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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 21, 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
WILLIAM O'DEA, Commissioner
CARIDAD RODRIGUEZ, Commissioner
JERRY WALKER, Commissioner

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

MICHAEL B. SIMONE, ESQ., Board Counsel
DONATO J. BATTISTA, Hudson County Counsel
ABRAHAM ANTUN, 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 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Here. Al's here on
10 Zoom.

11 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.
12 Commissioner O'Dea.

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Here.

14 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

15 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Here on
16 Zoom.

17 THE CLERK: Commissioner Walker.

18 COMMISSIONER WALKER: Here.

19 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Here.

21 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 1, which
22 is a replacement on the dais, Commissioners.
23 Confirmation of appointments of members in the
24 Hudson County Planning Board.

25 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Sponsor.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Second.

2 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 2.

3 Resolution authorizing Appointments of Members to
4 the Hudson County Human Services Advisory Board.

5 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Question.

6 Are these the current members that are being
7 reappointed, or are these new members?

8 DIRECTOR TOON: Good afternoon.

9 They're new members. These are individuals who have
10 served in the past, but they're newly reappointed.
11 They weren't serving in the past year.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Who was serving
13 in the past year?

14 DIRECTOR TOON: None of the members
15 on that list.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: They replaced
17 everyone?

18 DIRECTOR TOON: No, no. We have
19 staggered appointments so that everyone doesn't go
20 off at the same time. And they have to, I think
21 it's after two or three years, I forget what the
22 timeline is, they have to at least sit out for a
23 year.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: How many members
25 in total?

1 DIRECTOR TOON: I don't know the
2 number of members in total, but I can let you know
3 that.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Is there a cross
5 section of ethnic representation?

6 DIRECTOR TOON: Yes. The
7 African-Americans, I see some Hispanic names. Yes,
8 yes.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Middle Eastern,
10 Asian. Can we get some kind of an account on this?

11 DIRECTOR TOON: We can provide you
12 with some information, but yes, we make every effort
13 to make sure that our different boards are more
14 representative of the County. In some cases it's a
15 struggle, but we make every effort to do so. We can
16 get that information.

17 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 3.
18 Confirmation of Appointment to the Local Advisory
19 Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, LACADA.

20 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Sponsor.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Second.

22 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 4. 2024
23 budget transfer of appropriation reserves.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez-Baselice.

25 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 5.

1 Resolution authorizing application for and
2 acceptance of grant funds, if awarded, and execution
3 of a Grant Agreement with the New Jersey Department
4 of Transportation for the Rehabilitation of the
5 Bergen Avenue Bridge over Hudson, Bergen Light Rail
6 in Jersey City under the FY2025 Local Bridges Fund
7 Program, \$2,010,099.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Walker-Romano.

9 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 6. State
10 of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
11 Green Acres enabling Resolution.

12 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Sponsor.

13 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Second.

14 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 7.

15 Resolution approving a Grant Application and
16 accepting Grant Funds if awarded by the New Jersey
17 Department of Community Affairs Local Recreation
18 Improvements Grant for Fiscal Year 2025, \$92,538.

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Sponsor.

20 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Second.

21 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 8.

22 Resolution amending Resolution No. 383-6-2024 to
23 deobligate FY2024 Hudson County Local Arts Program
24 Funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts
25 awarded to Puertorriquenos Asociados for Community

1 Organization, Inc., and reallocate such funds to
2 other Grantee Organizations, January 1, 2024 to
3 December 31, 2024 \$8,465.49.

4 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Sponsor.

5 COMMISSIONER WALKER: Second.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Question. Why
7 is the money being de-obligated?

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: What was that an
9 event they did? I don't know, a week and a half?

10 MS. HULINGS: Good afternoon,
11 Chairman. Their organization wasn't able to comply
12 with the application, and they're not able to move
13 forward with the programming.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Isn't that money
15 supposed to be used programming?

16 MS. HULINGS: It was supposed to be
17 used for program support. Well, we spoke back, we
18 spoke to them early December, and they said that
19 they weren't going to be able to complete it, and we
20 were even gonna grant them an extension, but then
21 they refused to respond back to our questions and
22 information for a revised proposal.

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: If you don't
24 know, let me know before Thursday. Who's the
25 individual from that agency that stopped responding.

1 MS. HULINGS: Yeah, I want to say it
2 was Juan, but I have to get you the -- I'll get you
3 the contact information.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Julio Garcia?

5 MS. HULINGS: Julio.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Julio's the
7 executive director.

8 MS. HULINGS: Yeah.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'm going to
10 reach out to him.

11 MS. HULINGS: Absolutely, please do.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'm surprised
13 that they would turn down anyone.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Just sent him a
15 message.

16 MS. HULINGS: And I'll forward you
17 our last piece of information.

18 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 9.
19 Resolution awarding a Non-Fair and Open Contract to
20 Hudson Community Enterprises, Inc., a Sheltered
21 Workshop, for the Shredding of Documents for various
22 County Departments, February 11, 2025 to February
23 10, 2026, Not to Exceed \$159,000.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez-Lipski.

25 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 10.

1 Resolution approving a "Firearms Range Use and Hold
2 Harmless Agreement" with the Township of North
3 Bergen for the Prosecutor's Office use of their
4 Firearms Range, January 1, 2025 to December 31,
5 2025. Not to Exceed \$10,000.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Basalice and
7 Lipski.

8 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 11.
9 Resolution awarding Professional Services Contract
10 Non-Fair and Open Eyman Partners, LLC "Support
11 Services to the County of Hudson as well as provide
12 Legal Services in connection with the County's
13 Litigation against CarePoint Health," \$45,000.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Sponsor.
15 Questions.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Romano -- I mean,
17 O'Dea-Romano. Question.

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: But what is the
19 status of the litigation?

20 MR. BATTISTA: The litigation in
21 State Court has been administratively dismissed
22 because was CarePoint filed bankruptcy in the State
23 of Delaware. The County is participating in that
24 bankruptcy filing. There was a hearing the other
25 day in connection with the interim plan that

1 CarePoint has submitted in bankruptcy court. We
2 participated in opposition as to getting a payment
3 from the local court office.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Question. Who is
5 CarePoint right now? Is it HRH making the
6 managerial decisions? Because we're worried about
7 the unions, what's going to happen to them.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: The next
9 question I've got.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: When you say
11 CarePoint, Donnie, it's not CarePoint that you're
12 talking about, but what I'm told, HRH is the
13 manager, the manager of the hospital. So can we
14 find that out?

15 MR. BATTISTA: You're saying things
16 I'm not aware of.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I'm aware of, sir.
18 You have to do this, too. Yep.

19 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I have a
20 question that I'm sure Don is aware of. Go ahead.
21 So, who represents us in the bankruptcy?

22 MR. BATTISTA: Right now, the
23 litigation is being handled by State Court. They
24 are also handling the bankruptcy. We've had to
25 retain, or they did, retain --

1 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Delaware
2 counsel.

3 MR. BATTISTA: Because they, in order
4 to adhere to the Delaware Bankruptcy Procedure.

5 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: So can you
6 give us a -- not now, but can you give us a snapshot
7 about what additional fees or costs that we've
8 incurred because of their bankruptcy problem?

9 MR. BATTISTA: Well, my best
10 estimate, based upon the number before you today,
11 which is primarily because of the bankruptcy filing
12 and what McManimon has billed us, and what we're
13 paying for Delaware Counsel, I think we're pretty
14 close. We did not go up to \$100,000.

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: And how much do
16 they owe us?

17 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: With respect
18 to McManimon Scotland's bill, is that chargeable
19 against a prior resolution that we had authorizing
20 their engagement as our counsel for special affairs
21 or whatever?

22 MR. BATTISTA: We are using the
23 McManimon & Scotland as part of our omnibus
24 agreement with the HCIA.

25 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Oh, okay. But

1 there's a cap on that, right?

2 MR. BATTISTA: No, there's not. I
3 mean, I don't know what the cap the HCIA has, but
4 the HCIA will bill the County as part of the shared
5 services agreement we have to do with the HCIA.

6 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: So is that an
7 open-ended, there's no cap, but is that an
8 open-ended billing, I mean?

9 MR. BATTISTA: From us to the HCIA,
10 based upon where the billing is, what McManimon's
11 underlying contract is with the HCIA, I don't know.

12 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Well, that's
13 my question. So is there a cap on that? Because
14 these bankruptcy petitions, as you know, Don, they
15 can be bottomless pits. So I'm just trying to
16 figure out what the County invoice is going to be
17 also.

18 MR. BATTISTA: I'll find out for you
19 by Thursday.

20 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay. And
21 just give me a call.

22 MR. BATTISTA: All right.

23 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Billy?

25 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So the other

1 question, what we want to do a resolution on, is I
2 found out late last week, but I guess it's the new
3 operator at the facility, who has stripped every
4 employee of all their sick and vacation time. The
5 people that have worked there for 30 years and had
6 God knows how many weeks now have no sick or
7 vacations.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That's Bayonne,
9 right?

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: That's Christ
11 Hospital.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Christ Hospital.

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Oh, but you're
14 Bayonne, too. But, and I know that HPAE is in the
15 process of filing an action against them. So I
16 wanted to do a resolution. I'll have to connect
17 someone from that union with either our Clerk or the
18 Law Department to do a resolution supporting the
19 union's position.

20 I mean, whatever the financial situation
21 that this place has been left with, to take people
22 that are employees and strip them of all their sick
23 and vacation time, I mean, that's honestly totally
24 inhumane. Meanwhile, the people that were there
25 probably paid themselves out hundreds of thousands

1 of dollars each. And I mean, we as someone who
2 passed the ordinance years ago that guaranteed
3 people that we contract with at least a week of sick
4 time a year, I don't know how we don't go on record
5 opposing what was done and supporting the union's
6 efforts to have either it all restored or come up
7 with a requirement of negotiation between the union
8 and the management there as to how those things are
9 done.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I think that what's
11 going on is they own the property. So they're
12 bringing out the real price of the managerial
13 operations, HRH, the price that they own. We don't
14 want to have it dropped. Who's operating and who we
15 can do this resolution for?

16 MR. BATTISTA: I don't know. I'm not
17 going to be able to get that information for you.
18 I'll find out what's been disclosed in the
19 bankruptcy court as to the entities and who the
20 entities are. Right now, we're in the bankruptcy.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: There's three
22 different people filing.

23 MR. BATTISTA: Yes, sir. No, I
24 understand that, but that will have to be pushed out
25 to the union.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Thank you.

2 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 12. This
3 is a replacement, Commissioners, on the dais.
4 Approve Purchasing Agent's Awards for purchases made
5 under State Contracts.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and
7 Cedeño.

8 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 13.
9 Purchases made under the Educational Services
10 Commission of New Jersey Pricing System, formally
11 known as "The Middlesex Regional Educational
12 Services Commission."

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and
14 Cedeño.

15 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 14.
16 Purchasing made under Union County Cooperative
17 Pricing System.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and
19 Cedeño.

20 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 15.
21 Purchases made under Bergen County Cooperative
22 Pricing System.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Caridad and Fanny.

24 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 16.
25 Approve Purchasing Agent's Awards.

1 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Sponsor.

2 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Second.

3 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 17.

4 Resolution awarding a Fair and Open Professional
5 Services Contract for Pharmacy Consulting Services
6 at Meadowview Psychiatric Hospital to Pharma Care,
7 Inc., February 1, 2025 through January 31, 2026,
8 \$50,400.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yraida and Cedeño.

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Question. How
11 long has that been to be put in operation?

12 MR. ANTUN: A number of years, at
13 least 15.

14 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 18.

15 Resolution awarding Professional Services Contract
16 Fair and Open to Paulus Sokolowski & Sartor, LLC
17 Professional Environmental Engineering Services for
18 LSRP Services at Laurel Hill Park, Secaucus,
19 \$32,810.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Cifelli and
21 Baselice.

22 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 19. Award
23 of Professional Services Contract Fair and Open for
24 Transcription and Translation Services on behalf of
25 the Prosecutor's Office, For Every Word LLC, January

1 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, \$250,000.

2 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Sponsor.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Second. Every
4 word, \$250,000. I like that.

5 THE CLERK: Resolution awarding
6 Professional Services Contract Fair and Open for
7 Certified Court Reporting Services for the Hudson
8 County Law Department, Board of County
9 Commissioners, Hudson County Planning Board, Hudson
10 County Construction Board of Appeals, County Clerk
11 and other Departments as required Veritext Legal
12 Solutions. January 1, 2025 through December 31,
13 2025; Not to Exceed \$80,000.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Cifelli and
15 Rodriguez.

16 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 21.
17 Resolution approving a Professional Services
18 Contract Fair and Open with McManimon, Scotland &
19 Bauman for the provision of Legal Services-Outside
20 Counsel Condemnation and Eminent Domain Matters -
21 \$50,000.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Cifelli and Romano.

23 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 22.
24 Resolution awarding Year Three of Fair and Open
25 Competitive Contract with EMET Transitional

1 Services, LLC for Housing and Reintegration
2 Services, January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025,
3 \$1,200,000.

4 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I don't see
5 that. I don't see that.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: We don't see that.

7 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 22?

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Take it back. It
9 says not to exceed \$80,000.

10 THE CLERK: No, that's separate from
11 Resolution No. 21.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: That's number
13 one. You got to look at number two.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Oh, okay.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: No, second one
16 of these. They just gave it to each other.

17 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Oh, I don't
18 have that.

19 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: It's in your
20 package.

21 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: It's not in
22 the package. I have the old one.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: So it's in the
24 package itself.

25 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: No. 22,

1 correct? Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: \$80,000.

3 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I have \$1.2
4 million.

5 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: That's
6 \$1,200,000.

7 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes, yes.
8 That's right.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: There was an
10 updated one, Carrie.

11 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: The updated
12 one is what? \$1.2 million?

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That's the one I've
14 got in my original package.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: For Belmont?
16 What is it? Whose location is it, Belmont? I'll
17 sponsor it, because it's not on the agenda.

18 MR. ANTUN: That's for the Belmont
19 Human Services Commission.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yeah, I'll second
21 it.

22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So this is -- so
23 originally there's one that was awarded for the
24 23rd, but in 2023, they would pull a one-year
25 extension. So I guess now, based on how much

1 dollars was spent there since 2023, from January to
2 the end of the past, does that make sense?

3 MR. ANTUN: Yeah, I think the reason
4 for those extensions is because they wanted to
5 coincide with the plan. But this represents year
6 three of the competitive contracts. We come to you
7 every year to annually approve it, but we're
8 pursuing competitive contracts.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So when, at some
10 point, hopefully, right, within the next 24 months,
11 if not sooner, the ownership transfers over to
12 Alliance, then the contract will transfer over to
13 Alliance.

14 MR. ANTUN: That's correct. We
15 probably will come back to you to change the name.

16 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 23.
17 Resolution amending Resolution Nos. 822-12-2023 to
18 add funds to the Professional Service Contract Fair
19 and Open for Legal Services with Chasan, Lamparello,
20 Mallon & Cappuzzo, PC, \$25,000.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez-Lipski.

22 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 24.
23 Resolution authorizing Addition No. 7 to Purchasing
24 Agent's Award-Construction Contract "On Call
25 Contract for Traffic Signals, Foundations, Conduit

1 and Associated Work in the County of Hudson" Orchard
2 Holdings, LLC, \$150,000.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Sponsor.

4 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Second.

5 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 25.

6 Resolution authorizing agreement with Public
7 Services Electric and Gas, PSE&G, for Street
8 Lighting on 32nd Street in Union City, New Jersey.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Cedeño and
10 Rodriguez.

11 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 26.

12 Resolution authorizing the Hudson County Executive
13 to execute a Federal Aid Agreement with the New
14 Jersey Department of Transportation.

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Board as a whole.

16 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 27.

17 Resolution authorizing the County of Hudson to enter
18 into a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of
19 New Jersey Department of Human Services for the
20 Provision of Services through the State of Division
21 of Medical Assistance of Health Services for
22 Calendar Year 2025.

23 COMMISSIONER WALKER: Sponsor.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Second.

25 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 28.

1 Resolution authorizing the Sale of 2025 Bond
2 Anticipation Notes and authorizing the Director of
3 the Department of Finance and Administration/County
4 Treasurer of the County of Hudson, State of New
5 Jersey and other County Officials to undertake
6 certain actions in connection with such Bond
7 Anticipation Notes.

8 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Sponsor.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Second.

10 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 29. Legal
11 Advertising for 2025.

12 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Sponsor.

13 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Second. Will
14 we advertise it? The problem is that at least, I
15 think, both of these publications are going digital.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: The Star Ledger
17 is.

18 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Well, I think
19 the Journal is as well. They're sold by the
20 publisher, I think.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: It doesn't say
22 the Ledger. It says the Observer.

23 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm sorry.
24 The Observer, that's correct. They're going
25 digital. Oh, I didn't see about the observer.

1 There's still a paper, but a Ledger's certainly
2 going digital in the beginning of February.

3 So, as I said at the last meeting, I think
4 what we need to do is clarify that, and get maybe a
5 legal opinion as to whether or not our legal
6 publications, if they're solely digital, are they
7 gonna qualify as publications pursuant to the
8 various statutes? Do we have to abide by it?

9 MR. ANTUN: Yes, Commissioner. The
10 Governor signed legislation that would authorize the
11 digital process of advertising. I think it goes
12 until the end of March, until they're going to come
13 back and do another legislation. This interim bill
14 that the Governor signed is only good for about 60
15 days or so.

16 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Probably
17 that's an executive order, isn't it?

18 MR. ANTUN: No, no, no, that was
19 legislation. It was a bill.

20 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Oh, okay. I
21 don't like executive orders.

22 MR. ANTUN: Yeah, yeah. No, it was
23 not an executive order -- executive order,
24 Commissioner. It was a bill that was enacted, but
25 it was to provide temporary relief because a number

1 of publications are ceasing to exist. The Star
2 Ledger will be digital, and for now, the digital
3 publication is acceptable until they come up with
4 new legislation.

5 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: But that
6 legislation was a stopgap legislation, just to get
7 us over this transition period until we figure out
8 what we're going to do.

9 MR. ANTUN: Correct.

10 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay. So now,
11 and that lasts until the end of March?

12 MR. ANTUN: Don't hold me to that
13 date, but it's around that time.

14 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm going to
15 hold you to it. What is it? Well, I'm kidding. So
16 I just want to make sure that everybody understands
17 that the statutes are the statutes, and we have to
18 abide by it. So whatever outlet we use has to be
19 statutorily recognized, and I don't know that a
20 digital format is going to be one that complies with
21 the statute. That's just a question. Because that
22 would be one of the things that some aggrieved
23 plaintiff would file a complaint on. Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So the statute
25 historically requires a newspaper with a

1 circulation.

2 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: General
3 circulation and 20 some numbers in it, yes.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So the Observer,
5 what is the circulation of each of these newspapers?

6 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: That's
7 exclusively a West Hudson, South Bergen. I don't
8 think that's going to meet your statewide criteria
9 for what we need. I think we do that more as an
10 accommodation to the constituents in my district.

11 MR. BATTISTA: The strong legislative
12 dissatisfaction is the reason. The second reason we
13 do that is sometimes in the federal procurement, it
14 has to have the same procurement that we do at West
15 Hudson.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Why would we
17 then just limit it to these two? If you have one
18 that meets the requirement. The New York Times
19 exists, why would we use that? I can think of two
20 other newspapers that exist.

21 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: What's the
22 other one?

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I don't know.
24 There's other ones, actually. Why, if we're allowed
25 to have other ones besides the Ledger, then I have

1 no problem with the Observer.

2 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Why don't we
3 also put those? I mean, ultimately, this is. We
4 should look at that and figure out what's best. Is
5 there a Hispanic? Is that even published in?

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: El Diario.

7 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Does El
8 Diario publish a hard copy?

9 MR. BATTISTA: I wouldn't, I mean,
10 I'm not against putting it in another language
11 publication. I don't know if that's going satisfy
12 the federal procurement that sometimes the engineer
13 has to do.

14 MR. ANTUN: And they're published in
15 English, so I don't know if that's the problem.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Can we get that
17 to explain to me what the requirements are before
18 Thursday? Because I'm not comfortable voting until
19 I understand that if we can list more than -- as
20 long as there's one that meets the circulation
21 requirement, and I'm not sure that the Ledger, I
22 believe the ledger's going digital, too.

23 MR. ANTUN: Yeah, yeah, that's what
24 it is. The Ledger is digital.

25 MR. BATTISTA: I don't think there's

1 going to be a paper option. That's the problem.

2 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yeah.

3 There'll be no paper option. I don't know if it's
4 February 1st or not, but the paper deadline where
5 the Ledger ceases the paper publication goes
6 entirely digital, and that's going to be happening in
7 maybe a week or so.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: February 1st, I
9 believe it is.

10 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yeah, yeah. I
11 think you're right, yeah.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Less than two
13 weeks.

14 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: So but what my
15 understanding is as of tonight is that we are
16 authorized to continue, and we have valid service by
17 publication on the digital platform until further
18 statute from the legislature. Is that right, Don.

19 MR. BATTISTA: Yes. Yeah, that's my
20 understanding. That is correct.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'd like to see
22 that legislation, too. How does the Ledger now --
23 how does the Ledger now qualify? Can it be digital
24 qualified? Do we have to have X amount of
25 subscribers digitally?

1 MR. BATTISTA: I think it's part of
2 it, what we're hearing. The Ledger's always been
3 our primary newspaper publication. So the fact that
4 there's no longer paper, digital doesn't change
5 their status to be qualified.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: It would only
7 change their status if prior they had a circulation
8 on a daily basis of say 500,000. Now they're
9 digital and their circulation of digital subscribers
10 was only 100,000, and the minimum requirement was
11 150,000.

12 MR. BATTISTA: Commissioner, you
13 might be correct.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I just don't
15 know.

16 MR. BATTISTA: I think your argument
17 might be better made with the legislature. This is
18 what they put in place.

19 MR. ANTUN: And that's why this is
20 temporary. This is not permanent. This expires.

21 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I get that,
22 but there isn't a meeting that we had where we take
23 for granted the proper service by publication. So
24 we look for our ordinances especially. So we need
25 to nail this down sooner rather than later so we

1 don't run into any lawsuits that somebody's going to
2 raise a calendar complaint that's saying the
3 county's violated the publication of requirements of
4 the statute, yada, yada, yada. We want to nail it
5 down. So if we got two months to do it, let's do
6 it. And that's really up to the legislature as I
7 understand. But if the legislature can't get it
8 done, then can Governor Murphy extend it by
9 executive order for another two months or whatever.

10 But that's a decision that's not in our
11 hands. It's in the State's hands, either the
12 legislature or the Governor or both. But we've got
13 to -- we've got to knock.

14 MR. ANTUN: The other thing I want to
15 add to that, since it's a legal publication, the
16 digital publication cannot require you to subscribe.
17 So if you go to their web site, there's going to be
18 a section where you can access the publication.

19 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: The legal ads
20 without having to be a subscriber.

21 MR. ANTUN: You got it, that's it.
22 You can subscribe.

23 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay. Yes.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Go ahead,
25 Mr. Clerk.

1 THE CLERK: We have five new
2 ordinance for adoption. I'll use the prior
3 sponsors, and so I'll turn it over to the
4 Administration.

5 MR. BATTISTA: Before you turn it to
6 the Administration, I need to talk on what is Agenda
7 No. 2. At the end of the public hearing on
8 Thursday, I'm going to recommend that we make an
9 amendment to the ordinance that could just change
10 the license plate number of the vehicle in question.
11 I believe the Clerk may have spoken to your
12 attorney. I don't believe it's going to be a
13 substantive material change to the ordinance. It's
14 not changing the identity of the recipient.

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: This is for what?
16 Excuse me. This is for what?

17 MR. ANTUN: A restricted parking
18 spot. Oh, yeah, restricted parking spot. The
19 introduction of No. 2.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I'm sorry.

21 MR. BATTISTA: No, no, it's a public
22 hearing. After the public hearing, and I would
23 recommend that you make that amendment. I just
24 explained to you why.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: You can't continue,

1 Mr. Clerk.

2 THE CLERK: I'll turn it over.

3 MR. ANTUN: Mr. Chairman, I just have
4 one additional item. It is a resolution authorizing
5 County, the 2025 Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Services
6 grant award to various providers for Year One of the
7 competitive contracting process, February 1, 2025 to
8 December 31, 2025, \$876,936.50.

9 THE CLERK: This will be Resolution
10 No. 30.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Sponsor.

12 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Second.

13 MR. ANTUN: That's all I have.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I want to reference
15 that this special meeting tonight on Zoom
16 instructions from IT. For those attending the 6
17 p.m. Special Meeting regarding the County's 2025
18 Green Acres application via Zoom, please note that
19 there are two separate e-mails with individual links
20 for each meeting. At the conclusion of the caucus
21 meeting, please log out of Zoom and use the Special
22 Meeting link to reconnect to Zoom at 6 p.m. Thank
23 you.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I asked a while
25 ago for a written report on the courthouse, the

1 delay, the contribution behind the delay of formally
2 opening the courthouse and when to anticipate the
3 opening of that courthouse.

4 MR. DRUMELER: Commissioners, as we
5 discussed two weeks ago, we're getting our group
6 together to meet with the stakeholders, all the
7 stakeholders. We have one of those meetings
8 scheduled for tomorrow, so we should be able to get
9 you a report by the end of the week.

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: That's fine.
11 That's fine. I'm just saying, like, I asked for a
12 week's notice. It's not that hard to do a report
13 where you say that this is where we are today, and
14 we may have additional information once we have
15 another meeting, that's fine, but there's got to be
16 reasons and timelines and if you ask me today on any
17 project I work on in my day job, I can give you the
18 24 hours and status of it, and the timeline of it
19 and if there are delays, the meetings are delayed.
20 We need to have to meet with a bunch of people to do
21 that.

22 MR. DRUMELER: We're in pretty good
23 shape with our end. It's just the court's IT, at
24 end of one of the tighter periods to get you a
25 confidential report.

1 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Question about
2 the new courthouse.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Al.

4 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Are there
5 any -- how are we securing the building right now?

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: The sheriff's
7 office.

8 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Are they there
9 24-7?

10 MR. ANTUN: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: You sure?

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Andrew Conti is on
15 the line. Andrew? They connect us to Andrew Conti.
16 There he is.

17 UNDERSHERIFF CONTI: Yes, we're there
18 24-7.

19 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: When did that
20 start?

21 UNDERSHERIFF CONTI: When the county
22 took over occupancy of the building.

23 DIRECTOR D'ALESSANDRO: June 28th.

24 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: And when was
25 that?

1 DIRECTOR D'ALESSANDRO: June 28th.

2 UNDERSHERIFF CONTI: I believe it was
3 August.

4 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay. Thank
5 you.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So the design
7 builder, are they still in there? Are they doing
8 any additional work? Or are they done with
9 everything that's going on?

10 MR. DRUMELER: Commissioner, we're
11 finishing up some punch lists with them, and we have
12 a couple of days more, day five, I assume we'll
13 finish it. We expect to be done with it. I mean, a
14 lot of punch list stuff is relatively minor. Nicks
15 on the walls, that kind of stuff. We are putting up
16 a secondary fence around the sally port, which will
17 affect operations, but we're putting a secondary
18 fence up. That will be the longest term piece that
19 we're doing, but other than that, most of the stuff
20 will be done pretty expeditiously. The IT work for
21 the courts, the courts are doing themselves is
22 really the core.

23 COMMISSIONER WALKER: State
24 department, correct?

25 MR. DRUMELER: Yeah, the State's

1 doing their final, of running all their own
2 switches, their own primary switches for their own
3 primary security.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Part of the
5 report that you get, I'm just reading the whole
6 bunch of them before you even came to the podium,
7 are local MWB inclusion?

8 MR. DRUMELER: Yeah, I think we have
9 a pretty good idea as of where that sits right now.

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: With a breakdown
11 of who those entities are, a little bit more, we'll
12 have to see those out on the agenda. Might as well
13 go ahead and say it. I'm asking what should happen.
14 It should be readily available. It might take a
15 little longer to get this, but additionally, how
16 close, trade by trade, what are the goals of the
17 percentage of local are parts of the impact on the
18 market now? Which trades have been traded in, and
19 what was the percentage of the whole thing?

20 MR. DRUMELER: Commissioner, I know
21 the consultant tracks all that, so we'll get you the
22 full report.

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Did you take the
24 money? Where's the money now?

25 MR. DRUMELER: We did, and we'll get

1 that for you as well. That should be easier than
2 the other.

3 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Now, Dave, now
4 we have the new assignment judge.

5 MR. DRUMELER: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: How's the
7 interface with the new assignment judge meshing with
8 the opening of the new courthouse as far as the
9 court system? Because technically, as the
10 assignment judge, Judge Katz, he's got a lot to say
11 as far as the maintenance and the running of the
12 building.

13 MR. DRUMELER: Judge Katz's arrival
14 has been wonderful.

15 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay. I just
16 wanted to make sure he's on board, and then there's
17 a good communicative communication with Judge Katz
18 as far as what he needs and what his people need and
19 what we can provide.

20 MR. DRUMELER: Absolutely. And he's
21 been wonderful since his arrival.

22 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay. Great.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

24 THE CLERK: May I have a motion to
25 adjourn?

1 COMMISSIONER WALKER: I've just got
2 one thing.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Jerry.

4 COMMISSIONER WALKER: I just wanted
5 to thank the County Technical schools, the County
6 students from High Tech that was live streaming the
7 MLK basketball tournament yesterday. Thank Denise
8 and your staff for making sure that the crowds and
9 stuff was good.

10 I just wanted to give you all a couple of
11 scores from yesterday. Bayonne won against McNair,
12 67-41. Union City beat Piscataway, 63 -- that's
13 probably the best game. 63-60. Hoboken beat North
14 Central, 71-61. Jackson Memorial lost to St.
15 Thomas, 46-63. And Schneider beat Ferris, 51-35, so
16 thanks.

17 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Jerry, as a
18 West Hudson guy, I grew up in the 1960s, so I'm
19 shocked that anybody can centralize. Remember
20 Dwayne Beverly, all those guys? They were the guys
21 then, so I'm shocked. But good for you. Yeah, I
22 think it's okay.

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Now you need to
24 come watch a St. Peter's Prep team. They're ranked
25 number one in the state. They got a seven-footer

1 who's like the most recruited player in the state.

2 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: He's a St.
3 Peter's Prep?

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yeah, he is a
5 Prep.

6 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Wow. What's
7 his name?

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Jerry, what's
9 the seven-footer's name?

10 COMMISSIONER WALKER: I can tell you,
11 he's an African.

12 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yeah. Tell me,
13 he's an African or who's an African?

14 COMMISSIONER WALKER: He's probably
15 22 years old, I don't know.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: But so what
17 happened was when Dickinson High School won the
18 Hamilton Park League this past summer, Prep had to
19 go out and find somebody because they were afraid of
20 losing the County championships if they were the
21 defending champion. And all of a sudden, this
22 gentleman showed up, and they're the number one team
23 in the state.

24 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: All right.
25 Well, Jerry, Jerry, you don't have any Seton Hall

1 scholarships in the hands of this gentleman.

2 COMMISSIONER WALKER: Yeah, we do.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: He'd love to
4 take them, but he's gotta get on line. They've got
5 to get online.

6 COMMISSIONER WALKER: We just
7 can't -- we can't afford them.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yeah. With the
9 portal, he'll probably play two, three different
10 team spots in college.

11 COMMISSIONER WALKER: Yeah, yeah,
12 yeah.

13 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: It didn't
14 matter, portal, pre-portal, post-portal. It was all
15 a matter of doing it.

16 COMMISSIONER WALKER: Yeah, I don't
17 know if they --

18 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: NIL, no NIL,
19 it was all a matter of doing it.

20 COMMISSIONER WALKER: Yeah, I'm not
21 sure if he took the test to get into Prep. I'm
22 trying to do a little research on that.

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: They have a
24 waiver. They have an international waiver.

25 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: You didn't

1 take the test to get into that, did you?

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Come on. They
3 had no test. Tests were given at the gym. That's
4 not true. They were verbal. They were oral tests
5 given at the gymnasium.

6 Now, I wanted to also just thank both Road
7 and especially Parks for the job done yesterday. I
8 appreciate the Administrator. I reached out, I saw
9 folks walking into Lincoln Park to use the sledding
10 and saw that he had a lot of pads, and he said he
11 didn't work and he was gracious enough. I'm sure
12 with the approval of the County Tech to bring a
13 couple of additional workers on and to move things
14 over.

15 COMMISSIONER WALKER: John and I hung
16 out and harassed him for a couple of hours
17 yesterday. I made sure he came and met me at the
18 park. Then I went down once for everybody else.

19 THE CLERK: All right. Is there a
20 motion to adjourn?

21 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Motion.

22 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Second.

23 THE CLERK: All in favor? We are
24 adjourned.

25 (Whereupon the deposition is then
concluded at 5:22 p.m.)

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

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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 an Regular Caucus
Meeting of the Hudson County Board of County
Commissioners, held on Tuesday, January 21, 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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