

Easton, Pennsylvania

December 1, 2022

The regular meeting of the Northampton County Council was held on the above date with the following present: Lori Vargo Heffner, President; Kerry L. Myers, Vice President; John A. Brown; John Cusick; Thomas A. Giovanni; John P. Goffredo; Ronald R. Heckman; Kevin Lott; Tara M. Zrinski; Linda Zembo, Clerk to Council; Alene Shafnisky, Deputy Clerk to Council and Christopher T. Spadoni, Solicitor to Council.

Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Vargo Heffner led County Council in the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of the Minutes - November 17, 2022

Mr. Myers made the following motion:

Be It Moved By the Northampton County Council that the minutes of November 17, 2022 meeting shall be approved.

Mr. Giovanni seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved by voice acclamation.

Courtesy of the Floor

Ms. Vargo Heffner read an e-mail from Ms. Lynn Gerber, a resident at Gracedale, pertaining to the conditions at Gracedale and requesting County Council members to visit the facility to see for themselves what was really going on.

Mr. Bruce Haines, Bethlehem, PA - stated in 2018 and 2020, they received \$185,000 to build the VisitHistoricBethlehem.com website and brand. He further stated this money was passed through the Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Foundation (LLVCCF) that gave grants to improve Main Street, which had been under assault from e-commerce.

Mr. Haines advised Main Street consisted of 24 independent retail shops, 24 restaurants and two hotels. He further advised it was named one of the top ten Main Streets by USA Today in 2015

and could possibly receive a historic designation so he saw that as an opportunity to market it.

Mr. Haines stated LVCCF took less than 3% in administrative fees and the Hotel Bethlehem managed it without any benefits because it provided an opportunity for the County to be on the national map. He further stated he requested \$75,000 in June to allow them to do their marketing and advertising; however, the committee only recommended \$12,500, which would not really help them because one full page advertisement in the USA Today Go Escape Travel Edition would take all of that funding.

Mr. Haines advised Hotel Bethlehem was willing to match the grant by 33% and because they were not taking any administrative fees all the money would go for advertising and marketing both digital and printed to promote bringing people to Historic Bethlehem. He further advised when people came to Historic Bethlehem, it not only benefitted all the businesses on Main Street, but the County.

Mr. Haines stated every year all the hotels in the area added to the hotel tax that was given to organizations to promote tourism, which was what they were going to do with this money. He further stated he hoped that County Council would reconsider giving them the \$75,000 they requested because if not, the \$185,000 they invested so far would be for nothing.

Mr. Kurt Landes, Nazareth, PA - advised he was the President of Iron Pigs Charities and General Manager for Lehigh Valley Iron Pigs (Iron Pigs). He further advised their organization benefitted not only Lehigh County and the City of Allentown, but also this County.

Mr. Landes stated during the last fiscal year, the County provided \$200,000 in support of the project that was underway and that was planned to be completed by April 2023. He further stated as the project was nearing its end, they were trying to find ways to close the funding gap and that was why he was respectfully asking County Council for its support and consideration to allow them to receive the funding that was allocated to them in the proposed budget.

Mr. Landes advised he knew the County line ended right before Coca Cola Park, but they felt they were a regional asset because they needed the full support of the entire Lehigh Valley region and they gave back to both Counties. He further advised Lehigh County, as their landlord, took on the responsibility for many

things, including the funding involved with the project that they had to undertake to be able to be a viable franchise and operate for another thirty years.

Mr. Landes stated of the 700 people they employed, 44% came from this County and during their 14 seasons they drew approximately eight million fans of which 41% came from this County.

Mr. Landes advised they were one of the top five drawing teams in the country because they worked hard with the communities and offered affordable family entertainment. He further advised even though they were in the top five in attendance, they were in the bottom half of all 120 teams in average ticket pricing.

Mr. Landes stated their average ticket price for a family of four was \$73, which included food, drinks, parking, a program and tickets. He further advised in addition to the 75 games played at Coca Cola Park, they held activities and events 205 days out of the year that brought in people from outside the area.

Mr. Landes advised the hotel tax was to support tourism and many of the people that came to the games and events stayed at the hotels and visited other attractions, venues and restaurants throughout both Counties. He further advised during their 14 years, Iron Pigs Charities gave \$2 million to entities in both Counties.

Mr. Landes stated he recognized County Council had some tough decisions to make, but he hoped they would consider allowing them to keep their funding to close their funding gap.

Mr. Rick Molchany, Director of General Services for Lehigh County - advised even though Lehigh County was the owner of the Iron Pigs, they did not earn a profit from them due to their debt service. He further advised when this first started, Lehigh County was not experienced in running a ball park facility for a Triple A affiliate of the Philadelphia Phillies, but they took it on.

Mr. Molchany stated Allentown recently elected not to fund the Iron Pigs, but decided instead to fund their own social services partners at approximately \$1.5 million so Lehigh County did not have to take on that debt and could use those funds to support the Iron Pigs. He further stated over the years, Lehigh County supported a number of entities in this County because they were investing in the region.

Mr. Molchany advised there were times when the Counties competed for funding, but when it came to quality of life, the region itself spoke to the collaboration of the two Counties.

Ms. Fiorella Regineli-Mirabito, Mayor of Bath Borough, PA - stated she would like County Council to reconsider providing the grant they applied for to create a master plan to improve their parks.

County Executive Report

Mr. Lamont McClure, County Executive, advised if County Council had any questions for the individuals that just spoke, he would yield some of his time to allow them to be asked.

When Mr. Myers indicated he would have been much happier if they did not ask for funding to do renovations through Iron Pigs Charities, Mr. Landes stated they would have applied under Iron Pigs, but they were informed the most appropriate funding was hotel tax and that required them to apply as a non-profit organization and it would benefit both organizations that used Coca Cola Park as their base of operations. He further stated if they were not able to capture all the funds, they could potentially lose their license and then Iron Pig Charities would not exist.

Mr. McClure advised as of Tuesday, the budget had been discussed for 14 hours. He further advised when taxes were cut last year, some people said it was an election gimmick and they would raise them again the following year, but this would be the fourth year of a no tax increase budget.

Mr. McClure stated they would be fully funding the County's green future agenda, including farmland preservation, open space and environmentally sensitive land.

In answer to Mr. Myers' question as to whether the no tax increase was due to the influx of warehouses, Mr. McClure replied that played a part in it, but was not the driving force and we did not need any more.

Executive Session

Mr. Myers made a motion to enter into an Executive Session to discuss possible litigation.

Mr. Giovanni seconded the motion.

Ms. Vargo Heffner called for a vote on the motion.

The motion: Myers, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "no"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes" and Lott, "yes".

The motion passed by a vote of 8-1.

Ms. Vargo Heffner advised County Council entered into Executive Session at 7:02 p.m. to discuss possible litigation and returned at 7:12 p.m. with no action being taken.

Consideration of Matters Related to the 2023 Northampton County Budget and Capital Improvements Plan:

Consideration of Budgetary/Position Related Issues: (1) Created or Eliminated Positions: a) Department of Fiscal Affairs - Revenue; b) Department of Administration - Conservation District; c) District Attorney's Office; d) Coroner's Office; e) Department of Human Services - Veterans Affairs; f) Department of Human Services - Gracedale; (2) Upgraded Positions: a) Department of Administration; b) Department of Fiscal Affairs - Revenue; c) District Attorney's Office; d) County Council; e) District Attorney's Office; f) Department of Corrections; g) Department of Human Services - Gracedale

Created or Eliminated Positions:

Department of Fiscal Affairs - Revenue

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 135-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that one (1) full time position of Clerical Technician 3, pay grade RU/GR15, salary \$30,645, shall be eliminated in the Department of Fiscal Affairs - Revenue Division, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes" and Cusick, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Department of Administration - Conservation District

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 136-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the one (1) full time position of Program Coordinator, pay grade CS/GR23, salary \$52,062, shall be created in the Department of Administration - Conservation District, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes" and Giovanni, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

District Attorney's Office

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 137-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the one (1) full time position of County Detective, pay grade DE/GR25, salary \$61,036, shall be created in the District Attorney's Office, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes" and Goffredo, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 138-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that one (1) part time (.50 FTE) position of Clerical Technician 3, pay grade CR/GR15, salary \$14,913, shall be

upgraded to one (1) part time (.75 FTE) position of Clerical Technician 3, pay grade CR/GR15, salary \$22,369, in the District Attorney's Office, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes" and Heckman, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Coroner's Office

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 139-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that one (1) full time position of Deputy Coroner, pay grade CS/GR23, salary \$52,062, shall be created in the Office of the Coroner, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes" and Lott, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 140-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that three (3) part-time (.1 FTE) positions of Deputy Coroner, pay grade CS/GR23, salary \$15,619, shall be eliminated in the Office of the Coroner, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes" and Lott, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Department of Human Services - Veterans Affairs

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 141-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that one (1) full time position of Veterans Services Officer, pay grade CS/GR20, salary \$45,348, shall be created in the Department of Human Services - Veterans Affairs, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes" and Vargo Heffner, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Department of Human Services - Gracedale

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 142-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that thirteen (13) full time positions of Certified Nurse Aide, pay grade GU/GR04, total salary \$398,996, shall be eliminated in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home (SE1 & Staff Float), effective January 1, 2023.

Mr. Myers stated yesterday it was explained there were a number of positions being eliminated at Gracedale as they were not filled nor necessary.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes" and Zrinski, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 143-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that thirty-five (35) part time (.40 FTE) positions of Certified Nurse Aide, pay grade GU/GR04, total salary \$429,688, shall be eliminated in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home (SE1 & Relief), effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes" and Brown, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 144-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that eight (8) Per Diem (.20 FTE) positions of Certified Nurse Aide, pay grade GU/GR11, total salary \$53,248, shall be eliminated in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home (Relief), effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes" and Cusick, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 145-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that four (4) full time positions of Licensed Practical Nurse, pay grade GU/GR09, total salary \$175,016, shall be eliminated in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home (SE1), effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes" and Zrinski, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 146-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that four (4) part time (.40 FTE) positions of Licensed Practical Nurse, pay grade GU/GR09, total salary \$70,007, shall be eliminated in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home (SE1), effective January 1, 2023.

In response to Mr. Cusick's question as to whether the part-time per diem positions being eliminated could be used to lessen Gracedale's reliance on agency nurses, Ms. Jennifer Stewart-King advised these positions were for SE1 and that was where the daycare was going to be located so they were not needed.

In answer to Mr. Cusick's question as to whether they could retain them and reduce the use of agency personnel, Ms. Stewart-King stated they had enough positions, but not enough people. She further stated they hired 14 Certified Nurse Aides that were going to class.

In response to Mr. Myers' comment that they would be filling 14 positions, Ms. Stewart-King advised once they complete their classes, they would be offered a position.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes" and Brown, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 147-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that ten (10) Per Diem (.20 FTE) positions of Licensed Practical Nurse, pay grade GU/GR10, total salary \$116,480, shall be eliminated in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home (Relief), effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes" and Cusick, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 148-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that one (1) full time position of Registered Nurse, pay grade SW/GR26, salary \$59,130, shall be eliminated in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home (SE1), effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes" and Giovanni, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 149-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that one (1) part time (.40 FTE) position of Registered Nurse, pay grade SW/GR26, salary \$23,652, shall be eliminated in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home (SE1), effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes" and Goffredo, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 150-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that twenty-four (24) Per Diem (.20 FTE) positions of Registered Nurse, pay grade SW/GR27, total salary \$359,424, shall be eliminated in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home (Relief), effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes" and Heckman, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 151-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that one (1) full time position of Unit Clerk, pay grade GU/GR-03A, salary \$30,222, shall be eliminated in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home (SE1), effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes" and Lott, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Upgraded Positions

Department of Administration

Ms. Zrinski made a motion to reconsider the request to upgrade the Deputy Director of Administration position from pay grade CS/GR24/5-E, salary \$65,007 to CS/GR31/1-A, salary \$75,240.

Mr. Lott seconded the motion.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote on the motion.

The vote: Zrinski, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Myers, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Brown, "no"; Cusick, "no"; Giovanni, "no"; Goffredo, "no" and Heckman, "yes".

The motion passed by a vote of 5-4.

Mr. Myers made a motion to amend the resolution to have the position upgraded from a CS/GR24/5-E, salary \$65,007 to CS/GR30/1-A, salary \$71,857.

Mr. Cusick seconded the motion.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote on the motion.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "no"; Brown, "no"; Giovanni, "no"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "no" and Lott, "no".

The motion failed by a vote of 4-5.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 152-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the position of Deputy Director of Administration, pay grade CS/GR24/5-E, salary \$65,007, in the Department of Administration, shall be upgraded to pay grade CS/GR31/1-A, salary \$75,240, effective January 1, 2023.

Mr. Cusick agreed that she deserved a raise, but he could not support a \$10,000 raise for a politically appointed position.

Mr. Goffredo stated all the other raises that were given were in the 5-6% range, but this was a 16% increase so he would not support it.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "no"; Cusick, "no"; Giovanni, "no"; Goffredo, "no"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes" and Vargo Heffner, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 5-4.

Department of Fiscal Affairs

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 153-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the position of Revenue Manager, pay grade CS/GR31/1-A, salary \$75,240, in the Department of Fiscal Affairs - Revenue Division, shall be upgraded to pay grade CS/GR32/1-A, salary \$78,784, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Brown, "no"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes" and Zrinski, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 8-1.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 154-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the position of Deputy Revenue Manager, pay grade CS/GR24/1-A, salary \$54,512, in the Department of Fiscal Affairs - Revenue Division, shall be upgraded to pay grade CS/GR27/1-A, salary \$62,587, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes" and Brown, "no".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 8-1.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 155-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that one (1) full time position of Revenue Tax Claim Supervisor, pay grade CS/GR22, salary \$49,721, shall be eliminated in the Department of Fiscal Affairs - Revenue Division, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes" and Cusick, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 156-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that one (1) full time position of Revenue Tax Specialist, pay grade CS/GR19, salary \$43,304, shall be created in the Department of Fiscal Affairs - Revenue Division, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes" and Zrinski, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

District Attorney's Office

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 157-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that one (1) full time position of Clerical Specialist, pay grade CR/GR17, salary \$44,504, shall be eliminated in the District Attorney's Office, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes" and Brown, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 158-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that one (1) full time position of Assistant Victim Advocate, pay grade CS/GR22, salary \$49,721, shall be created in the District Attorney's Office, effective January 1, 2023.

In answer to Mr. Heckman's question as to whether he already had an Assistant Victim Advocate, District Attorney Terence Houck advised he had several. He further advised the individual who held the Clerical Specialist position would be filling this position.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes" and Cusick, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

County Council

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 159-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the position of Clerk to County Council, pay grade CE/GR06/3-C, salary \$113,403, in the County Council's Office, shall be upgraded to pay grade CE/GR06-4D, salary \$118,507, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes" and Giovanni, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 160-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the position of Deputy Clerk to County Council, pay grade CE/GR1/5-E, salary \$59,293, in the County Council's Office, shall be upgraded to pay grade CE/GR1/6-F, salary \$61,960, effective January 1, 2023.

In response to Ms. Zrinski's question as to why there was such a gap between the Clerk's salary and this salary, Ms. Vargo Heffner stated that decision was made before this County Council came on board.

Mr. Heckman advised the Home Rule Charter indicated that there must be a Clerk position and across the Counties, there was a disparity between salaries. He further advised the Deputy Clerk position was recently created as a training vessel in case the Clerk left.

In answer to Ms. Zrinski's question as to whether these positions would be in the pay study, Mr. Heckman stated if it were up to him, everyone would be in the pay study.

When Ms. Zrinski commented that there was a huge difference in the raise, Mr. Heckman advised years ago people would get step increases over the years, but that had gone by the wayside so that was the reason for the pay study.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes" and Goffredo, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 161-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the position of Executive Secretary to County Council, pay grade CS/GR19/2-B, salary \$45,252, in the County Council's Office, shall be upgraded to pay grade CS/GR19/3-C, salary \$47,289, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes" and Heckman, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

District Attorney's Office

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 162-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the position of Public Relations Administrator, pay grade CS/GR21/1-A, salary \$47,480, in the District Attorney's Office, shall be upgraded to pay grade CS/GR21/3-C, salary \$51,850, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes" and Lott, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Department of Corrections

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 163-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the position of Deputy Warden of Classification, pay grade CS/GR31/2-B, salary \$78,625, in the Department of Corrections, shall be upgraded to pay grade CS/GR31/3-C, salary \$82,163, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes" and Lott, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 164-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the position of Deputy Warden of Operations, pay grade CS/GR31/8-H, salary \$102,440, in the Department of Corrections, shall be upgraded to pay grade CS/GR31/9-I, salary \$107,102, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes" and Vargo Heffner, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Department of Human Services - Gracedale

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 165-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the position of Informatics/Compliance Nurse, pay grade CS/GR27/3-C, salary \$68,346, in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home, shall be upgraded to pay grade CS/GR27/4-D, salary \$71,422, effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes" and Zrinski, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 166-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the position of Staff Development Instructor, pay grade CS/GR27, salary \$62,587, in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home (Nursing Administration), shall be eliminated effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes" and Brown, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Myers introduced the following resolution:

R. 167-2022 **IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that the position of Staff Development Instructor - LPN, pay grade CS/GR26, salary \$59,772, in the Department of Human Services - Gracedale Nursing Home (Nursing Administration), shall be created effective January 1, 2023.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes" and Cusick, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Consideration of 2023 Salary Resolution

Mr. Heckman introduced the following resolution:

R. 168-2022 **RESOLVED** By the Northampton County Council that the 2023 salaries of the Career Service and Exempt employees, not within Collective Bargaining Units, whose job classifications are within the parameters of the Northampton County Career Service and Exempt Pay Scales, respectively, as well as the part-time professional employees, shall be as indicated on the attached pay scales.

In response to Mr. Cusick's question as to what was the percentage per step, Mr. Stephen Barron, Director of Fiscal Affairs, stated it was a 3% increase.

Mr. Heckman advised one of the County Council's responsibilities was to set the salaries and this was a reason for the pay study. He further advised the unions and the County Executive did their research, but he would like County Council to have their own independent study.

Mr. Heckman stated years ago, if someone got a satisfactory review, they would receive a step increase and if not, they would get a Cost of Living Adjustment and sometimes both. He further stated somewhere over the years, that was no longer the case and he does not even know what the steps mean anymore so he would either like to use the steps in a systematic way or get rid of them.

Mr. Cusick advised when a percentage raise was given and people did not move up a step, someone who had been here for a number of years ended up at the same step as someone who just started. He further advised County Council had the right to turn down the percentage increase and give everyone a step increase, but they would have to find the money in the budget to provide it.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Heckman, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Myers, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes" and Zrinski, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Adoption of the 2023 Budget: (1) Consideration of Amendments to the Proposed 2023 Budget Resolution; (2) Adoption of the 2023 Northampton County Budget as Amended

Consideration of Amendments to the Proposed 2023 Budget Resolution Grant

Mr. Cusick made a motion to eliminate \$1,147,000 from Hydroelectric Power Plant and provide \$500,000 for OSI Farmland Preservation; \$300,000 for Affordable Housing and \$347,000 for Human Resources - Pooled Program Operating Cost for an Employee Student Loan Repayment Recruitment and Retention Program.

Mr. Goffredo seconded the motion.

Ms. Zrinski stated she felt it was irresponsible to force the hand of the Administration to breach a contract that County Council already approved several years ago. She further stated defunding this project would force New England Hydropower Company to lose their matching funds and potentially end a project that would bring clean energy to the Lehigh Valley for generations to come.

Ms. Zrinski advised she also found it fiscally irresponsible to assume there was more revenue than what was projected in the proposed budget and to fund a program that had not been created instead of a project that has been in the works for four years so she would not be supporting this.

Mr. Myers stated he recently found out that this project would be used as an educational tool so he would be supporting it.

Mr. Lott advised this was not a grant, it was a loan and would get paid back. He further advised the dam and canal would be maintained for 75 years and the County would also get a dry dock for the barge it spent a lot of money on.

Mr. Lott stated there was mention of it being corporate welfare, but there was a lot of corporate welfare given out in this room over the last two years. He further stated this was not corporate welfare, but a loan that the County was getting a lot of benefits from.

Mr. Cusick advised over the four years, the cost of the project had gone from \$5 million to \$10 million. He further advised he agreed it was a great educational tool and if Lafayette College was helping to fund it that would be great, but they were not.

Mr. Cusick stated the County's taxpayers should not be venture capitalists and the money that was being spent on this could be spent on other things. He further stated the County could always use more money for farmland preservation and affordable housing and having a plan to attract and retain employees by helping to pay their student loans would be invaluable.

Mr. Cusick advised the reason County Council knew there was additional revenue was because they approved it in the last budget amendment, but unfortunately they could not access them because the County Executive did not present them in the proposed budget. He further advised he felt this project should be under the auspices of the Industrial Development Authority.

Mr. Heckman stated the County had to up its game to attract employees so he was open to creating a program to do so, but this project had been in the works for a number of years so they needed to move on it.

Mr. Heckman advised it was a valuable project especially for Lafayette College because they were going to benefit from it and as it was a loan, he was willing to give them another year. He further advised he was not concerned about a lawsuit because the result would be a declaratory judgement.

Ms. Zrinski stated the reason the cost went up was because the County was getting an upgraded product. She further stated it was taking so long because it was a 5,000 megawatt system and an energy project so there were a lot of permits that were required that took time to receive.

With regard to farmland preservation, Ms. Zrinski advised it was fully funded for 2023 and they were on track to close the list. She further advised they needed farmers to come forward to ask to have their farms preserved, adding the County was paying the highest amount per acre allowable by the State.

Ms. Zrinski stated she agreed something should be done to attract employees, but the money for the loans would not be paid out as soon as someone was hired so they could wait on this endeavor.

Ms. Vargo Heffner advised all of these items had value, but she wanted to know if Mr. Cusick would be amenable to making an amendment to remove the \$500,000 for Farmland Preservation since it was fully funded.

Mr. Cusick made a motion to amend the amendment to remove \$500,000 for OSI Farmland Preservation and allow it to remain with the Hydroelectric Power Plant.

Ms. Vargo Heffner seconded the motion.

Mr. Cusick stated he felt this amendment was fair since it was going to take this company time to have everything in place and this should cover some of their expenses in the upcoming year.

In answer to Ms. Zrinski's question as to why he was putting money into a program that was not going to be used straightaway, Mr. Cusick advised there were people employed now whose loans have been on pause that they may soon be required to make payments on

so it could be used as a tool to retain them; particularly since there were positions that required a college degree. He further advised if they did not create this program, they would not have another tool available that the Department of Human Resources could use to retain or attract employees.

Mr. Cusick stated even if the Supreme Court were to rule that the current Executive Order was legal, there were people who had more than \$10,000 in loans so it could still be beneficial to them. He further stated if the money was not allocated, they could not create the program.

Mr. Lott advised it was a little disingenuous for County Council to put a program in place without having any details because that was one of the reasons given not to create a health center for the employees even though they have been given information regarding it. He further advised there was talk that young people were not interested in a pension, which the County offered, but people who have been here for a year or two and see how their pension grew, were glad they had one.

Ms. Zrinski stated Mr. Cusick indicated there were funding sources that the Administration did not put into the budget so he should ask the Administration to fund a student loan program from those sources.

Mr. Spadoni advised the Home Rule Charter bound County Council to the revenue projections in the proposed budget.

Mr. Brown stated the Administration had come before County Council numerous times to approve recruitment and retention bonuses with some of them being paid out over the next four years. He further stated some members of County Council voted to provide free daycare, which he thought was a bad idea because it was not well defined.

Mr. Brown advised the nature of the incentives was consistent with what this body had previously provided, but it was getting bogged down by where the money was coming from. He further advised with regard to the breaking of a contract, contracts were broken all the time especially with the changeover of Administrations and from County Council to County Council and as far as a lawsuit, they lived in a litigious environment.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote on the motion to remove the \$500,000 for Farmland Preservation.

The vote: Cusick, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "no"; Brown, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "no"; Lott, "no" and Myers, "no".

The motion passed by a vote of 5-4.

Ms. Vargo Heffner called for a vote on the amended amendment to retain \$847,000 in funding.

The vote: Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "no"; Lott, "no"; Myers, "no"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "no"; and Brown, "yes".

The amended amendment passed by a vote of 5-4.

Affordable Housing

Mr. Cusick made a motion to add \$347,000 to Future Grants from Hydroelectric Power Plant funding.

Mr. Goffredo seconded the motion.

Ms. Zrinski stated she wanted to know if there was a plan because they were helping to build five affordable townhomes at the former Glendon Hotel location that would cost \$375,000 each to build and were selling for \$126,000. She further stated the money they were taking from the hydroelectric power plant would build one townhome.

Mr. Cusick advised not necessarily and he was sure the County could reach out to the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley to make improvements to existing stock in the program they already had in place. He further advised there were numerous places where the County could use this money to assist in affordable housing.

Ms. Zrinski stated the State was issuing \$10 million in grants so the County could pull from those funds.

Ms. Vargo Heffner advised this was the budget that was presented and people took time to take from one category and to give to another category so what was potentially out there in grants and what the Administration chose to go after was as hypothetical as everything else that had been discussed.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Cusick, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "no"; Lott, "no"; Myers, "no"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "no"; Brown, "yes" and Giovanni, "yes".

The motion passed by a vote of 5-4.

Human Resources

Mr. Cusick made a motion to add \$300,000 to Pooled Program Operating Cost to initially fund an Employee Student Loan Repayment Recruitment and Retention Program from Hydroelectric Power Plant funding.

Mr. Goffredo seconded the motion.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Cusick, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "no"; Lott, "no"; Myers, "no"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "no"; Brown, "yes"; and Giovanni, "yes".

The motion passed by a vote of 5-4.

Hotel Room Rental Tax 2000

Mr. Cusick made a motion to remove \$50,000 from Iron Pigs Charities (Coca Cola Park Improvements) and place it in Future Grants.

Mr. Goffredo seconded the motion.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Cusick, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Lott, "no"; Myers, "no"; Vargo Heffner, "no"; Zrinski, "no"; Brown, "no"; Giovanni, "no" and Heckman, "no".

The motion failed by a vote of 2-7.

Conduct of Elections

Mr. Cusick made a motion to remove \$100,000 from Pooled Communications as it could be replaced with State grant monies and give it to Human Resources - Pooled Program Operating Cost to initially fund an Employee Student Loan Repayment Recruitment and Retention Program.

Mr. Giovanni seconded the motion.

Mr. Heckman stated he attended a District 6 meeting during the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) conference and every other County present indicated they could use these funds without limits, including Lehigh County so he would like to hear from the Administration their view on the matter.

Mr. Charles Dertinger, Director of Administration, advised what they were told was not accurate. He further advised they reached out to election officers across District 6 to find out what they were doing, but as they were attending a registrar conference, he only heard back from two.

Mr. Dertinger stated Lebanon County indicated they had not scratched the surface of this because they did not know what money they would be realizing. He further stated they did hear from a County who informed them they could only use approximately 30% of the funds.

Mr. Dertinger advised Mr. Cusick was given the Frequently Asked Questions that was provided by the State as to what the money could be spent on. He further advised this was not revenue, but a deferred revenue so they could not pull down any of this money until they had expended it.

Mr. Dertinger stated they would have to buy the ballots before they could offset the cost of them and at this time, it could only be used for the Primary Election ballots. He further stated the State was also requesting them to do things that were not previously required, adding they were already some of them such as having more people to open the ballots.

Mr. Dertinger advised they brought a high-speed opener with American Rescue Plan Act funding, but they were probably going to need a second one. He further advised they did not know what the impact of these funds would be as they would not receive any of them until they submitted invoices.

Mr. Heckman suggested someone talk to Lehigh County because they had said there were not that many restrictions on these funds because he would like to make sure the County took full advantage of them.

Mr. Dertinger stated the State supplied the Frequently Asked Questions, as well as the law that reflected the eight elements they would be able to spend the money on. He further stated they had to submit these charges to the Department of State, the Department of Community and Economic Development and the Minor and Majority Leaders of the House of Representatives and Senate so they wanted to make sure they used the money correctly.

As a point of reference, Mr. Dertinger advised out of the \$1,136,453.76 the County would receive, the Sheriff Department's budget for the duties they performed during the election was \$13,000.

In response to Ms. Vargo Heffner's question as to whether they could potentially drawdown \$1,000, Mr. Dertinger replied if they did not have to expend any other monies on the new things the State was requiring them to do.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Myers, "no"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "no"; Brown, "yes"; Goffredo, "no"; Heckman, "no"; and Lott, "no".

The motion failed by a vote of 4-5.

Grow NORCO

Ms. Vargo Heffner made a motion to remove \$5,000 from Iron Pigs Charities and provide \$2,500 to Godfrey Daniels and \$2,500 to Touchstone Theatre.

Mr. Giovanni seconded the motion.

In answer to Ms. Zrinski's question as to whether this would be in addition to the money they were already receiving, Ms. Vargo Heffner stated that was correct.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Zrinski, "no"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "no" and Myers, "yes".

The motion passed by a vote of 7-2.

Mr. Myers made a motion to remove \$20,000 from Iron Pigs Charities and provide funding to the Borough of Bath for a Master Long-Range Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan.

Mr. Giovanni seconded the motion.

In response to Mr. Myers' question as to how much money would remain for the Iron Pigs, Ms. Vargo Heffner replied from this category, it would be \$100,000.

Mr. Cusick advised there were sources of revenue from this County that went to Lehigh County such as the gaming revenue. He further advised the City of Allentown was the beneficiary of Neighborhood Improvement Zone funding so a ton of State money went into that area.

Mr. Cusick stated he understood the stadium was not located there, but the city benefitted from it and there was no entity like that in this County. He further stated regionalism sometimes seemed to benefit one County more and referred to funding from the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study.

Mr. Cusick advised taking some of this money and investing it in the Borough of Bath was a good investment.

Mr. Myers stated they were still giving money to the Iron Pigs and it was important that they support the Borough of Bath.

Mr. Heckman advised the Iron Pigs were part of a multi-million dollar franchise and he did not want to see them leave, but the Borough of Bath was one of many small communities that should be helped.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Zrinski, "no"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "no" and Vargo Heffner, "yes".

The motion passed by a vote of 7-2.

Mr. Goffredo made a motion to remove \$100,000 from Iron Pigs Charities (Coca Cola Park Improvements) and place it in Future Grants.

Mr. Cusick seconded the motion.

Ms. Zrinski stated it did not make sense to take money from the Iron Pigs to place it in Future Grants for an undesignated purpose when they could just reapply for this funding.

Mr. Giovanni advised he did not understand Ms. Zrinski's comment because yesterday she said other money could be found for the Borough of Bath.

When Ms. Vargo Heffner asked if Messrs. Goffredo and Cusick would rescind their motion so a motion could be made to reduce the \$100,000 to \$50,000, they both agreed to rescind their motion.

Ms. Vargo Heffner made a motion to remove \$50,000 and put it in Future Grants and leave \$50,000 for the Iron Pigs.

Mr. Cusick seconded the motion.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote on the amended amendment.

The vote: Vargo Heffner, "yes" Cusick, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes" Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "no"; Myers, "yes" and Zrinski, "yes".

The motion passed by a vote of 8-1.

Mr. Goffredo made a motion to take \$62,500 from Future Grants to be given to the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Foundation (GLVCCF).

Mr. Myers seconded the motion.

In answer to Mr. Lott's question as to the reason for the reduction in the amount they requested and who was on the committee that made that decision, Ms. Tina Smith, Director of the Department of Community and Economic Development, stated the committee was comprised of herself, Mr. Barron, Mr. Myers and some non-profit leaders from the community. She further stated the committee felt

an additional website was redundant because if someone searched Downtown Bethlehem or Historic Bethlehem, there were at least five other websites that popped up and they felt they had done their due diligence in funding that project.

Ms. Smith advised this was a competitive grant so they were competing with a number of other Bethlehem entities and they tried very hard to make sure every municipal entity that applied received some funding, noting Bethlehem and Easton usually received more because they had more attractions.

Ms. Smith stated besides feeling this was a duplication of services, it was felt they had the opportunity to work with the DBA and for-profit businesses and that the Chamber of Commerce should be going out and soliciting the businesses that were benefitting from the website to help sponsor and pay for it going forward.

In response to Mr. Lott's question as to whether Bethlehem was involved in this endeavor, Ms. Smith advised she did not believe so and in fact, the County was the biggest financial supporter of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) initiative.

In answer to Ms. Vargo Heffner's question as to why the money was going to the GLVCCF, Ms. Smith stated the money had to go to a non-profit so they were the pass-through entity since Hotel Bethlehem was a for-profit entity.

In response to Ms. Vargo Heffner's comment that Bethlehem UNESCO Heritage Marketing was also receiving funds, Ms. Smith advised they received money from the same funding, but that was run by the Historical Bethlehem Museum and Sites.

Mr. Brown stated the UNESCO funding was to get Bethlehem designated worldwide as one of the top tier historic sites to visit and not for marketing the one square mile of businesses in Bethlehem to the average tourist.

In answer to Mr. Lott's question as to whether any of the other businesses contributed to the marketing of Main Street, Mr. Haines advised they previously received \$185,000 to market all the entities that existed in Historic Bethlehem, that included, among others, all the businesses downtown, Bethlehem Museums and Sites, the Museum of Industrial History and Moravian College. He further advised one of the ways they did that was to develop a new website that included all these entities, noting they did not create

another website just to have another website, they did it to create a brand.

Mr. Haines stated he never went to the other businesses to ask for funding because they were small businesses and felt it appropriate to request money from the hotel tax, which he alone was matching, because its purpose was to promote tourism.

Mr. Goffredo advised the County received hotel tax from the Hotel Bethlehem and they were not going to be the only entity to benefit from this money. He further advised having this brand would not only help promote Bethlehem and the region locally, but nationally and even internationally if they received the UNESCO designation.

Mr. Goffredo stated some members of County Council were willing to give the Iron Pigs, who were affiliated with a very profitable organization, to renovate their stadium and yet they were debating giving money to this endeavor.

As there were no further questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Goffredo, "yes"; Myers, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes" and Zrinski, "yes".

The motion passed by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Giovanni introduced the following resolution:

R. 169-2022 **RESOLVED** By the Northampton County Council that the proposed 2023 Northampton County Budget shall be amended as indicated on the attached document.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Giovanni, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Myers, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes" and Brown, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Adoption of the 2023 Northampton County Budget as Amended

Ms. Vargo introduced the following resolution:

R. 170-2022 **RESOLVED**, By the Northampton County Council that the following 2023 Northampton County Budgets (incorporated by reference hereto) shall be adopted, as amended, this 1st day of December, 2022.

1. General Fund
2. Special Revenue Funds
3. Capital Project Funds

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Myers, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes" and Cusick, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Adoption of the 2023 Northampton County Capital Improvements Plan

Ms. Vargo Heffner introduced the following resolution:

R. 171-2022 **RESOLVED** By the Northampton County Council that the proposed 2023 Northampton County Capital Improvements Plan shall be adopted on this 1st day of December.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Myers, "yes" and Zrinski, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Adoption of the 2023 Real Estate Tax Millage Rate Ordinance

Ms. Vargo Heffner advised Mr. Heckman and Ms. Zrinski introduced the following ordinance at the November 17, 2022 meeting:

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE REAL ESTATE TAX MILLAGE
RATE IN THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON FOR THE YEAR 2023

IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED that the millage rate for real estate tax purposes for the year 2023 shall be set at 10.8 mills on every dollar of assessed valuation of taxable real estate or \$1.08 on every \$100.00 of assessed valuation.

Public Hearing

Ms. Vargo Heffner asked if there were any questions or comments from the public.

There were no respondents.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Heckman, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Myers, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes" and Brown, "yes".

The ordinance was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Public Hearing of an Ordinance Entitled, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE
COUNTY COUNCIL OF NORTHAMPTON COUNTY AUTHORIZING THE CONVEYANCE OF
.0985 ACRES BY THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON FOR THE RETURN OF .0986
ACRES OF REAL PROPERTY AS PART OF THE NOR-BATH TRAIL"

Ms. Vargo Heffner Ms. Zrinski and Mr. Myers introduced the following ordinance at the November 17, 2022 meeting:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
AUTHORIZING THE CONVEYANCE OF .0985 ACRES BY THE COUNTY
OF NORTHAMPTON FOR THE RETURN OF .0986 ACRES OF REAL
PROPERTY AS PART OF THE NOR-BATH TRAIL

WHEREAS, Northampton County Home Rule Charter Section 602 (a) (6) provides that the Northampton County Council shall enact an ordinance for any act which conveys, leases, purchases or authorizes the conveyance, lease or purchase of any real estate property of the County; and

WHEREAS, on December 23, 1980, the County of Northampton purchased real property from the Northampton and Bath Railroad

Company consisting of 68.458 acres in the Townships of Allen, East Allen and Upper Nazareth (Nor-Bath Trail); and

WHEREAS, the Nor-Bath Trail land was acquired with grants-in-aid assistance provided under the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (LWCFA); and

WHEREAS, the requirements under the LWCFA guidelines require land to be conveyed at or above appraised value and total acreage; and

WHEREAS, a waiver valuation appraisal was completed by a Pennsylvania certified real estate appraiser and the value of the converted land of .0985 acres is \$5,368.00 (Exhibits A & B) and the replacement property of .0986 was valued at \$5,400 (Exhibits C, D & E); and

WHEREAS, a signature is required on behalf of the County as part of the Compliance & Stewardship Report, requested by the National Park Services showcasing the land swap (Exhibit F) ; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is requesting the acreage for vehicular improvements associated with the development of lands adjacent to the Nor-Bath Trail at the intersection of Airport Road (SR 987); and

WHEREAS, the County negotiated additional pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements within the right-of-way to be paid, installed and maintained by the developer.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED by the Northampton County Council, that it does hereby authorize the County Executive to sign on the requested documents as part of the Compliance & Stewardship Report, requested by the National Park Service for full conveyance of .0985 acres for the return of .0986 acres of land, in part by federal funds through LWCFA.

Public Hearing

Ms. Vargo Heffner asked if there were any questions or comments from the public.

There were no respondents.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Zrinski, "yes"; Myers, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Brown, "yes" and Cusick, "yes".

The ordinance was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Public Hearing of an Ordinance Entitled, "AN ORDINANCE REGARDING AN EMPLOYEE HEALTH CENTER FUNDED BY SPENDING FROM THE 2023 PROPOSED AND ADOPTED BUDGET"

Ms. Vargo Heffner stated Messrs. Goffredo and Giovanni introduced the following ordinance at the November 17, 2022 meeting:

AN ORDINANCE REGARDING AN EMPLOYEE HEALTH CENTER FUNDED BY SPENDING FROM THE 2023 PROPOSED AND ADOPTED BUDGET

WHEREAS, Northampton County Council has been advised by the Administration of Northampton County (Administration) of the intent to institute, operate, and maintain an Employee Health Center; and

WHEREAS, Northampton County Council has not been advised as to the start-up costs for this Employee Health Center, liability issues, operational costs, return on investment, and detailed projected cost savings to Northampton County, if any; and

WHEREAS, the Administration has advised that funding for this Employee Health Center is present within the 2023 proposed Fiscal Budget; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Northampton County Administrative Code (Code), Section 13.15 et al., any contract exceeding \$100,000.00 requires the review and approval of Northampton County Council, and no contract has been produced; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Code Section 13.07, competitive bidding is required, but was not entailed, nor have exceptions been stated in detail as required in Section 13.10, in the proposal forwarded by the Administration; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Code Section 13.14.c, the purchase and/or leasing of any real estate for any Employee Health Center requires review and approval by Northampton County Council, which has not been forthcoming; and

WHEREAS, Northampton County Council requires that a full and complete review be had for any Employee Health Center, including, but not limited to, full disclosure as to all costs and expenses, staffing, compensation, operational costs, liability, and the County's return on investment; and

WHEREAS, the Administration has advised County Council that the Employee Health Center has been overwhelmingly approved following a survey of Northampton County Employees. The survey contacted less than 25% of the County's workforce, did not include details and circumstances as to its operation and effect upon County employees, and did not set forth the terms and conditions of its use or operation. County Council requests that a full and complete survey with regard to the detailed data be made of Northampton County Employees as to this Employee Health Center, including but not limited to location and hours; and

WHEREAS, Northampton County Council requests that a Request for Proposal be issued by Northampton County for any Employee Health Center; and

WHEREAS, Northampton County Council requires that there be a full, complete, and transparent disclosure of all facts and circumstances of any Employee Health Center; and

WHEREAS, Northampton County Council has been advised that other Counties within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, prior to the establishment of an Employee Health Center, have done so only after competitive bidding.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED by Northampton County Council as follows:

1. The Employee Health Center shall only be considered after a Request for Proposal pursuant to the Code Section 13.07 is issued.

2. The Employee Health Center shall only be considered after a full and complete survey of County employees as stated above.

3. All Departments and Employees of Northampton County shall comply with the terms of this Ordinance.

4. Any Ordinance or part of any Ordinance conflicting with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed insofar as

the same affects this Ordinance.

5. The Administration is prohibited from transferring any monies from the 2023 Fiscal Budget of Northampton County for an Employee Health Center prior to review and approval by Northampton County Council.

Public Hearing

Ms. Vargo Heffner asked if there were any questions or comments from the public.

Mr. McClure read a letter from the President of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1265, the County's largest collective bargaining unit, indicating their support for the health care center.

Mr. Heckman advised he did not see anything in the ordinance indicating County Council wanted to eradicate the health center, but they could not force the employees to do another survey.

Mr. Heckman stated he took umbrage with the statement that County Council had all the information they needed because he just received information today from Lycoming County regarding their contract that he would like to review. He further stated they could compare this County to them, but they put their contract out for bid and got replies from a number of entities.

Mr. Heckman advised it appeared if someone asked questions, they were against it and that was not the case. He further advised he was not completely comfortable with this ordinance, but he would like more information because some of the information he reviewed glossed over the details.

Mr. Heckman stated he struggled as to whether or not he could support a health center because he did not believe it was everything they were making it out to be and their numbers seemed to vary.

Mr. Goffredo advised there had been a lot of discussion about this issue and this ordinance was to allow County Council to be more involved. He further advised no one had any idea who Integrity Health was until they appeared at a meeting to make their pitch.

Mr. Goffredo stated they did receive information with regard to this entity, but because they did not have any information from any competitors, they had nothing to compare it against. He further stated he sent three pages of very specific questions to Mr. Doug Forrester, Chairman of Integrity Health, and he did not get one specific answer in return.

Mr. Goffredo advised all the information County Council received to make a decision was provided by the gentleman who was going to make money off of it so he would like to see a lot more information and this ordinance would help him get it. He further advised the County already had a number of functions it was controlling and he was concerned this may be the first step in establishing another one.

Mr. Brown stated he appreciated the challenge the Administration was facing with regard to health care costs. He further stated in 2017, the County spent \$11.3 million on employee health care and for 2023 it was expected to increase by \$7.7 million due to the 24% projected increase.

Mr. Brown advised when he was County Executive, he put in place a 10% co-pay that was very unpopular with the employees so it was changed by the new Administration. He further advised unfortunately without doing something the County was on track to hit \$40 million for health care costs within the next two or three years.

Mr. Brown stated in 2017, the County was supporting an employee \$6,000 in healthcare costs and in the proposed 2023 budget, it was projected to increase to \$16,500. He further stated one employee contributed on average approximately 3% of their salary toward their health care costs plus whatever their particular plan's deductible and co-pays were.

Mr. Brown advised some of the challenges he had with the proposed plan was the way it was presented without any other options; 40% of the services they were proposing were already being provided at no additional cost; a third of their services were related to care coordination and member services, which was support for filing claims and the last 10% of it was the actual doctor or nurse contact. He further advised the County was paying \$4 million dollars up front plus the \$800,000 annual payment, which could go up year after year depending on how the contract was written.

Mr. Brown stated Mr. Forrester indicated if the County spent \$4 million, it would get \$6.5 million return on their investment, which was reasonable except when he did this process, he paid a consultant \$30,000 - \$50,000 and yielded a \$2 million savings just by changing the health care plan. He further stated the \$7.7 million was not in the proposed budget, but the Administration indicated it would be doing an amendment so he wondered how serious they were in moving this forward.

Mr. Brown advised the Administration indicated if they moved ahead with the \$7.7 million, they could potentially save 50% of it; however, even if this was approved today, it would take at least 6-9 months to have everything in place so no benefit would be realized in 2023 so the County was going to eat that \$7.7 million increase no matter what plus the \$4 million on top of it.

Mr. Brown stated they were projecting 750 employees would use the health center, but they really did not know what the return on investment would be so it may take five years for the County to see a profit. He further stated factoring in a 15% increase year after year after the 24%, the County would still be looking at a \$40 million increase in a few years so the health center may taper that curve a little bit, but it was not going to solve it.

Mr. Brown advised he also had a concern that it was being promoted as a volunteer program, but that may only last for so long because employees may be required to use it to get the return on investment that was proposed.

Mr. Heckman stated he did not think Mr. McClure had any plans to make it mandatory for the employees to use the health center; however, that did not mean a County Executive down the road may do it.

In response to Mr. Heckman's question as to where the 24% increase came from, Mr. Brown advised it came from the actuary that evaluated the health fund as to what was required by the County based on the utility of that fund. He further advised Mr. McClure had indicated that the 24% would equate to approximately \$7.7 million if the County was not able to cap it.

In answer to Mr. Heckman's comment that they did not know for sure that was going to be the increase, Mr. Brown stated when the actuary indicated what was needed, that was what was needed.

Mr. Myers advised he found out this was also being used in Southeast Pennsylvania so he felt they should get some information from them. He further advised not putting this out for a Request for Proposal and only having one entity come in to discuss it was puzzling to him.

Mr. Myers stated he was not comfortable voting on this tonight and if he was forced to do so, he would probably vote against it. He further stated he would like to receive some information from the people in Southeast Pennsylvania and have more conversations with the labor unions so he would like to table this and wait until the early part of next year, if necessary.

Ms. Vargo Heffner advised this ordinance did not state that County Council was voting for or against a health center, it was just saying that in order for County Council to do so, it was requiring certain things as set out within the ordinance. She further advised a Request for Proposal was required for any purchase/contract over \$100,000 and this was for millions of dollars so it was requesting that the process be slowed down and allow them to obtain more information.

Mr. Myers made a motion to table this ordinance.

Mr. Lott seconded the motion.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote on the motion.

The vote: Myers, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Cusick, "no"; Giovanni, "no"; Goffredo, "no"; Heckman, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "no"; Zrinski, "yes"; and Brown, "no".

The motion failed by a vote of 4-5.

As there were no further questions or questions, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Goffredo, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes"; Lott, "no"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "no"; Brown, "yes" and Cusick, "yes" Heckman, "abstain" and Myers, "abstain".

The ordinance was adopted by a vote of 5-2-2 abstentions.

Introduction of an Ordinance Entitled, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF NORTHAMPTON COUNTY AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF LAND SITUATED IN 3502 KESSLERSVILLE ROAD, FORKS TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA, FROM JAMES DIETZLZER AND KRISTIE G. DIETZLER, HIS WIFE"

Ms. Zrinski and Mr. Myers introduced the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF NORTHAMPTON COUNTY AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF LAND SITUATED IN 3502 KESSLERSVILLE ROAD, FORKS TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA, FROM JAMES DIETZLZER AND KRISTIE G. DIETZLER, HIS WIFE

WHEREAS, Northampton County Home Rule Charter Section 602 (a) (6) provides that the Northampton County Council shall enact an ordinance for any act which conveys, leases, purchases or authorizes the conveyance, lease or purchase of any real property of the County; and

WHEREAS, on November 28, 2022, Northampton County Council was requested to authorize the County Executive to enter into an Agreement of Sale, with James Dietzler and Kristie G. Dietzler to purchase a tract of land to wit: all that certain tract or lot of land situate in 3502 Kesslersville Road, Forks Township, described as Tax Parcel No J9-13-12C-0311 in a Deed recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Northampton County, Pennsylvania at Deed Book Volume 2002-1, Page 276226 attached for monetary consideration in the sum total amount of \$293,500.00; and

WHEREAS, Section 13.14 (b) of the Northampton County Administrative Code requires two sealed appraisals for Northampton County to purchase, sell or lease real estate; and

WHEREAS, Section 13.14 (b) 2 permits that provision to be waived when the "purchase, sale or lease of real estate does not justify the cost of the appraisals or is otherwise deemed unnecessary;" and

WHEREAS, Northampton County obtained one fair market value appraisal that indicated the parcel of land had a fair market value of \$400,000.00 which exceeds the County's purchase price; and

WHEREAS, County Council hereby waives the need for a second appraisal for the two parcels of land as unnecessary given the reduced purchase offered by seller.

NOW, THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED that Northampton County Council does waive the second appraisal and agrees to purchase the property from James Dietzler and Kristie G. Dietzler, his wife.

Ms. Vargo Heffner stated the public hearing, debate and possible vote would be held at the January 5, 2023 meeting.

Consideration of the Acceptance of Christmas Gifts for Gracedale Residents Resolution

Mr. Goffredo introduced the following resolution:

R. 172-2022 **WHEREAS**, Northampton County Home Rule Charter Section 202 (10) provides that the County Council shall have, among others, the following powers: "*to accept on behalf of the County any gifts of real property and to provide for the acceptance by any agency on behalf of the County of other gifts;*" and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that Northampton County Council authorizes the Department of Human Services - Gracedale to accept \$1,697.70 from the Friends of Gracedale Foundation to be used to purchase Christmas gifts for residents.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Goffredo, "yes"; Heckman, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Myers, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes" and Giovanni, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Consideration of the 2023 County Council Meeting Schedule Resolution

Mr. Goffredo introduced the following resolution:

R. 173-2022 **RESOLVED** by the Northampton County Council that: (1) In accordance with Northampton County Home Rule Charter Section 206(a), the Northampton County Council organizational meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 3, 2023, and will begin at 3:30 p.m., prevailing time, in the third floor meeting room, room #3116, Northampton County Government Center, 669 Washington

Street, Easton, Pennsylvania; and (2) The regular schedule of meetings for the year 2023, shall be conducted on the first and third Thursday of each respective month, beginning at 6:30 p.m., prevailing time, in the third floor meeting room, room #3116, Northampton County Government Center, 669 Washington Street, Easton, Pennsylvania, with the following exceptions: the meeting scheduled for Thursday, December 21, 2023 is cancelled and rescheduled for Thursday, December 14, 2023 and will begin at 4:30 p.m., prevailing time and will be held in the third floor meeting room, room #3116, Northampton County Government Center, 669 Washington Street, Easton, Pennsylvania.

As there were no questions or comments, Ms. Vargo Heffner called for the vote.

The vote: Goffredo, "yes"; Lott, "yes"; Myers, "yes"; Vargo Heffner, "yes"; Zrinski, "yes"; Brown, "yes"; Cusick, "yes"; Giovanni, "yes" and Heckman, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 9-0.

Airport Authority Liaison Report

Ms. Zrinski advised at the Airport Authority meeting it was announced that they have amended their contract with Forks Township to allow Braden Air Park to have a skydiving operation. She further advised revenues were up 32%, expenses were up 45% and in October they had their highest cargo activity with 26 million pounds, which was a 9% increase.

County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania

Ms. Vargo Heffner stated a resolution would be presented to County Council to adopt CCAP's priorities for next week since they were voted on at the conference.

Council's Clerk Report

Mrs. Zembo the next meeting of County Council would be held at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 8, 2022.

Adjournment

Mr. Myers made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Giovanni seconded the motion.

The motion to adjourn passed unanimously by acclamation.

Linda M. Zembo
Clerk to Council