



JERLENE H. WORTHY, CLERK
BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

COUNTY OF MERCER
McDADE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
640 SOUTH BROAD STREET
P.O. BOX 8068
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08650-0068
(609) 989-6584
Fax: (609) 392-0488

LISA M. VENA
DEPUTY CLERK

MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

FORMAL MEETING OF APRIL 25, 2019

MINUTES

Vice-Chair Koontz called the Formal Meeting to order at 6:03 P.M. on April 25, 2019 in Room 211 of the Joyce L. McDade Administration Building, 640 South Broad Street, Trenton, New Jersey.

ROLL CALL

The following members of the Board answered the Roll Call of the Clerk to the Board:

Present - Freeholders Cannon, Colavita, Frisby, Koontz, Melker and Walter
Absent – Freeholder Cimino

The Clerk to the Board read the Invocation.

Vice-Chair Koontz led the Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the Flag.

The Clerk to the Board announced that in accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law, notice of this Formal Meeting had been mailed to The Trenton Times, The Trentonian and The Princeton Packet newspapers as well as having been posted in both the County Administration Building and Courthouse at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.

At this time, Vice-Chair Koontz invited the members of the public to comment on any item listed on the agenda.

There were no comments.

COMMUNICATIONS

A communication was received from Suzannah L. Givone, Confidential Assistant, Sussex County Freeholder Board, dated April 11, 2019. RE: Resolution in support of New Jersey Legislation (S1683 / A4267).

A communication was received from Andrew A. Mair, County Administrator, dated April 25, 2019. RE: Questions from Freeholder Meeting of April 23, 2019.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On the motion of Freeholder Walter, seconded by Freeholder Cannon, the Minutes of the following meetings were approved:

Formal Meeting of February 26, 2019
Formal Meeting of March 14, 2019

VOTE ON MOTION

Ayes - 5. Nays - 0. Abstain - 1. Absent - 1.

Ayes - Freeholders Cannon, Colavita, Frisby, Koontz and Walter

Abstain – Freeholder Melker

Absent – Freeholder Cimino

RESOLUTIONS

The Clerk to the Board called for a Motion to Vote in Block on the following Resolutions listed on the Agenda.

Freeholder Colavita moved, seconded by Freeholder Walter, that:
RESOLUTIONS NO. 1 THROUGH 21 ON THE AGENDA “BE VOTED ON IN BLOCK”

VOTE ON MOTION

Ayes - 6. Nays - 0. Abstain - 0. Absent - 1.

Ayes - Freeholders Cannon, Colavita, Frisby, Koontz, Melker and Walter

Absent – Freeholder Cimino

Freeholder Cannon offered the following Resolutions, seconded by Freeholder Walter:

NO. 2019-208 MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS AUTHORIZES PAYMENT OF INSURANCE PREMIUM TO BORDEN PERLMAN SALISBURY AND KELLY FOR HULL PROTECTION. AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$4,168.50. TERM: APRIL 4, 2019 THROUGH APRIL 3, 2020

NO. 2019-209 COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH LIFE TIES, INC. FOR THE PROVISION OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM SERVICES FOR FAMILIES OF JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM-INVOLVED YOUTH. PERIOD: APRIL 1, 2019 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2019 (WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR ONE YEAR). AMOUNT: \$45,375.00 (STATE FUNDS) (NO COUNTY FUNDS)

- NO. 2019-210** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXERCISE THE OPTION TO EXTEND A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH NEW HOPE INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE FOR AN INTOXICATED DRIVER RESOURCE CENTER (IDRC) PROGRAM. PERIOD: APRIL 1, 2019 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2020. NO STATE OR COUNTY FUNDS
- NO. 2019-211** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (NJDEP) FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2019 COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ACT (CEHA) PROGRAM. PERIOD: JULY 1, 2018 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2019. AMOUNT: \$345,510.00 (\$184,410.00 STATE FUNDS; \$161,100.00 COUNTY FUNDS)
- NO. 2019-212** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A SHELTERED WORKSHOP SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH THE ARC/MERCER, INC. FOR JANITORIAL SERVICES AT 209 SOUTH BROAD STREET, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY. PERIOD: MAY 1, 2019 THROUGH APRIL 30, 2020. TOTAL AMOUNT: \$153,145.68
- NO. 2019-213** ACCEPTANCE OF DRAINAGE EASEMENT FROM OLD MILL SQUARE, LLC, TO THE COUNTY OF MERCER FOR THE PURPOSE OF STORM DRAINAGE, BLOCK 206, LOT 13, MERCER COUNTY ROUTE 640, 147 WEST DELAWARE AVENUE, PENNINGTON BOROUGH, MERCER COUNTY; COUNTY FUNDS: \$1.00

- NO. 2019-214** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF MERCER AND THE TOWNSHIP OF ROBBINSVILLE FOR ASSISTANCE IN THE ACQUISITION OF THE SPRING GARDEN COUNTRY CLUB (MIRY RUN) PROPERTY, KNOWN AS BLOCK 28, LOTS 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 51 & 53, ROBBINSVILLE TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY. COUNTY COST NOT TO EXCEED \$536,000.00.
- NO. 2019-215** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A PURCHASE OPTION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF MERCER AND KERR RIDGE ASSOCIATES, A NEW JERSEY PARTNERSHIP AND KERR RIDGE FARM, LLC FOR THE POTENTIAL ACQUISITION OF AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS AND A PUBLIC ACCESS EASEMENT ON THE KERR FARM, KNOWN AS BLOCK 95, LOT 3 AND BLOCK 98, LOT 15, HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY. MINIMUM COUNTY COST: \$4,800,000.00. FINAL COUNTY COST TO BE DETERMINED BY APPRAISALS
- NO. 2019-216** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE GRANT AGREEMENT WITH LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP FOR THE “MERCER AT PLAY 2 PROGRAM” FOR THE PROJECT KNOWN AS MAIDENHEAD MEADOWS TRAIL. COST NOT TO EXCEED: \$339,351.95
- NO. 2019-217** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A RENTAL CAR OPERATOR GROUND TRANSPORTATION PERMIT AGREEMENT WITH AVIS/BUDGET CAR RENTAL, LLC TO PROVIDE GROUND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AT THE TRENTON-MERCER AIRPORT. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2019 THROUGH JANUARY 4, 2020. 10% MONTHLY GROSS INCOME PAYABLE TO TRENTON-MERCER AIRPORT

- NO. 2019-218** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT (AWARDED THROUGH A "NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS") WITH CHURCHILL CONSULTING ENGINEERS TO PROVIDE ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF MERCER COUNTY BRIDGE NO. 441.2, CARRYING PROSPECT STREET OVER THE SHABAKUNK CREEK, EWING TOWNSHIP, COUNTY OF MERCER. TERM: UNTIL COMPLETION OF SERVICES AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$218,505.50
- NO. 2019-219** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE AN EXTRAORDINARY, UNSPECIFIABLE SERVICES (E.U.S.) AGREEMENT (AWARDED THROUGH A "NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS") WITH FAIRVIEW INSURANCE AGENCY ASSOCIATES, INC. TO PROVIDE PHARMACY BENEFITS CONSULTING SERVICES. AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$36,000.00. PERIOD: APRIL 24, 2019 THROUGH APRIL 23, 2020, WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR TWO (2) ONE (1) YEAR PERIODS.
- NO. 2019-220** AMEND RESOLUTION NO. 2013-467, ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 12, 2013 AND COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT (AMENDMENT NO. 1) TO THE LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH AMERICAN TOWER ASSET SUB, LLC. - AMEND RESOLUTION TO MODIFY THE LOCATION OF THE MICROWAVE RADIO AND ANTENNA ON THE TOWER AT THE MERCER COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY (NO COST TO THE COUNTY)

- NO. 2019-221** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF TRENTON FOR THE HOUSING OF THE MERCER COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE; PROPERTY: 1589 LAMBERTON STREET, TRENTON. PERIOD: JULY 1, 2018 to JUNE 30, 2028, WITH TWO (2) FIVE (5) YEAR OPTIONS. ANNUAL RENT: \$95,000.00 (PLUS ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS OF 3% AFTER YEAR 2)
- NO. 2019-222** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A TEMPORARY ROAD ACCESS AGREEMENT FROM THE COUNTY OF MERCER TO PSE&G, FOR THE PURPOSE OF POWER LINE CONSTRUCTION; PROPERTY: MERCER COUNTY PARK, WEST WINDSOR AND HAMILTON TOWNSHIPS, MERCER COUNTY; COMPENSATION TO THE COUNTY: \$4,700.00. PERIOD: APPROXIMATELY 18 MONTHS THROUGH COMPLETION OF PROJECT
- NO. 2019-223** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO "EXERCISE AN OPTION TO EXTEND" THE AWARD OF BID CONTRACT WITH EYEMED VISION CARE, LLC FOR A VISION DISCOUNT PLAN FOR MERCER COUNTY EMPLOYEES AND THEIR DEPENDENTS. TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$37,842.00. PERIOD: SEPTEMBER 1, 2019 THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2020. **(AB2017-23B)**
- NO. 2019-224** AWARD OF BID RECEIVED MARCH 7, 2019 TO GROFF TRACTOR MID ATLANTIC FOR ONE (1) NEW 2019 FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ARTICULATED WHEEL LOADER WITH OPTIONAL RPM217 TIER 4 LOADER-MOUNTED SNOW BLOWER FOR THE MERCER COUNTY HIGHWAY DIVISION AND THE MERCER COUNTY COOPERATIVE CONTRACT PURCHASING SYSTEM. PERIOD: MARCH 18, 2019 THROUGH MARCH 19, 2020. TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$314,610.00 **(CK09MERCER2019-05)**

NO. 2019-225 REJECTION OF BIDS RECEIVED MARCH 29, 2019 FOR ONE (1) ARMORED VEHICLE OR EQUIVALENT FOR THE MERCER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND MERCER COUNTY COOPERATIVE CONTRACT PURCHASING SYSTEM. SPECIFICATIONS SHALL BE REVISED (**CK09MERCER2019-08**)

NO. 2019-226 MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS RECOGNIZES THE MONTH OF APRIL AS NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH

NO. 2019-227 COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A GRANT AGREEMENT WITH EAST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP AND HIGHTSTOWN BOROUGH FOR THE "MERCER AT PLAY 2" PROGRAM FOR THE PROJECT KNOWN AS EAST WINDSOR SENIOR CENTER EXPANSION, ANKER PARK INCLUDING POND IMPROVEMENTS, AND DAWES PARK IMPROVEMENTS. COUNTY COST NOT TO EXCEED: \$1,000,000.00

NO. 2019-228 MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS ESTABLISHES A NEW DATE OF ADVERTISEMENT, PUBLIC HEARING, AND ADOPTION OF THE 2019 MERCER COUNTY BUDGET

ADOPTED: Ayes - 6. Nays - 0. Abstain - 0. Absent - 1.

Ayes - Freeholders Cannon, Colavita, Frisby, Koontz, Melker and Walter

Absent – Freeholder Cimino

OLD BUSINESS

Freeholder Walter asked for a follow-up on potentially acquiring solar-powered charging benches for the Mercer County Parks.

ON-GOING BUSINESS

Freeholder Walter asked for Terry West to come forward and speak about the Census meeting that would be held.

Terry West, Mercer County Community Affairs, stated that the County Executive would be hosting a Census Workshop at the Dempster Fire Training Center on May 17th. He added that the purpose of the workshop was for faith-based organizations, non-profits and elected officials within the County area to learn how to access Census data.

Freeholder Cannon announced that the County would be having the Annual Stand Against Racism Pledge tomorrow morning in the building on the 4th Floor.

Freeholder Frisby credited the CEO of the YWCA for establishing the Stand Against Racism campaign.

NEW BUSINESS

Freeholder Cannon mentioned that the month of April was National Volunteer Month.

Freeholder Frisby announced that the Team 26 cyclists would be at Trenton City Hall on Saturday to commemorate the 26 children that were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School. He added that this year the cyclist would be riding from Connecticut to Pittsburgh, but City Hall was one of the stops along the way.

PUBLIC SECTION

At this time, Vice-Chair Koontz invited the members of the public to comment on any item listed on and off the agenda.

There were no comments.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the Formal Meeting was offered by Freeholder Colavita and seconded by Freeholder Cannon, which was adopted by the unanimous vote of the members of the Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

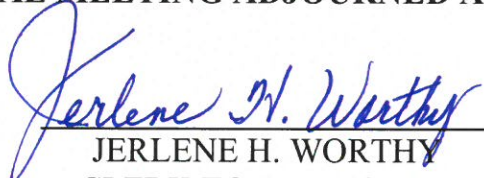
VOTE ON MOTION

Ayes - 6. Nays - 0. Abstain - 0. Absent - 1.

Ayes - Freeholders Cannon, Colavita, Frisby, Koontz, Melker and Walter

Absent – Freeholder Cimino

FORMAL MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:18 PM



JERLENE H. WORTHY
CLERK TO THE BOARD



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BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

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LISA M. VENA
DEPUTY CLERK

MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

INFORMAL MEETING OF APRIL 23, 2019

MINUTES

Vice-Chair Koontz called the Agenda Meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. on April 23, 2019 in Room 211 of the Joyce L. McDade Administration Building, 640 South Broad Street, Trenton, New Jersey.

ROLL CALL

The following members of the Board answered the Roll Call of the Clerk to the Board:

Present – Freeholders Cannon, Colavita, Frisby, Koontz, Melker and Walter
Absent – Freeholder Cimino

Vice-Chair Koontz led the Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the Flag.

SUNSHINE LAW

The Clerk to the Board announced that in accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law, notice of this Informal Meeting had been mailed to The Trenton Times, The Trentonian and The Princeton Packet newspapers as well as having been posted in both the County Administration Building and Courthouse at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

Two (2) communications were discussed and approved for placement on the Agenda for the Formal Meeting of April 25, 2019.

Vice-Chair Koontz made reference to the Communication regarding the County of Sussex Resolution in support of NJ Legislation which “concerns regulation of Solid Waste, Hazardous Waste and Soil and fill recycling industries”. He asked if the issue had an impact here in Mercer County. Andrew A. Mair, County Administrator, stated that he would check with the Planning Department.

RESOLUTIONS

Twenty-one (21) proposed Resolutions were discussed and approved for placement on the agenda for the Formal Meeting of April 25, 2019.

Freeholder Walter made reference to the proposed Resolution authorizing to execute a Grant Agreement with the State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) for the Fiscal Year 2019 County Environmental Health Act (CEHA) Program. She questioned if there was additional money available in the CEHA program to provide water quality testing. Mr. Mair stated that he would discuss the matter with Marygrace Billek, Director of Human Services.

Vice-Chair Koontz made reference to the proposed Resolution authorizing to execute a Purchase Option Agreement between the County of Mercer and Kerr Ridge Associates, a New Jersey Partnership and Kerr Ridge Farm, LLC for the potential acquisition of Agricultural Easements and a Public Access Easement on the Kerr Farm, known as Block 95, Lot 3 and Block 98, Lot 15, Hopewell Township, New Jersey. He asked if the purchase option would be for the full amount of 4.8 million dollars or was it an agreement to pay later. Paul R. Adezio, County Counsel, stated that they want to execute the proposed Purchase Option to lock in the seller at a minimum of 4.8 million dollars. He added that they are going to get appraisals done to make sure the numbers work with 4.8 million dollars. He explained that if everything matches up then they would return to the Freeholder Board for the actual approval for the Contract of Sale.

Freeholder Frisby asked what the per capita annual expenditure in Mercer County for acquiring and maintaining Open Space.

Freeholder Walter made reference to the proposed Resolution authorizing to execute a Lease Agreement with the City of Trenton for the housing of the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office; Property: 1589 Lamberton Street, Trenton. She asked if there was any provision that the County would be able to purchase the property at some point. Mr. Mair clarified that the City of Trenton was unwilling to sale the property due to their plan to potentially develop in the area.

OLD BUSINESS

Freeholder Walter thanked the Administration for having someone take a look at the area along Carlton Avenue, where there was flooding.

Freeholder Frisby asked if there was an opportunity for the County to have a Shared Service Agreement with the City of Trenton to address the flooding on Parkside Avenue. He suggested that the State of New Jersey, Mercer County and the City of Trenton should get together and discuss the matter.

ON-GOING BUSINESS

Freeholder Walter asked what was the provision for replacement of the trees at the Trenton-Mercer Airport. She questioned whether the County applied to New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to take the trees down.

NEW BUSINESS

Jerlene H. Worthy, Clerk to the Board, announced that the next Freeholder Meeting would be on Monday, May 6th due to the NJAC Annual Conference, where Freeholder Walter and Freeholder Cannon will be honored for their 20 years of service.

Freeholder Frisby recognized the Vocational School for their video that was used as a marketing tool.

PUBLIC SECTION

At this time, Vice-Chair Koontz invited the members of the public to comment on any item listed on and off the agenda.

Adam Bierman, a Princeton resident, expressed his concerns regarding Scott Sillar's analysis on the Mercer County Budget. He commented that he and some residents of Princeton found some of the findings from the analysis troubling. He stated that he had correspondences from County Executive Brian M. Hughes and Mayor Liz Lempert regarding the Citizens Finance Advisory Committee Analysis. **(See Schedule A, attached hereto, and made a part hereof)**

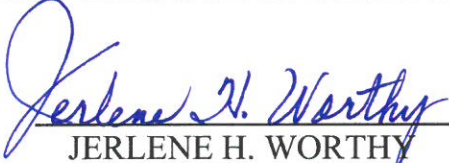
Vice-Chair Koontz mentioned that he found some of the basic assumptions that were built into the analysis were flawed.

Freeholder Walter confirmed that the County Budget is audited. She asked David J. Miller, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer, to talk about the process with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and how the County Budget gets reviewed.

Freeholder Frisby asserted that the Freeholders review the Budget thoroughly.

Suzanna McGee, a Ewing resident, expressed her concerns regarding the noise levels and expansion of the Trenton-Mercer Airport. She asked to obtain the noise log for the airport. Mr. Mair averred that he would get the information to her as soon as possible.

AGENDA MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:20 PM



JERLENE H. WORTHY
CLERK TO THE BOARD



"Schedule A"

March 6, 2019

Mercer County Responds To Citizens Finance Advisory Committee Analysis

To the Editor:

In the story, "Finance Committee Study Finds Mercer County is a Big Spender" [Town Topics, Feb. 20], the assertion that Mercer County outspends its peer counties in every category is misleading based on the Citizens Finance Advisory Committee's (CFAC) own report. CFAC failed to consider Mercer County's unique distinction of being home to our state capital, Trenton. The honor of hosting our state government comes with a cost: the state of New Jersey owns more than \$1 billion in property, or well over one-third of all tax-exempt property in the city, and this is a burden shared by all Mercer County residents.

Also not considered in the report is the benefit of Trenton-Mercer Airport. While this publicly owned utility does increase our county taxes, the economic benefit the airport brings to the region is substantial. A 2016 Rutgers University Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy study on the airport concluded the economic benefit to the regional economy was more than \$100 million. Left out too was mention of the revenue generated by our award-winning Mercer County Park Commission, which through four golf courses, a tennis center, equestrian center, festival grounds, skating rink, and nature center, entertains more than two million visitors each year who contribute to the county's vigorous tourism trade.

Other per capita benchmarks noted in the CFAC study included expenditures for Public Safety — which accounts for more than 50 percent of our budget — and our Special Services School District, along with other essential services such as maintaining roads and infrastructure, providing 911 dispatch services, eliminating veteran homelessness, and feeding our senior citizens, all of which are among the services Mercer County residents value.

Providing services costs money and we do everything we can to try to reduce the tax burden on all our residents. Using 2013 as a benchmark — the first year after Princeton's consolidation — records show that from 2013-2016, Princeton residents actually had a lower county tax rate than Trenton residents, a fact that might surprise some.

"Schedule A"

Overall, Mercer County affords its residents an unmatched quality of life marked by superb transit access, abundant history, vibrant arts and culture, and thousands of acres of parkland and open space. With five institutions of higher learning, including the world-renowned Princeton University, Mercer County is rich with talent, which is instrumental in Mercer having one of the healthiest economies in the state, as evidenced by the November 2018 unemployment figure of 2.7 percent, the lowest in almost 30 years.

While I appreciate CFAC's analysis, it fails to consider conditions unique to Mercer County. As host to state government and an important urban core, Mercer County sits apart from the peer counties identified in the advisory committee analysis. County tax dollars are put toward making Mercer an even better place to live and work. As a regional government, we are committed to sustaining the quality of life of our residents, while carefully managing our finances.

Respectfully,

Brian M. Hughes, Mercer County Executive



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"Schedule A"

March 13, 2019

Mayor Responds to Hughes Letter On the Finance Advisory Committee

To the Editor:

Princeton, like other towns in this state, struggles to shave every penny in taxes, and the Council has tasked the Citizens Finance Advisory Committee in helping with this effort. Given that 29 percent of our property tax dollars flows to the County — 40 percent more than the town's share, Council requested CFAC conduct a preliminary analysis of County spending in hopes of identifying room for savings.

In response to last week's letter in the Town Topics from Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes ("Mercer County Responds to Citizens Finance Advisory Committee Analysis," Mailbox, March 6), we want to make clear that our intention is to engage the county constructively. Our findings show that the taxes paid to the county by Mercer County residents are out-of-line with taxes in similar New Jersey counties — about 25 percent higher, \$54 million higher, than the average of our eight peer counties, equating to \$1,151 for the average residential tax bill in Princeton.

All counties in New Jersey offer the same services that Mercer County does. While our County does host the state capital, the percentage of property in the County that is tax exempt is not materially different from the eight peer counties, and all of the peers also operate parks and schools and spend heavily on public safety. While our analysis is preliminary, its conclusions and recommendations have not changed.

We encourage the County to dig further — and do the kind of rigorous self-examination that Princeton and the great majority of municipalities do every year in the service of keeping their residents' taxes as low as possible.

The CFAC presentation and underlying spreadsheets are available online at princetonnj.gov/boards-committees/citizens-finance-advisory-committee.

Mayor Liz Lempert
Scott Sillars,
Chair, Citizens Finance Advisory Committee