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COUNTY OF BERGEN
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HACKENSACK, NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 2024
COMMENCING AT 7:08 P.M.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

- RAFAEL MARTE

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:

THOMAS J. DUCH, ESQUIRE
DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

EDWARD J. FLORIO, ESQUIRE
COUNSEL TO THE BOARD

LARA L. RODRIGUEZ
CLERK TO THE BOARD

MARK ROTUNDO
COMMISSIONER AIDE

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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HEARING OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC

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1 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: The meeting is
2 called to order at 7:08 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 Sullivan, Tanelli,

1 Voss, Silna Zur, Vice Chairwoman Amoroso, and
2 Chairwoman Ortiz present, with Commissioner Marte
3 absent.)

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

6 Pledge of Allegiance

7 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Please join me for
8 the Pledge of Allegiance.

9 Dr. Voss, would you like to lead us.

10 COMMISSIONER VOSS: Please join me in
11 honoring America.

12 (At this point in the proceeding all
13 rise for a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance,
14 led by Commissioner Voss.)

15 Presentation in Recognition of the Junior

16 Commissioners of the Commission on the Status of
17 Women

18 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Tonight we're
19 delighted to have members of the outgoing class of
20 the Junior Commissioners from the Bergen County
21 Commission on the Status of Women join us at our
22 public session.

23 Founded in 1975 as a bridge between
24 government and the community, the Commission has been
25 instrumental in studying the needs of women and

1 promoting the expansion of women's rights and
2 empowerment. Established in 2000, the Commission on
3 the Status of Women has provided young women with the
4 opportunity to become involved with these and other
5 critical issues.

6 Those selected as Junior Commissioners
7 of the Commission on the Status of Women will be
8 charged with performing a community service project
9 of their choosing and researching a topic relevant to
10 their peers.

11 We are so proud to recognize the
12 outgoing class for their commitment during their time
13 served and wish them luck in their future endeavors.
14 We hope the experiences of lesson learned carry them
15 forward throughout life, and we are excited for the
16 future class to be here one day as they too prepare
17 to move on.

18 We are privileged to be joined by
19 Melissa DeBartolo, who has been instrumental in
20 driving this mission forward. Your hard work and
21 dedication serve as an inspiration to us all and
22 we're deeply grateful for your service.

23 Would any of my colleagues have any
24 words?

25 Commissioner Zur.

1 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Thank you,
2 Chairwoman.

3 I want to give a special thank you to
4 the Junior Commissioners, who were so critical this
5 year in the period product drive in making sure that
6 our food pantries were adequately stocked with
7 feminine hygiene products. It is such a big issue,
8 actually, at our pantries, and every dime that is
9 spent on those products, that are not covered by WIC
10 or SNAP, and the work that you did on that in your
11 individual schools to really not only bring awareness
12 but collect really integral and valuable products for
13 our pantries was tremendous.

14 I want to say thank you. I wish you
15 also much luck in the next chapter in college, and I
16 look forward to continuing to stay connected to your
17 community. I hope that this experience has empowered
18 you to know that you really can make a difference
19 when help is around you. Congratulations.

20 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Commissioner
21 Sullivan.

22 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: I just want to
23 say thank you to everyone for everything that you
24 did. Great job. I hope that you continue to help in
25 the future.

1 Thank you to Melissa who plugged
2 through this, even though she's about to have a baby.
3 Great job. Thank you.

4 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Dr. Voss.

5 COMMISSIONER VOSS: Thank you,
6 Chairwoman.

7 I just want to say congratulations. I
8 started in government when I was your age, and I have
9 continued for many, many years, and I hope that you
10 will do the same thing. It is rewarding when you
11 give back to the community, it is so fulfilling, and
12 you help yourself when you help others, so keep up
13 the good work.

14 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Vice Chairwoman.

15 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: We are, as
16 you hear, all grateful for your participation. You
17 know, they say sometimes that people don't understand
18 community involvement until they own a house and have
19 to pay property taxes, but, in fact, the earlier you
20 get started, the more sophisticated you'll be and the
21 more you can make a difference, so we're so happy to
22 have had you this year.

23 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

24 Before we invite our outgoing Junior
25 Commissioners up, we'd like to invite Melissa

1 DeBartolo, if you'd like to say a few words on behalf
2 of the team.

3 MS. DeBARTOLO: I did want to say thank
4 you to our Board of Commissioners and our County
5 Executive for taking this opportunity to recognize
6 this important commission that we have within the
7 Department of Human Services.

8 Good evening, everybody. My name is
9 Melissa DeBartolo. I am the department director for
10 the Bergen County Department of Human Services, and
11 I'm honored to be with you here today.

12 During this past academic year, it has
13 been our pleasure to host 21 truly exceptional young
14 women, who were selected among their peers for
15 appointment to the Junior Commission on the Status of
16 Women. You came to our meetings filled with passion
17 and determination to tackle any project you were
18 assigned, working as a collaborative team. We all
19 admired your steadfast desire to advance the rights
20 of women here and around the world.

21 During your time with the county, you
22 were responsible for many community service projects
23 at your schools. During Women's History Month, you
24 launched a feminine product drive, which provided a
25 basic necessity to those in need. You participated

1 in a Walk for Women's Cancer last October, and you
2 worked with the Center for Food Action on behalf of
3 the Bergen County Office of Food Security. You did
4 this all while completing college applications,
5 studying for final exams, and enjoying those last
6 days of high school.

7 In a few months you will be starting a
8 new chapter in your life. You should be as proud of
9 yourselves as we are. I hope some day my daughters
10 follow in a similar path that you have followed and
11 aspire to take these steps.

12 I just wanted to say congratulations
13 and thank you.

14 I think at this time our Board of
15 Commissioners are going to invite you up.

16 I also wanted to say thank you to
17 Natalie Garoski, she is a committee member of our
18 Junior Commission, and unfortunately our
19 Administrator, Terry Cannon, couldn't be here this
20 evening because she is at an event for our Commission
21 on the Status of Women, our adult Commissioners.

22 So at this time, I'm going to turn this
23 back over to our Board of Commissioners, and again
24 say thank you and congratulations to our
25 Commissioners and thank you to our Board of

1 Commissioners.

2 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

3 (Whereupon, the presentation is made.)

4 [APPLAUSE]

5 Hearing of the General Public

6 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: I now move we open
7 the Commissioners meeting to the general public.

8 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Second.

9 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: All in favor?

10 (All present Commissioners respond in
11 the affirmative.)

12 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Opposed?

13 (No response.)

14 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: We will now have the
15 Hearing of the General Public, with a three-minute
16 time limit in effect, in accordance with the Bergen
17 County Commissioner bylaws.

18 For those members of the public who
19 would like to participate during the public comment,
20 please fill out a sheet to be recognized.

21 Would the counselor please explain the
22 process by which the public will be recognized.

23 MR. FLORIO: Thank you, Chairwoman.

24 If you wish to speak, please fill out
25 one of these sheets, which Mark has over there in the

1 bullpen. You have three minutes. Please come to the
2 podium when your name is called, spell your last
3 name, and I'll let you know when your three minutes
4 have expired.

5 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

6 We'll start with Richard Schempp.

7 MR. SCHEMPP: Good evening. Last name
8 S-C-H-E-M-P-P. I live in North Arlington, New
9 Jersey.

10 I'm here about Schuyler Avenue again.
11 I might be getting repetitious, but it's not really a
12 complaint, it's just the fact that you guys got to
13 jump in and take control, because the emperor of my
14 town decides he's going to change traffic flow and
15 he's going to change an intersection, and it's a
16 county road.

17 I've been going to town meetings for
18 34 years, and all I've ever heard is: "It's a county
19 road, county road, county road, we can't do nothing."

20 Now they're going to take Disposal
21 Road, which enters Schuyler Avenue, because the BCUA
22 property was sold to a warehouse company and they're
23 going to bring in trucks. And Mr. Emperor said he
24 don't want any trucks going across Schuyler Avenue,
25 but what he failed to say, the next thing he says is,

1 I'm only going to let them go north. When we
2 reconstruct the intersection, it's only going to be
3 allowed, all this traffic, to go north. He said "I
4 don't want them going through North Arlington," but
5 there's just as equal houses on the north side as
6 there is on the south side. It's split in half.

7 We're taxpayers. I live on Schuyler
8 Avenue, and he's going to send them our way, and the
9 company itself said it's going to be 100 cars and 60
10 trucks.

11 I'm not saying stop the intersection,
12 because the county already told North Arlington you
13 can't block the trucks, you can't stop the guy from
14 access to his property, so I got no problem with the
15 intersection, I got a problem with sending everything
16 north because he thinks that's the better way to do
17 it. Belleville Pike backs up, but when you go the
18 other way, anybody who's been on Schuyler Avenue and
19 you go towards Lyndhurst, Page Avenue and Schuyler
20 Avenue backs up in the morning too, so it's an equal
21 amount. I don't see why the taxpayers on the north
22 side of Schuyler Avenue have to pay the freight. He
23 also threw out to me, "What's the matter, you haven't
24 got the benefit of the town, you want to give it a
25 hard time with your taxes? What are you, against the

1 town?"

2 I said, "No, to just send everything
3 our way, it's not fair," and that's what my whole
4 thing is.

5 I wrote a letter to Jim Tedesco just
6 stating that whole fact. I've got a copy of it, if
7 anybody wants to see it. It's just not fair. It's
8 discrimination. It's sending traffic our way, and I
9 got enough traffic on our way. We're on summer
10 vacation now because we're down to at least 50 dump
11 trucks a day instead of 100 or 150, so must be
12 everybody's on vacation.

13 But you guys got to step in, because
14 he's overstepping his bounds. I don't see where he's
15 got the right to change the traffic flow and change
16 an intersection when it's a county road.

17 That's all. That's all I got to say.

18 Thanks.

19 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

20 Mr. Duch would like to comment.

21 COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DUCH: Mr.
22 Schempp, I would just point out to you that
23 Commissioner Tanelli did introduce your complaint to
24 us sometime ago, and we did introduce an ordinance,
25 which the Commissioners unanimously supported. There

1 are three particular areas where we tried to regulate
2 weight on trucks. So the Commissioners did support
3 that.

4 You mentioned the letter to the County
5 Executive. I would love for you to leave a copy so
6 that we can look into this further. Commissioner
7 Tanelli did draw me a map to try to explain this to
8 me just before the meeting, so I appreciate that.

9 Thank you, sir.

10 MR. SCHEMPP: You're welcome.

11 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Andrew Meehan.

12 MR. MEEHAN: Good evening, Commissioner
13 Chairwoman Ortiz and Commissioners.

14 I just wanted to first thank
15 Commissioner Sullivan for giving me the idea of
16 contacting mayors regarding shared services, and
17 that's exactly what I did. And I must say, to the
18 credit of women, that the woman mayor was the first
19 to respond to me to actually share her ideas and what
20 shared services meant to her in terms of local
21 government and some of the advantages and
22 disadvantages of them.

23 But I also spoke to a Democrat as well.
24 So one Republican, one Democrat.

25 The other 15 mayors did not respond to

1 me, so they must have been very busy. They are
2 volunteers.

3 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Shocking.

4 MR. MEEHAN: Yeah, it's kind of
5 shocking, but I would have to say you all are more
6 responsive than they are, at least you show up, you
7 answer the questions, it may not be the way the
8 community likes it, but what I learned about the
9 shared services was one -- but on a positive note,
10 Chairwoman Ortiz, you are correct, the towns appear
11 to be very appreciative of the increase in ambulances
12 that you mentioned at the last meeting. So I want to
13 put that on record that that was a huge positive, is
14 because many of the towns cannot afford hiring and
15 maintaining those vehicles and employees, the health
16 insurance cost for smaller towns. So it's really the
17 ratio of how much tax dollars that they receive, but
18 it's also if we look at how much the county receives
19 in terms of the percent of property taxes and how
20 much public services costs, so I don't know how that
21 works in terms of a formula, so they would have to
22 probably look at that. I have no experience, so I'm
23 not going to speak to that. But I wanted to just say
24 that for shared services, the one mayor thought that
25 shared services did take away a certain amount of

1 autonomy but there was so much more benefits, just
2 like you were saying, regarding decreasing the amount
3 of cost, as everything else.

4 My platform is about adding shared
5 services only for the areas of police in the event
6 that you decide to regionalize police, which I
7 mentioned, as well as health care.

8 So I know that there was a
9 consolidation of the emergency phone lines up in
10 Mahwah. There was a huge complex built. So I read
11 it in the newspaper. I think it started in 2022 -- I
12 don't know when exactly it started. I know that
13 somebody went up there for a tour of it recently, and
14 I wanted to find out more about it, up in Mahwah.
15 It's a multibillion dollar complex.

16 MR. FLORIO: Three minutes, Mr. Meehan.

17 MR. MEEHAN: That's it.

18 Thank you.

19 COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DUCH: In Mahwah,
20 we have our Law and Public Safety Institute. We have
21 our Police Academy, our Fire Academy. We do
22 instruction there. And to the credit of the
23 Commissioners and the County Executive, they did
24 build a new training facility, which is really
25 state-of-the-art. It is quite a structure.

1 I recently toured and thanked all of
2 our 9-1-1 and other operators there. One of the
3 shared services offered is in fact dispatch and
4 9-1-1, and it's around-the-clock. The operation is
5 great. We have a lot of very talented people up
6 there. We're able to accommodate people in many
7 languages through the use of LanguageLine, so it's
8 truly a great institution, a great setup.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. MEEHAN: Okay. Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Chairwoman, I
12 just want to state one thing.

13 When you talk about the shared services
14 for municipalities, police departments, we have no
15 control over that. That's not us. Those are
16 municipalities. They do what they want.

17 You mentioned home rule a couple of
18 weeks ago.

19 MR. MEEHAN: Yes, I did.

20 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: That's up to
21 them. We don't get involved in the municipalities
22 merging of whatever they want to merge. We offer
23 shared services, but that wouldn't be one of them.

24 All right?

25 MR. MEEHAN: Yes. I appreciate it.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Patrick DiRoma.

3 MR. DiROMA: Hi.

4 It has been a little while, so I just
5 wanted to just kind of provide some updates. Chris
6 and I have been sending along emails to various towns
7 asking them to sign onto our letter, asking Bergen
8 County to adopt a Complete and Green Streets policy.

9 Just for anyone who may have missed any
10 of the emails, Teaneck, Hackensack, and Fair Lawn
11 were some of the recent towns that signed on. We
12 have other towns that have shown interest and we're
13 continuing to reach out to more every week. So just
14 giving a little bit of an update there.

15 With respect to the county level, we
16 now have two neighboring counties that are moving
17 forward in substantial ways with bike infrastructure
18 and/or Complete Streets policies. Hudson County has
19 been leading the charge on this for quite a few years
20 now, but recently I just saw in The Bergen Record
21 this week that Passaic County is actually nearing the
22 end of its design stage for a 311-mile bike network.
23 So they are working closely with Passaic Township and
24 they are looking to add 19 miles of dedicated bike
25 lanes, 8.25 miles of bike boulevards, which they are

1 streets with low traffic and speeds; 2.4 miles of
2 shared use paths; and 1.9 miles of buffered lanes and
3 two-way cycle tracks. They also have plans to
4 include a city type program for an electric bike
5 sharing park system.

6 This news broke this week, and just
7 today there are reports in multiple news outlets of
8 hundreds that are dead from extreme heat over in
9 Saudi Arabia from their pilgrimage to Mecca. This is
10 the reality of climate change that we're seeing, and
11 we are dealing with a heat wave of our own right
12 here, and so it seems to me that given all of this
13 low and zero emission transportation options, like
14 walking, cycling, and biking, you need to not just
15 get an equal seat at the table with cars but need to
16 be actively incentivized, and the Complete Streets
17 policy is a great way to do that.

18 So it is with all this in mind I'd just
19 like to reiterate our support for a Complete and
20 Green Streets policy.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

23 David Refkin.

24 MR. REFKIN: Good evening. David
25 Refkin, Ridgewood, Chair of the Green Ridgewood

1 Advisory Committee to our Village Council and
2 Planning Board member.

3 Three months ago, I was here to discuss
4 the challenges we face surrounding flooding and to
5 ask the county to play a role in assisting us with
6 this dire public safety threat. Since then,
7 Ridgewood has moved forward and taken the following
8 actions related to flooding:

9 The Village has started to implement a
10 20-point program to implement short-term and
11 long-term solutions.

12 Columbia University provided us with a
13 Sustainability Roadmap to address our flooding
14 challenges, as well as a decarbonization strategy.

15 Just this week, 140 residents attended
16 an information session with the Army Corps of
17 Engineers, organized by our Village Manager, Keith
18 Kazmark, to start a dialogue about solutions.

19 Green Ridgewood has started to work
20 with other municipal governments on an enhanced
21 stormwater ordinance. We believe we have developed a
22 model that other municipal governments can utilize in
23 our highly developed county.

24 We want to work with Bergen County on
25 these issues. There is a lot that you can do to help

1 us related to roads, sharing of equipment,
2 communicating best practices and so much more. We'd
3 like to invite you to the next meeting of the Bergen
4 Hub on July 29th at the River Edge Public Library so
5 you can hear the concerns of the communities in our
6 county and efforts being made to prepare for future
7 dangerous flooding events, which are becoming more
8 frequent and more severe.

9 On a separate note and speaking as a
10 resident of Ridgewood, we have a very serious safety
11 issue on the Saddle River Pathway. I ride my bike
12 2-3 times a week on the pathway, and frankly it is
13 scary.

14 Back in August, an email was sent to
15 the Bergen County Parks head about these serious
16 safety issues on the pathway, especially related to
17 bicycles. No response was received.

18 Here are the key issues:

19 None of the five tunnels on the pathway
20 have working lights, none have reflectors, none have
21 a painted line down the middle.

22 Large lawn mowing and other maintenance
23 vehicles utilize the pathway. Rarely do these
24 vehicles have their lights on, nor do they take any
25 precautions in the tunnels, like honking their horns.

1 I nearly drove into one.

2 The pathway is poorly paved with severe
3 wear on the edges, and the pathway often floods,
4 leaving dangerous sand on the pavement. There are a
5 couple of holes in the pathway that have had cones
6 placed in them for months.

7 I would estimate that only 50 percent
8 of the children wear bike helmets, despite this being
9 a state law. Roughly one-third of the adults wear
10 helmets. There is no enforcement. There is not even
11 a sign telling people about how important it is to
12 wear a helmet.

13 There are simple best practices we can
14 follow:

15 First, put lights in the tunnels,
16 battery powered if necessary.

17 Next, paint a line down the middle of
18 the pathway in important spots.

19 Third, there is a location in the Otto
20 C. Pehle Park where the pathway and the separate
21 walking trail are parallel. Currently walkers are on
22 the pathway and bikes are on the walking trail. The
23 simple solution, mark one as a walking path and one
24 as a bike path, like they did in this photo I can
25 show you in Poughkeepsie.

1 Have lights on all the vehicles. Honk
2 when in the tunnels.

3 Re-pave the pathway where needed, and
4 consider the regular flooding that occurs.

5 Put up signs to encourage use of bike
6 helmets and enforce the law.

7 Please, before someone gets badly hurt
8 or worse, address this issue and let's make the
9 beautiful Saddle River pathway a special place for
10 the residents of Bergen County.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. FLORIO: Three minutes, Mr. Refkin.

13 COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DUCH: If you can
14 leave that statement and print your email at the
15 bottom. It's difficult to read your email at the
16 bottom here, so if you could print it a little
17 clearer and leave it for me, I would appreciate it.
18 I will give it to the Acting Director of Parks.

19 MR. REFKIN: Thank you.

20 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Samuel Bouveron.

21 MR. BOUVERON: I am a resident of
22 Rochelle Park.

23 Thank you, Commissioners, for listening
24 to me today.

25 In the beginning of April, I came here

1 for the public session and I did deliver a speech.

2 Following that, on May 6th, I sent an
3 email to all of you, including the County Executive
4 Director and some other folks. In case you haven't
5 read this email, I'll read it for you.

6 I attended the Bergen County
7 Commissioners meeting on April 3rd, during which
8 Bergen County Executive Director Tedesco introduced
9 the 2024 budget.

10 When the meeting was opened to the
11 public, I delivered a speech, and I attached in the
12 email, in these papers, I gave you a copy as well,
13 related to immediate actions needed to mitigate the
14 floods in the lower Saddle River area.

15 This year is predicted to be one of the
16 most active hurricane seasons on record. Also, this
17 year is the 25th anniversary of Hurricane Floyd,
18 which was the most costliest hurricane in the Saddle
19 River area and New Jersey at that time. The
20 compounded effects of storm intensity, intense urban
21 development, continued negligence of maintaining the
22 Saddle River, its tributaries and the Saddle River
23 County Park, increased the risks of extended damages
24 in the lower Saddle River area. In parallel, storm
25 damage costs have risen exponentially since Floyd.

1 All that contributes to making the Saddle River and
2 its tributaries huge liabilities for the nearby
3 residents, communities, towns and taxpayers.

4 There is a 32 percent risk factor of
5 having a Floyd-like flood in the next 15 years.

6 There is a 39 percent risk factor of
7 having an Irene-like flood in the next 15 years.

8 There is a 47 percent risk factor of
9 having an Ida-like flood in the next 15 years.

10 A flood of the magnitude of the cited
11 storms above would be very dramatic for the towns
12 along the Saddle River and their communities. And
13 the costs to repair flood damages would be in the
14 billions of dollars for the county, New Jersey State,
15 and federal government, while a comprehensive
16 proactive flood mitigation plan would cost millions;
17 refer to the Army Corps Fact Sheet published on
18 January 25, 2024, stating: "The project will provide
19 protection up to a 150-year flood event with a
20 benefit-to-cost ratio of 1.6:1."

21 I conclude my three minutes speech by
22 offering the Commissioners to present a third version
23 of a flood study in the Lower Saddle River area.
24 That presentation includes historical facts, data,
25 economics, risk, SWOT, and opportunities to convert a

1 major liability that is the Saddle River into
2 business opportunities while implementing
3 environment-driven and sustainable projects.

4 MR. FLORIO: Three minutes, Mr.
5 Bouveron.

6 MR. BOUVERON: I'm sorry?

7 MR. FLORIO: Three minutes. Your time
8 is up.

9 MR. BOUVERON: Then this email was
10 forwarded to some other people, like Mr. Duch. And
11 then I sent this email on June 2nd asking two
12 questions. The first one is -- first of all, I
13 stated also in this email that we recently heard from
14 a NJDEP official the authorization of the project and
15 50 percent funding by the NJDEP of the U.S. Army
16 Corps of Engineers --

17 (Following is the completion of Mr.
18 Bouveron's statement:

19 ..."project in the Lower Saddle River
20 area. In his emails, he is asking non-federal
21 sponsors to fund the remaining 50 percent of the
22 USACE project and he encourages implementation of
23 small projects that could help minimize effects of
24 floods in the lower Saddle River area.

25 "We would like to know:

1 "a. How/when/who can fund the
2 remaining 50 percent of such USACE project?

3 "b. The 2024/2025 BC Budget lines
4 dedicated for the Saddle River and flood mitigation
5 project (including timeline)?

6 "Also, we heard recently:

7 "Team Rochelle Park and I have put
8 together a presentation showing the risks of
9 flooding, its damages, its liabilities... The
10 presentation covers the opportunities, the economics
11 and some offer suggestions of effective and
12 protective solutions that could be implemented.

13 "I delivered a speech to the BC
14 Commissioners in April and followed-up with emails
15 requesting your time to show you that flood
16 presentation. The flood presentation has been shown
17 to multiple local and state officials already and
18 Team Rochelle Park would truly appreciate the
19 opportunity to present it to you.

20 "Please review your availability and
21 let me know when we could organize a meeting
22 dedicated on flood mitigation in the Lower Saddle
23 River area.

24 "Kind regards,

25 "Samuel Bouveron."

1 (End of written statement.)

2 MR. FLORIO: Mr. Bouveron, your time is
3 up.

4 MR. BOUVERON: Okay. May I finish?

5 MR. FLORIO: No.

6 Leave your statement with the reporter
7 and she'll include it in the record in its entirety.

8 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Allen Kantorowitz.

9 MR. KANTOROWITZ: Allen Kantorowitz,
10 K-A-N-T-O-R-O-W-I-T-Z. I'm a resident of Fort Lee.

11 I've been coming to the Bergen County
12 Commissioners and Freeholders since 2014 with only
13 one issue. My surprise is that Bergen County has not
14 ever adopted a tourism bureau, a convention and
15 visitors bureau.

16 My background is, I started the Long
17 Island Convention and Visitors Bureau from scratch
18 with help from Nassau and Suffolk counties, and we
19 turned it into a second tier city tourism
20 organization. And most recently, I started the
21 Greater Newark New Jersey Convention and Visitors
22 Bureau with seed money from the First City
23 Development Corporation, and that turned into the
24 second largest tourism organization in the State of
25 New Jersey.

1 Yet Bergen County doesn't have any
2 representation for any kind of tourism organization
3 even on its website. It removed it.

4 What got me here this time was the
5 World Cup. They've had some meetings recently where
6 some of the tourism organizations throughout the
7 state, and there are bunches of them, Princeton,
8 Sussex County, so on and so forth, have
9 representation, again Bergen is not represented.

10 We'll lose millions and millions of
11 dollars because of the lack of representation of not
12 being at the table for the World Cup. All it would
13 have taken or still would take is to put together
14 some kind of tourism organization.

15 Economic Development has taken it off
16 their website for tourism, and I don't see how it
17 could be an issue. This is only helping the entire
18 county. It can promote and market it. It just seems
19 very odd that over the last century, that Bergen
20 County has decided not to want to promote itself to
21 the travel and tourism industry.

22 Thank you.

23 COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DUCH: So I would
24 like to say this. We had a meeting recently with the
25 Vice Chair of the FIFA committee for the State of New

1 Jersey. At that meeting, the County Executive
2 expressed his extreme displeasure that the mayor of
3 New York has a seat at the table and the County
4 Executive of Bergen County, the largest county in the
5 state of New Jersey, has no seat, no ability, no
6 voice.

7 I will tell you that he made it very
8 clear that the county is an excellent resource and
9 that unlike the Super Bowl, where we were also not
10 included, but in the Super Bowl the week before, they
11 reached out to us because they needed fire
12 protection, they needed police protection, they
13 needed all kinds of safety, and we provided it. So
14 the displeasure has been noted.

15 I will tell you that about 7 or
16 8 months ago we had a meeting with the director of
17 tourism from Cape May County. She was excellent.
18 She was an amazing resource, has been there for over
19 30 years, offered to assist us, did a little bit of
20 research, found out that most of the money that comes
21 to Bergen County doesn't come to Bergen County, it
22 goes to the Meadowlands Chamber of Commerce. So the
23 Meadowlands Chamber of Commerce gets tourism dollars
24 that really should come to the county.

25 So we are looking at it. I will tell

1 you that just last week, the Economic Development
2 folks presented to me and to the Chief of Staff a
3 tourism video to talk about tourism in Bergen County,
4 and it has all different sites that you would be able
5 to click on parks, you would be able to click on
6 restaurants. It also has a connection to something
7 called my Bergen.com, which is a schedule of events
8 happening in the county. So we are working on that.

9 FIFA is not a dead issue. We are
10 making some noise so that we could get a seat at the
11 table and have more to say. So it's a work in
12 progress, but thank you very much for coming up.

13 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Madam Chair,
14 if I may also?

15 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Just because
17 we don't have a tourism division does not mean we
18 don't have a seat at the table. We've actually met
19 with Jeff Vasser from the New Jersey State Office of
20 Tourism, and we're being included in the
21 conversations that are ongoing regarding what's going
22 to be happening for FIFA.

23 I've heard your pitch for years now,
24 and I do see value and I know the County Executive
25 does as well, but your initial thesis is a little

1 off, that we're not going to be included in this
2 because of the lack of that bureau within county
3 government.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Jeffrey Gingold.

6 MR. GINGOLD: Jeffery Gingold,
7 G-I-N-G-O-L-D. I'm the president of the Passaic
8 River Rowing Association, Lyndhurst, New Jersey, and
9 I did not prepare a speech, I just wanted to speak
10 from the heart.

11 I would like to thank Bergen County
12 very much for your help and assistance in working out
13 the lease agreement that we are eager to sign. I'd
14 like to let you know that since the boathouse was
15 dedicated in the fall of 2022, programming and
16 servicing to the community has expanded almost
17 threefold since that time. We had a two-tiered adult
18 program that immediately went to three. At the end
19 of 2023, we had just about 50 members. In our new
20 tier, our new club master's program, right now, as we
21 begin the summer season, it's at 62, and every Learn
22 to Row class is booked for the summer, which will
23 give us over 100 members in this category, in the
24 master's category before '24 is out.

25 Our youth program has also expanded

1 exponentially. We have up to 80 kids through the
2 summer. We're now looking to start a collegiate
3 program as well. As you know, the Bergen County
4 Rowing Center hosts two high schools and two
5 colleges, and there is a great future ahead.

6 We look forward to serving Bergen
7 County to the best of our ability, and we hope that
8 some of you fine people will come to visit us on
9 October 13th when we host the next Head of the
10 Passaic Regatta, and we're anticipating 400 rowers
11 coming to that and helping us really celebrate our
12 25th year as a rowing organization and all those
13 years in which we have been associated with the
14 county. Thanks very much, look forward to seeing
15 you. Take care.

16 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Debbie Brathwaite.

17 MS. BRATHWAITE: Debbie Brathwaite,
18 B-R-A-T-H-W-A-I-T-E.

19 Hello. My name is Debbie.

20 First of all, I want to say thank you
21 for whoever was instrumental in building the
22 pickleball courts in Rochelle Park.

23 In addition to the pickleball courts,
24 there are also -- oh, I have baseball, but there's no
25 baseball -- tennis and basketball. They are much

1 appreciated.

2 We are a community of over 300 players,
3 and a couple of weeks ago, Mr. Tedesco was visiting
4 and somebody spoke to him and sent him two emails
5 that he said he would follow-up and look into a few
6 more of our needs. And we're not trying to be
7 greedy, but we just have a few more needs that we
8 need.

9 I also want to say thank you for the
10 pickleball courts, tennis, and basketball. The area
11 is beautiful, and we appreciate it. And it's kept
12 clean, as well as the beautification of the park.
13 However, we just need a few more things.

14 I have Rochelle Park pickleball rules,
15 because the one we have there is not working and it's
16 really not for pickleball. So I have taken the
17 liberty of creating the pickleball rules that will
18 work for everyone, because there are only three
19 courts, and, like I said, we have over 300 players,
20 so at any given time, you know, temperatures flare a
21 little. I'm also one of the leaders, as well as my
22 counterpart over there Shak, so we try to keep it
23 very civil. We try to play 11, and when there's 12
24 people on, we try to do four people on and four
25 people off.

1 I also want to encourage everyone to
2 come on down, we could give you lessons, not private
3 lessons because we don't encourage that.

4 And my few things that I need is: A
5 paddle holder, one that holds at least like 12
6 paddles that we can paddle on. A water fountain in
7 the area. We had someone that had an over -- I don't
8 know what you call it -- heat exhaustion, and I
9 happened to have a bottle of water that was able to
10 help. So we could really use a water fountain in the
11 area. A squeegee for when it rains, and wind guards
12 around the court, because when it's too windy, the
13 ball flies all over the place.

14 MR. FLORIO: That's three minutes, Ms.
15 Brathwaite.

16 MS. BRATHWAITE: I'd appreciate that,
17 and thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Commissioner
19 Tanelli is our pickleball expert, and he just
20 challenged you to a match. He said if you beat him,
21 he will pay for everything out of his pocket.

22 MS. BRATHWAITE: Did you hear that?
23 When are you coming?

24 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: Do I get to pick
25 my teammate?

1 MS. BRATHWAIT: Yes. Thank you.

2 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

3 Alan Lo.

4 MR. LO: Good evening, Commissioners.

5 Alan Lo, L-O, A-L-A-N is the first name. I'm an
6 Englewood resident for 14 years, and like a lot of
7 people have complained about Bergen County taxes, you
8 know, what do we get, we pay so much taxes, and then
9 recently things changed and it's because of
10 pickleball. Because I start playing in Rochelle
11 Park, these beautiful new courts, and I met this
12 group of wonderful people, and all of a sudden my
13 whole outlook changes. Damn, I'd like to pay more
14 taxes.

15 [LAUGHTER]

16 MR. LO: I'm trying to get ahead of
17 time, maybe a couple of quarters to make sure
18 everything gets done, and it's a wonderful place.

19 I also belong to this group called
20 Hobbyist based in Ridgewood. We have 400 members.
21 We started a pickleball group. We play every week.
22 It's a happy place. It's my happy place. I go
23 there, everybody is smiling, it's wonderful. I
24 invite the Commissioners to come on down and play
25 with us. I mean, this is like the best use of my

1 money for the last 20 years, so I just want to say
2 thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Thank you.

4 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

5 I move we close the hearing to the
6 public.

7 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Second.

8 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: All in favor?

9 (All present Commissioners respond in
10 the affirmative.)

11 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Opposed?

12 (No response.)

13 Review of Resolutions

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

16 CLERK RODRIGUEZ: You have Resolutions
17 #667-24 through #715-24.

18 Resolutions of Unanimous Consent

19 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Do I have a motion
20 to accept the resolutions as a Consent Agenda?

21 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: So moved.

22 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: Second.

23 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: All in favor?

24 (All present Commissioners respond in
25 the affirmative.)

1 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Roll call, please.

2 (At this point in the proceeding roll
3 call is taken and the Consent Agenda is passed by a
4 vote of six in favor, with Commissioner Marte
5 absent.)

6 CLERK RODRIGUEZ: With six yeses, the
7 Consent Agenda is approved.

8 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Are there any
9 Resolutions of Nonconsent, tabled or pulled?

10 CLERK RODRIGUEZ: Resolution #684-24
11 was pulled.

12 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

13 Ordinances

14 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Before we go into
15 our Second Reading and public hearing, will the Clerk
16 please state for the record the Proof of Publication
17 stipulation.

18 CLERK RODRIGUEZ: The Proof of
19 Publication of the Ordinance Notice of Public Hearing
20 for Ordinance 24-22 was published in accordance with
21 the law and is on file in my office.

22 A copy of the Notice of Hearing and
23 Ordinance 24-22 was duly posted, pursuant to N.J.S.A.
24 40A:2-17.

25 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: We will now go on to

1 our ordinance for Second Reading and Adoption.

2 Will the Clerk read Ordinance 24-22 by
3 title only.

4 CLERK RODRIGUEZ: 24-22 is an:

5 "AMENDED ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND
6 ADOPTING AN ASSESSMENT ON CERTAIN SERVICES FURNISHED
7 BY HOSPITALS LOCATED WITHIN THE COUNTY'S BORDERS FOR
8 THE PURPOSE OF INCREASING FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE
9 PROVISION OF NECESSARY SERVICES BY SUCH HOSPITALS TO
10 LOW-INCOME CITIZENS AND PROVIDE NEW FISCAL RESOURCES
11 TO THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, PURSUANT TO P.L. 2018, c.
12 136, AS AMENDED BY P.L. 2022, c. 61 AND N.J.A.C.
13 10:52B-2.2."

14 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

15 May I have a motion to open the hearing
16 on Ordinance 24-22 to the public?

17 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: So moved.

18 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Second.

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: The public hearing
25 is open, with a five-minute time limit in effect, to

1 speak about Ordinance 24-22 only at this time.

2 The Board Attorney will keep the time.

3 Mr. Meehan.

4 MR. MEEHAN: Hi. I was just looking it
5 over, and once again some of this stuff is vague, and
6 I'm sure that you did your due diligence as Bergen
7 County Commissioners, but I wanted some clarification
8 on when you say "low income," I am assuming that you
9 use some type of household income median where people
10 would be -- I'm just going to go through my questions
11 and I'm going to say it really slow, since I got five
12 minutes, to make sure that you understand what that
13 question is.

14 What services are you speaking of that
15 are necessary? So the word "necessary" is also very
16 generic. It could include emergency services, it
17 could mean, you know, a lot of different things, I'm
18 not a health care expert. And the amount that it
19 would cost to the taxpayers or to the county. I know
20 that you have \$29 million saved, will it tap into
21 that or I don't know where that funding source will
22 occur. If you're going to increase the amount of
23 services, obviously somebody has to pay for it, and I
24 think that that would be a welcome addition to Bergen
25 County residents and I don't think anyone will argue

1 the point that we do need those services.

2 What areas will be impacted? So when
3 you do it on a county level, once again, with a
4 shared services agreement, then you have 70 towns,
5 and you have poor people, I think, in every town, but
6 a lot of it is congested in places like Garfield,
7 places like Hackensack, that have a lower median
8 income.

9 So I just want to make sure that when
10 you think of shared services, that it's being
11 distributed equally and fairly among the different
12 residents. And this is where the clarification is,
13 needs to be had. And who actually conducted the
14 assessment?

15 So I wanted to find out, it said
16 something about an assessment that was done. So what
17 company actually did that assessment that came up
18 with this necessary requirement for additional
19 services?

20 And I could be wrong on all of my
21 questions and I could be, and once again, I don't
22 have all of the experience as all of you do, some of
23 you have been Commissioners for I think over 12 years
24 or more, so it would be nice to learn more about
25 county level government and learn from the people

1 that have been there. So if you can share with me, I
2 would certainly appreciate it.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: The reason that we
5 read it by title only, as you know, that's why, so
6 the actual ordinance will have all the information
7 and this is relating to the County Option Program,
8 which Mr. Duch will speak about in more detail.

9 MR. MEEHAN: I appreciate that. Thank
10 you.

11 COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DUCH: Thank you,
12 Chairwoman.

13 So let's start first with the low
14 income question. So in terms of the low income
15 question, this is a program that really deals with
16 people who are Medicaid eligible. So people who are
17 Medicaid eligible have already been deemed low
18 income, otherwise they would not be able to qualify
19 for Medicaid.

20 MR. MEEHAN: Good.

21 COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DUCH: What
22 services are necessary?

23 This is for hospital-based services.
24 It is not for going to a clinic, it is hospital based
25 services. So all of the hospitals in the county are

1 eligible to participate in the County Option Program.

2 There is no cost to the taxpayers.

3 This was introduced in the State of New Jersey.

4 There were a number of counties. I don't remember
5 the exact number, there were 4 or 5 counties that
6 were model counties. After they did the initial
7 plan, it worked, so Bergen County, we sought out the
8 expertise that we needed so that we could also
9 participate in the program. We engaged a law firm
10 named Eyman Associates, which is headquartered in
11 Washington, D.C. They are the preeminent authority
12 on this program, the County Option Program, and they
13 have clients across the United States of America.

14 In terms of an increase in services, it
15 is up to the hospitals whether they will increase the
16 services. The way this works is, there is additional
17 funding that is made available to those hospitals
18 that chose to serve the Medicaid community on a very
19 wide basis.

20 In the County of Bergen, Bergen New
21 Bridge Medical Center serves the poorest of the poor.
22 We serve everyone. We are a public hospital. We are
23 the hospital of last resort. We are the hospital
24 that's necessary for people to be able to get
25 treatment. So the Medicaid reimbursement to the

1 Bergen New Bridge Medical Center is large. It is
2 also large to Hackensack University Medical Center
3 because they have a tremendous outreach, a tremendous
4 footprint in the county.

5 But every hospital in the county has
6 the ability to participate. The more Medicaid
7 patients they accept, the more serious their
8 illnesses are, the more reimbursement they are
9 entitled to.

10 The county runs the program. The
11 county does the billing with the assistance of Eyman
12 Associates. Billing is quarterly. The money is paid
13 to the State of New Jersey, then it goes to CMS, to
14 the federal government, and there's a reimbursement
15 that is paid back to us, which is greater than the
16 amount of money that is actually levied. So it is a
17 tremendous benefit to the county.

18 How it's distributed, there's a very
19 comprehensive formula. So if you're a hospital that
20 just takes people at the door and you do not treat
21 harsh cases or cases that require extended treatment,
22 you're going to get less of a reimbursement. If
23 you're a hospital that takes everybody and you treat
24 everybody for everything, inpatient, outpatient,
25 surgical needs, etc., you're going to get more.

1 The assessment was conducted overall by
2 CMS, which monitors Medicaid nationwide. It has to
3 receive their blessing. We have to annually provide
4 statistics, so we submit questionnaires, very, very
5 extensive questionnaires to all of the hospitals.

6 All of the questionnaires are answered.
7 All that information comes back to us and it is
8 submitted to CMS, and they have to vet our formula to
9 make sure we are treating everyone fairly.

10 So it's a very comprehensive program.
11 There is a net benefit to the County of Bergen, not a
12 net cost. And that net benefit has been used in part
13 in our budget.

14 MR. MEEHAN: Okay. Thank you so much
15 for the detailed answer. Once again, very
16 responsive. I really appreciate talking with you.

17 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: I don't know
18 how you got shared services into that, but we'll talk
19 about that at another time.

20 COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR DUCH: It's not a
21 shared service, it's totally Medicaid based, it's
22 need based, and it helps the people in the county who
23 really need it.

24 We're hoping that it encourages those
25 hospitals who -- there are some hospitals that

1 discourage Medicaid patients, they like a lot more
2 private patients, a lot more insured patients. So
3 we're hoping that by them participating in this
4 program and getting the reimbursement, that there
5 will be even more opportunity for Medicaid eligible
6 patients to be served by all of the hospitals in the
7 county.

8 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: And to clarify
9 one other point is that those low income metrics are
10 set by the federal government for Medicaid.

11 MR. MEEHAN: Yes, he said that.

12 Thank you for the clarification,
13 Commissioners.

14 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: May I have a motion
15 to close the public hearing -- oh, I'm so sorry.

16 MR. BOUVERON: I have one, it's not a
17 question, it's just a recalling facts following the
18 statement.

19 MR. FLORIO: You can only speak on the
20 ordinance, no other subject matter.

21 MR. BOUVERON: Not the subject that was
22 discussed by the public?

23 MR. FLORIO: No, only the ordinance
24 that is before the Commissioners.

25 MR. BOUVERON: I thought I can speak

1 about something he said before. My apologies.

2 MR. FLORIO: No, only the ordinance.

3 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: May I have a motion
4 to close the public hearing on Ordinance 24-22?

5 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: So moved.

6 COMMISSIONER VOSS: Second.

7 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: All in favor?

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

10 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Opposed?

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Is there any board
13 discussion on Ordinance 24-22?

14 (No response.)

15 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: May I have a motion
16 to adopt Ordinance 24-22 as was read by the Clerk?

17 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: So moved.

18 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Second.

19 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: All in favor?

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

22 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Roll call, please.

23 (At this point in the proceeding roll
24 call is taken and the Second Reading and Adoption of
25 Ordinance 24-22 is passed by a vote of six in favor,

1 with Commissioner Marte absent.)

2 CLERK RODRIGUEZ: With six yeases,
3 Ordinance 24-22 is adopted and passes Second Reading.

4 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

5 Committee Reports from Commissioners

6 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: It is time now for
7 our Commissioner committee reports. Please keep them
8 brief.

9 We'll start on this side with Dr. Voss.

10 COMMISSIONER VOSS: Thank you, Madam
11 Chairwoman.

12 Yesterday, we went to view a school
13 called New Concepts for Living. It's on Route 17,
14 and it used to be the former Barnes & Noble, and what
15 they have done to this place is unbelievable.

16 I've been an educator all my life, and
17 I used to worry what happened to people with
18 disabilities once they age out of the system. This
19 is for adults. It takes care of the people who are
20 intellectually or developmentally disabled. It's a
21 wonderful program. I am absolutely in awe, and I
22 recommend to all of you, it's a nonprofit, that if
23 you know people and their families who are seriously
24 disabled, this is the place to be aware of that they
25 give 24/7 help and it is just amazing, because they

1 will have probably 125 students this year and they
2 will probably go up to 300 students, but they are a
3 franchise and so this is wonderful for people with
4 disabilities. They go from people who are severely,
5 severely disabled, to people who are moderately
6 disabled, but it's a place to go and it gives hope to
7 families, and I just was overawed by this.

8 So if you get a chance, read up on New
9 Concepts for Living for adults. It's really amazing.

10 I was a history teacher for all my
11 life, so I was very happy that today was Juneteenth.
12 As I was driving here, many, many businesses were
13 closed, the banks were closed, and we need to know
14 our history. Juneteenth, I think almost everybody
15 knows now, was when after the Emancipation
16 Proclamation had been passed in 1863, there were
17 still people living in Texas, former slaves, who
18 didn't know they were free.

19 We have got to study our history, the
20 good, the bad, and the ugly. We have to know it all.
21 We can't washout history. We can't make believe
22 things didn't happen, because they did happen.

23 So today I went to two Juneteenth
24 programs, and of course over the weekend there will
25 be many, many, to celebrate the diversity of Bergen

1 County, to celebrate our history. I don't think
2 students today are learning as much as they should be
3 learning about the history of this wonderful country,
4 because as I have said many times, and I won't dote
5 on this, if you don't study history, you will be
6 condemned to relive it.

7 And I see certain things that are
8 happening today in our world that kind of prove my
9 point.

10 Thank you.

11 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you,
12 Commissioner Voss.

13 Commissioner Amoroso.

14 VICE CHAIRWOMAN AMOROSO: We love our
15 Commissioner teacher Joan.

16 There have been a number of Juneteenth
17 celebrations. We just went to the county one. Over
18 the weekend, we went to Overpeck, where NAACP hosted
19 a Juneteenth celebration with the county.

20 I was very happy to see that Bergen
21 Community College is getting into the act, and they
22 had a flag raising in the last week at their
23 flagpole, which is located very close to Paramus
24 Road.

25 They also, I'm glad to see it again,

1 they did a celebration for LGBTQ. So they did
2 another flag raising.

3 It really brings the college community
4 together.

5 Today also we went to Gethsemane
6 Cemetery in Little Ferry, a cemetery largely Black
7 that was founded by three white trustees in 1860 to
8 make sure that Black people were not buried in white
9 cemeteries. And I was there with Dr. Arnold Brown,
10 who was a civil rights icon and historian in Bergen
11 County. He's just got so much information on the
12 people who were buried there, including seven Civil
13 War veterans.

14 Also I attended a press conference with
15 Congressman Gottheimer which aims to address the real
16 problem of Black maternal healthcare across the
17 country and in New Jersey. This has been a topic
18 that our First Lady Tammy Murphy has gotten involved
19 in. So there's a group of bills that aims to in a
20 very comprehensive way address the risks for pregnant
21 Black moms and their babies. It's called the
22 Momnibus bill, a relief package of 13 bills
23 introduced by Congresswoman Underwood of Illinois
24 focused on strengthening the maternal health system.
25 I was very glad to see, of course, Josh is intimately

1 interested in that, which is wonderful.

2 I also attended at Bergen Community
3 College Women's Veterans Day. Ramapo College
4 President and Army Brigadier General Cindy Jeff
5 talked about her 39 years of service. And I have to
6 say, I have a little bit of a personal attachment.
7 My mother, also Mary Amoroso, served with the Coast
8 Guard during World War II as a member of the Women's
9 Reserve of the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve, officially
10 nicknamed the SPARS, and I have a recruitment poster
11 in my office featuring her face.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you,
14 Commissioner Amoroso.

15 Commissioner Tanelli.

16 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: Thank you,
17 Chairwoman. I'm going to be really brief.

18 It's that time again, I advise all of
19 you to take a quick look at our county website for
20 all our concert series and free movies in the parks.
21 They should be rolling out in the next few weeks.

22 And also everyone keep in mind that
23 school is now almost done, there's going to be kids
24 running around, please slow down a little bit, drive
25 a little more careful, be a little more alert.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you,
3 Commissioner.

4 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: That's all.

5 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Commissioner
6 Sullivan.

7 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: I have a
8 picture of Mary Amoroso in my office, just like she
9 does of her mother, just so you know.

10 Tonight we passed two resolutions that
11 enters the county into shared services agreements
12 with the boroughs of Wood-Ridge and Hasbrouck Heights
13 to have their 9-1-1 calls now directed to the Public
14 Safety Operations Center in Mahwah.

15 We on this Board believe in the
16 consolidation of services to provide adequate
17 services for our residents at a reduced cost. We are
18 very proud of our shared services programs. We are
19 glad to say that we have at least one agreement with
20 every municipality in Bergen County, and I'm glad to
21 see that you're starting to come on board and realize
22 how important this is.

23 MR. MEEHAN: Not entirely, but I'm
24 getting there.

25 COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: All right.

1 Yesterday the New Jersey Hall of Fame
2 and Entertainment Learning Center opened its doors at
3 the American Dream in East Rutherford. Commissioner
4 Zur and myself attended. The Hall does a really
5 great job of showcasing the achievements of all
6 individuals from New Jersey, and we just look forward
7 to the endless visitors that it's going to bring to
8 Bergen County and the American Dream. It's all
9 interactive. It's really something to see. It's a
10 great thing to go check out.

11 I do want to say that a good friend of
12 mine, the mayor of Park Ridge, his mother passed
13 away, so he lost his mother and father in the last
14 couple of months, both great public servants. I want
15 to give my best to Keith Misciagna on the passing of
16 his mom Winne, who was just a wonderful, wonderful
17 woman.

18 So Sunday was Father's Day, and being a
19 father, I want to thank all the dads on this Board
20 and in our community for all you do to support your
21 families. We had a wonderful day of course.

22 I also want to congratulate my daughter
23 Jadyn for graduating college, I know we did that, but
24 we had a party on Saturday, and the next day was
25 Father's Day. It was just a wonderful, wonderful

1 weekend. I'm very proud of all of our children, and
2 Commissioner Zur's daughter graduated as well, and
3 this is why we do what we do, to make our children
4 better and maybe we leave this place better than we
5 found it.

6 So that's my report. Thank you.

7 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you,
8 Commissioner Sullivan.

9 Commissioner Zur.

10 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: June is Pride,
11 and for me there has been a lot to be proud of
12 because we have celebrated it in Hackensack, Oradell,
13 Glen Rock, Maywood, Ridgewood, Fair Lawn, Tenafly,
14 Westwood, CarePlus, the county, the community
15 college, and this Sunday I hope you will all join us
16 for Pride at the Zoo, where Van Saun Park will be
17 decked out with family fun and so many tables for
18 services and really showcasing how we embrace all our
19 residents for their authentic self. I hope you will
20 join us on Sunday.

21 I also participated in the Project
22 Search graduation. Project Search is a program, it's
23 now our eighth class graduating, and it's for young
24 adults with unique abilities, which it gives them
25 immersive internship opportunities through job

1 experiences. And for that population, there's
2 usually a very low employment rate in the State of
3 New Jersey, only about 37 percent. Our graduates are
4 employed on average about 80 percent. And it really
5 gives them the soft skills that enable them to be
6 successful in the workforce and gives them that
7 opportunity to gain meaningful employment and live
8 independently ultimately.

9 I am so grateful to Friendship House
10 and to the Special Services School District, as well
11 as Holy Name Hospital, New Bridge Medical Center, and
12 the county, all who were hosts and whose department,
13 division heads are wonderful mentors to these young
14 people. It was such a meaningful day, as it always
15 is, and we look forward to all they are going to
16 contribute.

17 Also on the LGBTQ Pride front, I just
18 want to highlight that this past week we received a
19 \$300,000 grant at New Bridge Medical Center for their
20 LGBTQ Health and Wellness Center from Bristol Myers
21 Squibb Foundation to provide resources to expand
22 wraparound services and patient navigation. It's a
23 huge grant for the hospital and it's a huge win for
24 our residents, and we are so grateful for that
25 philanthropy.

1 I want to thank Dean Kazinci who
2 retired last night after over 40 years of service to
3 the Township of Teaneck. He was a police officer for
4 27 of those years, and then worked in the township
5 leading the way through COVID and the town that was
6 at Ground Zero, along with the mayor and our County
7 Executive really being on the frontlines, to be a
8 steady hand during a tumultuous time. He will be
9 profoundly missed and we are so grateful for his
10 lifetime of service and dedication to the residents
11 of Teaneck.

12 Finally, speaking of dedication, I want
13 to thank all of our teachers. As school is winding
14 down, as we're all experiencing these wonderful
15 graduations for our kids, I just want to give a huge
16 shout-out to the amazing teachers and
17 paraprofessionals and staff members who have really
18 upped the bar as far as growth and learning in our
19 school districts. It is one of the things that makes
20 Bergen County such a great place to live, work and
21 raise our families. So a huge shout-out to all our
22 educators and may we all have a safe summer.

23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you,
25 Commissioner Zur.

1 I want to first thank the Latino
2 Advisory Committee. We had a great celebration last
3 week for Caribbean Heritage Day. We had the
4 opportunity to honor many of our Caribbean residents
5 throughout the county. We had police officers, we
6 had teachers, we had lawyers, we had entrepreneurs.
7 It was such a great way to celebrate Caribbean
8 heritage with music and dancing.

9 So I want to thank them. They did the
10 an incredible job.

11 I also had the opportunity on D Day,
12 which was June 6th, to go to the Fort Lee VFW, which
13 is the most active VFW in the county. I was joined
14 by my colleagues and by many of the veterans that
15 were there. Josh Gottheimer, the Congressman, had a
16 press conference there for D Day, because he was
17 introducing a jobs plan for America's veterans. And
18 it's a plan with the Department of Veterans Affairs
19 to recognize the skills our veterans gain in the
20 service by a badging program. He is also driving
21 bills to support the transition assistance program to
22 help our veterans break into the manufacturing
23 sector. That way it makes it easier and paves the
24 way for veterans when they come back, and that way
25 they're able to support their families and live

1 independently, because sometimes there are a lot of
2 challenges involved when they come back from war for
3 many reasons.

4 So that was it. It was a great way to
5 celebrate D Day and to be with our veterans and to
6 thank them for everything.

7 I also want to thank the county, the
8 County Executive and my colleagues, that we got
9 together and celebrated Flag Day to commemorate the
10 adoption of the American flag. We honored the
11 significant history of the national flag, recognizing
12 its symbolism and the values it represents, for all
13 the sacrifices that were made for that flag and our
14 freedom.

15 Thank you so much, and I think it is
16 time to adjourn.

17 Adjournment

18 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: There being nothing
19 further to come before this meeting, I move to
20 adjourn.

21 COMMISSIONER VOSS: Second.

22 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: All in favor?

23 (All present Commissioners respond in
24 the affirmative.)

25 CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Opposed?

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(No response.)

CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: We're adjourned at
8:22 p.m.

(Whereupon, the Public Meeting is
adjourned at 8:22 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
License #XIO1042, and Notary Public
of New Jersey

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7/11/2024