

HUDSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

RE:

CAUCUS MEETING : TRANSCRIPT OF  
OF THE :  
HUDSON COUNTY BOARD OF : PROCEEDINGS  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS :  
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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  
Monday, December 22, 2025  
1:00 p.m.

B E F O R E:

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  
ALBERICO DEPIERRO, ESQ., 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. Commissioner Baselice.

3 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Here.

4 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

5 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Here.

6 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

7 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Here.

8 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

9 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Here.

10 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

11 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Here.

12 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

13 Commissioner Walker. Chairman Romano.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Here.

15 THE CLERK: Chairman, we will be

16 pulling L-1 for a meeting to be scheduled in

17 January.

18 Resolution No. 1. Cancellation of 2025

19 budget appropriations.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Sponsor.

21 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Second.

22 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 2.

23 Resolution requesting authorization to cancel Grant

24 Appropriations Reserves and Grant Receivable

25 balances. \$24,946,824.04; reserves. \$22,088,343.38.

1 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Sponsor.

2 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Second.

3 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 3. 2025

4 Budget Appropriation Transfers.

5 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Sponsor.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Cedeño.

7 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: No, that was

8 Cifelli.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Cifelli, I'm sorry.

10 Kopacz-Cifelli, Cifelli and Carrie.

11 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 4.

12 Resolution authorizing 2026 Temporary Budget for  
13 debt service.

14 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Sponsor.

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Second.

16 THE CLERK: And for the record,

17 Commissioner Rodriguez is on the dais.

18 Resolution No. 5. Resolution authorizing  
19 the application acceptance of grant funds, if  
20 awarded, of the Urban Forest Grant from New Jersey  
21 Department of Environmental Protection, Riggi  
22 Natural Climate Solutions Program, for Shade Tree  
23 Planting, and Tree Well Enhancement. Up to  
24 \$2,500,000.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: O'Dea and Kopacz.

1 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 6.  
2 Resolution accepting FY2026 Grant Funds from the  
3 State of New Jersey Department of Human Services for  
4 Medication Assistance Treatment and for substance  
5 abuse programs operated by the County Department of  
6 Family Services and Reintegration in the Hudson  
7 County Correctional Facility, October 1st, 2025 to  
8 September 30th, 2026, \$688,548.

9 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Sponsor.

10 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Question on 6.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Can you give me  
13 a quick overview of what this program does? What  
14 kind of treatments and medications?

15 DIRECTOR MAZZA: So it's suboxone,  
16 methadone, and there are medications that help treat  
17 opiate addiction. So some of them block the ability  
18 to get high and some of them treat withdrawals and  
19 help maintain them through treatment.

20 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I mean,  
21 obviously I have no expertise in this, but I've been  
22 doing a little bit of research because obviously  
23 there have been several deaths at the correctional  
24 center. And I think at least four of them due to  
25 like coronary or heart attacks. And some prescribed

1 medications or drugs for individuals with certain  
2 mental health issues, such as schizophrenia can  
3 result in, I guess, side effects related to the  
4 heart. Have you ever, have you ever had anyone ever  
5 talk to you about that?

6 DIRECTOR MAZZA: So I think you would  
7 have to have one of the medical doctors comment.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So I think, I  
9 think we need to have someone from medical here  
10 because in doing research, it's been suggested to me  
11 that the medical contract should have a cardiologist  
12 as part of the contract, and currently there is no  
13 cardiologist.

14 And that -- and that in looking at the  
15 deaths related to coronaries there and -- and  
16 tracing back those individuals who may have been  
17 prescribed either at the correctional center from --  
18 from the medical, which could be different than the  
19 new medical group. Or prescribed when they were  
20 sent to the Jersey city Medical Center, that there  
21 could be a correlation between those prescriptions  
22 and that -- and that obviously, currently, there  
23 appears to be no -- no checking of -- of coronary  
24 health of individuals at the facility brought to the  
25 facility, up to including those individuals who by

1 their nature may be high risk, if for example, they  
2 are morbidly obese.

3 So I think we, based on the number of  
4 debts that have occurred there, it would be prudent  
5 for us to reach out to the new medical group, and  
6 I'd like to be able to ask them that those  
7 questions. And I'd be curious to see if other  
8 correctional centers that have outside medical  
9 contracts, in fact, have under those contracts, a  
10 cardiologist or deaths -- or death due to coronary  
11 issues in the years, a lot substantial enough.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Set that up for the  
13 next meeting, a representative.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And then also  
15 have them prepared to let me know, had they -- had  
16 they yet put in place the system to be able to  
17 divert individuals with mental health issues  
18 directly into their secured mental health facility,  
19 that's in, I guess, Essex County.

20 You remember they spoke at the agenda at  
21 the meeting. Remember when they came at the meeting  
22 and we asked the questions about that, and they  
23 advise us that they have a -- I don't know whether  
24 it's under their auspices, but they have a secured a  
25 mental health facility that I guess is Medicaid

1 eligible so that individuals could get sent directly  
2 there. And then I guess last along those lines --

3 MR. ANTUN: Commissioner, Mr.  
4 Chairman, you want this -- you want them to come to  
5 the next caucus in January?

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yeah.

7 MR. ANTUN: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And then -- and  
9 then lastly, and we get a timeline update from when  
10 the mental health court would be in place?

11 MR. SALZAR: We sent the revised --  
12 we had to revise our budget. We sent it back down  
13 to the State. The State has it. I can follow up  
14 with the state and find out what their timeline is,  
15 but they have everything that they needed this  
16 morning.

17 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Would you please  
18 request to get a timeline from them?

19 MR. SALZAR: Yeah, I'll reach out to  
20 them this afternoon.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay.

22 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 7.  
23 Resolution authorizing acceptance of funds, if  
24 awarded, from the New Jersey Youth Justice  
25 Commission, Juvenile Detention Alternative

1 Initiative for CY2026 and approving the award of a  
2 Fair and Open Competitive Contract with Strong Ones,  
3 LLC, January 1st, 2026 through December 31st, 2026,  
4 \$60,000.

5 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Sponsor.

6 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Second.

7 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 8.

8 Resolution amending resolution --

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Hold on one second.

10 I'm acknowledging that Commissioner Lipski is on the  
11 Zoom.

12 THE CLERK: Yes. For the record, as  
13 Chairman said --

14 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Thank  
15 you.

16 THE CLERK: Resolution amending  
17 Resolution No. 540-9-2025 to accept funds from the  
18 New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of  
19 Aging Services, and to authorize the award of  
20 Contract Year 2025 Final Award Adjustments to  
21 provider agencies, January 1st, 2025 through  
22 December 31st, 2025, \$217,270 -- \$72.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Sponsor.

24 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Second, Kopacz.

25 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 9.

1 Resolution authorizing allocation from New Jersey  
2 Grant Funds from the New Jersey Historical  
3 Commission for the Hudson County Partnership Program  
4 to grantee organizations, January 1st, 2026 through  
5 December 31st, 2026, \$95,234.

6 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Sponsor.  
7 Kopacz.

8 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Second.  
9 Baselice.

10 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 10.  
11 Resolution approving the allocation of funds from  
12 the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Local Arts  
13 Program to grantee organizations for Fiscal Year  
14 2026, January 1st, 2026 to December 31st, 2026,  
15 \$337,513.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Board as a whole.

17 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 11.  
18 Resolution allocating CY2026 Alcoholism and Drug  
19 Abuse Services Grant Funds to various providers for  
20 two year of a competitive contract process, January  
21 1st, 2026 through December 31st, 2026, \$1,335,017.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Board as a whole.

23 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 12.  
24 Resolution amending Resolution No. 594-10-2024 and  
25 Resolution No. 413-7-2025 to reallocate and

1 deobligate funds received from the State Department  
2 of Labor and Workforce Development to vendors for  
3 continuation of WorkFirst New Jersey services,  
4 \$165,050.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez-Lipski.

6 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 13.

7 Resolution authorizing award of Program Year 2025  
8 Emergency Solutions Grant and Emergency Solutions  
9 Grant County Supplement Funds to various  
10 sub-recipients, January 1st, 2025 to June 30th,  
11 2026, \$495,635.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez-Lipski.

13 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 14.

14 Resolution authorizing to amend Resolution No.  
15 482-8-2021, 465-8-2022, 427-7-2023 and 184-4-2025 to  
16 award additional Community Development Block Grants  
17 funding to the Garden State Community Development  
18 Corporation February 1, 2026 through March 31, 2026;  
19 up to \$140,000.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez-Lipski.

21 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 15.

22 Resolution authorizing a Non-fair and Open  
23 Professional Service Contract with Waterfront  
24 Project, Inc. to provide legal services for Eviction  
25 Prevention and Housing Stability, November 1st, 2025

1 June 30th, 2026, \$180,000.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: O'Dea and Cifelli.

3 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 16.

4 Resolution authorizing a Non-fair and Open Contract  
5 with Kesz1 Technologies, LLC, for its yearly  
6 maintenance services for the Hudson County Custom  
7 Application and Purchasing Portal, January 1st, 2026  
8 to December 31st, 2026, \$64,040.

9 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Sponsor.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Second.

11 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 17.

12 Resolution awarding a Non-fair and Open Contract to  
13 Hudson Realty Abstract Company for Hudson County  
14 Park Survey, \$70,000.

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Baselice, and who  
16 was that? Kopacz.

17 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 18.

18 Approved Purchasing Agent's awards, purchased made  
19 under State contract.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and  
21 Cedeño.

22 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 19.

23 Purchase made under the Educational Service  
24 Commission of New Jersey Pricing System, formerly  
25 known as the Middlesex Regional Educational Service

1 Commission.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and  
3 Cedeño.

4 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 20.  
5 Purchase made under the Bergen County Cooperative  
6 Pricing System.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and  
8 Cedeño.

9 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 21.  
10 Purchase made under the Union County Cooperative  
11 Pricing System.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and  
13 Cedeño.

14 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 22.  
15 Approve Purchasing Agent's Award.

16 COMMISSIONER WALKER: Caridad and  
17 what's her name? Fanny.

18 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 23.  
19 Resolution awarding Professional Service Contract  
20 Fair and Open to Wilentz, Goldman & Spitzer, PA  
21 Legal Services Bond Counsel, January 1st, 2026 to  
22 December 31st, 2026.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Kopacz and --

24 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Lipski.

25 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Question.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Question.

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Do you know how  
3 much like in 2025, they billed under this?

4 MR. ANTUN: Give me one second.

5 DIRECTOR FULLER: Good afternoon,  
6 Commissioners. Commissioner, I'll get that for you  
7 shortly. I'll get that for you by the next meeting  
8 this afternoon.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Two o'clock?

10 DIRECTOR FULLER: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Continue, Mr.  
12 Clerk.

13 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 24.  
14 Resolution awarding Professional Service Contract  
15 Fair and Open for the Provision of Legal Services -  
16 Outside Counsel for various services, January 1st,  
17 2026 to December 31st, 2026, 1,300,000 in aggregate.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Kopacz and Aponte.  
19 Just curious if any attorneys, what's that mean "in  
20 the aggregate"?

21 MR. DEPIERRO: So instead of what we  
22 did this year, Commission -- Chairman, is mirroring  
23 other municipalities and public entities, like take,  
24 for instance, an example is the HCIA. Instead of  
25 doing RFQs for every single category, tons of paper

1 and trees and other things, we did in one RFQ. So  
2 all the categories were in the RFQ. So it's 1.3  
3 million in the aggregate, which means the total  
4 amount of contracts that would be award is 1.3,  
5 which is \$680,000 less than last year. And trying  
6 to save that and be innovated with the budget  
7 because some categories that were usually in a  
8 Commissioner's award are now through the Insurance  
9 Fund Commission, which already approved it earlier  
10 today.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you for  
12 saving some money. And I'm wondering why Ed Florio  
13 never explained to me aggregate.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: We didn't learn  
15 that at Prep.

16 MR. DEPIERRO: I'm not going to --  
17 I'm not going to support the name of that. That's  
18 for sure.

19 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Go ahead.

20 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 25.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Another question.  
22 Go ahead, Bill.

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So each of  
24 these -- each of these groups that are listed here  
25 are listed for specific categories?

1 MR. DEPIERRO: That is correct.

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Even though the  
3 resolution just lists them in one lump, all their  
4 names in one lump, some at the end.

5 MR. DEPIERRO: In the end, yes. But  
6 every Whereas clause, if you will notice every  
7 Whereas clause has the name of the firm and the  
8 category. I bolded it so that it stands out. So  
9 every category and every Whereas clause is a  
10 separate award so that it is clearly delineated as  
11 to who is getting what for what contract.

12 And then at the end, like when we do for  
13 other resolutions where the vendors are listed,  
14 they're listed again at the end, but the Whereas  
15 clauses and the backup to it specifically delineates  
16 the category, the firm, and the amount of the  
17 contract.

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: But you have a  
19 complex general litigation. You have listed one,  
20 two, three, four.

21 MR. DEPIERRO: Correct.

22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And the amounts  
23 of them are not the same.

24 MR. DEPIERRO: Correct.

25 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: The one is only

1 25,000. One is 75,000 and two are 100,000.

2 MR. DEPIERRO: Correct.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So how is that  
4 determined that -- that those amounts would be laid  
5 out that way?

6 MR. DEPIERRO: Basically we took the  
7 category and the amount that was awarded last year.  
8 So we're awarding a little bit less in this  
9 category. And that is thanks to also the Law  
10 Department having added, I think now in this year at  
11 least two other litigation attorneys. So now we're  
12 able to handle more work internally as well.

13 So these -- the general, the complex  
14 general litigation is based on the firms that are  
15 getting the higher contracts. They have more  
16 attorneys in their firm that handle complex  
17 litigation. So basically based on that, when a  
18 complex general litigation case comes in, it'll be  
19 awarded according to these contracts based on  
20 expertise, resources, availability of counsel. And  
21 basically that's one of the only categories that  
22 has -- that has different categories of awards.

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Well, that's why  
24 I picked it up.

25 MR. DEPIERRO: Yeah. And that's the

1 answer.

2 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: If you've  
3 allocated certain amount or certain category to  
4 certain firm and over the course of the year, that  
5 firm exceeds its billing category, then would you,  
6 would you have the right without coming back to us  
7 to reallocate from another firm in another category  
8 funds that weren't used to pay? Oh, I'm sorry to  
9 pay the firm that -- that has now exceeded their  
10 allocation?

11 MR. DEPIERRO: I would say  
12 Commissioner, the answer is twofold. One, we would  
13 make sure as we do every month of billing, we are  
14 aware of when a firm is getting close to its limit.  
15 So we would first address that before it happens.  
16 But in the event that a firm would go over, but it  
17 doesn't go over the aggregate of the award for that  
18 category, we would be able to, if -- if that was the  
19 decision --

20 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: To make a  
21 transfer?

22 MR. DEPIERRO: Correct.

23 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Without having  
24 to come to us in a resolution?

25 MR. DEPIERRO: Correct.

1                   COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: You can do  
2 that internally.

3                   MR. DEPIERRO: If necessary. I  
4 don't -- I don't know if that's the way that I would  
5 go about doing it, I think.

6                   COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: And what would  
7 you do? What would you do if a firm got -- if  
8 you're nine months into their contract or the  
9 allocation and the firm is definitely going to  
10 exceed their allocation. You said you would address  
11 it at that point. How would you address it?

12                   MR. DEPIERRO: Well, it was -- the  
13 only way that could be addressed is rather than go  
14 into the pot of another firm, because there may be a  
15 case if I would say that if you're getting to a  
16 point where the contract for Firm A is about to go  
17 and exceed its amount, then the Law Department would  
18 have to be wise. In the next case that comes in, it  
19 would have to go to another firm in that category so  
20 that we don't over exceed one firm in the category  
21 of complex general litigation.

22                   But if it's getting close, then if it's a  
23 matter that we know that it's going to be a matter  
24 that will go past the next, that whatever's left in  
25 the contract, then we would have to ask for it to be

1 amended. Like we do a couple of months ago, the  
2 workplace harassment contracts were amended by the  
3 Board where it was additionally funded.

4 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: That's what I  
5 mean. You have to come back to us and do it. The  
6 other question is when you say you're going to  
7 address it and you would -- you would monitor the --  
8 the billing from, especially some of the firms that  
9 are doing more, that they have a bigger allocation  
10 because of the complexity and the number of cases  
11 they might be handling. Is there a requirement  
12 internally with their engagement letters that they  
13 have to have a relatively strict billing schedule so  
14 that you're not going to get hit?

15 So let's say their allocation is \$200,000  
16 and they've only billed 75,000, and they haven't  
17 built for three months. So now in the fourth month,  
18 they drop you a bill for \$200,000. How do you --  
19 that's my concern.

20 MR. DEPIERRO: No, that's a fair  
21 question. Commissioner. And fortunately or  
22 unfortunately, the firms never forget to send their  
23 monthly billing so.

24 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: You're making  
25 that up about a lawyer, right?

1 MR. DEPIERRO: I'm sorry?

2 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: You're making  
3 that up about lawyers.

4 MR. DEPIERRO: Okay. We won't go on  
5 the lawyer jokes. There's too many out there. So  
6 every -- every month we do get the billing and you'd  
7 be surprised how timely their billing is sent in.  
8 So that is -- that is looked at by us.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I don't -- I  
10 just for your purpose and our purposes, I would not  
11 want to see, you know, so many bills and say, Oh  
12 wow, they're right on. They're going to be under,  
13 they're going to be under, under, under the  
14 allocation. And all of a sudden at the end, they  
15 give you a final bill that's double or triple what  
16 you thought.

17 MR. DEPIERRO: No, no. That won't  
18 happen, Commissioner. We have -- we have also great  
19 administrative staff upstairs that stays on top of  
20 the billing, and I and a few other lawyers, we look  
21 at the bills because we have to make sure that  
22 there's also accountability on the billing.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Bobby.

24 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: A couple of  
25 things. First, I like the idea of saving money.

1 There are typos in the resolution fact sheet. First  
2 construction should be a hundred thousand. Next  
3 should be 300,000 and Law State Federal Regulations  
4 would be 50,000.

5 MR. DEPIERRO: I'm opening it up  
6 right now, Commissioner. My apologies.

7 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Just missing  
8 a zero.

9 MR. DEPIERRO: On which one?

10 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Construction.

11 MR. DEPIERRO: Oh yes, yes. Yep.

12 The first one is missing.

13 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Next one's  
14 300,000.

15 MR. DEPIERRO: Yep.

16 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: And Law State  
17 and Federal is 50,000.

18 MR. DEPIERRO: Yes. I could have it  
19 reprinted in a few minutes.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: So we have to  
21 revote on that. where's our law team on that?  
22 Carmen, do we have to bring it back on the fact  
23 sheet?

24 MR. ANTUN: That's what's being  
25 corrected, not the resolution.

1 MR. DEPIERRO: I'll have it  
2 reprinted.

3 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: I'm all about  
4 when we have vendors or firms that produce the  
5 people that we had in the past, they've all done  
6 well. It's just -- this has changed because of an  
7 RP and saving money.

8 MR. DEPIERRO: So the current  
9 attorneys that we are using, they are either out of  
10 awards that are being -- that would be awarded here  
11 if passed by, by the Board. And the other side of  
12 it, which was already done earlier today, the  
13 Insurance Fund Commission. Take, for instance, the  
14 workplace harassment investigations was a line item  
15 in the Law Department. Now it's going to be through  
16 the Insurance Fund Commission.

17 So the firms have not changed and firms  
18 are not being taken off, or fully replaced at all.  
19 So obviously we have working relationships with the  
20 firms that we have, and we want to continue to have  
21 the work product that we're accustomed to. So it's  
22 just simply, it's a -- it's a way of saving budgets.  
23 Obviously, we're only talking about the Law  
24 Department budget. So it's saving line items, like  
25 I said, \$680,000 on the Law Department's budget.

1 And it also through the Insurance Fund Commission,  
2 you will, we award contracts and it's always up to,  
3 so you can, it's -- it's two different ways. Now  
4 layers of making sure that we are not exceeding  
5 budgets. Sometimes we have to, and that's okay  
6 because the work needs to get done. So it's just a  
7 way of being innovative because we know what we're  
8 walking into next year.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: And you're saving  
10 \$680,000?

11 MR. DEPIERRO: From a line item  
12 budget, yeah.

13 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: You're now in  
14 charge of the Law Department. I appreciate that.  
15 You're digging deep and you're looking, but in a  
16 sense, nobody's really losing anything. It's just  
17 moving money around.

18 MR. DEPIERRO: That's basically how  
19 we're doing it. It's the worker's compensation  
20 matters, all the matters. I -- if you need them at  
21 the categories that were in last year's budget that  
22 are now through the Insurance Fund Commission, I  
23 have them. We're even, we even had to, we saved  
24 money on each category as well.

25 We looked at it and say, you know what?

1 This year we gave out a contract, let's say three  
2 contracts for a total of \$360,000. We looked at  
3 the -- myself and -- and the staff, we looked at the  
4 budget and went through all the billing and say, you  
5 know what? We didn't go that high. So why don't we  
6 save money? So it's just a way of being able to do  
7 it.

8 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: I guess it  
9 goes, it goes back to Commissioner Cifelli. In the  
10 event something does, let's say we do go over, do we  
11 have a rainy day fund, so to speak, to deal with  
12 it's going over or we'll have to come through  
13 another resolution and he had more time to shift,  
14 right?

15 MR. DEPIERRO: I think it would  
16 either be, we either amend the contract, but again,  
17 that's \$680,000 is being saved. So that's \$680,000.  
18 And if we ever have to look back and say, Oh, Firm A  
19 needs more money because they're going to go over  
20 it --

21 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: It comes  
22 before us anyway.

23 MR. DEPIERRO: It would come,  
24 exactly. It was going to come before.

25 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Okay. Good.

1                   CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Billy? You say  
2 here like several places, the fee schedule is  
3 consistent with the schedule we had last year. It  
4 continues to represent a ten-percent fee reduction  
5 from the standard within the industry. Is that the  
6 hourly rate is ten-percent?

7                   MR. DEPIERRO: Yeah. That's  
8 boilerplate language from every year. Even all the  
9 past years is boilerplate language in our  
10 resolution.

11                   COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So our -- our  
12 hourly rate is ten-percent below what the industry  
13 standard is for the same.

14                   MR. DEPIERRO: At the very minimum.

15                   COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And then -- and  
16 then you know, one thing that I did, I look at is  
17 like a couple of these firms are awarded onto  
18 multiple categories, right? The one -- the one  
19 concern I have is awarding a firm under multiple  
20 categories that does like sexual and workforce  
21 harassment and hostile work environment  
22 discrimination because that's so much -- it's such a  
23 unique category. I think you've got like two of the  
24 firms that are also like complex litigation doing  
25 the same thing. Can you -- I mean, you know, there

1 are individuals identified within those firms that  
2 have some level of expertise in that particular area  
3 because it -- it seemingly becomes -- I don't think  
4 just here, but I think just in general a bigger -- a  
5 bigger area. And I just don't like, if there's  
6 hostile work against County employees, these are the  
7 same firms that you also have potentially doing  
8 complex general litigation work for you.

9 I just, the autonomy -- the autonomy  
10 necessary for a firm to handle that one category  
11 concerns me if they have other contracts to do other  
12 work for them.

13 MR. DEPIERRO: Valid question. And  
14 before doing it this way, I'm -- I'm always like  
15 this. Maybe it's not always a good thing. I always  
16 over ask my colleagues and other professionals. And  
17 also I sit on the -- as an attorney investigator on  
18 the Board of Ethics for Attorney Ethics in Essex  
19 County. And I cleared it also with them because I  
20 like to have my answers before I put anything down  
21 on paper.

22 And there is no conflict for a firm  
23 handling workplace harassment or hostile work  
24 environment, any of those types of investigations  
25 and handling complex or any litigation that are --

1 that comes through way of the County. Obviously, if  
2 you have Employee A that filed a workplace  
3 harassment complaint against one of their  
4 colleagues, and it is being handled by one of the  
5 firms in that category, if then that lawsuit, let's  
6 say that employee doesn't like the outcome of their  
7 investigation, and they file a lawsuit against the  
8 County, then obviously all that we would have to do  
9 as a Law Department, we wouldn't give the firm that  
10 did the investigation, the representation of the  
11 County on the defense.

12 So that's how you avoid any conflict. And  
13 no, there is no conflict generally speaking from  
14 handling investigations and also defending the  
15 County, let's say on a slip and fall or on a -- or  
16 on a matter related to a separate department.

17 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: There would  
18 be. There would be. There would be a potential  
19 conflict assuming that Employee A is the plaintiff  
20 in a harassment case. And that firm is handling the  
21 defense, County's defense of that, of that case.  
22 And then under their general litigation, stip in  
23 their -- in their contract, Employee A just  
24 coincidentally happens to be a fact witness for the  
25 County. Then they've got to recuse themselves,

1 right?

2 MR. DEPIERRO: Yes. But also for  
3 the, the investigation contracts, they don't  
4 represent the County. They are a third party.

5 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Right. But  
6 I'm saying if it ever gets to litigation and you  
7 find out that, that there's a -- but they'll have  
8 conflict programs in their computer system. And if  
9 they come up with a -- if there's a fact witness,  
10 that also happens to be a plaintiff against the  
11 County.

12 MR. DEPIERRO: And that is correct.  
13 And that is correct, Commissioner. In fact, before  
14 any contract is awarded, the firms always do a  
15 conflict. And if they have a conflict, they can't  
16 accept the award of the representation.

17 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Bill.

19 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Can we afford  
20 through the -- to the employees, the option to  
21 select any of those firms they want?

22 MR. DEPIERRO: No, because then you  
23 would, you would take away the independent aspect of  
24 it. There are sometimes situations that I've seen  
25 random situations where -- what was that? There

1 are -- there have been random situations where an  
2 employee has filed multiple complaints, and they  
3 didn't like the outcome of their investigation. So  
4 if they -- if they voice that complaint, we've  
5 awarded to the next firm on the list.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Have these -- so  
7 we have in the past had firms that did other work,  
8 but also did the workplace harassment and hostile  
9 work environment.

10 MR. DEPIERRO: Yes. It's currently  
11 happening now as well.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay. And then  
13 overall, can you just get us, I don't even need it  
14 today the year that we're currently in the amount, I  
15 guess, billed through the month of November by all  
16 the firms under all these categories.

17 MR. DEPIERRO: Sure.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Continue,  
19 Mr. Clerk.

20 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 25.  
21 Resolution awarding a Fair and Open Professional  
22 Services Contract to Neglia Engineering for the  
23 "Concept Development and Design for County Avenue,  
24 in the Town of Secaucus," \$315,350.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Cifelli-Baselice.

1                   THE CLERK: Resolution No. 26.  
2 Resolution awarding a fair and open professional  
3 service contract to Neglia Engineering for the  
4 design construction management of Palisade Avenue,  
5 safety improvements in the Township of North Bergen,  
6 \$33,900.

7                   CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Baselice and  
8 Rodriguez.

9                   THE CLERK: Resolution No. 27.  
10 Resolution awarding a fair and open professional  
11 service contract to Boswell, Inc., for design and  
12 construction management of John F. Kennedy Boulevard  
13 East and Bergenline Avenue intersection improvements  
14 in the Township of North Bergen \$69,206.

15                  CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Baselice-Rodriguez.

16                  COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Question. The  
17 office utilized the on-call engineering list. He  
18 solicited the post. What does that exactly mean?  
19 Does that mean anyone on the list is sent like a --  
20 an RFP?

21                  MR. KATARYNIAK: Yes, Commissioner.  
22 we pre-qualify. We pre-qualify this year was ten  
23 firms that have certain qualifications, requisite  
24 qualifications. We submit that proposal when we  
25 have a project to all ten, all ten are eligible to

1 submit.

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: You submitted an  
3 RFP to ten firms and one only respond.

4 MR. KATARYNIAK: No, no. Oh, no. On  
5 that particular one. Yes, yes, yes. On that  
6 particular one, there was only one respondent on  
7 that one.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: That just seems  
9 weird. Okay.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: All right.  
11 Continue, Mr. Clerk.

12 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 28.  
13 Resolution awarding Professional Services Contract  
14 Fair and Open to Boswell, Inc. for the Construction  
15 Management of Mechanical and Electrical Repairs to  
16 the Joint Hudson/Essex County Bridges, \$1,298,000.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez-Cifelli.

18 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 29.  
19 Resolution approving Change Order No. 3 Sparwick  
20 Contracting, Inc., "pedestrian Protection for the  
21 14th Street Viaduct," \$289,609.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Romano-Cedeño.

23 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 30.  
24 Resolution approving shared service agreement with  
25 Essex County for the operation, maintenance and

1 repair of three bridges in common.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Cifelli-Rodriguez.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Question.

4 Question 28.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: 28.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Since November  
7 of 2024, TM Services for this portion of the bridge  
8 project have been advertised on five separate  
9 occasion with no prior response. Where did you  
10 advertise? And why did you, and why -- why would  
11 you have used the same process of reaching out to  
12 firms that were qualified -- prequalified.

13 MR. KATARYNIAK: You're referring to  
14 the bridge repairs?

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.

16 MR. KATARYNIAK: Yeah. Yeah. I'm  
17 referring to your -- I'm referring to your memo.  
18 For the construction management firm -- yeah. For  
19 the construction management, we originally had gone  
20 out to specialized bridge contractors for that work.  
21 There were some clarifications regarding some of  
22 this work is very specialized. And I guess we had  
23 changed some of the terms to sort of open up for --  
24 for different contractors options. I think because  
25 it was an ongoing construction contract, there were

1 some concern about added liability for those firms  
2 to take on that additional work.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I guess my  
4 question was just general where, where, and how did  
5 you advertise? It says advertised five occasions  
6 with no response.

7 MR. KATARYNIAK: They were advertised  
8 through our on-call.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay. So it was  
10 three on-call. You didn't advertise it in the  
11 Bergen Record?

12 MR. KATARYNIAK: No, no, it wasn't.  
13 It wasn't wide open to the world.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: It would be --  
15 it would be good within a memo to specify that to  
16 say it that way. Because advertise, we assume you  
17 just -- you put an advertisement in whatever, either  
18 the way you bids are advertised in the papers.

19 MR. KATARYNIAK: Right. Okay.

20 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 31.  
21 Resolution authorizing the use of Competitive  
22 Contracting for the purchase or licensing of  
23 proprietary computer software for the Department of  
24 Cultural and Heritage Affairs.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Romano-Rodriguez.

1 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 32.  
2 Resolution authorizing encroachment of two balconies  
3 in the County Right-of-Way at 1207-1211 John F.  
4 Kenny Boulevard, City of Bayonne; Block 24 Lots 2  
5 and 3, \$5,600.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I sponsor for  
7 them.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: O'Dea-Baselice.

9 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 33.  
10 Resolutions scheduling Annual Re-Organization  
11 Meeting of the Hudson County Board of County  
12 Commissioners, Monday, January 5th, 2026 at 4:00  
13 p.m. 4.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Board as a whole.

15 THE CLERK: I-1. Ordinance amending  
16 Chapter 200, Article 18 of the Administrative Code  
17 to regulate bus stops on John F. Kennedy Boulevard  
18 East in the Town of Guttenberg.

19 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Who represents  
20 Gothenburg? Rodriguez and Cedeño.

21 THE CLERK: That's all I have. Mr.  
22 Chairman.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Mr. Administrator.

24 MR. ANTUN: Mr. Chairman, I have no  
25 additional items.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Hold on. Craig's  
2 coming.

3 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: Good  
4 afternoon, Commissioners and Directors. Thanks.  
5 Thanks for letting me into your house. Usually, you  
6 know what? There is an advantage to being elected  
7 County Executive, Commissioner Cifelli, right? Is  
8 there?

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm not the  
10 County Executive.

11 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GUY: But I just  
12 wanted to wish everybody, you know, Happy Holiday,  
13 Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa. And  
14 I just want to thank everybody on the Board, you  
15 know, for '25, you know, we got -- you got a lot of  
16 things accomplished. We've got a tough road ahead  
17 of us, but I think this Board as it stands now, you  
18 know, works together with everybody.

19 So I also want to, you know, give a shout  
20 out to our Directors because they make us all look  
21 good. And you -- everybody knows that they're  
22 accessible. So again, have a great Christmas, and  
23 I'm sure I'll see you or hear from you before the  
24 new year.

25 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Would you, would

1 you like to sponsor Resolution No. 32? I'll take my  
2 sponsorship back.

3 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Bayonne Kenny.  
5 Kenny's got it. Anything, Alberico, before we  
6 adjourn? We're going to come back after. Well, we  
7 got the public safety meeting. Yes, we'll do it  
8 after. We'll have a public safety meeting  
9 afterwards.

10 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Motion to  
11 adjourn.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Second?

13 THE CLERK: All in favor. We are  
14 adjourned.

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: We'll take a  
16 five-minute break here.

17 (Whereupon the proceeding is then  
18 concluded at 2:00 p.m.)  
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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 an Regular Caucus  
Meeting of the Hudson County Board of County  
Commissioners, held on Monday, December 22, 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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