools and have mock
6 presidential elections.

7 So no demos in the towns, we're going
8 to be dedicating that all to the schools. I have
9 already asked a couple of schools. In fact,
10 Hasbrouck Heights senior center already wanted to be
11 signed up for April. And because we have a new way
12 of voting, it's important that we go around to the
13 towns and we showcase the equipment.

14 The video is wonderful. We can premier
15 the video, that's how I like to do it, then we do our
16 demonstration. The video has been very, very helpful
17 to us. But once October 1st starts, we're now in a
18 crunch, because a lot of this equipment is needed to
19 prepare for early voting and training, so we've sort
20 of segregated the time when we're going to do this
21 and I think it will work out. We're going to be
22 presenting that to our clerks next week.

23 MR. MILLER: One other thing I just
24 wanted to bring up that I omitted was our drop boxes.
25 We have 32 drop boxes throughout Bergen County. We

1 send out a Republican and a Democrat to pick up the
2 ballots at the drop boxes every day during the
3 election. This year, more than likely we'll have it,
4 we'll go out like the last couple of weeks before the
5 election, have them go out at least twice a day. So
6 they go there, they open the ballot box up to the
7 drop box, they put them in a case that we have for
8 them, with a flashlight, with the keys, we got
9 everything all set up there. They bring them back,
10 they stamp them, we run them through the machine so
11 we know what drop box they came from and we run them
12 through the machine so they're time stamped and they
13 get put into the SVRS.

14 Now, on election night, what we do, we
15 have 64 people go out, Republicans and Democrats, to
16 each drop box. And 8:00 comes, the polling places
17 are closed because they are a polling place, and we
18 take all the ballots out, we lock up the drop box,
19 and they come back with them and we'll process them
20 through our machines and more than likely count them
21 the next day. But the next day we also send out a
22 team to go around to the drop boxes to make sure that
23 all the drop boxes are locked and that the people
24 that we send out to do this did it properly and they
25 have been doing it properly, but we just double check

1 to make sure there's no last minute votes stuck in
2 the bin and that the boxes are locked. And I
3 encourage everyone to tell them to use the drop
4 boxes.

5 We got votes in the other day, I had to
6 go over to the postmaster with them. They were
7 postmarked October 30th, they came in, I don't
8 know -- Maryann, what day did they come in?

9 MS. RAYMUNDO: December.

10 MR. MILLER: It's crazy. So we went
11 over there and they said they're working on it to
12 make sure it doesn't happen again. Meanwhile there
13 were 90 some odd votes.

14 That's it, I think.

15 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Maybe you would like
16 to speak about the training manual.

17 MR. MILLER: Yes.

18 Also with the poll workers, what we're
19 doing, we have Wes as our trainer, he gives all the
20 training classes, and we encourage people to come
21 back again if they don't fully understand it. And
22 then we also give them a training manual that we go
23 through in our office, we look at it, we make sure
24 everything is included and go over it with Wes again
25 to make sure it wasn't something that he thought

1 should be in there that we don't have in. Every poll
2 workers is given a training manual, so they have
3 that. They have it in front of them, they have it
4 with them Election Day. So if they have any
5 questions, they can find the answers in the book. If
6 they have anything that they're not comfortable with,
7 we encourage them to give us a call and we take care
8 of that.

9 Now Election Day also, if poll
10 workers -- you know, unfortunately what happens, if
11 it rains, all of a sudden you're going to get a bunch
12 of people saying, oh, I can't come in, I feel sick,
13 whatever the story may be, but the municipal clerks,
14 if we have say eight people show up in District 1 to
15 work the polls, and only 3 or 4 show up in
16 District 2, the municipal clerk knows to take two
17 people or so from District 1 and move them into the
18 other district in the town so that the polls are
19 covered.

20 I think that's it.

21 There's going to be other things that
22 come up during the election, of course.

23 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Sure.

24 MR. MILLER: And we'll engage that when
25 it happens.

1 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you. Thank
2 you for your presentations, and it's time now for the
3 questions from our board.

4 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: I'll start.

5 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Commissioner
6 Sullivan.

7 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: First I want to
8 thank you all for being here. I don't know, maybe
9 the letter wasn't perceived the way it was intended
10 to be perceived, but this is all about the public
11 being informed. This is why we're doing what we're
12 doing and this is why we're having a meeting right
13 now to put it on the record.

14 This was advertised for everybody. But
15 we had a concern, as the Board of County
16 Commissioners, and unfortunately this is where
17 everybody comes, no matter what the problem is,
18 whether it's a Parks issue or County Sheriff's issue,
19 everyone comes here and we bear the brunt of
20 everything. So we wouldn't be doing our due
21 diligence if we didn't ask you all to be here and
22 explain to the public what's going on.

23 I'm very happy to hear that there are
24 steps moving forward to secure the election runs a
25 lot smoother. I heard some good things today. I

1 just have a question about the way we report, Clerk.

2 You know, I know you mentioned the SD
3 cards and how you're going to do things better with
4 them, but what else can be done to ensure that we
5 have a quick and accurate reporting to the public
6 consistent with other counties that report?

7 Now, from what I heard today, you don't
8 want to go to the Internet, but I mean why are
9 counties like Essex and other counties able to use
10 the same machines, able to have a very good, accurate
11 reporting, and in a much more timely fashion?

12 Now, I'm glad that you're eliminating
13 the one process because your numbers were different
14 on two different levels, but is there anything else
15 that you plan on doing? I understand you're a little
16 nervous of the Internet, but, I mean, everyone gives
17 their cards online now and everything.

18 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: Yes, we still have
19 concerns. I spoke to other clerks. Many other
20 clerks do what I'm doing. I talked to Joanne
21 Rajoppi, she says she picks up some of the stuff and
22 drops off some. She doesn't trust the Internet
23 either. So I have to go by what the seasoned clerks
24 who have looked into it --

25 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: You're a

1 seasoned clerk, John. Don't sell yourself short.

2 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: I'm only a junior.

3 So we're changing the process for the
4 first time ever. We're going out and picking up the
5 information. When we meet with the clerks, we're
6 going to tell them how urgent it is to get the stuff
7 to us, even if they have to come and drop-off the SD
8 cards themselves and then come with another car for
9 the rest of the information.

10 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: That's another
11 recipe for disaster, someone gets in a car accident.
12 It just seems like a recipe for disaster, where we
13 could have these results right away.

14 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: For years it's
15 secure coming through police officers, you know, and
16 the town clerk or a Democrat and a Republican. The
17 first year I did it, you heard the story before, the
18 first year of my first election I was shocked that
19 the results were dropped off in front of the elevator
20 downstairs, never went into a secured location. And
21 clerks and other people were struggling to bring the
22 results in. And we set up, me and Carlos and one
23 other person set up carrying all that information in.
24 We've since evolved. We have security guards that
25 help us. We have floodlights out there, because if

1 anything happens when those results come in, we have
2 a problem, but we've been able to deliver the
3 results.

4 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: So you're dead
5 set against reporting, like Essex County was in by
6 8:30.

7 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: For this
8 presidential year, yes, I am.

9 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank
10 you.

11 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Commissioner
12 Tanelli.

13 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: Thank you,
14 Chairwoman.

15 I want to thank all three for coming.
16 We've all had so many questions for the last few
17 months, and a lot of stuff was addressed today. It's
18 a shame that we didn't train them on new machines,
19 but I'm thrilled that now they're going to get
20 trained and we're going to do it yearly as far as we
21 move forward.

22 My question is, do you have a number of
23 falloff from poll workers that you trained, let's say
24 '21 and '22, who actually showed up that day so that
25 you could actually -- I heard a suggestion today

1 where we have people in the bullpen waiting to fill.

2 MR. MILLER: Yes, we have a list of
3 people. If people don't show up, we're not going to
4 call them back to work unless they were really sick.

5 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: So if you have a
6 number of 2,500 people that you think you need to
7 have a successful election, are you going to train
8 2,600?

9 MR. MILLER: Our goal is to train 3,000
10 board workers.

11 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: Okay.

12 MR. MILLER: So that gives us a
13 cushion, which we'll need. Hopefully, you know,
14 we'll train 3,000 and realistically we'll have 2,700,
15 probably.

16 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: Great. Thank
17 you.

18 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: Chairwoman?

19 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Commissioner
20 Amoroso.

21 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: So how many
22 people did not show up that you counted on in the
23 past election?

24 MR. MILLER: I think Alicia would have
25 that exact amount.

1 MS. PEREZ: Approximately 200. We had
2 hired 1,939 for the general and 1,705 showed.

3 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: And you
4 expect a very high turnout, as we all do, this year.

5 MR. MILLER: Right.

6 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: How did you
7 come up with the 2,500 number? Is that going to be
8 sufficient or the 3,000?

9 MR. MILLER: Well, we're going to train
10 3,000, okay.

11 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: How did you
12 come up with that number?

13 MR. MILLER: Because that's the number
14 we feel we want. We're going to have about 560
15 polling places, so we want to make sure we have
16 enough people to cover them, and that doesn't include
17 our super board workers that we'll have at the
18 polling places also.

19 MS. FRANCIKA: Can I say something in
20 defense of this?

21 If I'm adding more equipment to the
22 locations, we're going to need more poll workers,
23 that that 3,000 figure, which probably drops down to
24 2,700 if there's no-shows, is probably right, it's
25 more than sufficient.

1 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Chairwoman?

3 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Commissioner Zur.

4 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Just to kind
5 of feed off that question, you had indicated that
6 you're going to be having more techs, more call
7 centers. Can you quantify what that looks like
8 numbers wise for us?

9 MS. FRANCIKA: Well, we had about 15
10 people in the field from Dominion for the last
11 election, plus our own warehouse staff of about
12 eight. I'm looking to double that to maybe 30 or
13 maybe 40, and then have our warehouse staff. So we
14 divide Bergen County into six regions, and we have
15 this color coded map that we've been using for years,
16 and so we are going to double, maybe even triple it
17 so that the techs can be there if they're needed.

18 But I will tell you that getting the
19 paper jams, which was the No. 1 reason a tech would
20 come to a location, if we could conquer the paper
21 jams with our little three language sign don't touch
22 the paper and fixing and screwing in the paper trays
23 which we tested and tested and tested, that's going
24 to mitigate a lot of things but we're going to
25 overcompensate for that. We're going to

1 overcompensate with the techs being in the field.

2 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: How did you
3 land on that number, the two times, the three times
4 the number?

5 MS. FRANCIKA: Because I'm going to
6 look at the region, I'm going to look at the biggest
7 locations like the North Arlingtons, the Lyndhursts
8 down in the south, and then you got the Mahwahs and
9 the Oaklands and the Ramseys up in the northern
10 corner, and like Mr. Miller and like John said, we
11 have a big county, we don't realize how big we are
12 until we go to one of these conventions and then you
13 can fit five of their counties in our county and
14 they're complaining they got 12 towns. Cry me a
15 river, 12 towns, really, really, because it is a big
16 undertaking for everything, to get everybody situated
17 where you got to anticipate where the bigger
18 locations are and where the bigger crowds are going
19 to be. So that's how we're going to make those
20 determinations.

21 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Commissioner Marte.

22 COMMISSIONER MARTE: Yes.

23 Thank you for your presentation, and I
24 have a couple of questions but you have answered most
25 of them. I came up with just one question, which you

1 probably answered, but your targeted number for
2 training for workers is 2,500 or 3,000?

3 MR. MILLER: 3,000, yes.

4 COMMISSIONER MARTE: Now you said
5 you're going to train them on a yearly basis?

6 MR. MILLER: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER MARTE: And will the same
8 workers be re-trained on a yearly basis?

9 MR. MILLER: They'll be re-trained on a
10 yearly basis, yes.

11 COMMISSIONER MARTE: Okay. Thank you.

12 MR. MILLER: Some of them will drop
13 out, but most of them will stay.

14 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Commissioner Voss.

15 COMMISSIONER VOSS: Thank you,
16 Chairwoman.

17 I thank you for coming today. My
18 questions were very much addressed in your
19 presentations but I want to reemphasize a few things.

20 I heard from a lot of seniors that they
21 found the multiple steps kind of confusing. Would
22 you consider putting some additional signage up,
23 signs like don't pull the paper out, you know, this
24 is Step 1, this is Step 2 and so on and so forth?

25 MS. FRANCIKA: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER VOSS: And that would make
2 things go -- I think Debbie you mentioned --

3 MS. FRANCIKA: Commissioner, I am so
4 glad you said this. I don't mean to interrupt you,
5 but I forget a very big part of my presentation. I
6 have asked the Attorney General if I could put the
7 voter instruction video in every polling location.

8 I first asked the New Jersey State
9 Division of Elections, and of course they punted it
10 over to the AG. I asked all three of our AGs, I
11 said, look, I want to get 284 poll pads that run on a
12 continuous loop with our voter instruction video in
13 three languages.

14 So, look, there are going to be lines
15 at the presidential, it is just going to have to do
16 with sheer volume at certain times. While they are
17 waiting in line, would you like to look at the video
18 of how to vote.

19 COMMISSIONER VOSS: Sometimes I think
20 it's more if you have signs put on the wall, this is
21 Step 1, this is Step 2.

22 MS. FRANCIKA: We have the screen shots
23 from our videos that we can put up on the wall.

24 COMMISSIONER VOSS: I think that would
25 help a lot. You happened to mention in your

1 presentation that people were reading the voter
2 stuff.

3 MS. FRANCIKA: No, people were inside
4 looking at the ballot because it was almost like they
5 never look at their sample ballot.

6 COMMISSIONER VOSS: Exactly.

7 MS. FRANCIKA: When you have a
8 question -- I will give you an example. There was a
9 three part question in Hillsdale and they were
10 reading it, they were staying in there -- it was a
11 yes or no, and they were staying in there forever
12 because one part had to do with another part had to
13 do with another part, and it maybe was the first time
14 they ever read it. So it wasn't the fact that they
15 didn't know how to press the ovals, darken it to make
16 their choice, they were reading this for the first
17 time.

18 COMMISSIONER VOSS: I know. They need
19 to have something in their hands, this is Step 1,
20 even a pamphlet or something like that so that they
21 know what to expect.

22 MS. FRANCIKA: Right.

23 COMMISSIONER VOSS: Because a lot of
24 people, they may listen but they're not hearing.

25 MS. FRANCIKA: The poll worker does a

1 good job in the training, and Mr. Duch has a story
2 that he told to me in my budget hearing and he told
3 today in the meeting, that when the poll worker is
4 trained properly, the poll worker guides you through
5 the process, that's their job. You may be behind the
6 curtain and they are going to say this is what is
7 going to happen. You are going to go in, the ballot
8 is going to appear. First there are directions that
9 have Mr. Hogan's name on it, please read the
10 directions, then hit next.

11 COMMISSIONER VOSS: Some people were
12 very confused.

13 MS. FRANCIKA: Yes, I can understand
14 that. It's new. They have voted the same way for
15 over 30 years, and I understand that. But I do like
16 that suggestion, we may make signs of step-by-step.

17 COMMISSIONER VOSS: Or even a pamphlet
18 that they can hold in their hand as they're going in.

19 MR. FRANCIKA: But that's really the
20 poll workers' job. You don't want them looking at
21 the pamphlet and then looking at the screen and
22 getting all confused. I'm going to kind of ruminate
23 that for a while.

24 COMMISSIONER VOSS: I had gotten quite
25 a few phone calls about the fact they didn't like

1 that there were multiple steps.

2 MS. FRANCIKA: Yes, there are multiple
3 steps with every brand new equipment. That's the law
4 and that's why we have paper ballots following the
5 voter, but I do understand what you're saying and
6 I'll report back to all of you.

7 COMMISSIONER VOSS: Thank you.

8 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: I would also like to
9 thank everyone for coming out today -- oh, sorry,
10 Commissioner Zur.

11 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: What internal
12 controls are you planning on putting into place to
13 compensate for potential human error both on the
14 absentee ballot counting as well as in places like --
15 I heard some of your, you know, mistake proving that
16 you're hoping to do, but, Mr. Miller, what are you
17 putting into place as far as possibilities of missing
18 or skipping or any of the other inadvertent
19 challenges?

20 MR. MILLER: Well, we have a procedure
21 and we have a booklet that will show people how to
22 exactly vote-by-mail, you know, tell them the
23 different steps that they have to do.

24 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: I don't mean
25 on their end, I mean on your end.

1 MR. MILLER: On our end, we get the
2 ballots. We have a system setup in the office where
3 the ballots come in, for instance, the ones that come
4 in by the vote by the drop boxes. So we pick up 200
5 downstairs in Hackensack, we bring them upstairs, we
6 stamp them, and we put them through our SVRS machine,
7 which opens the envelope and stamps it so we know
8 when it came in. So it's postdated when it comes in
9 so we know when it comes in, and anyone that calls us
10 that says was our ballot counted, did you receive my
11 ballot yet, we can scan and see right on the computer
12 exactly if the ballot was received and when it was
13 received.

14 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: I guess what
15 I'm asking, though, is: There's opportunities for
16 human error at each step along the way. Are you
17 planning on putting into place checks and balances to
18 make sure that those aspects of human error are
19 mitigated?

20 MR. MILLER: For instance, like when we
21 open the ballots, again like five days before the
22 election, we open the ballots, we're upstairs, we
23 have a staff of people come in, again, separate R's
24 and D's. So they separate, they put the ballot here
25 and the envelope over here, so we count the ballots

1 to make sure they match the envelopes. We don't know
2 who is what, but we just count to make sure they're
3 right. And then we go through the envelopes again,
4 another group of people go through the envelopes to
5 make sure there's no ballots left in the envelope,
6 because we always find ballots where people leave
7 them in the envelopes, it's human error, and we
8 correct that and we find that and we make sure that
9 everything that's there is counted.

10 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: And are there
11 additional checks that you're going to be putting
12 into place for this next cycle? Especially with the
13 amount and the magnitude that we're anticipating
14 seeing, are there going to be additional checks and
15 balances?

16 MR. MILLER: I'll ask Alicia if we
17 could address that a little bit. She is on top of
18 this all the time.

19 MS. PEREZ: So if I understand
20 correctly, meaning when we tabulate the ballots, just
21 the whole process from start to finish?

22 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: The whole
23 process, start to finish.

24 MS. PEREZ: So obviously there's a lot
25 of ballots coming into our office, so, like you said,

1 we're canvassing the ballots, so we're separating
2 them out, we do it in batches of 20. So we make sure
3 that for every outer envelope, there's an inner
4 envelope and there's a ballot. And we put those in
5 batches of 20 and we make sure that we count again
6 and then we move on.

7 If we run into something that is
8 missing an inner envelope, well, then that has to go
9 through the Commissioner because we have to make sure
10 that we are able to count that ballot. So we're
11 constantly doing the process over and over again,
12 it's just very redundant because we're trying to
13 eliminate forgetting something.

14 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: So what did
15 you learn from this last election that is going to
16 help you even improve that process more?

17 MS. PEREZ: I guess with this last
18 election, we were working with a new vendor, so we're
19 trying to develop a new process and get comfortable
20 with each other so that we can work in harmony with
21 each other and figure out the best way. You know, I
22 believe that we did do well with Kenny at Dominion.
23 He worked well with us. He worked with our people to
24 adjudicate ballots.

25 I don't know, maybe I'm not answering

1 your question in detail.

2 COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DUCH: Maybe if
3 you explain the adjudication process.

4 So if a ballot comes in and we can't
5 tell exactly how it reads or what's the vote, what
6 the process if there's any question?

7 MS. PEREZ: Okay. So on Dominion's
8 side, if a ballot runs through the machine and it
9 will electronically, if there's something with the
10 ballot where they can't read a mark or there's a
11 write-in, it gets put into an adjudication file.
12 That adjudication file sits in the system and we have
13 six stations setup with six teams, a Democrat and
14 Republican, and then there's also a Democrat and
15 Republican Commissioner monitoring the adjudicators
16 to make sure if there's any question on any ballot.

17 Then Kenny either has one of his staff
18 members or he teaches one of our ballot boards to
19 keep moving the ballots through the process to get to
20 the adjudication team, and then those individuals
21 look at the ballots, and if there's an unclear mark,
22 they'll call over one of the Commissioners, say, you
23 know, is this ballot clear, is this a vote, is this
24 not a vote, is it just a hesitation mark, and is this
25 a double vote. And the Commissioners as a team will

1 make a decision as to whether to count. And then
2 that's how we adjudicate until the very end, until
3 there's no ballots left in the adjudication files.

4 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: And I just
5 want to stress, I appreciate the intensiveness that
6 this entire process takes and I'm just worried always
7 about how we make sure we're securing integrity of
8 this process in every step along the way. When we
9 have seen some of the question marks in various
10 municipalities, I just want to make sure that you're
11 taking lessons from this experience and moving them
12 into this next election cycle, because the volume is
13 going to be astronomically different.

14 MR. MILLER: It sure will.

15 Now, we also do cure letters too that
16 come in. If we have a question on a signature, we
17 send out a letter to the person that voted and ask
18 them to please sign here to make sure it's your
19 signature. They don't even have to sign it, they can
20 just X it or whatever, as long as we know that that's
21 that person, they'll send it back to us. For
22 instance, this past election I guess we sent out
23 about 700 cure letters, 600 cure letters, and we got
24 maybe half of them back. But we only send out a cure
25 letter if we're not sure if that's the voter, if we

1 have a real question on his signature or something
2 they submitted that they should have done.

3 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: I personally --

4 MR. MILLER: It's a big process, you
5 know.

6 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you. It
7 really is, and I'm glad I went to the meeting earlier
8 to have a better understanding of the process. You
9 brought up so many other steps that I wasn't even
10 aware of. And especially with this upcoming
11 election, I'm glad that the new machines came in last
12 year, we were only at about a 30 percent voter
13 turnout versus probably close to 70 percent this
14 coming year, and that all of you addressed all the
15 challenges that we faced last year and finding
16 solutions for them. And obviously I would say No. 1
17 would be, from what I hear throughout this meeting,
18 is training, awareness, and education. Those are the
19 three issues that we really have to emphasize and
20 stress and really go forward this coming year.

21 Most of my questions were pretty much
22 answered between the two meetings but there was one,
23 and, by the way, my daughter received a curated
24 letter because when she was in high school, she had a
25 signature, and then in college she thought as she was

1 an adult, she was going to change her signature, so I
2 know exactly what you meant by that. But I made her
3 take care of it right away.

4 MR. MILLER: Good.

5 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: But I just had one
6 question that I did not ask earlier today, and it
7 involves a language barrier. If there's polling
8 places where you're going to get certain different
9 languages, do you have anyone there or a
10 representative that speaks maybe a fluent language of
11 that town that might have an issue?

12 MR. MILLER: We're trying to focus in
13 on that a little bit more. Look, we had an issue in
14 Palisades Park. It's a heavy Korean population. So
15 we are going to try to recruit through their borough
16 clerk some additional people up there that would be
17 able to speak Korean to help out a little bit.

18 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Because we are such
19 a diverse county, when we did the census, we speak
20 almost 30 languages. I'm not saying that we're
21 supposed to help at every language possible.

22 MR. MILLER: We're making an effort to
23 do that.

24 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: I know my mother had
25 an issue, and unfortunately the poll worker I guess

1 wasn't properly trained and wasn't very kind to her
2 and she was very upset. Thank God my stepfather was
3 there, who speaks fluent English and helped with the
4 process, but you don't want to make the voter feel
5 uncomfortable.

6 MR. MILLER: That's the other thing we
7 tell our board workers, if there's any problems at
8 the polls, call us immediately. We have six
9 Commissioners, one of us, we'll go out there and
10 visit the polls all day long on Election Day. So
11 we're in Mahwah, we're in Palisades Park, we're in
12 Cliffside Park, we're in Washington Township,
13 Westwood. I mean, we're all over the place. And we
14 do that because that's what we're supposed to do.

15 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: I appreciate that.
16 Thank you.

17 Commissioner Tanelli.

18 MR. MILLER: North Arlington, too.

19 [LAUGHTER]

20 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: I hope everybody
21 knows where it is.

22 So I have a question. I think I know
23 the answer to this, but I did have a lot of towns
24 reach out to me that 8:00 where there were lines that
25 people were turned away.

1 MS. FRANCIKA: No, really?

2 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: Yes.

3 So I believe the rule is as long as
4 they're inside by 8:00 and on line to vote, that
5 before the door is locked, that that vote should be
6 counted.

7 MS. FRANCIKA: Absolutely.

8 MR. MILLER: Absolutely.

9 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: Hopefully when
10 they're trained they understand that as well.

11 MR. MILLER: You got to understand,
12 these people have been trained but they need intense
13 training now. They need more.

14 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: I'll be honest,
15 down by me after COVID, I don't recognize any of the
16 poll workers anymore. There were the same poll
17 workers there for the 27 years I've been involved,
18 and I went to all of our ten locations and I maybe
19 recognized two people. So I understand your
20 challenge too as well, as getting people and
21 retaining people and getting them to do it
22 consistently so that they know all of this stuff. I
23 appreciate it.

24 MR. MILLER: Thank you.

25 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Commissioner

1 Amoroso.

2 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: Thank you.

3 Are you doing any special training,
4 especially this year with the volume you expect, to
5 help poll workers and super poll workers deal with
6 long lines?

7 MR. MILLER: Well, when we give a class
8 for the training, I mean, you know, the answer to get
9 rid of the lines is to have additional poll workers
10 there, which we're going to have. And the poll
11 workers know that if they're on line to vote, they
12 have to be allowed to vote. We can't tell them they
13 can't vote.

14 So we're hoping with additional
15 training and education, that they'll be a little bit
16 faster, and Debbie is eliminating one of the
17 processes of the voting machine, which is good, that
18 card, which would help us a little bit also. So,
19 look, we know we're going to have a tough election
20 this year, let's not kid ourselves, okay, but we
21 think we can handle it.

22 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: Do you have
23 central administrative apparatus that's checking
24 throughout the county on poll sites?

25 MS. FRANCIKA: What we have is we have

1 something called ePulse where we can monitor every
2 single poll pad everywhere. I know if Mary in North
3 Arlington and poll pad No. 6 didn't charge her poll
4 pad, and we type her a little message and say Mary,
5 plug in your charger, the poll pad is down to 2
6 percent, 12 percent. We have almost like a central
7 command, it almost feels like we're spying on
8 everyone, we are, but it is a really wonderful
9 process that we have that we can keep track of every
10 single poll pad, we can see how many people checked
11 in, we can see what the percentages are on their
12 battery life. We can see all of that, and we can
13 keep a grip on it.

14 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: Thank you.

15 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: There was something
16 that was brought up earlier was the elimination of
17 voter registration the day of at the polling
18 location, which maybe you want to elaborate on.

19 MS. FRANCIKA: Yes.

20 Same day registration makes my blood
21 run cold, because I know the poll workers, they're
22 seasoned workers, to now have somebody come in and
23 say I'd like to register today at the polling place
24 with a seasonal worker sort of going through the
25 process when my office is the Commissioner of

1 Registration, I have the trained personnel, I have
2 sort of floated this to the League of Women Voters
3 and they totally agreed that in counties as large as
4 Bergen, we have 284 polling locations, 562 districts,
5 that the same day registration should be right here
6 in the county where I could set up a triage with my
7 staff, with a poll pad. I could check them in, they
8 could vote on a machine, I could have it right in my
9 office and we could process same day registrations
10 right here. When I said that, the League of Women
11 Voters, right, they applauded. They said we can't
12 imagine this happening at a polling place with
13 everything going on. And I said, well, thank God
14 they didn't put it, if they're considering it and
15 they still are, that they wanted to do it in a
16 presidential, because I think it would have been
17 horrible, but they're still considering the
18 legislation for the future, which I still think is a
19 problem. Whether it's a slow election or a very
20 heavy election, that's not where that belongs. And
21 we say people can register same day, come down here
22 because you come down here if I had to put you before
23 a judge to ask if you can vote. So come down here
24 again, and we'll set it up on the first floor. I
25 have the whole thing mapped out of how we would do

1 it, and we could do it quicker and we could do it
2 more accurately.

3 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: How are you going to
4 let the public know that they would have to come to
5 the county?

6 MS. FRANCIKA: Well, we would have to
7 advertise, and certain counties like Middlesex,
8 Bergen, I'm thinking of the bigger counties, Ocean,
9 Trenton, where it's all heavily volumed, I can't
10 imagine people walking up to a poll worker and asking
11 them to register them. I can't imagine what that
12 would be like, and the altercations that might ensue
13 which would not be pleasant, and I think it would be
14 a danger. I think it's a safety issue, I think it's
15 a security issue, and I don't think the poll workers
16 would be signing up for that. I think we'd have a
17 lot of pushback. So that's my personal feeling.

18 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

19 MS. FRANCIKA: You're welcome.

20 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: County Executive, do
21 you have any comments or questions that you'd like to
22 address?

23 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: Thank you,
24 Chairwoman.

25 First let me say thank you for

1 presenting today and doing a wonderful job of not
2 only helping us understand what took place, but what
3 you're going to do to help make it a better process
4 for the people in 2024. So thank you for that,
5 because that's what we should be doing for the people
6 of Bergen County, is making sure, whether it's a new
7 process or an old process, that we can get them to
8 feel comfortable about using the process. And
9 someone coming to vote and exercising that right is
10 something so important and so sacred, and so
11 everything that we can do to make it better, I just
12 want you to know how much I appreciate the work that
13 you've already done and the work that you'll continue
14 to do.

15 As the Administrator has promised you
16 all, the administration will be supportive of the
17 things that you need to also make things better. He
18 gave me a brief rundown on some of the things that
19 you've talked about today and in the past, and the
20 administration is committed to providing the funding,
21 the space, and everything else that you're going to
22 need to ensure a good, fair election in 2024. I will
23 give you my word that we will be there --

24 MS. FRANCIKA: Thank you.

25 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: -- to help

1 you every step of the way.

2 When we are talking about the process,
3 there were also other pieces of the process. So one
4 of the things that I observed in both early voting
5 and then stopping in at 1 or 2 of the polling
6 locations on Election Day was that some of the poll
7 workers just seemed to feel that it was the voter's
8 responsibility to move their way through the system.
9 You know, I observed the long folders, they were
10 tucked on the side of the machine and the poll worker
11 not saying, well, no, you need to take these things.
12 Down to that little level of making a poll worker
13 understand that that's their obligation, they need to
14 pick that out.

15 MS. FRANCIKA: It's the law, Mr. County
16 Executive, they must offer it. The voter doesn't
17 have to take it, but they must offer it.

18 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: Right. And
19 some people saying, well, I'm walking with this piece
20 of paper and what do I do with it and things like
21 that.

22 MS. FRANCIKA: Exactly.

23 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: So I think
24 from an educational standpoint, there is refinement I
25 think that we need to look at in regards to making

1 sure that they know, as Commissioner Voss said, they
2 need to know every step of the process along with the
3 voter, and I think we have to reinforce that. It's
4 their responsibility as a poll worker. I mean, you
5 know, being a poll worker for 30 years on the same
6 machine, not having to do an awful lot, now things
7 changed drastically, and I think that's a challenge
8 that we have as the folks that need to make sure that
9 they understand that. I think that's why when Rich
10 was talking about young people and the students, they
11 grasp that and they understand that.

12 MR. MILLER: It was great.

13 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: I think,
14 Rich, from our standpoint here, we have the college
15 that we would love for you to be able to go to and
16 talk to the college about using some of the Bergen
17 Community College students and we can help facilitate
18 that. Also the high schools that we have here in
19 Bergen County, the Academies and many of the tech
20 schools and many of other schools, I think those
21 would be good resources for you.

22 MR. MILLER: I'm going to be speaking
23 to the Superintendent of Schools, Lou DeLisio.

24 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: The
25 Superintendent of Schools?

1 MR. MILLER: Yes.

2 So he'll have a list of all the
3 superintendents, and we'll reach out to Dr. Learner
4 too.

5 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: Right,
6 because we have a much more intimate relationship
7 with those folks than with the rest of the schools.
8 So I'm saying there's other ways that I think we
9 might be able to help you to facilitate that.

10 MR. MILLER: That's why Melissa spoke
11 to me right away when she saw we were doing Teaneck
12 about Paramus, she said I'm on a school board.

13 Great. Thank you.

14 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: Again, using
15 the young people I think is a great opportunity and
16 the college students, they offer even a greater
17 opportunity because they can work different hours and
18 longer hours.

19 MR. MILLER: Yes.

20 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: So that's
21 even a different pool of people.

22 MR. MILLER: We'll be reaching out to
23 them, you can be sure.

24 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: And, John, I
25 heard you say, you know, how concerned you are about

1 the transmission of data through the cloud.

2 While I don't agree with you, I would
3 really ask that you re-think that and really take a
4 deeper dive into using the technology that's offered
5 to us and allowing results to be able to be posted as
6 fast as possible. I know you said that, and one of
7 the two of the Commissioners emphasized the fact that
8 other counties use it, and I don't think size is the
9 difference here. That's not a size issue. If it
10 works in Essex through the cloud, it can work in
11 Bergen through the cloud.

12 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: County Executive,
13 I don't want to interrupt you.

14 One time we get hacked, one time, the
15 election is done.

16 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: John, if
17 everybody thought that in their life, nothing would
18 happen in today's world and today's environment,
19 nothing. The world would shutdown, if everyone
20 thought that that was going to happen and didn't do
21 anything through the cloud and through the Internet.

22 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: We can agree to
23 disagree. I'm not going to do it this year, maybe
24 we'll consider it next year.

25 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: Again, I'm

1 just asking you to come up and understand that
2 providing fast, accurate information to the public is
3 what people expect today, and it's our job to be able
4 to try as best we can to meet those expectations.

5 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: And that's why
6 we're taking the steps we're taking.

7 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: Yes, I said
8 that.

9 COUNTY CLERK HOGAN: Okay.

10 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: So if we can
11 teach everybody to be more educated on the process
12 and make sure that the poll workers are doing
13 everything that they're supposed to do and they can,
14 the machines are working properly, we can get the
15 results, and we can get them out in a timely manner,
16 then we've had a successful election. And that's
17 what the people of Bergen County want.

18 So I thank you for taking the time out
19 of your day to be with us tonight, and know that
20 along with the administration and the Board of
21 Commissioners, we're here to help and we're here to
22 make sure that whatever you need, we can get that for
23 you.

24 MS. FRANCIKA: Thank you.

25 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: So thank you

1 for being here.

2 MS. FRANCIKA: Thank you all.

3 MR. MILLER: Thank you.

4 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: Thank you,
5 Chairwoman.

6 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you. Thank
7 you so much for joining us.

8 MS. FRANCIKA: Thank you so much.

9 Review of Resolutions

10 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: We will now review
11 the resolutions to be voted on this evening.

12 CLERK RODRIGUEZ: You have before you
13 Resolutions #92-24 and #93-24.

14 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: We have Page 2.

15 There is a grant agreement for #92-24,
16 Body of the Whole?

17 And Resolution #93-24, ADA curb ramp,
18 Body of the Whole?

19 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Yes.

20 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Do you want to do
21 both Body of the Whole?

22 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Yes.

23 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: Yes.

24 Resolutions of Unanimous Consent

25 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Can I have a motion

1 to accept the resolutions as a Consent Agenda?

2 COMMISSIONER MARTE: So moved.

3 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Second.

4 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Roll call, please.

5 (At this point in the proceeding roll
6 call is taken and the Consent Agenda is passed by a
7 unanimous vote.)

8 CLERK RODRIGUEZ: With seven yeases, the
9 Consent Agenda is approved.

10 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

11 Are there any resolutions of
12 Nonconsent, tabled or pulled?

13 CLERK RODRIGUEZ: There are none.

14 Closed Session

15 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: We will go into
16 Closed Session for approximately 45 minutes and we
17 will return to Public Session.

18 Will the attorney briefly state the
19 matters which we will be discussing in Closed
20 Session.

21 MR. FLORIO: Thank you, Chairwoman.

22 The board will receive updates on
23 matters that are legal, contract, public safety, and
24 matters of health, unless there's no need for a
25 Closed Session.

1 Adjournment

2 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Since there is no
3 further business, may I have a motion to adjourn?

4 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: So moved.

5 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: Second.

6 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: All in favor?

7 (All present Commissioners respond in
8 the affirmative.)

9 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Opposed?

10 (No response.)

11 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: We are adjourned at
12 5:58 p.m.

13 Thank you.

14 (Whereupon, the Work Session is
15 adjourned at 5:58 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, KIM O. FURBACHER, License No. XIO1042, a Certified Court Reporter, Registered Diplomate Reporter, Certified Realtime Court Reporter, and Notary Public of the State of New Jersey, hereby certify that the foregoing is a verbatim record of the testimony provided under oath before any court, referee, board, commission or other body created by statute of the State of New Jersey.

I am not related to the parties involved in this action; I have no financial interest, nor am I related to an agent of or employed by anyone with a financial interest in the outcome of this action.

This transcript complies with Regulation 13:43-5.9 of the New Jersey Administrative Code.



KIM O. FURBACHER, CRCR, CCR, RDR
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