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

Prayer

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

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Approval of the Minutes

Mrs. Thierry made the following motion:

Be It Moved By the Northampton County Council that the minutes of the October 18, 2011 meeting shall be approved.

Mr. Dowd seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved by voice acclamation.

Courtesy of the Floor

Mr. Stephen J. Barron, Jr., 2239 Lincoln Street, Bethlehem, PA - advised he wanted to highlight some of the items in the memorandum he sent to County Council as they considered the budget, a tax increase and taking $20 million from the Fund Balance to balance the 2012 budget. He further advised at this time last year, it looked like $300,000 would be needed to balance the budget with three weeks to go. He noted today, the County was approximately $8.5 million ahead of where it was at this time last year.
Mr. McClure arrived at the meeting at this time.

Mr. Barron stated last year, the County turned the negative $300,000 around and the Fund Balance did not have to be used at all. He further stated he knew the County still had some expenses to deal with, but currently the revenues were exceeding what was already projected with three weeks to go.

Mr. Barron advised the County had been off $112.3 million over a five year span for a $300 million budget. He further advised budgeting was not an exact science, but there was nothing that would have made it this far off. Therefore, he suggested County Council question each line item before considering a tax increase because he did not believe $20 million from the Fund Balance would have to be used to balance the budget.

In answer to Mr. Cusick’s request for clarification regarding the County having a $60 million fund balance, Mr. Barron stated it had been suggested that this was a theoretical number, but he audited this every year so he wanted to throw in the statement where the investment money was kept. He further stated he believed the Fund Balance would be approximately $60 million again based on what he reviewed.

Mr. Barron advised between 2006 and 2010, the administration claimed a projected loss of Fund Balance to be $88.1 million, however, it actually increased $24.2 million. He further advised based on this, as a taxpayer, he would not be very happy if his taxes were raised.

In response to Mr. McClure’s question as to whether he had an opportunity to look at the revenue picture for 2011, Mr. Barron stated the County was approximately $1 million ahead. He further stated every year, as the financial statements close out and they audit the General Fund, they usually add $1-3 million. He noted the County was going to finish out ahead of the projected revenue.

In answer to Mr. McClure’s question as to what the Fund Balance would be if taxes were raised, Mr. Barron advised at the end of 2012, there would probably be a Fund Balance of $65-70 million.
In response to Mr. McClure’s question as to how he arrived at that figure, Mr. Barron stated he was not taking into account Government Accounting Standard Boards 54 (GASB 54) or any of the other buckets. He further stated he did not see the County dipping into the $20 million.

In answer to Mr. Gilbert’s question as to whether he was stating the County did not have to adhere to GASB 54, Mr. Barron replied the County did have to adhere to GASB 54.

In response to Mr. Gilbert’s question as to whether he was quoting a gross or a net figure if the County had to adhere to GASB 54, Mr. Barron advised he was quoting the gross figure. He further advised it was what the figure would be before the money was put into the buckets, noting the County had a choice as to which buckets it wanted to put the money in.

Mr. Gilbert asked why he was quoting a gross figure because it was not giving credence to the areas that would have to be subtracted from it and it was giving a misleading amount of surplus funds.

Mr. Barron stated if everything was subtracted out, the indication was the County would be dipping into the Fund Balance by $20 million and raising taxes. He further stated the County would be holding onto $20 million for no reason because it was not going to dip that far into the Fund Balance.

When Mr. Gilbert commented that $20 million was a significantly lower number than $60 million, Mr. Barron advised he was arguing net versus gross.

When Mr. Gilbert remarked it had to be the net figure because the County could not pretend there were no buckets, Mr. Barron stated the County had a choice as to what buckets the money would go into.

In answer to Mr. Gilbert’s question as to whether the true net figure was closer to $20 million, Mr. Barron advised the Fund Balance on the balance sheet was $60 million and when GASB 54 was subtracted, that was the number the County had to work with. He further advised he was only looking at the financial statements, noting the County could change GASB 54 and put the money in different buckets.
Mr. Gilbert stated GASB 54 was for the protection of the taxpayers so County Council could not ignore the fact that money had to be earmarked for certain areas, therefore, the figure was not being quoted as accurately as it should be.

Mr. Barron advised GASB 54 did not say the County had to do anything, noting it was only a recommendation. He further advised part of the rational for GASB 54 was because some governments had large amounts of money or strategically planned to have large amounts of money when they were going to borrow money to make themselves look more financially healthy. He noted this actually gave a more uniform way of looking at each and every government. He further noted it mostly helped bonding companies and people that would extend credit.

Mr. Gilbert agreed it was a way for the State to monitor where some governments were fiscally, but the reason for that was for the protection of an overinflated set of books or to mask an indebted County, which this County never had to face because the necessary precautions were taken.

In response to Mr. Cusick’s question as to the explanation of why the County was $8.5 million ahead, Mr. Barron stated there were encumbrances that had to come out of it, but it was important to look at it from where the County was a year ago when it was negative $350,000. He further stated he did not know why the County was so much ahead, but the question should be asked as to where that $8.5 million was going to be spent.

In answer to Mr. Cusick’s question as to whether the payroll periods matched up, Mr. Barron advised there was one payroll left last year, but there were two left this year, however, that did not equate to $8.5 million.

Mr. Angle stated everyone could believe Mr. Barron or Mr. Doran Hamann, Acting Director of Fiscal Affairs, who was a man whose credentials were impeccable year after year after year.

Mr. McClure advised on September 20, 2011, he read in the Morning Call, the following quote: “You shouldn’t be raising taxes to take money out of somebody else’s savings account and put it in the County’s savings account”. He further advised that was the quote of Mr. Vic Mazziotti, the County’s former
Director of Fiscal Affairs, who was talking about the County Executive’s plan in Lehigh County to raise the Fund Balance from $16 million to $25 million. He noted when Mr. Mazziotti was leaving Northampton County, he heard a lot of accolades from County Council regarding his financial accuracies. He further noted on, at least, this point, he and Mr. Mazziotti appeared to agree.

Mr. McClure stated during Mr. Mazziotti’s campaign, he put out a press release that stated, “the reform team plan would maintain more than $20 million in the Tax Stabilization Fund providing for adequate reserves and sustaining the County’s excellent bond rating”. He further advised Northampton County already had $25 million in its Stabilization Fund so it would be able to maintain its rating.

Mr. McClure stated it went on further to state, “the Administration wants to save up even more for a rainy day, but a lot of taxpayers were already living in a financial hurricane. Many were underwater with their car loans and mortgages, local businesses struggle to keep their door open. The time for government to build its reserve was when the economy was booming. The current County’s nest egg was plenty”.

Mr. Angle advised Mr. McClure was taking Mr. Mazziotti’s statement out of context because that pertained to what happened in Lehigh County which was a different set of circumstances from Northampton County.

Mr. Kent Baird, Wildlands Conservancy - stated he had appeared before County Council previously to secure funding for projects and to propose their support for Open Space. He asked if anyone had compared the overall savings of removing the funding from this particular program against the value of the program and the investment County Council made to it. He further stated these were dollars that were approved by the taxpayers and there was a large community of land trusts that would like to work through some of the administrative hurdles of the past years to bring together a really strong program for the future. He noted if County Council were to leave more funding for this program, they would make the best use of it.

Mr. Ron Angle, Upper Mt. Bethel, PA - gave farewell comments to his fellow members of County Council.
Mr. John Stoffa, County Executive, advised he had nothing to report.

Consideration of the 2012 Northampton County Budget

Adoption of the 2012 Budget - Consideration of Amendments to the Proposed 2012 Budget

Mr. Cusick asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the proposed amendments to the 2012 budget which were each approved by County Council at the meeting held December 1, 2011. He further advised these amendments would reduce the proposed tax increase from one mill to .5 of one mills, which was equal to 4.6% increase in taxes so any changes to these amendments could affect that amount.

Mrs. McHale made a motion to remove the position of Deputy Director of Administration.

Mr. Cusick seconded the motion.

When Mr. Stoffa stated there would be no one to handle the loss prevention responsibilities of that position, Mrs. McHale noted there were insurance companies that would offer their services.

In response to Mr. McClure’s question as to whether this position was budgeted for and what was the salary, Mrs. McHale replied it was budgeted for and Mr. Stoffa indicated the salary was $45,000.

In answer to Mr. Angle’s question as to what was saved in loss prevention during this last fiscal year, Mrs. McHale advised it was simply a credit that was applied to the County’s premium so it varied.

Mr. Thomas Harp, Director of Administration, stated it was 1% of the County’s contribution to the Risk Pool of the General Liability Policy.
When Mr. Angle asked if it was greater than $45,000, Mrs. McHale and Mr. Harp both indicated it was not.

Mr. Angle advised the County had to function and that position had been established since the beginning. He further advised Mr. Stoffa had from time to time, voluntarily kept that position open to save money. He then asked, in the spirit of saving, the County Council members who were receiving $9,500, to give some of it back for one year.

Mrs. McHale stated she had recommended that County Council reduce its size from nine members to five members.

Mr. McClure advised he understood where Mrs. McHale was coming from, but he was not sure that during the next two years allowing the County Executive to have fewer people to run the County was going to make County Council’s job easier when compared to the savings.

In response to Mr. Cusick’s question if he planned to fill the position if it were funded, Mr. Stoffa stated he did.

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


The motion failed by a vote of 1-8.

Mr. Dietrich made a motion to eliminate the Deputy Registrar position.

Mr. Cusick seconded the motion.

Mr. Cusick stated this suggestion was made by employees of the Voters Registration Office during the final budget hearing, however, no vote was taken on it. He further stated he had talked to a former member of the Election Commission who indicated support for eliminating this position and based on the
input from that individual, he believed County Council should follow through on this suggestion.

Mr. Stoffa advised there was a Presidential election coming up, the position is filled and the Registrar was out on sick leave so based on that, he could not guarantee the results would be the same as it had been in the recent elections. He further advised they needed to have that position filled.

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


The motion failed by a vote of 3-6.

Mr. Dietrich made a motion to add $400,000 to Environmentally Sensitive Lands.

Mr. Cusick seconded the motion.

Mr. Gilbert stated when the students made their presentation about restoring the funding, it changed his way of thinking, however, he felt $400,000 was too much, but would be agreeable to $100,000.

Mr. Dietrich advised the importance of the program had been very well determined by the support of the voters. He further advised the addition he was proposing would sit in the fund until appropriate projects were submitted.

In answer to Mr. Gilbert’s question as to whether there was a mechanism by which funds could currently be given to a project if it came up, Mr. Dietrich stated a budget amendment could be done.

Mr. McClure advised the people who came before County Council to support this funding were professionals in this field and they made it quite clear that if the County did not budget this money, it made it difficult for people to present projects and to trust that County Council would amend the budget to fund
a project. He further advised if the County was committed to preserving environmentally sensitive lands, the $400,000 was a modest investment in protecting the environment for the future.

Mrs. Thierry stated when these individuals spoke about preserving environmentally sensitive lands, they indicated that it took approximately a year so what was the rush.

Mr. Dowd advised he spoke to an individual who was very involved in this endeavor and he indicated it would be very difficult to encourage people to put properties up if there was no money or only the hope there would be money. Therefore, the County had to decide as to whether they were going to be committed to this endeavor or not.

Mrs. Thierry asked if the properties would be going on the market or would they just sit there until the County decided to preserve them.

Mr. Angle replied people were not looking to buy up environmentally sensitive lands. He further advised there were other ways to preserve land and people have to understand government could not continue to be everything to everyone.

In response to Mrs. McHale’s question as to what the total amount was for this in the proposed budget, Mr. Stoffa stated it was $3.7 million.

Mrs. McHale advised that was all that should be approved because that was the half mill tax that was approved in 2006 so that was what should be allowed every year and when it was gone, it was gone.

Mr. McClure stated he believed Mr. Dietrich’s motion was a good faith effort for a compromise for those who believed there was too much in the budget for environmentally sensitive lands originally.

Mr. Cusick advised the issue he had with this line item was the lack of projects and any projects presented before the next deadline would fall within next year’s budget.

As there were no further questions or comments, Mr. Cusick
Mr. Dietrich made a motion to return $25,000 to the District Attorney’s 2012 budget for the purchase of a vehicle.

Mr. Dowd stated he felt the District Attorney had been one of the most responsible individuals with regard to his budget.

Mr. Dietrich agreed with Mr. Dowd, noting that not only has he been fiscally responsible, but indicated if he was able to find the money for this vehicle without using taxpayers dollars, he would try to do so.

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


The motion passed by a vote of 7-2.

Mr. Angle advised last year, the proposed budget called for a tax increase and based on what he felt the majority of County Council wanted, he came back with a no tax increase budget. He further advised if County Council wanted to hold a meeting seven days from now, he would produce a budget without a tax increase that he believed would be adopted.

Mr. Gilbert asked Mr. Baird if perhaps they could keep County Council informed as to what projects they were hoping to get funding for on a regular basis.

Mr. Baird stated this was a great time to buy conservation easements and land as people were looking at the compensation as
a tool to invigorate their financial strategy. He further stated they would definitely be coming to the meetings because they believed in what they were doing.

Mr. Angle advised he believed there were a number of organizations involved in the preservation of land other than farmlands so he did not think one individual could speak for them all.

Mr. Baird stated while it was true there were a number of different agencies, they all worked together in one way or another.

Mr. Cusick advised based on the above vote for the aforementioned amendments, the following resolution was adopted:

R 112-2011 RESOLVED, By the Northampton County Council that the proposed 2012 Northampton County Budget shall be amended as indicated on the attached documents.

Adoption of the 2012 Budget - Adoption of the 2012 Northampton County Budget As Amended

Mr. Cusick introduced the following resolution:

R. 115-2011 RESOLVED, By the Northampton County Council that the following 2012 Northampton County Budgets (incorporated by reference hereto) shall be adopted, as amended, this 8th day of December 2011.

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

Mr. Cusick called for a ten minute recess at the request of Mr. Angle to calculate the numbers.

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

The vote: Cusick, “yes”; McClure, “yes”; McHale, “yes”;

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 6-3.

Adoption of the 2012 Real Estate Tax Millage Rate Ordinance
This ordinance was introduced by Mr. Cusick and Mrs. Ferraro at the meeting held October 20, 2011 and the public hearing was held at the November 3, 2011 meeting.

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE REAL ESTATE TAX MILLAGE RATE IN THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON FOR THE YEAR 2012

IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED that the millage rate for real estate tax purposes for the year 2012 shall be set at 11.8 mills on every dollar of assessed valuation of taxable real estate or $1.18 on every $100.00 of assessed valuation.

Mr. Cusick stated the adoption of the 2012 millage rate was the final part of the 2012 budget adoption process and was dependent upon the changes made to the proposed budget.

Mr. Flisser advised the millage reduction would be .5 mills, but there would still be a 4.6% increase.

Mr. Angle made a motion to amend the 2012 millage rate to 10.8 mills.

Mrs. Thierry seconded the motion.

In response to Mr. Dowd’s question as to what the process would be if County Council adopted a 10.8 millage rate and the County Executive vetoed it, Mr. Lauer stated the millage rate to be adopted was for 2011 so if this ordinance was vetoed, there was no ordinance for a tax millage rate for the current year.

Mr. Angle advised the 2011 millage rate did not become automatic for 2012, therefore, if County Council set it for 10.8, the County Executive had a right to veto it. However, as long as there were six votes, his veto would be valueless.
In answer to Mr. Dowd’s question as to what would happen if there weren’t six votes, Mrs. McHale stated the tax bills could not go out.

Mr. Lauer advised there were some things in the County Code that might prevail, except for the fact the Home Rule Charter provided with respect to these types of issues, County Council made that determination. He further advised there would be some additional cause should County Council be in a position to submit supplemental bills.

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


The motion passed by a vote of 8-1.

Mr. Cusick called for the vote on the following amended tax millage rate ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE REAL ESTATE TAX MILLAGE RATE IN THE COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON FOR THE YEAR 2012

IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED that the millage rate for real estate tax purposes for the year 2012 shall be set at 10.8 mills on every dollar of assessed valuation of taxable real estate or $1.08 on every $100.00 of assessed valuation.


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

Executive Session

Mr. Cusick stated Mr. Lauer had requested County Council enter into Executive Session.
Mr. Lauer advised he would like County Council to enter into Executive Session to discuss litigation. Mr. Cusick made a motion to move into Executive Session.

Mrs. McHale seconded the motion.

Mr. Lauer stated County Council entered into Executive Session at 5:33 p.m. and returned at 5:46 p.m., wherein he asked County Council for some guidance with regard to an issue relating to litigation.

Mr. Angle advised the issue was a member of the public saw a member of County Council pass a note and requested a copy of the note, as well as some computer documents, and was denied. He further advised that person then filed a complaint with the Open Records Office in Harrisburg, who agreed as it was done during a public meeting, it was subject to the open records law. He noted he was getting the indication that the majority of County Council wanted Mr. Lauer to appeal, however, he did not think he should appeal and the documents be given to the individual.

Mr. Lauer stated the Right to Know Act itself provided the decision by the hearing officer in Harrisburg was the first step in the process. He further stated there was a statutory right to file an appeal and what he put before County Council for discussion in that regard was that issue. He noted it was not that the decision was made and it was final.

Mr. Bernie O’Hare advised under the Sunshine Act, any member of the public had a right at any time to express an objection to a violation of the Sunshine Act and he was expressing an objection. He further advised under the Sunshine Act, any vote or official action that was taken by County Council and that would include any action authorizing County Council to commence litigation must be done in public and done by a public vote. Therefore, if County Council was voting to take any step of litigation, he requested that it be done publicly otherwise they would be in violation of the Sunshine Act.

Mrs. Thierry made a motion to allow the County Council Solicitor to file an appeal with the Open Records Office in
Mr. McClure seconded the motion.

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


The motion failed by a vote of 2-5, with two abstentions.

Consideration of the Resolution Establishing the 2012 Northampton County Council Meeting Schedule

Mr. Cusick introduced the following resolution:

R. 116-2011 RESOLVED, by the Northampton County Council that: (1) In accordance with Northampton County Home Rule Charter Section 206(a), the Northampton County Council organizational meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 3, 2012, and will begin at 4:00 p.m., prevailing time, in the third floor meeting room, room #3116, Northampton County Courthouse, 669 Washington Street, Easton, Pennsylvania; and (2) The regular schedule of meetings for the year 2012, shall be conducted on the first and third Thursday of each respective month, beginning at 6:30 p.m., prevailing time, in the third floor meeting room, room #3116, Northampton County Courthouse, 669 Washington Street, Easton, Pennsylvania, with the following exceptions: (a) for the month of April 2012 the meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 5, 2012 is canceled and rescheduled for Wednesday, April 4, 2012 and is to begin at 6:30 p.m., prevailing time, in the third floor meeting room, room #3116, Northampton County Courthouse, 669 Washington Street, Easton, Pennsylvania and (b) for the month of December 2012, the meeting normally scheduled for December 20, 2012 is canceled and rescheduled for December 13, 2012 and will begin at 4:00 p.m., prevailing time, in the third floor meeting room, room #3116, Northampton County Courthouse, 669 Washington Street, Easton, Pennsylvania.

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

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

Consideration of the Stephen’s Place 2011 Contingency Allocation

Mr. Cusick stated at the request of Mr. McClure, a 2011 Contingency transfer resolution for Stephen’s Place was prepared. He further stated County Council allocated the same amount of funding to Stephen’s Place from the 2010 Contingency account.

Mr. McClure introduced the following resolution:

WHEREAS, in October 1994, Stephen’s Place (Bethlehem, PA) officially opened its doors to provide residential support services to non-violent adult males coming out of prison with a history of substance abuse. The program helps these men to succeed in their recovery and in their reintegration from prison back to society.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Northampton County Council that the sum of $5,000 shall be transferred from the 2011 Contingency account #05000-76050 and allocated to Stephen’s Place, this 8th day of December 2011.

Mrs. McHale made a motion to also allocate $5,000 to the Red Cross and $5,000 to the Salvation Army.

In response to Mr. Angle’s question as to whether she would be willing to divide the amount if there was more than one Salvation Army in the County, Mrs. McHale indicated she would.

Mr. Dowd seconded the motion.

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

Cusick, “yes” and Ferraro, “yes”.

The motion passed by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Angle made a motion to also allocate $3,000 to the Portland-Upper Mount Bethel Food Pantry.

Mr. McClure seconded the amendment.

Mrs. Ferraro made a motion to also allocate $3,000 to the Nazareth Area Food Bank.

Mr. Dowd made a motion to also allocate $3,000 to the ProJeCT of Easton Food Bank.

Mrs. Thierry seconded the amendments.

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


The motions were passed by a vote of 9-0.

Mr. Cusick called for the vote on the following resolution as amended:

R. 117-2011  WHEREAS, in October 1994, Stephen’s Place (Bethlehem, PA) officially opened its doors to provide residential support services to non-violent adult males coming out of prison with a history of substance abuse. The program helps these men to succeed in their recovery and in their reintegration from prison back to society.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Northampton County Council that the sum of $5,000 shall be transferred from the 2011 Contingency account #05000-76050 and allocated to Stephen’s Place, this 8th day of December 2011.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Northampton County Council that the following sums shall be transferred from
the 2011 Contingency account #05000-76050 and allocated to the organizations so listed, this 8th day of December 2011:

(1) American Red Cross - $5,000
(2) Salvation Army - Bethlehem - $2,500
(3) Salvation Army - Easton - $2,500
(4) Portland/Upper Mt. Bethel Food Pantry - $3,000
(5) Nazareth Area Food Bank - $3,000
(6) Project Easton Food Bank - $3,000


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

Labor Attorney

Mr. Angle advised there had been discussions with regard to the County not having its own labor attorney. He further advised a suggestion was made to cut back one full time and one part Solicitor and bring in a full time Solicitor that had labor negotiation experience.

Mr. Angle introduced the following resolution:

RESOLVED, by the Northampton County Council that the one existing position of Assistant County Solicitor, full-time, CE Grade 4, in the Solicitor’s Office, shall be eliminated, effective January 1, 2012. Further, the former position of Assistant County Solicitor, full-time, shall be reclassified into the new full-time position of Assistant County Solicitor Labor Attorney. Further, the one existing position of Assistant County Solicitor, part-time, shall be eliminated, effective January 1, 2012.

Mr. McClure stated he believed the County was too big for one attorney to handle all of its labor related issues in house. He further stated outside firms had resources to handle multiple issues at one time that a lone person could not handle. He noted he felt the County would be disadvantaged by bringing a labor attorney in house and not taking advantage of expertise
that a firm that had more resources to deal with the exigent issues that arose. He further noted although this action was well intended, he did not think it was a viable solution.

Mr. Angle advised the person who was going to handle labor negotiations could get outside help, if required, but this move would not cost the County any money and get in house a person with labor contract negotiation experience.

Mrs. Ferraro stated her concern was that these positions would be eliminated and the County would not be able to find an attorney to take on that responsibility.

Mr. Dowd advised due to this being presented at such a late time, he felt it should be left for the new members of County Council to decide next year.

In answer to Mr. Cusick’s comment that he believed there was a Request for Proposal (RFP) out, Ms. Patricia Siemiontkowski, Director of Human Resources, advised there was an RFP, but she had not heard from Mr. Terry Beidelman, Deputy Purchasing Manager, what responses had come in.

In response to Mr. Angle’s question as to what the County spent, Ms. Siemiontkowski stated for the year, the County had spent approximately $100,000.

Mr. McClure made a motion to table this resolution.

Mrs. McHale seconded the motion.

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


The motion passed by a vote of 7-2.

Northampton County Gaming Revenue and Economic Redevelopment Authority Liaison Report

Mr. Dietrich advised the last meeting of the Northampton County Gaming Revenue and Economic Redevelopment Authority for
Presentation of Plaques

Mr. Cusick, on behalf of the members of County Council, presented plaques to the outgoing members, Mrs. McHale, Mr. Dowd and Mr. Angle, and thanked them for their many years of service.

Mrs. McHale stated it was hard for her to believe that she had been a member of County Council for 13 years. She further stated it had been rewarding and sometimes difficult, but despite the demands put on each and everyone of them, she believed one of her major accomplishments was saving millions of dollars through the County’s self-insured health care program. She noted she also enjoyed the year she was the first female President, noting it was an honor and privilege and thanked everyone who worked with her to make her job a little easier.

Mrs. McHale advised she was really grateful for the friendships that she had made not only with members of County Council, but throughout the County workforce and the residents of Northampton County should be very proud of them. She further advised she wanted to congratulate her successor, Mr. Kenneth Kraft, and hoped that his tenure in office was as rewarding as hers was.

Mr. Dowd stated he had been a member of County Council for 12 years and it was a remarkable experience. He further stated he would encourage anyone who was at all interested in government to make the transition from sitting on the outside to sitting on the inside. He noted it was a phenomenal learning experience for him and he would not have missed it for the world. He further noted he felt his successor, Mr. Robert Werner, would be an excellent representative for District 2, as well as all the citizens of the County.

Mr. Dowd thanked everyone for their support, especially during his Presidency for four years. He noted one of his biggest accomplishments was getting the Tax Increment Financing for the Route 33 Interchange because that was something that had been on his agenda for at least 20 years.

Mr. Angle advised he enjoyed his time on County Council and his two most memorable accomplishments were the naming of the
Courthouse and hanging the Ten Commandments on the wall when taking a position after the Courts indicated it would take theirs down if the Third Circuit Court of Appeals said they had to. He further advised it had been an enjoyable experience, but sometimes it took someone like him to play the devil’s advocate to get issues out in the open.

Mr. Angle wished everyone good luck in their future endeavors. He stated his successor, Mr. Scott Parsons, was a genuinely nice guy and he welcomed him aboard.

Mr. McClure commented to Mrs. McHale that he would personally miss her fearlessness and her ability to be resolute in the face of fire. He further stated the public would miss how respected she came to be within the internal workings of the County government and how she, because of that respect, was able to do good things for a lot of people that most people would not even know about.

Mr. McClure remarked to Mr. Dowd that he would miss his prayers because they always had the tendency to focus his mind. He further remarked that even when they did not agree, they agreed to be disagreeable, which would also be a loss for the public.

Mr. McClure commented to Mr. Angle that he would miss a worthy adversary when they disagreed on issues and a certain segment of the public would miss a voice for their concerns that were not always heard.

Adjournment

Mrs. McHale made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Cusick seconded the motion.

The motion passed by acclamation.