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COUNTY OF BERGEN
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HACKENSACK, NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2023
COMMENCING AT 7:02 P.M.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

- THOMAS J. SULLIVAN, CHAIRMAN
- GERMAINE M. ORTIZ, VICE CHAIRWOMAN
- MARY J. AMOROSO
- RAFAEL MARTE
- STEVEN A. TANELLI
- TRACY SILNA ZUR

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

- DR. JOAN M. VOSS, CHAIRWOMAN PRO TEMPORE

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
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

EDWARD J. FLORIO, ESQUIRE
COUNSEL TO THE BOARD

LUCINE BEYLERIAN
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & POLICY

ANDY POLICASTRO
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
BERGEN COUNTY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

JENNIFER CLEMEN
TREASURER
BERGEN COUNTY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

JOHN E. TEN HOEVE, JR., ESQUIRE
COUNTY ADJUSTER
BERGEN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF LAW

KIM O. FURBACHER, C.C.R., R.D.R.
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HEARING OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC

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1 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Good evening. I'd
2 like to call the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

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

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

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

20 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you.

21 Roll Call

22 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Will the Clerk
23 please call the roll.

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

1 Tanelli, Silna Zur, Vice Chairwoman Ortiz, and
2 Chairman Sullivan present, with Commissioner Voss
3 absent.)

4 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Evidence of a
5 quorum is present.

6 Pledge of Allegiance

7 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Would you please
8 stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

9 County Executive, would you please lead
10 us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

11 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: Thank you,
12 Chairman.

13 Ladies and gentlemen, please honor
14 America by the flag salute.

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

18 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: So in case you
19 didn't notice, we have a special member on the dais
20 today, our County Executive. I would say he's
21 pulling double duty, but it's like 12th duty that he
22 does. He's going to stand in for Mr. Duch, who is at
23 the New Jersey Conference and Convention.

24 Presentation in honor of National Teacher

25 Appreciation Week

1 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Tonight in honor of
2 National Teacher Appreciation Week, we have guests
3 from the Bergen County Education Association, First
4 Vice President, Andy Policastro, and Treasurer,
5 Jennifer Clemen. We would like to thank you both for
6 joining us this evening to recognize all teachers for
7 what they do every day for our next generation.
8 Teachers educate, motivate, inspire, and guide their
9 students and very often continue to influence us all
10 long after our school days are over.

11 We know that we have the best of the
12 best in Bergen County with nearly 30 of our schools
13 named Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence by the United
14 States Department of Education.

15 The quality of our schools is an
16 absolute testament to our educators. Though we can
17 never thank you enough, please accept this
18 proclamation on behalf of the Board of Commissioners
19 and especially Dr. Joan Voss, who could not be here
20 tonight but who I know wanted to be here to commend
21 both of you in person.

22 Would my colleagues please join me in
23 the well for the presentation of the commendation.

24 So we have a resolution from the Bergen
25 County Board of Commissioners. I understand our

1 County Executive also has one.

2 Like I said, there's a lot of whereas'
3 in there, but I'll just read the end.

4 Now, therefore, be it resolved that the
5 Bergen County Board of Commissioners hereby
6 recognizes May 8th through May 12th as National
7 Teacher Appreciation Week in the County of Bergen.

8 And be it further resolved that the
9 Bergen County Board of Commissioners recognizes and
10 commends all of Bergen County's teachers and
11 educators with appreciation for their devoted
12 contributions to the lives of our students, and
13 encourages all residents of Bergen County to
14 personally express their appreciation.

15 When I go home -- my wife's a
16 teacher -- I'm going to tell her I gave out this
17 proclamation.

18 MS. CLEMEN: Thank you so much.

19 MR. POLICASTRO: Thank you.

20 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: Thank you,
21 Chairman.

22 On behalf of the people of Bergen
23 County, it's my honor to be able to recognize
24 National Teacher Appreciation Week, and it's very
25 nice to see you and have you here.

1 I'm not going to read the entire
2 proclamation, but it's in recognition of National
3 Teacher Appreciation Week.

4 Whereas, teachers continue to impact us
5 long after we leave the classroom, because their work
6 gives us knowledge and confidence to find our own
7 place in the world.

8 And, whereas, on behalf of the nearly
9 one million residents of Bergen County, I am proud to
10 join in celebrating National Teacher Appreciation
11 Week and honor the service and immeasurable
12 contributions of the dedicated teachers throughout
13 our county.

14 Now, therefore, be it resolved that I,
15 James J. Tedesco III, Executive of the County of
16 Bergen of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim
17 May 8th-12th, 2023 as Teacher Appreciation Week.

18 Congratulations.

19 [APPLAUSE]

20 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: There's also
21 a commendation there for you to take with you.

22 Andy, thank you.

23 MR. POLICASTRO: Thank you so much.

24 COUNTY EXECUTIVE TEDESCO: Jennifer,
25 thank you.

1 MS. CLEMEN: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: You guys want to
3 say something. He'll bring you the mic.

4 MR. POLICASTRO: On behalf of Sue
5 McBride, President of the BCA; Easter Fletcher, Vice
6 President of the BCA; and of course Jenn Clemen, our
7 Treasurer, we thank so much the County Commissioners
8 and the County Executive for these awards. We do
9 appreciate everything you've done for us in the past
10 few years and especially during COVID. Thank you
11 again. And thank you, everybody, for giving us the
12 proclamation on behalf of all the approximately
13 20,000 members of the Bergen County Education
14 Association. Thank you again.

15 (Whereupon, the presentation is made.)

16 [APPLAUSE]

17 MS. CLEMEN: Thank you.

18 MR. POLICASTRO: Thank you.

19 [APPLAUSE]

20 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Before you guys
21 leave, I just want to read something that I was given
22 from some educators, and it was on Facebook. It
23 says, please read in its entirety regarding teachers
24 heavy salaries and driving up taxes.

25 "They only work 9 or 10 months a year.

1 It's time we put things in perspective and pay them
2 for what they do, babysit."

3 It gets better, that's why I said let
4 me read it until the end. Don't get mad yet.

5 "We can get that from minimum wage,
6 that's right, let's give them \$3 an hour and only the
7 hours they worked, not any of that daily planning or
8 any time they spend before or after school. That
9 would be like \$19.50 a day, 7:45 to 3:00 p.m., with
10 45 minutes off for lunch. That equals six and a half
11 hours. Each parent should pay \$19.50 a day for the
12 teachers who babysit their children. How many
13 students do they teach in a day? Maybe 30. So
14 that's \$19.50 times 30 equals \$585 per day.

15 "However, remember they only work
16 180 days a year. I'm not going to pay them for any
17 vacations. Let's say that's 585 times 180, that's
18 \$105,300 per year. But hold on, my calculator needs
19 new batteries. What about those special education
20 teachers and the ones with master's degrees? Well,
21 we could pay them minimum wage," at the time this was
22 written, it was \$7.75 -- how far we've come -- "and
23 just to be fair, round it off to eight bucks an hour.
24 That would be eight bucks times six and a half hours
25 times 30 children times 180 days equals \$280,800 per

1 year.

2 "Now, wait a minute, there's something
3 wrong here also. The average teacher's salary
4 nationwide is \$50,000. \$50,000 over 180 days equals
5 \$277 a day. 30 students equals \$925 at six and a
6 half hours or just \$1.42 an hour per student. A very
7 inexpensive babysitter."

8 Well, my wife didn't tell me I had to
9 read that, but we really appreciate everything you do
10 for education. We understand that education costs
11 money, but yet we are always No. 1 and 2 in the
12 nation here in New Jersey. And I know from the
13 County Administrator on down to everybody on this
14 board, we support you, we appreciate you, and we
15 thank you for everything you do.

16 Thank you very much.

17 MS. CLEMEN: We appreciate you.

18 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Would any of my
19 colleagues like to add anything?

20 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: If I may,
21 Chairman?

22 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Yes, you may.

23 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: And we also
24 know that you're so much more than babysitters, you
25 are planting the seeds of lifelong learning, you're

1 planting the seeds for the future. So I think all of
2 us who had kids at home on Zoom during the pandemic
3 had only an inkling of the work that you do every
4 single day, and this is so overdue. You are really
5 our best asset. You are what makes Bergen County
6 such a wonderful place for all of us to live and
7 raise our children, so thank you so much.

8 VICE CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Anybody else?

10 Okay. Thank you very much.

11 MS. CLEMEN: Thank you.

12 MR. POLICASTRO: Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: And I didn't mean
14 to insinuate you were just babysitters. Tracy always
15 points that out to me and I'm glad that she's here.
16 There's no doubt what you do is very, very important.

17 Resolutions of Nonconsent

18 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: So it is my
19 understanding that Resolution #506-23 requires a
20 public hearing.

21 I'd like to make a motion to place
22 Resolution #506-23 on Nonconsent.

23 May I have a second?

24 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Second.

25 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

1 (All present Commissioners respond in
2 the affirmative.)

3 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Opposed?

4 (No response.)

5 MS. BEYLERIAN: Our Nonconsent
6 Resolution is #506-23, a **Resolution Adopting**
7 **Pre-Qualification Regulations for Bidders regarding**
8 **the Bergen County Justice Center - Exterior**
9 **Historical Restoration.**

10 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you.

11 Before we open the hearing on the
12 resolution, I want to ask our County Counsel John
13 Ten Hoeve to come up to explain the resolution.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. TEN HOEVE: Thank you.

16 Good evening, Commissioners and County
17 Executive.

18 Just to briefly explain what's going
19 on. As you know, the county is going to embark on an
20 historical restoration project at the Bergen County
21 Courthouse.

22 The county is permitted to adopt
23 prequalification regulations, which it's doing just
24 for this project alone. The regulations have been
25 developed by the project manager, by the architect,

1 and other professionals, and they've come up with a
2 series of regulations that will apply only to the
3 historical construction. They're very detailed. It
4 includes requests for experience that contractors
5 have to have, details with regard to the manner in
6 which the construction can take place. It all has to
7 be subject to regulations adopted by the State
8 Historical Commission.

9 The regulations in the State of New
10 Jersey and a decision by the Director of the Local
11 Government Services Board indicates that a public
12 hearing has to be held whenever any entity,
13 municipality or county, decides that it's going to
14 adopt prequalification regulations.

15 There has been a notice published in
16 the Star Ledger and in The Bergen Record with regard
17 to this. It will be open to the public. I can
18 answer questions that you may have and perhaps that
19 the public may have.

20 Once the hearing is closed, a
21 transcript has to be provided to the Director of
22 Local Government Services, and hopefully the
23 regulations will be approved by them.

24 That's a brief summary.

25 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you

1 very much.

2 May I have a motion to open the hearing
3 on Resolution #506-23 to the public?

4 VICE CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: So moved.

5 COMMISSIONER AMOROSO: Second.

6 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

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

9 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Opposed?

10 (No response.)

11 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: The public hearing
12 is open, with a three-minute time limit in effect, to
13 speak about Resolution #506-23 only at this time.

14 The Board Attorney will keep the time.

15 Is there anyone that wishes to be heard
16 on this resolution?

17 (No response.)

18 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Okay. Seeing none,
19 may I have a motion to close the public hearing on
20 Resolution #506-23?

21 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: So moved.

22 COMMISSIONER MARTE: Second.

23 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

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

1 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Opposed?

2 (No response.)

3 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Any board
4 discussion on this resolution?

5 COMMISSIONER AMOROSO: Yes, Chairman.

6 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Sure.

7 COMMISSIONER AMOROSO: Our courthouse
8 is just a historical marvel, and I'm very glad that
9 we can move forward these regulations to protect and
10 restore it in a historically sensitive manner.

11 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you.

12 May I have a motion to accept
13 Resolution #506-23?

14 COMMISSIONER AMOROSO: I move it.

15 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: May I have a
16 second?

17 VICE CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Second.

18 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Roll call, please.

19 (At this point in the proceeding roll
20 call is taken and Resolution #506-23 is passed by a
21 vote of six in favor, with Commissioner Voss absent.)

22 MS. BEYLERIAN: With six eyes,
23 Resolution #506-23 passes Nonconsent and is adopted.

24 MR. TEN HOEVE: Thank you for your
25 consideration.

1 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you, counsel.

2 Hearing of the General Public

3 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: I now move that we
4 open the Commissioners meeting to the general public.

5 Can I have a second?

6 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: Second.

7 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

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

10 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Opposed?

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: It is unanimously
13 carried.

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

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

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

22 MR. FLORIO: Thank you, Chairman.

23 When you are recognized to speak by the
24 Chair, please come to the podium, state your name,
25 spell your last name, you have three minutes to

1 speak, and I'll remind you when your time is over.

2 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you,
3 counselor.

4 Mr. Meehan.

5 MR. MEEHAN: Mr. Meehan. Hackensack,
6 New Jersey.

7 So this evening I actually don't have
8 much, any questions for you this time, but because my
9 colleague and I spoke, I wanted to at least present a
10 proposal that's pretty interesting to the board.

11 So the outline of the proposed pro se
12 resource center that was discussed last time by my
13 colleague and online paralegal certification here
14 after PL certification.

15 "As this Board is aware, my colleague
16 has made it his mission to try to improve the
17 position which ordinary, especially nonaffluent
18 residents, have in their interactions with the court
19 system.

20 "It should first be clarified that what
21 he is proposing is vastly distinguishable from "Legal
22 Aid." Legal Aid is reserved for destitute people who
23 officially qualify as such. With Legal Aid, the
24 clients are represented in court by licensed
25 attorneys and simply provided with this benefit free

1 of charge. However, most middle income people cannot
2 afford the expense of a lawyer, although they will
3 most often not qualify for Legal Aid either.

4 Additionally, some people may prefer to represent
5 themselves, even if cost was not the primary factor.

6 "The U.S. Constitution and the New
7 Jersey Constitution guarantees all citizens this
8 right. However, the legal system tends to frustrate
9 this choice. For example, New Jersey is one of the
10 few states in which official instructions have been
11 directed by the Administrator of the state's courts
12 which require judges to deprioritize people who are
13 appearing pro se (self-represented). Such cases are
14 intentionally moved to the end of the court's daily
15 calendar and often after sitting in court for hours
16 (while newer cases involving paid attorneys are
17 shuffled to the front)" for those of you who are
18 lawyers, "the pro se cases are continued to the next
19 calendar for lack of time to be heard that day. This
20 can happen numerous times in succession with the same
21 case. The pro se parties are treated like 'children
22 of a lesser God,' if any God at all.

23 "The Bergen County Board of
24 Commissioners may have no power to intercede against
25 the directions of the Administrative Offices of the

1 New Jersey Courts. However, what he is proposing
2 should be within its power and authority and he is
3 personally certain that most residents would welcome
4 this.

5 "Would the judges and professional
6 attorneys welcome it?" So that's based on your
7 decision.

8 "There would be some benefits to the
9 judges and the courts. As it now stands, most pro se
10 appearances are done by people with no training and
11 no help."

12 (Following is the rest of the written
13 statement:

14 "This slows the judicial process as
15 [it] wastes valuable time and resources. Having
16 better informed and somewhat trained residents
17 appearing pro se would move the process along
18 considerably faster and more smoothly. On the other
19 hand, more people would be inclined to use the system
20 if they had some level of confidence that they knew
21 how to do so competently. So there may be no net
22 gain of total resources, just a net gain of the
23 number of matters being processed - using the same
24 resources. However, that should be considered a
25 legitimate function of government, to provide the

1 public with such benefits.

2 "Would the licensed attorneys approve?
3 Surely not. It is clearly contrary to their economic
4 interests but again, the legitimate function of
5 government includes helping to balance the needs of
6 the masses with the wants of the powerful factions.
7 In keeping with that goal, I make the following
8 proposal:

9 "A combined county agency, which
10 provides resources for pro ses and offers online
11 training for them to obtain a paralegal certificate.
12 I will cover the resource center elements first:

13 "1. Office space made available (or
14 leased) in the vicinity of the courthouse.

15 "2. Full-time licensed attorney
16 available for consultations. The attorney would not
17 enter appearances on behalf of the litigant (or other
18 legal interactant). Each person could apply for time
19 allocation and meet either in-person or by Zoom
20 meeting, discuss their issues with the attorney(s).
21 These attorneys would function more like teachers
22 than coaches. They would advise the residents as if
23 they were providing a professional "second opinion"
24 and help in all possible ways, within the time
25 available to be shared by everyone in need. It may

1 be possible to get some help from lawyers pro bono
2 (volunteering). The old expression 'if you can't
3 beat um, join um' may apply here, at least enough to
4 provide more professional assistance than the county
5 would be paying for. As I said earlier, while most
6 lawyers would see this process as invasive, there
7 will always be a few who take an opposite view.

8 "3. Full-time paralegal, again, to
9 help the residents organize and file their matters,
10 as needed. Typically, a paralegal does much of the
11 preliminary work for the lawyers anyway. In New
12 Jersey, there is a rule that paralegals cannot work
13 directly for pro se clients without a licensed
14 attorney supervising and reviewing¹. Therefore, one
15 of the other roles of the Center's full-time lawyer
16 pool could be to review work done by certified
17 paralegals directly on behalf of their clients. In
18 that case, there would be no limit to the amount of
19 time the county resident could utility a paralegal
20 because the resident would be paying them directly
21 and the Center's attorney(ies) would simply review
22 the finished materials, as required by New Jersey's
23 rules.

24 "4. Full-time clerical and office
25 manager, so that there would be a team of staff

1 available to provide assistance.

2 "5. Access to automated databases
3 (legal libraries), professional subscriptions,
4 LexisNexis, etc.

5 "6. Printing and photocopying can be
6 done at a nominal cost to the users, similar to a UPS
7 store, etc. A simplified method can be implemented
8 for a flat fee to cover up to a certain amount of
9 printing and replenished as needed.

10 "7. The Center would obtain waivers of
11 liability from the users, as a condition of their
12 use.

13 "8. Internships could be offered to
14 college students, especially law students, so that
15 the Center could have more staffing without
16 additional budgeting.

17 "9. Bergen Community College already
18 offers an online paralegal certificate course and it
19 is affordable. However, graduates lacking experience
20 have a difficult time finding jobs and since it is a
21 requirement that paralegals may not work directly
22 with clients from the public (without attorney
23 supervision) this limits the scope of the new
24 paralegal certificate holders, as well as making
25 their employment by the public much more expensive -

1 as a licensed lawyer must also be employed during
2 this same process. Suppose however that the
3 paralegal certificate holders could volunteer at the
4 Center and in return, they could have access to the
5 Center's clients who might employ them directly,
6 under the supervision of the Center's staff
7 attorneys. Thus, a middle-income resident can
8 receive some valuable legal assistance at an
9 affordable cost, perhaps \$25.00 to \$50.00 per hour
10 for paralegal services, no cost for the supervisory
11 attorney (on a limited basis) and free access to
12 equipment and research databases. They can also be
13 encouraged to join the online paralegal certificate
14 program. As said, the certified paralegals would
15 have a 'launching pad' to commence their careers and
16 the entire community would benefit.

17 "It may also be possible to engage some
18 method to establish a nonprofit (possible
19 'charitable') status whereby the public might donate
20 to the fund, thereby increasing the resources shared
21 by the community without additional appropriated
22 funding.

23 "Please consider.

24 "Thank you.

25 "Isidor Farash."

1 "1This, I submit, should also be seen
2 as a diminishment of the citizen's constitutional
3 rights to due process."

4 End of written statement.)

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

6 MR. MEEHAN: Thank you, one and all.

7 MR. FLORIO: Mr. Meehan, if you leave
8 your statement with the reporter, it will be spread
9 in the record as if read in totality.

10 MR. MEEHAN: Sounds good. My colleague
11 worked very hard on it.

12 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Your colleague
13 worked very hard on it?

14 MR. MEEHAN: Oh, I don't write like
15 that.

16 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: I thought you were
17 going to speak on your behalf. I'm sorry.

18 Isador Farash.

19 MR. FARASH: Thank you, Commissioner
20 Sullivan.

21 Farash, F-A-R-A-S-H. I'm from Emerson.

22 So the printed material is
23 self-explanatory. I think most of the people
24 watching at home got a flavor for what I'm talking
25 about. It's a proposal to establish a pro se

1 resource center which would be equipped with
2 computers, have subscription to databases for legal
3 research, and have a staff, including a full-time
4 attorney, paralegal, clerical, and so forth to assist
5 the general public who needed to do their own legal
6 work.

7 And such a facility could work in
8 conjunction with the county's college program, the
9 online program dealing with online paralegal
10 certification, and I've explained how that works in
11 the body of the letter. I think that most average
12 people would welcome such an advantage, which they're
13 lacking today. I think most people are frightened of
14 the courts. I think that most people know that the
15 courts have a power which is above their rightful
16 allotment, and whether that's a true perception or
17 whether it's just a perception, sometimes perception
18 is more important than reality.

19 I think it's a true perception. I
20 think that there is no oversight of the court system,
21 and so what we have today is a system that is
22 reserved for the very rich. Ordinary people just
23 can't afford to use it. If they run into an
24 emergency situation or it's not any of their
25 choosing, they're faced with having to pay their

1 mortgage or hire a lawyer. So this would provide an
2 additional alternative of having a county funded
3 resource center where people could go and interact
4 with professionals, gain the knowledge base, have
5 access to the resources to pursue their own legal
6 matters.

7 The only last thing I'll say real quick
8 is, while I was writing this, I was thinking about
9 that Shawshank Redemption story and how the character
10 of Tim Robbins spent years writing letters to these
11 Maine state legislature asking them to fund a library
12 for the prison, and eventually they did, after 5 or
13 10 years. And it's nice in the movies that sometimes
14 the good fight wins, doesn't it always happen as
15 readily in real life. But I don't have 5 or
16 10 years. Hopefully, you know, we can make forward
17 motion on some of these proposals in my lifetime.

18 MR. FLORIO: Three minutes, Mr. Farash.

19 MR. FARASH: Thank you very much to
20 everyone.

21 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you very
22 much, Mr. Farash.

23 Anybody else?

24 (No response.)

25 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Seeing no one, I

1 move that we close the meeting to the public.

2 Can I have a second?

3 VICE CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Second.

4 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

5 (All present Commissioners respond in
6 the affirmative.)

7 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Opposed?

8 (No response.)

9 Review of Resolutions

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

12 MS. BEYLERIAN: Resolutions #496-23
13 through #505-23 and #507-23 through #555-23.

14 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you.

15 Resolutions of Unanimous Consent

16 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Can I have a motion
17 to accept the resolutions as a Consent Agenda?

18 COMMISSIONER AMOROSO: So moved.

19 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Second.

20 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

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

23 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Roll call, please.

24 (At this point in the proceeding roll
25 call is taken and the Consent Agenda is passed by a

1 vote of six in favor, with Commissioner Voss absent.)

2 MS. BEYLERIAN: The Consent Agenda is
3 approved.

4 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you.

5 Are there any resolutions of
6 Nonconsent, tabled or pulled?

7 MS. BEYLERIAN: Just the previously
8 mentioned Resolution of Nonconsent, #506-23.

9 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you.

10 Ordinances

11 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: We will now go on
12 to our ordinances for Second Reading and Adoption.

13 Will the Clerk please read Ordinance
14 23-09 by title only.

15 MS. BEYLERIAN: Ordinance 23-09 is an:

16 "ORDINANCE TO DISCONTINUE VAN RIPER
17 AVENUE IN ELMWOOD PARK AS A COUNTY ROAD AND TRANSFER
18 CONTROL AND JURISDICTION TO THE BOROUGH OF ELMWOOD
19 PARK."

20 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you.

21 May have a motion to open the hearing
22 on Ordinance 23-09 to the public?

23 VICE CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: So moved.

24 COMMISSIONER MARTE: Second.

25 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

1 (All present Commissioners respond in
2 the affirmative.)

3 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Opposed?

4 (No response.)

5 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: The public hearing
6 is now open, with a five-minute time limit in effect,
7 to speak about Ordinance 23-09 only at this time.

8 The Board Attorney will keep the time.

9 Is there anyone wishing to speak on
10 Ordinance 23-09?

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Seeing none, may I
13 have a motion to close the public hearing on
14 Ordinance 23-09?

15 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: So moved.

16 COMMISSIONER AMOROSO: Second.

17 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

18 (All present Commissioners respond in
19 the affirmative.)

20 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Opposed?

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Is there any board
23 discussion on Ordinance 23-09?

24 (No response.)

25 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: May I have a motion

1 to adopt Ordinance 23-09 as was read by the Clerk?

2 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: So moved.

3 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Second.

4 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

5 (All present Commissioners respond in
6 the affirmative.)

7 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Roll call, please.

8 (At this point in the proceeding roll
9 call is taken and the Second Reading and Adoption of
10 Ordinance 23-09 is passed by a vote of six in favor,
11 with Commissioner Voss absent.)

12 MS. BEYLERIAN: With six ayes,
13 Ordinance 23-09 passes Second Reading and is adopted.

14 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you.

15 Will the Clerk now read Ordinance 23-10
16 by title only.

17 MS. BEYLERIAN: Ordinance 23-10 is an:

18 "ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE SPEED LIMIT
19 ALONG GRAND AVENUE IN THE BOROUGH OF MONTVALE."

20 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you.

21 May I have a motion to open the hearing
22 on Ordinance 23-10 to the public?

23 VICE CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: So moved.

24 COMMISSIONER MARTE: Second.

25 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

1 (All present Commissioners respond in
2 the affirmative.)

3 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Opposed?

4 (No response.)

5 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: The public hearing
6 is now open, with a five-minute time limit in effect,
7 to speak on Ordinance 23-10 only at this time.

8 The Board Attorney will keep the time.

9 Is there anyone wishing to be heard on
10 Ordinance 23-10 at this time?

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Seeing none, may I
13 have a motion to close the public hearing on
14 Ordinance 23-10?

15 VICE CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: So moved.

16 COMMISSIONER AMOROSO: Second.

17 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

18 (All present Commissioners respond in
19 the affirmative.)

20 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Opposed?

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Is there any board
23 discussion on Ordinance 23-10?

24 (No response.)

25 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: May I have a motion

1 to adopt Ordinance 23-10 as was read by the Clerk?

2 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: So moved.

3 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Second.

4 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

5 (All present Commissioners respond in
6 the affirmative.)

7 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Roll call, please.

8 (At this point in the proceeding roll
9 call is taken and the Second Reading and Adoption of
10 Ordinance 23-10 is passed by a vote of six in favor,
11 with Commissioner Voss absent.)

12 MS. BEYLERIAN: With six ayes,
13 Ordinance 23-10 passes Second Reading and is adopted.

14 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you very
15 much.

16 Committee Reports from Commissioners

17 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: It is now time for
18 Commissioner reports.

19 We have a brief time limit.

20 I'm going to let Commissioner Zur go
21 first, in case she has to run.

22 Commissioner Zur.

23 COMMISSIONER SILNA ZUR: Thank you,
24 Chairman.

25 I want to just touch on two things

1 regarding food insecurity that really are the epitome
2 of collaboration and partnerships and how, if we work
3 together, we can make an impact.

4 This week we had the ribbon cutting at
5 the Fairview food pantry. It was a partnership
6 between the Franciscan Community Development Center,
7 the county, Habitat for Humanity, the archdiocese,
8 R&C Architects, just so many people who came forward
9 to volunteer and help to put pieces back together
10 again of the food pantry that is serving 4,000 people
11 a month. It really was so impactful to see Sister
12 Anne Maria and Sister Gloria. Really the emotion was
13 there, but really how that is going to support the
14 community, and, by the way, the municipality as well.
15 This could not have been done without the mayor and
16 all the employees at borough hall. It really will
17 continue to make a huge impact in fighting food
18 insecurity in that community.

19 And tonight we also had another example
20 of partnership between the Girl Scouts, the YWCA, the
21 regional Status of Women, the Food Security Task
22 Force and the entire county kicking off our menstrual
23 product drive. May is Menstrual Hygiene Awareness
24 Month, and this is a perfect opportunity to
25 underscore that hygiene products are so critically

1 needed at our food pantry. Every dollar spent on
2 that is taking food off of families' tables. It is
3 critical for people to be able to have access to
4 these products to enable them to go to work and to go
5 to school. They're not covered by WIC or SNAP or any
6 other federal subsidy, so it is so critical. They're
7 the most needed product at our food pantries. So
8 please consider contributing to the county's
9 menstrual health hygiene drive that is going on, you
10 can donate the products in our lobby or at various
11 places at the county as noted on our website. We are
12 so grateful for really the teenagers and the young
13 women who are leading this charge and being on the
14 frontlines and making sure that we are as impactful
15 as possible to help those who are struggling in our
16 community and to make a difference in our food
17 pantry.

18 There was also the Israel Flag Raising
19 and Armenian Genocide events, and a Torah dedication,
20 but the bottom line is we are doing so much in this
21 county to help all of our neighbors and being there
22 to make Bergen County strong and a place we want to
23 raise our families and live and work.

24 So thank you so much, Chairman, and I
25 pass the torch.

1 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you.

2 Commissioner Marte.

3 COMMISSIONER MARTE: No comments.

4 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Okay.

5 Vice Chairwoman Ortiz.

6 VICE CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Thank you,

7 Chairman. I'll be brief.

8 So with my Hispanic Advisory Committee,
9 I am so excited what we just did this past weekend.
10 Together with the Hispanic Advisory Committee,
11 pro bono attorneys, of which I had four, they were
12 wonderful, we had volunteers and most importantly we
13 had host Pastor Jessica, who is the pastor for the
14 New Jersey Vineyard Church. So together as a team,
15 we were able to help 34 individuals and they're
16 currently on their path to citizenship. I am so
17 excited that we were able to do this, and it was so
18 successful that we have another date, because we have
19 a lot of them coming back, the news is spreading
20 quickly. I'm just excited that this Advisory
21 Committee not only does cultural events but we're now
22 really getting more into civic engagement and really
23 helping the residents of Bergen County, which I think
24 is just wonderful.

25 I also wanted to let everybody know

1 that we're going to be celebrating Caribbean Heritage
2 Month on June 14th at 5:30 p.m., and I hope everyone
3 can join us.

4 Thank you, Chairman.

5 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you.

6 VICE CHAIRWOMAN ORTIZ: Wait. Sorry.
7 One more thing. I just want to welcome my new aide,
8 Sabrina Rivera, who started with me last week. She's
9 doing a wonderful job and I look forward to working
10 with her going forward. Thank you, Sabrina.

11 [APPLAUSE]

12 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Commissioner
13 Tanelli.

14 COMMISSIONER TANELLI: Thank you,
15 Chairman.

16 I'll be brief.

17 I would also like to introduce Mark
18 Rotundo, who started at my office this week.
19 Welcome, Mark, aboard. Not only is it exciting to
20 finally have somebody in my office, but that means
21 Mark and I are going to start working very diligently
22 with Shaun Hutchinson, where we start the program
23 where we honored our veterans for the last few years.
24 Right after COVID, it kind of went silent for a
25 little while, but we feel it's imperative this Board

1 honor our veterans as much as possible.

2 Also tonight we voted on a resolution
3 to bring the Wibit Splash Zone Water Park setup back
4 in. I encourage everyone to try to get up to see it
5 as often as possible at the Darlington Park swim
6 area. It will open Memorial Day weekend.

7 That concludes my report. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Commissioner
9 Amoroso. Please be brief.

10 COMMISSIONER AMOROSO: Thank you,
11 Chairman. I will try.

12 Shout-out to the Bergen County Senior
13 Services, Lorraine Joewono and Kerri Sherer, for our
14 dementia friendly event at Two Bergen County Plaza on
15 Thursday, April 27th.

16 Bergen County has become the first
17 county to be designated a dementia friendly zone.
18 The fact of the matter, there are a lot of people
19 over the age of 60 in Bergen County, some 200,000 out
20 of our one million, and one in ten persons over the
21 age of 60 is going through some stage of dementia.

22 Being dementia friendly means learning
23 how to talk with folks who have dementia and knowing
24 how to work with families and caregivers to provide
25 the most understanding and support.

1 We also attended Law Day on May 1st.
2 This is our annual tradition in Bergen County where
3 we sit on the courthouse steps with our Superior
4 Court judges and we have the great honor and
5 privilege of watching our residents who have come to
6 us from around the world swear their allegiance and
7 become citizens.

8 Last Saturday we joined the spring
9 installment of Rebuilding Together North Jersey, the
10 nonprofit effort which helps homeowners in need with
11 projects around their homes, like clutter clean-outs,
12 electrical upgrades -- some of Tom's union members
13 helped -- painting. The work in New Milford Saturday
14 was sponsored by Greater Bergen Realtors. Despite
15 the steady rain, there was a real sense of purpose.

16 We also commemorated the Armenian
17 Genocide and were privileged to hear a poem read by
18 our Commissioners' Communications Director, Lucine
19 Beylerian, that had been written by her Armenian
20 great-grandfather.

21 And, finally, we attended a Clothesline
22 Project sponsored by healingSPACE of the Y. There
23 were 2,000 tee shirts waving in the wind on The Green
24 opposite the courthouse to show that those who have
25 suffered sexual assault, that includes one in four

1 women, one in six men, can air their dirty laundry.
2 They can cast off the pain and the shame, when they
3 truly understand they did nothing wrong.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Thank you,
6 Commissioner.

7 Just to point out, we had the
8 proclamation here this evening on teacher week. It
9 is very near and dear to my heart. My wife, of
10 course, is a teacher, as is my oldest daughter,
11 following in her mother's footsteps, because they
12 didn't want to follow mine. I get it, but that's all
13 right. It's so important. It is such a wonderful
14 feeling to know that the two people dearest in my
15 family make a difference in the world.

16 Like I said in the proclamation, it's
17 not just what they do now, later on in life you look
18 back at some of the things that teachers taught you
19 and it stays with you. I remember my sixth grade
20 teacher -- I have a tendency to mumble -- used to
21 say, "Mr. Sullivan, speak distinctly, people want to
22 hear your voice." My mother never said that, but my
23 sixth grade teacher did.

24 It is Stigma-Free Month. My colleagues
25 and I all were around for the Bergen New Bridge

1 Medical Center ten-year anniversary of stigma-free
2 there, as well as today there was a symposium put on
3 by our own board. Both the County Executive and
4 myself spoke of the importance of stigma-free and
5 what it means. We have a saying that you never know
6 what that person next to you is going through. You
7 never know. So be as kind as you possibly can and
8 don't judge anybody. I mean, it is so true that I've
9 told the story about my family, how we had some
10 things that needed to be dealt with and they were
11 dealt with, but if I didn't have the courage because
12 of what I learned as a Commissioner, I don't know if
13 I would have had enough courage to help my children
14 the way that they needed it, and that goes for a lot
15 of families.

16 So I want to thank our stigma-free
17 committee, but I want to thank our services here in
18 Bergen County and our County Executive, who was
19 basically the person who took the torch and ran with
20 it after he got involved, and we can't thank him
21 enough.

22 The Great Hunger event honoring all us
23 Irish is Saturday, 10:30, outside the courthouse.
24 It's all about what Irish people went through in
25 their flight to America.

1 We also had the symposium on dementia,
2 which Commissioner Amoroso so eloquently spoke about.

3 Really, I mean, every year I learn
4 something new. Every year I learn how many resources
5 there are, what people can do, and how actually to
6 deal with it, especially not just the people with it
7 but the families. And it was a wonderful program,
8 just another thing that our County Executive is
9 always in front of.

10 Rebuilding Together again was mentioned
11 by Commissioner Amoroso. That's a program that my
12 local union, IBEW Local 64, spearheads in Bergen
13 County. We help people that need help but can't
14 afford to do the repairs. We get donations, we get
15 grants, and the union volunteers their time, not just
16 the electricians, you have plumbers, carpenters.
17 It's all union guys volunteering their time to help
18 people rebuild their homes that couldn't afford it.
19 So that's a wonderful program.

20 Lastly, I just want to bring to light
21 Resolution #530-23 today, another shared services
22 with the town of Emerson for the 9-1-1 dispatch,
23 which we do out of Mahwah. I don't mean to praise
24 the County Executive because he's here, but another
25 initiative that we have moved forward with here in

1 Bergen County to save municipalities money and also
2 get it done right.

3 So that concludes my report.

4 I want to say thank you to everyone,
5 and thank you to the County Executive as well for
6 stepping in tonight and doing such a great job.

7 Adjournment

8 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: There being nothing
9 further to come before this meeting, I move to
10 adjourn.

11 Second?

12 COMMISSIONER MARTE: Second.

13 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: All in favor?

14 (All present Commissioners respond in
15 the affirmative.)

16 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: Opposed?

17 (No response.)

18 CHAIRMAN SULLIVAN: The motion carried.

19 We are adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

20 Thank you.

21 (Whereupon, the Public Meeting is
22 adjourned at 7:40 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

My Commission Expires:
7/11/2024