A regular meeting of the Northampton County Council was held on the above date with the following present: Ann McHale, President; Wayne Grube, Vice President; Ron Angle; John Cusick; Charles M. Dertinger; J. Michael Dowd; Margaret Ferraro; Lamont G. McClure, Jr.; Diane Neiper; Leonard N. Zito, Solicitor to Council, and Frank E. Flisser, Clerk to Council.

Prayer

Mr. Dowd led County Council in prayer to open the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Ferraro led County Council in the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Angle made the following motion:

Be It Moved By the Northampton County Council that the minutes of the April 3, 2008 meeting shall be approved.

Mrs. McHale seconded the motion.

The motion was adopted by voice acclamation, with Mrs. Ferraro abstaining.

Courtesy of the Floor

When Mr. John Maher indicated he wanted to address the tax rebate ordinance, Mrs. McHale informed him he could do so during the public hearing.

Confirmation of Appointments
Mrs. McHale stated the Personnel Committee met on Wednesday, April 16, 2008, to review appointments/re-appointments to the Airport Authority, Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council, Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Drug and Alcohol Advisory Board and Children, Youth and Families Advisory Board.

Mr. Cusick introduced the following resolution:
R. 26-2008 RESOLVED, by the Northampton County Council that the following individuals shall be confirmed in their appointments/re-appointments as indicated hereafter:

AIRPORT AUTHORITY

Appointment: 
12/31/12
Frank J. Kovacs, Jr.
2103 Main Street
Bethlehem, PA 18017

AREA AGENCY ON AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Term to Expire: 6/3/09

Appointment:
Diane Neiper
307 East 19th Street
Northampton, PA 18067

MENTAL HEALTH/MENTAL RETARDATION/DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADVISORY BOARD

Term to Expire: 4/16/11

Appointment:
Eric Hanus
232 W. Packer Avenue
Apt. 5
Bethlehem, PA 18015

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES ADVISORY BOARD

Term to Expire: 4/1/11

Re-appointments:
Mr. Cusick advised the Personnel Committee unanimously recommended all these appointments/re-appointments be presented to County Council.

In response to Mr. McClure’s question, Mr. Cusick stated he did not oppose appointing County Council members to advisory boards or councils.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote


The resolution was adopted by a vote of 8-0-1.

Public Hearing on the Ordinance Providing for a Taxpayer Rebate of Real Estate Taxes

Mrs. McHale advised this ordinance was introduced by Messrs. McClure and Dertinger at the meeting held April 3, 2008.

AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A REBATE ON NORTHAMPTON COUNTY REAL ESTATE TAXES FOR THE YEAR 2007

WHEREAS, the County of Northampton currently has a significant unappropriated fund balance that exceeds the current needs to operate the government of Northampton County; and

WHEREAS, the economy of the United States is teetering on the brink of a recession.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, AND ENACTED, By the Northampton County Council that:

I. The Northampton County Executive, through the Department of Fiscal Affairs, is hereby directed to issue a 10% rebate on real estate taxes paid for the year 2007 to each, and all, property owners in the County of Northampton, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and utilities properties.

II. This shall be a one-time rebate that shall be paid to all residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural and utilities property owners, who paid real estate taxes in the year 2007 and who were not delinquent on any of the parcels which they own.

Mrs. McHale asked if there were any questions or comments from the public.

Mr. John Maher, 227 Mechanic Street, Wind Gap, PA stated he supported this ordinance because any monies that were not being used by the County should be refunded to the taxpayers as everyone was having a hard enough time making ends meet.

Mrs. McHale asked if there were any questions or comments from the members of County Council.

Mr. McClure advised the overriding theme of this ordinance was that the County was overtaxing its citizens. He further advised the Administration wrote the General Fund was the primary operating fund of the County and at the end of 2007, the General Fund’s unreserved, undesignated fund balance was $48.5 million while the total fund balance reached $60.8 million. He noted as a measure of the General Fund’s liquidity, it may be useful to compare both the unreserved fund balance and total fund balance to the total fund expenditures. He further noted the unreserved, undesignated fund balance represented 63% of total General Fund expenditures while the total fund balance represented 78.9% of the same amount. Therefore, the County was taking in 80% more tax money in a given year than it needed to run its government and it had to stop.

Mr. McClure stated the Administration also wrote at the end of the calendar year 2007, the County’s governmental funds
reported combined ending fund balances of $95.8 million, which was an increase of $5.8 million or 6.4% in comparison with the prior year. He further stated the General Fund unreserved, undesignated fund balance, which was available for spending at the government’s discretion, increased $6.7 million. He noted the remainder of the fund balance was reserved or designated to indicate that it was not available for spending because it was already committed to 1) liquidating contracts, purchase orders and commitments of a prior period ($7,118,609); 2) committed to balance the next year’s budget ($5,161,100); 3) restricted to special revenue funds for their designated purpose ($22.7 million); 4) committed to capital construction projects ($10.9 million) and 5) committed to generate income for the maintenance of the Louise Moore Park through the Hugh Moore trust ($1.4 million).

Mr. McClure commented those were the facts and so when he saw the County was overtaxing its citizens, he reached out to Mr. Dertinger and they came up with what they felt was a modest and reasonable one time 10% across the board tax cut, which would cost the County approximately $8 million. He further commented if this ordinance was passed, the unrestricted fund balance at the end of 2008, would be at least $46 million which was $1 million more than the County needed to operate. However, if this ordinance did not pass, the unrestricted fund balance would be at least $52 million.

Mr. Dertinger advised some of his friends and colleagues have suggested using the money to pay some of the County’s bills, some have indicated there were projects that needed to be done and still others have suggested using it to pay down the debt. He further advised information was received from the County Executive today that he wanted to borrow $40 million to build a parking garage, therefore, he was not going to pay down the debt with the unrestricted fund balance, but add to it so this was not the argument. He noted the argument was whether County Council felt the County should overtax its citizens or not, noting property taxes were one of the most difficult taxes for senior citizens to pay and there were many middle income individuals struggling to stay in their homes. In conclusion, he remarked he did not see a logical argument against this as it was a modest and reasonable plan and would only cost the County $8 million.
Mrs. Ferraro stated she did not feel this was the time to do a 10% across the board tax refund because it was going to cost the County a great deal of money just to administer it. She also questioned where the staff was going to come from to handle the extra work. Moreover, she agreed with the figures that Mr. Doran Hamann, Budget Administrator, provided and did not feel the County had as much money as everyone seemed to believe it had.

Mrs. Ferraro advised a responsible thing to do would be to either pay down the debt or put money aside for projects that were coming up. Furthermore, she asked what was wrong with former County Executive Gene Hartzell’s approach to doing things which was to pay as you went. She further advised it was only April and if the County got through this year with everything it had to do and it still looked as though it was being a little too conservative with the dollars then at budget time County Council could do a budget reduction, but she did not think this was the right time.

Mr. Grube stated he appreciated the work Messrs. McClure and Dertinger had done with regard to a tax rebate, however, he could not support it at this time. He further stated $54 would not make any great impact on the majority of the taxpaying citizens and their financial crisis. He noted in 2000, he voted to decrease the millage rate, however, three years later, there was a large tax increase. He further noted there were seven major capital projects to be addressed so he proposed taking the $30 million and putting it toward these projects.

Mrs. Neiper advised when Messrs. McClure and Dertinger introduced this ordinance, she met with Mr. Hamann to review the numbers. She noted $5.1 million of the $12 million was scattered throughout to balance the budget and the County probably would need another $5 million plus next year. She further advised Mr. Hamann shared with her a little history that dated back to 1994 which showed the fluctuations in the fund balances.

Mrs. Neiper stated back in 1998, there was $46 million in the fund balance, but little by little that amount was whittled away by balancing the budget year after year and Mr. Grube was right the millage rate went down to 6.3 in the year 2000 and then it jumped up to 7.5 and then 10.3 because the fund balance was getting too low. She also agreed with Mr. Grube that the
excess money could be used for some of the County’s projects such as Weaversville and the Archives building, which she felt should be in the Milides building and not part of the parking deck.

Mrs. Neiper advised she understood there was a gentleman’s agreement with regard to the fund balance, but she felt perhaps it was getting a little too big and the excess should be used for these projects and not create more debt for the taxpayers.

Mr. Angle asked Mr. Hamann to verify that there was no $64 million surplus.

Mr. Hamann stated according to the LarsonAllen report, there was $60.8 million in the fund balance, $48.5 million of that was unrestricted and approximately $12 million was used to balance the 2007 budget.

Mr. Angle commented there was talk about doing away with the budgetary reserve, however, any good financial planner would tell you that you should have at least three months’ worth of expenses in your savings account. He advised the County barely kept two months, which was not exorbitant, but recommended by Zelenkofske Axelrod. He further advised it was not just a gentleman’s agreement, but an agreement between the Finance Committee and the Administration for responsible government. He noted County Executive John Stoffa and his Administration have managed not to eat through the “seed corn” and kept the level at two months and if that level was changed for any reason, then it would alter the true figures of the County by using the money for something else.

Mr. Angle stated there was also talk about using the money to pay down the debt, however, the County’s debt was basically in municipal bonds and you could not simply call up and say you wanted to put extra money down to pay down the debt like you would for a mortgage. He further stated with municipal bonds, you could call the bond if it was callable, however, he was not sure the County had met its threshold for that.

Mr. Angle remarked that the County would certainly be incurring debt in the future with the proposed building projects, therefore, it did not make sense to send someone $54 now just to send them a larger tax bill in the future. He
further remarked he probably would have supported some type of a measure that would have helped people over 65 on a limited income who were struggling with their taxes, however, he did not think $54 would help the masses. Besides, people did not want a once and done tax rebate, but wanted to know their County was stable and would not be raising their taxes.

Lastly, Mr. Angle pointed out that if the budgetary reserve was reduced, it would also reduce interest income which was a source that was also used to balance the budget every year.

Mr. Dertinger advised he liked the analogy of “seed corn”, but the “seed corn” was rotting because the County had done nothing with it, noting there were many projects in this County that have gone not just undone, but ignored. He further advised the County absolutely must do something with this money and this was a way to see if, in fact, while the County was looking at such a large surplus if it could be continued year after year. He commented Mrs. Neiper indicated she spoke with Mr. Hamann, however, Mr. Hamann had failed, to this date, to give him any indication when the County needed more than $22 million in the fund balance.

Mr. Dertinger stated one explanation that had been given was the County’s fluctuating balances, however, the past Administration and County Council actually did something. He added they built things and moved forward on projects, but this Administration and County Council were stuck in the mud with a lot of money. He further stated he appreciated Mr. Hamann’s opinion on these things, however, with and without his advice, the County had incurred debt and cut and increased taxes. Therefore, he did not know if all of the County’s decisions should be based on one man. He noted he and everyone else appreciated the work Mr. Hamann had done, but he had not gotten the answer that he requested. Therefore, if Mr. Hamann was prepared tonight to let him know when the County required more than $22 million, he might be willing to reconsider this action.

Mr. Dertinger advised a comparison was made as to what people would do with their own home and their own finances, however, he never knew of anyone who called their employer to inform him they were making too much money so they were going to return some of it because people do not take money from their employers, they were paid for a service. However, the County
was taking money from its taxpayers who expected services, however, to date, the County had done very little to meet that obligation. He noted the fact that everyone was indicating it was only $54, but it was $8 million that the County was doing nothing with and now it was looking to make it another $40 million, which he felt was unconscionable.

Mr. Angle informed Mr. Dertinger that actual seed corn did not rot. Further, he found Mr. Dertinger’s attack on the integrity and the ability of Mr. Hamann very offensive.

Mrs. McHale noted she received a message that Mr. David Dunn of Hanover Township wanted the following statement with regard to the tax rebate ordinance entered into the minutes of this meeting - “It is poor fiscal management and if it was my money, I would bank it.”

As there were no further questions or comments, Mrs. McHale called for the vote on this ordinance.


The ordinance failed by a vote of 2-7.

Public Hearing on the Ordinance Providing for Amendments to the 2008 Budget

Mrs. McHale stated the following ordinance was introduced by Mr. Angle and herself at the meeting held April 3, 2008:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2008 NORTHAMPTON COUNTY BUDGET: DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; DEPARTMENT OF FISCAL AFFAIRS; CORRECTIONS; DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS: LIQUID FUEL TAX AND PARKS AND RECREATION; DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES: PASS THROUGH GRANTS, HOMELESS ASSISTANCE, DEVELOPMENT FUND, CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES, AREA AGENCY ON AGING, MENTAL HEALTH, MENTAL RETARDATION AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL; CAPITAL PROJECTS: COURTHOUSE, PRISON EXPANSION, GRACEDALE RENOVATIONS, COUNTY PARK PRESERVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
# 2008

## BUDGET AMENDMENT

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### Human Services - Children, Youth & Families

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**Human Services - Drug & Alcohol**

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<th>169,500</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61000</td>
<td>Prevention Block Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>41160</td>
<td>School District SDFS &amp; C</td>
<td>22,700</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>23,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41240</td>
<td>Treatment Block Grant</td>
<td>747,800</td>
<td>(25,700)</td>
<td>722,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>41315</td>
<td>Act 152</td>
<td>609,900</td>
<td>(26,500)</td>
<td>583,400</td>
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<td>41330</td>
<td>Base Allocation</td>
<td>680,500</td>
<td>11,400</td>
<td>691,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>41340</td>
<td>BHSI</td>
<td>242,500</td>
<td>108,600</td>
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**Capital Project - Courthouse**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42000</td>
<td>Interest On Investment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7,402</td>
<td>7,402</td>
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<tr>
<td>82100</td>
<td>Courthouse Expansion</td>
<td>1,935,297</td>
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**Capital Project - Prison Expansion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>3,671</th>
<th>3,671</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42001</td>
<td>Interest On Investment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>86270</td>
<td>Prison Annex</td>
<td>941,078</td>
<td>3,671</td>
<td>944,749</td>
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**Capital Project - Gracedale Renovations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>1,627</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42002</td>
<td>Interest On Investment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85310</td>
<td>Main Steam Line</td>
<td>59,949</td>
<td>1,627</td>
<td>61,576</td>
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</table>

**Capital Project - County Park Preservation**
Mrs. McHale asked if there were any questions or comments from the public regarding this ordinance. There were no respondents.

Mrs. McHale asked if there were any questions or comments from the members of County Council.

Mr. Cusick stated at the Finance Committee meeting, he questioned why $103,603 was being added to the Courthouse for capital projects and at that time, no specific reason was given as to why and how that dollar amount was reached and asked if an answer could now be provided.

Mr. Steve DeSalva, Director of Public Works, advised he did provide a general explanation and mentioned that he was going to do a wrap up on all the projects. He further advised there was additional work being done by the engineers for the final inspection, as well as the checking of the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning system and the fire suppression system.
Mr. DeSalva stated there was approximately $600,000 remaining for the Courthouse project and even though they were getting down to the final steps of this project, there were still some items, i.e., electrical systems, elevators and security systems to get squared away. He further stated he had to add encumbrances for Ricci Green Engineering because there were certain problems only they could address.

As there were no further questions or comments, Mrs. McHale called for the vote.


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

Bachmann Publick House

Mr. Angle asked if there was any new information regarding the Bachmann Publick House.

Mr. Dowd advised he planned to hold an Economic Development Committee meeting to discuss this issue just before the next County Council meeting. He further advised the General Purpose Authority was having a meeting on Wednesday, April 23, 2008, at 9:00 a.m. to vote on whether to take it over.

Gracedale Window Project

In response to Mr. McClure’s question regarding the Gracedale windows, Mr. DeSalva stated the bids came in today and there were three bidders that were very close together on their costs, noting the base bids were from $3.6 – $3.7 million. He further stated they still had to look at the bid tabulations and get the final costs. He indicated they planned to have a recommendation next week.
In answer to Mrs. McHale’s question, Mr. DeSalva advised they had approximately $2.8 million in the budget for this project.

Archives Building

Mr. John Stoffa, County Executive, agreed with Mrs. Neiper’s suggestion to hold a meeting of the Archives Committee to compare the proposed plan to move it to the parking garage with the original plan to see what was the best way to proceed.

Purchasing Manager Position

Mrs. Ferraro questioned whether the position of Purchasing Manager had been filled or if they were interviewing for it.

Mrs. Connie Sutton-Falk, Director of Human Resources, stated there were 73 applicants for the job. She further stated her department had to score these applicants and then send the names of the top three to the department head for interviewing. She noted the scoring process should take about two weeks because of the number of applicants.

Introduction of the ArtsQuest/Lehigh Valley Public Telecommunications Corporation Hotel Tax Ordinance

Mrs. McHale advised this ordinance was being introduced by herself and Mr. Dowd. She further advised the public hearing, debate and possible vote would be held at the May 1, 2008 County Council meeting.
AN ORDINANCE OF NORTHAMPTON COUNTY COUNCIL PURSUANT TO
THE HOTEL ROOM RENTAL TAX ACT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF
PENNSYLVANIA (16 P.S. 1770, ET SEQ.) AND THE TOURIST
PROMOTION LAW OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA (73
P.S. 401, ET SEQ.) AND ORDINANCE NUMBERS 359 OF 2000
AND 440 OF 2005 DETERMINING THAT ARTSQUEST, A NOT-FOR-
PROFIT CORPORATION WITHIN NORTHAMPTON COUNTY AND
LEHIGH VALLEY PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION,
ALSO A NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION WITHIN NORTHAMPTON
COUNTY ENGAGE IN TOURISM RELATED ACTIVITIES THAT
BENEFIT NORTHAMPTON COUNTY AND THEREFORE DIRECTING A
PORTION OF THE NORTHAMPTON COUNTY ANNUAL ALLOCATION OF
12.5% OF THE REVENUE GENERATED BY THE HOTEL ROOM
RENTAL TAX ACT AND NORTHAMPTON COUNTY ORDINANCES 359
OF 2000 AND 440 OF 2005 TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO ARTSQUEST
AND LEHIGH VALLEY PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS
CORPORATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS ORDINANCE

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Hotel Room Rental Tax Act P.L. 307
of 2000, 16 P.S. Section 13211, et seq., now 16 P.S. 1770, et
seq. the County of Northampton, a Third Class County, enacted
Ordinance No. 359 of 2000, effective October 8, 2000 and
Ordinance No. 440 of 2005, effective October 2, 2005; and,

WHEREAS, Act 12 of 2005, enacted by the Pennsylvania
General Assembly and approved by the Governor effective sixty
(60) days from July 5, 2005 authorizes by Section 1770.8 (16
P.S. 1770.8) the County of Northampton to impose a Hotel Room
Rental Tax by Ordinance at the rate of four (4%) percent and
provides for the distribution of such tax monies; and,

WHEREAS, Ordinance No. 359 of 2000 established the Hotel
Room Rental Tax and thereafter Ordinance No. 440 of 2005
effective October 2, 2005 increased the Hotel Room Rental Tax
Act from 3.5% to 4% and restructured the distribution of the tax
collected for Northampton County purposes to its current level
as follows:

(a) 68.75% to the Northampton County Regional Tourist
Promotion Agency (Lehigh Valley Convention and Visitor Bureau,
Inc. "LVCVB").

(b) 18.75% to be retained by Northampton County for
further development of tourism facilities; community development initiatives, which will enhance regional tourism; and

(c) 12.5% for future development of facilities and for marketing purposes within Northampton County to enhance regional tourism.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 1770.8 of the Hotel Room Rental Tax Act pertaining to counties of the Third Class, Northampton County has retained 12.5% of the funds collected in Northampton County for the further development of facilities and for marketing purposes within Northampton County to enhance regional tourism; and,

WHEREAS, Northampton County Council has determined that ArtsQuest and Lehigh Valley Public Telecommunications Corporation are not-for-profit corporations whose activities enhance regional tourism and are therefore qualified to receive revenues generated by the Hotel Room Rental Tax Act.

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

1. The foregoing "whereas" provisions are incorporated as though set forth in their entirety.

2. All the definitions and provisions of the Hotel Room Rental Tax Act of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (16 P.S. 1770, et seq.) as amended are incorporated in their entirety.


4. Northampton County Council hereby designates its 12.5% of revenues received under Ordinance No. 440 of 2005 to be distributed on an annual basis to ArtsQuest and Lehigh Valley Public Telecommunications Corporation as follows:

   a. Fifty percent (50%) shall be allocated to ArtsQuest, until a total of one million dollars ($1,000,000) is reached. Thereafter the funding
shall cease.

b. Fifty percent (50%) shall be allocated to Lehigh Valley Public Telecommunications Corporation, until a total of one million dollars ($1,000,000) is reached. Thereafter the funding shall cease.

c. It shall be expressly understood that the allocation of funding outlined in paragraphs 4.a. and 4.b. shall be subject to an annual review by County Council during the annual Northampton County budget review process.

d. The Northampton County Council hereby requires as a condition of the aforementioned grant funding that ArtsQuest and Lehigh Valley Public Telecommunications Corporation shall each provide the Northampton County Council and the County Executive with a written annual report which shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the revenues received from the Northampton County hotel tax, the manner in which those revenues were used, and a status report on the respective projects.

5. This Ordinance shall be administrated by the Northampton County Executive subject to the powers of the Northampton County Council under Section 1.2-202 of the Northampton County Home Rule Charter (348 Pa. Code 1.2-202(1)) to adopt and repeal Ordinances as well as under its other powers and duties.

6. The Controller of Northampton County shall annually audit the funds distributed to assure that they are committed and expended for the enhancement of regional tourism by the beneficiaries ArtsQuest and Lehigh Valley Public Telecommunications Corporation for the benefit of Northampton County.

7. Any Ordinance or any part of any other ordinance conflicting with the provisions of this Ordinance is hereby repealed.
Consideration of the “Cover the Uninsured Week” Resolution

Mrs. McHale stated Mrs. Neiper asked to present a resolution regarding the declaration of “Cover the Uninsured Week” in Northampton County.

Mrs. Neiper introduced the following resolution:

R. 27-2008  

WHEREAS, 800,000 Pennsylvanians—including 133,000 children—do not have health coverage; and

WHEREAS, more than eight out of ten people who are uninsured are in working families; and

WHEREAS, not having health insurance means minor illnesses can become major ones because care is delayed; and

WHEREAS, the lack of coverage can allow one serious ailment or accident to wipe out a family's bank account; and

WHEREAS, every year more Pennsylvanians join the ranks of the uninsured – faced with the reality that uninsured people live sicker and die younger than those who are covered; and

NOW, THEREFORE, in order to promote awareness of the vast number of Pennsylvanians that do not have health coverage, and to help ensure that every child in Pennsylvania has health insurance,

We hereby declare April 27!May 3, 2008

COVER THE UNINSURED WEEK

in

THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON, PENNSYLVANIA

In response to Mr. Grube’s question as to whether she would continue to accept resolutions presented the day of a meeting, Mrs. McHale advised there was a time restriction involved and that was the reason she was allowing this resolution to be presented.
As there were no further questions or comments, Mrs. McHale called for the vote.


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

**Artsquest**

In answer to Mr. Angle’s question, Mr. Zito stated this ordinance would not obligate the County to provide these funds, noting they would be subject to the annual budget process and appeal powers.

In response to Mr. McClure’s question, Mr. Zito advised this ordinance provided the ability for them to receive funding on an annual basis and it was subject to the discretion of County Council as the governing body and also to the appeal powers of government.

**Chief Registrar’s Resignation**

Mr. Dertinger stated he learned today there was a press conference announcing the resignation of Ms. Deborah DePaul, Chief Registrar, and that the Administration was getting ready to assemble a committee to find a replacement.

Mr. Karl Logenbach, Northampton County Solicitor, advised the matter was brought to his attention earlier today and he was reviewing the law to determine the appropriate procedure as to the manner and method of selection.

In answer to Mrs. McHale’s question, Mr. John Conklin, Director of Administration, stated he had a discussion with Ms. DePaul and it was her concern that information would be revealed during the normal Career Service process. Therefore, she asked if a meeting could be set up with the media today and she went home to prepare. He noted, however, Ms. DePaul did not return for the press conference so he announced her resignation without going into any detail and was very positive about her tenure
Mr. McClure advised his concern was with the fact the State of Pennsylvania was facing one of its biggest primary elections next week.

In response to Mr. Angle’s question, Mr. Conklin stated Ms. DePaul’s resignation would be effective May 2, 2008, therefore, this primary would not be an issue.

Human Services Committee Report

Mrs. Neiper advised on April 4, 2008, a Legislative Breakfast was held and it was well attended. She further advised she just wanted to let everyone know there would be no Cost of Living Adjustments coming from the State for Area Agency on Aging, Children, Youth and Families, Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Early Intervention, Drug and Alcohol or Gracedale. Furthermore, there was an 18% decline in funding for the Human Services Development Fund and HealthChoices was facing a deficit of $500,000 to $750,000 for this fiscal year. She indicated to continue services at the 2006/2007 level, the additional money required by the Area Agency on Aging was $350,000, by Children, Youth and Families was $4.5 million, by Mental Health was $521,000 and by Drug and Alcohol was $332,000. She further indicated they were not asking for these funds, but just wanted everyone to be aware of the situation. Additionally, Mental Retardation was facing dramatic regulatory changes which would impact service delivery.

Mrs. Neiper stated she held this Legislative Breakfast to let our State leaders know where the money was going, where it was short and that the County was being forced to cut services. She further stated she hoped it made an impact so when they were discussing the State budget, they would have a better idea of the dire straits in the County was in.

Mrs. Neiper advised she and Mr. Ross Marcus, Director of Human Services, would be going to Harrisburg on May 6, 2008, to attend the County Commissioners of Pennsylvania Human Services Legislative Day.
Mr. Angle stated he wanted to commend Mrs. Neiper for doing such a great job and asked what she felt the end result would be if nothing changed.

Mrs. Neiper informed him the County would have to cut services.

**Finance Committee Report**

Mr. Angle advised he was planning to hold a Finance Committee meeting to discuss the County Executive’s parking garage proposal.

**Personnel Committee Report**

Mr. Cusick stated the Personnel Committee met yesterday where they were enlightened as to the reason for this year’s improvement in the overtime budget. He further stated they also discussed the telecommuting policy that was recently implemented.

Mr. Cusick advised another issue that was discussed was the updating of Information Technology’s software to better integrate payroll, budgeting and finance. He further advised Information Technology planned to appear before County Council in the fall with a proposal.

**Wind Gap Project**

In answer to Mr. Angle’s question, Mr. Zito stated Mrs. McHale had received a letter from the Borough of Wind Gap Solicitor asking for an Executive Session to present information to County Council. He further stated as Mr. Logenbach was in charge of this litigation, an Executive Session could not be convened unless the County Executive and County Solicitor were present. He noted an Executive Session was scheduled for the next County Council meeting.

**Council Solicitor's Report**
Mr. Zito provided a copy of his Solicitor’s Report for this meeting (see Attachment #1).

Adjournment

Mr. Dowd made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. McClure seconded the motion.

The motion passed by acclamation.

Frank E. Flisser