

October 5, 2009

INITIATIVE OF FREEHOLDER BOARD'S STAFF WILL CUT COSTS

Licensing of Staff as Notaries Public Will Save County Approximately \$30,000 to \$50,000 Annually

(Newark, NJ) – During a brief ceremony held recently in the Office of the Essex County Clerk at the Hall of Records, seven members of the Freeholder Board's staff and two staff members from the Office of the Essex County Administrator were sworn-in as Notaries Public by County Clerk Christopher J. Durkin. This step, initiated by the Freeholder Board's staff, will enable the County to save \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year in notary service fees previously paid to area newspapers.



From left to right: Maritza DeJesus, Jessica Flores, Lillian Torres, Jeffrey Cora, Bernice Derrick, County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., Kathy Brown, Deputy Freeholder Clerk Debra Marvel, Freeholder President Blonnie R. Watson, and Freeholder Clerk Deborah Davis Ford. On the far right is County Clerk Christopher J. Durkin, who issued the oath.

State statutes require the County to advertise a host of documents (i.e. ordinances, resolutions, contracts, bids, requests for proposal) and public notices (i.e. meeting schedules) in local newspapers, and to retain proof that they were, in fact, advertised. Those "proofs" have taken the form of notarized "Affidavits of Publication", for which the County had paid \$85 or \$15 per affidavit, depending upon the newspaper. By having staff members licensed as Notaries Public, Freeholder Board staff may now notarize affidavits for the Administration, and the County Administrator's staff members may notarize affidavits for the Freeholder Board, thereby completely eliminating the notary expenses. Since 2005, these costs have ranged from a high of \$56,000 in 2007 to a low of \$26,000 in 2008.

"During these very, very difficult fiscal times", said Freeholder President Blonnie R. Watson, "we are always looking for ways to save taxpayer dollars and do more with less." She went on to say, "I am so proud of our staff for taking the initiative to look anew at some of the daily office tasks we do by rote, and for identifying this opportunity to save money."

"We commend Freeholder President Blonnie Watson and her staff for identifying how the County can reduce its recurring cost of publishing legal notices," said Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., who attended the ceremony. "Licensing our employees as notaries public and having them certify the publication of our legal notices is a simple way of saving money by providing a service ourselves."

The following County employees were sworn-in as Notaries Public: Freeholder Clerk Deborah Davis Ford, Deputy Freeholder Clerk Debra Marvel, Kathy Brown, Jeffrey Cora, Maritza DeJesus, Bernice Derrick and Lillian Torres, all from the Freeholder Board's staff, as well as Jessica Flores and Laura Toombs of the County Administrator's staff.

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