

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, March 12, 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
- CELESTE WILLIAMS, Commissioner

CERTIFIED COPY

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
- WILLIE ORTIZ, 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: Present.

13 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

14 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Here.

15 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

16 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Here.

17 THE CLERK: And Chairman Romano.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Here.

19 THE CLERK: Please stand for the
20 Pledge of Allegiance.

21 (Flag Salute.)

22 THE CLERK: Adequate notice of this
23 Regular Meeting has been provided as follows:

24 1. Posting notice of Resolution No.
25 8-1-2026 on the County Commissioner's Bulletin

1 Board, First Floor, Administration Building Annex,
2 Jersey City, New Jersey.

3 2. Copies of the above mentioned
4 resolution have been sent to the County Clerk and
5 the editors of the Kearny Observer and the Star
6 Ledger.

7 May I have a motion to approve the minutes
8 of Caucus, February 10th, 2026 and Regular Meeting,
9 February 12th, 2026.

10 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: I'll motion.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and
12 Cedeño.

13 THE CLERK: Commissioner
14 Aponte-Lipski.

15 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

16 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

17 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.

18 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

19 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

20 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.
21 Commissioner Kopacz.

22 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

23 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yes.

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.

6 THE CLERK: The next order of
7 business is additional discussion on today's agenda.

8 MR. ANTUN: Mr. Chairman, I have no
9 additional items.

10 THE CLERK: Okay. Continue, Mr.
11 Clerk.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I just handed
13 everyone a copy of the resolution. As you know,
14 there was a press conference today. They did sit in
15 at the hospital, and the hospital was under threat
16 of imminent enclosure. The County Counsel said they
17 could at least have standing issues, so hopefully
18 it's not closing on Saturday.

19 But all that just kind of reinforced our
20 needs, and they have to pay us \$15 million in order
21 to initiate a process that will be doing an
22 investigation into what part of the hospital we get
23 to where we are today, but also what options, like,
24 we'll see if that can be done. So I have a
25 resolution I want to sponsor. Unless Yraida want to

1 sponsor, because it's her district.

2 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: I'll
3 second that.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So I'll sponsor
5 resolution, authorize investigation to operation,
6 financial and administrative performance of Heights
7 University Hospital. So it's on to the agenda.
8 Motion and second.

9 THE CLERK: Understood.

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: What number
11 would that be?

12 THE CLERK: That would be No. 25.

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Question.
14 Alberico, if it was to close on Saturday, does that
15 mean we have no more recourse for the \$15 million?

16 MR. DEPIERRO: Well, first -- first
17 of all, Chairman, I was able to get in touch with,
18 thanks to Hudson Regional Health Commission. The
19 Department of Health has confirmed that legally
20 nothing can transpire this Saturday because the
21 hospital's application, which is a certification of
22 need application, is pending.

23 The State Health Department, the State
24 Health Planning Board has to hold at least two
25 public meetings before anything can even be done.

1 And the application actually has to be decided on
2 whether it can be granted or denied. So I think
3 that's important to note. So that's coming
4 straight from the Department of Health.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Thank you.

6 MR. DEPIERRO: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Continue, Mr.
8 Clerk.

9 THE CLERK: May I have a motion to
10 approve all the items listed on the consent agenda?

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Rodriguez and
12 Lipski.

13 THE CLERK: Commissioner
14 Aponte-Lipski.

15 COMMISSIONER APONTE-LIPSKI: Aye.

16 THE CLERK: Commissioner Baselice.

17 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Yes.

18 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cedeño.

19 COMMISSIONER CEDEÑO: Yes.

20 THE CLERK: Commissioner Cifelli.
21 Commissioner Kopacz.

22 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yes.

23 THE CLERK: Commissioner O'Dea.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I have to
25 abstain on 11B, and I have to abstain on 16. Aye on

1 the rest.

2 THE CLERK: Commissioner Rodriguez.

3 COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

4 THE CLERK: Commissioner Williams.

5 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Yes.

6 THE CLERK: Chairman Romano.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Hold on. I got to
8 look for that one.

9 THE CLERK: That concludes the items
10 of business on today's agenda.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes. 16.

12 THE CLERK: Oh, I've got to go back.
13 I've got to go back. According to the policy --

14 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Hold on. Hold on.
15 I didn't vote yet.

16 THE CLERK: Oh, I thought you did.
17 Apologize.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Abstain on 16 and
19 aye on the rest.

20 THE CLERK: According to the policy
21 set by the Board of County Commissioners, members in
22 the public area are asked to limit their comments to
23 five minutes when discussing agenda items and three
24 minutes at the conclusion of the meeting for persons
25 who submit a written request to discuss the matters

1 of public interest.

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: No offense.

3 THE CLERK: Should have been first.

4 I know.

5 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: First, you went,
6 opportunity for a member of the Commissioners to
7 comment on business. Opportunity for chief of staff
8 to comment. I think we got it. So you skipped
9 right over.

10 THE CLERK: No. We didn't get there
11 yet, Mr. Chairman -- I mean, Commissioner.

12 MR. FLORIO: You voted on consent.

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Why did we vote
14 on all the items and we didn't --

15 THE CLERK: Understood. All right.
16 That concludes the items of business on today's
17 agenda. Are there any comments from the
18 Commissioners on the business of the Board?

19 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Well, yeah.
20 First, and I want to thank Darice for providing the
21 information. You know, I raised a couple of
22 concerns about, so Hunger Free does not have a
23 location. They lost the second location that they
24 thought they had; is that correct, Darice?

25 DIRECTOR TOON: Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So, I mean, that
2 says maybe, I mean, they're in Bayonne. I'd love
3 them in Jersey City, Kenny, but -- so what happened?
4 That entity backed out of the lease?

5 DIRECTOR TOON: Commissioner, the
6 owner leased it to someone else. They didn't, I
7 guess they didn't get --

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: They didn't have
9 a lease?

10 DIRECTOR TOON: No, no, no. It was a
11 space that they were looking to lease, and the owner
12 chose to lease it to someone else.

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Kenny, are there
14 any, like, real estate people? Darice, can we try
15 to tie them in, plug them into a real estate person
16 in the town?

17 DIRECTOR TOON: She's working with
18 someone.

19 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: All right.
20 Because, well, whoever she was working with did a
21 terrible job.

22 And then my other question is, Mr.
23 Administrator, as was represented to me well over a
24 year ago, the building where the new pantry
25 operation is going to be located, the old, I guess,

1 cable TV station in Bayonne. It was represented
2 back in the day to me that they were going to allow
3 the building to be -- the new building to be built
4 in a manner with enough structure support to, in the
5 future, potentially develop affordable housing above
6 it. Now you're telling me that's not the case?

7 MR. ANTUN: Correct.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Is it someone
9 from, I guess, Mike O'Connor is here? Mike, can you
10 explain what happened? When I spoke to Norman,
11 Norman said that that mayor, now Sheriff Davis, had
12 an issue with it. But as I remember saying, he
13 wasn't going to be the Sheriff. He would be, if
14 he's the Sheriff, there'll be a new mayor in the
15 city.

16 MR. ANTUN: Commissioner, as I
17 explained, you know, that decision was made some
18 time ago when the building was being designed, and,
19 you know, that was the recommendation that they made
20 to the County Executive. And as you know, the
21 County Executive always follows the wishes of the
22 mayor.

23 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: You're talking
24 about space for Stephanie? I took -- I met with her
25 yesterday. We took care of it.

1 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: You found her
2 space?

3 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Yeah, we're
4 good.

5 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: That's the first
6 point. That was -- Mike, I'm sorry. Can I see
7 Darice again?

8 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Darice, she'll
9 be following up. I met with Stephanie yesterday,
10 yeah, myself.

11 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So we still
12 voted on the resolution, so they still have the
13 money. Now you'll have to find the space, so you
14 don't have to come back to us. All right. Thank
15 you. I'm sorry, Mike.

16 MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, so as you know,
17 I mean, the Authority is responsible for building
18 this and doing it at the direction and in
19 coordination with the County. So in regard to the
20 policy decisions made in the City of Bayonne, you
21 know, actually I defer to Commissioner Kopacz, and
22 you can communicate with him. I'm sure he's fully
23 familiar with how that played out.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Has the building
25 construction started yet?

1 MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Oh, so, and you
2 know, Norman and I were on that call, the Zoom
3 Monday. I'm always on the Zoom. Just there was
4 technical issues, I think, not with us, with here,
5 that didn't allow us to speak. So we awarded the
6 contract. We procured and awarded the contract.
7 You know, this is through federal funding. And the
8 contractor, we've issued a notice to proceed. We're
9 preparing -- they're preparing to start
10 construction.

11 The building, they'll be working to get
12 the initial permits to build the building, and we
13 expect it to be complete, intended to be complete by
14 the end of the year, substantially complete.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: What's the cost?

16 MR. O'CONNOR: So TCL.

17 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: What was the
18 contract?

19 MR. O'CONNOR: The construction
20 contract, which is not all the elements of the
21 building, that doesn't include IT, doesn't include a
22 lot of other stuff, which we're procuring. My
23 recollection is the construction contract, I want to
24 say around 6.5, all in with it. It's a Project
25 Labor Agreement. In fact, they're working to sign

1 it with -- it's a small business, it's a smaller
2 contractor. They seem very good. We haven't worked
3 with them before, Bismarck, but they do public work.
4 And their work, I think really the Project Labor
5 Agreement is the final thing that they're working
6 on, and they're engaged. We are with them.

7 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Do you know
8 where they're based out of?

9 MR. O'CONNOR: They're in Newark,
10 actually, yeah. And they've built a number of
11 projects successfully in North Jersey.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: D-I-S-M-A-R-K.

13 MR. O'CONNOR: Bismarck. Like the
14 Heron. Bismarck, yeah.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay. Does
16 anybody know what --

17 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Excuse me, can
18 I break in on something?

19 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Al. Go
20 ahead, Al.

21 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm just
22 coming out of Superior Court in Paterson. I'm on
23 the Parkway, and I just want to enter my appearance.
24 Okay, thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead.

1 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Do you want to
2 vote on the resolutions and the minutes, Al?

3 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Oh, you've
4 already done that already? Because I'm sorry, I got
5 stuck in court. Yes, aye and all.

6 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And one on the
8 hospitals, that's the information No. 25.

9 MR. FLORIO: Chairman, for the
10 record, that's aye on the consent agenda, aye on the
11 minutes.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes. Correct. Al,
13 you had a question through the other day when we had
14 the communication issue here. You want to hold that
15 until later or?

16 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yeah, I can
17 hold it later. I can call Abe on that later. It's
18 not a big deal.

19 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Go ahead,
20 Mike. Go ahead.

21 THE CLERK: Are there any more
22 comments from the Commissioners?

23 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: And then the
24 other issue is that I had asked the Chairman to put
25 a committee together related to the Schools of

1 Technology, and he advised me that can we wait, I
2 guess, until the next meeting, that certain local
3 officials will be reaching out to me?

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Even not the next
5 meeting, even sooner.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: It's not going
7 to change my opinion, not going to change my desire
8 for that, especially related to SciTech High School,
9 but as long as the issue remains in the status that
10 was told to me by the Improvement Authority the
11 other day, that's fine.

12 All I would say is time is of the essence.
13 Having spoke to Mr. Guerra again, and understanding
14 that construction prices only held to June 1, every
15 week or two weeks lost in coming up with a
16 resolution of it jeopardizes it, because come June,
17 ten-percent more, and then there will be no options.

18 I'll be in touch with you probably Monday,
19 Mr. Chairman. If I had known, I would have had a
20 conversation before then.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Yeah, it's
22 not going to be the next meeting. It's going to be
23 just until they have that conversation.

24 Okay. Continue, Mr. Clerk.

25 THE CLERK: Are there any more

1 comments from the Commissioners on the business of
2 the Board?

3 Seeing none. Are there any comments from
4 the Chief of Staff to the County Executive?

5 To the public, this is time for persons
6 who submitted timely requests to address the Board
7 on any matters of public interest. Please remember
8 to limit your comments to three minutes.

9 Are there any speakers? Three people have
10 registered, Mr. Chairman. Leon Rogers, Raymond
11 Mitchell, and Leroy Truth.

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Call them out
13 again.

14 COMMISSIONER BASELICE: Call Rogers
15 again. I was just saying Rogers first.

16 THE CLERK: Leon Rogers? Yeah, Leon
17 Rogers.

18 MR. ROGERS: Hi, how are you guys
19 doing? Good evening. I work for Parks Department.
20 And I have some concerns about the time where I was
21 put out of work in 2021. I was mandated to seek a
22 mental health professional. I complied with all of
23 that stuff.

24 Long story short, I was out 15 months,
25 close to 16 months of work. And I haven't received

1 any disability or any worker's comp. I was dealing
2 with, speaking to Jennifer DeSalvo and Tony Jenkins
3 from the EPA. I asked questions about what I was
4 supposed to do for income while I was out addressing
5 my mental health. And no one could seem to help me
6 out, help me understand the process.

7 Jennifer DeSalvo told me to speak to Tony
8 Jenkins in regards to signing my disability papers,
9 and I forwarded that to Jennifer DeSalvo. I never
10 seen the disability papers again. Disability wrote
11 me back and said, this seems to be work-related.
12 And like I said, I've been out of work for 16
13 months. During that time I didn't receive any
14 income. I wasn't able to go obtain another job.

15 I called unemployment. They said there's
16 no separation from the employer. It put a financial
17 hardship on me for that time that I was out. I
18 wanted to know what can be done about that. Who can
19 I speak to about that? And so I've been scared to
20 even mention it to anyone because I'm a union
21 delegate. And I try to stay within the rules and
22 governing contract that we have with 1199-J. But it
23 seems like I'm always being targeted and harassed by
24 supervisors and possibly management. I'm just
25 looking to speak to someone who can help me iron

1 these issues out. And that's all I have to say.

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Alberico?

3 MR. DEPIERRO: Yeah, Mr. Chairman.
4 Unfortunately, these matters can't be addressed
5 because there are multiple disciplinary hearings at
6 the Office of Administrative Law. Mr. Rogers is
7 also represented by counsel in all of those. So
8 anything that's related to that obviously is
9 currently being discussed and handled in court.

10 In fact, there was an appearance earlier
11 today with his counsel and the Law Department. And
12 as for any of those other concerns that don't touch
13 upon that, I'm sure that the Department of Human
14 Resources has addressed it. But I think that all of
15 those areas, unfortunately, are currently part of
16 several pending appeals of Mr. Rogers at the Office
17 of Administrative Law.

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So my concern is
19 that, and I've spoken to Mr. Rogers a couple of
20 occasions, my concern is that an individual is
21 directed to go into, and I think you said EPA, I
22 think you meant EAP.

23 MR. ROGERS: Yes, EAP.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: The Employee
25 Assistance Program. They're directed to go into an

1 Employee Assistance Program while they are under
2 some kind of a status. In the world I know, whether
3 it would be a mental health issue, a substance abuse
4 issue, whatever the issue may be, when individuals
5 go into programs like that, they receive some form
6 of compensation. Maybe they're placed on short-term
7 or longer-term disability.

8 In this instance, it seems like there was
9 no -- either they weren't assisted in getting or
10 receiving that. But I have a concern for that, and
11 while you may not be able to speak on the record, I
12 would ask that you, pursuant to what we're allowed
13 to do, I would ask that you provide us a formal
14 report on it. If that report has to be provided at
15 next caucus in closed session, fine.

16 It seems to me that an individual that
17 cooperates, goes into an Employee Assistance
18 Program, should be able to be compensated in some
19 way. If they're not paid, like when people go out
20 on certain injury-related issues from the job, they
21 get paid. But in some cases, maybe the payment is
22 disability. I don't understand. It's not my area
23 to be an expert in, but why that individual wasn't
24 allowed to collect disability, wasn't advised or
25 directed to how to do that.

1 MR. DEPIERRO: Commissioner, I'll
2 prepare for the Board a --

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Al. Go
4 ahead, Al.

5 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Well, maybe
6 I'll send maybe Alberico and Bill. I guess I'm in
7 the car on Route 3 trying to get back to Hudson
8 County. But in any event, if there's -- this is
9 hypothetical. I don't want to get involved in any
10 specific information about this gentleman, because
11 that would raise other things that we have to do.

12 But in general, if an employee opts to go
13 into an EAP, aren't there protections for the
14 employee with respect to whatever their medical
15 condition is, and that they're protected in a
16 certain short term because of their opting into
17 going into an EAP? In other words, aren't there
18 protections for the employee who opts for the
19 available EAP that protects the employee from any
20 short-term income interruption?

21 MR. FLORIO: Chairman.

22 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: In general
23 terms, I don't want to get involved with this
24 individual.

25 MR. FLORIO: Chairman, I don't want

1 to cut off the Commissioner, but we're getting very
2 close to matters that might be partial to the
3 litigation referenced earlier by County Counsel.

4 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Did you hear that,
5 Al?

6 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yeah, I did,
7 but I don't think that's a good answer. I think the
8 answer is just tell me or e-mail me what the rights
9 of an EAP employee are when they opt to go into the
10 EAP program. If one of those is that the employee
11 has -- I'm not going to use the word immunity, but
12 the employee has confidentiality that he or she
13 says, Yeah, I went to the EAP program because I have
14 a problem. I'm not saying that this individual has
15 a problem. I don't know.

16 But with that said, there are certain
17 protections for them. And it sounds like this
18 individual is complaining that he has not been
19 afforded those protections. That's all I'm saying.
20 So I'll talk to you guys later.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: All right. Okay.
22 Thank you. Next speaker.

23 THE CLERK: I told you and the names.
24 Raymond Mitchell?

25 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Not here.

1 THE CLERK: Leroy Truth?

2 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Not here.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Not here.

4 THE CLERK: There being no further
5 business.

6 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I thought you
7 had one more speaker.

8 MR. LANIER: I'm not signed up.

9 THE CLERK: He didn't sign up.
10 There's only one that signed up.

11 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'll let him
12 speak if he's there. Let him speak.

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Whoa, whoa,
14 whoa. What do we got? What's your name? Just put
15 your name.

16 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yeah. But wait a
17 second. We have a policy.

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I don't care if
19 he didn't sign up. He called me today and I
20 directed him what to do and he called.

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Oh, he called in?
22 Okay. If he called in, that's a different story.
23 Carol's out sick. Go ahead.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: He spoke to me
25 and I directed him to call in.

1 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay. Go ahead,
2 sir.

3 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Let him speak.

4 MR. LANIER: Do I give up my name?

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: You say your name
6 for the record. You have three minutes.

7 MR. LANIER: Okay. My name is Tyler
8 Lanier, and I work for the Hudson County Parks
9 Department. I'm a maintenance worker, and I work
10 for Bayonne and I've worked for five years and for
11 five years I've been part-time permanently, and I've
12 been wanting to get full-time permanent, but I feel
13 like I've been overlooked. And I've also seen
14 people get hired after me, getting hired full-time
15 before me.

16 And I'm not trying to single anybody out.
17 I'm not trying to say things are unfair, but I also
18 feel like I've been disrespected. So I'm just here
19 to ask, what can I do about it to get that
20 opportunity, that fair opportunity?

21 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Alberico, refer
22 that to Personnel?

23 MR. DEPIERRO: Absolutely. To the
24 department and to his Department of Parks and
25 Department of Human Resources.

1 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So how many
2 times have you submitted? Because they post, right?

3 MR. LANIER: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: How many times
5 have you responded to the post? How many times have
6 you been interviewed for full time?

7 MR. LANIER: I can't -- I can't name
8 the rough. I could roughly name.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Give me a rough
10 idea.

11 MR. LANIER: I would say about at
12 least three times a year out of those five years.

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So you maybe ten
14 times you've submitted your name and been
15 interviewed?

16 MR. LANIER: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Wow. I mean, do
18 we have a program? Do we have a policy? How does
19 the number of years that you've been in service as
20 permanent part-time affect you? Like, hey, here's
21 our challenge. There are individuals. So the
22 pattern that we want, everyone's a seasonal?

23 MR. LANIER: Yeah.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So we have a
25 pattern of people become a seasonal. Then, for

1 whatever reason, this has been forever. This
2 predates Craig Guide, Tom DeGise. It might even go
3 back to, God knows, Ed Clark. But individuals, 95
4 percent of the time.

5 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Billy, Billy,
6 Ed Clark?

7 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yeah, I'm
8 telling you. They go from --

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I think I was
10 12 years old.

11 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: No, you weren't.
12 Let's not get carried away, all right?

13 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Let's not get
14 carried away.

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: They go from
16 seasonal to permanent part-time. And then from
17 permanent part-time to full-time. The problem is,
18 how long can an individual be permanent part-time?
19 You got no benefits, right? Permanent part-time
20 gets no benefits. And they make less money.

21 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Billy's right.
22 Billy is right. The Civil Service counts
23 complications versus complications and problems.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Yeah. I mean,
25 we've got to figure it out. Because not only that,

1 worse than that, he's better off being seasonal than
2 part-time. Because seasonal, he gets paid full-time
3 hours. Even though he gets let go and comes back,
4 let go and come back. I know. If you analyze how
5 much --

6 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Yeah, but
7 Billy, he doesn't get the panoply of the other
8 benefits. Pensions, health insurance, and all that
9 stuff.

10 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: All right, so.
11 Okay, you have to speak to, Alberico -- the Director
12 of Personnel is over there. And the Director of
13 Parks is not here right now. You'll be referred to
14 Mike and Kevin here. So, you see Mike or Kevin.

15 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Okay. And I
16 don't want to push this guy off. He's got a
17 problem. But let's address his problem.

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'm with you.

19 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: All right.

21 Thanks, Billy.

22 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Any other speakers
23 that, because Carol's not here today.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'm on the list,
25 Chairman. No, no, I'm not on the list. I just had

1 a question that came up. Can I have Elinor, please?
2 Is Elinor here?

3 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Elinor. Okay.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: It's a question.

5 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: While Elinor is
6 coming up. Happy birthday to Commissioner Cifelli on
7 March 14th. And happy birthday to Commissioner
8 Robert Baselice on the 17th, the St. Patrick's baby.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I've got one
10 comment. I've got one comment about that. And
11 Stick, are you a Yankee fan?

12 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: No.

13 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: You're a Met
14 fan. Are you a baseball fan?

15 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm going to
17 give you my Yankee quote. When I was a little boy,
18 my hero was Mickey Mantle. Mickey Mantle once said,
19 If I knew I was going to live this long, I would
20 have taken better care of myself.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Oh, yeah.
22 That's a good one. I've heard that.

23 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: There you go.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Happy birthday.

25 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm going to

1 be here. I'm going to be here for a lot of you guys
2 -- for your wake. I'll be there.

3 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Thanks. Thanks.
4 Thanks a lot. We appreciate that.

5 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Well, well.
6 Hey, look, you're worried about my birthday, I'm
7 worried about yours.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So. All right.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Anything else?

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So my question,
11 in a general way is when an individual that works
12 for the County government voluntarily goes into an
13 EAP program, how are they handled from? Are they
14 paid while they're in that program? As if they're
15 an employee, are they advised and directed to -- to
16 either go and get temporary disability while they're
17 out. Or to get long-term disability while they're
18 out. What -- what is the procedure of process?

19 MS. GIBNEY: General --

20 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Billy's
21 question, okay, is that Elinor? Okay. That's
22 precisely the question I was trying to talk about.
23 What are the rights of somebody that goes to do EAP
24 as an employee?

25 MS. GIBNEY: In general terms, it

1 would be the employee could be going on a voluntary
2 basis, an involuntary basis. There could be
3 discipline involved.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay.

5 MS. GIBNEY: If they're going on a
6 voluntary.

7 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: It's one of the
8 examples. Voluntary.

9 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: All right.
10 That's good. All right. I understand. You're an
11 echo.

12 MS. GIBNEY: On a voluntary basis and
13 employee would be able to afford themselves of their
14 sick time that's accrued, or they can request a
15 medical leave. So their benefits would be
16 continued, but, and they could apply for disability
17 independently.

18 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay.
19 Involuntary.

20 MS. GIBNEY: Involuntary. They would
21 not be eligible for disability if there's a
22 suspension pending. It depends on the
23 circumstances.

24 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So -- so if
25 there's a -- so they're not suspended, and they go

1 into -- into EAP, they -- and the suspension pending
2 could be a long, long time. So that world, that's
3 almost a punitive way of really -- to really hammer
4 a person.

5 So while they're in EAP, let's say, it was
6 a substance abuse issue, mental health issues, so
7 they may be away or out for several months. But
8 because that suspension is hanging overhead,
9 they're -- they're not allowed to apply for
10 disability? Wow. That's -- that's a way for the
11 government to really go --

12 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm sorry,
13 Billy. I want to put out. I want to put a fine
14 point on that. So if an employee has an EAP
15 petition, they're disqualified from regular State
16 disability?

17 MS. GIBNEY: I'm sorry.

18 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Depending on the
19 circumstance.

20 MS. GIBNEY: Exactly. The State
21 would make the determination, not the County.

22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: But they could
23 apply.

24 MS. GIBNEY: Exactly. We can't stop
25 them from applying, but we don't make the ultimate

1 decision.

2 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay. No
3 disrespect, that's kind of not the way you explained
4 it. You said they're not eligible. Now you're
5 saying the State will decide whether they're
6 eligible or not.

7 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: They can file,
8 but then it's up to the state.

9 MS. GIBNEY: The County does not make
10 a determination on State disability. The State
11 does. An employee files independently. The County
12 doesn't file on behalf of the employee.

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: But do you, do
14 you --

15 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Does the
16 County -- does the County object that they're
17 filing?

18 MS. GIBNEY: No, as I stated, the
19 County -- the County does not object to disability
20 claims. They go directly to state.

21 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: That's way --
22 because -- because any employer-employee, if the
23 employee files for a disability claim, the employer
24 has a right to object to that. Because it comes out
25 of their account, the employer's account. So that's

1 where I'm getting confused.

2 MS. GIBNEY: The County does not
3 object to disability claims, Commissioner.

4 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: All right,
5 great. Okay. That's all I want to know. All
6 right.

7 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Anything else?

8 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: But those
9 disability claims stand on their own, their own bona
10 fides.

11 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yes. Go ahead.

12 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: All right.

13 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So -- so my
14 question was, do you, does someone advise an
15 individual in an involuntary situation, that they
16 have the right to file for disability claim.

17 MS. GIBNEY: I believe so, yes. But
18 as I said, Commissioner, if they're already
19 suspended, there's different circumstances. So to
20 put me on a spot for an exact answer, it depends
21 on --

22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I'm asking you
23 any exact question. I'm saying in a situation where
24 there's a pending suspension, in any circumstance,
25 you advise them. Shouldn't someone advise anyone

1 whether they're suspended, pending a suspension,
2 Hey, while you're in this program, you have the
3 right because you pay into disability, to apply for
4 disability. You have a right to get an attorney to
5 appeal if you're denied the disability. Like, do we
6 at least like let people know what their rights are?

7 MS. GIBNEY: Employees are notified
8 of what their rights are.

9 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Who does that,
10 your office?

11 MS. GIBNEY: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Okay. Thank
13 you.

14 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: All right.
15 All right.

16 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So I have one
17 last question that I know -- not from you Elinor.

18 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: No, no, no,
19 no. Billy never has one last question. Go ahead.

20 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Go ahead, Billy.

21 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Is there a way
22 to --

23 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Yeah. Go ahead,
24 Billy.

25 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: So my question,

1 this was brought to me the other day by someone. We
2 currently allow individuals to participate. And I,
3 when I mean individuals, I mean both Commissioners,
4 as well as department directors. Schools of
5 technology, community college. Are all allowed to
6 participate remotely. Now, we need to have five
7 individuals in the chambers but they're allowed --
8 they can participate remotely.

9 I spoke to an attorney the other day and
10 the attorney advised me and Ed, I'm not going to ask
11 for an answer now, but I'm going to ask for a
12 written.

13 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Who is the
14 attorney?

15 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Can you let me
16 finish, Al? Al, can you let me finish? Is there a
17 way to mute you and allow me to --

18 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: You want to
19 finish.

20 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: You interrupted
21 five speakers, and you don't allow me to my
22 question.

23 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Billy. Billy.
24 Billy. Come on. Billy --

25 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Shouldn't be on

1 the phone.

2 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: Billy, calm
3 down, lower the temperature. Come on, Billy.

4 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I can't -- Al, I
5 can't. Every person that speaks, you interrupt
6 them. Every person that speaks, you interrupt them.
7 Whenever you're done. Whenever you're done.

8 COMMISSIONER CIFELLI: I'm done,
9 Billy.

10 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: The question I
11 have legally is, if we allow Commissioners to
12 participate remotely, if we allow staff and others
13 to participate remotely, how are we denying the
14 public from also participating remotely? That's my
15 legal question, and I'm asking for a written legal
16 opinion, thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: I have a question,
18 I have an add-to on that. We made a statement the
19 other day, COVID's over. We have directors that
20 come here all the time. I'm instructing you on
21 behalf of the Board that everybody that heads an
22 autonomous agency that belongs to the County, i.e.
23 the Community College; i.e., the Schools of
24 Technology; i.e., the Improvement Authority, that
25 they come to the meetings. And if not, they have to

1 inform us why not. So this loophole is definitely
2 closed. Because we're not going have what happened
3 a few years ago when people calling in from
4 Switzerland and Germany and California. So let's
5 go, Directors have to come and a representative of
6 every agency should be here, including
7 Commissioners. It's the same thing.

8 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: I don't think
9 you can treat the public differently than you treat
10 everyone else. And I'm asking for a written legal
11 opinion as to whether or not under what within the
12 law allows elected employees of the government to
13 participate remotely, but does not allow members of
14 the public to participate remotely. I'll ask Ed to
15 get me in writing for the next meeting.

16 MR. FLORIO: As we speak.

17 CHAIRMAN ROMANO: And I'll put it out
18 to all the agencies and departments should be
19 represented here. Board of Elections, everybody.

20 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: And you have to
21 let them in.

22 COMMISSIONER O'DEA: Right.

23 COMMISSIONER KOPACZ: Well, I don't
24 believe we've done for the last four years. Motion
25 to adjourn, Kopacz.

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CHAIRMAN ROMANO: Second.

THE CLERK: All in favor? We are
adjourned.

(Whereupon the proceeding is then
concluded at 5:18 p.m.)

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 Regular Meeting of the Hudson County Board of County Commissioners, held on Thursday, March 12, 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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