

Bogota Mayor McHale and Little Ferry Mayor Raguseo

Shared Municipal Court Initiative

Little Ferry – February 18, 2011

Mayor McHale and Mayor Raguseo today announce a joint initiative to save tax dollars and improve efficiency within their municipal operations.

Under the proposed agreement, the two boroughs will share a municipal court. The new shared court will be housed in Little Ferry with Little Ferry's current staff taking over the day-to-day operations. Under NJ law, each municipality will continue to appoint their own judge, prosecutor and public defender while the court staff will be shared.

The new shared court is expected to start Friday, April 1, 2011. The Bogota court will be shut down on that day for the transfer of files with full operations beginning Monday, April 4, 2011. All tickets, citations, summons and court sessions will be operated out of Little Ferry.

"This is an exciting opportunity to save money not only today but in the future" stated Mayor McHale. McHale elaborated that their current court is outdated and in great need of physical repairs. "It just made sense to explore sharing courts with another municipality instead of spending thousands of dollars to upgrade our infrastructure" stated the Mayor. Mayor McHale stated that with the newly shared court, operations will improve dramatically.

Mayor Raguseo continued the discussion on operations. "Court will be every Thursday in Little Ferry Borough Hall and this will increase both municipalities opportunity to hear cases. We will not have to postpone as many cases and it has the opportunity to reduce police overtime costs as there will be more days and times to be heard." Financially Mayor Raguseo stated that this is a win-win for everyone. Little Ferry will receive rent and money to offset the costs of operations while Bogota will save on salaries, benefits and costly capital upgrades. Little Ferry will receive approximately \$150,000 over the length of the agreement, the agreement runs through 2013, with Bogota saving slightly more when factoring in pension and health benefits costs.

Mayor McHale stated not only will they see savings in this year budget by reducing salaries and health benefits, future savings will be earned due to the continued increase of health benefits and pensions costs. "Pension costs us on average 11% per non-police employee and health benefits increased almost 17%" stated Mayor McHale. Raguseo stated that sharing employees and operations is something that must be discussed on a regional basis and he is planning on hosting an event for neighboring municipalities sometime in early Spring to discuss sharing and capital needs and how the region as a whole can benefit.

Questions/comments contact:

Michael Capabianco, 201-641-9234 ext 658