

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, December 9, 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
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.

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 For the record, Commissioner Cifelli is on via Zoom.

10 Commissioner Kopacz.

11 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Here.

12 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Here.

14 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

15 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Here.

16 THE CLERK: Commissioner Walker.

17 COMMISSIONER WALKER: Here.

18 THE CLERK: Chairperson Romano.

19 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Here.

20 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm sorry.

21 I'm sorry, Mr. Clerk, but my audio is off. It's Al

22 Cifelli. I'm present. Can you hear me now?

23 THE CLERK: Yes, we can.

24 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Thank you.

25 THE CLERK: Okay. Resolution No. 1,

1 2025 Budget Appropriation Transfers.

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Sponsor.

3 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: I'll second.

4 Kopacz.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Question, Bill.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So there's a
7 need for like four or five buses for a -- for an
8 annual holiday event for seniors and -- and with the
9 flow of the technology, do I need to ask that you
10 guys transfer \$3,000 into like whatever our
11 accountants that pays for that because there's no
12 more money left?

13 MR. ANTUN: You know, Commissioner,
14 no -- no one has indicated that to me. If not, I
15 would have spoken to you.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Because somebody
17 said that, that you, they said, Why can't you pay it
18 from 2026?

19 And you said that's complicated to do. So
20 maybe we should, well, should I amend this to try to
21 find like \$3,000 from some other item before
22 Thursday? Can you check on that now on Thursday?

23 MR. ANTUN: Yeah. Yeah. Let me --

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: It's a small
25 number to try to resolve.

1 MR. ANTUN: No one's discussed that
2 with me. When do you -- when, when is it that --

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: That's on the
4 19th of the month.

5 MR. ANTUN: Of December?

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Correct.

7 MR. ANTUN: All right. Let me say
8 this, that there is -- if -- if something comes up
9 where it is needed, we could do it at the December
10 22nd meeting.

11 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay.

12 MR. ANTUN: Right now, Commissioner,
13 I'm not aware that that's required, but I'll check.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay.

15 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 2.
16 Resolution authorizing application for an acceptance
17 of grant funds if awarded from the New Jersey
18 Department of Transportation for FY2026 State Aid
19 Annual Transportation Program, \$6,291,966.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Who was that? Was
21 it Carrie?

22 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yeah.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Carrie and Yraida.
24 Rodriguez and Yraida.

25 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 3.

1 Resolution authorizing approval to submit grant
2 application and execute grant agreement with the New
3 Jersey Department of Transportation for the Local
4 Freight Impact Fund FY2026 for the Newark Jersey
5 City Turnpike Improvement Project, \$3,583,575.92.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Board as a whole.

7 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I was going to
8 sponsor it but...

9 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 4.
10 Resolution authorizing application for the
11 acceptance of grant funds if awarded and the
12 execution of grant agreement with the New Jersey
13 Department of Transportation for the rehabilitation
14 of the Bergen Avenue Bridge over the Hudson-Bergen
15 Light Rail in Jersey City under the FY2026 Local
16 Bridges Fund Program, \$2,018,860.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: All right, Al. You
18 want it, Al?

19 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yes, but I
20 have a question.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: All right. Hold
22 on. Let's get a second. Cifelli sponsored, and
23 seconded by Caridad.

24 Go ahead, Albert.

25 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: So, is there

1 any interplay between this and the federal tunnel
2 project, portal project?

3 MR. ANTUN: No, not at all.

4 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay. All
5 right. Thank you.

6 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 5.
7 Resolution authorizing the acceptance of additional
8 funds from the National Opiate Settlement Fund for
9 the purpose of mitigating the effects of the opiate
10 epidemic on the residents of Hudson County,
11 \$2,594.52.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yraida and Cifelli.

13 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 6. 2025
14 Budget Amendment National Opiate Settlement Fund,
15 \$2,594.52.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Cifelli and Yraida.

17 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 7.
18 Resolution amending Resolutions No. 52-1-2025,
19 456-8-2025 and 536-9-2025 to reallocate Alcoholism
20 and Drug Abuse Services granting -- Grant Funding,
21 February 1st, 2025 through December 31st, 2025,
22 \$70,105.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Lipski and
24 Rodriguez.

25 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 8.

1 Approve Purchasing Agent's awards, purchases made
2 under State contracts.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and
4 Jerry.

5 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Goddamn, what
6 kind of language is that?

7 COMMISSIONER WALKER: Forgive me.

8 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 9.
9 Purchases made under the Bergen County Cooperative
10 Pricing System.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and
12 Jerry.

13 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 10.
14 Purchases made under the Union County Cooperative
15 Pricing System.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Caridad and Jerry.

17 THE CLERK: No. 11 is a replacement,
18 Commissioners. Approve Purchasing Agent's Awards.

19 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Caridad and Jerry.

20 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: On No. 11 --

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Question, Billy.

22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: We spoke during
23 the Public Resources Committee about the need to
24 connect this company with a local training vendor,
25 which is National Career Institute. National Career

1 Institute obviously provides a certification in
2 HVAC, and I know they have challenges getting many
3 of those people placed. We're here giving a million
4 and a half dollar contract. So my first question is
5 if they're a union vendor then -- then how do we
6 create apprenticeships through the union? And if
7 they're not a union vendor, then how do we
8 immediately create opportunities for individuals
9 that go through that program to get placed?

10 We're giving them a million and a half
11 dollars, and I don't know what how much other work
12 they get. The name of the group is National Career
13 Institute. Jerry has their number. I have that
14 number. But do you know if there is a union?

15 MR. SAX: I don't know, but I said I
16 would find out.

17 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yeah.

18 MR. SAX: And look, I also don't have
19 the contact information for the National Career
20 Institute.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: We'll give you
22 that. This just points out as a rule of thumb, we
23 have on the books for many years a First Source
24 agreement. We've conceded that we've done little to
25 enforce that, and we've gotten commitments that

1 we're going to start to enforce it.

2 I think we need to, Mr. Chairman, you have
3 some kind of a committee that that oversees how
4 that's being done, maybe that's Contracts Committee
5 because they relate to contracts. But I think
6 there's a lot of opportunities that are being missed
7 to get people jobs, and there are a lot of people
8 even coming through Family Services that we sent to
9 training schools that we should be using companies
10 that we give millions of dollars a year to, to help
11 them get placed in position.

12 MR. ANTUN: Yeah, Commissioner. I
13 don't know if Frank Mazza is here, but I mean, we
14 have a protocol set in place. I don't know where
15 this company has been into that, but perhaps Mr.
16 Mazza can shed some light on that if he knows.

17 DIRECTOR MAZZA: So with a contract
18 like this, I imagine Monday morning the department
19 will be alerted, and then we'll have somebody reach
20 out to the vendor and to the company, and they're
21 supposed to if they have job openings, some short
22 non-union job openings, they're supposed to take
23 interviews with our folks who are in training.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: But Frank who's
25 making sure it happens?

1 DIRECTOR MAZZA: In my department?

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I work in this
3 world. If you send somebody a letter, nothing's
4 going to happen. If you don't -- if you don't have
5 a very strong person that's there that follows up
6 that sends them a monthly report that asks them to
7 verify if they've made any hirings in the last three
8 months or six months and doesn't stay on top of it,
9 I'm telling you, nothing's going to happen because
10 90 percent of these businesses would rather not have
11 to deal with it well.

12 Unless you are strong on top of them,
13 trust me, I'm going to be sitting here in a year.
14 You're going to tell me you sent all these letters,
15 I don't know if anyone got hired, and I'm going to
16 go pull out ones that are in Urban Enterprise Zone,
17 and I'm going to find out they never interviewed
18 anybody you sent them.

19 DIRECTOR MAZZA: We have people in
20 the department who are overseeing that, and the
21 notice of award that we just got from the Workforce
22 Development Board that was brought to you states
23 that 80 percent of everybody that enters training
24 has to have a job, and 60 percent of everybody who
25 is in training has to hold that job for six months.

1 The end of that grant is June 30th so the department
2 will be on top of it.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So if I asked
4 you to go over the last year and show me how many
5 people under the First Source ordinance, how many
6 companies hired and how many people there are.

7 DIRECTOR MAZZA: I could show you who
8 we sent, but I'm also telling you under this new
9 system that the way it operated before is not the
10 way it's going to operate moving forward.

11 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: But for you to
12 tell me who you sent without knowing whether or not
13 they got placed doesn't really --

14 DIRECTOR MAZZA: No, no. We would --
15 we would know who got a job and who didn't get a
16 job. I could send you that.

17 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So find out who
18 you sent, to which companies.

19 DIRECTOR MAZZA: Sure.

20 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: That got placed.

21 DIRECTOR MAZZA: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And as you know,
23 and as you know, if -- if possible, if you identify
24 companies to work with, you can offer them other
25 money. You can offer them a real legitimate, no

1 more.

2 DIRECTOR MAZZA: No. Workforce
3 Development Board has stated that any employment has
4 to be unsubsidized.

5 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: If you can go
6 directly to the State, I've gone to the State and
7 done direct OJT contract.

8 DIRECTOR MAZZA: And what I'm saying
9 is, once it becomes subsidized, it doesn't count
10 towards the performance metrics in our contract. So
11 we can do that, but we will forego that sort of
12 credit we get for --

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Well, at the end
14 of the day, a person gets a job, and they're placed
15 and they're no longer collecting food stamps and
16 whatever, I think that's a win.

17 DIRECTOR MAZZA: I agree. I
18 believe --

19 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Which department
20 is the semantics of who gives us credit now. We can
21 have a separate discussion and figure out because
22 it's ridiculous if they're not going to give us
23 credit from the Workforce Development Board.

24 DIRECTOR MAZZA: I couldn't agree
25 more.

1 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: People need
2 jobs, trust me. Jerry will bear that out, and we're
3 giving a lot of people a lot of -- a lot of -- lot
4 of contracts. We need to really start holding their
5 feet to the fire, acknowledging and rewarding those
6 that do and maybe looking for other -- other options
7 for those that don't. I think it's as simple as
8 that.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: And Ralph, you'll
10 give us an update, right?

11 MR. SAX: Yes.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

13 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 12.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Oh, one question.
15 Question, I want to JoAnn Northgrave so that's -- I
16 just want to compliment your mobile office trailer
17 for the Department of Aging and Veterans Affairs,
18 you and Lisa, what does that exactly entail? This
19 one we wanted to compliment you on that trailer, you
20 and Lisa for the Aged Senior Citizens and Veterans.

21 MS. NORTHGRAVE: Say it again.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That trailer that
23 you're getting on 11B or --

24 MS. NORTHGRAVE: Yes. That's for
25 TRANSCEND.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That's going to be
2 for seniors and the veterans?

3 MS. NORTHGRAVE: No. That's for --
4 that's for the drivers. That's the driver's hub.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Oh, okay. Thank
6 you. Sorry.

7 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 12.
8 Resolution authorizing renewal of fair and open
9 competitive contract with Hoboken Community Center
10 under the American Rescue Plan Act Grant, for the
11 creation of a Consumer Choice Pantry, January 1st
12 2026 through December 31st, 2026. Time extension.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Sponsored. Bobby
14 seconded. Can you give me a little bit info on that
15 please, on No. 12?

16 MR. ANTUN: Hey, Darice.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Nicole?

18 MS. GARCIA: No. 12? Hi. I believe
19 this is just to extend the term on delivery on the
20 construction and all of what's going into developing
21 this project. That's all it is.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: What do you mean
23 when you said construction? They're building right
24 on Second and Adams?

25 MR. ANTUN: They're building a pantry

1 on the ground floor, so the money needs to be
2 expended by the end of 2026, but this contract
3 called for it to be finished by this year. So we're
4 just -- we're just doing an extension to allow them
5 to go until next year.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Because
7 they've got the other one on 13th. That's what I
8 was wondering.

9 MR. ANTUN: No. This is the one on
10 Adams. I think it's on Adams.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: But they're
12 connected. There's nothing on Adams right now.
13 It's a hole.

14 MS. GARCIA: That's -- that's the
15 location, the old battalion.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: There's nothing
17 there. So what I'm saying is you're still dealing
18 with you where it is on the 13th Street, correct?

19 MS. GARCIA: Right. That's the
20 Hoboken Community Center.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yeah. That's what
22 you're talking about?

23 MS. GARCIA: And this is a new
24 construction.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: But it's the same

1 place?

2 MS. GARCIA: That will be the
3 operator, yes.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.
5 Continue, Mr. Clerk.

6 THE CLERK: Resolution No.13.
7 Resolution authorizing to amend Resolution
8 810-12-2024 and 591-10-2025 to extend Social
9 Services for the homeless and the Hudson County
10 Homeless Trust Fund Program Contracts to various
11 providers for one month. January 1st, 2026 through
12 January 31st, 2026. \$200,189.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Lipski and
14 Rodriguez.

15 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 12.
16 Resolution amending Revolution No. 604-101-2025 to
17 award additional American Rescue Plan Act Grant
18 Funds to the coalition for Food and Health Equity to
19 address Food Insecurity, January 1, 2025 through
20 October 31, 2026, \$210,000.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Lipski and Caridad.

22 THE CLERK: Resolution No.15.
23 Resolution authorizing --

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Hold on. Hold
25 on. Question on 14. Can we -- can we get a copy

1 and you can redact whatever information you need to
2 redact, I'd like to get a copy of the list of all
3 the individuals that have currently been served
4 under this contract to give them an extra 200,000.

5 MS. GARCIA: Yes. We could get you a
6 copy of what you've asked for.

7 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay.

8 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 15.
9 Resolution authorizing to amend Resolution No.
10 402-7-2025 to House Hudson County Youth in the Essex
11 County Juvenile Detention Center, January 1, 2026
12 through December 31, 2026, \$4,126,252.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Board as a whole.
14 Question. Go ahead, Bill.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: What's the
16 change in rate?

17 MR. ANTUN: The change in the rate
18 goes from 325 to 424. That is the -- that is the
19 base rate, and then when you add in the medical and
20 the education, it goes from 424 to 565.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: That's a day
22 rate. Is that a daily rate?

23 MR. ANTUN: Yes, it is.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: It's crazy.

25 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: That is crazy.

1 But I have another question.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Al.

3 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: We have -- is
4 this contract based upon a minimum guaranteed --

5 MR. ANTUN: No.

6 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: So it's just
7 as pay as you go?

8 MR. ANTUN: Yeah. Commissioner,
9 they -- they -- Essex County is no longer doing
10 contracts. They adopted an ordinance setting what
11 the rate is, and there is no minimum. If we sent --
12 if we send juveniles there, that's the rate, and
13 there's no -- there's no minimum or anything.
14 They're not doing any more contracts.

15 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Well, how
16 many -- how many juveniles do we have there? Like
17 the census, Hudson County census there today, for
18 example?

19 MR. ANTUN: I don't know what we have
20 there today, but on the average, I can tell you what
21 it is in a second. Let me just check again. I
22 think it's based on 2020 --

23 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: What do you
24 mean "based on"? How many do we have there though?
25 Let me -- let me back up. Are we getting billed for

1 the actual beds that we use?

2 MR. ANTUN: Yes, yes.

3 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Actual beds?

4 MR. ANTUN: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: So I don't
6 need an average. I need to know what -- what are we
7 doing now? For example, how many -- how many --

8 MR. ANTUN: I can't tell you. I'll
9 tell you later today or tomorrow.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Nicole.
11 Do you know?

12 MS. GARCIA: So in 2025, we had an
13 average of 12 youth. They could take up to 20
14 youth. That's -- that's what they can handle for
15 us, and Abe was able to give you the statistic on
16 how much the total rate is per bed.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: He wants to let you
18 know.

19 MS. GARCIA: And if he can't tell you
20 what's there as of today, but we could get that
21 before Thursday.

22 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay. But my
23 point is, we pay only for the actual daily use?

24 MR. ANTUN: Yes.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

1 MR. ANTUN: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: All right.

3 MR. ANTUN: And I should also say
4 that the State has now enacted a provision that
5 allows us to apply for -- for financial assistance
6 for any of the sending counties if the rate is over
7 500 dollars per day, which obviously for 2026, it
8 will be. So we will be applying for that
9 reimbursement. But it's only for the excess. So
10 one of the first --

11 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: So what --

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Hold on. Go ahead.
13 Go ahead. Go ahead, Bill.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So one of the
15 first things you should do since the State's going
16 to reimburse us over 500, and we're already over
17 500, is meet with them and have them readjust their
18 pro rata education. Because the education provided
19 there sucks, and I'm literally meeting on someone on
20 Friday to seek maybe to take litigation against them
21 for not providing thorough efficient education for
22 individuals who find themselves that are juveniles
23 and find themselves incarcerated in a juvenile
24 detention facility.

25 If you want to run a track record through

1 that department of what happens to individuals when
2 they get released and their inability to ever go
3 back to a high school and not being allowed to go
4 back to a high school and maybe never, maybe never
5 getting a GED or anything else, thus leaving them on
6 a roll back to a state correctional facility, I
7 think you'd be shocked at what those results are.

8 The education they provide there is
9 horrible and if it costs another hundred dollars a
10 day to provide decent education and the State's
11 willing to pay for it, we should be jumping on that
12 issue now, and I know come January 15th, one person
13 that I know will be jumping on that damn trend.
14 That's seriously.

15 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I totally
16 agree with Bill.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Bobby. Bobby, go
18 ahead.

19 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Okay. Is
20 it -- am I accurate in saying that NJAC has been
21 addressing this. They've been looking at the
22 Juvenile Justice and the juveniles.

23 MR. ANTUN: Commissioner, you're
24 absolutely right. But having Commissioner Walker
25 there is good, will help us a lot.

1 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: It will. But
2 I mean, but you're right. Commissioner O'Dea hit it
3 right on the head. So this all started this debate
4 when I first got came on, and it was the services
5 that were being provided that created our problem
6 with Essex. We need to make sure our kids are
7 getting services. They're in a juvenile detention
8 center outside of Hudson County to make sure that
9 they're getting the appropriate service.

10 And I agree with Commissioner O'Dea a
11 thousand percent. If it's was going to cost us, if
12 it's going to cost more money to get them the
13 correct services, and I think we should have some
14 way of monitoring our kids. I'm not sure if that's
15 in play where when we had it in Hudson County. We
16 had people coming in monitor all the time. We
17 should be able to monitor our kids to go see.

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay. I'll
19 connect you with somebody who does.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: All right, Al.

21 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: One more. One
22 more question about the educational component of the
23 per diem that we pay Essex County is how much money?

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: \$58.49.

25 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay. And --

1 and what Bill is saying is that from his feedback
2 that's -- we're wasting money on that because
3 they're not getting the thorough and efficient
4 education that the State constitution and the -- the
5 courts have demanded all -- and I don't want to say
6 this because nobody on the Board is going to
7 remember this name but Harold Ruble Jr., Billy will
8 remember.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I remember. I
10 remember, yeah.

11 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: He was
12 thorough and efficient. That's -- yeah, what was
13 his case?

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Robinson versus
15 the Mayo (ph.)

16 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: That's
17 absolutely right.

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Robinson versus
19 Mayo.

20 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yeah. So just
21 I think -- I think it behooves us. I think as Billy
22 jumped on this and as Bobby jumped on this, I think
23 it behooves us to hold Essex County's feet to the
24 fire and see what are we getting for that 58 plus
25 dollars a day. It doesn't sound like it's thorough

1 and efficient.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: And it's simple.
3 Nicole, two questions we need for Thursday. Can you
4 find out what the curriculum is for the education?
5 And also the number of beds that Commissioner
6 Cifelli and the rest of Board would like to know and
7 don't -- shouldn't we get a weekly report of how
8 many?

9 MS. GARCIA: There is a dashboard
10 that is submitted on a weekly report.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Good. There
12 is, okay. Yeah, I think uh Jerry's -- Darice's hand
13 is up. Darice, go ahead, the Darice.

14 DIRECTOR TOON: Yeah. Good
15 afternoon, Commissioners. Yeah, I just wanted to
16 answer the question regarding the number of youth
17 who are there. We have 10 young people in there in
18 Essex County today. And yeah, we do get, you know,
19 I do get a daily count of the number of young people
20 there. We have 10 in Essex and five -- and three in
21 Morris and two in Bergen. And I'm sorry, Bergen.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Oh, so it's all
23 together we are at this point we have 15, correct?
24 Ten, three and two?

25 DIRECTOR TOON: Yes. It changes

1 every day, yes.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: And also if we
3 could do the educational curriculum at all three
4 institutions, please, for the Board?

5 DIRECTOR TOON: Okay.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: An idea.

7 DIRECTOR TOON: Okay. Okay.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: All right,
9 gentlemen and ladies? Okay. Continue, Mr. Clerk.

10 DIRECTOR TOON: Thank you.

11 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 16.
12 Resolution authorizing the renewal of a Memorandum
13 of Agreement between the County of Hudson and New
14 Hope Integrated Behavioral Healthcare for the
15 operation of a 48-hour Intoxicated Driver Resource
16 Center Program, January 1, 2026 through December 31,
17 2026.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Board as a whole.

19 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Sponsor.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Al.

21 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Sponsor.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Cifelli and
23 Walker.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I've got to go
25 back to --

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Question? Go
2 ahead, Bill.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Ask a question
4 on the flip side of it.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: So which one, Bill?

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: 15, and the
7 juvenile detention. So previously we had a contract
8 that a substantially lower amount with a guarantee
9 number whether we utilize them or not, correct? Now
10 we have a contract with a daily rate with no minimum
11 guarantee, but is there any guarantee? Meaning is
12 it feasible that on any given day, something --
13 something crazy happened, and there are 15 juveniles
14 picked up and ordered sent to the detention
15 facility, and Essex County says we don't have 15
16 beds, sorry. Is that -- is that possible?

17 MR. ANTUN: Yes, it is.

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And then what
19 happens?

20 MR. ANTUN: Yeah, we would have to go
21 to the JJC and then they would -- they would have to
22 sort that out. That happened in Atlantic County.

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I know. That's
24 why I asked you the question.

25 MR. ANTUN: Yeah. So well, JJC would

1 have to sort that out, and then direct where they
2 would go.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Alberico, you
4 wanted to say something, right?

5 MR. DEPIERRO: No. No.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Commissioner
7 Walker --

8 OPERATOR: To your Webex Voice Portal
9 please enter --

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: It was the hand
11 that Darice had. Okay. Because I'm familiar with
12 that.

13 OPERATOR: You have two new messages.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. A little
15 technical difficulties. Go ahead, Mr. Clerk.

16 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 17.
17 Resolution amending Resolution No. 724-11-2024 and
18 authorizing Final Approval for updated funding
19 guidelines for the Hudson County Open Space
20 Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Going to be Board
22 as a whole, ladies and gentlemen. Board as a whole.

23 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 18.
24 Resolution transferring custodianship of the Petty
25 Cash Fund from Esther Suarez to Wayne Mello at the

1 Hudson County Prosecutor's Office.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Romano and
3 Rodriguez, right? Who was that? I thought that was
4 the Dominicans, okay. Sure. That's Yraida.

5 THE CLERK: That's all I have. I'll
6 use the prior sponsors for the ordinance up for
7 adoption. I'll turn it over to the Administration.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Abe.

9 MR. ANTUN: Mr. Chairman, we have no
10 additional.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Where's Kenny
12 Kopacz, had to leave? Well done. Any --

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Chairman.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Hold on, hold on.
15 Billy.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So we have a
17 second reading ordinance on the bonding for the --
18 for the Hi-Tech High? All right.

19 MR. ANTUN: So I think it's A. A-5
20 A-5. It's A-5.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So tomorrow is
22 the Local Government Finance Board Meeting?

23 MR. ANTUN: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: To authorize it?
25 At the prior meeting, I had asked that the \$10

1 million that guess Sci-Tech, the Liberty Science
2 Center is putting in was going to be deposited prior
3 to the meeting tomorrow. You advised me that was it
4 7 point --

5 MR. ANTUN: 7.3.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: 7.3 was
7 deposited, and 2.7 will be put in at closing.

8 MR. ANTUN: At the closing for the
9 bond sale, yes.

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And that
11 satisfies as NW certified, or will they certify by
12 Thursday that that will satisfy the requirements to
13 go -- to go do the bonding. Will that money need to
14 be escrowed prior to --

15 MR. ANTUN: No, that money -- that
16 money doesn't have to be escrowed prior to the
17 bonding, but it has to be escrowed prior to the
18 award of the contract for the construction.

19 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: But when's the
20 bonding going to happen?

21 MR. ANTUN: Once we get the approval
22 the -- oh, go ahead, Mike. You want to answer it?

23 MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. It's Michael
24 O'Connor and Norman Guerra from the Improvement
25 Authority. I apologize. The 7.3 million is

1 actually in the account of the Hudson County
2 Improvement Authority. So we have that 7.3 million.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: When will the
4 2.7 go in?

5 MR. O'CONNOR: The 2.7 million is
6 what left -- what's left of the commitment in the
7 Project Development Agreement, and that gets
8 deposited I believe upon closing the bond deal or
9 contiguous with that. So it's once we complete the
10 financing that that funding, we receive that funding
11 from it.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: When are you
13 awarding the contract to the -- to the lowest
14 bidder.

15 MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, so -- so we
16 can't do that unless we have the, you know, assurity
17 of enough funds to award the contract, and that will
18 occur in the event, you know, after Thursday if
19 the -- if the Board approves the bond ordinance.
20 Then we'll proceed to award the contract to Terminal
21 sometime in the next week to 10 days after that.

22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: All right. Abe,
23 my last question, and I put this on the record
24 multiple times, but I need to put it on again now
25 working on transition with Jersey City because they

1 have serious financial issues. There was a
2 memorandum of agreement executed how many years ago
3 between the city and the school?

4 MR. ANTUN: It was several years ago,
5 Commission. I don't remember the exact.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And that -- and
7 that memorandum of agreement outlined two things.
8 One, that a set percentage of this, of the seats
9 would be available to Jersey City students, correct?

10 MR. ANTUN: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: It has been
12 determined by the State funding into this project
13 that that cannot happen; is that correct?

14 MR. ANTUN: Correct.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay. Based on
16 that, that was the underlying factor upon which the
17 City of Jersey City signed an agreement where they
18 would put \$2 million a year into the operating costs
19 of the school, is that correct?

20 MR. ANTUN: Correct.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Based on the
22 fact that there is no legal authority to grant the
23 City X amount of students per year, then there is --
24 it is not legally binding or you cannot hold the
25 City of Jersey City accountable to pay \$2 million a

1 year towards the operating cost?

2 MR. ANTUN: That's correct.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So I just need
4 to put that clearly on the record. It's kind enough
5 of the City to put \$10 million, plus to give the
6 land for free with no guarantee of getting any
7 students. But God help us, they're not going to put
8 \$2 million a year --

9 MR. ANTUN: More than every year.

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: But that's a
11 separate discussion.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: The Chief of Staff,
13 Jenny, do you have anything?

14 THE CLERK: Chairman?

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

16 THE CLERK: We have one other
17 resolution, and add-on.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead.

19 THE CLERK: This will be Resolution
20 No. 19. In support of RevolutionNJ commemorating
21 the beginning of the Nation and the role New Jersey
22 played over the past 250 years, as well as its
23 present and future role as part of the United
24 States.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Board as a whole.

1 Chief of Staff, anything for us?

2 MS. DAVIS: So two things. I never
3 saw that agreement. So I cannot confirm or deny
4 what you said, Bill. I'd like to see a copy of that
5 agreement myself because I've never seen that
6 agreement. I cannot say that it actually says that
7 enough.

8 Second of all, I don't think it's kind
9 enough of anyone to agree to pay for anything in
10 terms of education. I think it's everyone's
11 responsibility to work together to figure out how we
12 take this monstrosity of a -- of a cost and figure
13 out with all the other challenges that every
14 district faces how to give our kids the best
15 education we possibly can Countywide.

16 And I know there's a lot of people who
17 want this Liberty Science High School. I also know
18 that it's going to cost a lot of money. So I think
19 that the way I would phrase it is that we have to
20 put our heads together again with this new
21 Administration and really get down and dirty and see
22 what can be done to make sure we can make sure this
23 high school is a success, not only in the
24 facilitation of it, but in the education of it for
25 the kids.

1 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: But all I would
2 say is at the end of the day, if from the County
3 budget there's X amount of dollars allocated, then
4 the people of Jersey City pay what percent is Jersey
5 City currently of your -- of your assessment?

6 MR. ANTUN: Dollar-wise, it's in
7 excess of 40 percent.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So we're already
9 paying 40 -- excess of 40 percent of whatever the
10 County puts into that, right? In addition, Jersey
11 City, because Jersey City owned the land gave the
12 land upon which this school is being built.

13 MS. DAVIS: And the County is putting
14 plenty of funding to build them.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: As you did to
16 build the one in Bayonne?

17 MS. DAVIS: Yes, absolutely.

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And how much did
19 the City of Bayonne put in towards the construction
20 of that building?

21 MS. DAVIS: I am not the person to
22 ask, but --

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Abe? Abe?

24 MR. ANTUN: I don't recall the city
25 putting in.

1 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: As a lawyer
2 would say, I rest my case.

3 MS. DAVIS: But the person who made
4 this deal was the Mayor of Jersey City. So that's
5 all I'm saying.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: He's no longer
7 the Mayor of Jersey City. But he hasn't told me or
8 anyone else to look to enforce a bad deal. Those of
9 us that represent Jersey City.

10 MS. DAVIS: Except that we're half
11 ready.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: -- to get find a
13 way to get out of a bad deal.

14 MS. DAVIS: Possibly, but we're half
15 baked.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I don't think
17 the school's bad. Don't get me wrong. I think the
18 school has a tremendous --

19 MS. DAVIS: I'm glad that we agree on
20 that. That's good, yeah.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I think the
22 school has a tremendous amount of merit and it's a
23 good project. I just don't think Jersey City should
24 pay more, more than it's already had to put into it.
25 I think that's more than fair.

1 MS. DAVIS: But we are half baked,
2 and we all need to work together because we're
3 halfway through the souffle, and it's going to come
4 out of the oven some way.

5 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I agree it's --
6 it's going to come out of the County budget. The
7 way -- the way -- the way whatever dollars go to the
8 Bayonne school, to County Prep to Hi-Tech, and all
9 of those other schools. There's a formula, right?
10 If I'm wrong Mr. Administrator, correct me. The
11 dollars we put into the Schools of Technology offset
12 or supplement whatever other dollars they may get
13 from the State or any other school. Is that fair
14 and accurate?

15 MR. ANTUN: Well, whatever the school
16 requires to operate right, we substitute. Once you
17 subtract their State aid --

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Or any of the
19 resources.

20 MR. ANTUN: The County through the
21 County budget --

22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: All we're asking
23 is to subsidize this the same --

24 MR. ANTUN: School Estimates
25 appropriates the money.

1 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Subsidizes the
2 same way the existing schools all get subsidized. I
3 think that's -- that's more than a fair -- more than
4 fair when in this particular case again.

5 MS. DAVIS: I think we're talking
6 about plums and pineapples here. Plums and
7 pineapples are different fruits, but let's work
8 together to figure out how we can keep the education
9 quality for the students and keep it affordable for
10 the district and the residents of Hudson County.
11 That's all.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: All I'm saying
13 is don't -- if you're going to ask us to put extra
14 money in then you've got to go to other cities where
15 those schools are and ask them to put extra money in
16 every year.

17 MS. DAVIS: Well, everyone needs to
18 get together.

19 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Good luck with
20 that one. Especially in Secaucus.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: One more question.
22 Abe, the Department of Corrections gets no data from
23 the juveniles that are incarcerated in the different
24 centers?

25 MR. ANTUN: No.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I was trying to
2 figure it from when I was a cop.

3 MR. ANTUN: Yeah, yeah. No, no. The
4 juveniles are not going to go in Corrections.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: There's no
6 oversight?

7 MR. ANTUN: No, no. It's all
8 separate.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Bobby, any
10 questions? Anybody? Bobby? Albert, everything
11 good? Ladies, Billy, Jerry? Billy, Jerry,
12 anything?

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'm good.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Anybody? Okay.
15 Motion to adjourn.

16 THE CLERK: All in favor? We are
17 adjourned.

18 (Whereupon the proceeding is then
19 concluded at 5:16 p.m.
20
21
22
23
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 an Regular Caucus
Meeting of the Hudson County Board of County
Commissioners, held on Tuesday, December 09, 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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