Easton, Pennsylvania                                      October 16, 2014

A regular meeting of the Northampton County Council was held on the above date with the following present: Margaret L. Ferraro, President; Glenn A. Geissinger, Vice-President; Mathew M. Benol; Kenneth M. Kraft; Lamont G. McClure, Jr.; Scott Parsons; Hayden Phillips; Robert F. Werner; Frank E. Flisser, Clerk to Council, and Philip D. Lauer, Solicitor to Council. Absent was Seth Vaughn.

Prayer

Reverend Frank Terhune, St. Peters Evangelical Lutheran Church, Plainfield Township, led County Council in prayer to open the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Geissinger made the following motion:

Be It Moved By the Northampton County Council that the minutes of the October 2, 2014 meeting shall be approved.

Mr. McClure seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved by voice acclamation.

Consideration of the Administrative Code Article XIII Contract Approval Resolutions - a. Pathology Services for the Coroner’s Office, b. Emergency Generator Project

Mrs. Ferraro stated as Mr. Zachery Lysek, Coroner, had a prior commitment, she was moving this issue up on the agenda. She further stated the County Executive requested County Council adopt a resolution approving three vendor contracts for pathology services for the Coroner’s Office and an amendment to the Emergency Generator project.
Mrs. Ferraro introduced the following resolution:

**Pathology Services for the Coroner’s Office**

R. 93-2014  **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"; and

**WHEREAS**, on September 29, 2014, the Northampton County Council received a request from the County Executive for County Council to adopt a resolution approving a five year contracts at $215,000.00 per year with an expected payout not to exceed $1,075,000.00 for the initial five year term. If an additional five year extension is exercised, the total compensation is estimated at $2,150,000.00. The contracts vendors are PA Medical Consulting, Inc.; Health Network Labs, dba Forensic Pathology Associates and Marianne Hamel, for pathology services for the Coroner’s Office.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Northampton County Council does hereby concur with the recommendation of the County Executive to award contracts to PA Medical Consulting, Inc.; Health Network Labs, dba Forensic Pathology Associates and Marianne Hamel for pathology services for the Coroner’s Office.

**Emergency Generator Project**

R. 94-2014  **WHEREAS**, at the meeting held June 19, 2014, the Northampton County Council adopted Resolution No. 56-2014 which reads as follows:

"Number 56-2014

**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"; and

WHEREAS, Northampton County Administrative Code Article XIII Procurement and Disposition of County Property, Section 13.16 Contracts and Agreements c.(2) requires approval of County Council for "any contract where costs are to be funded with monies outside of the County's General Fund, such as those funded through bonded indebtedness."

WHEREAS, on June 2, 2014, the Northampton County Council received a request from the County Executive for County Council to adopt a resolution approving an eighteen month contract, totaling $105,615.00, with Gillan and Hartmann, Inc. for architectural and engineering services for the design, specification and construction administration for the Emergency Generator Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Northampton County Council does hereby concur with the recommendation of the County Executive to award a contract to Gillan and Hartmann, Inc. for architectural and engineering services for the design, specification and construction administration for the Emergency Generator Project."; and

WHEREAS, on October 9, 2014, the County Council received a request from the County Executive for County Council to adopt a resolution approving an amendment, in the amount of $35,785.00 to the contract for architectural and engineering services for the design, specification and construction administration for the Emergency Generator Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Northampton County Council does hereby concur with the recommendation of the County Executive to approve an amendment, in the amount of $35,785.00, to the contract with Gillan & Hartmann, Inc. for architectural and engineering services for the design, specification and construction administration for the Emergency Generator Project. The new contract total would then equal $141,400.00.

As there were no questions or comments regarding the pathology services resolution, Mrs. Ferraro called for the vote.

The vote: Ferraro, "yes"; Werner, "yes"; Benol, "yes"; Geissinger, "recuse"; Kraft, "yes"; McClure, "yes"; Parsons, "yes" and Phillips, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 7-0-1 recuse.
Mrs. Ferraro asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the Emergency Generator project resolution.

Mr. Richard Young, Director of Public Works, advised this contract amendment was to add services for a survey because when they started the layout of the generators at Gracedale, they could not find any information on the placement of the existing utilities.

In answer to Mr. Phillips' question as to why this ambiguity was not mentioned when the original contract was issued, Mr. Young stated when the contract was originally advertised it was to replace the existing generators at their current locations, however, since then they came up with a plan to relocate the generators from inside the building to a separate outside building.

In response to Mr. Kraft's question as to whether there were any plans from when the land was developed for Gracedale, Mr. Young advised there were some plans, but not for this area.

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

The vote: Ferraro, "yes"; Werner, "yes"; Benol, "no"; Geissinger, "yes"; Kraft, "yes"; McClure, "yes"; Parsons, "yes"; Phillips, "yes" and Werner, "yes".

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 7-1.

**Courtesty of the Floor**

Justice James, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Union Representative stated the crowd was smaller this evening than in the past because employees had to get part-time jobs to supplement their County wages. He further stated they were present because they were concerned about the proposed healthcare plan and he used the word proposed because they still have not received any numbers or rationale to explain it, noting they already dispelled the Affordable Healthcare Act and the Cadillac Tax.

Mr. James advised he heard there should be a fund balance of approximately $30 million by the end of the year so there was no reason why this burden had to be put on the back of the workers. He further advised for three months, he personally
asked, but to date had not received any numbers or conversation that would give a hint as to whether the Administration was either telling the truth or lying.

Mr. James asked what it was going to cost the taxpayer for all the current vacant positions. He stated they were shutting down the academy that trained Corrections Officers so those individuals would now have to go to Elizabethtown and the County would have to bear the cost. He then asked how many more Corrections Officers did the County have to lose before the Prison reached the tipping point and inmates started suing.

Mr. James advised disgruntled employees were going to retire solely because of the healthcare proposal so he wondered what that would do to the pension fund because less people would be contributing to it. He also wondered what it would cost if all of the labor agreements went to arbitration, suggesting it would be easier to negotiate raises and healthcare than to fight negotiators.

Mr. James stated the Administration indicated healthcare cost the County $20 million and had increased by $2.5 million, but how could they trust the numbers. He then asked if the $3 million that came from the casinos was dedicated because if not, the $2.5 million could be taken from there and then the healthcare change did not have to happen.

Mr. James advised the money that was spent on consultants, public relations firms and other entities to better the image of one person could be spent on the employees for their wages and healthcare. He further advised there were many long time employees that have served in the Administration and knew how to run the County and the taxpayers were already paying their salaries so he would expect the Administration to reach out to them and listen to their experience.

Mr. James stated when positions remained unfilled and jobs were not done, he wondered how this Administration was going to answer to the taxpayers. He further stated the County Seal contained the words "justice" and "mercy", but he did not see any justice and mercy being shown and if there was not any justice or mercy, there would be no peace.

Mr. Paul Breaux, Plainfield Township, PA - advised he was the Vice President of the Executive Board of AFSCME Local 1265 and a voting, taxpayer resident of Northampton County. He further advised the message was not getting through to the
County Executive John A. Brown and some members of County Council.

Mr. Breaux stated the situation in this County was disastrous because most of the departments were short staffed. He further stated everyone heard about the Prison being short staffed, but the Juvenile Detention Center was down 10 Youth Care Workers.

Mr. Breaux advised Mr. Brown was worried about numbers in the budget, but the numbers that should concern him were the 26 mandations a week that were occurring at the Juvenile Detention Center because it was opening the County up to a huge liability for a lawsuit if a Youth Care Worker gets injured on the job after working multiple 16 hour shifts a week. He further stated this was negligence on the part of the County Executive and County Council.

Mr. Breaux stated when the healthcare change went into effect next year, the County would not be short ten Youth Care Workers, but 20 because the mandations, over time and on the job injuries would be doubled. He further stated there could not be this many positions vacant in a police or fire department because of public safety issues and these positions were just as important.

Mr. Breaux advised the 911 Center, the Prison and the Juvenile Detention Center supplement each other in serving the public and they deserved to have the most qualified individuals assisting them. He further advised at times, there were only eight people working at the 911 Center serving 200,000 residents.

Mr. Breaux stated with the changes in healthcare plan, the County would lose qualified employees at the 911 Center and he worried that qualifications would have to be reduced in order to fill these positions without good benefits and lower salaries. He further stated with how public this issue had become, every taxpayer would hold Mr. Brown and County Council accountable if they were to lose a family member or friend because they wanted to save some money in the budget.

Mr. Breaux advised this Administration had not shown that these changes would really affect the budget. He further advised they were not for the benefit of the County, but to make one person look good in the public eye. He added he hoped nothing occurred that would cause Mr. Brown or County Council to
regret making this change.

Mr. Sean Carson, 238 North Liberty Street, Nazareth, PA stated he was a County employee at the 911 Center. He further stated most of the employees lived in Northampton County, but everyone was on the same team to serve the residents of the County.

Mr. Carson advised Mr. Brown was successful in private industries so he should know how the internal relationships of an organization had a direct reflection on the services and products it provided not only to its shareholders, but all the stakeholders. He further advised Mr. Brown had little prior political experience, but that was okay because any intelligent person could do the job with assistance from the people who were already there.

Mr. Carson stated no one was arguing the County was not in good financial shape and something had to be fixed, but Mr. Brown’s solution was to blame the employees and use them as scapegoats. He further stated instead of changing the healthcare plan, he would be better off educating the employees on how to use their healthcare plan more efficiently.

Mr. Carson advised the employees were hard working and dedicated who did not work for great wages, but for decent healthcare and retirement. He further advised there were four contracts coming up for negotiations and he wondered how Mr. Brown thought these negotiations were going to go.

Mr. Carson stated offices were short staffed and people were being overworked creating an atmosphere where work was getting backlogged because the employees were not getting paid enough to care anymore and were not being appreciated.

Mr. Carson advised because the office was short staffed and an employee was overworked when someone came in to pay their tax bill, the taxes could get recorded incorrectly so the County would be out of tax money and that person could lose their home. He further advised who was going to explain to someone if they were faced with an emergency and because a worker was so overworked, the information was not entered properly and the result was catastrophic. He noted this was what the employees were responsible for and ultimately what the County Executive and County Council was responsible for.
Mr. Carson stated the County Executive needed to tap into the knowledge of the employees to help cut costs. He further stated the employees were here to help, but he had to help them too.

Ms. Lynda Sweeney - donated her time to Mr. Carson.

Mr. Dan Barnhart - donated his time to Mr. Carson.

Mr. Mike Romig, Bethlehem, PA - advised after being with the County for 27 years, he agreed with the Administration that the taxpayers should be mad, but they should not be mad at the employees because they provided a lot of services for salaries that did not keep up with today's economy or other municipality waste costs. He further advised one quarter of the employees earned less than $30,000 a year and many more earned between $30,000 and $40,000.

Mr. Romig stated the taxpayers should be irate with the past and present Administrations, who have wasted and squandered millions of dollars. He further stated there have been incompetent Administrators who hired incompetent assistants who hired incompetent contractors to do work around the County when they had employees who could have done the job just fine.

Mr. Romig thanked those employees who were in the unions because they were the reason the employees were here today. He advised the taxpayers should be made aware of where their money was really being wasted.

Ms. Shirley O'Brien, Plainfield Township, PA - stated she wanted to address the members of County Council in the hope they cared about the employees and would try to help them. She further stated the County was hurting its citizens, not only its employees so she was asking them to do whatever was necessary to stop this 10% coinsurance, which would devastate them.

Ms. O'Brien advised she was a Clerical Technician and brought home $17,000 a year after eight years of service. She further stated she was not embarrassed or ashamed of that, but maybe the County should be. She wondered if any of the department heads would stand up and let the people know what they were making and what their recent raises were.

Ms. O'Brien stated she knew many employees would be retiring or leaving for better paying jobs because of the change in the healthcare plan. She then asked Mr. Brown if he was
thinking about the impact a shortage of employees would have, noting a shortage of 911 operators could mean the difference between life and death; a shortage of Sheriffs would jeopardize safety and a shortage of nurses could result in the residents of Gracedale not receiving the care they deserved.

Ms. O'Brien advised many County services would be impacted in a negative manner due to understaffing so she wondered who was going to accept the blame because it would not be the employees fault for not being able to do their job.

Ms. O'Brien stated many employees were offended at the Open Enrollment meeting by Mr. Colin Healey's statement that "the employees were not subpoenaed to work here", which was made in response to questions the employees were asking about the changes and wondered why such meetings were held if questions could not be asked. She further stated it was true it was the employees' decision to work here, but it was mostly due to the benefits and now they were being taken away.

Ms. O'Brien advised employees should feel appreciated, but that was not the case at the County. She further advised she believed they were a valuable asset to the County and were trying to serve the public the best they could. She noted morale was very low, employee attitudes were changing and many were leaving due to the changes being made.

Ms. O'Brien stated she hoped that the members of County Council would understand that the employees would be devastated if this change in insurance went into effect and asked they do whatever was in their power to stop it.

Ms. Donna Dzojko, Moore Township, PA - advised tomorrow she would be celebrating her 37th year working for the County and she had always been very proud to work for the County, but things were changing. She further advised long term employees were not looked at for their knowledge and experience, but felt they were being forced out. She noted it was true no one was forcing them to stay, but they wanted to stay because their jobs were their life and at Gracedale, the residents have become their family.

Ms. Dzojko stated she was here seeking answers to concerns that have been arising to assist employees in determining what their future plans would be for them and their families. She further stated she heard changes were coming to Gracedale through a ten step plan at Gracedale, but she was not familiar with it.
Ms. Dzojko advised she heard there would be no wage increase and a lot of employees have been through that before, but in the past, they have also received small increases just to let them know they were worth something. She further advised the healthcare plan changes would devastate the employees and their families.

Ms. Dzojko stated there have been rumors that vacations would be cut to two weeks, personal days may be cut completely, sick days may be cut in half and longevity, which was a reward for employees remaining with the County for a long period of time, may be cut. She further stated it was also rumored that any time that was currently on the books would not be available next year. She noted she would like to know if these rumors were fact or fiction because they affected the lives and decisions of the employees.

Ms. Sherry Simons - deferred her time to Mr. Breaux.

Mr. Craig Gardner, Jr. - deferred his time to Mr. James.

Ms. Bonnie Hapstack - deferred her time to Mr. James.

Sister Virginia Longcope, Executive Director, Stephens Place, Bethlehem, PA - advised she wanted to thank County Council for the $5,000 they received last year. She further advised her organization was for men coming out of prison with a history of substance abuse and they served approximately 10-12 men each year. She noted all their money, which was received through grants, private foundations and donations, was used to help these men get back into the community.

Mr. Stephen Barron - stated after Mr. Brown presented his budget at the Human Services Building and announced the changes to the health insurance plan, he asked him about some of the numbers and projections relating to healthcare and asked where the changes in the healthcare costs and savings actually came from. He further stated Mr. Brown replied he had hundreds of conversations, e-mails and correspondences and when he asked if he would be willing to share them with him, he replied not at this time. He noted he filed a Right to Know Request and should be receiving them on November 16, 2014, which he would share with County Council.

Mr. Barron advised several employees mentioned to him that there were people visiting them saying they represented Mr. Brown and the County, but they never saw them before. He
further advised one of his lead auditors informed him there was a contract for $24,000 that was done via a purchase order for a firm called the C3 Group and when he asked what they did, he was told they counseled on healthcare.

Mr. Barron stated he did some research and discovered they were actually paid $58,000 with no Executive Order. He further stated he pulled the contracts and found they should have gone out as an Executive Order and should have been bid because they clearly fell under the definition of professional services.

Mr. Barron advised he spoke to the people in Procurement, who indicated they were not aware there was an additional $34,000 spent on these services so he was having his solicitor look into whether this was legal. He further advised he also found another company called Concord Financial Services was paid $22,800 to look at how the County paid vendors, which was the job of his office and those reports were on their website.

Mr. Barron stated by his calculations, the County had spent more than $100,000 in consultant fees. He further stated he cut his budget by 10% as requested, but the County Executive had spent ten times more in ten months than his operational budget had ever been in consultant fees.

Mr. Barron stated Mr. Brown told the employees they had to pitch in to cut finances, however, any fiscal conservative would look at his spending with regard to consultants and find it galling especially when they elected him to do the task that he was currently paying people for illegally.

Ms. Mary Eckhardt, Moore Township, PA – advised she was a taxpayer and she was present to ask County Council to concentrate on the money the County had available. She further advised she was on a fixed income and had to pay for health insurance that had a $2,300 deductible.

Ms. Eckhardt stated she felt sorry for the young people today, but times were not easy and everyone should pull their weight so she was here to ask them to please try to pull your weight. She further stated she loved Gracedale and many people fought very hard to keep it in the hands of the County. She noted they have helped to keep their jobs so now help them to pay for their jobs.
Ms. Eckhardt advised she was aware that they had made concessions, but so have a lot of people who were working today. She further advised they all had to make sacrifices and the young people coming up have to face insurmountable debt without adding to it.

Ms. Eckhardt stated she knew it was very hard negotiating contracts because she was a union organizer and understood what a union could do, but she was asking the union to extend their hand and work with the County as hard as they could so the people of the County would not have to sacrifice. She further stated no matter what happens, she knew the employees would still do the best job possible because they were people who gave their all. She noted she knew the employees were sincere in what they were doing, but she was asking as a taxpayer and as a retired person on a fixed income to work together for the betterment of the County.

Mr. Breaux - advised he understood the plight of the taxpayers on fixed income, but when there was an increase in services in the County someone had to pay for them. He further advised the taxpayers voted to keep Gracedale and won, but that was an increase tax burden as well.

Mr. Breaux stated other people were working to pay for their healthcare, but he had not heard of anyone else paying $13,200 for coinsurance. He further stated a resolution was introduced at the last meeting for a $500 coinsurance and as a representative of the union, they would be willing to discuss it.

Mr. Breaux advised the union was willing to negotiate and have presented ideas to Mr. Brown. He further advised he sent an e-mail to Ms. Ferraro indicating where the County could save $150,000, but no one was listening. He noted two thirds of the employees lived in Northampton County and were taxpayers and they cared about what happened to it.

Mr. James - stated it was time for a decision to be made and someone needed to reach out to this union and have a conversation about negotiations. He further stated neither the employees nor the taxpayers could afford things in the future when they are faced with a 75% tax increase.

Mr. James advised Mr. Brown was desecrating the County by not listening to the ideas of the employees and they were tired of talking to the wall. He further advised the holidays were
coming and he could at least show some compassion. He noted they needed a commitment tonight from someone that they were willing to talk to the union so people could be at ease when they came to work.

Mr. James stated it was time to change the culture. He further stated there were two paths and Mr. Brown was going down the wrong path.

Ms. Paula Kenderski - advised she was a worker with Children and Youth. She further advised she had great respect for the Corrections Officers and the nurses at Gracedale, but they were short staffed as well and they had so many cases coming in, they could not keep up with them.

Ms. Kenderski stated she understood the feelings of the taxpayers, but the employees were not exempt from paying taxes. She further stated they did receive some reimbursements from the State for their salaries and benefits, but they still had to pay contributions, deductibles, copays and coinsurance.

Ms. Kenderski advised she was asking County Council to look at the budget and come up with an amendment so the employees would not be burdened with this change. She further advised the employees were not saying there should be no changes, but when they did not receive a raise, then have their pay cut by $13,000 and have everyone telling them to suck it up or learn to budget, it was not fair.

Mr. Tom Davis - stated he was President of AFSCME Local 2549 that represented the Corrections Officers. He further stated when Mr. Bernie O'Hare asked Mr. Brown if he planned to fill the staffing levels at the Prison or other divisions, he replied he was not just going to throw bodies at them.

Mr. Davis advised Mr. Brown went on to say that he spoke to him and made proposals with regard to the staffing levels and he rejected them and indicated he would address that at negotiations, but he never had a private meeting with Mr. Brown so that never happened. He further advised Mr. Brown had said the employees were the County's most valuable asset and then he called them bodies so that just showed how insensitive he was toward his employees.
Ms. Wendy Wagner - advised she had been employed at Gracedale for 28 years and she wanted to speak for the housekeepers and Nurses Aide. She further advised she was a Nurses Aide for 26 years and was now a housekeeper and she, along with many of her coworkers, were wracked with pain, but went to work every day.

Ms. Wagner stated the County Executive could take her benefits away from her, but he could not take away her pride or the pride of any of the employees. She further stated the employees of Gracedale have given back and were willing to work with the Administration, but they wanted stability.

Ms. Wagner advised there was so much uncertainty, disgust and frustration at Gracedale that people did not want to be there and the valuable employees were going to leave. She further advised the younger people coming in did not have the same work ethic as the older generation.

Mr. Michael Stocker, Easton, PA - stated he was a Junior at Lafayette College. He further stated the cost of education was skyrocketing and he had many friends who have graduated with debt in the six figures and no job.

Mr. Stocker advised he was only 21 years old and did not have a family to support, but he wanted the employees to realize they had a job. He further advised unemployment in the country had been horrible for the last six years and there were people who were worse off than they were.

Ms. Donna Reeck - stated she worked for Children and Youth because the job she had in Developmental Programs was privatized. She asked if Mr. Brown was prepared to have members of his family receive less than stellar service because she was not.

Ms. Reeck advised she had spent half her salary on medical expenses and if she were to have a bad medical year, she would be homeless so she asked Mr. Brown not to do that to her or anyone else.

County Executive Report

Mr. John A. Brown, County Executive, stated he did not have anything to report.
Public Hearing on the Northampton County Council Salary Ordinance

Mrs. Ferraro advised the following ordinance was introduced by Messrs. Geissinger and Phillips at the meeting held on October 2, 2014:

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR COMPENSATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

WHEREAS, the families of Northampton County, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States of America are all facing a difficult economic time; and

WHEREAS, these families cannot continue to sustain public sector wages and benefits that cause the elderly, the hard working middle class and others to support a system that drives up taxes without regard for these economic conditions; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of elected officials to ensure that government functions at an optimum level of service at the minimal tax burden possible; and

WHEREAS, County Council must first look to itself to ensure it is a prudent steward of the public funds; and

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, 2016, the members of the Northampton County Council shall be compensated on a per annum basis in the amount of eight thousand dollars ($8,000.00). 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.
Public Hearing

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

There were no respondents.

Mrs. Ferraro stated at the suggestion of the County Council Solicitor, an amendment to the ordinance was prepared to clarify the intent of ordinance. In addition, a minor amendment had to be made to the title of the ordinance to correct a previous omission.

Mrs. Ferraro introduced the following amendments:

WHEREAS, at the meeting held October 2, 2014, Glenn Geissinger and Hayden Phillips introduced Bill 661-2014, the ordinance titled, AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR COMPENSATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE NORTHAMPTON COUNTY.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, bill 661-2014 shall be amended as indicated hereafter (sections marked with strikeout have been deleted, and sections marked with bold underline have been added):

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR COMPENSATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE NORTHAMPTON COUNTY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, the families of Northampton County, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States of America are all facing a difficult economic time; and

WHEREAS, these families cannot continue to sustain public sector wages and benefits that cause the elderly, the hard working middle class and others to support a system that drives up taxes without regard for these economic conditions; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of elected officials to ensure that government functions at an optimum level of service at the minimal tax burden possible; and

WHEREAS, County Council must first look to itself to ensure it is a prudent steward of the public funds; and
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, 2016, the members of the Northampton County Council shall be compensated on a per annum basis in the amount of eight thousand dollars ($8,000.00). 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. The change in compensation set forth herein shall not affect the compensation of any Council members during their current term of office."

Mrs. Ferraro stated the amendments were accepted by the authors of the ordinance so the ordinance shall read as follows:

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR COMPENSATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE NORTHAMPTON COUNTY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, the families of Northampton County, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States of America are all facing a difficult economic time; and

WHEREAS, these families cannot continue to sustain public sector wages and benefits that cause the elderly, the hard working middle class and others to support a system that drives up taxes without regard for these economic conditions; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of elected officials to ensure that government functions at an optimum level of service at the minimal tax burden possible; and
WHEREAS, County Council must first look to itself to ensure it is a prudent steward of the public funds; and

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 ORDEIGNED AND ENACTED by the Northampton County Council that:

I. Effective January 1, 2016, the members of the Northampton County Council shall be compensated on a per annum basis in the amount of eight thousand dollars ($8,000.00). 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. The change in compensation set forth herein shall not affect the compensation of any Council members during their current term of office.

Mr. McClure made a motion to table the ordinance.

Mr. Kraft seconded the motion.

Mrs. Ferraro called for a vote on the motion.

The vote: McClure, "yes"; Kraft, "yes"; Geissinger, "no"; Parsons, "yes"; Phillips, "no"; Werner, "yes"; Benol, "no" and Ferraro, "yes".

The motion passed by a vote of 5-3.

Mr. McClure advised he made the motion to table the ordinance because at the last meeting, Mrs. Ferraro made a speech about compromise and a compromise was reached to pass a resolution relating to the healthcare changes. He further advised she made a request for the County Executive to negotiate with County Council and the employees in order to find a way to lessen the impact of these overnight unilaterally imposed insurance increases, but he was still refusing.
Mr. McClure stated he did not think County Council should conduct any business and table everything that was not essential until Mr. Brown agreed to negotiate with County Council and the employees at least regarding healthcare.

Consideration of the General Purpose Authority St. Luke's Hospital Project Resolution

Mrs. Ferraro advised the Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development requested County Council adopt a resolution pertaining to projects being considered by St. Luke's Hospital. She further advised the General Purpose Authority had arranged for low cost financing for the various projects being considered by St. Luke's Hospital.

Mrs. Ferraro stated one of the conditions of obtaining the low cost financing was that County Council certified the particular project was desirable for the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the County, noting this was accomplished by the adoption of a resolution. She further stated the County's full faith, credit or taxing powers were not pledged as a guarantee for the funds being borrowed by St. Luke's Hospital. She added it was important to note that St. Luke's itself was the guarantor for the financing being arranged.

Mrs. Ferraro introduced the following resolution:

APPROVING THE FINANCING BY NORTHAMPTON COUNTY GENERAL PURPOSE AUTHORITY OF PROJECTS FOR SAINT LUKE'S HOSPITAL OF BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA AND ST. LUKE’S HOSPITAL – ANDERSON CAMPUS, AND DECLARING THAT IT IS DESIRABLE FOR THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE AREA TO BE SERVED BY THE FACILITIES OF THE HOSPITAL TO HAVE SUCH FACILITIES FINANCED THROUGH THE AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, the Northampton County General Purpose Authority (the "Authority") is a body corporate and politic existing under the provisions of the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Act 53 Pa. Cons. Stat. §§ 5601-5622, as amended (the “Act”) by the County Council (the "County Council") of the County of Northampton, Pennsylvania (the "County"), with all the general powers granted by the Act for the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the area; and
WHEREAS, the Act vests the Authority, inter alia, with the power of financing projects for the benefit of hospitals and health centers; and

WHEREAS, the Authority, at the request of Saint Luke’s Hospital of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation and St. Luke’s Hospital – Anderson Campus (collectively, the “Hospital”), proposes to undertake all or a portion of a project (the “2014 Project”) consisting of: (a) the acquisition, equipping, installation, and implementation of and/or additions to (including replacements and upgrades) electronic medical records system software and equipment, to include, without limitation: (i) a patient kiosk system; (ii) software license purchases; (iii) in house and third party software implementation and development costs; (iv) associated consulting costs; (v) interest expenses and costs related to software development and implementation; (vi) custom configuration and interface costs; (vii) contingency and application costs and (viii) various other software, equipment, furnishings, facilities, systems, and construction and/or improvements related to the installation of the equipment described above, and such other related additional or substituted software, equipment, furnishings, facilities, and systems; (b) certain other information technology equipment and software and medical equipment and (c) the payment of certain costs and expenses in connection with the Lease Transaction; and

WHEREAS, the Hospital has requested that the Authority provide tax exempt lease financing in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed $30,000,000 (the “Lease Transaction”), estimated to be sufficient to pay the costs of the 2014 Project; and

WHEREAS, the Act permits an authority to undertake the financing of hospital or health care projects for public hospitals, non-profit corporation health centers or non-profit hospital corporations serving the public which may duplicate or compete with existing enterprises serving substantially the same purposes provided that a declaration is made by the municipality which organized an authority for such a project that it is desirable for the health, safety and welfare of the people in the area to be served by the facilities to have such facilities provided by, or financed through, an authority; and
WHEREAS, the County Council, who is familiar with the Hospital, has determined that the Hospital is a public hospital, non-profit corporation health center or non-profit hospital corporation serving the public and is concerned about improving the health, safety and welfare of the people of the County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

1. The Authority’s undertaking of 2014 Project is hereby approved, it being understood that such approval shall not, directly or indirectly, obligate the taxing power of the County or otherwise obligate the County in any way whatsoever, and is given for the sole purpose of complying with the provisions of the Act relating to the undertaking of the 2014 Project by the Authority.

2. It is hereby declared desirable for the health, safety and welfare of the people in the area served by the Hospital to have the 2014 Project and the project facilities financed through the Authority and the Authority is hereby requested and authorized to undertake the financing of the 2014 Project for the benefit of the Hospital through the Lease Transaction.

3. The proper officers and other personnel of the County and the Authority are hereby authorized and empowered to take all such further actions and execute such additional documents as they may deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

4. Any resolutions or part of resolutions conflicting with the provisions of this resolution are hereby repealed insofar as the same affect this resolution.

Mr. McClure made a motion to table this resolution.

Mr. Kraft seconded the motion.

Mrs. Ferraro called for the vote on the motion.


Due to a lack of a majority vote, the motion failed.
Mrs. Ferraro called for the vote on the resolution:

The vote: Ferraro, "yes"; Kraft, "no"; McClure, "no"; Parsons, "no"; Phillips, "yes"; Werner, "no"; Benol, "no" and Geissinger, "no".

The resolution failed by a vote of 2-6.

Mrs. Ferraro advised this had never happened in the history of this County Council and could cause a huge multi-million dollar project of St. Luke’s Hospital to come to a halt. She further advised the County received hundreds of thousands of dollars from St. Luke’s Hospital and other agencies to whom the County provided this service and she did not know what the repercussions would be with the financing for St. Luke’s Hospital.

Consideration of the Human Services Personnel Request

Mrs. Ferraro stated the Department of Human Resources asked County Council to approve the reclassification of a Developmental Programs Administrative Support Division position of Budget Analyst I position to the position of Accountant I.

Mr. Kraft introduced the following resolution:

RESOLVED, by the Northampton County Council that the position of Budget Analyst I, pay grade HS-35, salary range $38,111 to $62,546, in the Department of Human Services, shall be reclassified to the position of Accountant I, pay grade HS-35, salary range $38,111 to $62,546, effective the 20th day of October 2014.

Mr. McClure made a motion to table this resolution.

Mr. Kraft seconded the motion.

Mrs. Ferraro called for the vote on the motion.

The vote: McClure, "yes"; Kraft, "yes"; Geissinger, "yes"; Parsons, "yes"; Phillips, "no"; Werner, "yes"; Benol, "no" and Ferraro, "no".

The motion passed by a vote of 5-3.
Adjournment

Mrs. Ferraro made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

The motion to adjourn passed unanimously by acclamation.

______________________________
Frank B. Flisser
Clerk to Council