

**MINUTES OF A CAUCUS MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS OF THE COUNTY OF CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY, HELD IN THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 4 MOORE ROAD, CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE, NEW JERSEY ON TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2020 AT 2:00 P.M.**

Administrator Bozzelli called the meeting to order. The following members answered roll call:

Freeholders Desiderio, Hayes, Morey, Pierson and Thornton were present remotely (5)

Statement of the Director:

“This is a notice read pursuant to the requirements of the “Open Public Meetings Act.” At least 48 hours advance notice of this meeting has been provided by posting of the same in writing on the bulletin boards in the County Administration Building, and the County Clerk’s Office and mailing a copy of the notice to the Cape May County Herald and the Atlantic City Press and filing the same with the County Clerk, all being done on Friday, April 3, 2020.” This announcement will be made part of the minutes of this meeting.

Moment of Silence

Flag Salute

1. Freeholder Discussions

Freeholder Pierson reported on what the County Health Department was doing to prevent the spread of COVID-19. He had sent, prior to the meeting today, an “Action Report” to each freeholder. The Health Department, Complete Care, F&S, Sheriff’s, Prosecutor’s and the Technical School collaborated to set up the 1<sup>st</sup> testing site in the county. It would be held one day per week, by appointment only, starting on Thursday. The Health Department was working with Lower Township at Victoria Manor in North Cape May to contain the outbreak affecting the vulnerable senior population there. They were also working to provide supplies to the local hospitals and coordinating efforts with Cumberland and Atlantic Counties for the testing and housing of patients.

Kevin Thomas talked about the outbreak in North Cape May at Victoria Manor and new statistics within the county. Fifteen residents and 12 staff members there tested positive for COVID-19. Additionally, at another facility, Victorian Commons, one resident residing there tested positive. To date, the county had 100 positive cases with 2 deaths, 83 cases still active, with 15 cases off quarantine.

Marty Pagluighi reported the county had received the first shipment of supplies, various types of masks and gloves, from the state on Saturday. That first allocation was earmarked for 1<sup>st</sup> responder agencies. They were waiting on a 2<sup>nd</sup> shipment which would go to healthcare agencies. They were working with the municipalities to keep the public informed.

Administrator Bozzelli updated on the daily state conference calls in which she participated. The calls were very informative and gave a broad overview of what was happening around the state. Bergen County had been affected the worst. All actions taken by the governor went out in county press releases, one to two per day. Testing was discussed daily. Freeholder Pierson provided the “Action List” for the county. Cape May County didn’t receive the stimulus package because they didn’t meet the population criteria to receive it. Ocean City received it because they were deemed a Principal City.

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She elaborated where departments stood as far as continuing county services which they were responsible to provide.

- 1) Dr. Bosak reported the Mosquito Control Department wasn't operational now, but they were attempting to get ready for seasonal operations.
- 2) Bob Church reported that the Ingram's Thorofare Bridge, the Gateway Project and Public Works road maintenance projects were continuing, same as before the pandemic.
- 3) Denis Brown was putting out the press releases each day in conjunction with the Department of Public Information.
- 4) Judy Davies reported that the Animal Shelter was struggling with adoptions because people couldn't physically come into the facility to see them. They were working on alternate ways to promote the pets.
- 5) The Police Academy operation was limited; they were using virtual training for the Class II Officers instruction that had been cancelled.
- 6) Chief Skill and the Prosecutors Office were continuing to be busy but had provided lunch for all the Urgent Care facilities in the county this past week.
- 7) Pat Devaney's office was continuing to write RFP's.
- 8) The Department of Aging had two staff members in five days per week and were still providing "Meals on Wheels" and other lifesaving services with the assistance of Fare Free Transportation.
- 9) The IT Department had two staff members on call for Help Desk. Bess wanted everyone to know they couldn't provide video conference calls equipped with camera and microphones. They didn't have the means to provide it currently. The Freeholder Meeting Room was set up and available for use.
- 10) The County Clerk was continuing with core functions provided by a small staff. Customers weren't allowed in the building to work on property searches as they were accustomed and were complaining about that.
- 11) Leslie Gimeno had completed work for the Census Day held late last week. Economic Development was working with the Cape May County Chamber to bring someone on for small business development.
- 12) Donna Groome with Human Services reported the state allowed some work from home. They were down to 2 working units from 7 working units. They were busier than usual because of the status of individuals out of work due to the pandemic. The building had been cleaned by Bio Blast, who went through 3 times focusing on the touchable surface areas.
- 13) Jennifer Hess reported the nursing home was doing well. Masks were always required to be worn now. John Edwards was assisting to get PPE for the staff, many of whom expressed they were anxious with the situation. Psychiatric services had been offered through EAP.
- 14) Rutgers Cooperative Extension had been closed by the state until May 31<sup>st</sup>. Linda Horner was working from home.
- 15) The Election Board under Mike Kennedy's direction had several employees in each day. The county was going to have provide additional help with the ballots as the numbers had greatly increased for the upcoming elections.
- 16) Kevin Lare reported that the first payroll with change in codes associated with the pandemic went well with no problems reported.
- 17) Human Resources was working with the staff on a rotating schedule and doing a great job. Many employees had concerns and fears which were being addressed by Sara Maloney and her staff.
- 18) Jeff Lindsay was reported to be doing everything humanly possible and helping with OPRA requests and writing resolutions.

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- 19) Facilities and Services was keeping the status quo. Beth noted members of the cleaning crew were due extra recognition for being front line cleaning and stepping up during this crisis.
- 20) The Veterans Bureau reported that burials were being done at the cemetery per the normal.
- 21) Nancy Mauro had reported that fuel deliveries were on target.
- 22) The County libraries were closed except for physical building checks. Any of the classes that were offered that could be done on-line were taking place on-line. Andrea Orsini was organizing that.
- 23) Steve Popper was working with all department heads to distribute hand sanitizer compliments of Naughty Spirits Distillery. Their only request was that empty bottles be brought back for refill instead of discarding them.
- 24) John Rechner reported no price gouging was found or reported to the state.
- 25) Lori Rosell at the Tax Board reported that she allowed one customer at a time in the office. She and her staff would assist the County Clerk's Office if the need arose.
- 26) The County Park & Zoo was closed, the full staff was maintaining enclosures and animals as per the normal.
- 27) At the Prosecutor's Office on the prosecution side, Michele Deweese reported cases were still ongoing.
- 28) Brittany Smith was mostly working from home but available for questions regarding grants or the budget.
- 29) Diane Wieland was having her staff stay on top of and update the county website.

Director Thornton praised Beth, Kevin Thomas, Jeff Pierson, Marty Pagluighi, and department heads, and all county employees for their diligence and effort. Beth had been available everyday from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. since this started. He had never felt prouder of the county as he did now during this trying time, in all his years as freeholder. County Veterans organizations were recognized too, for contributing their manpower to the effort.

**New topic for discussion:** Resolution regarding transient guests and seasonal tenants and discussion of which resolution sample the board would like to roll out.

Director Thornton recommended a County wide policy with everyone on the same page, so there would be no question as to what was going on in each town. That was the direction they had received from the governor's office from the beginning. One policy to prevent confusion. All municipalities would be recommended to follow the county lead as much as possible. He wasn't concerned with setting an absolute date for restriction release, he stated. If we give a positive date that was going to be interpreted as an absolute date by the public. He opened the floor for comment of other board members so they could reach a consensus.

Freeholder Desiderio felt they should keep the date open, until further notice. As an example, he said Atlantic City Mayor Small, in an executive order, set the date as indefinite. When and if they see the curve coming down, they could revisit it, and state on so and so date we're going to lift the restrictions.

Freeholder Morey commented that dates were being adjusted and discussed and the county could state in the resolution, while suggesting a projected date, that it was subject to change. To leave things indefinite could be misinterpreted and send the wrong message.

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Administrator Bozzelli interjected that on today's conference call with the state, discussion of the new executive orders called for the verbiage on some of the orders to end with the statement they would remain in effect unless modified or revoked by the governor.

Freeholder Hayes affirmed this by reading a portion of an executive order dated April 7, 2020. She was torn she stated because she could see both sides. She suggested a date be put in the resolution with the stipulation it could be adjusted.

Freeholder Morey wondered if an effort had been made to discuss this with the mayors of the municipalities.

Director Thornton reiterated one policy was what was needed and what the governor wanted from the beginning.

Freeholder Pierson added that the mayors were informed of the pending county resolution in an e-mail blast, and their comments were taken into consideration. He felt the board should move forward and act.

Administrator Bozzelli added to the discussion that Jeff Lindsay and Jeff Sutherland has worked on the resolutions for hours yesterday and this was what they had come up with, these options.

Jeff Lindsay confirmed that the mayor's opinions were taken into consideration as well as some of the solicitors' questions regarding rental contracts when writing the resolutions.

Jeffrey Pierson stated they should keep an open-ended date that could be adjusted as things change, and to add the beaches, boardwalks and promenades to the resolution to cover everything.

Boardwalks and beaches come under municipal domain Director Thornton reminded.

Jeff Lindsay confirmed that Administrative Order No. 2020-5 from the governor gave the municipalities the authority and the initial resolution by the Board requested the municipalities impose additional restrictions. From his understanding all the boardwalks and beaches were closed already, so possibly this was a moot point.

Director asked for a motion. The administrator asked for direction as to which resolution they were going vote on. Jeff Lindsay interjected 2 things needed to be decided, whether to include the beaches and a date or no date.

Freeholder Morey was opposed to not giving a tentative date for the opening of business. He asked Freeholder Desiderio what they were doing in Sea Isle City.

Moved by Mr. Desiderio seconded by Mr. Pierson to adopt the resolution version about hotels, motels and rental properties with the date being indefinite. Roll call: Freeholder Desiderio-Y, Hayes-N, Pierson-Y, Thornton-Y, and Morey-No response.

Freeholder Morey asked if he could read the resolution again prior to voting, prompting more discussion to ensue.

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Moved by Mr. Desiderio seconded by Mr. Pierson to adopt the resolution version about hotels, motels and rental properties, including beaches and boardwalks, with the date being indefinite. Roll call: Freeholder Desiderio-Y, Hayes-Y, Pierson-Y, Thornton-Y, and Morey-Y.

Director Thornton asked for discussion around a business recovery task force. He was concerned Cape May County was going to be left out of money being allocated by the State for business recovery. He recommended they create a recovery task force with Freeholders Desiderio and Morey taking the lead, one member from the County Chamber, a total of 7 to 9 members. Freeholders could submit recommendations for remaining members.

Moved by Mr. Pierson, seconded by Ms. Hayes to create the Recovery Task Force. Roll call: Freeholders Desiderio, Hayes, Morey, Pierson and Thornton (AYE-5) (NAYE-None) (ABSTAIN-None) (ABSENT-None). Carried.

Administrator Bozzelli asked should they bring up the topic again on the next conference call with the mayors. A short discussion took place regarding the fact that Cape May County often doesn't get its fair share of monies. A federal grant determined by the census count was what determined who gets how much money, Administrator Bozzelli added.

Freeholder Hayes asked about the National Guard who happen to be county employees and whether there was a County policy.

On a lighter note, Veteran Vincent Pale turned 97 years old today, stated Freeholder Pierson.

Moved by Mr. Desiderio seconded by Mr. Pierson to adjourn the caucus. Roll call: Freeholders Desiderio, Hayes, Morey, Pierson and Thornton (AYE-5) (NAYE-None) (ABSTAIN-None) (ABSENT-None). Carried.

Caucus adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

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Administrator/Clerk of the Board