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

Prayer

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Dertinger led County Council in the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. McClure made the following motion:

Be It Moved By the Northampton County Council that the minutes of the February 7, 2008 meeting shall be approved.

Mrs. Neiper seconded the motion.

The motion was adopted by voice acclamation.

Courtesy of the Floor

Ms. Sherry Darr, 3024 Woodland Trail, Bangor, PA - stated she supported making the Controller’s position full time and putting it on the ballot for the voters to decide. She further stated she also supported the elected officials salary ordinance.

Confirmation of Appointments
Mrs. McHale advised the Personnel Committee met on February 20, 2008, to consider the County Executive’s appointments and re-appointments to the Conservation District, the Higher Education Authority, the Hospital Authority, the Housing Authority, the Lehigh Valley Workforce Investment Board, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, the Airport Authority, the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority, the Personnel Appeals Board and the Retirement Board.

Mr. Cusick introduced the following:

R. 12-2008  RESOLVED, by the Northampton County Council that the following individuals shall be confirmed in their appointments/re-appointments as indicated hereafter:

AIRPORT AUTHORITY  Terms to Expire: 12/31/12

Appointments:
Lawrence D. Sheridan  
3650 Walt Whitman Lane  
Bethlehem, PA 18017-1554

Marc A. Troutman  
421 Paxinosa Avenue  
Easton, PA 18042

Re-Appointment:  
Term to Expire: 12/31/09
Joseph F. Leeson, Jr.  
PO Box 1426  
Bethlehem, PA 18016-1426

CONSERVATION DISTRICT  Terms to Expire: 12/31/11

Appointment:
Charles A. Graver  
820 South Delps Road  
Bath, PA 18014

Re-appointment:
Theodore J. Veresink  
81 Jonathan Drive  
Easton, PA 18045
HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY  Term to Expire: 12/31/11

Appointment:
Peter A. Gray
1005 Zucksville Road
Easton, PA 18040

Re-appointments:
Terms to Expire: 12/31/12
Shawn M. Donahue
1948 Quarter Mile Road
Bethlehem, PA 18015-5138

Shawn K. Langen
310 Cattell Street
Easton, PA 18042

HOSPITAL AUTHORITY  Term to Expire: 12/31/11

Appointment:
Peter A. Gray
1005 Zucksville Road
Easton, PA 18040

Re-appointments:
Terms to Expire: 12/31/09
Shawn M. Donahue
1948 Quarter Mile Road
Bethlehem, PA 18015-5138

J. Michael Dowd
25 Chestnut Ridge Circle
Easton, PA 18042

Shawn K. Langen
310 Cattell Street
Easton, PA 18042

HOUSING AUTHORITY  Term to Expire: 2/9/13

Re-appointment
Lori G. Sywensky  
750 Williams Avenue  
Walnutport, PA 18088

LEHIGH AND NORTHAMPTON TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
Term to Expire: 3/2/13

Appointment:  
Cordelia E. Miller  
2567 Lynnhurst Drive  
Bethlehem, PA 18017

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION  
Term to Expire: 12/31/08

Appointment:  
Elected Official  
Thomas J. Nolan  
3910 Kipton Court  
Bethlehem, PA 18020

LEHIGH VALLEY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD  
Terms to Expire: 12/31/10

Appointment:  
Phillip B. Mitman  
643 Ferry Street  
Easton, PA 18042

Re-appointment:  
Sharon J. Scheirer, SPHR  
307 W. Grant Street  
Easton, PA 18042

PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD  
Term to Expire: 2/3/09

Appointments:  
Eugene R. Auman, SPHR  
518 East Main Street  
Bath, PA 18014
William Falstich
5878 Alexander Road
Bethlehem, PA 18017

Terms to Expire: 2/3/10

Ralph D. Stampone
47 West Third Street
Wind Gap, PA 18091

Re-appointments:
Lynn Johnson
4668 Steuben Road
Bethlehem, PA 18020

David Sanders
69 East Geopp Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

Term to Expire: 2/3/09

RETIREMENT BOARD
Terms to Expire: 12/31/09

Appointment:
Employee Representative
John R. Mehler
2741 Stephens Street
Easton, PA 18045

Re-appointment:
Retiree Representative
Gerald E. Seyfried
4431 Gable Drive
Bethlehem, PA 18020

Mr. Cusick stated at the meeting, a concern arose with regard to the appointees of the Personnel Appeals Board, therefore, he would like to vote on all the other appointments/re-appointments and then vote on each of the Personnel Appeals Board appointments/re-appointments separately.

Mr. Dertinger advised he would have a hard time voting for these appointments/re-appointments as a balance was required on most of these boards. He further advised he had asked for a list of the individuals serving on all the authorities, boards and commissions, noting the list he received was not up to date.

Mrs. McHale stated this issue was discussed at the meeting and the Administration indicated they would be providing County
Council with a correct and updated document.

Mr. Cusick advised they also requested this information be posted on the County website so it was readily available to the public.

Mr. Dertinger made a motion to table these appointments/re-appointments until such time as an updated listing was provided.

Mr. McClure seconded the motion.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote on the motion.

The vote: Dertinger, “yes”; McClure, “yes”; Ferraro, “no”; McHale, “no”; Neiper, “yes because she had also previously asked for an updated list because this was a concern of hers as well”; Angle, “no” and Cusick, “no”.

The motion failed by a vote of 4-3.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote on all the appointments/re-appointments except the Personnel Appeals Board.


The appointments/re-appointments of the resolution for all but the Personnel Appeals Board were adopted by a vote of 6-1.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote on the appointments/re-appointments for the Personnel Appeals Board.

Mr. Cusick stated at the meeting, it was determined that these appointments/re-appointments should be voted on individually.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote on the appointment of Mr. Eugene Auman.


This appointment was adopted by a vote of 4-3.
Mr. Dertinger advised this was one of the most important boards for the County and after reviewing the resumes of the appointees and re-appointees which revealed they were fine individuals, but their labor experience was mostly from an administrative side.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote on the appointment of Mr. William Falstich.


This appointment was adopted by a vote 4-3.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote on the appointment of Mr. Ralph Stampone.


This appointment was adopted by a vote of 4-3.

Mrs. Neiper stated at yesterday’s meeting an accusation was made that this was a bipartisan issue and she just wanted to clarify it was not because the person she would have liked to have seen re-appointed was a democrat.

Mr. Angle advised this great country was founded on people who wanted to be involved and volunteered and he wanted to thank all those who came out tonight, as well as those who did not, because the rest of this was something of another world.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote on the re-appointment of Ms. Lynn Johnson.


This re-appointment was adopted by a vote of 7-0.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote on the re-appointment of
Mr. David Sanders.


This re-appointment was adopted by a vote of 7-0.

Based on the voting, the resolution, in its entirety, was adopted.

Consideration of the Elected Officials Salary Ordinance

Mrs. McHale stated the elected officials salary ordinance was introduced by Mr. Cusick and Mrs. Neiper at the meeting held January 17, 2008. The public hearing on the ordinance was held at the February 7, 2008 County Council meeting after which time it was tabled until such time as all County Council members would be in attendance and would be available to vote on this ordinance.

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR COMPENSATION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON

WHEREAS, Northampton County Home Rule Charter Section 106. Compensation provides that, “The County Council shall have the power by ordinance to set the salary of each elected official. No ordinance shall increase or decrease the salary of an elected official during his term of office. No ordinance which increases or decreases the salary of an elected official shall take effect less than one (1) year after its date of enactment.”

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

I. Effective January 1, 2012, the County Controller of the County of Northampton shall be compensated on a per annum basis in the amount of fifty thousand dollars ($50,000.00).

II. Effective January 1, 2010, the County Executive of the County of Northampton shall be compensated on a per annum basis in the amount of eighty-five thousand dollars ($85,000.00).
III. Effective January 1, 2010, the members of the Northampton County Council shall be compensated on a per annum basis in the amount of nine thousand five hundred dollars ($9,500.00). The President of County Council shall receive an additional five hundred dollars ($500.00) per annum as compensation for his/her responsibilities as presiding officer.

IT IS FURTHER ORDAINED AND ENACTED, that the Northampton County Council shall review the salaries of all Northampton County Elected Officials within four years of the effective date of this ordinance.

Mr. Angle advised he would like this ordinance to remain tabled as there was still not a full complement of County Council members present.

Mrs. McHale stated if there were no objections, the ordinance would not be removed from the table. There were no objections.

Public Hearing on the Ordinance Providing for an Amendment to the Northampton County Home Rule Charter, Article IV, to Provide for the Full Time Status of the Controller of the County of Northampton

Mrs. McHale advised the ordinance providing for the full-time status of the County Controller was introduced by Messrs. McClure and Dertinger at the meeting held February 7, 2008.

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR AN AMENDMENT TO THE NORTHAMPTON COUNTY HOME RULE CHARTER, ARTICLE IV, TO PROVIDE FOR THE FULL TIME STATUS OF THE CONTROLLER OF THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON, EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED, by the Northampton County Council that:

SECTION I - PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE NORTHAMPTON COUNTY HOME RULE CHARTER

A. A proposed amendment to the Northampton County Home Rule Charter shall be prepared for presentation as a referendum question at the November 4, 2008 General
Election, said referendum question shall be prepared and acted upon in accordance with the Northampton County Home Rule Charter, Article XI, and all applicable laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

B. The proposed question is:

"Shall the electorate of Northampton County approve a change in the Northampton County Home Rule Charter Article IV, Controller, so as to provide for the full-time status of the Controller of the County of Northampton, Easton, Pennsylvania, commencing with the term of office which begins January 2012. Article IV Controller Section 401. Titles and Status shall be amended so as to add the following section:

During his term of office the County Controller shall devote full time to the office, and shall not actively engage in any other business or occupation. The salary of the full-time County Controller shall be established by the Northampton County Council in accordance with the Northampton County Home Rule Charter.

SECTION II – EFFECTIVE DATE

A. This ordinance shall become effective thirty days after the date of enactment.

Mrs. McHale asked if there were any questions or comments from the public. There were no respondents.

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

Mr. Cusick stated he felt this was a concept that was long overdue and asked everyone to vote for this in November as well.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote on the ordinance.


The ordinance was adopted by a vote of 7-0.
Consideration of the Department of Corrections Reorganization Plan

Mrs. McHale advised at the Personnel Committee, the following positions were reviewed as part of the reorganization plan for the Department of Corrections.

Mr. Cusick stated at the meeting, Mr. Todd Buskirk, CCF Director, Department of Corrections, gave an excellent presentation and the numbers he presented spoke for themselves and these positions were important to their plan.

Mr. Cusick then introduced the following resolutions:

R. 13-2008  **RESOLVED,** by the Northampton County Council that three (3) full time Corrections Supervisor (Lieutenant) positions, pay grade CS-25, salary range $39,479 to $56,143, be created in the Department of Corrections, effective February 21, 2008.

R. 14-2008  **RESOLVED,** by the Northampton County Council that one (1) full time Deputy Warden of Operations position, pay grade CS-31, salary range $52,037 to $74,002, be created in the Department of Corrections, effective February 21, 2008.

Mrs. McHale asked if there were any questions or comments.

Mr. Angle advised he intended to support these resolutions as he felt they were necessary for the safety of the prison. However, he commented when Mr. John Stoffa, County Executive, entered office he indicated he would not create any jobs, but as since created a great number of jobs.

Mr. Stoffa stated these positions were necessary due to the increase in the prison population. He further stated he did not state he would not create any new jobs, but that his biggest regret was he could not keep down the number due to the growth of government.

In response to Mr. Dertinger’s question, Mr. Buskirk advised they have been moving forward to fill the positions which were previously created.
Mr. McClure stated he did not think the Administration was concerned about creating new jobs through the year as they were sitting on $60 million surplus. He further stated although these positions were valuable, he was not going to support them or any new positions this year because he did not want to see a tax increase.

Mrs. McHale agreed there was a considerable increase in the fund balance, but it should be kept in mind that seven or eight million of that was due to the health care savings.

Mr. Cusick advised it was also indicated during the meeting that Mr. Buskirk did plan to appear before County Council again for more positions.

Mr. Angle stated he agreed to a point with Mr. McClure with regard to new jobs, however, the reality was the prison population had grown and the presentation was right on the money because you cannot have employees without supervisors. He further stated the Finance Committee was on top of the budget reserve and he planned to address that issue at a future meeting.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote.


The resolutions were adopted by a vote of 6-1.

Consideration of Human Services Personnel Requests:

Mrs. McHale advised at the Personnel Committee meeting, the Human Services personnel requests for the Area Agency on Aging and Gracedale were considered.

Mr. Cusick introduced the following resolutions:

R. 15-2008 **RESOLVED**, by the Northampton County Council that four (4) contracted part-time on-call workers shall be converted to four (4) part-time Aging Care Manager II positions (1.00FTE), pay grade PS-35, salary range $16.3684/hour to $25.9596/hour, in the Area Agency on Aging Division of the
Department of Human Services, effective February 21, 2008.

R. 16-2008  RESOLVED, by the Northampton County Council that one (1) full time Nurse II position, pay grade CS-29, salary range $47,460 to $67,494, be created in the Gracedale Division of the Department of Human Services, effective February 21, 2008.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that two (2) part-time Nurse II (1 FTE) positions shall be eliminated as a result of the creation of the one (1) full time Nurse II position, effective February 21, 2008.

Mrs. McHale asked if there were any questions or comments. There were no respondents.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote.


The resolutions were adopted by a vote of 7-0.

Consideration of the Deputy Director of Administration Position

Mrs. McHale stated at the Personnel Committee meeting, the Deputy Director of Administration position request was also considered.

Mr. McClure advised it was his understanding that at this level of employment at the County, it was not incumbent upon the County Executive to bring this matter to County Council.

Mr. Angle agreed, indicating it was just being done as a courtesy.

Mr. Cusick introduced the following resolution:

RESOLVED, By the Northampton County Council that Thomas C. Harp shall be confirmed in his appointment as Deputy Director of Administration, at pay grade CS-24, salary range $37,701 - $53,616, Step G $41,171, effective February 21, 2008.
Mr. Cusick stated Mr. Harp was present at yesterday’s meeting and he felt he brought an outstanding background in Human Services.

Mrs. McHale asked if there were any questions or comments.

In answer to Mr. Dertinger’s comment, Mr. Angle advised Mr. Stoffa indicated yesterday he was filling this position now because he felt he needed the manpower.

Mr. Dertinger stated he was just wondering why this was not brought up during the budget process and was being presented at this time.

Mr. Angle advised the position was in the budget and Mr. Stoffa was just filling it now which he was entitled to do.

Mr. Stoffa added it was being filled now because of the workload.

Mr. Dertinger stated he did not begrudge the filling of this position, but indicated if Mr. Stoffa did not want to answer his questions then perhaps he should not have extended this courtesy.

Mr. McClure advised he had a philosophical problem with even the courtesy that the County Executive was extending County Council for their opinion as to a position that he did not need their approval to fill. He then asked a parliamentary question as to whether it would be appropriate for him to abstain from this vote because he felt the potentiality existed here that the County Executive was by custom giving up some of his power that was afforded him by the Home Rule Charter.

Mr. Stoffa stated he was withdrawing this item from the agenda.

Consideration of the County Depository Resolution

Mrs. McHale advised from time to time, County Council was
asked to add financial institutions to the list of eligible depositories of County funds. She further advised the Finance Committee met on February 20, 2008 to consider this matter.

Mr. Angle introduced the following resolution:

R. 17-2008  RESOLVED, by the Northampton County Council that the following shall constitute the current and updated listing of County Authorized Depositories (sections marked with bold and underlining have been added, sections marked with strikeout have been deleted), effective this 21st day of February 2008:

1. Adjustable Rate Mortgages
2. Bank of America
3. Bank of New York
4. Citizens Bank of Rhode Island
5. Commerce Bank
6. FMB Trust
7. First Commonwealth Federal Credit Union
8. First Star Savings Bank
9. Firstrust Bank
10. Fulton Financial Advisors
11. Harleysville National Bank
12. JP Morgan Chase Bank
14. Lafayette Ambassador Bank
15. M & T Bank
16. Marshall BankFirst
17. Mellon Bank
18. National Penn Bank
19. Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust (PLGIT)
20. PNC Bank
21. Sovereign Bank
22. Susquehanna Patriot Bank
23. The Bankcorp Bank
24. The Trust Company of the Lehigh Valley
25. U S Bank
26. Wachovia Bank

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any resolution, or any part thereof, conflicting with the provisions of this resolution, is
hereby repealed insofar as the same affects this resolution or is inconsistent with this resolution.

Mrs. McHale asked if there were any questions or comments. There were no respondents.

Mrs. McHale called for the vote.


The resolution was adopted by a vote of 7-0.

Deputy Director of Administration Position

Mr. Angle remarked he wanted to thank the County Executive for keeping County Council in the loop because everyone here was supposed to do the people’s business and work together.

Homeless Shelters/Affordable Housing Organizations

Mr. Cusick stated an issue that had been in the newspapers recently was whether or not the local municipalities should make contributions from their tax dollars to either homeless shelters or affordable housing organizations. He further stated he felt this was an issue the Human Services Committee should be reviewing at one of their meetings. Additionally, he felt representatives from the municipalities should be invited to attend such a meeting.

Bachmann House

In answer to Mr. Angle’s question, Mr. Stoffa advised there were some new developments with regard to the Bachmann House and he planned to have a presentation for County Council in March.

Gambling Committee Report
Mrs. Ferraro stated at their meeting, it was noted an agreement was still in the works among the priority municipalities. She further stated an authority had to be chosen to be in charge of the municipal grants, indicating it was possible it would be the General Purpose Authority, but some details still had to be worked out. She noted at their next meeting they intended to discuss gambling addiction, which she announced the Department of Human Services was already exploring.

Finance Committee Report

Mr. Angle advised at yesterday’s meeting, Mr. Vic Mazziotti, Director of Fiscal Affairs, provided an update on the Swaption transaction. He pointed out if the Swaption was exercised today, there would be an approximate $6.5 million deficit.

Mr. Angle stated another issue they discussed was campaign finance reform noting the Supreme Court had ruled that Home Rule Charter Counties could pass regulations involving how much money could be spent in County races. He further stated the consensus was that might not be a bad idea.

Human Services Committee Report

Ms. Neiper advised their meeting was held on February 18, 2008, and Mr. Kevin Dolan, Director of the Division of Children, Youth and Families, was present, along with various members of his staff, to provide a quick overview of the different areas of the Division of Children, Youth and Families. She further advised one of the issues he did mention was the budget, noting with the decrease in funding from the Federal and State governments, they would soon be experiencing budgetary difficulties.

Ms. Neiper stated she, along with Mr. Ross Marcus, Director of Human Services, was trying to arrange a Legislative Breakfast for the local State Senators and Representatives to discuss budget issues as they pertain to Human Services. She further stated when a date had been established, she would notify the members of County Council.
Council Solicitor's Report

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

Adjournment

Mr. McClure made a motion to adjourn.

Mrs. Neiper seconded the motion.

The motion passed by acclamation.

Frank E. Flisser