

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, February 10, 2026
4:30 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.

3 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Here.

4 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.
5 Commissioner Cedeño.

6 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Here.

7 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Here.

8 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Here.

10 THE CLERK: 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 Williams.

17 Chairman Romano.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Here. Is

19 Commissioner. Williams here?

20 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 1.

21 Resolution appointing Sanie B. Allen to serve as
22 County Re-Entry Coordinator for the County of Hudson
23 pursuant to N.J.S.A. 30:8-16.19.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Who is the
25 coordinator here? What town is the coordinator

1 from?

2 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Sponsor.

3 Kopacz.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Second.

5 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 2.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Hold on. Hold on.

7 Is Susan Allen from any particular district?

8 THE CLERK: I do not have the answer
9 to that.

10 MR. ANTUN: They are currently --
11 this person is a County employee.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. I just
13 wanted to make sure that whoever area they were from
14 sponsored it.

15 THE CLERK: From Jersey City.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. All right.
17 Okay. Good. Kopacz and Romano. Go ahead.

18 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 2.
19 Resolution authorizing application and acceptance of
20 funds, if awarded, from the New Jersey Governor's
21 Council on Substance Use Disorder for Fiscal Year
22 2027. July 1st, 2026 through June 30th, 2021.
23 \$270,478.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Kopacz and
25 Rodriguez. By the way, for the audience, our newly

1 commissioned Commissioner replacing Jerry Walker is
2 here with us today. Celeste Williams. Celeste,
3 welcome to the Board.

4 Continue, Mr. Clerk.

5 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 3.
6 Resolution accepting FFY25 Hazardous Materials
7 Emergency Preparedness Grant for planning and
8 training from the United States Department of
9 Transportation through the State of New Jersey
10 Department of Law and Public Safety, October 1st,
11 2025 to September 30th, 2026, \$58,000.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Romano-Kopacz.

13 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 4.
14 Resolution authorizing FY26 Ryan White Minority AIDS
15 Initiative Grant Partial Award Allocations to
16 Professional Services providers and a provider
17 awarded through a Competitive Contracting Process,
18 March 1st, 2026 through February 28th, 2027,
19 \$111,681.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That's Lipski and
21 Rodriguez.

22 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 25.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Hold it, Willie.
24 Resolution No. 5.

25 THE CLERK: Resolution authorizing

1 FY26 Ryan White Part A Formula Grant Partial Award
2 Allocations to professional service providers and
3 providers awarded through a competitive contracting
4 process, March 1st, 2026 through February 28th,
5 2027, \$1,093,841.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Lipski and
7 Rodriguez.

8 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 6.
9 Resolution amending Resolution No. 780-12-2024 to
10 extend the contract period for Three Months with the
11 New Jersey Food Security Initiative to continue
12 expanding enrollment opportunities in the
13 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program across
14 Hudson County, February 10th, 2025 through May 24,
15 2026, no cost extension.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That was Lipski and
17 Basalice.

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Question. So at
19 the end of it, is it the end of this year, Denise,
20 Darice, that all the ARC funding runs out?

21 MR. ANTUN: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So what type of
23 planning for alternate funding is being undertaken?
24 Because obviously if we've never created some proof
25 of concept, the proof of concept for the funding

1 that those dollars went to to provide individuals
2 food has proven itself beyond, forget reasonable
3 doubt, beyond any doubt. So the need to find a
4 funding source, whether it's our funding source, a
5 combination of our dollars plus local dollars plus
6 foundation dollars is something that I see as a
7 very, very critical component, not something we can
8 wait to run out, as you know.

9 And we should be very proud of ourselves
10 because most towns and counties did not do what -- I
11 had spoken about and we did, is prioritize those
12 programs that were funded with ARC money that we now
13 know we need to continue funding from whatever
14 source, state, county, et cetera. So, but obviously
15 this one is so much, there were so many people
16 provided food on a twice-a-month, once-a-week basis
17 through what operates out of the Juneau Center that
18 my concerns as we start the final year of having any
19 government money from the federal level is what,
20 where are we in alternative funding?

21 DIRECTOR FULLER: Commissioner,
22 Director Toon is on a phone call. I was just --
23 first of all, just wanted to respond to the question
24 you had as to when the funds run out. We have to
25 have all of the funds expended no later than

1 December 31st, 2026. We did previously, and we'll
2 provide another copy, Director Toon's office did put
3 together a schedule of the various programs that are
4 being funded through ARC. And she basically ranked
5 them as to those, you know --

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I was the guy
7 that asked we do that.

8 DIRECTOR FULLER: Correct, and I
9 believe we provided that, but I'll make sure that
10 it's up to date and then we'll provide you another
11 copy for Thursday.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I appreciate
13 that. Does it answer my bigger question?

14 DIRECTOR FULLER: Right. No, that's
15 for Director Toon. I was just answering part of
16 your question.

17 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Whenever
18 Director Toon is off a call, I appreciate it because
19 I think that, you know, we may need to even have a
20 committee of this Board for things like that to
21 monitor and be proactive in making sure that
22 whatever needs to be done. We may need our
23 legislators to sponsor funding in this year's budget
24 for that, right? Otherwise, we're going to have to
25 plan to eat the costs next year, but we should also

1 look and see what other dollars may be out there
2 from the philanthropic world that we can funnel to
3 the not-for-profits that are part of the program.

4 Just if you ended this thing tomorrow, I
5 guarantee you'd have 250 people at a Commissioner
6 meeting.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Continue, Mr.
8 Clerk.

9 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 7.
10 Resolution authorizing to amend Resolution No.
11 709-12-2025 to provide additional funds and extend
12 social services for the homeless, contract with the
13 Welfare and North Hudson Community Action
14 Corporation, February 1st, 2026 through June 30th,
15 2026, \$322,463.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Lipski-Rodriguez.

17 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 8.
18 Resolution amending Resolution No. 729-12-2025 to
19 de-allocate and reallocate funds from the Jersey
20 City Theater Center to other grantee organizations
21 for FY2026, Hudson County Historic Partnership
22 Program Grant, January 1st, 2026 to December 31st,
23 2026, \$6,501.71.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Sponsor. Romano
25 and Basalice.

1 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 9.
2 Resolution approving Year Three of a Fair and Open
3 Competitive Contract with Educate the Block and
4 National Career Institute for pre-occupational
5 comprehensive education and employment training
6 services for pre-release and post-release adults,
7 March 2nd, 2026 through February 28th, 2027,
8 \$483,000.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Lipski-Rodriguez.

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Question.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Question.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So you have
13 backup here that lays out enrolled, released,
14 re-arrested. How are we with placements and
15 retention?

16 DIRECTOR MAZZA: So this is
17 pre-occupational training that happens inside of the
18 jail, which is pre-occupational training, as you
19 know, is like a step before occupational training.
20 So it prepares the client for occupational training.
21 They have to enroll in an occupational training
22 program when they're released, and that's through
23 welfare dollars. And then they get caught up in the
24 data for welfare on placements. They get enrolled
25 in a different program and they count towards that

1 data set.

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Shouldn't we
3 track how many of them are being enrolled in
4 occupational training with these same entities? So
5 they're doing pre-occ training?

6 DIRECTOR MAZZA: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Wouldn't it make
8 sense to statistically look that upon release, how
9 many of them continue? And I'm assuming that they
10 can't enroll in occ training while they're
11 incarcerated.

12 DIRECTOR FULLER: That's correct.
13 But we do have that data. I can provide you the
14 information on how many continued in these programs
15 when they were released. But when they're released,
16 there's also 14 other options as far as training
17 goes, and the County and the department cannot be
18 involved in what program they pick. It's completely
19 client choice.

20 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So how do we --
21 what do we need to do legislatively or otherwise to
22 allow individuals that take and complete
23 successfully a pre-occ while they're incarcerated to
24 enroll in an occ while they're incarcerated? Like,
25 wouldn't that make sense? So then actually, Hey, I

1 get released. I just got my certificate as a -- as
2 whatever it is, a chef, and I can go work at a
3 restaurant or a catering, or Hey, I just got my
4 certificate as an HVAC specialist. Now I can go
5 work for Jewel Electric. So what do we need to do
6 to do that?

7 DIRECTOR MAZZA: I think we can do
8 that now with the changes that have happened as a
9 result of recent federal legislation. I think that
10 just requires sort of the blessing of the Workforce
11 Development Board. We have a meeting in March with
12 them on how to sort of adjust our programs to the
13 changes that have been made.

14 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yeah, well, let
15 me know. I would like to attend the meeting and
16 make that pretty clear, because if somebody does a
17 pre-occ and then they're still incarcerated for
18 three more months, and during those three months,
19 they could do an occupational with the same vendor,
20 the vendor's happy because they're getting paid.

21 DIRECTOR MAZZA: I agree.

22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And the
23 individual's happy because they now walk out the
24 door of the correctional facility with an ability
25 to -- in fact, while they're there, the vendor could

1 be helping provide them the leads for once they
2 would get released.

3 DIRECTOR MAZZA: I agree.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: All right. So
5 let's work on it.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Continue.

7 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 10,
8 resolution awarding a non-fair and open contract to
9 the Hudson Community Enterprise, Inc., a sheltered
10 workshop for the shredding of documents for various
11 County departments, February 1st -- February 11th,
12 2026, through February 10th, 2027, not to exceed
13 \$170,000.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That's O'Dea and
15 Cifelli.

16 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 11.
17 Resolution amending Resolution No. 33-1-2025 to
18 award professional service contract, Non-Fair and
19 Open, Eyman Partners, LLC "To extend the term of the
20 contract to the end of the County's Litigation
21 against Carepoint Health."

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Let's get O'Dea and
23 Romano. Can we get a little explanation on that,
24 please?

25 MR. DEPIERRO: Yes. In fact, I'm

1 waiting for the attorneys that have been
2 representing on these matters. I'll have an update
3 on the two litigations for Thursday's meeting.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Now, is this regard
5 to the money that they owe us, the tax money or
6 whatever that was from years ago, right?

7 MR. DEPIERRO: Correct. So I'll have
8 an update on Thursday.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: That's one
10 litigation, what's the other one?

11 MR. DEPIERRO: One is related to the
12 bankruptcy proceedings that were filed by the
13 hospital.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

15 MR. DEPIERRO: You're welcome.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Continue.

17 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 12.
18 Resolution amending Revolution No. 154-3-2025 to add
19 funds to the Non-Fair and Open Professional Service
20 Contract with North Hudson Community Action
21 Corporation, a Federally Qualified Health Care
22 Center, to provide an infectious disease specialist
23 to diagnose, prescribe, and coordinate the
24 dispensation of medication for Hudson County
25 Correctional Center Inmates, April 1st, 2025 to

1 March 31st, 2026, \$215,000.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: So you've got
3 Aponte and Rodriguez.

4 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: What did you
5 say? Williams.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. I'm
7 incorrect on that, it's Aponte and Williams.

8 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 13.
9 Resolution authorizing payment to Cellebrite, USA
10 Corp., d/b/a Cellebrite, Inc. for the renewal of
11 existing licenses and software upgrades for the
12 Digital Forensic Software for the Hudson County
13 Prosecutor's Office, April 13th, 2026 to April 12th,
14 2027, \$143,294.40.

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Romano and Celeste.
16 Walt, can we help Bobby with that echo? It's on his
17 end.

18 MR. BORACZEK: I'm not sure it is, I
19 guess.

20 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: What echo?
21 What echo?

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead.
23 Continue, Mr. Clerk.

24 THE CLERK: Resolution 14. Approve
25 Purchasing Agent's Awards, purchases made under

1 State contracts.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That's Rodriguez
3 and Cedeño.

4 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 15.
5 Purchases made under the Educational Service
6 Commission of New Jersey Pricing System, formerly
7 known as the Middlesex Regional Education Services
8 Commission.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez-Cedeño.

10 THE CLERK: Regulation No. 16.
11 Purchases made under the Bergen County Cooperative
12 Pricing System.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and
14 Cedeño.

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

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and
19 Celeste.

20 THE CLERK: Was that Williams on the
21 second?

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes, it was.

23 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 18.

24 Approve Purchasing Agent's awards.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and

1 Cedeño.

2 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 19.
3 Resolution approving the award of a Fair and Open
4 Competitive Contract to Tectonic Engineering
5 Consultant, Geologist & Land Surveyors DPC, Inc. for
6 professional land surveying services for West
7 Hudson, Columbus, Stephen R. Gregg, Washington,
8 Mercer, and Laurel Hill Park, \$287,450.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Williams and
10 Echo -- Baselice.

11 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 20.
12 Resolution awarding a Fair and Open professional
13 service contract to Neglia Engineering for the James
14 J. Braddock Park Nature Pathway in the Township of
15 North Bergen, \$91,440.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Well, Baselice,
17 where are you? Okay. Cifelli and Rodriguez. Can
18 we question on that? I think we went in a Public
19 Resource. We're going to do a correction on the
20 word. It's not a pathway. It's going to be trail.

21 MR. ANTUN: Yeah, it's a -- it's a
22 nature trail. Correct.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. It might
24 offend some of the wonderful residents.

25 MR. DEPIERRO: Yes. Absolutely.

1 I'll do it right now, actually. Nature trail,
2 right?

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Continue.

4 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 21.
5 Resolution approving Designation of Independent
6 Legal Counsel as a Member of the County Counsel's
7 Office, to serve as Special Counsel for the limited
8 purpose of Prosecution of Alleged Violations under
9 the County Environmental Health Act the Solid Waste
10 Management Act and related statutes and approving an
11 addendum to an agreement with the Hudson County
12 Improvement Authority relative to said services the
13 Law Offices of Stephen J. Natoli, Esq., January 1st,
14 2026 to December 31st, 2026.

15 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Sponsor.
16 Kopacz.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Second. Kopacz and
18 Romano.

19 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Question.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Question. Go Bill.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: How is this
22 individual paid?

23 MR. DEPIERRO: I'll let it go for one
24 second.

25 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I don't see an

1 hourly rate.

2 MR. DEPIERRO: It's through the HCIA.

3

4 MR. ANTUN: Yeah, the HCIA pays them.

5 MR. O'CONNOR: This is Mike O'Connor.

6 I think you guys can hear me now. It's an hourly
7 rate, Commissioner.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: What is that
9 rate?

10 MR. O'CONNOR: I think it's \$190 an
11 hour.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: \$190 an hour.
13 Was there a procurement process?

14 MR. O'CONNOR: Yes, it was pursuant
15 to a fair and open procurement process where we
16 solicit, we do that -- we do the same every year.

17 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Can we be
18 provided what that was? Because it's not -- we
19 don't -- in other ones we see the list of who else,
20 you know, submitted their curriculum vitae or --

21 MR. O'CONNOR: Sure, we can give you
22 the proposal. We can give you the proposal. I'll
23 also send you the resolution that we have where we
24 awarded the contract in December. So it's the
25 Improvement Authority that actually employs the

1 attorney. It's because of the specific language in
2 the NJDEP statute that governs this type of
3 enforcement, a requirement in order for us to do
4 this is that ultimately this attorney have status as
5 an Assistant County Counsel. That's the purpose of
6 the resolution before you. But sure, we'll get you
7 the procurement documents. We've done this every
8 year.

9 MR. ANTUN: Yeah.

10 MR. O'CONNOR: In fact, you know
11 what? It's late.

12 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Who was the
13 attorney last year?

14 MR. O'CONNOR: This attorney has been
15 doing it for a few years. Previous to that, it was
16 Karen Young. Previous to that, I think it was Kathy
17 Walrod.

18 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yeah. Kathy
19 Walrod was the last one I remember.

20 MR. O'CONNOR: Right. Right. And I
21 think, in fact, this attorney had worked with Kathy
22 Walrod in the past, and I think had been a member or
23 associated with that firm for a while. But then
24 Karen Young was doing it for a period of time.
25 Karen Young's no longer able to do it. And this

1 attorney has been doing it for the last few years.

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And if you could
3 let us know approximately how much per year for the
4 last three or four years.

5 MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, our dollar
6 amount for this is \$60,000. We don't ever get to
7 that. I want to say it's probably about 35,000 for
8 the year. But we can get you that, sure.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: And Mike, just
10 along the same line, but this attorney prosecutes
11 violations, right?

12 MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, it's correct.
13 They're actually civil violations.

14 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Now, I
15 understand. Okay. Is there a way that we can
16 ascertain what the rate of return is? You know,
17 like the bang for the buck? So if we pay the
18 attorney 60,000 or 45,000 or whatever they bill, how
19 much of the fines that come back?

20 MR. O'CONNOR: We can get you some
21 information.

22 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yeah, I'm just
23 curious.

24 MR. O'CONNOR: The fine collection
25 was last year. The Improvement Authority doesn't

1 actually get all the fines. That's shared. I think
2 part of it is with the state and then Hudson
3 Regional Health is involved in this also.

4 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: But if you
5 could just get a number for it.

6 MR. O'CONNOR: You got it. Well,
7 I'll attempt to get that to you in 30 seconds.

8 MR. ANTUN: Yeah, Mr. Chairman.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead.

10 MR. ANTUN: The resolution that was
11 approved by the Improvement Authority is attached as
12 part of your backup so, and the amount states it's
13 50,000. But I'll have Mike O'Connor provide a memo
14 explaining how many responded and the other
15 information that Commissioner Cifelli you requested.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Mike, I think Al
17 might be interested in the contract.

18 Go ahead, Mr. Clerk.

19 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: After
20 December, I might be. I don't know.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay.

22 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 22.
23 Resolution authorizing the acceptance of One 2025
24 Mobility Trans Safetbus, if awarded, from the New
25 Jersey Transit Corporation Section 5310 Program, to

1 be leased to Hudson County.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Romano and Cedeño.

3 THE CLERK: I-1. Bond Ordinance
4 providing for various 2026 Road and Bridge
5 Improvements by and in the County of Hudson, State
6 of New Jersey; Appropriating \$12,542,089, including
7 state grants received or expected to be received in
8 the aggregate amount of \$9,310,826; therefor and
9 authorizing the issuance of \$3,077,393 Bonds or
10 Notes to Finance part of the cost thereof.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Kopacz-Romano.

12 THE CLERK: Mr. Chairman, Board, I
13 will use the prior sponsors for the ordinance up for
14 adoption. I'll now turn it over to the
15 Administration.

16 MR. ANTUN: Mr. Chairman, we have one
17 item in the Board's consideration.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead.

19 MR. ANTUN: It's authorizing an award
20 to various social service homeless providers in the
21 amount of \$623,490.

22 THE CLERK: This will be Resolution
23 No. 23.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: 23 for the Board.
25 Question by Commissioner Rodriguez. Go ahead,

1 Carrie.

2 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Elaborate a
3 little on that.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Elaborate on that
5 please for Commissioner Rodriguez.

6 MR. ANTUN: This is a partial award
7 to various providers. We didn't receive responses
8 to several items. So if you recall, Item No. 7,
9 that's on the agenda, continues the current
10 providers and awards additional money for that
11 period while we do another RFP. That's item -- it's
12 Item No. 7 on the agenda.

13 And this, what this represents are the
14 agencies that we're able to award at this time. And
15 then the remaining agencies, hopefully the Board
16 will approve it, giving them a five-month extension
17 with additional funding while we undertake another
18 process.

19 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Can we define
21 what is provided as homeless prevention? Yes.
22 Director Toon.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Also, Billy, you
24 had a previous question for Director Toon.

25 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes. I'll let

1 her answer this one.

2 DIRECTOR TOON: Darice Toon. Yes,
3 Commissioner, that's rental assistance. And we
4 contract with a couple of -- typically a couple of
5 agencies, including our own Welfare department to
6 provide rental assistance.

7 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So BEOF, CCAN, I
8 mean, they're just small amounts, right? That's,
9 how much rental assistance can you provide with
10 29,000, 31,000, five people, six people, ten people?

11 DIRECTOR MAZZA: Right. Most of the
12 rental assistance funding, Commissioner, is actually
13 subject to the new RFP because we didn't get
14 sufficient responses for that. So most of it,
15 you're right, that's not a lot at all. That's
16 pretty much what they asked for. But yeah, most of
17 it is actually going to be subject to the RFP and
18 also what will be awarded to Family Services through
19 their Welfare office.

20 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay. And then
21 I had asked you a question earlier. The question
22 is, the food, our food insecurity, all the food
23 distribution programs that we do and all the money
24 that we've gotten from the federal government from
25 ARP to do it runs out at the end of the year.

1 DIRECTOR TOON: Correct.

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Where are we
3 with -- I know we've talked about new initiatives,
4 place in Kearny and other things. Where are we with
5 the overall plan to find the monies, to replace all
6 the funding that we've been able to utilize there
7 for the last four or five years?

8 DIRECTOR TOON: That Commissioner, I
9 don't have the answer to that. That's more of a
10 financial, a finance question. I can just tell you
11 that we're -- it's a what? A budget question.
12 Thank you. Thank you.

13 It's more of a budget question because I
14 don't have, you know, any control over that.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Well, so Mr.
16 Administrator, should I go back to my point earlier?
17 We need to put some group together, some planning
18 together because come January, there's no money.
19 And if come January, all those distributions are
20 ceased, trust me, you'll have to move this to a
21 larger location.

22 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Do we not have
23 a lobbyist that, and I realize that the relationship
24 between a blue state county like Hudson and
25 Washington right now is somewhat strained. That's a

1 mild term, but do we not have a lobbyist that
2 because most of these programs get funded from
3 Washington, right?

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Well, they were
5 before 2024.

6 MR. ANTUN: Yeah, the programs,
7 Commissioner Cifelli, the programs that Commissioner
8 O'Dea's alluded to were funded under the ARP
9 program. That's how we allocated those dollars.

10 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: That's running
11 out though.

12 MR. ANTUN: Well, running out in the
13 sense that ARP stipulated that all the money's had
14 to be expended by the end of this year. And we're
15 in the process of doing that. And the
16 Commissioner's question is, is that, well, what
17 happens next year? I think that's the 800-pound
18 gorilla in the room that nobody has an answer to at
19 the moment.

20 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Is that
21 gorilla of ours there?

22 MR. ANTUN: It's a budget question
23 and, you know, we have a lot of budget challenges
24 this year.

25 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yeah, but

1 don't we have, aren't we paying lobbyists?

2 MR. ANTUN: Yes, yes.

3 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: To do whatever
4 they can do to shape the tree?

5 MR. ANTUN: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: 250 miles
7 south of here?

8 MR. ANTUN: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Maybe that
10 tree's barren, but no pun intended. That's one of
11 the orange-haired monkey's children's names. I
12 don't mean that, but isn't there, I don't know, but
13 I just wanted to still in my head where we're at
14 with this because Bill's right. I mean, come the
15 end of the year, I mean, somebody's got to fund this
16 stuff. I don't know where it's going to come from.

17 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: We need a plan.
18 How much do we spend on it? How much do we spend
19 each year? How much of that money can we look in
20 July to see the state of New Jersey allocate to us?
21 What other allies can we have throughout the state
22 of New Jersey that have done similar programs in
23 similar, especially urban counties? So you put
24 together a coalition to get some of the dollars from
25 the state. Some of that money we're going to

1 probably have to eat ourselves, Mr. Administrator.

2 I know you never liked to spend those dollars, not
3 in this particular case, but increase the budget,
4 but things that we just have to do.

5 And then this is something that I believe
6 there is a lot of philanthropic money out there.
7 But if we're not proactively working to access those
8 dollars, if we're not proactively working and
9 identifying nonprofits that we can actually write
10 the grants for and or do the compliance and
11 administration on grants, in my day job, there's a
12 half a dozen nonprofits that I'm the lead entity
13 because I know how to do the compliance. I know how
14 to do the paperwork. And while that entity is
15 better at delivering that service, the government's
16 not going to fund them unless they know there's
17 somebody that knows how to properly get all the
18 paperwork and things that are needed.

19 But in order to do that, we got to plan
20 now. The reason that I ask, and I give Darice
21 credit, but the reason I ask that we take those and
22 rank those and look at what those costs are is
23 because when these things run out, the buck's going
24 to stop here. And I cite this one because we'll see
25 who else knows what rank number one of all the

1 programs that were funded? You know? Anybody know?
2 Anybody else read the report? A program for Middle
3 Eastern or Muslim women that are victims of domestic
4 violence. Remember that, Darice?

5 And it made so much sense to me because
6 unless you have a program specifically tailored to
7 that culture and that population, individuals will
8 not be comfortable going to whatever other program
9 exists. And I've used that example over and over
10 again, but the clock's ticking. Now's the time to
11 take that report, decide what there has to get
12 funded, and then creatively use our grant writers,
13 our lobbyists, our own delegations in Trenton and DC
14 to go after those dollars.

15 Because otherwise we're just sitting here
16 a year from now, people lined up at our meetings
17 because there's no food being distributed, victims
18 coming here because there are no longer programs.
19 So we did the first part, which other places didn't
20 do. But other places have no clue what priorities
21 there are, what importance there are, what things
22 are there, and they're going to be sitting a year
23 from now doing what we did already. But if we don't
24 now take that document and start to look at how do
25 we fund those, it's all going to fall to you, right?

1 Because we're all going to go to you and
2 go, hey, look at the report. It said we've got to
3 fund these five things. Where's the money? And the
4 only place you're going to find the money come
5 January if we do nothing is where? In our budget.

6 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: So, but
7 getting back to the lobbyists, and we have these
8 people on retainers. Can't they have a role in all
9 of this with Billy? I mean, not with Billy, I don't
10 want to lay this on him, but Billy is, because
11 that's what he does in his day job, so to speak.
12 But can't we get these lobbyists to kind of roll up
13 their sleeves and try to bird dog these things for
14 us? And write the grants on them?

15 MR. ANTUN: No, we have grant
16 writers. We can certainly work on what Commissioner
17 O'Dea is saying.

18 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Oh, all right.
19 Well, let's get it done. That's what I think that's
20 what Bill's saying.

21 MR. ANTUN: We have these firms under
22 contract. It's just a matter of --

23 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I know. I
24 know we do.

25 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yeah. But Abe,

1 for the next -- like if not for the next meeting,
2 like for a month from now, take the list that was
3 done. Take the top ten priorities of it and task
4 the departments and their grant writers to look and
5 identify what sources of dollars outside the norm
6 currently exist for it. Because I think that we and
7 a lot of governments don't apply sometimes for money
8 that we can apply for. Because it's easy to just
9 ask you to, right? It's easy just to ask you to put
10 the money in the budget.

11 But like those things exist. And the more
12 we raise it, and the more we look at some of the
13 larger philanthropic entities, some of the corporate
14 entities that are in the County. I saw LeFrac gave
15 my buddy 300 grand for CDL driving. That we should
16 be asking LeFrac to give 300 grand for our food and
17 security program. Those are the kinds of things
18 that we gotta be proactive, not reactive to.

19 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm asking.
20 The Commissioners, they don't do anything in Hudson
21 County, do they?

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Willie, go ahead,
23 Willie.

24 THE CLERK: Resolution No. 24,
25 establishing the Hudson County Immigration Community

1 Safety Committee.

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Sponsor.

3 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Second.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And just as a
5 note, Abe. So just as a note, we did a pretty
6 extensive Zoom on, was it Friday?

7 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Friday.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: On Friday, at
9 the same time that we were dealing with a little bit
10 of an ICE crisis, which got resolved. And I haven't
11 gotten the full report as to how it started, but we
12 certainly came up with it, with kudos to the County
13 Exec in resolving the -- that issue in the moment.

14 What, for Thursday, Mr. Chairman, I'm
15 going to suggest we just do is that we'll change the
16 last Be It Resolved, that the Board, and we'll list
17 the four Commissioners that you've already put on
18 this. And then we'll just list the number of, and
19 we'll provide you a list of people that have reached
20 out to us who are advocates and reps from the
21 community, for you to be able to name them to that.
22 And we'll just have you name them, as opposed to put
23 all the names in the resolution.

24 So I'll tweak this very simply, and we'll
25 get that back to you tomorrow. And then it'll list

1 the names of the Commissioners. It'll list a rep, a
2 couple of reps that we talked about, and then it
3 will name, whatever, seven to eleven immigration
4 advocates, community advocates to be named by the
5 Chair. And we'll have a list of those that have
6 already expressed interest to us. And then if they
7 don't get named, they can yell at the Chairman.

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Continue, Mr.
9 Clerk.

10 THE CLERK: I have nothing further,
11 Mr. Chairman. I have nothing further.

12 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Can you
13 repeat that 24 again? I didn't catch most of it.

14 THE CLERK: Yeah, sure. It's
15 Resolution No. 24, Commissioner. And it's
16 establishing the Hudson County Immigration Community
17 Safety Committee. Commissioner, if you need a copy,
18 we have copies here, if you don't have one. You
19 have one?

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I have extra. You
21 have this or that?

22 THE CLERK: That's the executive
23 order.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yeah. And the
25 purpose of this meeting, I want you to go back to

1 the Zoom meeting we had on Friday. This committee
2 will work hand-in-hand with the committee that's
3 been established by the County Executive per the
4 executive order. So one committee, and actually,
5 the four Commissioners sit on both. So we're the
6 kind of link between the advocacy groups and the
7 internal group.

8 And the internal group will develop
9 policies, oversee policies, et cetera. The advocacy
10 group can serve, and obviously, the Commissioners
11 can make suggestions, make recommendations as things
12 are rolled out. If there are tweaks that need to
13 be, we'll go back to the internal group and ask them
14 to adopt additional programs. And the advocates may
15 also be great to help identify resources, because
16 one of the big things that is going to be done is
17 providing services and resources to families that
18 are impacted by ICE.

19 So if the breadwinner in the family is
20 swept up off the street, now the family has no
21 source or form of income, or they'll threaten to
22 lose their housing, we want to make sure that we
23 have identified service providers, support staff, as
24 well as resources to assist.

25 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: And just from

1 a technical legal end, if I'm not mistaken, this
2 coming Friday, there's going to be a partial
3 shutdown of the federal government due to an impasse
4 in Congress with respect to the funding of the
5 Homeland Security allocations. But -- and one of
6 the things that I think is in dispute, that one of
7 the bones of contention between Republicans and
8 Democrats are certain things like, and this impacts
9 on a very quality of life personal issue for our
10 residents.

11 The Democrats want to insist, or insisting
12 that no one can go into a private home without a
13 judge's warrant, as opposed to an administrative
14 warrant. And that's been a big bone of contention
15 between the present administration and the
16 Democrats. The other things are ancillary to that,
17 such as masks, body cams, but I think a lot of those
18 things are in the mix. And as far as our day-to-day
19 support for our residents, we need to get a
20 clarification on where we stand legally with those
21 things, such as, can ICE just walk into somebody's
22 house without a judicial warrant?

23 That's something that's up in the air
24 right now. I don't think it's -- as far as I'm
25 concerned, legally, it's not up in the air, but I

1 think it's being debated now in Washington. So we
2 have to keep a monitor on what developments come out
3 of DC on this stuff. My own two cents, but...

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And then I think
5 for Thursday, I sent -- I don't want to lose this, I
6 sent another resolution supporting a bill
7 concerning, I guess, fines or penalties related to
8 the masks. That's State legislation that's pending.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: That's
10 important, but that's one of the items that I think
11 that's important to our constituents, that we need
12 to have their civil rights protected. And that's,
13 unfortunately, Washington and New Jersey and
14 Minnesota and California and New York are not on the
15 same page with this. So hopefully that will get
16 ironed out in Washington. I'm not so confident
17 that's just going to be done, but...

18 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Can I ask a
19 question, Chairman?

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead.

21 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Who was on
22 the committee?

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: It's Bill O'Dea,
24 Fanny, Yraida, and Al Cifelli.

25 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: No, I'm

1 kidding. Yeah, it represents all points of the
2 County, great. Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Motion to
4 adjourn.

5 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Second.

6 THE CLERK: All in favor? We are
7 adjourned.

8 (Whereupon the proceeding is then
9 concluded at 5:22 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, February 10, 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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