



JERLENE H. WORTHY, CLERK
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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LISA M. VENA
DEPUTY CLERK

MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

FORMAL MEETING OF FEBRUARY 11, 2021

MINUTES

Chair Frisby called the Formal Meeting to order at 6:05 P.M. on February 11, 2021

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

Present – Commissioners Cannon, Cimino, Colavita, Koontz, Melker, Walter and Frisby

The Deputy Clerk to the Board read the Invocation.

Chair Frisby led the Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the Flag.

The Deputy 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.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Commissioner Cannon asked for a moment of silence honoring Mr. Eugene Marsh who recently passed away. She spoke about all the wonderful memories of him that were shared at his funeral today. Commissioner Cannon recounted his admirable achievements and many attributes. Commissioner Cannon noted he was always there when needed and would be truly missed by all.

Chair Frisby added that Mr. Marsh was an African American male who was “bigger than life” and made history in so many ways. He said how unfortunate it was to lose Mr. Marsh during Black History Month.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH PRESENTATION

Ms. Ivey Avery and Ms. Tiana Smith

Chair Frisby introduced his friend Ms. Ivey Avery. He said Ms. Avery worked at the War Memorial in Trenton as an actress; she is a poet and just all around phenomenal woman. Chair Frisby spoke of her reading as Sojourner Truth, an American Women’s Rights Activist. He was proud to have her here this evening to read a poem for Black History Month.

Ms. Avery said she was a retired teacher and somewhat of a community activist in the 1960’s. She attended Spellman College at the height of the Civil Rights movement and advocated for African American studies. Ms. Avery spoke about black people standing up for equal justice and walking and demanding they be heard. She explained that she would be sharing a poem with the Board along with Tiana Smith, a 9th grader at Pennington High School. **(See Schedule B, attached hereto made a part hereof)**

Ms. Avery thanked the Board for inviting her here this evening and was hopeful for the future.

At this time, Chair Frisby invited members of the public to comment on any item listed on the Agenda.

Ms. Janet Cerullo, a resident of Mercer County, commented how inspiring it was to listen to Ms. Avery and Ms. Smith and to hear their poem. She was grateful to women who show strength and added though she never experienced racism she was an advocate for her special needs daughter, so she felt empathy for their cause. Ms. Cerullo thanked them for inspiring her to be a better person and do more.

Warden Charles Ellis, Mercer County Correction Center

Commissioner Walter asked Warden Ellis if he would take a few moments and speak about his wife's family and their stand for justice. Warden Ellis commented that no better person to speak on that matter but his wife, Yvonne, but said his in-laws were civil rights activists during some of the most tumultuous times in US history. He noted that they were some of the most trying times to persevere and is in awe of his wife's stories.

Commissioner Walter said Mr. and Mrs. Bibb were a foundation in the Ewing Community and thanked both Ms. Avery and Ms. Smith for continuing the fight for equal justice for all.

Warden Ellis was present tonight to answer any questions/concerns the Commissioners had regarding the Mercer County Correction Center. (MCCC) He spoke about staffing concerns and the ongoing overtime at MCCC. Warden Ellis explained that numerous correction officers were out on sick-leave due to exposure to Covid-19 causing many officers to work overtime. He explained that they were looking into possibly hiring more officers but overtime was an issue that continuously occurs.

Commissioner Walter said the Board has received many calls and emails regarding mandatory overtime at the jail and asked if more officers needed to be hired.

Warden Ellis explained that Covid-19 has impacted mandatory overtime because the jail needs to be staffed to protect the inmates and oversee day-to-day operations.

Commissioner Melker agreed with hiring more officers and alleviates the stressors of mandatory overtime.

Warden Ellis discussed many of the on-going issues and said he was not opposed to hiring more officers in the future.

**Dr. Kimberly Schneider – President of Mercer County Special Services
School District (MCSSSD)**

Chair Frisby explained that the Board requested Dr. Schneider to be present this evening to answer any questions and discuss the layoffs occurring at MCSSSD.

Dr. Schneider informed the Board that the first and most crucial impact to the district's budget was a steady decline in student enrollment. She discussed the numerous obstacles with having in-person instruction due Covid-19 school closures and other expenses that attributed to the layoffs. Dr. Schneider said this decision did not come easily but it is what has to happen to move forward. She was willing to answer any questions the Board may have. **(See Schedule C, attached hereto made a part hereof)**

Chair Frisby commented that he was aware of the on-going struggles learning remotely presents, but was curious as to why MCSSSD waited so long to announce its decline in enrollment.

Mr. David Miller, Chief Financial Officer, said the school district did identify a savings of 1.8 million dollars. He said this savings came from a savings in fuel costs, transportation, maintenance staff and other cost cutting measures. Mr. Miller said these costs were not enough to mitigate any layoffs.

Commissioner Walter wanted to make sure that no student's IEP would be changed due to the reduction in staff.

Dr. Schneider stated that the only way that would happen is at a parents request or other special situation. She assured the Board that all students would have what they needed as per their IEP.

Commissioner Cannon thanked Dr. Schneider for joining them this evening and understood how difficult it was to discuss layoffs. She asked what the amount of money was needed so that Dr. Schneider could get through the end of the school year without layoffs.

Dr. Schneider said it would take roughly \$2.6 million to allow staff to stay on until the end of the school year.

Commissioner Cimino said that the Administration and the Board found out about the layoffs second hand. He asked why that happened and wanted to ensure the Board would be made privy of crucial information in the future.

Dr. Schneider said she also was learning about this in “real-time” and hoping to follow proper protocol. She said that in the future she will ensure her team conveys all information to the Administration in a timely fashion.

Commissioner Colavita questioned if part of the decline in student enrollment was due to school districts implementing their own special education departments.

Dr. Schneider said there has been a slow decline over several years but Covid-19 was really catastrophic to the MCSSSD. It impacted their budget greatly and they were hopeful it would turn around the second quarter, but that has not happened at this time.

Chair Frisby thanked Dr. Schneider for being present this evening and commented that one of his reasons for moving to Mercer County was because of the MCSSSD.

COMMUNICATIONS

A communication was received from Isamar Maldonado, Purchasing Agent, dated January 22, 2021, RE: Minutes and Bid Results for the Week of January 18, 2021.

A communication was received from Lillian Nazzaro, Esq., County Administrator, dated February 9, 2021, RE: Commissioner Questions for February 9, 2021.

A communication was received from Lillian L. Nazzaro, Esq., County Administrator, dated February 11, 2021, RE: Commissioner Questions for February 11, 2021

RESOLUTIONS

At this time, the Clerk to the Board called for a Motion to Vote in Block on the following Resolutions listed on the Agenda.

Commissioner Cimino moved, seconded by Commissioner Cannon, that:

RESOLUTIONS NO. R-1 THROUGH R-10, R-12 THROUGH 26 AND R-28 THROUGH 30 ON THE AGENDA “BE VOTED ON IN BLOCK”

VOTE ON MOTION

Ayes - 7. Nays - 0. Abstain - 0. Absent -0.

Ayes – Commissioner Cannon, Cimino, Colavita, Koontz, Melker, Walter and Frisby

Commissioner Koontz offered the following Resolutions, seconded by Commissioner Walter:

NO. 2021-87 COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH CATHOLIC CHARITIES, DIOCESE OF TRENTON FOR THE PROVISION OF BI-CULTURAL TRAUMA TREATMENT SERVICES. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2021 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2021, WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR ONE (1) YEAR. AMOUNT: \$80,000.00 (COUNTY FUNDS)

NO. 2021-88 COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH CATHOLIC CHARITIES, DIOCESE OF TRENTON FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED RESIDENTIAL/SENIOR CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2021 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2021, WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR ONE (1) YEAR. AMOUNT: \$94,300.00 (COUNTY FUNDS)

- NO. 2021-89** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH JEWISH AND CHILDREN'S SERVICE OF GREATER MERCER COUNTY FOR THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES – MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE CASE MANAGEMENT AND STABILIZATION. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2021 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2021, WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR ONE (1) YEAR. AMOUNT: \$135,300.00 (COUNTY FUNDS)
- NO. 2021-90** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICE OF GREATER MERCER COUNTY FOR THE PROVISION OF EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2021 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2021, WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR ONE (1) YEAR. AMOUNT: \$135,300.00 (COUNTY FUNDS)
- NO. 2021-91** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH JEWISH AND CHILDREN'S SERVICE OF GREATER MERCER COUNTY FOR THE PROVISION OF HISPANIC OUTREACH SERVICES. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2021 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2021, WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR ONE (1) YEAR. AMOUNT: \$30,000.00
- NO. 2021-92** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICE OF GREATER MERCER COUNTY FOR THE PROVISION OF LATINX TRAUMA TREATMENT SERVICES. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2021 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2021, WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND FOR ONE (1) YEAR. AMOUNT: \$76,000.00 (COUNTY FUNDS)

NO. 2021-93

AMEND RESOLUTION NO. 2020-370, ADOPTED AUGUST 13, 2020 AND AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD TO EXECUTE AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO THE OPTION TO EXTEND THE COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH THE RESCUE MISSION OF TRENTON FOR THE PROVISION OF EMERGENCY SHELTER SERVICES FOR HOMELESS SINGLE ADULTS AND CODE BLUE ALERT PLAN SERVICES TO SHELTER AT-RISK INDIVIDUALS. "AMEND RESOLUTION TO INCREASE THE CONTRACT AMOUNT BY AN ADDITIONAL \$130,000.00 [STATE CODE BLUE SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS (SSH) FUNDS] FOR CODE BLUE ALERT PLAN SERVICES TO SHELTER AT-RISK INDIVIDUALS." REVISED TOTAL AMOUNT: \$362,658.00 (\$202,658.00 [SSH FUNDS]; \$130,000.00 [STATE CODE BLUE SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS (SSH) FUNDS]; \$30,000.00 [COUNTY FUNDS FOR THE CODE BLUE SERVICES])

NO. 2021-94

AMEND RESOLUTION NO. 2020-600, ADOPTED DECEMBER 3, 2020 AND AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD TO EXECUTE AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO THE GRANT AWARD FOR THE SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS (SSH) CONTRACT WITH THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (NJDHS), DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT (DFD). "AMEND RESOLUTION TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$145,000.00." REVISED TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$1,125,800.00 (\$663,200.00 [STATE SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS (SSH) FUNDS]; \$131,600.00 [TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) FUNDS]; \$186,000.00 [INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT (ICM) FUNDS]; AND \$145,000.00 [CODE BLUE FUNDS]) (NO COUNTY FUNDS)

- NO. 2021-95** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH EAST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP FOR THE PROVISION OF MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE PROGRAMMING AND COORDINATION FOR DRUG AND ALCOHOL PREVENTION AND EDUCATION. PERIOD: OCTOBER 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021. AMOUNT: \$11,267.00 (STATE FUNDS; NO COUNTY FUNDS)
- NO. 2021-96** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP FOR THE PROVISION OF MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE PROGRAMMING AND COORDINATION FOR DRUG AND ALCOHOL PREVENTION AND EDUCATION. PERIOD: OCTOBER 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021. AMOUNT: \$9,301.00 (STATE FUNDS; NO COUNTY FUNDS)
- NO. 2021-97** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT 2020 GRANT AGREEMENT FOR THE COUNTY OF MERCER CONSORTIUM PURSUANT TO THE HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM. TOTAL AMOUNT: \$664,863.00 (FEDERAL FUNDS – NO COUNTY FUNDS)
- NO. 2021-98** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (DVRPC) FOR DVRPC FY 2021 TO REIMBURSE DVRPC FOR NON-FEDERALLY FUNDED REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING SERVICES CONDUCTED TO BENEFIT MERCER COUNTY. TOTAL AMOUNT: \$41,599.00. PERIOD: JULY 1, 2020 TO JUNE 30, 2021

NO. 2021-99 COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT (AWARDED THROUGH A FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) WITH POSITIVE SOLUTIONS, LLC, FOR A PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM TO PROMOTE TOURISM FOR THE COUNTY OF MERCER. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2021 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2022, WITH A ONE (1) YEAR OPTION TO EXTEND. AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$30,000.00 ANNUALLY. TOTAL AMOUNT: \$60,000.00 (RFP2020-05)

NO. 2021-100 MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AUTHORIZES PAYMENT TO THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (NJDOL) FOR USE OF SPACE BY THE MERCER COUNTY OFFICE OF TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO MAINTAIN A CO-LOCATED COMPREHENSIVE ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER. PERIOD: JULY 1, 2019 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2020. TOTAL: \$344,365.34 (FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDS – NO COUNTY FUNDS)

NO. 2021-101 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 VAULT MEDICAL SERVICES OF NEW JERSEY, PC, AND INFINITY-BIOLOGIX, LLC, FOR COVID-19 TESTING AND INSURANCE PROCESSING SERVICES. AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$4.0 MILLION FUNDED BY STATE OF NEW JERSEY CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND. PERIOD: DECEMBER 1, 2020 THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, 2021

- NO. 2021-102** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO ACCEPT FUNDING AND EXECUTE SUBSEQUENT AWARD DOCUMENTS WITH THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY FOR THE MERCER COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COUNTY PROSECUTOR INSURANCE FRAUD REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM GRANT ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY, DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE, OFFICE OF THE INSURANCE FRAUD PROSECUTOR. AMOUNT: \$250,000.00 (\$250,000.00 STATE; \$0.00 COUNTY MATCH). PROJECT PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2021 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021
- NO. 2021-103** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A GRANT APPLICATION AND ANY SUBSEQUENT SUB-GRANT AWARD DOCUMENTS WITH THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY, OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, FOR THE PARTICIPATION IN THE SFY 2020 GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY BUDGET-OPERATION HELPING HAND PROGRAM. PERIOD: SEPTEMBER 1, 2020 THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2021. TOTAL AMOUNT: \$47,619.00 (STATE: \$47,619.00; COUNTY MATCH: \$0.00). GRANT SUB-AWARD NO: OHH-11-2020
- NO. 2021-104** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE SUB-GRANT AWARD DOCUMENTS WITH THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY, DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE FOR THE CONTINUATION OF VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT, VICTIMS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. AMOUNT: \$995,422.00 (\$619,275.00 FEDERAL; \$376,147.00 COUNTY MATCH). PROJECT PERIOD: JULY 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021. GRANT NO: V-11-19

- NO. 2021-105** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT (AWARDED THROUGH A NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) WITH X-RAY IMAGING, INC., FOR THE MERCER COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT. PERIOD: FEBRUARY 12, 2021 THROUGH FEBRUARY 11, 2022. TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$33,105.00
- NO. 2021-106** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENT (AWARDED THROUGH A NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) WITH THE LENOX LAW FIRM TO DEFEND THE COUNTY IN CERTAIN LITIGATION INVOLVING KEVIN BANNON V. BRIAN M. HUGHES, ET. AL. AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$30,000.00. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2021 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2021 (COUNTY FUNDS)
- NO. 2021-107** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO "EXERCISE AN OPTION TO EXTEND" A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH MARTIN APPRAISAL ASSOCIATES, INC., FOR REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL SERVICES FOR THE COUNTY OF MERCER. PERIOD: FEBRUARY 1, 2021 TO JANUARY 31, 2022. TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$40,000.00 (CC2018-10B)
- NO. 2021-108** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO "EXERCISE AN OPTION TO EXTEND" A COMPETITIVE CONTRACT WITH STERLING DISANTO & ASSOCIATES, LLC FOR REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL SERVICES FOR THE COUNTY OF MERCER. PERIOD: JANUARY 1, 2021 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021. TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$40,000.00 (CC2018-10)

- NO. 2021-109** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT (AWARDED THROUGH A NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) WITH GREENMAN-PEDERSEN, INC., TO PROVIDE ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES FOR THE INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT OF PRINCETON AVENUE, MULBERRY STREET AND FARMERS MARKET DRIVEWAY, LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP, COUNTY OF MERCER. TERM: UNTIL COMPLETION OF SERVICES. AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$42,816.92
- NO. 2021-110** MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COMMEMORATES FEBRUARY AS BLACK HISTORY MONTH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PAST AND CURRENT HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS
- NO. 2021-111** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND THE MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS CONDEMNS HATE AND EXTREMISM
- NO. 2021-112** COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT (AWARDED THROUGH A FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS) WITH DY CONSULTANTS FOR CONSULTING SERVICES FOR THE TRENTON-MERCER AIRPORT AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER RELOCATION STUDY. PERIOD: JANUARY 29, 2021 THROUGH JANUARY 28, 2022. AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED: \$223,472.28

NO. 2021-113 COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION WITH THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (NJDOT) TO RECONSTRUCT TAXIWAY A LIGHTING (CONSTRUCT) PROJECT AT THE TRENTON-MERCER AIRPORT. NJDOT GRANT AMOUNT: \$540,000.00; COUNTY OF MERCER AMOUNT: \$80,000.00. TOTAL AMOUNT: \$620,000.00

NO. 2021-114 MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SUPPORTS SENATE BILL 3220 WHICH PERMITS MUNICIPALITIES TO EXEMPT ANY PERSON FROM THE CIVIL SERVICE LAW ENFORCEMENT EXAM IN THEY HAVE COMPLETED THE FULL BASIC COURSE FOR POLICE OFFICERS

VOTE ON RESOLUTIONS:

Ayes -7. Nays - 0. Abstain - 0. Absent – 0.

Ayes – Commissioners Cannon, Cimino, Colavita, Koontz, Melker, Walter and Frisby

Commissioner Koontz abstained from voting on the following Resolutions because he serves as a member of the Board.

Commissioner Cannon offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Walter:

NO. 2021-115 COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE A SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH PRINCETON FOR THE PROVISION OF MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE PROGRAMMING AND COORDINATION FOR DRUG AND ALCOHOL PREVENTION AND EDUCATION. PERIOD: OCTOBER 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021. AMOUNT: \$14,113.00. (STATE FUNDS; NO COUNTY FUNDS)

VOTE ON RESOLUTION:

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

Ayes – Commissioners Cannon, Cimino, Colavita, Melker, Walter and Frisby
Abstain – Commissioner Koontz

Commissioner Koontz offered the following Resolutions, seconded by Commissioner Cimino:

NO. 2021-116 AMEND RESOLUTION NO. 2018-319, ADOPTED JUNE 28, 2018 AND COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND CLERK TO THE BOARD AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT (AMENDMENT NO. 2) TO THE AIRLINE OPERATING AGREEMENT/TERMINAL ACCESS AGREEMENT WITH FRONTIER AIRLINES, INC., - AMEND RESOLUTION GRANTING A DEFERRAL OF RENTAL PAYMENTS UNTIL APRIL 1, 2021

VOTE ON RESOLUTION:

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

Ayes – Commissioners Cannon, Cimino, Colavita, Koontz, Melker, and Frisby

Abstain – Commissioner Walter

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

Robin Karpf, 64 Vankirk Road, Princeton NJ, addressed the Board. She had questions regarding the runway protection zone and asked who would be monitoring the project. Ms. Karpf asked if permits were taken out and what the process would entail.

Lillian Nazzaro, Esq., County Administrator, replied that she would get that information to Ms. Karpf through an OPRA request.

The following members of the audience spoke about their concerns regarding the impending layoffs at the Mercer County Special Services School District (MCSSSD). They consisted of both concerned parents and teachers who were worried for students. Many of them stated the students have built a special bond with their current teachers and aides; and were apprehensive how they would cope starting over in the middle of the school year. Parents were disappointed and voiced their concerns that their children were regressing due to lack of social interaction because of the effects of Covid-19. Many teachers shared their concerns of losing their employment during these unprecedented times and asked the Board for their assistance with this matter.

Leah Pray	Janet Cerullo	Melissa Andrie
Tina Jablonski	Chris Lada	Cindy Grunning
Jennifer Semple	Elizabeth Breden	Jennifer Ledem
Gabrielle Raccosta	Tina Midura	Jen Duda

Chair Frisby read into the record a statement from Mr. Donald Ryland, President of Local PBA 167. He addressed the on-going challenges at the Mercer County Correction Center and stated many of the issues have been magnified because of the current issues with Covid-19. Mr. Ryland stated if the issue of overworked staff does not get the proper attention issues will continue to arise. He stated he was in agreement with Warden, Charles Ellis, to hire more correction officers to help alleviate some of the work place overload.

ADJOURNMENT

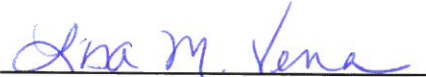
A motion to adjourn the Formal Meeting was offered by Commissioner Walter and seconded by Commissioner Cimino, which was adopted by the unanimous vote of the members of the Mercer County Board of County Commissioners.

VOTE ON MOTION:

Ayes – 7. Nays - 0. Abstain - 0. Absent -0.

Ayes – Commissioners Cannon, Cimino, Colavita, Koontz, Melker, Walter and Frisby

FORMAL MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:35 PM



LISA M. VENA

DEPUTY CLERK TO THE BOARD

Why do we still raise our fists?

Waking up at dawn, being whipped, falling on our hands and knees, being beaten with batons that caused us to leap, but the fight continues on.

Why do we still raise our fists?

Embedded in ink, we are only 3/5ths, on paper we weren't seen as humans, we were used, abused, and we conclude to march through the stones and sticks?

Why do we still raise our fists?

They sprayed us with hoses that chilled our bones to the core, we were drowned before we could call our families on the phones.

Why do we still raise our fists?

Was the fear of ending up like Tamir not enough, was the fear of ending up like little Aiyana not enough, to let us give up? He was only 12 and she was only 7 years old.....

They were too young, couldn't even reach high school like me, they couldn't grow up.

Why do we still raise our fists?

Aren't we certain that victory is far beneath us, that justice is far ahead of us, that equity does not concern us, and equality will never be for us?

Why do we still raise our fists?

To be seen as a color then as a human being, We are thugs, we are ghetto, we are leeches, we are ratchets, are we not phenomenally black?

How can the pigment of my shade show what I lack

The stereotypes built on my character are not a judgement in my face, it's a slap...

After all that...why do we still raise our fists?

We will not resist to the hands that want to erase us from the world

My bare skin that's made of gold, will feel the air. I will not fold. I will be bold....

We will march on until victory is won, and when it is....the ebony in my skin will feel the sun, once again the fog will not overtake me and run me to tears, based on fears planted by the ivory ones.

I want to be join hands rather than be foes

After everything they have put my people through I still have love for them. I know that some do not love me so why don't I accept life as it goes.

I still raise my fist, because I am a product of the slaves who were hung from the poplar trees, I am a product of the marches of 1963, it is me. We will not resist. My people were scared for I am not. I'll give it all I got, my fist will remain in the air, God forbid, until the last gun shot....

Yelling "I can't breathe" has damaged my lung but I will scream it until I have run out of hymns to sing and repeat the ones we've sung. It is not over yet. It has just begun.

Why do we still raise our fists?
Aren't we scared it will get heavy and it will fall, our muscles will weaken, our protest will become small?

Why do we still raise our fists?
Waking up at dawn, being whipped, falling on our hands and knees, being beaten with batons that caused us to leap, but the fight continues on.

Why do we still raise our fists?
Embedded in ink, we are only 3/5ths, on paper we weren't seen as humans, we were used, abused, and we conclude to march through the stones and sticks?

Why do we still raise our fists?
They sprayed us with hoses that chilled our bones to the core, we were drowned before we could call our families on the phones.

Why do we still raise our fists?
Was the fear of ending up like Tamir not enough, was the fear of ending up like little Aiyanna not enough, to let us give up? He was only 12 and she was only 7 years old.....
They were too young, couldn't even reach high school like me, they couldn't grow up.

Why do we still raise our fists?
Aren't we certain that victory is far beneath us, that justice is far ahead of us, that equity does not concern us, and equality will never be for us?

Why do we still raise our fists?
To be seen as a color then as a human being, we are thugs, we are ghetto, we are leeches, we are ratchets, are we not phenomenally black?
How can the pigment of my shade show what I lack
The stereotypes built on my character are not a judgement in my face, it's a slap....

After all that....why do we still raise our fists?
We will not resist to the hands that want to erase us from the world
My bare skin that's made of gold, will feel the air, I will not fold, I will be bold....
We will march on until victory is won, and when it is....the ebony in my skin will feel the sun, once again the fog will not overtake me and run me to tears, based on fears planted by the ivory ones.

I want to be join hands rather than be foes

After everything they have put my people through I still have love for them, I know that some do not love me so why don't I accept life as it goes.

I still raise my fist, because I am a product of the slaves who were hung from the poplar trees, I am a product of the marches of 1963, it is me, we will not resist, My people were scared for I am not, I'll give it all I got, my fist will remain in the air, God forbid, until the last gun shot....

Yelling "I can't breathe" has damaged my lung but I will scream it until I have run out of hymns to sing and repeat the ones we've sung, it is not over yet, it has just begun.

So you ask "Why do we still raise our fists?" The voices of our generation are not just words they are fists. When the end of time comes forth how will I know I will still be able to sit here and speak forth to you, as something white.



JERLENE H. WORTHY, CLERK
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

COUNTY OF MERCER
McDADE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
640 SOUTH BROAD STREET
P.O. BOX 8068
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08650-0068
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LISA M. VENA
DEPUTY CLERK

MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

INFORMAL MEETING OF FEBRUARY 9, 2021

MINUTES

Commissioner Board Chair Frisby called the Agenda Meeting to order at 6:03 P.M. on February 9, 2021 through Zoom Video Conferencing.

ROLL CALL

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

Present - Commissioners Cannon, Cimino, Colavita, Koontz Melker, Walter and Frisby

Chair Frisby led the Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the Flag.

SUNSHINE LAW

The Deputy 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.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

At this time, Chair Frisby said Commissioner Cannon requested a moment of silence for Mr. Eugene Marsh who recently passed away.

Commissioner Cannon commented that the world lost another wonderful person and she was truly heartbroken about the passing of Mr. Marsh. She said that Mr. Marsh was a man of honor; he was mentor to some and a role model to all. Commissioner Cannon said he was a true gentleman and scholar and spoke of how much his presence would be missed. She asked the Board to join her in a moment of silence remembering Mr. Eugene Marsh.

PRESENTATION

Chair Frisby said there would be a presentation tonight brought before the Board by Commissioner Cannon.

Mr. Scott Richman, Director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), was present tonight to address the Board. He spoke about the ADL's office covering New York and New Jersey since 1913 and their fight against anti-Semitism, hate and an attack on extremism. Mr. Richman explained that the ADL also works diligently in the helping law enforcement officials identify perpetrators online. Mr. Richman discussed the recent attack on our Nation's Capital and condemned the people who participated in those acts of violence. He was adamant that acts of violence and hate have no place in society today. Mr. Richman informed the Board that the extremism of white supremacists and their modern ideology has killed more types of people in the past 10 years than drug related crimes. He was delighted that the Mercer County Board of Commissioners was against extremism and looked forward to working with the Board to navigate this cause.

Commissioner Cannon thanked Ms. Alana Berman for bringing this information to her attention. She spoke of how disturbed she was when watching the events of January 6th unfold and felt more needs to be done to help combat the on-going hatred in our Country.

Commissioner Walter had a question in regards to the Board's Resolution. She spoke of the section in the Resolution where a "lecture" series was mentioned and asked the Board if they were comfortable entertaining people to come and speak about any of their beliefs. Commissioner Walter said if the Board allowed one group to talk about their ideals that would leave them open to having others do the same. She was not against having a lecture series included, but was concerned of the potential issues that could arise.

Chair Frisby said he was completely comfortable leaving the language in and spoke of many instances occurring on college campuses today. He did not want to infringe on people's freedom of speech regardless of what that may lead to.

Mr. Richman added that including a lecture series would not be an issue of taking sides but merely establishing values that the Board agrees with.

Michael Herbert, Esq., Board Counsel, explained that under the 1st Amendment any group of people or person has the right to be heard, however if they are a "hate" group that advocates the overthrow of County Government that would not have to be entertained. He reminded the Board that they are governed by the Open Public Meetings Act; therefore, no one could be precluded from speaking at a Commissioner's public meeting.

The Board agreed to leave the lecture series in the Resolution by adding additional language to the Resolution.

COMMUNICATIONS

Three (3) communications were discussed and approved for placement on the Agenda for the Formal Meeting of February 11, 2021.

RESOLUTIONS

Thirty (30) proposed Resolutions were discussed and approved for placement on the agenda for the Formal Meeting of February 11, 2021.

Commissioner Walter made reference to the proposed Resolution authorizing to execute an Agreement with Positive Solutions LLC, for a Public Relations Program to promote tourism for the County of Mercer. She asked the Administration what baseline they were using and what were the measureable deliverables for services. Commissioner Walter was concerned because there was no other company available to compare it to.

Ms. Lillian Nazzaro, Esq., County Administrator, said she would provide that information to the Board.

Commissioner Walter made reference to the following proposed Resolution regarding an Amendment (Amendment No. 2) to the Airline Operating Agreement/Terminal Access Agreement with Frontier Airlines, Inc., - Amend Resolution Granting a deferral of Rental Payments until April 1, 2021. Commissioner asked the Administration when the last time a rental payment was paid by Frontier Airlines.

County Administrator Nazzaro said that Frontier has not paid a payment since April of 2020.

Commissioner Walter asked why the Administration did not take the \$50,000.00 security deposit when the rent was defaulted on.

County Administrator Nazzaro responded that they did not default on their rental payments due to the deferral agreement.

Commissioner Walter was concerned that the Board was not notified of the Agreement before this meeting and asked the Administration why this occurred.

County Administrator Nazzaro said the Agreement was just finalized and therefore brought before the Board.

Ms. Melinda Montgomery, Airport Manager, Trenton-Mercer Airport, addressed the Board. She said she was in contract with the Administration when the pandemic first began and they discussed the effects Covid-19 had on airlines and how numerous airlines were asking for non-payment agreements from airports through deferral programs. Ms. Montgomery said after many discussions with her peers across the region she was comfortable with the County offering Frontier a deferment on rental payments.

Chair Frisby said that once the Administration was aware of Frontier not paying their rent the Board should have been informed. He felt communication was paramount especially during these difficult times.

Commissioner Melker asked the Administration if Trenton Thunder was charged any interest when entering into a deferral agreement with their rental payments.

County Administrator Nazzaro said she would provide that information to the Board.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Walter asked the Administration to provide an update of instances of overtime at the Mercer County Correction Center from the last two weeks.

Mr. David Miller, County Treasurer, said that of the officers working overtime, the majority of them were covering officers being out due to Covid-19 exposure.

County Administrator Nazzaro commented that she had checked today and there were ten officers out due to Covid-19 exposure. She said that number changes daily.

The Board was provided an update on vaccination distribution by County Administrator Nazzaro. She explained that allotment is based on population so the vaccines are being distributed when received. County Administrator Nazzaro said she received an update regarding the single dose vaccination from Johnson & Johnson. She explained that shot should be approved by March 1st and provides Mercer County residents with an even greater opportunity for vaccination. County Administrator Nazzaro informed the Board where residents of different municipalities could go to receive their shots. Two major sites were set up for Mercer County residents one being the Cure Arena and the second was Mercer County Community College. **(Please see Schedule A, attached hereto and made a part hereof).**

Marygrace Billek, Executive Director of Human Services explained that some entities receive their own allotment of vaccines which would be in addition to the ones Mercer County receives. She informed the Board that 98% of staff and residents at Mercer County's nursing homes were already vaccinated.

Commissioner Cimino made mention of numerous emails he received regarding the Mercer County Special Services School District (MCSSSD). He was confused as to why the Board was not informed sooner of possible layoff of staff. Commissioner Cimino explained that the Board plays a vital role to funding the MCSSSD and was not sure why he heard about this information second hand.

Chair Frisby added that he also had an issue with the lack of dialogue especially since his son attends MCSSSD. He questioned alternative solutions to layoffs and asked the Administration if they were eligible to receive a PPP loan or implement furloughs instead of laying off staff.

Commissioner Walter commented that her concerns were specifically in regards to the students and their needs. She said she was a Special Education teacher and noted how influential one on one with teachers' aides was to the student. Commissioner Walter added that often it is the aides who change catheters; administer feeding tubes and so on. She was deeply concerned for the student and the bonds they have created with their educators. Commissioner Walter wanted to ensure that each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) was adhered to.

Commissioner Cannon was concerned after reading this news online and hearing from Dr. Wang, President of Mercer County Community College (MCCC) that enrollment numbers were down. She asked if the Administration had any enrollment numbers coming from the Mercer County Technical Schools. Commissioner Cannon was concerned if this continued across the Board what could happen in the future.

Commissioner Koontz had a question regarding the Budget. He asked why this issue was surfacing now considering how far into the school year we already were. Commissioner Koontz asked if students were being pulled out of MCSSSD mid-year because normally funding is allotted at the beginning of the year.

County Administrator commented that this was a very unfortunate and agreed with the Board's concerns. She added that the Administration was unaware of the layoffs and were not notified beforehand.

Chair Frisby asked the Administration to have Dr. Kimberly Schneider, President of MCSSSD present at Thursday night's meeting.

Mr. Miller explained that MCSSSD was largely funded through student tuition and that due to a decline in enrollment the budget was directly impacted. He added that the on-going Covid-19 crisis certainly inhibited enrollment at MCSSSD. Mr. Miller said furloughs would not be a useful tool in this situation and believed that the MCSSSD was ineligible for a PPE loan. He assured the Board that he has been in communications with Dr. Schneider and each student's IEP was being directly followed to suit their individual needs.

Commissioner Koontz asked if a sending district stops sending students because they have implemented their own resources; MCSSSD loses that student's funding mid-year.

Mr. Miller responded that there could be a little bit of a lag in noticing the lack of funds but if they are not enrolled in September the funding will not be there by November. He stated there was some delay of reducing staff in hopes that student enrollment would get better and that has not happened this year. Mr. Miller added that the MCSSSD was not receiving any State funding from the on-going crisis with Covid-19 because special services school districts were left out of the funding package.

PUBLIC SECTION

At this time, Chair Frisby invited the members of the public to comment on any item listed on the Agenda.

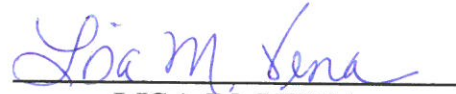
Thomas George, 19 Twin Rivers Drive North, East Windsor NJ, addressed the Board. He said his daughter has attended MCSSSD for the last ten years and felt there was mismanagement by the school district. Mr. George commented that Burlington County schools were fully open and MCSSSD only has a virtual option. He said how important it was to have schools open especially for special needs students. Mr. George commented how it is a struggle to do remote learning with his daughter and she needs to be in class with her peers. He felt the MCSSSD Board and Superintendent should be held accountable by someone and felt this Board should oversee the management of this process.

Elizabeth Breden, 2 Abbington Lane, Robbinsville NJ, addressed the Board. Ms. Breden spoke of how her daughter has regressed since being out of the classroom due to Covid. She asked the Board to look into this matter further and oversee MCSSSD.

Lydia T asked what the Administration planned to do with the on-going issue of the Mercer County Correction Center (MCCC). She asked if they had plans to close the jail and send inmates to Hudson County. Ms. Lydia was against the closure of MCCC because it was a violation of inmate's rights.

County Administrator Nazzaro responded that the County was still in litigation with regard to Hudson County and was hopeful a resolution would be coming soon.

AGENDA MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:43 PM



LISA M. VENA

DEPUTY CLERK TO THE BOARD

gb

Effective February 15, 2021

<u>MUNI</u>	<u># VAX</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
TRENTON	235	CURE
EWING	100	CURE
LAWRENCE	90	CURE
PRINCETON	75	CURE
EAST WINDSOR	75	COLLEGE
HAMILTON	240	COLLEGE
HIGHTSTOWN	15	COLLEGE
HOPEWELL TWP	45	COLLEGE
HOPEWELL BORO	5	COLLEGE
PENNINGTON	5	COLLEGE
ROBBINSVILLE	35	COLLEGE
WEST WINDSOR	80	COLLEGE

*Numbers above by population

In addition to this:

FEMA will supply 3000 vaccines to City of Trenton for a two week vaccine schedule- 1500 a week. This will begin the week of February 17 and week of Feb 25th for the most vulnerable population in Trenton.



Kimberly J. Schneider, Ed. D.
Superintendent

Statement by Superintendent of the Mercer County Special Services
School District (MCSSSD) Concerning Reduction in Force

At its meeting on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, the Board of Education approved what is hoped will be a temporary reduction in force including 11 teachers, 19 classroom assistants and one additional member of the professional staff. The effective date will be April 4 for the teachers and March 4 for the classroom assistants.

The Board meeting, conducted on Google Meet, included affected staff as well as parents, other members of the school community and the public. The discussion raised important questions that we would like to address. Most were discussed at the meeting and in a prior public statement but all merit further attention.

Reductions in force are difficult for all concerned. Nothing in this statement should be read to minimize our concern for its impact on the lives of real people or the value of their past service to our students. Everyone is being asked to adjust to the circumstances we face, with the understanding that the actions we take now are designed to prevent even more painful measures in the future.

Impact on Students and Staff

Parents may be assured that their students will be protected in every respect. After the reduction in force (RIF) takes effect, every child will have a teacher and a classroom assistant in the ratios of students to staff required by State regulation. All students with disabilities who require one-on-one attention will continue to have the one-on-one assistant required by their Individualized Education Plans (IEP's).

We understand that many of the students and their parents affected by the RIF love their teachers and assistants. This is no surprise. The replacement of any teacher or assistant as part of this process has nothing to do with their skill, integrity or dedication to their students. The criterion is seniority. Reductions in force are expressly authorized by law as a means of coping with declining student enrollment provided they be implemented on this basis.

Parents should know too that we are proud of our staff as a whole. The new teachers or assistants assigned to affected students will be senior staff with a record of skilled and dedicated service to the students of our District.

The effective date of the RIF is two months away for the teachers and a month away for the classroom assistants. This time will be used to ease the transition for students and their parents. We recognize that the fragility of many of our students requires a stable environment and every effort will be made to preserve it.

We recognize too that parents are concerned about the welfare of their teachers and assistants, as we are. We are hopeful that affected staff members will find positions in school districts able to operate hybrid programs. We will assist them in this regard. The 60- and 30-day notice periods can be used for this purpose. Retirements and other staff attrition may also work to reduce the impact.

All affected staff will be placed on a rehire list to permit them to be called back on the basis of need and seniority, to the extent restoration of student enrollments and growth in revenue permit.

The Financial Reason for the RIF

The single reason for this reduction in force, or the reason which is the basis for all the others, is decline in the numbers of students enrolling in MCSSSD programs during the pandemic. This drop in enrollments did not begin last month or over the last few months but dates back to at least the beginning of the school year.

In June 2020, a total of 561 students were attending one of the MCSSSD schools. Mercer High School then graduated 41 students leaving 520 students overall. Admissions of new students have not been able to catch up since that time.

The shortfalls began with the district's summer program in 2020 when 498 students were budgeted to participate and 427 actually enrolled, a shortfall of 71 students. Anticipation of new enrollments in September permitted the conservative projection that 544 students would attend MCSSSD in the regular school year. As of the end of December 2020, the actual number was 506.

Each year the State certifies our tuition rates and determines what we should be charging, looking at what has been spent on a per-student basis going back two years. When the certified rates are then compared to what the sending districts have been charged, any overcharge must be refunded to the districts and any undercharge must be collected from them in the form of a "charge back." In the face of declining enrollments without commensurate reductions in costs, the magnitude of charge backs to sending districts in 2021-2022 will be unprecedented, likely to hit many of the districts at a time they can least afford them. Any charge backs not collected from sending districts must be paid out of our own emergency reserves.

Although MCSSSD is operating at spending levels in line with prior years, we do not have the same number of students available to share these costs. Costs left unchecked in the face of declining enrollments create a vicious cycle: the higher the tuition, the less the enrollment; the less the enrollment, the higher still the tuition. In the end, if tuitions are not economical, sending districts will not send their students.

In announcing the RIF we described the less painful measures we have implemented in an effort to contain costs, including a hiring freeze for all non-essential personnel, curtailing utility usage and freezing purchases. We are also able to squeeze savings out of shuffling personnel, reduced operating costs for largely vacant buildings, and other one-time savings. Yet none of this is sufficient to offset escalating increases in per-student costs from year to year.

Recognizing this, we looked next at student-teacher ratios on a classroom by classroom basis. They are below State standards and, since some classes have only a few students, offer opportunities for efficiencies. This situation has been under observation and may no longer remain uncorrected.

A reduction in force is the only adjustment of sufficient scale to offset enrollment declines. Of the \$2.6 million loss of anticipated revenue in the 2020-2021 school year, approximately \$420,000 relates to the enrollment deficit for the 2020 ESY program and the remaining \$2.2 million results from loss of enrollment in the regular school year. In the time we have left in this school year, the RIF will prevent the problem from getting worse by approximately \$506,000.

A common question is “Why now?” The better question might be “Why not before this?” Uncertainty about how the pandemic will affect school operations is no longer a reason for inaction.

The Causes of Declining Enrollment

The principal cause of reduced enrollments in MCSSSD is not students dropping out mid-year and returning to their districts but, rather, fewer students signing up. This would include both new students enrolling for the first time and students previously enrolled.

Some have asked whether all-remote learning has reduced student enrollment. With respect to students being withdrawn from MCSSSD in mid-year, the answer is generally no. Students may leave school mid-year for various reasons in a typical year and this year is no different in that respect, but with few exceptions the all-remote learning environment has not been the reason. However, the impact of all-remote learning on new and returning enrollments is much less clear.

MCSSSD offers a unique learning environment for children with special needs. Local school districts send students here they believe they are not able to serve effectively on a 5-day per week basis. In any number of cases, this assessment may be different when the local district is operating on a remote or hybrid basis and the student is home for all or part of the week.

The companion question is why MCSSD has remained all-remote for most of this school year. Recall that our buildings were closed from March 13, 2020 for the balance of that school year. We began the new year on remote, then opened our buildings on a hybrid basis on November 9, 2020 but closed the buildings back down after two weeks; and our buildings have been closed for the most part since. We are now scheduled to resume our hybrid program on April 19, 2021.

These decisions have been based on assessment of risk to students and staff, in accordance with State criteria. Half of our students and 20% of our staff come from areas in which the incidence of Covid-19 has remained high throughout the year. For the same reason no doubt, the Trenton Public Schools have been all-remote all year and their return to school buildings is not scheduled until May 3, 2021.

Communications Leading Up to Announcement of the RIF

The need for an eventual reduction in staff has been looming for some time. The Business Administrator made the first public mention of it at the regular meeting of the Board of Education on January 12, 2021, triggered by the budget process for the new school year then underway.

On January 22, 2021, the Superintendent spoke with the union president and informed her that a RIF was imminent. The full extent of staff to be affected was not known at that time. Throughout the process that followed, focusing on the identification of affected staff based on relative seniority, the union has been advised and consulted.

On January 29, 2021, principals held meetings with affected staff and their union representatives, one of the principals called each staff member personally, and written notices were sent to everyone formally advising them of the Board of Education meeting on February 2, 2021 at which the RIF was scheduled to be considered. The RIF itself will not be effective until March and April. The expectation is that this will be adequate time to then be ready to launch what amounts to a new school year.

Kimberly J. Schneider, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Mercer County Special Services School District

February 4, 2021

Update February 9, 2021

Based on further information, the anticipated savings noted on page 3 of this statement has been revised to \$609,000.

Bianchi, Gillian

From: Worthy, Jerlene
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 12:22 PM
To: Vena, Lisa; Bianchi, Gillian
Cc: Nazzaro L. Lillian, Esq.
Subject: FW: Glenn Reitmeier public comment Feb 11, 2020

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Gillian for your minutes.

Thank you,
Cookie

From: Glenn Reitmeier [<mailto:glenn.reitmeier@live.com>]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 12:10 PM
To: Frisby, Samuel; Koontz, Andrew; Cannon, Ann; Cimino, John; Colavita, Pasquale; Melker, Nina D.; Walter, Lucylle; Worthy, Jerlene; Frisby, Samuel
Cc: Trenton Threatened Skies; donald.wilcox@brram.org
Subject: Glenn Reitmeier public comment Feb 11, 2020

Dear Mercer County Commissioners

As a matter of public comment for the meeting of Feb 11, 2021, I would like to call your attention to a recent Wall Street Journal article from Dec 1, 2020:

https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-covid-pandemic-could-cut-business-travel-by-36permanently-11606830490?st=7w74u01941nz29f&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink

The article's title, byline and opening words below should be carefully considered by the Commissioners:

The Covid Pandemic Could Cut Business Travel by 36%—Permanently
Between 19% and 36% of all business trips could disappear, given efficiencies developed during the lockdown, our Middle Seat columnist and airline experts estimate

Even if Covid-19 vaccines become widespread, business travel is likely to be changed by the pandemic. Travel budgets have been slashed and some meetings will remain virtual; conferences and conventions may be crimped.

But by how much? It matters not only to airlines and their employees but also their customers—travelers. That's because higher fares paid by corporate customers actually subsidize cheap fares for vacationers. What's more, less business travel means that airlines schedule fewer flights on business routes, like trips to New York, Chicago, London and Tokyo. That means fewer seats for leisure travelers.

Estimates of permanent change in the airline industry have ranged from the CEOs of American, United and Delta all saying business travel will come roaring back in full, though it may take a few years, to observers like Bill Gates who recently suggested half of all business travel will never return.

Guesses aside, a look at data suggests between 19% and 36% of all air trips are likely to be lost, based on a business-travel analysis I worked on with three airline-industry veterans.

As I have called to your attention in previous public comments, continued spending on the TTN airport expansion is irresponsible in the face of the overwhelming disruption caused by the pandemic and the resulting rise of internet videoconferencing. The pandemic will fade away, but video conferencing is here to stay.

Of course, airport management will tell you that the pandemic is temporary; their one and only job is to be advocates for expansion. However, it is the Commissioners' job to look at the big picture and to provide responsible oversight in the use of taxpayer funds. We all wish for successful vaccines and the end of the pandemic, but even when that happens, videoconferencing will forever reduce the demand for air travel. Since most air travel is done for business and that demand will be permanently reduced, there will be an inevitable glut of terminal and airline over-capacity in the industry. This is certainly NOT the industry condition that was anticipated by TTN airport expansion planning. How can TTN possibly expect to deliver a profitable return to Mercer County under such conditions? Commissioners, representing taxpayers, must look at the big picture and ask hard questions about the wisdom of the airport expansion.

I urge you to recognize this new reality and to stop pouring good money after bad; stop airport expenditures NOW and reverse the TTN airport expansion plans.

Please include these written comments in the public record.

Thank you,

Glenn Reitmeier
1124 S. Houston Road
Yardley, PA 19067

glenn.reitmeier@live.com