

HUDSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

RE:

REGULAR 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,
Commissioners Chambers
567 Pavonia Avenue
Jersey City, New Jersey
Thursday, February 26, 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
CELESTE WILLIAMS, Commissioner

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

EDWARD J. FLORIO, ESQ., Board Counsel
ALBERICO DE PIERRO, Hudson County Counsel
ABRAHAM ANTUN, County Administrator
CAROL JEAN DOYLE, County Commissioner Clerk
Reported by: Shari Cathey, CCR, RPR

1 THE CLERK: Commissioner Aponte-
2 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 Commissioner Kopacz.

10 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Here.

11 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Here.

13 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

14 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Here.

15 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

16 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Here.

17 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Here.

19 THE CLERK: Please stand to pledge to
20 the flag.

21 (Flag Salute.)

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Madam Clerk, before
23 we start, we have two birthdays. We have one of our
24 top staffers, whose been with us for many years and
25 does a yeoman's job every day, Ms. Luz Feliciano,

1 February 18th. And the Dean of the County Board of
2 Commissioners, Prep grad, uncle to DeFilippo, man
3 behind the scenes for Westside Avenue, Juan Abel
4 O'Dea.

5 Okay. Madam Clerk, continue, please.

6 THE CLERK: Adequate notice of this
7 Regular Meeting has been provided as follows:

8 Posting notice of Resolution 8-01-2026 on
9 the County Commissioner's Bulletin Board, First
10 Floor, Administration Building Annex, Jersey City,
11 New Jersey.

12 Copies of the above mentioned resolution
13 have been sent to the County Clerk and the editors
14 of the Kearny Observer and the Star Ledger.

15 May I have the motion to approve the
16 minutes of the Caucus Meeting of January 27th, 2026,
17 and the Regular Meeting of January 29th, 2026?

18 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Motion.

19 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Second.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and
21 Cedeño.

22 THE CLERK: Commissioner
23 Aponte-Lipski.

24 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

25 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

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COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.
THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.
COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.
THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.
Commissioner Kopacz.
COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.
THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.
COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.
THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.
THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.
COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.
THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.
CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.
THE CLERK: So the next order of
business is today's agenda. I'll turn it over to
Administration.
MR. ANTUN: Mr. Chairman?
CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.
MR. ANTUN: I do not have any new
items. I do have a couple of replacement items.
Item number 11 has to do with replace -- the name of
the company was changed from SCYTL to SOE Software
Corporation, nothing else is different.
And No. 18, which is under the Middlesex

1 Coop, we deleted the amount of the pitcher's mound,
2 it's not necessary at this time.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: What did you
5 delete?

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: The amount of the
7 pitcher's mound.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: You reduced it,
9 you said?

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: No. Deleted it.

11 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: You can't delete
12 it without us moving, and seconded to delete it.

13 MR. ANTUN: No, no. I agree with
14 you. I'm just letting you know what the changes
15 are.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So I make a
17 motion for the two --

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I second.

19 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Do those
20 changes.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I second. O'Dea
22 and Romano. Before we continue, County Executive,
23 before you leave the chambers, did you want to
24 address the Commissioners on anything? You did
25 enough for today. Okay. Continue.

1 THE CLERK: On the changes,
2 Commissioner Aponte-Lipski.

3 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

4 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

5 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.

6 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

7 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

8 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.
9 Commissioner Kopacz.

10 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

11 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.

13 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

14 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

15 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

16 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

17 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

19 THE CLERK: I do have one new one, it
20 would be Resolution 27. It's urging the Governor
21 Mikie Sherrill and all the New Jersey State
22 Department of Health to take any and all measures to
23 ensure the continued operation and long-term
24 stability of Heights University Hospital, formerly
25 known as Christ Hospital.

1 I need a sponsor and a second.

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Sponsor unless?

3 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Second.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: You want to do
5 Board? You want to do Board? Or whatever you want
6 to do it.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: We'll do Board as a
8 whole.

9 THE CLERK: Board as a whole.
10 Commissioner Aponte-Lipski.

11 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

12 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

13 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.

14 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

15 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

16 THE CLERK: Commissioner Kopacz.

17 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

18 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

19 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yeah. And just
20 -- yes. And just so everyone knows, in light of the
21 urgency of a call that occurred today with the
22 operator of this, we need to send somebody in a car
23 down to the governor's mansion and drop the
24 resolution off.

25 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

1 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

2 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

3 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

4 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes. And one other
6 comment with regard to that. I know that there's
7 been a lot of people losing jobs. I think we should
8 be made aware of what that situation is with the
9 unions.

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I just had a
11 question.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Bill.

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I guess to the
14 -- to -- to legal. So I know that -- I know that
15 under certain circumstances, the Board has the power
16 to create an investigatory committee, which could up
17 to and include, I guess, subpoenaing individuals.

18 So I think that the history of what has
19 occurred at that hospital over the last 13 years
20 warrants it. So I would like to -- I would like
21 to, you know, have a conversation, I guess, with the
22 Chair and then with the County Counsel or our
23 counsel about the possibility of us creating that
24 committee.

25 Because, you know, it's obvious to me that

1 for over a decade, individuals purposely allowed the
2 hospital to run down, didn't make capital
3 improvements. As the administrator would know, we
4 have issues with -- with monies that they owe that
5 they did not pay. We had issues with checks that
6 were cashed, but not by the people they were
7 supposed to be cashed by.

8 And you know, a pattern of neglect, maybe
9 purposeful neglect, has resulted in a hospital today
10 that literally we were told on a call earlier this
11 morning is closing tomorrow. And participating in
12 most of that and being told things like, well,
13 there's -- the medical arts building will be able to
14 provide a lot of the medical services.

15 And my response was, more than half the
16 people -- the doctors are no longer in that building
17 because they left because the patients they get were
18 patients that came from the hospital. So I mean,
19 the pattern that started many years ago with a --
20 with a real estate deal, I don't know how -- how
21 else to describe that, continues through today.

22 So I would like to, you know, consider
23 putting on the next agenda a resolution to have an
24 investigatory committee. We've had contracts there,
25 there's monies they owe us to dig deep into that.

1 Because I think that that will help, you know, bring
2 a new operator into -- into that facility because
3 obviously -- you know, the one that's there now,
4 they didn't start the problem, but they didn't
5 address the problem.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Continue,
7 Madam Clerk.

8 THE CLERK: According to the policy
9 set by the Board of County Commissioners, members of
10 the public are asked to limit their comments to five
11 minutes when discussing agenda items and three
12 minutes at the conclusion of the meeting for persons
13 who submitted a timely written request to discuss
14 matters of public interest.

15 At this time, the public may address the
16 Board on any item on the agenda only. Please keep
17 your comments limited to five minutes. Are there
18 any speakers on agenda items only?

19 MS. WALKER: All right. Hello,
20 Commissioners. My name is Courtney Walker. And
21 I'm here for agenda Item No. 10, which is a
22 resolution approving the contract with Full Service
23 Mailers for the provision of election-related
24 services. Like Clerk Postal Computer and Mailing
25 Services.

1 I believe this is the same provider we
2 have a contract with from last year. And with the
3 late arrival of sample ballots before the general
4 election, sample ballots arrived after early voting
5 started in a lot of people's mailboxes when they
6 were supposed to arrive before.

7 Those sample ballots include important
8 information, like early voting locations. And there
9 were several new early voting locations added last
10 year, which was incredible. Thank you all for
11 advocating for more. But I just want to make sure
12 that any issues we have with that service provider
13 are resolved before entering into a new year of our
14 contract with them.

15 I was told sample ballots -- if my memory
16 serves me correctly, I was told sample ballots
17 arrived late because of issues with the service
18 provider. So I want to make sure that those issues
19 are addressed because I know that we're all
20 continuing to advocate for better distribution of
21 early voting locations throughout the County.

22 So going back to Agenda Item No. 10, I
23 just want to make sure that we have addressed the
24 issues with our service provider before entering
25 into a new contract year with them.

1 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Can anyone
2 answer?

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Junior; right?
4 Junior can answer.

5 MR. MALDONADO: Commissioners, so to
6 respond to the question. The statutory deadline for
7 sample ballots was met last year. Unfortunately,
8 they arrived after early voting started because of
9 the amount of mail that was going out in Hudson
10 County for the elections and other elections that
11 were being held.

12 But we have spoken to the mail house. We
13 had made arrangements with two superintendents of
14 elections to be able to get voter registration lists
15 to them a little earlier in order to avoid that from
16 happening again this year. But we have the
17 commitment from the mailing house that that's not
18 going to occur.

19 But it's not their fault. They met the
20 statutory deadline, I just want to make that clear.
21 So we'll work on making sure that this year, they
22 get into the voters' hands before early voting.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Junior.

24 MR. MALDONADO: Okay. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay.

1 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes. We just
2 added that. We added that. And just for clarity, I
3 believe there's a temporary stay of the closing.
4 Because this morning, they said they were closing
5 them all, but now, my understanding from union -- at
6 least from something the union put out, that there's
7 been a temporary stay on that. It doesn't make this
8 resolution any less important, it doesn't make an
9 investigatory committee any less, you know, needed,
10 but --

11 MS. RAYMAKER: I wanted to -- I'm
12 Norrice Raymaker, and I'm with Sergeant Anthony
13 Neighborhood Park Association. And I'm a 30-year
14 resident on Palisade Avenue. And we have watched --
15 our neighborhood has watched at the various owners
16 of the facility have bought up many properties along
17 Palisade Avenue. And then did nothing with them.

18 So the daycare center, which is directly
19 across the street, which was a huge benefit for
20 people working at the hospital at the time, has been
21 closed for about 20 years. And nothing has been
22 done with that property. The garage, which was
23 built in '94. My neighborhood association sued over
24 the building of that garage because it was supposed
25 to go to ten stories.

1 Bill Bromirski, who was on the planning
2 board in Jersey City at the time, we lost our
3 lawsuit, but he wrote in to the zoning that the
4 garage had to be kept to four stories. And as a
5 concession to the community, we were to be allowed
6 to rent spots in that garage, and that tradition
7 continued up until July of this year, when all of
8 the neighbors were told to get out.

9 So, you know, I would like to check on the
10 deeds and the planning board minutes to see if that
11 was memorialized. And if there's anything we can do
12 about that. My doctors are in the doctors'
13 building. I had an appointment on February 5th.
14 There were buckets in the hallway because the water
15 was pouring through the ceiling tiles in the
16 hallway.

17 My own doctors have complained to me that
18 the heat is unregulated. It'll be 95 degrees in
19 that building. They cannot open up the windows to
20 try and get a little cool air into the offices.
21 They have not had leases since 2024. They don't
22 want to leave that building because it has a nice
23 drop-off, a circular drop-off where people can --
24 where their patients can be -- come in. Where the
25 county can drop off people who are using County

1 transportation.

2 They don't want to leave. But they are
3 under tremendous pressure because of this chronic
4 refusal to maintain that property. And that
5 property is owned by the same man who owns Alaris
6 Health. So they're deliberately -- you know,
7 they're doing what a bad landlord does.

8 They don't take care of things, they want
9 the tenants to leave so that it can be vacant, and
10 then they can do whatever they want with it. And we
11 know what they want to do with it. They came
12 forward, they went to planning in Jersey City, they
13 wanted to put a 50-story building on this site.
14 Then they came forward with a plan to put up ten
15 ten-story buildings, no hospital.

16 They talk about they need revenue to
17 support the deficits that occur at this hospital,
18 but they have no feasibility study, they have no
19 real architectural study. They're just taking
20 advantage of people's need for a hospital. They're
21 bamboozling us, in other words.

22 And I am so grateful to all of you for --
23 for seeing through and realizing who you are dealing
24 with. You are dealing with people who have been
25 indicted nine times under the RICO Act. That's who

1 is in charge of this facility. So, please. Thank
2 you so much for this resolution.

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Next speaker.

6 THE CLERK: No other speakers?

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Move to close.

8 THE CLERK: I have -- Commissioner
9 Cifelli is in here, Chairman. So I need a sponsor
10 for No. 9, and I need a --

11 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm here. I'm
12 here. Hello.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Bill will take them
14 both.

15 THE CLERK: Take them both. Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Hello. I'm
17 here.

18 THE CLERK: May I have a motion to
19 approve all the items on the consent agenda? A
20 second?

21 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Lipski.

23 THE CLERK: Commissioner
24 Aponte-Lipski.

25 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

1 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.
2 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.
3 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.
4 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.
5 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.
6 Commissioner Kopacz.
7 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.
8 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.
9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.
10 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.
11 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.
12 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.
13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.
14 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.
15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.
16 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli just
17 came on Zoom.
18 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I was on for
19 the last speaker.
20 THE CLERK: We have one ordinance for
21 second reading. Finance and Administration. Bond
22 ordinance providing for various 2026 Road and Bridge
23 Improvements by and in the County of Hudson, State
24 of New Jersey; Appropriating \$12,542,089, including
25 state grants received or expected to be received in

1 the aggregate amount of \$9,310,826. Therefore and
2 authorizing the issuance of \$3,077,393 bonds or
3 notes to Finance part of the cost thereof.

4 This is the time fixed for the public
5 hearing of this ordinance, which was introduced at
6 the meeting of February 12th, 2026. Advertised as
7 required by law, together with a notice of hearing
8 for this time. It's been posted on the County
9 Commissioner's Bulletin Board and made available to
10 the general public.

11 Are there any speakers on this ordinance?
12 Seeing none, can I ask for a motion to close the
13 hearing?

14 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Motion.

15 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Second.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Basalice and
17 Lipski.

18 THE CLERK: All in favor. Opposed.
19 On the final adoption. Commissioner Aponte-Lipski.

20 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

21 THE CLERK: Commissioner Basalice.

22 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.

23 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

24 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

25 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.

1 Commissioner Kopacz.

2 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

3 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.

5 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

6 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

7 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

8 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Commissioner
10 Cifelli.

11 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yes. I don't
12 know if I was muted or not.

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Al, you're
14 muted.

15 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Can you hear
16 me now?

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Is he on? Is he?

18 THE CLERK: He's on.

19 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Can you hear
20 me now? I was probably muted.

21 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

23 THE CLERK: This concludes the items
24 of business on today's agenda. Are there any
25 comments from the Commissioners? Are there any

1 comments from the Chief of Staff of the County
2 Executive?

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: That's a first.

4 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Can I make a
5 comment?

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Bob.

7 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: The County
8 Department of Roads and Parks, the sheriff's office,
9 Hudson County Improvement Authority, everybody,
10 you've been cleaning the roads, and you've been
11 doing an outstanding job. I just wanted to say,
12 last night was about to happen. I had to put that
13 on my profile.

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yeah. In Hoboken
15 -- in Hoboken, they went beyond, they went places
16 they didn't have to go, and that's a tribute to the
17 leadership from the county exec and from Denise, so,
18 thank you. Because I know -- you know, I can't say
19 what I wanted to say.

20 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I would just --
21 I would just add that late last night, and then
22 actually -- we received a request concerning a
23 funeral that was happening this morning at St.
24 John's Church. And Denise, Wally, obviously, the
25 County Exec, you know, they cleared that.

1 Otherwise, the persons in the cars of the family
2 wouldn't even have been able to have a place to
3 bring their vehicles for a funeral. So definitely
4 above and beyond the call of duty.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Continue,
6 Madam Clerk.

7 THE CLERK: This is the time for
8 persons who submitted a timely written request to
9 address the Board on any matter of public interest.
10 Please remember to limit your comments to three
11 minutes.

12 I do have a list of speakers. The first
13 one I have is Leroy Truth. Not here. Raymond
14 Mitchell.

15 MR. MITCHELL: All right. Last week
16 -- well, last two weeks, I was here, as we all know,
17 March 26th, 2020, my father was strangled in a North
18 Bergen Harborage, owned by Hackensack Meridian. The
19 last time I was here, they said that Mr. Wayne Mello
20 would give me the information that Ms. Suarez said
21 that my dad died of COVID.

22 I still have not received it all these
23 months. I've been coming here for probably like a
24 year, I guess, to these meetings, and I have not
25 received anything at all. I continue and continue

1 coming here, and it's -- I don't understand what is
2 -- what do I have to do, guys? Like, since you guys
3 are the, you know, officials here, public servants.
4 What do I have to do to get my information from the
5 prosecutor's office? Does anybody have suggestions?

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I thought that they
7 did speak to you.

8 MR. MITCHELL: I need it in writing.
9 Nobody really spoke to me about it. I was looking
10 for Ms. Suarez to speak about this because he's the
11 one that said the cause of -- she -- I understand
12 she retired because she said, I guess, my dad died
13 of COVID, and then she retires.

14 I was supposed to have my information.
15 And there was weeks that I asked her for that
16 information. And now, Wayne Mello here, doesn't
17 want to give me any information either. Is he
18 covering up? Or like, what's going on here?

19 Because now I have three different
20 stories. I have an actual death from the nursing
21 home, I have the strangle marks on his face, and
22 then I have Ms. Suarez said it was COVID, so.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Whoever would issue
24 -- I'm assuming whoever would issue the certificate.

25 MR. MITCHELL: But now, she's no

1 longer here, so what do I do? Should she get
2 arrested for his? I don't know. Because I should
3 have my information. Because if she -- if she
4 stated my dad died of COVID, I should have that;
5 right?

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Did they tell
7 you in writing? Or verbally?

8 MR. MITCHELL: I didn't get -- that's
9 what I want, I want it in writing, because I want to
10 challenge it. I want to challenge all this.

11 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Was there -- let
12 me ask you a question. Was there any kind of
13 autopsy done when he --

14 MR. MITCHELL: No, sir. During the
15 pandemic, there was no autopsy, they couldn't -- I
16 called the medical examiner, he never showed up.
17 Also, the doctor never showed up, the nursing home
18 told him what to write, he said, so.

19 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Well, no.

20 MR. MITCHELL: This is a big problem
21 here that I'm getting all of this -- and Brian Stack
22 also said he's going to investigate.

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: The nursing staff
24 cannot issue a cause of death, it's got to come from
25 a doctor, my friend.

1 MR. MITCHELL: Well, the nursing home
2 was the one that wrote it, and --

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: No, no, no, no.

4 MR. MITCHELL: It wasn't on the death
5 certificate.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: A doctor has to
7 sign off.

8 MR. MITCHELL: Yes. And he --

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Well, a doctor
10 signed it.

11 MR. MITCHELL: He said he signed off,
12 but he said he never even seen my dad during that
13 time. And why wasn't he removed? You know, North
14 Bergen has the nursing home. You open that door,
15 it's the side of the hospital. How come my father
16 wasn't in the hospital side to try to revive him?

17 How does he just die at the nursing home
18 when -- you know, is that protocol? Like, you just
19 die at the nursing home, and then they don't even
20 try to open up the door and get to Hackensack
21 Meridian Hospital? I don't understand what's going
22 on. Like, how does that happen? Does anybody know
23 that? That if you're dying, should you be going to
24 the hospital and they try to revive you? Or the
25 paramedics? Because nobody even tried to do that

1 for him.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Again, on behalf of
3 the Board, our sincerest condolences on your loss.
4 Next speaker.

5 THE CLERK: Next speaker -- I'm
6 sorry.

7 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Are there any --
8 like, do you have any reports that would provide to
9 you as a family?

10 MR. MITCHELL: Nothing. I couldn't
11 get anything. I still get -- I called them up,
12 because it's seven years, and this is the sixth year
13 coming in, and I asked -- I called the North Bergen
14 Harborage. They tried to call out to the owner of
15 the -- you know, because they sold it in 2022. And
16 they still have not reached me yet. So this has
17 been a week already so.

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I just don't
19 understand why there should be somewhere, paperwork
20 that someone signed, and if you're telling me a
21 doctor signed it --

22 MR. MITCHELL: Well, the death
23 certificate, but --

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Right. And the
25 doctor said --

1 MR. MITCHELL: But he never showed up
2 at the hospital.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: The doctor said,
4 I signed the death certificate, even though I never
5 saw the patient.

6 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. How do you do
7 that?

8 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: No comment.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I mean, that's a
10 civil lawsuit.

11 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. I think people
12 should be arrested for that.

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: All sorts of
14 civil lawsuits.

15 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Next speaker,
17 please.

18 THE CLERK: The next speaker is Mark
19 Bloomberg. I didn't see him in the audience.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead. Go.
21 Next speaker.

22 THE CLERK: Next speaker is Vivian
23 Glatessa [ph]. Vivian.

24 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Next speaker.

25 THE CLERK: Moving right along.

1 Casey Stanley.

2 MR. STANLEY: Hi. My name is Casey
3 Stanley. I am a resident of Ward 4 here in Jersey
4 City. Last summer, I had just recently found
5 employment again after an extended period. And one
6 of the things that I had a challenge with during
7 that time was being able to pay my rent.

8 I was able to pay my rent through some
9 loans through family members, and when I went to go
10 repay them, I found out that I was eligible for a
11 back-rent application, and I was referred to one of
12 the agencies within Hudson County to be able to
13 apply for that.

14 I applied for that in August, and it took
15 me about a month for me to figure out who my point
16 of contact was in that application process. It took
17 me another month for that person to actually respond
18 to any of my messages to them. And then it took
19 about -- every two weeks, I was getting a new
20 requirement for documentation sent to me.

21 And I was kind of exasperated by this
22 process. I only found out, in late January, that I
23 was denied for lack of ability to show gross
24 income. As an independent contractor, during that
25 time from July to present, I have a 1099 that shows

1 my total income, there's no deductions.

2 But she -- the point of contact was
3 insistent that I show gross income in a W-2 format,
4 which I would not have. I did not have. And
5 ultimately, I was denied that application and paid a
6 thousand dollars because I was unable to demonstrate
7 gross income.

8 I tried to reach out to different
9 supervisors during that period of time. Not often
10 able to get a hold of anyone. Fortunately, I was
11 able to work with a woman named Michelle Rodriguez,
12 who facilitated a lot of the communication that
13 otherwise would not have happened.

14 And so I was denied my application because
15 I didn't have a W-2. I tried to -- I tried to like
16 appeal that, but her supervisor doesn't respond to
17 e-mails or phone calls either. I'm a little
18 exasperated. I don't know what else to do. I've
19 gone through, what seems to be, the exhaustive
20 process of available people with Hudson County.

21 And so I'm here as a last resort, trying
22 to figure out what -- why was I denied? What were
23 the requirements officially through the process?
24 And is there any sort of resolution for me to able
25 to appeal the process? Because I'm not trying to

1 ask for more than what I think that I'm qualified
2 for. And so I just wanted to be able to make sure
3 that there's some sort of resolution to this that's
4 transparent and clear and able to be resolved.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I believe
7 somebody is here that can generally answer the
8 question.

9 DIRECTOR MAZZA: Frank Mazza, I'm the
10 Department Director of Family Services. So
11 obviously, I'm not going to get into the specifics
12 of your case. I'm happy to sit with you and go
13 through it.

14 I do want to address a few things. So I
15 have your file here. The department was in constant
16 communication on what was needed. And the denial,
17 I'm happy to sit with you and talk to you about
18 that. Also, if somebody is denied or disagrees with
19 any decision that the welfare department makes,
20 you're entitled to call for what's called a fair
21 hearing. And you're able to sit in front of a judge
22 and present your case. As a matter of fact, legal
23 services will provide counsel if you need it.

24 And -- but -- but this file is filled with
25 communications back and forth with you on what was

1 needed. Not only that, it's with the division chief
2 and several administrators, and being very specific
3 as to what was required and the reason for the
4 denial.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you, Frank.
6 You can take it to the back. Next speaker.

7 THE CLERK: Next speaker is Courtney
8 Walker.

9 MS. WALKER: All right. Hi,
10 Commissioners. I originally was going to pass my
11 public comment, but with Casey's last comment, I
12 felt like I had to say something.

13 You know, we've been talking a lot about
14 what the county can do to support immigrant families
15 at this time who have been impacted by ICE. The
16 county consistently says they have programs and
17 policies in place. They formed two different task
18 forces to help community members better understand
19 how to navigate those programs in place and advocate
20 for additional needs.

21 However, with the last speaker's story,
22 it's really concerning again, like, that someone was
23 jumping through hoops, and hoops, and hoops, and
24 hurdles to try to get back payment for rent. And
25 this is a similar -- like, back payment for rent, is

1 something that I know the County is going to suggest
2 for families who have been having hardship of
3 meeting rent when they've lost the primary
4 breadwinner, and you know, need help paying their
5 rent to not get evicted.

6 So I just want to flag that this issue
7 goes beyond just one case. We need to make sure
8 that that process is working for everyone because
9 the need for rental assistance now is higher than
10 ever. And it's not just immigrant families. We're
11 having an affordability crisis, as we all know.
12 And people need access to those services.

13 And I understand there needs to be very
14 specific documents in place, but we need to make
15 that process as easy to navigate as possible, as
16 responsive as possible. Because this is somebody's
17 home, this is shelter, this is important.

18 And additionally, for immigrant families,
19 we need to make sure that it's possible to navigate
20 those services in a bilingual way or multilingual
21 way, frankly. Yeah. So if we're having trouble
22 getting it over the line in one area, I'm sure so
23 many other people are having trouble. So I just
24 want to flag that as a potential concern. Thank
25 you.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Thank you. Next
2 speaker.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Excuse me.
4 Courtney, what I would say to that is I think Frank
5 Mazza is second to none --

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yeah.

7 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: When it comes to
8 trying to help people. With that being said, there
9 are rules and regulations that he has to live with.
10 And I think one of the things -- and we missed you
11 at our last meeting, Frank. Our next is Tuesday at
12 five, hopefully you can make it.

13 Is his ability to help educate a lot of
14 the advocates on a lot of those intricacies. And
15 also, in doing that, then having a discussion. How
16 do we deal with some cases that may not be able to
17 make that; right? Because some of these programs
18 require you to have an ability to show, if I pay the
19 five months' rent you owe, how are you going to pay
20 your rent going forward?

21 And obviously, there may be instances
22 where a breadwinner has been taken away, and those
23 individuals that's left there may not have that
24 ability to do that. So with those cases, how are we
25 going to address that? So I think that -- I think

1 that -- I think that -- you know, when I reached out
2 to them -- their office on instances, they're great.

3 MS. WALKER: Okay.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: But I also know
5 that within the -- within the subject of issue with
6 ICE, there may be cases where these programs
7 currently don't address, and we've got to think
8 outside the box and figure out how we're going to
9 make sure that those people get -- get taken care
10 of.

11 MS. WALKER: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Go ahead.

13 THE CLERK: The last speaker I have
14 is Aiden Horgan [ph].

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Abe?

16 THE CLERK: Aiden here?

17 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: He said it was
18 too hot here.

19 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: We've got Abe
20 Antun.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Too hot.

22 THE CLERK: It's Aiden, not Abe.
23 Okay. There being no further business to come
24 before the Board.

25 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Motion.

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COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Second.

THE CLERK: Second. All in favor.

Opposed.

CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Seconded by

Baselice.

THE CLERK: Meeting is adjourned.

(Whereupon the proceeding is then
concluded at 5:11 p.m.)

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

I, SHARI CATHEY, CCR, RPR, License No.
30X100234700, and Notary Public of the State of New
Jersey, hereby certify that the proceedings herein
are from the notes taken by me of a Regular Meeting
of the Hudson County Board of County Commissioners,
held on Thursday, February 26, 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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