A regular meeting of the Northampton County Council was held on the above date with the following present: Ron Angle, President; John Cusick, Vice President; Thomas H. Dietrich; J. Michael Dowd; Margaret Ferraro; Bruce A. Gilbert; Lamont G. McClure, Jr.; Ann McHale; Barbara A. Thierry; Philip D. Lauer, 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

A member of the audience led County Council in the pledge of allegiance.

Courtesy of the Floor

Mr. Jerry Green, 53 East Lehigh Street, Bethlehem, PA - advised he was President of the United Steelworkers Union, Local 2599, and was present as a result of a Collective Bargaining session they engaged in with Northampton County. He further advised the session was held in November of 2008 to negotiate a contract that would expire on December 31, 2008. He noted they had negotiated in good faith, but an agreement could not be reached. However, the Union members agreed to work without a contract and an agreement was reached in November 2009.

Mr. Green stated the Union had always had a good relationship with Northampton County and they would like to maintain it. He further stated the agreement was taken back to their membership for ratification and it was overwhelmingly approved.

Mr. Green advised when he brought it back to the County, he was informed the Administration would not accept the new agreement because they felt it was too expensive.
Mr. Green stated on May 6, 2009, a State mediator was brought in to assist in the bargaining. He further stated they eventually came to an agreement whereby the nurses and social workers would get 4.9% wage increase each year for four years, noting they gave up certain things to get to that number. He indicated there were other contracts approved that showed their request was not out of line. He further indicated they had 50 nurses and social workers that serviced the residents at Gracedale and they did a terrific job.

Mr. Green advised he was bringing this to the members of County Council hoping they could ask the Administration to bring this matter to a conclusion without going through any unnecessary court expenses.

Mr. Paul Verret, Gracedale Nursing Home, Nazareth, PA - stated he was speaking on behalf of the social workers at Gracedale and wanted to express their disappointment with the current labor situation. He further stated he hoped the County would recognize their hard work with a fair wage. He noted having been offered a fair contract that was overwhelmingly supported and then having it revoked had dampened their spirit regarding this Administration. In conclusion, he noted the nurses and social workers at Gracedale would continue to serve their residents, families and the community with the upmost respect and professionalism they were known for and in return, they only asked for the fair wages that the County had agreed to.

Ms. Valerie Makula, 1542 Dennis Street, Bethlehem, PA - advised she was a Registered Nurse at Gracedale and all the nurses loved what they did, but they also felt they should be fairly compensated for it. She further advised the nurses and social workers have been working two years without a contract, which also meant they did not receive any raises. She noted she recently read in the newspapers that the Administration planned to renegotiate all union contracts with regard to salaries so she hoped they also planned to look at the salaries of the Career Service employees.

Ms. Judith Pezzuto, 186 East Douglasville Road, Nazareth, PA - stated she was a Registered Nurse at Gracedale and President of the Local United Steel Workers. She further stated
they negotiated with the Administration for approximately a year, the contract was ratified and then the County decided to step out of the agreement. She noted from what she read in the newspapers, it appeared the County may not want to be in the nursing home business so she was wondering if the Administration was trying to dissolve the unions at Gracedale because they may be a stumbling block in their effort to privatize it.

Mr. Angle advised he had no reason to believe that was the case.

Mr. Ron Scrafano, 3010 Windsor Street, Easton, PA - stated he was here to support the union workers at Gracedale. He further stated he knew a lot of people who have gone to Gracedale and they received excellent care.

Mr. Mike Stershic, Lehigh Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau - advised he wanted to welcome the new members to County Council and to thank County Council for their past support over the years. He further advised visitors to the Lehigh Valley brought in approximately $1 billion and his organization employed approximately 26,000 so it was extremely important in terms of generating tax dollars and employment.

Mr. Stershic stated if anyone had any questions or concerns about his organization, he would be happy to meet with them.

In response to Mr. Cusick’s question as to whether there were any plans for a convention center in the Lehigh Valley, Mr. Stershic replied right now they were not able to attract the size of conventions that the metropolitan areas could attract because there was no convention center big enough to accommodate them. He noted the casino planned to build a hotel and convention area which would help tremendously and there was discussion about space located in South Whitehall Township.

Mr. McClure advised he did not want to speak directly about the contract negotiations, but he believed Mr. Green and his organization should be complimented on coming to the table. He further advised one of the things that he learned serving on the Retirement Board was in the past few years, the awards that the bargaining units were getting through arbitration were quite
high. Therefore, the County should try to negotiate rather than letting these things go to arbitration.

Mrs. McHale asked if the numbers used for the salaries and fringe benefits in the 2010 budget were calculated based on the expiring contract rates or anticipated contract renewal rates.

Mr. Vic Mazziotti, Director of Fiscal Affairs, stated they were based on the expiring contract rates so there was no money for the increase.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Cusick made the following motion:

Be It Moved By the Northampton County Council that the minutes of the November 9, 2009, November 16, 2009 and December 10, 2009 meetings shall be approved.

Mrs. McHale seconded the motion.

As there were no questions or comments, Mr. Angle called for the vote.


The minutes were adopted by a vote of 9-0.

County Executive’s Report

Mr. John Stoffa, County Executive, advised Mr. Chris Zieger of the Sheriff’s Department was promoted to Chief Deputy Sheriff.

With regard to Gracedale, Mr. Stoffa stated they issued a Request for Proposal for someone to come in and do an assessment of the facility. He noted Mrs. Ferraro offered to be part of the evaluation team and if anyone else wished to be involved, they should contact the Procurement Office.
Mr. Stoffa advised they have advertised for a new Director of Human Resources and have received approximately 30 applications. He further advised the last date for submissions was Monday and then they would begin working on that.

Mr. Stoffa stated the window project at Gracedale was expected to be finished by the end of the month. He further stated in February the entire project would be reviewed to ensure that everything was done properly and there were no leaks.

Mr. Stoffa advised they were working on contracts, indicating he understood people were unhappy, but this County was dealing with some financial difficulties.

Mr. Stoffa stated if anyone had any questions or issues they wanted to discuss, his door was always open.

Mr. McClure advised a little more than a year ago, County Council called for the resignation of the former Director of Human Resources, which did not occur. Therefore, he wondered why there was now a vacancy in this position.

Mr. Stoffa stated he did not want to discuss the matter in public, but he was acting under his jurisdiction not to retain cabinet members.

In answer to Mr. McClure’s question as to whether he agreed that Gracedale should not be privatized or sold, Mr. Stoffa advised he felt Gracedale had to be evaluated before he could make any decision regarding it.

Mr. McClure stated there had been discussions on how much Gracedale had cost the County within the last few years, however, he reviewed the records for the last 20 years and Gracedale had only cost the County approximately $2 million.

Mr. Stoffa advised that may be true, but it was getting more and more expensive to run Gracedale.

Mr. Gilbert stated there was no one in the County who wanted to see any sacrifice with the regard to the wonderful care given the residents of Gracedale. However, the County had to not only think of today, but five or ten years down the road.
He further stated everyone wanted to retain Gracedale, but at what cost to the taxpayers and did the County have the right to put the taxpayers’ money at risk if in five to ten years, based on the economic and market conditions, the County was not capable of doing so without massive tax increases. Therefore, he felt it was worth looking into because if not, the County had failed overall.

Mr. Cusick advised at the end of last year, there were some discussions about Bethlehem’s Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as it related to the casino. He then asked if the County’s solicitor had a chance to look into the matter and was there a decision as to any action being taken.

Mr. Stoffa stated they have looked at the issue. He further stated Mr. Karl Longenbach, County Solicitor, had attended a couple of meetings and he had been in touch with a few individuals from Bethlehem. He noted they had a promise of sorts whereby they would not do anything for 60 days without informing the County of it, however Mr. Longenbach was trying to get that in writing. He added they were following this issue very closely.

When Mr. Cusick advised his other question pertained to the Request for Proposal with regard to the Gall Farm, Mr. Stoffa advised that was no longer being considered as the County did not have the money.

Mr. Angle stated that Mr. Stoffa had agreed to sit down with Mr. John Conklin, Director of Administration, Mr. Flisser and himself either the day before or the day of a meeting to discuss the issues.

Discussion of the Greater Shiloh – Nehemiah Project- 2009 Contingency Allocation

Mr. Angle advised he was going to pull the discussion with regard to the Greater Shiloh’s Nehemiah Project from the agenda. He further advised he formed a committee of Mr. Stoffa, Mr. Conklin, Mr. Gilbert and himself to meet because there were some details that had to be ironed out as to how the County was going to move ahead with the grant. He noted once the issues had been
resolved, it would be brought back before County Council for consideration.

Introduction of the Ordinance Declaring a Portion of the 2001 Bond Issue Impracticable and Unfeasible

Mr. Angle asked Mr. Cusick to introduce the ordinance.

Mr. Cusick stated Mr. Dietrich would be the co-sponsor of this ordinance. He further stated the ordinance was being introduced tonight and the public hearing, debate and vote would be held at the January 21, 2010 meeting.

Mr. Cusick advised it would take money from the Bethlehem Commerce Center Project and the Arcadia East Industrial Center Project, and allocate that money to capital improvements at Gracedale.

Messrs. Cusick and Dietrich introduced the following ordinance:


WHEREAS, the County of Northampton (“County”), a County of the third class of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (“Commonwealth”), pursuant to the Municipality Authorities Act, act of June 19, 2001, P.L.287, codified beginning at 53 Pa C.S.A. §5601 (“Authorities Act”), by ordinance duly enacted December 3, 1998 (“Authority Organizing Ordinance”), established the Northampton County General Purpose Authority (“Authority”) for the purpose of exercising any and all powers conferred by the Authorities Act; and

$125,000,000 for the purpose of guaranteeing a like amount of bonds of the Authority to be issued in order to fund certain capital projects ("Authority Bonds") as authorized by the Debt Act; and

WHEREAS, among such capital projects are: (1) a project known as the Bethlehem Commerce Center Project, which consists of roadway infrastructure construction and related improvements for the Rt. 412 and North Gate areas of the Bethlehem Commerce Center, for the payment of the costs of which proceeds of the Bonds in the amount of $13,150,000 were allocated, and (2) a project known as the Arcadia East Industrial Center Project, which consists of water and related infrastructure construction, and related improvements, for the area Northeast of Silvercrest Road and East of Route 512, for the payment of the costs of which proceeds of the Bonds in the amount of $1,000,000 were allocated; and

WHEREAS, Section 3(e) of the Guaranty Ordinance provides that proceeds of the Authority Bonds may be applied to pay the cost of capital projects other than those included in the project authorized in Section 1 hereof should any of the components of the project become "unfeasible or impracticable, pursuant to an ordinance adopted by County Council amending this ordinance for such purpose..."; and

WHEREAS, it is the opinion of the County Council that, due to a change in certain circumstances: (1) a portion of the Bethlehem Commerce Center Project, in the approximate amount of $686,000, has become in whole or in part unfeasible or impracticable, and (2) a portion of the Arcadia East Industrial Center project, in the approximate amount of $8,900, has become in whole or in part unfeasible or impracticable; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 3(e) of the Guaranty Ordinance, the County desires by this ordinance to declare: (1) a portion of the Bethlehem Commerce Center Project to be unfeasible or impracticable and to reallocate the amount of $686,000 to the Gracedale County Home for the Aged capital projects, and (2) a portion of Arcadia East Industrial Center Project to be unfeasible or impracticable and to reallocate the amount of $8,900 to the Gracedale County Home for the Aged capital projects.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED AND ORDAINED by the County Council of the County of Northampton, as follows:

1. The County Council hereby declares, due to a change in certain circumstances, a portion of the Bethlehem Commerce Center Project to be impracticable or unfeasible.

2. The County Council hereby declares, due to a change in certain circumstances, a portion of the Arcadia East Industrial Center Project, to be impracticable or unfeasible.

3. The County Council authorizes and approves the reallocation of the approximate amount of $694,900 to the Gracedale County Home for the Aged capital projects.

4. The proper officers of the County are hereby severally authorized on behalf of the County to execute any and all papers and documents and to do, or cause to be done, any and all acts and things necessary or appropriate for the implementation of this ordinance and Ordinance 371-2001.

5. Except as explicitly set forth herein, the Guaranty Ordinance is not in any way modified or amended and remains in full force and effect.

6. This ordinance shall become effective at the earliest date permitted by the County Home Rule Charter.

Introduction of the Ordinance Amending Northampton County Administrative Code Article XV - Section 15.02 Retirement Board

c. Membership

Mr. Angle asked Mr. Cusick to introduce the ordinance.

Mr. Cusick stated Mr. Angle would be a co-sponsor of this ordinance. He further stated this ordinance would change the make up of the Retirement Board to more accurately reflect those of other counties across the Commonwealth. He further stated it would reduce the Retirement Board from seven members to five,
which would include the County Executive, Controller, the President of County Council, as well as two other members of County Council.

Mr. Cusick advised the ordinance was being introduced at this meeting, but the public hearing, debate and possible vote would be held at the January 21, 2010 County Council meeting.

Mrs. Ferraro stated she realized this ordinance was only being introduced, but she felt it was moving this issue much too fast. She further advised there were three new members on County Council who had to be brought up to date on many things and this was one of the most drastic changes ahead of them. Therefore, she felt this should be put aside because there was a lot of research that had to be done before any decision was made.

Mrs. Ferraro advised she would like to know how the Retirement Boards of other Home Rule Charter Counties were formed because she thought it was a travesty that not one retiree would be part of the board to have a voice in their own pension system.

Mrs. McHale stated she could not agree more with Mrs. Ferraro and she was not sure the Controller should sit on the board because he was supposed to be an independent watchdog.

In answer to Mr. McClure’s comment that although he might agree with Mrs. Ferraro and Mrs. McHale, now was not the time to debate the issue, Mr. Angle agreed, noting he felt it should be introduced because it was an issue that should be discussed.

Mr. Angle advised the issue arose because two of the individuals who currently served on the Retirement Board did not reside in Northampton County so they never should have been on the board.

Mrs. McHale stated, according to a legal opinion that was issued, the determining factor for being on the board was the position and not whether someone lived in the County.

Mr. Angle advised Mr. Gerald Seyfried, a member of the Retirement Board, had indicated it clearly stated the person had to be a County resident. Therefore, there were currently two
vacancies on the board.

Mr. Angle then asked Mr. Lauer if he could issue an opinion as to whether or not a person on the Retirement Board had to be a resident of the County.

Messrs. Cusick and Angle introduced the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING NORTHAMPTON COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE ARTICLE XV, AUTHORITIES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, SECTION 15.02 RETIREMENT BOARD, AND DELINEATING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE NORTHAMPTON COUNTY RETIREMENT BOARD

WHEREAS, Northampton County Home Rule Charter Section 202 Powers (7) provides that the County Council shall have the power “to adopt, amend, and repeal the Administrative Code;” and

WHEREAS, Northampton County Home Rule Charter Section 602. Ordinances (a)Acts Required (1) provides that the County Council shall “adopt an ordinance for any act which adopts or amends the Administrative Code, establishes or abolishes an agency, or assigns powers or duties among agencies.”

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED By the Northampton County Council that Northampton County Administrative Code, Article XV, Section 15.02 Retirement Board shall be amended as indicated hereafter (sections marked with **bold underline** are being added and sections marked with *strikeout* are being deleted):

**ARTICLE XV**

**AUTHORITIES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

Section 15.01 Establishment
15.02 Retirement Board

Section 15.01 Establishment
a. The following boards and commissions are established by the Charter:

   (1) Personnel Appeals Board,
   (2) Revenue Appeals Board,
   (3) Election Commission; and
   (4) Personnel Commission.

b. In accordance with Section 1304 of the Charter, the following authorities, boards, and commissions shall continue to exist unless specifically abolished by ordinance:

   (1) Joint Planning Commission of Lehigh and Northampton Counties;
   (2) Lehigh and Northampton Airport Authority;
   (3) Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority;
   (4) Northampton County Children’s Bureau Advisory Committee; (designated as the Advisory Board to the Division of Children and Youth)
   (5) Northampton County Conservation District;
   (6) Northampton County Coordinating Committee of the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study;
   (7) Northampton County Drug and Alcohol Commission;
   (8) Northampton County Hospital Authority;
   (9) Northampton County Housing Authority;
(10) Northampton County Industrial Development Authority;

(11) Northampton County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Advisory Board;

(12) Northampton County Overall Economic Development Committee;

(13) Northampton County Park Board;

(14) Northampton County Re-development Authority;

(15) Northampton County Solid Waste Authority;

(16) Northampton County Prison Advisory Board; and

(17) Northampton County Area Agency on Aging Advisory Board.

All other authorities, boards and commissions are hereby abolished except as otherwise provided by ordinance or this Code.

Section 15.02 Retirement Board

  a. Establishment. There is hereby established the Northampton County Retirement Board.

  b. Function. The Northampton County Retirement Board shall administer the retirement system of the County in accordance with applicable law.
c. Membership. The Retirement Board shall be comprised of seven (7) five (5) members. The members shall be the Northampton County Executive, the Northampton County Controller, the President of the Northampton County Council, and two (2) other members of the Northampton County Council. The Director of Administration, the Director of Fiscal Affairs, two (2) members of County Council (one of whom shall be President of Council) and two (2) participating members in the retirement system one of whom shall be chosen from a list of three (3) nominees for appointment which shall be provided to the County Executive by the Northampton County Employee’s Retirement Association. The two (2) participating members shall be selected by the County Executive subject to confirmation by the Northampton County Council. All members of the Retirement Board shall have voting privileges relative to matters which are considered by the Retirement Board.

Introduction of an Ordinance Repealing Northampton County Ordinance No. 453 of 2006, the Ordinance Titled, “AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PARTICIPATION BY THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON IN THE WILSON PARK TAX INCREMENT DISTRICT”

Mr. Angle asked Mr. Cusick to introduce the ordinance.

Mr. Cusick stated Mr. Dowd would be the co-sponsor of this ordinance. He further stated several years ago, County Council passed an ordinance that gave Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to
convert the Dixie facility in Wilson into high-end condominiums. He noted from recent news reports, it was now being slated to become an apartment building.

Mr. Cusick advised it was never the County’s intention to grant a tax break for an apartment building. He further advised he had discussions with the members of the Wilson Area School Board and they informed him they would be looking at this issue at their January 18, 2010 meeting. Therefore, he believed some action had to be taken with regard to this matter whether it was to remove it or amend it.

Mr. Dowd commented as the County was the last entity to approve a TIF, it should be the last entity to remove or amend it.

Mr. Cusick stated the ordinance was being introduced at this meeting and the public hearing, debate and possible vote would be held at the January 21, 2010 County Council meeting.

Messrs. Cusick and Dowd introduced the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING NORTHAMPTON COUNTY ORDINANCE NO. 453 of 2006, THE ORDINANCE TITLED, “AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PARTICIPATION BY THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON IN THE WILSON PARK TAX INCREMENT DISTRICT”

WHEREAS, Northampton County Ordinance No. 453 OF 2006, the ordinance titled, “AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PARTICIPATION BY THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON IN THE WILSON PARK TAX INCREMENT DISTRICT,” was duly enacted on October 6, 2006.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED By the Northampton County Council that 453 OF 2006, the ordinance titled, “AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE PARTICIPATION BY THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON IN THE WILSON PARK TAX INCREMENT DISTRICT,” shall be, and the same hereby is, repealed effective upon the effective date of this ordinance.

Consideration of the Resolution Requesting the Northampton County Controller Perform an Audit of Workers’ Compensation Claims and Related Costs
Mr. Cusick introduced the following resolution:

R. 1-2010 WHEREAS, the County of Northampton has experienced significant increases in workers’ compensation costs, due to increases in workers’ compensation rates, claim filings and the length of time the claimant is out of work; and

WHEREAS, the Court System, Corrections, Public Works and Human Services sections of the 2010 proposed budget were increased prior to final adoption so as to account for increased workers’ compensation costs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Northampton County Council requests that the Northampton County Controller perform an audit of workers’ compensation claims, and related costs, for the past three years. It should include workers’ compensation rates, claims filed and costs for each year audited. Further, it is requested that the audit include suggestions for reducing workers’ compensation rates, claims filed and overall costs.

Mr. Cusick advised during the budget process, County Council was hit with a budget amendment that drastically increased the County’s Workmen’s Compensation Insurance costs. Therefore, he felt a serious look had to be taken with regard to this matter. He further advised he discussed this with the Controller, who indicated he was capable of performing this audit.

Mr. Stephen Barron, Controller, stated he liked this idea and it actually expanded on an audit they just completed with regard to Unemployment Compensation. He further stated they would be able to review the whole system and not just pick and choose certain cases. He noted one of the issues would be whether to remain self insured or pay for an insurance policy and let the actuaries deal with it.

Mr. McClure advised he did not want to see the Controller’s office bogged down with “political” audits, which had occurred previously and resulted in some major criminal behavior being overlooked.

Mr. Barron stated his office planned to handle all requests, but they would occur on their schedule, noting this
audit would probably not begin until April.

In response to Mr. Dietrich’s question as to when an audit of this nature was last done, Mr. Barron advised he could not provide a date at this time, but could after he reviewed the records.

Mr. Conklin advised approximately two years, the County contracted with Insurers Buyers Council, Inc. to help with its Request for Proposal processes for general property and liability insurance. He further advised in conjunction with that, they did a study on the workers’ compensation program.

Mr. Conklin stated Insurance Buyers Council, Inc. just finished their draft report and they were expecting to have a management review meeting within the next few weeks to go over their findings. He further stated when they have the management review meeting, they would bring the Controller in to minimize the amount of work he would be required to do on this project.

Mr. Conklin advised the Administration was also concerned about the increased costs and has been aggressively working on this issue. He further advised the findings would be presented to County Council.

As there were no further questions or comments, Mr. Angle called for the vote.


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


Mr. Angle stated from time to time County Council is required to approve certain contracts of the County due to the provisions of Northampton County Administrative Code Article Xiii, Section 13.16. Administrative Code Section 13.16 Contracts and Agreements c.(1) requires approval of County Council for “…any contract exceeding $100,000, which was awarded using the
Competitive Negotiation, Negotiation After Competitive Sealed Bidding, and Non-Competitive Negotiation source selection methods. For contracts with renewal clauses, the entire potential payout if all renewal clauses are exercised under the terms of the contract must be considered when determining if Council approval is necessary.

Mr. Angle introduced the following resolution:

R. 2-2010 WHEREAS, Northampton County Administrative Code Article XIII Procurement and Disposition of County Property, Section 13.16 Contracts and Agreements c.(1) requires approval of County Council for “...any contract exceeding $100,000, which was awarded using the Competitive Negotiation, Negotiation After Competitive Sealed Bidding, and Non-Competitive Negotiation source selection methods. For contracts with renewal clauses, the entire potential payout if all renewal clauses are exercised under the terms of the contract must be considered when determining if Council approval is necessary.”

WHEREAS, on December 2, 2009, the Northampton County Council received a request on behalf of the County Executive for County Council to adopt a resolution endorsing a contract, in the amount of $77,742.08 for one year and potentially three years at $233,226.24, with US Security Associates, Inc. for security services at Gracedale, Northampton County Department of Human Services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Northampton County Council does hereby concur with the recommendation of the County Executive, as set forth in the attached documentation, to award a contract to US Security Associates, Inc. for security services at Gracedale, Northampton County Department of Human Services.

Mr. Cusick advised as there was only one bid, he did not consider it a competitive process and would not be approving it because he felt it should be rebid.

In answer to Mr. McClure’s question as to why there was only one bid, Mr. Stoffa stated there were two bids, but one was not qualified. He further stated this firm was the current provider and was doing it for the same money as last year.

In response to Mr. McClure’s question as to whether there
would be a lapse in service if the contract was not approved, Mr. Stoffa advised he did not know when the current contract expired.

Mr. Angle stated there was a second bid that was $10,000 more than this one so there was a competitive bid.

In answer to Mr. Gilbert’s question as to the quality of the service, Mr. Stoffa and Mr. Ross Marcus, Director of Human Services, both indicated the people at Gracedale were satisfied with the service.

As there were no further questions or comments, Mr. Angle called for the vote.


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

Northampton County Gaming Revenue and Economic Redevelopment Authority

Mrs. McHale advised she received the following letter from Mr. Charles Palmeri:

“Please be advised that I am resigning my position on the Northampton County Gaming Revenue and Economic Redevelopment Authority, effective immediately. I have determined that my work schedule and pursuit of other interests will not make it possible for me to attend meetings and spend the time necessary to be an effective member of the authority.

I wish the members of the authority success in their efforts now and in the future.”

Mr. Angle stated Mr. Palmeri was a representative member of the Slate Belt Council of Governments.

Mrs. McHale advised County Council would need to appoint an at-large member.
Mr. Cusick stated Mr. Doug Hill, Executive Director of CCAP, contacted him and asked if he could meet with the members of County Council on February 18, 2010.

After some discussion, it was determined he could make his presentation at the regular County Council meeting on February 18, 2010.

Economic Development Committee

Mr. Dowd advised the Economic Development Committee would be holding a meeting at 5:00 p.m., on February 4, 2010, to discuss State grants and the Recovery Zone Facility Bonds.

Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA)

Mrs. McHale stated Mr. Cusick had requested an update regarding the Easton Transportation Center Project. She further stated Mr. Angle should contact Mr. Armand Greco, Executive Director of LANTA, as she only made tentative arrangements for him to appear at the January 21, 2010 meeting.

Farmland Preservation

Mr. Angle advised the Farmland Preservation Board approved another farm last night.

Committee Structure

Mr. Angle passed out the Committee Structure and indicated he added a Vice Chairperson to the Personnel and Finance Committees because those committees should meet every month. He stated he would like to see all committees hold at least bi-monthly meetings because he felt it gave everyone more of an opportunity to work through things.
Council Solicitor's Report

Mr. Lauer advised he did not have a report, but he wanted to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve and he would do his best to serve County Council well.

Adjournment

Mr. McClure made a motion to adjourn.

Mrs. McHale seconded the motion.

The motion passed by acclamation.

Frank E. Flisser
Clerk to Council