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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
Tuesday, January 13, 2026
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
- DAVID DRUMELER, Deputy County Administrator
- WILLIE ORTIZ, County Commissioner Clerk
- Reported By: Shari Cathey, CCR, RPR

1 THE CLERK: Commissioner
2 Aponte-Lipski.

3 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Here.

4 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.
5 Commissioner Cedeño.

6 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Here.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Baselice is on some
8 way. Bobby? Walt, he's on. He's trying to get on.

9 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: I'm on.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay.

11 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

12 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Present.

13 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

14 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Here.

15 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Here.

17 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

18 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Here.

19 THE CLERK: Chairperson Romano.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Chairman Romano.

21 Yes.

22 THE CLERK: L-1. Honoring the North
23 Bergen High School Marching Band for their
24 Outstanding 2025 Championship Season.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: They're going to

1 march in for that, or no? They're matching in.
2 Just for the record, we have our County Clerk here,
3 Junior. And we have our vice president of our
4 community college. And we have the Sheriff's
5 representative here also at the meeting.
6 Distinguished retired captain of Bayonne, Jeremy
7 Sullivan. Welcome, all of you, to our wonderful
8 conclave.

9 Could I have a sponsor and a second on
10 L-1?

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That was Yraida and
12 Carrie. Captain Sullivan, Bill said we'd like to
13 see you Thursday and said you'll be here.

14 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 1.
15 Resolution confirming appointments to the Local
16 Advisory Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Aponte and Carrie.

18 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 2.
19 Resolution confirming appointment and reappointments
20 of members of the Hudson County Mental Health Board.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: You've got Aponte
22 and Kenny.

23 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 3.
24 Resolution amending Resolution No. 549-9-2025 to
25 extend a Fair and Open Competitive Contract with the

1 W-T Group, LLC for a two-month period to conduct an
2 Americans with Disabilities Act Self Evaluation and
3 Develop a Transition Plan for Hudson County, August
4 1st, 2024 through March 31st, 2026. No cost
5 extension.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Board as a whole.

7 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 4.
8 Resolution amending Resolution No. 165-3-2024 to
9 accept additional funding from the New Jersey
10 Department of Environmental Protection for the
11 Regional Greenhouse Gas Grant Project, October 1st,
12 2025 through October 1st, 2027, \$15,000.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Aponte and Kopacz.

14 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 5 approve
15 Purchasing Agent's awards, purchases made under
16 State contracts.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That's Caridad and
18 Fanny.

19 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 6.
20 Purchases made under the Educational Service
21 Commission's pricing system, formerly known as the
22 Middlesex Regional Educational Service Commission.

23 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Sponsor.

24 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Second.

25 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 7.

1 Purchases made -- approve Purchasing Agent's Awards.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Carrie and Fanny.

3 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 8.

4 Resolution awarding a Fair and Open Contract through
5 the 1% for Public Art War Memorial in Stephen R.

6 Gregg Bayonne Hudson County Park.

7 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Sponsor.

8 Kopacz.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Second. Kopacz and
10 Romano.

11 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 9.

12 Resolution qualifying professional consulting firm
13 for the provision of on-call Architectural Services
14 to the Hudson County Engineer's Office.

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Romano and Carrie.

16 THE CLERK: A-1 is up for adoption.

17 I will use the prior sponsors. I will now turn it
18 over to the Administration.

19 MR. DRUMELER: We have two items as
20 late starters that we would ask the Board's
21 indulgence on. One is to apply for a grant to
22 provide seniors with more of the ELIQ, I think
23 they're called. We have a demonstration on them, I
24 believe, to the Board. They're AI contraptions for
25 lack of a better term that help seniors.

1 We've had quite a robust response for
2 folks wanting them, and this will allow us to
3 provide additional, if we're awarded the grant, it
4 will allow us to provide additional funds so that we
5 have a waiting list actually for folks looking for
6 them.

7 THE CLERK: That will be Resolution
8 No. 10.

9 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Excuse me.
10 Can you expound on them?

11 MR. DRUMELER: I've given you
12 everything that I know about them.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Well, Jo's coming
14 up. Let's get it on the agenda. Sponsor and a
15 second?

16 All right, Kenny and Fanny. Go ahead.
17 Thank you, Jo.

18 MS. NORTHGRAVE: I also have Brian
19 Poffel on the phone in case you have any questions
20 from him. I know that you all were really impressed
21 with the ELIQ demonstration that occurred in the
22 chambers that day. That little robot that we were
23 speaking to and was answering us, and it's supposed
24 to help our seniors overcome loneliness, but it
25 actually does work.

1 So this grant is for approximately 234
2 additional units of which the company itself will do
3 everything for us. We have nothing to do except for
4 accept them.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: How old do you have
6 to be to get it?

7 MS. NORTHGRAVE: I think 60. Do you
8 want one, Commissioner? We good?

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes. Thank you.
10 Thank you, Jay.

11 MR. DRUMELER: Chairman, the second
12 one was authorized payment to Trapeze Software, to
13 get the route matching maintenance and support.
14 That's for our TRANSCEND vehicles. It does
15 scheduling and route.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: What's that number
17 one? What number would that be?

18 THE CLERK: No. 11. That would be
19 Resolution No. 11.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Alberico, do those
21 robots talk in Mac?

22 MR. DEPIERRO: I hope they can speak
23 a lot of languages.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: What was that
25 again?

1 MR. DRUMELER: This is for route
2 match software. So basically when you order a
3 TRANSCEND bus, it figures out the scheduling to
4 know, Oh, I have to pick up and then it figures out
5 how that's going to work.

6 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: That's going
7 to be a robot?

8 MR. DRUMELER: No, no, no, this is
9 just a route matching software that we use to
10 schedule our -- it's computer software.

11 All right, Chairman, that's all.

12 THE CLERK: Chairman, I have nothing
13 further.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I've asked the
15 Commissioners if there's any adjustments, obviously,
16 we have to make in the committees because of Jerry
17 leaving to let me know before I meet with Carol
18 Jean. Anybody for Purchasing too? You guys let me
19 know.

20 Question, Billy.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I may be just as
22 lucky to let him know the concerns that the funding
23 that would go from the federal government would have
24 to do with public assistance. We may be on the
25 right percentage number. At the end of the day, I

1 don't think that gives us immunity from being
2 financially punished. I'm not sure what we can do.
3 I'm not sure what our delegation can do.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Billy, one second.
5 For the record, Commissioner Al Cifelli is on Board.
6 You hear us now?

7 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I chimed in at
8 the roll call.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Billy,
10 continue with the same.

11 DIRECTOR MAZZA: The only bit of good
12 news I have is the New York Attorney General won an
13 injunction today. They froze because of a fear of
14 fraud, they froze certain types of TANF benefits and
15 social services for the homeless benefits and a
16 federal judge ordered the administration to release
17 those funds.

18 But there's a fear that there's a
19 conflation between what is welfare and what is a
20 normal error. If you miss signing a document,
21 that's considered an error. We're allowed to have
22 up to six-percent by statutory regulation. The fear
23 is that getting viewed as welfare fraud rather than
24 a simple error.

25 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Can I ask you

1 a question, Frank?

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Al.

3 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Was the
4 lawsuit by the state of New York -- how many other
5 states other than blue states were being withheld
6 the federal payments?

7 DIRECTOR MAZZA: None. It's six blue
8 states. New York.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm shocked.
10 I'm surprised.

11 DIRECTOR MAZZA: New York.
12 California. I'll get you the list. Minnesota got
13 their food stamps frozen today.

14 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Wow.

15 DIRECTOR MAZZA: We were not on the
16 list. Yeah, I have a concern that we're a blue
17 state and that we have errors. My fear is not that
18 we're doing anything wrong. My fear is that they
19 will shut down large programs when they look into
20 them at a State level, and that means things like
21 Minnesota right now, they don't have the ability to
22 allocate food stamps to their population.

23 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Wow.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Frank, how's it go
25 with the warming center? All good?

1 Junior, do you have anything you wanted to
2 bring up?

3 MR. MALDONADO: No.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Calendars, 2026
5 calendars. They were asking if we could do digital.
6 We can send you the calendar.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Anybody? Kenny, do
8 your thing.

9 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Motion to
10 adjourn.

11 THE CLERK: All in favor? We are
12 adjourned.

13 (Whereupon the proceeding is then
14 concluded at 4:52 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 a Caucus Meeting
of the Hudson County Board of County Commissioners,
held on Tuesday, January 13, 2026; 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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