

Saturday, 10 A.M. October 26. 1929

A special meeting of the Board of Freeholders was held in the office of County Clerk John A Ernst; this morning to begin the investigation into the causes of the fire which partially destroyed the County Court House at 4.45 this morning and to examine the insurance policies held on the building by the County.

Present there were Director U. S. Grant, Freeholders Applegate and Mathis; County Treasurer T. B. Grammer, County Counsel W. H. Jayne and Clerk Wred G. Bunnell.

The affair was discussed from every angle and it was decided that the work of rehabilitating the Court House should begin as soon as a settlement can be made with the insurance companies.

The following resolution was introduced by Mr. Mathis who moved its adoption: Mr. Applegate seconded the motion.

WHEREAS a fire occurred at about 4.45 A. M. to-day partially destroying the County Court House Building.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean that the Director and Clerk of this Board give notice in writing of the loss resulting from said fire to the following insurance companies:

Royal Insurance Company
Queen Insurance Company
Glens Falls Insurance Company
Standard Fire Insurance Company
Travelers Fire Insurance Company
Home Insurance Company
Insurance Company Of North America.

and that the property be protected from further damage and an inventory and estimate of the loss be made.

Adopted on roll call;

Ayes:- Mr. Applegate, Mr. Grant. Mr. Mathis.

Nays:- None.

The Board recessed to October 28 to continue the investigation.

Fred G. Bunnell

Clerk.

Monday, October 28, 1929.

The Board of Chosen Freeholders were in special session on the above date to continue the investigation into the causes of the fire at the Court House on October 26, and to ascertain if possible from whence emanated the stories published in Metropolitan Newspapers that the Court House had been used for some time for drinking and petting parties.

Interviews on the subject had been attributed to Chief C. C. Wills of the Fire Department, and to Warden Wm. L. Liming of the County Jail, Chief Clerk John L. Burdge of Sheriff Holman's office.

Both Chief Wills and Warden Liming appeared and gave testimony, the testimony being taken stenographically by Mrs. Mary Elverson, Stenographer of the Common Pleas Court, and all testimony being given under oath.

At the beginning of the session this resolution was introduced by Clerk F. G. Bunnell, who prepared it.

WHEREAS on Saturday, October 26, 1929, at 4.45 A.M. a fire occurred in the Ocean County Court House at Toms River, New Jersey, at which considerable damage was done to the property of the Taxpayers of the County of Ocean

AND WHEREAS it is the opinion of this Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean that incalculable damage would have resulted had it not been for the prompt and efficient services performed by the members of the Toms River Fire Department consisting of Company No. 1 and Company No. 2

WHEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the thanks of this Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean be and they are hereby tendered to the respective companies and that they be commended for the prompt response to the alarm, and the efficient and able manner in which they subdued the fire without causing unnecessary damage to the County Buildings.

AN BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of this Board be directed to spread this resolution in full on the minutes of the Board and that copies of the resolution be sent to the two companies and to the newspapers of Ocean County.

Adopted on roll call:
Ayes: - Mr. Applegate, Mr. Grant, Mr. Mathis.
Nays: - None

Chief Wills was sworn first and testified as follows:
(This record is made from a transcript of the tes of the testimony
taken by Mrs Elverson, Court Stenographer, and is a true and correct
copy. Fred G. Buhell, Clerk)

Clayton C. Wills, being duly sworn according to law
upon his oath deposes and says:-

Examination by Mr. Jayne:

Q: Mr. Wills, you are a resident of Toms River, and you are Chief
of the Toms River Department, are you not? A. Yes, sir.

Q: Were you Chief of the Fire Department and acting as such, at the
time of the fire which occurred in the Court House at Toms River
on the morning of October 26, 1929? A: Yes, sir.

Q: You were present at that fire, were you? A: Yes, sir.

Q: Have you, Mr. Wills, read in particular a newspaper article
which appeared in the "Philadelphia Inquirer" of the issue of
October 27, 1929, relating to this fire, and which your name is men-
tioned-- A. No, I have not read it.

Q: I show you the article to which I refer. (Newspaper presented
to witness) A. I have not my glasses with me.

(Clerk reads article to witness)

Q: Did you state to a representative of this newspaper that the
basement had never been locked at night in the fifty years of the
buildings existence? A: No, sir.

Q: Have you any knowledge that the Court House building had been
used as a spot for young people to resort or remain for purposes
of drinking? A. Positively not.

Q: Did you state to a representative of the "Philadelphia Inquirer"
that the fire was undoubtedly caused by a cigarette stub that had
been carelessly thrown away in the basement of the Court House
building? A. No, sir.

BY MR. APPLICANT.

Q: The basement had nothing but a coal bin and a couple of furnaces
there? A. That's all.

BY MR. JAYNE:

Q: The article to which I have referred also states that the fire-
men upon entering the building found evidences of these nocturnal
trysts, or, in other words, evidences of the congregation of young
people there. To your knowledge did the firemen find any such
evidence? A. I never heard of it til I heard someone read

It out of the paper in Asbury Park on Sunday.

Q: This article to which I have referred also states that the Firemen upon entering the building found cigarette stubs, empty gin bottles, and other signs of the use to which this part of the old Court House had been put. To your knowledge was any such evidence found? A. Not so far as I know

Q. Have you any knowledge or information that the Court House building had been used by young people as a place where they could congregate and drink and make love? A. No, sir. I never heard of it till I heard it read out of the papers since the fire.

Q: Upon your investigation of this fire did you discover that there had been any fire in the basement of the Court House building?

A. I did not. That was not the starting point; of course it burned down. I will give it to you as I found it if you want me to. I was not the first on the spot, Number Two Company was the first one there. When I came in three of my men were in the Court House with a line of hose; they asked me where they should take in the hose and I said "Wait a minute". I came through the alley there and looked through the northeast window on the first floor. Not a sign of any light. I came up the stairs to the northeast window on the second story, to the door there, and it was all ablaze and the flames bursting through the door, and I went back and called them there. That was all aflame and the blaze was going out the top of the cupola.

BY MR. GRANT:

Q: That was the old Court room and the judges office? A. Yes, the old court room and I guess it was the judge's room.

Clayton C. Wills, JS,

At the conclusion of Mr. Wills' testimony, the Board decided to adjourn until the next day. Oct. 29, when the other witnesses could be present.

It was decided. Following a question by the Clerk that the typing of the entire testimony in the hearing would not be necessary, as it would probably be a repetition of what had gone before.

On motion the Board adjourned .

Fred G. Bunnell, Clerk.

A recess meeting of the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean was held on the above date with Director Grant presiding and Mr. Applegate and Mr. Mathis present at roll call.

The meeting opened by County Counsel Jayne taking charge of the investigation of the stories concerning petting and drinking parties in the Court House.

The first witness called was John L. Burdige, Chief Clerk in the Sheriff's office. I. J. ...

Toms River, N.J. November 19, 1929

A regular meeting of the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean was held on the above date with Director Grant presiding and Mr. Applegate and Mr. Mathis present at roll call.

The Bill Committee reported as follows:

WHEREAS, we the Bill Committee, have this day audited and approved bills in the following accounts and for the amounts as set opposite each appropriation as follows; Amounting to \$18,268.62.

Courts...\$609.06; Jail and Board of Prisoners...\$94.30;
Coroners...44.24; Elections...\$5,231.44; Stationary and Printing...
\$5.50; Contigent Expenses...\$37.09; Fox Bounties...\$12.00; Lights
and Fuel...\$252.08; Krippled Kiddies...\$100.00; Public Buildings
and Grounds...\$397.60; Expenses County Officers...\$45.78; New
Bridges...\$249.95; Repairs to Bridges and Railings...\$83.08;
Road Repairs...\$7,251.46; New County Roads...\$3,871.29; Imp. to
Municipal Roads...\$31.75.

NOW WHEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean that the Director be and he is hereby authorized and instructed to approve each and every one of the aforesaid bills.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Collector of the County of Ocean be and he is hereby authorized and directed to pay each and every one of the aforesaid bills when they shall have been approved by the said Director.

H. Applegate,

E. Moss Mathis.

U. S. Grant.

Bill Committee.

The report was adopted on roll call;

Ayes:- Mr. Applegate, Mr. Grant, Mr. Mathis.

Nays:- None.

This resolution was presented.

WHEREAS, due to the partial destruction by fire and water of the Court House of the County of Ocean; and

WHEREAS it is necessary to repair said Court House and also necessary to employ the services of an architect.

THHEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean that P.P Elkinton, Architect of

Toms River be and his services are hereby retained to prepare the necessary plans and specifications for the repair and remodeling of said Court House.

Adopted on roll call;

Ayes:- Mr. Applegate, Mr. Grant. Mr. Mathis.

Nays:- None.

On motion of Mr. Mathis seconded by Mr. Applegate the appointment of Miss Dorothy Irons by Sheriff Holman as clerk in his office to succeed C. Paul Jones, resigned, was ratified and approved by the Board on a Viva voce vote.

On motion of Mr. Applegate seconded by Mr. Mathis the chairman of the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee was authorized to reclaim all possible from Court House fire.

A bill was presented by The Finex Press, signed by Judge A. G. Callagher, for \$150.00 for stationary for the Court, including letter heads, \$90.00; brief covers, \$20.00; and Court Calendars \$40.00.

It was passed and ordered paid on roll call;

Ayes:- Mr. Applegate, Mr. Grant. Mr. Mathis.

Nays:- None.

The following Temporary Note was presented and adopted on roll call:

WHEREAS, by resolution of the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean, duly adopted on September 6, 1929, there was appropriated the sum of Forty Five Thousand Dollars to pay the cost of the improvement of a Bridge In Berkeley Township in the County of Ocean, and known as the South Channel Bridge, including engineering, legal and incidental fees in connection therewith, said sum to be funded and raised by the issuance and sale of temporary improvement notes of the County of Ocean, bearing interest at a rate not to exceed six per centum per annum.

AND WHEREAS, it appears that there is necessary to be raised at this time the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars to partially and temporarily finance the cost of said improvement.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean, that the proper officers of the County be and they are hereby authorized and directed to make, execute and sell a temporary improvement note of the County of Ocean in the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars to be dated November 19, 1929

Toms River, N.J. January 7, 1930

A regular meeting of the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean was held on the above date with Director Mathis presiding and Mr. Applegate and Mr. Grant present at roll call.

The minutes of the previous meetings were approved as read.

It was decided by motion that the sub contract let by Decker and Canning, for shoulder work on the Menahawkin-Cedar Bridge job be approved subject to the approval of the State Highway Commission, and when Engineer and Clerk of this Board have received copy of contract.

On motion the matter of the Right of Way near Mrs Wags at Seaside Park be referred to County Engineer and County Counsel for adjustment.

Former Freeholder Wm. L. Butler and J. Willets Berry, President of Beach Haven Exchange Club, led a delegation of citizens before the Board in the interest of concrete roads on Long Beach. The delegation was assured that roads would be built there when funds were available.

The following resolution was presented:

WHEREAS, The Ocean County Court House at Toms River on October 26, 1929 was damaged by fire to the extent of \$20,000.00;

AND WHEREAS, it therefore becomes necessary that repairs and alterations be made to the said Court House, and to that end plans and specifications have been prepared therefore by Paul P. Elkinton, Architect, of Toms River,

AND WHEREAS, these plans and specifications have been inspected this day by this Board in regular session.

WHEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the said plans and specifications as presented and inspected are hereby approve and adopted and the Clerk of this Board is directed and authorized to advertise

for bids in the following papers: Point Pleasant Leader, Lakewood Citizen, Beach Haven Times, New Jersey Courier and Toms River Sun

for two weeks and that bids shall be received by this Board on Tuesday, January 28, at 11 A.M. at the Court House, Toms River.

Adopted on roll call;

Ayes:- Mr. Applegate, Mr. Grant, Mr. Mathis.

Nays:- None.

W H E R E A S this Board has duly advertised in manner and form as required by law for bids for the general construction work in restoring the Court House building in accordance with the plans and specifications prepared therefor by P. P. Elkington, Architect, and heretofore duly approved by this Board; and

W H E R E A S the following bids have this day been received for said general construction work pursuant to said advertisement:

Bucher & Stoney -	\$ 12,432.00
Charles Newman -	\$ 15,465.00
Fred T. Gaskill -	\$ 12,500.00
Herman Fuhr -	\$ 12,335.00

NOW THEREFORE BE IT R E S O L V E D by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean that the bid of Herman Fuhr, he being the lowest responsible bidder for the general construction work, be and the same is hereby accepted; and

BE IT FURTHER R E S O L V E D that the County Treasurer be and he is hereby authorized and directed to return the certified checks to all unsuccessful bidders except the checks of Herman Fuhr and Bucher & Stoney, being the two lowest bidders, which checks the County Treasurer is hereby directed to retain until the said Herman Fuhr shall execute a formal written contract in conformity with his said bid and furnish the requisite bond, whereupon said checks shall be returned to said bidders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director and Clerk of this Board be and they are hereby authorized and empowered to execute the said contract for and in behalf of the County of Ocean.

WHEREAS this Board has duly advertised in manner and form as required by law for bids for the electrical work in restoring the Court House building in accordance with the plans and specifications prepared therefor by P. P. Elkington, Architect, and heretofore duly approved by this Board; and

WHEREAS the following bids have this day been received for said electrical work pursuant to said advertisement:

J. Wesley Brower	-	\$ 622.00
Carleton F. Elwell	-	\$ 562.00
Grimm Electric Shop	-	\$ 615.00

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean that the bid of Carleton F. Elwell, he being the lowest responsible bidder for the electrical work, be and the same is hereby accepted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Treasurer be and he is hereby authorized and directed

to return the certified checks to all unsuccessful bidders except the checks of Carleton F. Elwell and Grimm Electric Shop, being the two lowest bidders, which checks the County Treasurer is hereby directed to retain until the said Carleton F. Elwell shall execute a formal written contract in conformity with his said bid and furnish the requisite bond, whereupon said checks shall be returned to said bidders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director and Clerk of this Board be and they are hereby authorized and empowered to execute the said contract for and in behalf of the County of Ocean.

WHEREAS this Board has duly advertised in manner and form as required by law for bids for plumbing and heating required in restoring the Court

House building in accordance with the plans and specifications prepared therefor by P. P. Elkington, Architect, and heretofore duly approved by this Board; and

W H E R E A S the following bids have this day been received for the said plumbing and heating work pursuant to said advertisement:

David Carlson-	Plumbing	-	\$ 2,311.60
	Heating	-	310.00
	Heating (Alternate)	-	558.40
Sherman & Tompkins-	Plumbing	-	\$ 2,649.00
	Heating	-	396.00
	Heating (Alternate)	-	
Andrew Van Cleave-	Plumbing	-	\$ 2,388.00
	Heating	-	194.00
	Heating (Alternate)	-	384.00
William R. Hogg Co.-	Plumbing	-	\$ 2,752.00
	Heating	-	324.00
	Heating (Alternate)	-	391.00
George D. Worrell-	Plumbing	-	\$ 1,534.00
	Heating	-	188.00
	Heating (Alternate)	-	351.00
Joseph Drastal-	Plumbing	-	\$ 1,982.00
	Heating	-	396.00
	Heating (Alternate)	-	472.00
R. H. Byers-	Plumbing	-	\$ 2,700.00
	Heating	-	230.00
	Heating (Alternate)	-	460.00

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean that the bid of George D. Worrell, he being the lowest responsible bidder for the plumbing and heating work, be and the same is hereby accepted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Treasurer be and he is hereby authorized and directed to return the certified checks to all unsuccessful bidders except the checks of George D. Worrell and Joseph Drastal, being the two lowest bidders, which checks the County Treasurer is hereby directed to retain until the said George D. Worrell shall execute a formal written contract in conformity with his said bid and furnish the requisite bond, whereupon said checks shall be returned to said bidders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director and Clerk of this Board be and they are hereby authorized and empowered to execute the said contract for and in behalf of the County of Ocean.

WHEREAS this Board has duly advertised in manner and form as required by law for bids for painting and decorating work in restoring the Court House building in accordance with the plans and specifications

prepared therefor by P. P. Elkington, Architect, and heretofore duly approved by this Board; and

W H E R E A S the following bids have this day been received for said painting and decorating work pursuant to said advertisement:

Clayton Bros.	\$ 1,975.00
Zelmer Painting and Decorating Co.	\$ 4,370.00
Robert J. Blahn	\$ 3,660.00
E. Douglas Applegate	\$ 1,645.00
O. E. Payne	\$ 3,950.00

AND WHEREAS it is apparent that the bidders did not in the submission of their respective bids figure upon the same form or plan of interior decoration and the lowest bidders failed to submit with their respective bids a sketch of the interior decoration proposed to be made by them;

THEREFORE BE IT R E S O L V E D by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Ocean that all of the foregoing bids this day submitted for painting and decorating work be and the same are hereby rejected; and

BE IT FURTHER R E S O L V E D that the County Treasurer be and he is hereby authorized and directed to return the certified checks to all of said bidders.