The 2010 organizational meeting of the Northampton County Council was held on the above date with the following present: Ann McHale, President; J. Michael Dowd, Vice President; Ron Angle; John Cusick; Thomas H. Dietrich; Margaret Ferraro; Bruce A. Gilbert; Lamont G. McClure, Jr.; Barbara A. Thierry; Anthony J. Martino, 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. McHale led County Council in the pledge of allegiance.

Courtesy of the Floor

As no one signed up to speak under Courtesy of the Floor, Mrs. McHale asked if there was anyone who had any questions or comments. There were no respondents.

President’s Message

Mrs. McHale stated her term as the first female President of Northampton County Council was coming to a close and she wanted to thank her veteran colleagues for giving her the honor to serve as President. She further stated she further wanted to express her appreciation for the cooperation they have given her. She noted the path had not been an easy one at times, but she believed the positive challenges outweighed the negative ones. She further noted she wanted to give a sincere thanks to the office staff for all their work in making her job easier.

Selection of County Council Officers
President of County Council

Mrs. McHale asked for nominations for the position of President of County Council.

Mr. Cusick advised he would like to nominate Mrs. Ferraro for the office of President of County Council.

Mrs. McHale seconded the nomination.

Mrs. McHale asked if there were any other nominations.

Mr. Gilbert stated he would like to nominate Mr. Angle.

Mr. Dowd seconded the nomination.

As there were no other nominations for President, Mrs. McHale called for the vote.

Before the vote was taken, Mrs. McHale asked if the two nominees had to abstain from voting as there was a financial benefit attached to this position.

Mr. McClure advised he always disagreed with that decision because he did not think a nominee would be in violation of the Home Rule Charter or the Pennsylvania Ethics Act.

Mrs. McHale stated a few years ago, the Solicitor for County Council had issued an opinion that if a person were to gain financially from a vote, they should abstain.

Mr. Angle advised he concurred with Mr. McClure, noting he did not believe there was any law in the State of Pennsylvania that would bar someone from voting for themselves. However, he did not intend to vote for himself.

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


By a vote of 4-3, Mr. Angle was elected President of County
Mrs. McHale asked if there were any nominations for the position of Vice-President of County Council.

Mr. Angle stated he would like to nominate Mr. Cusick for the office of Vice-President.

Mr. Dietrich seconded the nomination.

As there were no other nominations, Mrs. McHale called for the vote.


By a vote of 9-0, Mr. Cusick was elected Vice-President of County Council.

Mrs. McHale asked if there were any nominations for the position of County Council Solicitor.

Mr. McClure advised he was making this nomination in acknowledgment of the excellent job Mr. Martino did as County Council’s Solicitor.

Mr. McClure then nominated Mr. Martino for the office of County Council Solicitor.

Mrs. McHale seconded the nomination.

Ms. Thierry stated she would like to nominate Mr. Philip Lauer.

Mr. Dietrich seconded the nomination.

Mrs. Ferraro advised she would like to nominate Mr. Brian Monahan.
As there was no second, this nomination failed.

As there were no further nominations, Mrs. McHale called for the vote.


By a vote of 5-4, Mr. Lauer was selected as the Solicitor for County Council.

New President’s Message

Mr. Angle thanked Mrs. McHale and Mr. Martino for their services as they both did an outstanding job.

Lehigh Valley Health Department

Mr. Angle advised there was a meeting scheduled next Monday with Lehigh County to discuss the Lehigh Valley Health Department. He further advised Mr. Cusick had planned to introduce a resolution on Thursday night to remove Northampton County from any further participation with regard to the Lehigh Valley Health Department, but has since changed his mind.

Mr. Angle stated he wanted to know if everyone still wanted to meet with the representatives of Lehigh County, noting they were probably wondering where Northampton County was in the matter because of discussions that have been held.

Mr. Angle advised Northampton County’s money for this endeavor was supposed to come from the gaming money, but that had been put to a better use, namely the lowering of the tax increase.

Mr. Cusick stated he did not think it was necessary to attend the meeting if there was not a majority among the members of County Council to move ahead with this endeavor, but after
speaking with some of his colleagues, the indication was they wanted to see the study completed. Therefore, he decided to let Northampton County’s participation continue and he would review the results once they were released.

Mr. Cusick advised he shared Mr. Angle’s concern about the lack of financial wherewith all to fulfill the County’s obligation and unless there was some financial change from last year’s budget to this year’s, he was highly skeptical the County would be able to move ahead.

Mrs. Ferraro stated twenty years ago when she was on County Council, one of the issues was the establishment of a County health department. She further stated the money, which was not taxpayers’ money, was available for the study and she felt the County would be very foolish to not move forward to see the results of the study. She noted there was a group of dedicated and hardworking individuals working on this study and the County should do everything it could to assist them to bring it to fruition.

Mrs. McHale advised the Health Commission was required to meet once a year under Act 32. She further advised they were meeting that requirement so that the Board of Health could continue to work toward getting the plan and budget in place to make a presentation to County Council. Therefore, she felt it was important that all members of County Council attend the meeting.

Mr. Dowd stated he had been a supporter of this endeavor, but he was also concerned about the financial issue. However, he agreed that it would not be wise to cut short the study and evaluation.

Mr. Flisser advised five members of County Council had to be present for a quorum so he asked who would be attending the meeting.

Mr. Dowd, Mr. Gilbert, Mrs. McHale, Mrs. Ferraro, Mr. Cusick and Mr. Angle indicated they would be attending.

Committee Formation
Mr. Angle asked the members of County Council to let him know which committee they preferred to be on and he would try to accommodate everyone as best he could.

Mr. Angle stated he hoped this year County Council could work very closely with the County Executive because there were a lot of important issues that have to be resolved.

Mr. Angle advised he planned to give his best effort to being the kind of President everyone would like him to be. He further advised he also planned to hold regular meetings with the County Executive so everyone could be on the same page on how to address the problems facing the citizens of Northampton County.

Adjournment

Mrs. McHale made a motion to adjourn.

The motion passed by acclamation.