



**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

JERLENE H. WORTHY, CLERK  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

EBONY WITHERSPOON  
DEPUTY CLERK

**MERCER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**SPECIAL FORMAL MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 5, 2023**

**MINUTES**

Chair Walter called the Special Formal Meeting to order at 6:00 PM

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

Present – Commissioners Cimino, Frisby, Lewis, McLaughlin, Melker, Stokes and Walter

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The Clerk to the Board read the Invocation.

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

**SUNSHINE LAW**

It was announced that in accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Public Meetings Law, notice of this Meeting has been mailed to the Trenton Times, the Trentonian, and the Princeton Packet newspapers as well as having been posted in the Administration Building and the Courthouse at least 48 hours in advance of this meeting.

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**2023 MERCER COUNTY BUDGET**

Chair Walter announced the opening of the Public Hearing on the Amendment to the 2023 Introduced Budget of the County of Mercer, New Jersey;

Chair Walter asked if there were any questions or comments.

**There were no comments.**

Commissioner Frisby moved, **“To Close the Public Hearing”**, seconded by Commissioner Cimino.

**VOTE ON MOTION**

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

Ayes – Commissioners Cimino, Frisby, Lewis, McLaughlin, Melker, Stokes and Walter

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Commissioner Cimino offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Melker:

**NO. 2023-589**      AMENDMENT TO THE 2023 INTRODUCED  
BUDGET OF THE COUNTY OF MERCER,  
NEW JERSEY

**ADOPTED:**

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

Ayes – Commissioners Cimino, Frisby, Lewis, McLaughlin, Melker, Stokes and Walter

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Chair Walter announced the reconvening of the Public Hearing on the 2023 Mercer County Budget of the County of Mercer, New Jersey;

Chair Walter asked if there were any questions or comments.

Mike McKitish, a resident of Robbinsville congratulated the Board on completing their arduous budget season. He questioned how much one-time revenue, that was not repeatable, was contained within the budget. He also questioned how many one-time expenses were contained within the budget. He believed there could be some monumental issues impacting future budgets because of some information provided. Mr. McKitish requested the total percentage the tax increase would be for homeowners in Mercer County as well.

Temporary Chief Financial Officer Sharp responded that the increase from 2022 to 2023 would 6.04%.

Chair Walter mentioned that it was difficult to track one-time revenue or expenditures and asked Ms. Sharp to clarify.

Dr. Sharp explained that it was based on departmental needs and it was hard to gauge one-time expenses. She mentioned that most major one-time expenses come from the County's Capital account.

Mr. McKitish noted significant Grant funds and the programs they sourced. He asked if those expenses were re-occurring even if Grant funds do not provide said services.

Chair Walter explained that some Grant funds cover numerous budget years and the services will be provided as deemed necessary. She said the County does cover a portion of services and there is provisional language contained within Resolutions allowing the County to not fund those services if unnecessary.

Ira Marks, a resident of Lawrenceville addressed the Board. He said there were numerous questions and wanted information on how to get the answers. He noted that the tax increase of 6.04% could have been a 10% increase if the County did not take funds from surplus.

Chair Walter explained that taking funds from surplus has been standard practice due to Grant funds being encumbered after funds were expended. She explained that although the County is granted money often times they have to expend those funds and wait for reimbursement.

Mr. Marks made mention of the astronomical increase in group healthcare costs. He asked if the Administration was working with the provider or finding a new one.

Chair Walter explained that the State of New Jersey was the County's insurance carrier and they provided financial assistance to State employees but have left local government, such as counties and municipalities with a huge increase in healthcare costs.

Dr. Sharp commented that the Administration created a task force to look into what could be done to remedy some of the cost increases by interviewing various insurance companies. She explained they were presently working to find a solution to help lessen the financial burden.

Mr. Marks reiterated that the County needs to find out why employees are excessively using their insurance policies and attempt to cut costs before they are astronomical. He said he would provide further questions to the Office of the Temporary Chief Financial Officer.

Mike Todd, a Councilman in Robbinsville, addressed the Board. He was present this evening to discuss the budgetary constraints within the Robbinsville school district and how they are impacting local towns. He asked if the Commissioner Board was comfortable adopting the budget and assumed many of the financial uncertainty was due to the rising costs goods/services because of inflation. Councilman Todd asked about the forensic audit and how that correlated to the current budget.

Chair Walter mentioned that at the next Commissioner Board meeting the results of the forensic audit should be presented before the Board. She was hopeful it would provide a clear picture if the County is on track and fiscally fit.

Mr. Todd said there has been some discussion of next year's budget and the possible financial hardships continuing due to rising costs. He asked the Board if they were aware of any information regarding future funding.

Chair Walter discussed with Mr. Todd the hardships the Commissioner Board faced during this difficult budgetary season. She felt many extenuating circumstances affected the outcome and was hopeful that moving forward communication between the County and local municipalities could be improved upon. Chair Walter noted the rising costs of healthcare and other services explaining how they will impact future budgets.

Commissioner Cimino moved, "To Close the Public Hearing", seconded by Commissioner McLaughlin.

**VOTE ON MOTION**

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

Ayes – Commissioners Cimino, Frisby, Lewis, McLaughlin, Melker, Stokes and Walter

Commissioner Frisby offered the following Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Stokes:

**NO. 2023-589**      ADOPTION OF THE 2023 MERCER  
COUNTY BUDGET AS AMENDED  
(SECOND READING – ADOPTION)

**ADOPTED:**

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

Ayes – Commissioners Cimino, Frisby, Lewis, McLaughlin, Melker, Stokes and Walter

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

There were no comments.

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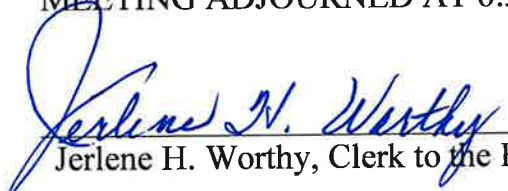
A Motion to Adjourn the Special Formal Meeting was offered by Commissioner Frisby, seconded by Commissioner Stokes, which motion was adopted by the unanimous vote of the members of the Board.

**VOTE ON MOTION**

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

**Present – Commissioners Cimino, Frisby, Lewis, McLaughlin, Melker, Stokes and Walter**

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:38 PM

  
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Jerlene H. Worthy, Clerk to the Board