

HUDSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

RE:

CAUCUS MEETING : TRANSCRIPT OF
OF THE :
HUDSON COUNTY BOARD OF : PROCEEDINGS
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS :
:

O P E N S E S S I O N

Hudson County
Administration Building,
County Commissioners Chambers
567 Pavonia Avenue
Jersey City, New Jersey
Tuesday, January 07, 2025
4:30 p.m.

B E F O R E:

Certified Original

ANTHONY ROMANO, Chairman
YRAIDA APONTE-LIPSKI, Commissioner
ROBERT BASELICE, Commissioner
FANNY CEDEÑO, Commissioner
ALBERT CIFELLI, Commissioner
KENNETH KOPACZ, Commissioner
WILLIAM O'DEA, Commissioner
CARIDAD RODRIGUEZ, Commissioner
JERRY WALKER, Commissioner

A L S O P R E S E N T:

CARMEN E. MENDIOLA, ESQ., Board Counsel
DONATO J. BATTISTA, Hudson County Counsel
DAVID DRUMELER, Deputy County Administrator
WILLIE ORTIZ, County Commissioner Clerk
Reported By: Shari Cathey, CCR, RPR

1 THE CLERK: Commissioner
2 Aponte-Lipski.
3 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Here.
4 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.
5 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Here.
6 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.
7 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Here.
8 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.
9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Present.
10 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.
11 Commissioner O'Dea.
12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Here.
13 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.
14 Commissioner Walker.
15 COMMISSIONER WALKER: Here.
16 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.
17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Here.
18 THE CLERK: L-1, To Honor and Commend
19 Kevin Brown for his Years of Service and to extend
20 best wishes on his next endeavor as the New District
21 Director for New England District 615 of 32BJ.
22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Sponsor. So --
23 so just for the record, can we get a copy of this
24 and actually put it like a frame? If I have to buy
25 the frame, I'll buy the frame. I gave him one

1 without a frame yesterday. Governor Murphy was at
2 his thing last night. Tammy Murphy was there.
3 Mikey Sherrill was there. A lot of heavy hitters
4 singing the guy praise.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yeah. Whatever it
6 is I'll pay for it.

7 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yeah. He
8 legitimately, look, the changes in the living wage
9 law with standard wage, medical, he was very much
10 part of who came to us to get those changes made.
11 No, just pay for it. You've got petty cash. Buy a
12 frame.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Jeez. I'll pay.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: The temporary
15 budget's adopted. You should be able to get petty
16 cash off of a temporary budget. Get it tomorrow.

17 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 1.

18 Resolution approving an application for and
19 accepting grant funds, if awarded, under the Edward
20 Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program
21 administered by the New Jersey Division of
22 Administration Department of Law and Public Safety
23 for the Hudson County Multi-Jurisdictional Gang, Gun
24 and Narcotics Task Force JAG 19TF-23, July 1, 2024
25 through June 30, 2025, \$286,113.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Sponsor.

2 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Second.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: It's from July.
4 We're backfilling it in?

5 MR. SALZER: That's what I think.
6 I'm going to check into that, Commissioner.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: It should come up
8 in June.

9 MR. SALZER: I agree. I will check
10 into that.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Continue.

12 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 2.
13 Resolution authorizing allocation of funds to Hudson
14 Pride from the New Jersey Governor's Council on
15 Substance Use Disorder Grant, January 1st, 2025
16 through March 14th, 2025, \$7,340.

17 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Yraida
18 and Jerry.

19 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 3.
20 Approve Purchasing Agent's awards. Purchases made
21 under State contracts.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Walker and Yraida.

23 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 4. Approve
24 Purchasing Agent's awards.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: O'Dea and Walker.

1 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 5, which
2 is a replacement. Resolution authorizing contract
3 between the Hudson County Department of Health and
4 Human Services and the Hudson County Schools of
5 Technology to implement the Employment Pathways
6 Scholarship funds January 1st, 2025 to December
7 31st, 2025. \$60,000.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Board as a whole.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Question? How
10 many students? How many youth? How many youth?

11 MS. HARRISON-GARCIA: Good afternoon.
12 So this program we're planning on having 20 students
13 receive scholarships, and there will be two cohorts.
14 The first will include 10 students, and then the
15 second cohort will include another 10.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And how do you
17 identify who they are?

18 MS. HARRISON-GARCIA: There's an
19 application process, and there is certain criteria
20 to be able to apply for this program.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: What's the
22 criteria?

23 MS. HARRISON-GARCIA: 18 to 24 years
24 old. They'll be prioritized, low income young
25 people who face at least one of the following

1 barriers to employment: History of being in foster
2 care; history of being homeless and or missing
3 runaway youth; current or past involvement with the
4 justice system; being a pregnant or parenting teen
5 or having a disability.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So I've probably
7 got a couple million dollars in funding for things
8 like this. So I don't want to set you up for
9 failure, but you really need to come back and show
10 me all the backup support because I just don't want
11 to see 20 kids go through this and none of them get
12 any jobs. Unless you set up a good system and you
13 bring some back-end employment opportunities,
14 because it talks here about them, you know, they've
15 got to get jobs at the end of this.

16 We train a lot of people. It says
17 tuition, case management, support service, resume
18 writing, interview skills, job search and career
19 counseling. You've got to have jobs at the end of
20 it. I don't see giving somebody one class in
21 electric, one class in a handyman, one class in
22 HVAC, one class in welding, giving them a skill
23 level set that anyone's going to learn. And I want
24 you to have a program that's successful.

25 I'd rather you go back and limit it --

1 like, I'd rather have you go back and limit to a
2 better program for a handyman. How many hours are
3 each of these programs?

4 MS. HARRISON-GARCIA: So these
5 programs are less hours than what's required by the
6 Department of Labor because they do not meet those
7 same hour requirements. So these are kind of like
8 intermediary, I would assume.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'm just --
10 look, I don't want to throw water on what looks like
11 a good idea, but I'm telling you, based on looking
12 at what this is and how little hours they're going
13 to get in it, they're not going to get a job at the
14 end of it. So what do we do? We took 20 young
15 people who, based on the criteria you established,
16 have desperate need, right? We want to help them.
17 And they need more support services than a lot of
18 other people we could just put into training.

19 But if you train them and then they're
20 done and they don't get a job, like you kind of
21 raise an expectation, and then there's nothing at
22 the end, you take that same young person, and you
23 just deflate them even more. I mean, I'm passionate
24 about it. I run these programs. I know what's been
25 successful. I know what's not been successful.

1 I get folks from, and I'm not going to
2 mention, because he gets millions of dollars from
3 the State, and he runs them through training things
4 at Kearny, and then they call me because they can't
5 get jobs, and they don't get placed at jobs. And
6 you've got to figure out how you incorporate a
7 placement component of it. I don't mind if the
8 placement component is we hire them. We hire them
9 as building service workers. We hire them as
10 whatever, a park worker.

11 But just go back, if you want to do it
12 between now and Thursday, you must incorporate that
13 those young men and women that complete this program
14 will get a job. Because if they don't get a job,
15 I'm telling you, you're going to take the life --
16 you're going to give it a little up, and then
17 they're going to go down further because they're
18 going to view themselves as a failure again.

19 They're going to go through a program
20 because I'm telling you, these are like kind of
21 intro. Learn a little bit about electric. Learn a
22 little bit about being a handyman. Learn a little
23 bit about HVAC. But at the end, you're not really
24 getting a certificate in anything that you can even
25 come to me and go, Hey, I've got a certificate as a

1 handyman, as a handyman specialist.

2 We do a program with the Port Authority
3 through the school. We pay the school just for the
4 handyman side. In that program, we haven't run as
5 many cohorts as we would have wanted to to date
6 because we made sure that the Port Authority has to
7 make sure that they have an opportunity to get
8 placed with the Port Authority when it's over.

9 So all I'm saying is people come up with
10 great ideas. It's great to call it a scholarship
11 program, but you get a scholarship if you go to
12 college. At the end, you've got a degree. A lot of
13 those folks can't get jobs that pay any money
14 either. They're still working in retail someplace.
15 But you've got to -- you know, I don't want to stop
16 you from doing it, but I couldn't -- I have to be
17 honest with you. In all good conscience, I couldn't
18 vote for this as it is right now because based on my
19 background and experience, I would feel I would be
20 voting on a program that's set to be a failure.

21 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: I have a
22 couple of questions. So I understand what
23 Commissioner O'Dea is saying. Is it already written
24 in stone it has to be 20 young people? It's a small
25 amount of money and you're giving \$3,000, and it is,

1 like I said, an intro-type of course. When I did
2 this years ago, what I used to do is I used to start
3 from the back and go forward. So I would start with
4 businesses or trades, and they sometimes
5 supplemented the grants, and we had jobs waiting for
6 kids and then we would set up the programs to fit
7 those kids into those jobs. So you had jobs waiting
8 at the end. That's my suggestion. It worked.

9 You always have to tweak the programs.
10 You don't know how many people will be involved. You
11 don't know how successful it's going to be. But
12 it's also a requirement of the grantor, which would
13 have been Health and Human Services, to make sure
14 that whoever's getting the money has a 30, 60,
15 90-day, and then a year follow up to make sure these
16 kids are in a job that's retained.

17 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And why did
18 somebody pick these things to train for? Who
19 decided that there's a great job demand for these
20 areas?

21 MS. HARRISON-GARCIA: That's what's
22 been told, that there's a high job demand in these
23 areas.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Whoever told you
25 that isn't being totally honest with you or doesn't

1 understand the field. I'd love to speak to whoever
2 told you that because I know that field better than
3 they do. I currently administer three grants that
4 do exactly what you're trying to do here, and
5 they're much more tied into getting placements.
6 There's agreements in some cases with trade unions
7 where we actually pay the trade union to go back to
8 something Bob said, for what the equivalent of
9 almost an OJT component of what the program would
10 be.

11 If I were going to do this and you're not
12 locked into what the program is, I'd go tomorrow,
13 I'd reach out to Jeannie Critella (ph.), who sits on
14 the foundation board also for the college, whose
15 family owns and manages 11 catering facilities that
16 probably collectively employ 2,000 people. Three of
17 them are in Jersey City. One of them's in our park
18 and we own the building that they got whatever, a
19 50-year lease on. We do have culinary. Do we have
20 culinary at the school?

21 Create a culinary program with them. They
22 already have one, I'm guessing. Let the school take
23 that on and let them step in upfront. Here's what I
24 would do. Step in upfront because they can do this.
25 Interview. The other part of it you're missing in

1 this because you said they have to meet certain
2 criteria, but you also have to vet and make sure
3 this is what they really want to do. So I'm a young
4 person that got some problems or jammed up in the
5 court system. Hey, if I go through this, my problem
6 goes away. If this isn't what I want to do, again,
7 we're not doing them a disservice, and we're taking
8 the spot from somebody that wants it.

9 What they do, they actually created
10 questions. Based on the answer to the questions,
11 they can tell whether this is a field you really
12 want to be involved in. You want to succeed. I
13 want a program that's totally successful. I don't
14 want to be sitting here -- the last thing I want to
15 do is sit here at the end of this year and say, how
16 many of them got jobs? Three.

17 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Three? I'm
18 going back to my workforce group that used to be up
19 in Union City. I used to do that. I used to do a
20 lot of community stuff for the kids. When it comes
21 to my phone, I ask my daughter. I'm not savvy with
22 this stuff. I don't know accounting. I don't know
23 computers as well as my daughter does. I ask her
24 what to do. That is something good to go forward
25 with anything with respect to my personal feeling.

1 Any program dealing with kids and trying to get kids
2 moving forward to me is a good thing.

3 This program goes back to the vocational
4 school days where these were the programs that kids
5 that traditionally didn't work do well in the normal
6 school setting. They did these programs. Again,
7 I'm not saying these aren't programs but maybe we
8 can add some other things. If you did a resource
9 group and asked some kids, what would you like to
10 get out of this at the end? It might help in being
11 successful. I don't want us to tie your hands, but
12 I think it just needs to be tweaked, and I think it
13 would help.

14 MS. HARRISON-GARCIA: I hear all your
15 suggestions. Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'm willing to
17 be helpful.

18 MS. HARRISON-GARCIA: I appreciate
19 that.

20 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'm in the
21 space. I see the space. I also get calls on the
22 regular. I had a gentleman call me multiple times
23 with a CDL license from one of these programs who
24 was just begging. He would take any job. If we
25 told him to clean out the sewers, he'd jump at it.

1 That's the kind of person we want to help.

2 So I just know that at the end of this
3 program I don't know what they have that's going to
4 put them in any better position to get hired by
5 somebody than they were before the program started.
6 That's just what my concern is. It's not a
7 reflection on the school because at EDC, we contract
8 with the school to do the handyman specialist
9 program. Maybe that's the program that you make a
10 larger program, and then we tie it into us and other
11 places.

12 I talked about 32BJ before. Maybe we then
13 plug that into something where they can get placed
14 with us as a building maintenance worker. We commit
15 to so many positions. We can go to a couple of
16 municipalities. We can go to some of the developers
17 with high-rise buildings. At least it's something
18 that gets them a position. If they really want to
19 go into the construction trades at the end of it and
20 they want to get into a union, send them to me.

21 There's a whole other program they need to
22 go to. It takes a lot of time and you learn to take
23 a math and reading test because to get into any
24 union you've got to pass a math and reading test.
25 People run great programs giving you all the

1 technical skills and then you take the math test and
2 you fail the math test. So you can't even get
3 interviewed to get into the union.

4 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: I see that
5 one of them is electrical. Does the parks have an
6 electrical unit to it?

7 MR. DEFILLIPO: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Maybe if we
9 could tie it in from the seasonal at least. Try to
10 get them going six months and try to get them some
11 experience in that area. I know with electrical you
12 do need experience but maybe you guys can work
13 together on something like that so they can get some
14 job placement.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: If the County is
16 willing to commit at a minimum seasonal employment
17 between those probably two departments over there
18 for anyone who completes the program then if you
19 come back and tell me that Thursday then I'll vote
20 for you. That's easy. Then I know they go in, they
21 complete it, they at least get some real work
22 experience for six months. They do good, they do
23 bad. If they're a screw up, they're a screw up, but
24 they were given an opportunity. I just don't want
25 to see them go through this program they get a

1 little -- congratulations, here you go. Good luck.
2 What do I do now?

3 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I have a
4 question though or a comment. I think Bob and Bill
5 have put their fingers on the problem, and it seems
6 to me like the educational part of this has been
7 fixed in some kind of a vacuum. That's the front
8 door of the program is the education. The back door
9 is getting the jobs.

10 So who is -- have we partnered up with
11 unions or employers in real time? Have we partnered
12 up with them and said, Here's what our curriculum is
13 going to be. Does that meet your criteria as a
14 potential employer? Are you satisfied with somebody
15 that comes out of our program that you can
16 conceivably hire them right on the spot?

17 Getting a job with the County as a
18 seasonal, that's fine for a transition period but,
19 for permanent employment which I think is what this
20 program is designed to do, have we gotten enough
21 input on the back end from -- have we hooked up with
22 connections with real employers or unions that will
23 say Yeah, this curriculum is a good curriculum, and
24 if you get somebody out of this curriculum they have
25 a shot at working with us.

1 But right now it's like you send them
2 through this curriculum it may be a jack of all
3 trades or a master of none, and they're not going to
4 be hireable. So I think Bill and Bobby are right.
5 We've got to concentrate on bringing potential
6 employers in to look at the program and say, Yeah,
7 that program is something that we could use. If
8 somebody comes out of your program with these skills
9 and this education, yeah, they're a viable candidate
10 for employment with us. Right now it looks like
11 we've churned these young people out and there's
12 nowhere to go from.

13 MS. HARRISON-GARCIA: Absolutely.
14 Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'm sorry for
16 being so -- I didn't mean to be harsh on anyone, but
17 I live it up every day.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: She's a pirate.
19 She's tough.

20 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I wouldn't -- I
21 wouldn't care if you were Captain Bly you still
22 wouldn't.

23 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 6.
24 Resolution qualifying Professional Consulting Firms
25 for the provision of "On-Call" Historic

1 Architectural Engineering Services to the Hudson
2 County Engineer's Office.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yraida-Romano.

4 THE CLERK: I-1. Providing for
5 various 2025 capital improvements and acquisition of
6 equipment for the Department of Roads and Public
7 Property by and in the County of Hudson State of New
8 Jersey appropriating \$39,995,920 therefor; including
9 state and federal funds received from the American
10 Rescue Plan Act of 2021, in the amount of \$4,070,000
11 and authorizing the issuance of \$34,215,161 bonds or
12 notes to finance part of the cost thereof.

13 COMMISSIONER WALKER: Sponsor.

14 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Second.

15 THE CLERK: I-2. I-2. Ordinance
16 amending Chapter 400, Article 8.11 of the
17 Administrative Code to establish a restricted
18 parking space on John F. Kennedy Boulevard, City of
19 Bayonne for Andrew H. Gutterman.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I'll sponsor.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Second.

22 THE CLERK: I-3. Ordinance amending
23 Chapter 200 article 8.11 of the Administrative Code
24 to establish a restricted parking space on Hudson
25 Street City of Hoboken for Pablo Ruiz.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Sponsor.

2 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Second.

3 THE CLERK: I-4. Ordinance amending
4 chapter 200 article 8.11 of the Administrative Code
5 to establish a restricted parking space on Hudson
6 Street City of Hoboken for Blanche E. Fernandez.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Sponsor.

8 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Second.

9 THE CLERK: I-5. Ordinance
10 establishing regulations for the use of the County
11 building by the public.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: What is that?

13 MR. BATTISTA: Well, Chairman,
14 basically, to delineate areas that are for the
15 purposes --

16 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: I make a
17 motion.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Second.

19 MR. DRUMELER: We have nothing
20 further, Mr. Chairman.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Do we have a copy
22 of the committee assigning notice? Hold on. Jerry
23 wants to speak.

24 COMMISSIONER WALKER: I just want to
25 bring everybody's attention. If you're not doing

1 anything on the 20th of January, at County Prep we
2 have a Martin Luther King Day Tournament. The
3 lineup is 11:30 is going to be McNair vs. Bayonne;
4 one p.m. is with Piscataway vs. Union City; 2:30
5 North Central vs. Hoboken; at four, Jackson Memorial
6 vs. St. Thomas; and at 5 p.m., Hightown vs.
7 Dickinson; and at 7, Snyder vs. Ferris. On the
8 20th, so I'll be there on the day.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Is this
10 volleyball?

11 COMMISSIONER WALKER: No goddamn
12 volleyball. Al, what do you mean?

13 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I had some
14 good Central Huskies. They were the team that lost
15 to San Diego for the championship.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Any other
17 questions? Kenny Kopacz is not here, so Yraida is
18 going to do the magic word.

19 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Motion.

20 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Second.

21 THE CLERK: We are adjourned.

22 (Whereupon the proceeding is then
23 concluded at 5:05 p.m.)
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, SHARI CATHEY, CCR, RPR, License No.
30XI00234700, and Notary Public of the State of New
Jersey, hereby certify that the proceedings herein
are from the notes taken by me of a Caucus Meeting
of the Hudson County Board of County Commissioners,
held on Tuesday, January 07, 2025; and that this is
a correct transcript of the same.



SHARI CATHEY, CCR, RPR
A NOTARY PUBLIC of the
State of New Jersey
I.D. No. 2283786
Commission Expires 2/4/27

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