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Official Publication of the New Jersey League of Municipalities

January 2021

A Municipal Seat at the Table

*"Elected officials come and go.
Good leaders leave a legacy for
future leaders to follow and expand on.
My hope is that I can leave that legacy
for my community and the League."*



Janice Kovach
NJLM, President
Mayor, Clinton Town



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Deadline to submit is February 3.

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New Jersey Municipalities Magazine

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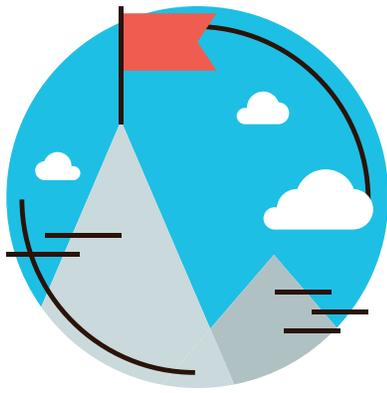
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A Municipal Seat at the Table

Mayor Janice Kovach of Clinton begins her term as NJLM President with plans for outreach and growth

ABOUT THE COVER

2020-21 NJLM President Janice Kovach, Mayor of Clinton Town, is poised for action to benefit the League and her community. Here she is shown in front of her town's landmark Red Mill Museum Village.

All official photos of Mayor Kovach in this issue by Corbin Payne Photography.



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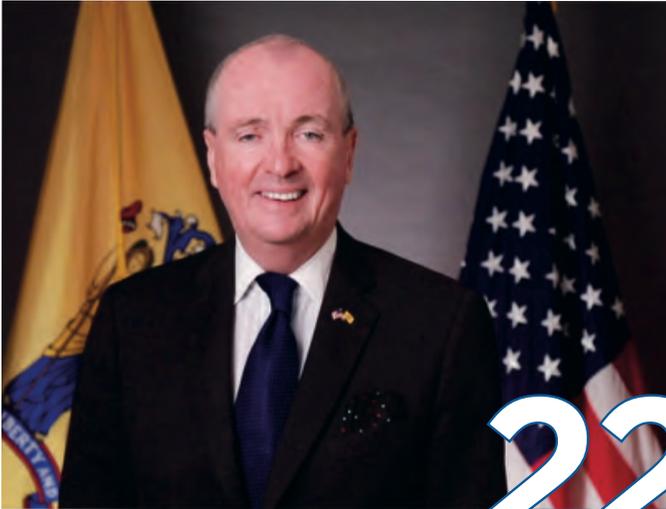
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Resolve to Evolve

Each January, most local governments take a moment to reorganize before moving into the blur of the new year's activities. Each year there's an opportunity to try something new, to plan something more, to be something better. At the League we hope to help you evolve into what best meets the needs of your constituents this year, as we do every year.

The cover of this month's issue features our new President, Mayor Janice Kovach of Clinton Town. As she observed in her acceptance speech regarding the past year, "It has been a wild ride for so many of us. It's been an opportunity and a challenge. Each and every one of us has had to step up in ways that we never anticipated. We have become not just local elected officials. We have been individuals for our residents to come to when they've needed something."

And while we are all hoping for a better 2021, she notes that, "I think going into the new year we're still going to be facing a lot of these challenges. And with that, this is a project for all of us to work together on. We are a community of elected and appointed officials."

Under her leadership, we look forward to developing a strategic plan for the League that will take us into the future. Please read more of President Kovach's thoughts on the League and local government in her interview (see page 6).

While we plan for success as a statewide community of municipalities, don't forget

to plan for your own individual success in 2021. Start the year out strong by attending our informative webinars for Newly and Previously Elected Officials. Covering topics from ethics to the latest legislative goals, it's a great way to join in the advancement of local government. We'll also offer a budgeting seminar this winter. With the unique challenges of the pandemic, this daylong event will provide much needed insights on the basics of budgeting in these complex times.

You can also take some of last year's lessons into 2021 and put them in your toolkit for the whole year. Through November 2021, you can use your Conference ID to log into the 105th Annual Conference website to attend sessions or visit exhibitor's booths. While you can't earn CEU's from these session replays, you can benefit from the educational value. Didn't register but want to see what you're missing? You can still register by visiting the registration section of www.njlm.org/2020conference.

And, of course, there is always this magazine. From the start of the pandemic, we've published what we hope are helpful tips and inspiring features to help local governments as you innovate solutions to your very new, very demanding crop of problems. We'll continue to be there for you and invite you to send in your stories for our new Covid Recovery column (see page 16).

Happy New Year, we look forward to making 2021 a success! 🇺🇸

Michael Cerra

P.S. Please send in your entries for this year's Show Off Your City Contest by February 3. Whether they are COVID-centric images of the day or timeless takes on your municipality's beauty, we look forward to seeing and Showing Off Your City on the April issue cover.

“You can also take some of last year's lessons into 2021 and put them in your toolkit for the whole year.”

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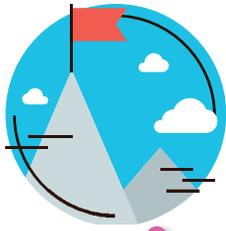
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A Municipal Seat at the Table

Mayor Janice Kovach of Clinton Town begins her term as NJLM President with plans for outreach and growth

Q *What led you to get involved in local government?*

JK I have always had a passion for politics and the role that it can, and should, play in public service. My first turn at running for office was when locally there was no race. Three seats were open and three individuals were running. That's when all of my civics lessons reminded me that people should have a choice when electing their representatives. It doesn't mean one side is bad; but, when residents don't engage in the political process, those elected are not always held accountable.



Q What are the greatest strengths of local government in New Jersey?

JK The public servants who work every day for their communities. Whether elected, appointed, or hired, these people are the front line. They respond to requests, questions, and complaints and ensure the smooth running, efficiency, and safety of our towns.

Additionally, the resiliency and ability to adapt to an ever-changing environment, sometimes with no notice and no funding. But we do what must be done to benefit our municipalities.

Q What do citizens expect from their municipal officials, and how has that changed over the years?

JK Residents expect immediate responses when there is a concern or a question. We should be able to answer or know how to get those answers. Residents are also much more engaged in their local communities. We need to listen first and foremost to their concerns, questions, or suggestions.

Encouraging civic engagement creates a more open process and less of a feeling that government is hiding.

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Mayor John McCormac
Township of Woodbridge
★★★★★
JPM helped us hire two members of our Senior Management Team and handled everything tremendously.

Mayor Thomas Andes
Township of Denville
★★★★★
Dan and his team at JPM were instrumental in recruiting exactly the right person as our first Executive Director of our newly created Business Improvement District.

Mayor Fred Tagliarini
Township of Aberdeen
★★★★★
JPM provided an outstanding Temporary DPW Director, and completed an outstanding Efficiency Study of our DPW.

Mayor Beth Holtzman
City of Ventnor
★★★★★
Best decision we made; Maria Mento and Joe Verruni are very knowledgeable and always accessible.

Stephen Mountain
Manager, Township of Randolph
★★★★★
JPM was very responsive to our needs and utilized a process that was fair and organized. They helped us select the best professional for the position.

Mayor Richard Onderko
Borough of Manville
★★★★★
Best Municipal Government Advisors I've met in 10 years in elected office. Helped us recruit a fantastic Administrator. Thanks Dan and JPM.

George Jackson
Administrator, Borough of Eatontown
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Q *What are your goals as League President?*

JK My main goal is a strategic plan that focuses on what the League needs to be going forward. In addition, to expand involvement and have a board and advisory group that is representative of our state. We need to hear the voices of all constituents and elected officials from every corner: north, central, and south, urban, suburban, and rural.

We need to build our bench so that the League will continue to thrive and grow. In doing so, we also need to provide the tools for our future leaders to ensure they have what they need to be successful in their public service.

I would also like us to continue to strengthen our relationship with the legislators and the Governor's office. We are only as good as our ability to offer insights and have a seat at the table where policy impacting each of our communities is crafted.

And finally, to continue the work of previous presidents. Each brought a unique perspective and built the basis of who we are as an organization. That shouldn't stop because they are no longer serving in leadership. Their passions are what have driven each of us to this table. We use our abilities to continue to see their vision and help attain their goals. ability to see their vision and help attain their goals. Just because it didn't happen in one term doesn't mean the work stops.

Q *What advice would you give to someone just elected to local office for the first time?*

JK If you were elected in a partisan election put aside the politics and focus on the town. Be willing to listen and work with others, even those who are on the "other side."

Disagreements are fine, discussions are even better. You were elected to represent everyone, even those you disagree with. Ask questions, learn about how your municipality operates. Attend the League's newly elected officials training.

The first thing I realized when I was first elected was that I knew half of what I thought I did. But I was willing to ask

questions and reach out to more seasoned elected officials, as well as those who are working for the community.

I can't stress enough the importance of getting to know the employees, asking questions, and understanding their roles. Ultimately you will need them to help accomplish your goals as well as respond to constituents. You will only be effective if you build relationships across the board.

Q *How would you describe your leadership style?*

JK Inclusive. I try not to ask anyone to do something I'm not willing to do myself. This is not an "I" role but rather a "we" role.

Creating a team environment doesn't mean we don't have differences, but that we talk through them and try to get to consensus. Ultimately, I am the one responsible and I have to be willing to take the blame as well as the accolades. Decisions that don't make everyone happy are never fun but necessary.

I also try to think ahead and understand the impact of a decision today on the town five or 10 years from now. Elected officials come and go. Good leaders leave a legacy for future leaders to follow and expand on.

My hope is that I can leave that legacy for my community and the League.

Q *What motivates you as a leader?*

JK Energy and engagement motivate me. I told a reporter recently that I finally feel that I am part of the "cool crowd" because civic engagement and advocacy are at an all-time high. It is still harder to get those individuals to run, but I'm hoping we can create positive experiences for them so that they want to step up and take their seat at the table.

These individuals are our future leaders, regardless of their background. We have to encourage and motivate them to stay engaged.

Q *How are women progressing in terms of local government leadership? What was key to your success and that of your peers?*

JK Women are progressing. Probably not as fast as I would like to see. But part of that is what can be the ugly side of government: politics. We have watched a steady decline in campaigns as well as how we treat our peers on our councils. Not all women are comfortable with that side. It truly does take a thick skin and the ability sometimes to compartmentalize

what feels like personal attacks on integrity during the silly season of campaigning. In addition, this is sometimes still seen as the boys' club. I stopped counting the times that I have been told I don't look like a mayor.

For me, I started in leadership positions in high school. If I didn't like how something was going, I stepped up to work towards the change I wanted to see. Early on, I realized that I am not necessarily a good follower, or at least [I won't] follow blindly without questioning.

I also know that work can't be done in a silo. If I wanted to advance ideas, I needed to get others on board. Sometimes it worked, and sometimes it didn't. I would always try to review the process. A debrief with others brought understanding of what I needed to do better in order to gain agreement. These are skills I used in every organization that I was a part of as well as during my career in the corporate world.

The most important skill I learned was to listen. And not just listen, but to hear and understand. That doesn't mean there was agreement; but, when you look at the whole picture, it is much easier to make informed decisions or arguments.

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Acceptance Remarks from League President Mayor Janice Kovach of Clinton Town

Thanks Jim and thank you Congressman Malinowski. I appreciate the fact that he was able to be here with us and for his commitment to our communities here in New Jersey. It's so important, with the work that needs to be done, we have to all work together.

I'm not the best at writing out my speeches, I just have a couple of points I want to make.

Who would have thought?

When starting this year, we thought our biggest challenge was replacing Mike Darcy as executive director.

And then 2020 happened.

It has been a wild ride for so many of us. It's been an opportunity and a challenge. Each and every one of us has had to step up in ways that we never anticipated. We have become not just local elected officials. We have been individuals for our residents to come to when they've needed something. We have learned all about unemployment, we have learned all about our utilities. Anything and everything that has impacted our communities, we have had to step up and we've been on that front line for them.

While I want to say that I'm planning that 2021 is not going to be that way, I think going into the year we're still going to be facing a lot of these challenges. And with that, this is a project for all of us to work together on. We are a community of elected and appointed officials.

And Jim—I think Chegwidden and I are going “Phew!” Thank God it wasn't us that had to take on the presidency this year. We looked at that one as you got stuck and we dodged that bullet, but you really have stepped up. You've done an amazing job. Mike did want me to let you know that normally, if we were all together, we'd be giving you a plaque. Your plaque is in the mail.

While not being in Atlantic City has felt different and seeing all of the sessions online has been a new experience for many of us, I have to say everyone coming together to step up and help has been tremendous. I've gotten nothing but praise from individuals who have attended the sessions. So, to the staff of the League, Mike and Lori, not only did you have to step into roles, but you've stepped into a new reality. You've done an amazing job, you and the staff. For that I do say thank you on behalf of all us.

To the other individuals who have helped me get to this place, obviously my family: I wouldn't be here providing the support to this community if I didn't have the support of my family here. I also have the support of my Council as well as the staff members of the Town of Clinton. We all work together on



everything that needs to be done for our community. I can't do this job without all of their support.

Finally, the residents of the Town of Clinton who continue to believe in me and let me serve as their mayor. It has truly been an honor and a privilege, and I hope that I continue to do you proud serving as president of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities.

To Mayors Chegwidden, Heck, and Pikolycky, we definitely have our work cut out for us. We've got a lot of things that need to get done and we've got a lot of plans we're going to start working on. So take the weekend, take the holiday, and the 30th will be here before you know it when we start getting back to work—and that goes for the staff as well. Mike you can give everyone a break, but know that the 30th we all come back to work and focus on ensuring that the needs of our communities are met both on the state and at the federal level.

With that, I want to say thank you to everyone who continues to believe in me, who has been there and has been a support. I will be reaching out to each and every one of you and please reach out to other elected officials in your local communities who may not be part of the everyday work of the League. We're not going to do what needs to be done unless we all take a seat at that table.

Remember, if we're not at the table, we're on the menu. With that, I'm going to say thank you. 🇯🇵

DEP Honors Municipalities' Recycling Efforts

While the global recycling community continues to face challenges due to weak recycling markets and rising program costs, New Jersey is doing a good job of recycling thanks in part to the efforts of this year's DEP recycling award winners.

"I commend the award winners for their innovative efforts to promote recycling and educate their communities about the importance of diverting waste," DEP Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe said. "New Jersey has been a national leader in recycling for many years, thanks in part to the types of initiatives we see from our recycling award winners and those who follow their excellent examples. Their work helps protect our environment by keeping communities clean and reducing the impacts of climate change."

"We proudly recognize these award winners for their diligent work to keep New Jersey's environment clean and healthy," said Paul Baldauf, Assistant Commissioner for Air Quality, Energy and Sustainability. "Every year our winners show us the value of recycling and its importance to the environment. We hope promoting their accomplishments will inspire others to adopt better recycling practices."

The following are the municipalities whose hard work was recognized:

GOVERNMENT: **Township of Middletown** The township increased its recycling rate to 75% from 65% through a comprehensive program that includes single stream curbside collection, two recycling drop-off centers, and a polystyrene recycling program open to all Monmouth County residents.

LEADERSHIP: **Long Beach Township** The community implemented an innovative voluntary recycling project that diverts oyster and clam shells from restaurants for use in establishing a research oyster reef in Little Egg Harbor Bay.

RISING STAR: **Lisamarie Schieli-Maywood's recycling coordinator** has developed and implemented a wide variety of reuse and recycling programs for non-traditional waste items including used sports equipment, books, prom dresses, Halloween costumes, jeans, board games and more.

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 <small>No Recyclables in Plastic Bags</small>	 <small>No Plastic Bags or Plastic Wrap</small>	 <small>No Tangles, Cords, Hoses or Chains</small>	 <small>No Yard Waste</small>	 <small>No Food or Liquid (empty all containers)</small>
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Questions about what goes where?

Visit www.middletownnj.org/recycling or download the recycleCoach app.
Middletown Department of Public Works, 732-615-2109

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PROGRAM: **Toms River Township Department of Public Works** The department developed an educational program about recycling and litter prevention that features a puppet show and coloring book for school children and a robot used at public events.

In 1987, New Jersey became the first state to enact legislation that requires recycling in residential, commercial and institutional settings. New Jersey achieved an overall recycling rate of 60% in 2017. The DEP administers a number of grant and educational programs to help improve the statewide recycling rate. ♻️

@ To learn more about recycling in New Jersey, visit www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling. For more information about the Association of New Jersey Recyclers, visit www.anjr.com/.

Moody's Upgrades AC to Positive Outlook

Moody's Investors Service revised its outlook of Atlantic City to positive, citing continued strides in improving the city's governance and finances and ongoing oversight of by the State of New Jersey. Moody's is considered to be among the top three credit rating agencies in the country and ranks the creditworthiness of borrowers, including government entities such as municipalities.

"This positive outlook is remarkable considering it was issued in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession. It is a testament to the tremendous progress that DCA and the City have been able to make as a result of strong collaboration and financial discipline," said Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as DCA Commissioner. "We understand that much more work needs to be done, especially in the areas of economic diversification and addressing social challenges. However, credit reports like this provide validation that we remain on the right track."

The Moody's report listed the city's credit strengths as:

- State oversight that has materially improved governance,
- Casino PILOT law that provides stable tax revenue from the gaming industry, and
- Dramatically improved reserves and liquidity.



It noted the city effectively used federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds to help

local businesses and changed policies to permit greater use of outdoor dining and open containers of alcohol outdoors, which has benefitted the local restaurant industry during the pandemic.

The Moody's analysis also credited the city and State with making real efforts to diversify the economy and pointed to reports that developers are expressing more interest in Atlantic City and additional projects are expected to start soon. It further highlighted that the city expects to end 2020 with a substantial surplus of as much as \$7 million; receives stable, reliable state aid; is collecting property taxes at or close to the norm during the pandemic; and continues to adjust its staffing levels and increase operating efficiencies to control expenditures.

DCA continues to execute the Atlantic City Implementation Plan, which identifies strategic recommendations for the city and includes targeted time-frames to complete the recommendations. The State also created the Atlantic City Restart and Recovery Working Group to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on Atlantic City. 



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Garden Statements

Dover PD Hands Out Masks

In a recent article by Jessie Gomez in the *Morristown Daily Record*, it was reported that Dover's police officers were helping to slow the spread of COVID-19 by handing out hundreds of masks. Residents who needed them were able to pick up masks from officers stationed downtown.

At the time of publication, the town had 1,300 confirmed cases of COVID-19.

"Dover got hit pretty hard with COVID-19," said Dover Police Chief Johnathan Delaney. "We understand and recognize that certain racial and ethnic groups were disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and the best we can do is address what's going on."

In May, Dover had one of the higher per capita infection rates in North Jersey, with 351 cases for every 10,000 residents—almost three times the rate of Morris County.



DEP Appoints Lacey Township Mayor to Decommissioning Panel

Lacey Township Mayor Steven Kennis is joining a State-led advisory panel of environmental, utility, and security experts assisting with decommissioning of the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station, ensuring that the concerns of the community where the station is located are included in the process.

Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe chairs the panel created by administrative order in 2019 to evaluate the decommissioning process. The Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station permanently shut down in September 2018. Commissioner McCabe made the appointment in collaboration with Congressman Andy Kim.

JANUARY

January 9

Orientation for Municipal Officials Who Are Newly Elected, Re-elected, and Experienced
Webinar—Your Computer

January 23

Orientation for Municipal Officials Who Are Newly Elected, Re-elected, and Experienced
Webinar—Your Computer

FEBRUARY

February 26

Returning to Work After COVID-19
Webinar—Your Computer

MARCH

March 6

Budgeting for Elected Officials
Conference Center at Mercer, West Windsor

March 9

Cannabis in the Workplace
Webinar—Your Computer

APRIL

April 16

29th Annual Mayors Legislative Day
Statehouse Annex, Trenton

Visit www.njlm.org/seminars or contact Danielle Holland-Htut at dholland@njlm.org or 609-695-3481, Ext. 118.

The Safety Advisory Panel meets at least twice a year to review decommissioning activities required by Holtec International under a January 2018 Administrative Consent Order governing the decommissioning process. Holtec purchased the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station from Exelon Generation Company, LLC in July 2019. 

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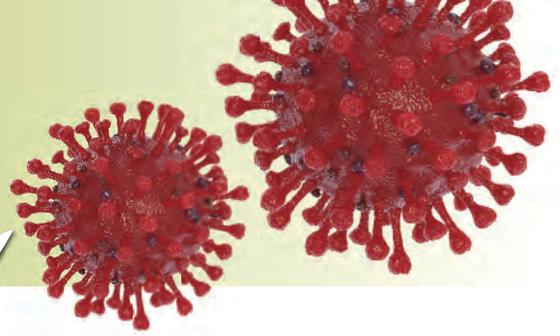
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COVID Recovery



Highland Park Mayor's COVID-19 Task Force & Proactive Responses to the Pandemic

HARRY GLAZER, *Aide to the Mayor/Public Information Officer, Borough of Highland Park*

The following effort was recognized as an Honorable Mention in the 2020 Innovation in Governance Awards (see story page 26).

Early on Borough leaders in Highland Park saw the implications of the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic and took a number of sound and strategic steps to mitigate its effects in town.

Foremost among those steps was establishing the Mayor's COVID-19 Task Force, even before NJ State precautions were instituted. Convened by Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler, a member of the NJLM Executive Board, and led by Office of Emergency (OEM) Coordinator Jim Polos (a former mayor and former county freeholder), the task force brought together leaders of the police department, fire department, first aid squad, public schools, borough administration and communications department, recreation and aging services department, the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and the health inspector to discuss and coordinate responses to the pandemic on a weekly basis. This task force has met regularly throughout the past eight months and continues to do so.

One critical step of the Task Force was developing the Civilian Outreach Program Exercise (COPE) program to assist at-risk residents stuck at home due to COVID-19 and unable to provide for some of their own basic needs. The COPE program was assigned to the CERT program and the Department of Community Services for day-to-day management. (See a report on the COPE program in the November issue of *NJ Municipalities* magazine, www.njlm.org/magazine).

Beyond the COPE program, Task Force leaders worked closely with the Main Street Highland Park organization to advise them of all state and county COVID-19 regulations pertinent to the business community and to assist them when re-openings began in the summer. With the cooperation of Main Street and the Task Force, the Borough's well-regarded Farmer's Market reopened and steadily grew in participation—opening first as order ahead and pick up only, then as an open air market with all precautions as state rules allowed.

The Task Force and Main Street Highland Park also collaborated on a few initiatives to aid local businesses and create safe opportunities for residents, such as creating 'Town Tables' eating areas on two different blocks (both closed to traffic) off the main street, issuing signs about mask wearing to all local businesses, installing hand sanitizers by street corners on the main street, installing colorful signage reminding residents and

visitors to wear masks, and consultations with individual restaurants regarding allowable capacity for the resumption of indoor dining.

At the same time, Task Force members did not lose sight of the needs of those less fortunate in town and supported weekly outdoor food distributions from the Highland Park Community Food Pantry, at the Community Center, and the Teen Center/Zone 6.

Throughout the pandemic, Mayor Brill Mittler provided frequent updates to Borough residents on the number of cases in town, necessary precautions to ward the spread of the virus, and activities undertaken by the Task Force. These updates were conveyed through a variety of platforms and channels such as email, video, social media, announcements at Council meetings held via Zoom, and printed letters distributed in senior housing buildings.

Little could prepare Highland Park for the unforeseen challenges of COVID-19 and its impact on so many aspects of community life. Borough leaders feel confident that, through the consistent hard work and careful planning of the Mayor's COVID-19 Task Force, many of the worst effects were deterred and the community was able to adapt as constructively as possible to the precautions of the pandemic. 🇺🇸



AMY SPIEZIO,
Managing Editor

Share Your Pandemic Strategy Story

Through the duration of the pandemic and its recovery *NJ Municipalities* will highlight success stories of local governments in the face of staggering difficulties. Your efforts can help your peers in local government overcome the same challenges, while giving kudos to the tireless efforts of your teams.

Would you like to share your story? Reach out to Managing Editor Amy Spiezio at aspiezio@njlm.org.

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Mayors Inducted into Hall of Fame

Thirteen of New Jersey’s mayors were inducted into the NJLM Mayors Hall of Fame at the League’s virtual conference on November 19.

The New Jersey League of Municipalities opened the doors of the Mayors’ Hall of Fame on Wednesday, November 15, 1995, at the Mayors’ Luncheon during the 80th Annual League Conference. The Mayors’ Hall of Fame inductees must be serving as mayor and have at least 10 years of mayoral service to be inducted at the silver level, and at least 20 years of mayoral service to be inducted at the gold level. Sadly, inductee Bloomingdale Mayor Jon Dunleavy, an NJLM Executive Board Member, died shortly before the League Conference. The League expresses its deepest condolences to the Dunleavy family.

Below is a listing of those inducted into the Mayors Hall of Fame, we thank them for their service.

WHITE LEVEL (30 or more years)

MAYOR WILLIAM PIKOLYCKY, *Woodbine Borough*

GOLD LEVEL (20 or more years)

MAYOR PAUL MARINO, *Hamburg Borough*

MAYOR BRIAN C. WAHLER, *Piscataway Township*

MAYOR THOMAS E. HARPER, *Wrightstown Borough*

SILVER LEVEL (10 or more years)

MAYOR JON DUNLEAVY, *Bloomingdale Borough*
(posthumously presented)

MAYOR ALBERT B. KELLY, *Bridgeton City*

MAYOR BRIAN J. CARLIN, *Burlington Township*

MAYOR MICHAEL BLUNT, *Chesilhurst Borough*

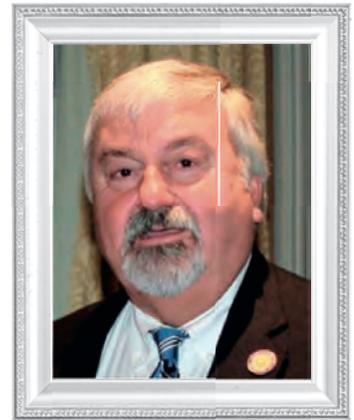
MAYOR PAUL J. VALLONE, *Far Hills Borough*

MAYOR MICHAEL REINA, *Jackson Township*

MAYOR TIMOTHY DOUGHERTY, *Morristown Town*

MAYOR PAUL N. MIRABELLI, *Mountainside Borough*

MAYOR MATTHEW ANESH, *South Plainfield Borough*



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Meet Your New Board Members

The following mayors and deputy mayors were elected to serve on New Jersey State League of Municipalities' Executive Board. As a member of the League's Executive Board, they will help lead the Association of New Jersey's 565 municipal governments. They will represent the interests and needs of New Jersey's local elected officials to county, state, and federal governments.

Here's a little more information about each of the five new Board Members. We thank them for their commitment and look forward to benefitting from the unique skills they bring to the League.



Mayor Jeff Martin, Hamilton (Mercer)

is the Chief Executive of the ninth-largest municipality in NJ – 90,000 residents and over 730 full-time employees. He presides over a budget of more than \$150 million in annual revenue/appropriations. He has led the effort to consolidate and merge nine separate fire districts into one municipal fire department—saving township residents more than \$1.5 million per year. Martin has directed town response during COVID-19, civil unrest, and numerous emergency operations. Previously he was General Counsel at Borden Perlman Insurance and Staff Counsel at Farmers Insurance, and Assistant Staff Judge Advocate and Defense Counsel for the U.S. Air Force's Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps. He served as a Councilman for Hamilton from 2018-2019. Martin earned his BA at The College of New Jersey, JD at Rutgers University School of Law-Camden, and LL.M. at University of Connecticut School of Law. He also has professional military training from Squadron Officer School and Commissioned Officer Training.



Mayor John Pallone, Long Branch

was born and raised in Long Branch where he is a proud resident. Public service and the opportunity to serve the community has always been extremely important to Pallone and his family. Since 2010 Pallone has been a member of the Long Branch City Council

and is currently the Mayor of Long Branch. He is on the Library Board of Trustees, Board Member of the Long Branch Urban Enterprise Zone, and a Trustee of the Church of Seven Presidents Museum. During his term as Mayor, he has most notably: led the ground breaking for a new Community Pool, opened a new Arts and Cultural Center, started a Mayor's Opioid Task Force (also known as HEARS), and opened a full accessibility beach in Long Branch. In addition, Pallone is a member of the Long Branch Rotary Club, BPO Elks Lodge #742, and the Long Branch Community Think Tank. He has been a small business owner of a media production company for over 30 years. Pallone earned a bachelor's degree from New York University and master's degree in Public Administration from the City University of New York, John Jay College. He and his wife Svetlana are the proud parents of their 13-year-old son, John.



**Deputy Mayor
Christine Quinn,
Sparta Township,**

is in her third term on the Sparta Township Council having served as Mayor in 2016 and Deputy Mayor in 2015, 18, 19, and 20. She is centered around a core of serving, preserving, and securing her community. She is the co-founder of Salute 07871/Hometown Heroes and STEP (Sparta

Township Emergency Prep), Co-Chair, SMART (Sparta Municipal Alliance Team), and President, Sussex County League of Municipalities. Quinn notes that she enjoys serving on the Town Council and working with others to identify areas for improvement and look at new ideas, set goals that deliver tangible results to positively impact the community. She is proud of delivering a municipal budget with zero increase in 2020 and building a fiscally sound, stable Sparta. Other highlights include infrastructure improvements across all roads, parks and facilities, Introduction of STEP/CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), adoption of Stigma Free program, strategic ordinance updates and Master Plan Review, and Construction of “Freedom Field” the community’s first turf field, dedicated to community veterans. For more than 33 years she has worked at BASF as an ATD Master Trainer, Collaboration Tech. Quinn is married to Ron, parent to Breianne, Ryan, Aimee, Amanda (Boo), and Billy, and grandchildren Tori, Kamryn, Sophia, CJ, and Logan.



**Mayor Marty Small Sr.,
Atlantic City,**

was sworn in in 2004 at age 29, the youngest elected councilman in Atlantic City history. Small served the 2nd Ward as Councilman for 16 years, the last four as City Council President. He was selected as the 4th African-American mayor in Atlantic City in 2019. Smalls is a career

recreation professional, and previously worked for the Atlantic

City Board of Education as the Coordinator of Elementary Extracurricular Activities. He was previously a professional basketball player for the Atlantic City Seagulls, then a social caseworker for Atlantic City. After that he worked with the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City. In 2001 he was appointed to the Atlantic City Free Library Board of Trustees. In 2002, Small was elected to the Atlantic City Board of Education where he served as vice president during his tenure. Small earned his BA from Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, where he holds the record as the school’s all-time leading rebounder and has been inducted in to the Stockton University Athletics Hall of Fame as an individual and as part of the 1995-96 basketball team. He earned his masters degree in educational leadership from Cheyney University. He is married to Dr. La’Quetta Small, principal of Atlantic City High School, and they are parents to Jada and Marty Jr.



**Mayor Sara Todisco,
Garwood,**

is currently serving her first term as Mayor of Garwood after her eight-year tenure on the Borough Council. She is the youngest Mayor in Union County. Her initiatives include a Citizens’ Advisory Panel, seasonal Community Spirit awards, and launching official social media pages for the

Borough. Also, she invites the public to quarterly Breakfast with the Mayor events. In addition to being available by phone, email, or in person, during the current COVID-19 pandemic, Todisco has used Facebook Live frequently for question and answer sessions. She is a 4th generation resident of Garwood. Todisco was elected to the Borough Council in November 2011 following her appointment in May 2011 to fill a vacancy. She served as Council President in 2013 and 2017 along with serving on each Council committee. Most frequently, she served as the Chair of the Finance Committee. She is currently the President of the Garwood Lions Club and Vice President of the Education Foundation of Garwood. Additionally, she serves as the Chair of the Union County Commission on the Status of Women. By profession, Mayor Todisco is a social studies teacher at Chatham Middle School, where she has worked since 2013. Todisco was graduated from Northeastern University. 🇯🇵

Hope for the Future

Governor Murphy Addresses 105th Annual League Conference

Governor Phil Murphy recorded a keynote address for the attendees of the 105th Annual League Conference-Presented Virtually. The following is that speech.

Good afternoon, everyone. I apologize that I cannot be with you live this afternoon. And, obviously, we all regret that we cannot gather for lunch in Atlantic City as we usually do. Nonetheless, I thank Executive Director Mike Cerra and his team—and, notably, new Assistant Executive Director Lori Buckelew—for all they do every day to not only keep the League of Municipalities such an important organization, but to help improve your abilities, locally, to serve your residents.



Allow me to start by making one thing perfectly clear—even in the face of this pandemic, my optimism that we will defeat this virus together and move forward to a stronger, fairer, and more resilient future is unbowed.

You have heard me use this analogy before—New Jersey is a patchwork quilt of 565 distinct communities. But north, central, and south, we rise as one, and I look forward to our administration's forthcoming partnership with incoming President Mayor Janice Kovach. I've known Janice a long time, and I know the passion she brings to everything she does. I know advocating for each of you will be her top job in the coming year, and in that I also thank Hardwick Committeeman Jim

Perry for all he did on your behalf throughout this past year.

Remembering municipal officials

I must also take a moment to remember three leaders who we lost since we last gathered. First is former League President and Buena Vista Mayor Chuck Chiarello. He was, quite simply, a mayor's mayor. I know we all miss his tremendous warmth and wisdom.

And we remember Highland Park Councilwoman Susan Welkovits and Jersey City Councilman Michael Yun—both lost to COVID-19. They dedicated every day to improving life for the people they served. They loved their hometowns and they loved public service.

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Overcoming COVID

There is not one part of our state which has been spared from this virus—we all know residents, perhaps even family and friends, who have been infected or who have passed away. The best way we can honor them and our communities is to do everything we can to save every life possible. In this, I am proud of the partnerships between our administration and the League and your own local administrations.

I commit to continuing to work with you—whether through Mike and the League or reaching out directly—to deliver New Jersey into a post-COVID world in a stronger, fairer, and more resilient position.

We came together early to build the testing program needed to track this pandemic and ensure our resources have gone to where they have been needed most. Alongside our county partners and communities of faith, we made New Jersey a model for proactive and aggressive testing. We continue in this posture, with an average of more than 33,000 tests being logged each day and with the resources we need to continue.

I am also proud of how we came together to ensure the delivery of vital personal protective equipment to our front-line workers—including local health officials, police officers, fire personnel, and EMS teams.

All totaled, we have distributed more than 82 million pieces of PPE across our state. And through the work of the Department of Health, the New Jersey State Police, the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, and the Office of Emergency Management, among so many others, we are diligently building a stockpile of hundreds of millions more pieces.

Whatever this virus still has in store we will be ready to work with you and your communities.

I am also grateful for all we have done together to assist our federal delegation in delivering the Coronavirus Relief Funds that have been so vital in our response.

I was particularly proud to set up the new Local Government Emergency Fund to direct \$60 million to local governments in the 12 counties which did not receive direct federal relief. We know that so many of you took on unanticipated spending and, through

the Local Government Emergency Fund, we are working to see that these costs are covered without being shouldered by property taxpayers.

Through the Department of Community Affairs and the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, we have put tens of millions of dollars to work to provide direct rental assistance to tenants and small businesses, and the Board of Public Utilities has worked with our various utility companies to ensure that no one is cut-off during the pandemic.

And we have invested more than \$200 million—much of it through the New Jersey Economic Development Authority—directly in small businesses across our state, protecting jobs while also ensuring that our Main Streets can withstand this pandemic.

I commit to continuing to work with you—whether through Mike and the League or reaching out directly—to deliver New Jersey into a post-COVID world in a stronger, fairer, and more resilient position.

Other Considerations

But even with everything we've had to do to meet this moment, we have not

forgotten the other important work we began on many other issues facing our state. Our work continues to bring more of you together with your neighbors to secure smart shared-service agreements to deliver vital services while achieving greater economies of scale.

INFRASTRUCTURE: So, too, does our work to ensure that we have strong, safe, and modern transportation infrastructure. Through the Department of Transportation, we continue to deliver the local funds needed to improve local roads and byways.

And, I was proud this year to see the federal government sign-off on the new Portal North Bridge along the Northeast Corridor, and I was equally honored to join officials in Middlesex County to kickoff construction of the new Raritan River rail crossing on the Jersey Shore Line.

When completed, these two bridges will eliminate major commuter choke-points along NJ TRANSIT.

PROPERTY TAXES: And we continue to make other investments in your communities to help us further address the weight of property taxes—such as delivering direct tax relief to hundreds of thousands of families and our commitment to properly funding our best-in-the-nation public schools.

There is so much more we are doing together, and to address all of that would be another video. As I noted, our state is a vivid quilt. But the threads that hold this quilt together are strong and resilient—just like the people we serve. I thank you for your continued commitment to keeping these bonds strong, despite all that this going on around us.

And our administration remains committed to working with the League of Municipalities, and with you.

I wish you the very best for a productive virtual convention. I look forward to when we can once again join together in person to celebrate our accomplishments and map out a path to a stronger, fairer, and more resilient future for every community and every family.

Thank you all so very much. May God bless our great communities and our state. See you soon. 



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MEL member elected officials, commissioners and executive administrators who complete this course by May 1 qualify for a \$250 credit to their town's assessment. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is unlikely that in-person sessions will be conducted this year.

To complete the course online:

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- Follow the instructions to register and complete the training



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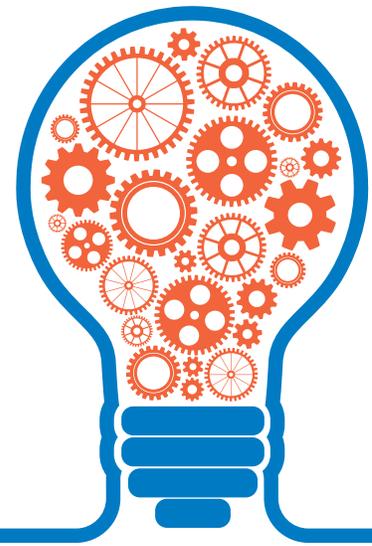
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Towns Honored for Innovation

2020 Innovation in Governance Awards Announced



Wyckoff has been recognized for its Innovation in Governance. The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities recognized the municipality's Innovation in Governance through their annual awards program. The award and several honorable mentions were presented as part of the Keynote address on Thursday, November 19, during the Annual League Conference, held Virtually.

The 2020 judges were: League Past Presidents Paul Maticera and Plainsboro Mayor Peter Cantu; Division of Local Government Services Director Melanie Walter; and New Jersey State League of Municipalities Executive Director, Michael Cerra.

This award program was established to provide innovative and practical approaches to solving municipal problems and concerns. The program invited applications describing any type of innovation undertaken by municipalities in the past 16 months. The participants responded with a range of submissions that underscore the variety of challenges municipalities solve. The top innovative approach is shared with municipal leaders throughout the state at the League's website, www.njlm.org, through the National League of Cities' "Best Practices" database, and in the following report.

The 2020 Honorable Mentions Are:

Highland Park: Mayor's COVID-19 Task Force & Proactive Responses to the Pandemic

Jersey City: First On-Demand Public Bus Service in the State of New Jersey

Middletown Township: Transforming Compost Use in New Jersey

Newark: Lead Service Line Replacement Program

Wyckoff's Winning Idea: Start Your Own Legacy of Community Service

The Township of Wyckoff, similar to many other municipalities in New Jersey, is experiencing the challenge of maintaining a volunteer fire department due to the "aging out" of volunteers.

That being the case, in 2020, the Township of Wyckoff formed a project team to develop a program that would solicit new volunteer firefighters. A two-prong social media campaign that included social media posts aimed at a demographic of young men and women, often described as millennials, was created to appeal to these individuals.

The first step featured current firefighting volunteers who have developed a family legacy of firefighters. We adopted this successful recruiting approach that has proven it is more effective to achieve a goal by featuring respective members of a community. Hence, we featured a generational portrayal of father-daughter firefighters, father-son firefighters, father-son-daughter-grandfather firefighters to appeal to all members of our community as well as millennials.

Start your own legacy of community service

The second step of our campaign focused on home fire prevention measures issued as social media posts. Our thinking was to demonstrate the added value that our volunteer firefighters provide to the public.

Factors in success

The Township of Wyckoff is comprised of more than 17,000 residents, approximately 5,536 homes and 150 local businesses located within a 6.7 square mile radius. The Township is home to three volunteer fire departments with only a limited number of physically certified and medically qualified firefighters who



One of Wyckoff's recruitment pieces.

In Your Town

Wyckoff's program demonstrates a unique way to attract new volunteers by instilling a sense of community and appealing to a newer, diverse population of both younger men and women. Other communities can easily duplicate our innovative program by using our fire safety theme and messages when seeking to recruit new volunteers for their fire departments.

can enter the interior of a structure in a hostile fire and heat environment wearing self-contained breathing tanks and masks to perform search and rescue and fire suppression. With the growing concern for fire safety response to our social media posts has been positive and as a result five (5) new volunteers have joined to date.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, about 70% of America's firefighters are volunteers and about 85% of the nation's fire departments are all or mostly volunteer. This year alone, as of September 25, 2020, the Township's three fire companies responded to 474 fire response calls.

It is no secret that firefighters are also subject to health and safety risks and the more years of service the greater that risk is for volunteer firefighters. In order to better protect and serve our community and to provide the emergency assistance that is critical to the health and well-being of our residents as well as to protect the health and safety of our firefighters, it is the Township's commitment to develop a new approach to achieve a fire department with a fully trained and qualified balance of volunteer firefighters who can function as interior structural firefighters

How have the stakeholders benefited & responded to this initiative?

Our number one priority to our community is SAFETY. Having the proper resources, such as adequately skilled and trained volunteer firefighters as well as the most advanced equipment is of utmost importance to the welfare of our citizens.

Maintaining high caliber certified "interior structural firefighters" is of

paramount benefit to our community.

Are there any measured savings or program improvements?

Essentially this program attempts to maintain a fire department that helps to avoid the additional personnel costs of salaries and wages that would normally accompany a career department.

Is the program temporary or permanent?

This program is designed to be ongoing and promoted monthly on our Township website, weekly E-News, and Facebook and Instagram social media platforms. During Fire Prevention month in October, online postings were more frequent on a weekly basis.

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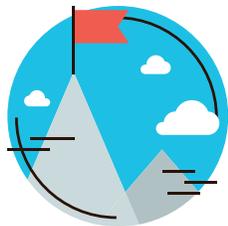
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Whether it's been deep poverty, unemployment, education access, health access and health disparities, rise in cost of housing, etc., the truth is very clear. We have a severe crisis of wealth in our country that is overwhelming Americans, and in New Jersey, the wealth gap is one of the widest in the nation.

The Coalition of Housing Advocates released a report in July 2020 on the Potential Impact of COVID-19 Related Evictions in New Jersey highlighting the fact that New Jersey residents who are Black and Brown are disparately impacted not only by COVID-19 but also by the economic fallout of the virus. Black and Brown communities in New Jersey face one of the largest racial wealth gaps in the country. In New Jersey, the median

net worth for a White family is \$352,000, compared to \$6,100 for Black families and \$7,300 for Brown families. Whether it was the pandemic stimulus package or funding for small businesses and COVID-19 testing capacity for cities, the federal government provided far less than was needed. For Newark, being able to turn to the City's philanthropic community is a clear way to help fill in the much-needed gaps.

Newark Forward Values

Prior to the pandemic, the Mayor established the Newark Forward Values, put forth as the foundation of every city initiative, policy and program. The goal is to make Newark a more empowered, safer, equitable, collaborative and better educated city. The City of Newark responded to the challenges of COVID-19 with earnest vigor and with its values as its guiding light to move the City forward. Like other cities, Newark works in close coordination with federal, state, and county officials to address the diverse and evolving needs brought by the pandemic.

2020 was the preemptive test for our generation. Last year exposed and multiplied every need and inequality of mankind that too many have faced for generations. The truth is, for far too long our generation has lived radicalized inequities every day of our existence. We need bold new ideas and innovative approaches to widen the net for all to

ensure that the future of Newark is one of promise.

**We must manage
COVID and
begin to pursue
important priorities
for the future
of our city
and its residents.**

We recognized early on that utilizing our philanthropic community would be key to leveraging much-needed resources and reaching more families that desperately needed support. We are fortunate to be able to rely on

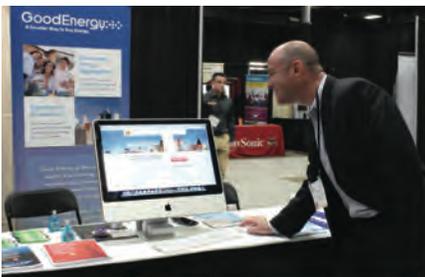
something else that few US cities have: our Philanthropic Liaison.

In the New Year, we are laser-focused on two huge, bold initiatives that will benefit residents and businesses in a truly systemic way and which are major goals for rebuilding Newark stronger than ever.

NJ FAM Fund

The first is the “40 Acres and a Mule Fund” (NJ FAM Fund). It will challenge those who call for harmony to now support genuine equality through capital distribution. This investment vehicle is a twist on traditional philanthropy, leveraging the Mayor’s new office of Strategy Innovation and Investment. Led by a former Wall Street banker, the fund multiplies philanthropic dollars as loan loss reserves to create this innovative capital investment vehicle.

The fund’s goal is to raise \$100 million for a revolving low-interest loan fund to help Black and Latinx small business



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Focus:
Future is Philanthropy

owners grow their businesses and to empower these entrepreneurs of color to compete at increasingly higher levels. This fund will bring pride and prosperity to our city and state and to our minority business community in particular.

**The focused,
coordinated energy
of grantmakers—
large or small—
is an asset no city
can afford to miss.**

The NJ FAM Fund, co-managed by the principals of Invest Newark (the city's economic development corporation) and New Jersey Community Capital, has raised \$2 million so far. AT&T, Shaquille O'Neal, Panasonic, Carlos Medina, Nelson Mullins Law Firm, and New Jersey Community Capital, PSEG, and Popular Bank are the first of the investors and corporate partners. The Fund's name is a reminder of the unfulfilled economic promise made to freed slaves at the end of the Civil War.

Guaranteed income program

The second initiative is Newark's guaranteed income program. When implemented and funded, it will address the financial vulnerability so many Newarkers suffer—especially communities of color. Newark is uniquely positioned to lead the national policy conversation

on regular, unconditional infusions of cash to lay the groundwork for true economic resilience and economic justice.

Long before COVID-19, Newark assembled a 30-member Guaranteed Income Task Force to explore how such a program could address economic inequity, reduce the racial wealth gap

Newark Philanthropic Liaison

The Newark Philanthropic Liaison is a project of the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers, which exists to strengthen and promote effective philanthropy throughout the state and represents more than 130 foundations. The Liaison's efforts galvanize support for public-private partnerships that can have an outsized impact on the continued transformation of the city. Priority areas include workforce development, education and youth development, equitable and inclusionary development and public safety. In short, the Liaison, who reports to the CNJG President and CEO, is the eyes and ears of the grantmaking community, working in tandem with the Mayor's Office. In 2020, the Newark Philanthropic Liaison project was supported by Bank of America, Burke Family Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Maher Charitable Foundation, The Nicholson Foundation, The Prudential Foundation, Schumann Fund for New Jersey, Turrell Fund and Victoria Foundation, with the PSEG Foundation providing in-kind support.



Preparing food distribution

Our ability to collaborate and partner in such a strategic and comprehensive way made it easier for the City of Newark to launch a variety of programs to help small businesses and their employees, homeowners, renters and commercial landlords threatened by the COVID-19 crisis. Early in the pandemic, the City of Newark provided interventions for those with the most need, using data and community feedback to help identify critical areas, which led to the creation of small stimulus packages.

Mayor Baraka helps distribute supplies during the pandemic.



and promote greater housing security for Newark residents.

Last June, the Task Force published a report calling for a nationwide guaranteed

income policy and highlighting Newark's readiness to conduct a pilot initiative.

Newark's role as a leader on this issue became even more pronounced when a

new national group, Mayors for a Guaranteed Income, was formed with Newark in a lead role. The final task is to identify anchor investors to help us reach a fundraising goal of \$4.2 million to launch this pilot in late 2021.

No one knows when Newark and the nation will be able to put the health and economic devastation of the pandemic behind us. We do know that Newark can't wait. We must manage COVID and begin to pursue important priorities for the future of our city and its residents.

The focused, coordinated energy of grantmakers—large or small—is an asset no city can afford to miss. Not every city is home to such a range of committed nonprofit funders whose efforts, and our city's wellbeing, benefit from having a Newark Philanthropic Liaison. Just as many other US cities have done, we invite New Jersey municipalities to thoroughly examine how to pursue philanthropy and see what is relevant to your continued efforts. 

Wellness

Research shows that wellness programs that promote healthy habits can lead to lower health care costs, reduced sick time use, improved retention and increased productivity.

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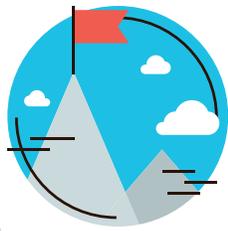
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The Importance of Decorum

Civility keeps communities involved in government

ROBERT SHANNON, *Administrator, Township of Wyckoff*;
FRED SEMRAU, *Fund Attorney, Municipal Excess Liability JIF (MEL)*



There is a sense that politics have become especially nasty in recent years, but politics has always been rough and tumble. For example, the distance between the front benches in the House of Commons is two sword lengths plus a foot. Early sergeants at arms maintained order with the mace that was kept in front of the presiding officer for everyone to see.

Model decorum

The risk management manual that the MEL just distributed to all municipalities includes a model decorum ordinance.

The lack of civility discourages people from becoming involved in government and leads to lawsuits. In one case, an ugly hearing on a zoning matter was a major factor in the town losing a lawsuit that cost \$7.5 million. The court wrote that:

“Bare animus towards a group or fear, unsubstantiated by factors which are properly cognizable in zoning proceedings, may constitute sufficient evidence for a zoning ordinance to fail under an equal protection challenge.”

The public needs to understand that if the meeting starts to focus on things that are discriminatory, the final decision could be made by the courts and not by the town.

Maintaining Decorum

- **The most critical thing a Mayor, School Board President, or other presiding officer must do is to establish the protocols at the reorganization meeting and consistently enforce these rules.** Back in the 70s and 80s, it was sufficient to use Roberts Rules of Order. Today, you should adopt a resolution or ordinance with some basic guidelines on decorum. Wyckoff just became the first municipality to adopt the new model developed by the MEL. The model is also on the MEL's website (<https://meljif.org>).

- **Consistent enforcement is critical.** You cannot call your opponents out of order for things that your supporters are allowed to get away with.

- **Establish reasonable time limits for speakers** at both hearings and the open portion of the meeting.

- **Establish a meeting curfew** so that the meeting automatically ends at a certain hour unless the bylaws are suspended. That requires a two-thirds vote. Both Council Members and the public become more distinct when they know that the meeting is about to automatically end.

- **Avoid getting into a debate with the public.** If the presiding officer gets into an argument from the dais, the meeting will quickly get out of hand. You are not obligated to answer or respond to any questions. Defer questions that require follow-up to the manager, attorney or committee chairs, and depending on the circumstances you can offer to answer questions after the meeting.

- **When you are presiding, be careful of your body language.** It is best to maintain eye contact with the speaker and avoid comments or expressions that appear to be judgmental. Try to appear as neutral as possible. One expression that will help calm a discussion is “This is a situation where reasonable people can come to different conclusions with the same facts.” You can also remind everyone that whatever they say will be permanently on the record and cannot be redacted.

- **Do not attempt to shout down a speaker.** That only escalates the situation. When things are getting out of hand, call for a short recess. This motion is privileged and proceeds without debate. Often cooler heads will prevail and you can regain control of a without having to take more formal action. You should always call a recess before asking the police to talk to someone who is violating the rules of decorum.

Meeting management

Public bodies can balance the rights of speakers and preserve decorum by following basic principles of meeting management. In 1989, the U.S. Court of Appeals in *White v Norwalk, California* upheld an ordinance that provided that:

“Each person who addresses the Council shall not make personal, impertinent, slanderous or profane remarks.”

The Court also held in *White* that:

“In dealing with agenda items, the Council does not violate the first amendment when it restricts speakers to the subject at hand... While a speaker may not be stopped from speaking because the moderator disagrees with the viewpoint the speaker is expressing, it certainly may stop him if his speech becomes irrelevant or repetitious.”

The key to understanding the *White*

decision is that local government cannot regulate speech per se, but under some circumstances can regulate conduct that impedes the process of government.

In 2010, the New Jersey Supreme Court applied this principle in *Besler v BOE of West Windsor-Plainsboro*:

“A public body may control its proceedings in a content-neutral manor by stopping a speaker who is disruptive or who fails to keep to the subject matter on the agenda. The government or a school board, however, has the burden of showing that its restriction of speech in a public forum was done in a constitutionally permissible purpose.”

In this case, a parent complained that a coach used profanity with a girls’ basketball team. When the parent didn’t receive what he considered to be a satisfactory response, he filed suit. For eight consecutive meetings, he spoke

about the case and criticized the coach personally. Finally, the board president read a statement that speakers should not attack individuals, talk about pending litigation, or otherwise repeat themselves. A few minutes later when the parent was recognized, he again returned to the same argument and was cut off by the President. He sued and a jury agreed with the speaker and awarded damages. The board appealed.

The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that this was a jury question and that the burden of proof was on the board to show that its actions were reasonable. The court held that because the board established its decorum rules just before this speaker was to be recognized, a reasonable juror could conclude that the board was singling out this particular speaker.

The fact that New Jersey places the burden of proof on local government makes it more difficult to deal with decorum issues, but not impossible. 



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Piscataway Community Center

How courting private industry benefitted the town and its residents

GENE WILK, *Public Information Officer, Piscataway*



How can you provide your residents with three pools, a full-size basketball court, and a large fitness center, all indoors, without using their tax monies? You start with good planning and optimism, and then you focus on bringing businesses into your township that will fund the construction of a \$32 million, 83,000 square foot facility.

The newly dedicated YMCA at the Piscataway Community Center (YPCC) is the result of years of careful budgeting and economic development that have also given the township an “AA+ stable” bond rating and last year being named to *Money Magazine’s* Top 100 Best Places to Live in America list for the fourth time. Other amenities at the YPCC include an overhead running track, golf simulators, dance and art studios, a café, and a large meeting room. With more resources, the township was able to build “Raritan Rapids,” an adjacent, outdoor, pirate-themed spray park.

The value of location

Mayor Brian C. Wahler (NJLM Past President) and the Piscataway Township Council long recognized the economic value of I-287 that bisects the municipality of nearly 58,000 residents with five exits. With the need for office parks declining but fulfillment centers increasing, they knew that the financial future of the central New Jersey community rested on the properties near the highway.

For example, on the western side of the township is a large swath of land that during World War II was the site of Voice of America radio antennas. After the war, it became a sizable home



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Piscataway Community Center



to chemical processing facilities. Hundreds of crews working around the clock would manufacture petrochemicals and plastics for decades for the Bakelite Corporation, Union Carbide, and Dow Chemical.

Yet the economy changed and the land was vacated, ecologically strained by years of chemical activity and its value on the tax rolls greatly diminished.

After working diligently to recruit interest, private industry came into Piscataway, remediated the environmental contamination, and built the Rockefeller Group Logistics Center. The site is now home to facilities of Best Buy, Fujitsu, Humanscale, KISS Beauty Products, Kuehne & Nagel, and SHI International Corp. In buildings ranging in size from around 200,000 to 725,000 square feet, these companies are providing good

paying jobs to hard working residents and operating on environmentally restored soil.

Developing YPCCC

Township officials developed plans for the YPCC in 2004 but the 2008 national recession would hamper momentum. However, the biggest hurdle was Hurricane Sandy in 2012. The YPCC site is on Route 18 known as Hoes Lane in Piscataway. Township officials were counting on the State's completion of significant upgrades to the roadway so needed stormwater and utility infrastructure for the YPCC would be in place. However, with utility companies rightfully focused on the pressing needs of Jersey Shore communities, progress on the YPCC was delayed.

Yet with the township's experience during and after the storm, with some families finding adequate but not optimal sheltering at the high school, township officials recognized the need for the YPCC to also function as an evacuation site. As such, its enhanced construction and two back-up generators enable hot meals and hot showers in times of emergency.

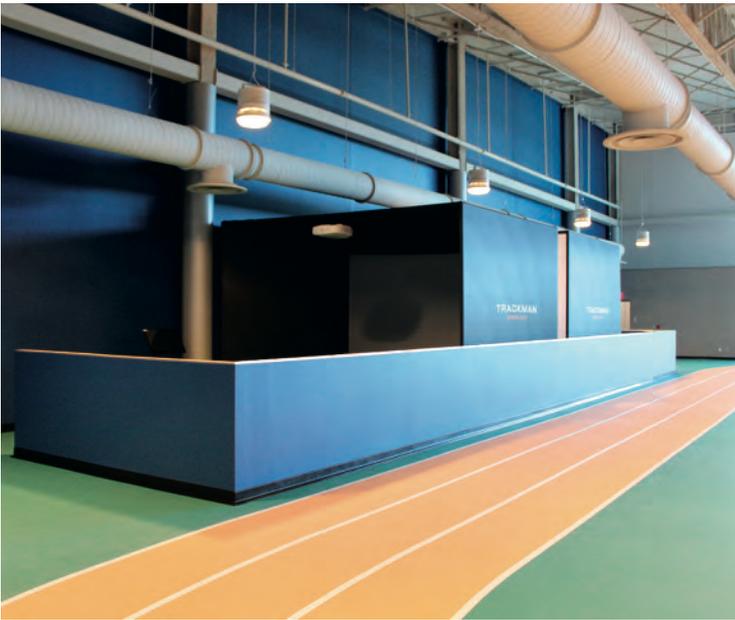
With groundbreaking in March 2019, construction managers Lehrer Cumming, general contractors Terminal Construction, Netta Architects, and Grotto Engineering Associates had the YPCC built ahead of schedule. The YMCA of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge & South Amboy was chosen to operate the facility.

"We are diverse and unified, respectful and kind. We volunteer. We give. We care. We know that there is a place for



Going Multinational

International investment also came to Piscataway. Another addition to the township was Cascades, Inc., a Canadian tissue and packaging products company that refurbished an abandoned chemical factory in the township into an \$80 million, 400,000 square foot facility. Two Japanese companies also boosted their presence in Piscataway. Horiba Scientific opened a facility with space for engineering and manufacturing while Kinkisharyo International, LLC located a facility to build and refurbish train cars for several rail systems.



everyone,” Mayor Wahler said at the July 2020 dedication ceremony. “This is what our community center is: a place for everyone. Every member of every family can find something fun and worthwhile here.”

The coronavirus crisis would delay

the opening of its indoor facilities to the public but enthusiasm in Piscataway continues to remain high.

“So, while today is not a grand opening, it is a dedication. For us though, it really is a rededication,” Mayor Wahler continued. “Today, we rededicate ourselves

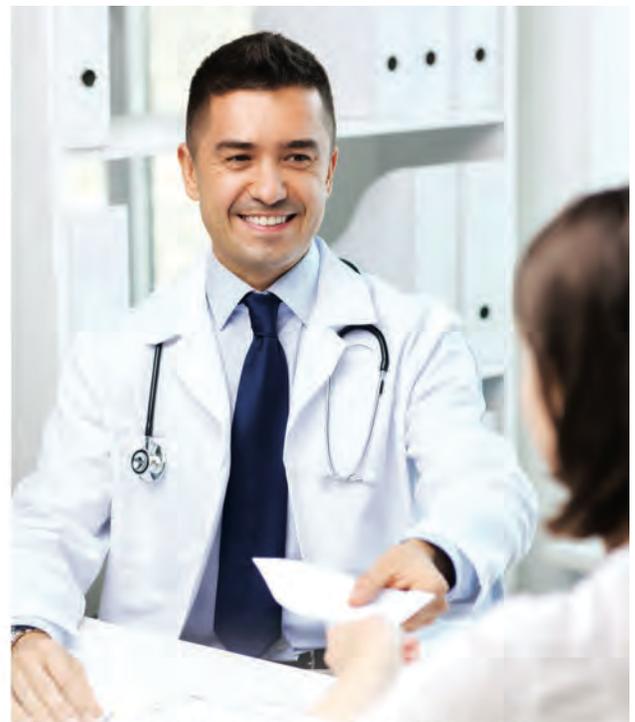
to community. We rededicate ourselves to the belief that the basic well-being of everyone is all of our responsibility. As we look forward to the open doors of this community center, we press onward with creating a township that continues to welcome everyone.” 🇺🇸

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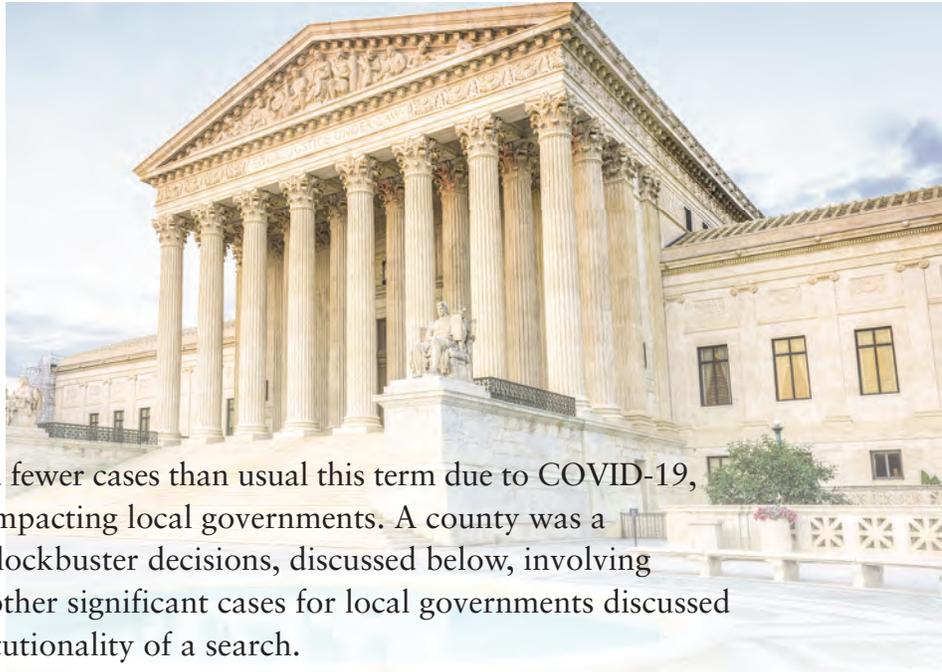


Supreme Court Review for Local Governments

Moving into the new year with a look back at national decisions

LISA SORONEN, *State and Local Legal Center, Washington, D.C.*

*The State and Local Legal Center (SLLC) files Supreme Court amicus curiae briefs on behalf of the Big Seven national organizations representing state and local governments. *Indicates a case where the SLLC has filed or will file an amicus brief.*



Even though the Supreme Court heard fewer cases than usual this term due to COVID-19, the Court decided numerous cases impacting local governments. A county was a named party in one of the Court's blockbuster decisions, discussed below, involving gay and transgender employees. The two other significant cases for local governments discussed in this article involve water and the constitutionality of a search.

Bostock v. Clayton County

In a 6-3 decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, the Supreme Court held that gay and transgender employees may sue their employers under Title VII for discriminating against them because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlaws employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin.

The Court, in an opinion written by Justice Gorsuch, first considered the definition of the word "sex." The Court assumed that the term refers only to biological distinctions between male and female.

According to Justice Gorsuch: "From the ordinary public meaning of the statute's language at the time of the law's adoption, a straightforward rule emerges: ...If the employer intentionally relies in part on an individual employee's sex when deciding to discharge the employee—put differently, if changing the employee's sex would have yielded a different choice by the employer—a statutory violation has occurred."

County of Maui, Hawaii v. Hawaii Wildlife Fund

In *County of Maui, Hawaii v. Hawaii Wildlife Fund** the Supreme Court held 6-3 that when there is a "functional

equivalent of a direct discharge" from a point source to navigable waters an appropriate permit is required under the Clean Water Act.

The Clean Water Act forbids the "addition" of any pollutant "from a point source" to "navigable waters" without a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. In this case the County of Maui wastewater reclamation facility pumps treated wastewater (pollutants) from wells (point sources) which travels through groundwater to the ocean (a navigable water).

Maui argued that an NPDES permit is only required when a point source or series of point sources is "the means of delivering pollutants to navigable waters." In this case groundwater lies "between the point source [the wells] and the navigable water [the ocean]."

Hawaii Wildlife Fund agreed with the Ninth Circuit "that the permitting requirement applies so long as the pollutant is 'fairly traceable' to a point source even if it traveled long and far (through groundwater) before it reached navigable waters."

In an opinion written by Justice Breyer: both positions were rejected, holding instead that a permit is required when there is a functional equivalent of a direct discharge.

The Ninth Circuit's interpretation of "from" was too broad, the Court opined, because it would lead to "surprising, even

bizarre, circumstances, such as for pollutants carried to navigable waters on a bird's feathers." The Court likewise rejected as too narrow Maui's argument that if a pollutant travels from a point source through groundwater before reaching navigable water no NPDES permit is required.

According to the Court, the functional equivalent of a direct discharge test "best captures, in broad terms, those circumstances in which Congress intended to require a federal permit."

Kansas v. Glover

In an 8-1 opinion, the Supreme Court held that a police officer may initiate a traffic stop after learning the registered owner of the vehicle has a revoked license unless the officer has information negating the inference the owner of the vehicle is the driver.

In *Kansas v. Glover*, Deputy Mehrer ran the license plate of a vehicle he saw being driven lawfully, matched it to the

vehicle he observed, and learned it was registered to Charles Glover who had a revoked driver's license. Deputy Mehrer then initiated a traffic stop and discovered Charles Glover was in fact driving the vehicle.

Glover claims that Deputy Mehrer lacked the necessary reasonable suspicion to stop him. The Supreme Court disagreed with Glover and found there was reasonable suspicion in this case.

According to the Court: "Before initiating the stop, Deputy Mehrer observed an individual operating a 1995 Chevrolet 1500 pickup truck with Kansas plate 295ATJ. He also knew that the registered owner of the truck had a revoked license and that the model of the truck matched the observed vehicle. From these three facts, Deputy Mehrer drew the commonsense inference that Glover was likely the driver of the vehicle, which provided more than reasonable suspicion to initiate the stop."

The Court did note that additional facts might dispel reasonable suspicion. "For example, if an officer knows that the registered owner of the vehicle is in his mid-sixties but observes that the driver is in her mid-twenties, then the totality of the circumstances would not 'raise a suspicion that the particular individual being stopped is engaged in wrongdoing.'"

Conclusion

The Supreme Court moved 10 cases it was supposed to hear in its 2019-2020 term to next term. Two of these cases involve local governments. Oral argument has been scheduled in October for both cases. The question in *Torres v. Madrid** is whether police have "seized" someone they have used force against who has gotten away. In *City of Chicago, Illinois v. Fulton** the Court will decide whether a local government must return a vehicle impounded because of code violations immediately upon a debtor filing for bankruptcy. 

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GOLD DOME

Potential Impacts on the 2021 New Jersey Governor's Race



BEN DWORKIN, PH.D., *Director, Rowan University Institute for Public Policy & Citizenship (RIPPAC)*

The day after Election Day 2020 was the unofficial start of the 2021 election season, and with it, the battle over the biggest prize in New Jersey politics—the governorship.

The 1947 state constitution makes New Jersey's governor the most powerful in the nation. Virtually everything—legislation, spending, appointments, contracts, patronage, etc.—goes through the Front Office.

Heading into 2021, incumbent Democrat Phil Murphy is in a solid position for reelection. He has locked up the party's vocal, engaged, and growing progressive base and has cut deals with enough party power brokers to find off any serious primary challenge.

He has significant personal resources to self-finance an expensive statewide campaign, if that becomes necessary. Further, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Murphy has seen his approval ratings skyrocket to above 60%.

Fault lines

There are, however, some fault lines that may offer hope to potential Republican challengers.

State History. First, there is the history. Since 1989, New Jersey has consistently elected a governor of the opposite party to the winner of the previous year's presidential election. Republican George H.W. Bush won the White House in 1988 and Democrat Jim Florio won as governor in 1989. Bill Clinton's win in 1992 is followed by Christine Todd Whitman's victory in 1993. On it goes through Murphy's election in 2017 that came right after Donald Trump's surprise victory the year before.

So, Biden's election should make New Jersey Republicans more optimistic about their prospects in 2021.

Leadership Style. A second potential fault line for Murphy is his leadership style. The governor is certainly an affable politician; courteous and empathetic.

But he has also been running New Jersey using emergency powers granted to him by the state's constitution. This authority was intended for use in short-term situations, like the immediate aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. Murphy is now in his 10th

month of employing this power as he tries to manage the continuing pandemic.

The ongoing use of emergency powers has opened Murphy up to attacks on the way he operates as a chief executive, with “dictator” and “king” being among the most frequently-used—and nicest—insults employed by his critics.

Approval ratings. Finally, Murphy's approval ratings are largely seen as temporary and artificially high, juiced by the crisis-nature of the pandemic. Underneath the surface, there are simmering resentments, frustrations, and anxieties—among both the political class and ordinary citizens—with the potential to erupt at some unforeseen moment in the future.

These three items offer hope for New Jersey Republicans, despite their growing statewide registration disadvantage, where Democrats now outnumber them by more than 1.1 million, a 400% increase since 2007.

GOP Base

One key ingredient to any potential Republican gubernatorial victory next year is the GOP base, a group of voters who have been on a steady diet of Donald Trump for five years.

That a majority of the party's grassroots has been firmly committed to the President is without doubt. For any potential GOP gubernatorial nominee, locking up the base is critical in what is already an uphill battle.

The question is whether their fervor for Trump will dissipate once he is ensconced in Mar-a-Lago and not the White House. More specifically: Will one's support of Trump in 2020 become a threshold issue for Republican voters in 2021? Angry over his loss of the presidency and an election they believe to be “a fraud,” will the party's base determine who leads New Jersey's GOP based on one's commitment to MAGA politics?

And then there is the question of what kind of political role will Trump himself play in his post-presidency life.

Should he decide to insert himself into a primary—either to get back at those he considers disloyal or to strengthen his own political position and influence—then those New Jersey Republican leaders who are hoping for a reset of the party will have a much tougher time doing so. It's not hard to imagine Trump continuing to tweet out his praise or scorn for

candidates and hold events that soak up the media's attention long after January 2021.

Normally, an ex-president who can still rally the grassroots is a great thing to have on your side. Democrats certainly love to use Barack Obama in this role.

But the downside for New Jersey Republicans is that, while Trump's support can help one win a GOP primary, it can hurt the Republican nominee in the general election. Lest we forget, the President lost New Jersey by a whopping 16% this year.

Given Trump's unpopularity statewide, the smart political play for Republicans would seem to be to localize the election and keep the focus on Murphy's record on taxes, the affordability of the state, and his leadership style.

It's going to be much harder to do that if the former President doesn't clearly leave the stage.

Thus, New Jersey Republicans are preparing for a battle that will define

the future of the party in a (sort of) post-Trump era.

And because of the state's off-year election cycle, New Jersey is the "canary in the coalmine" for the national party. What happens here will have implications everywhere.

Attention Getters

There are three Republicans who are receiving the most attention so far as potential gubernatorial nominees in 2021: Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick, state party chair Doug Steinhardt, and former Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli. Certainly, this list may expand in the future.

Bramnick embraced, more than the others, the breaking away from Trump and his style of politics. After recognizing, perhaps, what an uphill battle he would have given the President's hold on the party base, he announced in December that he would not seek the nomination.

Steinhardt has clearly wrapped himself in the "Make America Great Again" banner. And Ciattarelli is trying to keep a foot in both worlds, though his critics argue he has become much more Trumpian and less independent than his reputation suggests.

New Jersey Republicans are looking for someone to make an aggressive case against Murphy and for taking New Jersey in a different direction. In several recent legislative and countywide elections, the GOP has won against a very well-funded Democratic Party, largely by arguing that Murphy is not just liberal, but an extreme liberal, and that he is enabled by an all-Democratic legislature.

These messages could make the beginning of a competitive and unifying Republican gubernatorial campaign, but to do that, their candidate will need the stage to himself.

And no one can be sure that Donald Trump will allow that to happen. 

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Managing Municipal Debt Obligations in the Time of COVID-19

LEAH SZAREK, *Interim Chief External Relations Officer,
Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB)*

Plunging tax revenues, strained healthcare systems, painful budget cuts—New Jersey municipalities are not alone in facing these challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB) serves as a resource for municipalities in disclosing current information about their financial and operating status to investors and the public.

Turn to the MSRB for help seeing how other municipalities are describing the financial impact of the pandemic in their public filings. The MSRB also provides resources to help municipal officials appropriately categorize their filings to make them easier for investors and the public to find. When thinking about bringing new municipal bonds to market in these volatile times, the MSRB's free market data can be an important resource for municipalities and their financial professionals to see how the market is trending.

How Are Municipalities Disclosing the Known and Unknown Pandemic Effects?

The EMMA website (<https://emma.msrb.org/>) is the centralized, national repository where states and municipalities file information about their financial and operating condition and events that may affect bondholders. Investors rely on these disclosures to make informed decisions about the bonds in their portfolios and bonds they may be considering buying. For municipalities, disclosures from other states and communities can provide a helpful model for disclosure, especially when it comes to a novel situation like a global pandemic.

The MSRB identifies and aggregates the disclosures that reference COVID-19 and related keywords. Many municipalities are using this report to see how their peers are handling the tough task of disclosing the effects of the pandemic and the uncertainties around future revenue and expenses.

MSRB does not regulate municipalities or set the standards for disclosure. Instead, the MSRB provides the EMMA platform to enable municipalities to quickly and efficiently meet their disclosure obligations. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) plays an important role in the regulatory framework for disclosure. Recent SEC guidance related to the COVID-19 pandemic encourages municipalities and all bond issuers to provide investors with as much information about their current and operating condition as is reasonably practicable, and even forward-looking information when possible, accompanied by

appropriate cautionary language. The SEC has said they would not expect to second guess such “good faith attempts to provide appropriately framed current and/or forward-looking information.”

Ready to File a Disclosure to EMMA but Need Help?

The MSRB provides a free library of video tutorials, manuals and resources to assist municipal officials throughout the process of submitting a disclosure filing to the EMMA website. Among the most frequently asked questions about making a COVID-19-related disclosure relates to choosing a category to index the disclosure in the EMMA system. Categories function as labels and search filters on the EMMA website. Submitting disclosures with the applicable categories enables EMMA users to locate disclosures more easily.

Thinking about Issuing Municipal Bonds?

In March 2020, as it became increasingly apparent states and communities would have to go on lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19, volatility in the municipal bond market soared to heights not seen even during the Great Recession.

Even though the market has normalized in recent months, the market data and tools available on the EMMA website and in MSRB data reports can be important resources for municipalities considering a new bond issuance.

Aiding in the Recovery

As New Jersey cities and towns wrestle with the fiscal challenges of the pandemic, the MSRB and its EMMA website, can serve as an important resource to municipal officials, their bondholders, and policymakers. Municipalities that issue bonds can use EMMA and the MSRB's disclosure summary to review the COVID-related disclosures of other states and municipalities to understand how they are managing the crisis and disclosing that information to the investing public. Local officials can reach out to the MSRB with questions when making their own filings and refer to EMMA for real-time market data to inform their debt management decisions. At the same time, the freely available market data and expertise from the MSRB continues to inform federal public policy on relief measures to help state and local governments recover from this crisis. 

Leah Szarek is the Interim Chief External Relations Officer for the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB), where she oversees the organization's corporate communications, stakeholder engagement initiatives and government relations. Previously, she has held various communications roles at the MSRB and has led the MSRB's flagship market transparency program, the Electronic Municipal Market Access (EMMA®) website, as Director, Market Transparency.



Land Use Approval Extensions

FRANK MARSHALL, Esq., NJLM Associate General Counsel

As a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency, many development projects that have already been granted site plan and subdivision approvals by our planning board have been delayed. Given the circumstances, can our board extend these approvals?

With the public health crisis and the shutdown or slowing of many operations that followed, municipal planning boards are bound to see an increase in requests for extensions of the period of approvals provided for within the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL). The need for an extension can be caused by a variety of reasons, such as delays in obtaining approvals from other government agencies, or financial constraints caused by the economic shutdown.

In some instances, the planning board will be mandated to grant an extension, and in some cases the decision to grant an extension is left to the board's discretion.

Mandatory extensions

The MLUL provides guidance to planning boards as to circumstances under which extensions of statutory time protections for site plans and subdivisions should be given to developers. In short, the law provides that a planning board shall grant an extension of approval for a period determined by the board but not exceeding one year from what would otherwise be the expiration date, if the developer can prove by reasonable satisfaction that they were, through no fault of their own and despite their good faith efforts, unable to proceed with the development because of delays in obtaining legally required approval from other government entities.

This type of extension is available for preliminary, minor subdivision, minor site plans, and final approvals.

Discretionary extensions

In addition to those mandatory extensions, a board is given the authority to grant discretionary extensions of approvals. Typically, a developer requests an extension because of circumstances beyond their control, such as a poor economy, a lack of financing options, labor issues, or some combination of these and other factors.

The length of an available extension varies depending on the type of approval. For instance, a board may extend a period of

protection for a final approval of a site plan or major subdivision for one year but cannot exceed three extensions; preliminary approval can be extended for additional periods of at least one year but not to exceed a total extension of two years.

Determining whether or not to grant an extension

In times such as these, when there may be an increasing number of requests for discretionary extensions, it would be wise for a planning board to consider adopting uniform criteria for granting or denying discretionary extensions.

In determining whether or not to grant a request for an extension, the board must engage in a balancing test in which it must consider factors that weigh in favor of the extensions and factors that weigh against the extensions. Then they must balance the factors to determine whether or not to grant the extensions. *Jordan Developers v. Brigantine Planning Board*, 256 N.J. Super. 676, 679-680 (App. Div. 1992).

The Jordan court specifically held that the board must weigh “the public interest in the implementation of [any ordinance] change, the applicant’s interest in extended protection, and the circumstances in which the need for the extension arose.”

The required balancing test is not an “all or nothing” proposition. Certain factors may weigh against granting an extension except that, if conditions are imposed on the extension, the balance may then be tipped in the direction of granting the extension. Conditions may have to be imposed in the event the board finds that same are necessary in order to strike the proper balance.

Perhaps the most important consideration a board should keep in mind when making the determination to grant an extension or not is whether the project as approved still conforms to the master plan and zoning regulations. If the project is still in line with municipal regulations and the cause of the delay was truly some unavoidable serious problem, then the granting of an extension would certainly be appropriate.

However, if the project no longer conforms to all of the land use requirements there are essentially two options available to the planning board. First is to approve the extension, conditioned on the project complying with any new standards that may have been adopted. This option clearly provided for within the MLUL.

The second, and more complex, option is to deny the discretionary extension. In this case, the board must be sure to have adequately performed the balancing test described above and make a clear finding putting its reasoning on the record. 🇯🇵

105th Annual Conference— Virtually Perfect!



A new event format with the same high-quality opportunities for bettering local governments.

An extraordinary year called for an extraordinary event, and this year's League Conference fit the bill. Embracing the latest technology, attendees, speakers, and exhibitors put forth their best efforts to provide the latest information and opportunities to help improve local government operations.

With more than 75 sessions from the League and its Affiliates, timely topics ranged from ABC laws during the pandemic to encouraging moral strength. Discussions between speakers and attendees were lively interactions via chat panels that kept the spirit and the intent of the educational sessions moving forward.

An electronic Exhibit Hall was filled with materials and explanations of the latest products and services.

Delegates had the full spectrum of thought-provoking items and initiatives to review and the opportunity to live chat with booth representatives.

League members also met to determine priorities for 2021 and approved a slate of League Resolutions (see page 50) and to vote on the new Officers and Executive Board Members at the League Annual Business Meeting.

The New Jersey State League of Municipalities thanks all of the speakers, delegates, and the engaging vendors and the session speakers. We ask that you continue to support our vendors and speakers throughout the year by using your Conference ID to log in and attend missed sessions and connect with new product and service providers.

Following is a rundown of highlights from the Conference.



Atlantic City Mayor's welcome



Michael Cerra, NJLM Executive Director's Welcome



James Perry Sr., Committeeman, Hardwick; NJLM President (outgoing) welcome address.



Janice Kovach, Mayor, Clinton Town; NJLM President (incoming) thanks delegates for attending.

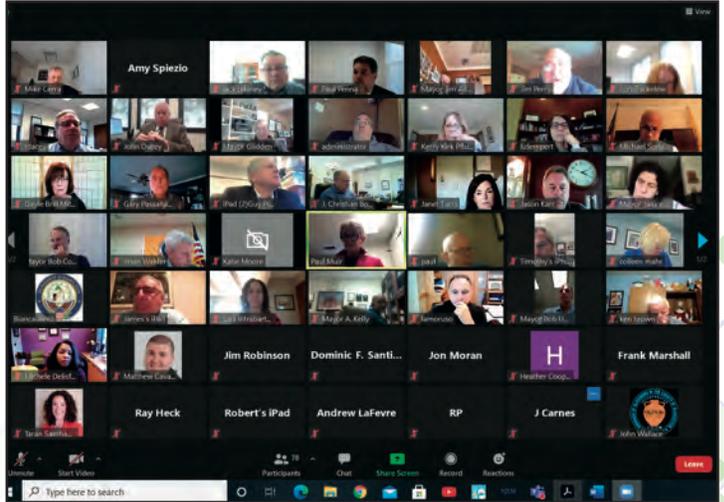
League Business

Setting its priorities for 2021, the League’s Resolution Committee met on the first day of the Conference, presided over by then First VP Mayor Janice Kovach of Clinton Town. A total of 13 resolutions were adopted this year (see page 52 for the full list).

At the end of the week, the Conference was wrapped up with the League’s Annual Business Meeting. Outgoing President James J. Perry Sr., Committeeman in Hardwick, was thanked for his year in the top spot. In addition, incoming President Mayor Janice Kovach of Clinton Town; 1st Vice President Mayor William Chegwidden of Wharton; 2nd Vice President Mayor Raymond Heck of Millstone Borough; and 3rd Vice President Mayor William Pikolycky of Woodbine were sworn in by Assemblyman Tom Malinowski of District 7. The Executive Board was elected. Meet your new board members on page 20.



Business meeting



Resolution consideration

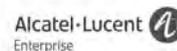
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Sessions Live or On-Demand

This year’s educational sessions covered the gamut from the traditional training for elected officials and affiliate members to cutting-edge information on managing the pandemic crisis.

New Jersey’s State Executive team, Governor Phil Murphy and Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver shared their time generously with attendees. Gov. Murphy provided a keynote address and was also a panelist with then NJLM President Perry and Attorney General Gurbir Grewal in the session Potential State and Local Solutions to the Opioid Crisis. Lt. Gov. Oliver spoke about COVID-19 recovery in the CARES Funding and Covid Response with DLGS Director Melanie Walter and joined in a meaningful discussion on ethics in the session Enhancing Moral Courage in Government. The sessions can be viewed through Nov. 21, 2021 by logging into or registering at www.njlm.org/2020conference.



Commissioner Persichilli



Shared Services czars



Leadership panel

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The votes have been counted.
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Start your term in Municipal Government on the right foot.
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Orientation for Municipal Officials Who Are Newly Elected, Reelected, Or Experienced



Saturday, January 9, 2021
Webinar—Your Computer

Saturday, January 23, 2021
Webinar—Your Computer

This orientation for municipal officials who are newly elected, reelected, or experienced is fast paced and designed to quickly bring officials up-to-date on important municipal issues. The newly elected officials will get a thorough overview of their major areas of responsibility, key contacts at the State level, and important sources of information and assistance.

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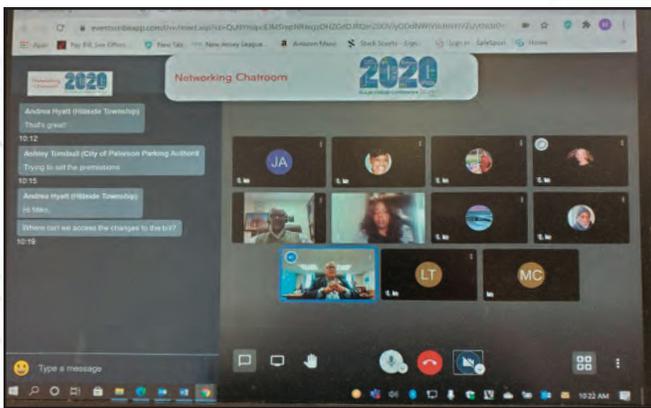
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Networking Goes Digital

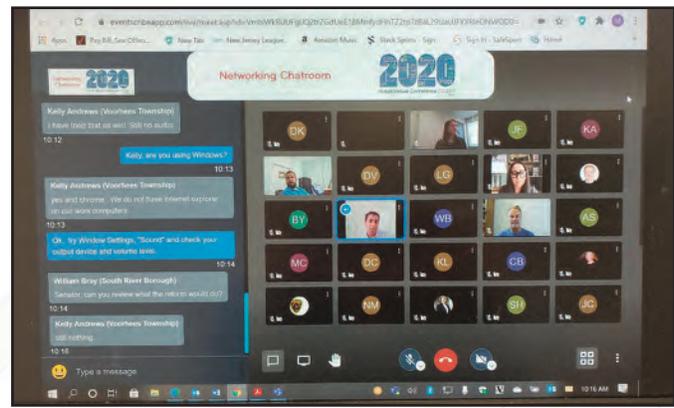
One of the most valuable experiences of the Conference is the opportunity to speak with your peers from around the state on issues of shared interest. This year was no exception as the event offered Networking Chatrooms for attendees.

They included:

- The League Conference Orientation with the League President Perry and 1st VP Kovach as well as NJLM Executive Director Michael Cerra and Assistant Executive Director Lori Buckelew
- Liquor License Reforms with Mayor Sheena Collum, South Orange Village; Senator Vin Gopal (District 11), and Downtown New Jersey Executive Director Courtenay D. Mercer
- Mayors of Rural Communities with NJLM President Perry
- Urban Mayors with Mayor Albert Kelly of Bridgeton, NJLM Past President
- Newly Elected Officials with Mayor Richard Turner of Weehawken and Councilwoman Edina Brown of Old Bridge
- Elected Officials of North Jersey
- Elected Officials of South Jersey with Mayor Gary Passanante of Somerdale and Mayor Anthony Fanucci of Vineland, both members of NJLM Executive Board



Chatroom for Urban Mayors



Chatroom for liquor licensing



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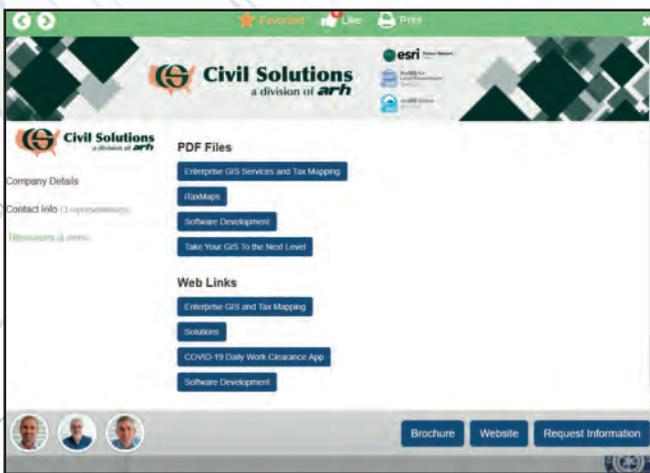
Over 145 exhibitors participated in the virtual conference and they are still available with their expertise and resources. Expand and extend your learning by exploring the products and services they offer!

The exhibitors have direct knowledge of the local municipal market and can help you navigate through your unique circumstances. They have worked with municipalities across the state—and nation—and can provide case studies and guidance.

The exhibitors—and the content in their booths—will be available until November 2021 so bookmark the conference website and refer to them often as you create your budgets, RFP's and need new products and services.

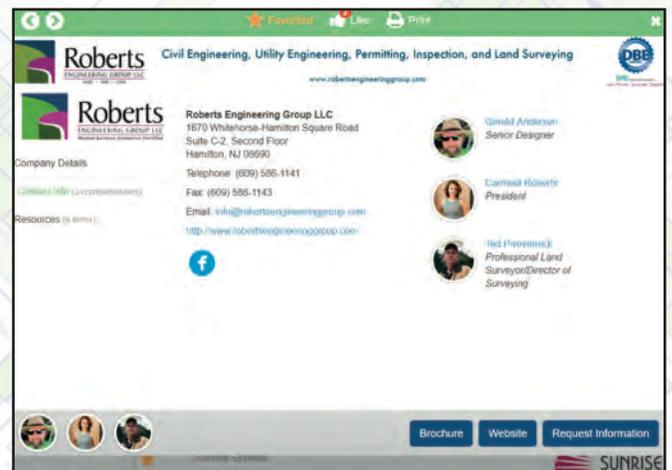
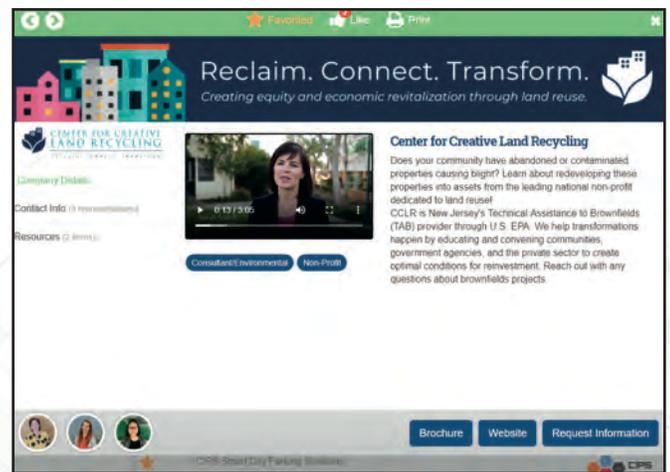
The booths contain a wealth of information at your fingertips!

Each booth includes company information with website links and pdf resources.



The “Contact Info” tab includes company and staff details with direct contact information for questions.

A “Request Information” button at the bottom of each booth will allow registrants to send exhibitors a direct message with the click of a button!



Stop by the booths today to get the solutions your municipality needs! Exhibitors can be searched alphabetically, by category listing, or the “logo wall.”

Visit the conference website at: www.njlm.org/2020conference

2020 NJLM Virtual Conference Exhibitors

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 AccuScan
 ACS - A Division of IdentiSys, Inc.
 Advanced Card Systems
 Aero Industries Refuse Tarp Systems
 Aetna
 Altec Industries Inc.
 Altice Business
 AmeriHealth New Jersey
 Amy Greene Environmental, a Davey Co.
 Ancero Utility VoIP
 Art Pride New Jersey
 Asphalt Paving Systems
 Aufsite - Cloud Services Provider
 Ben Shaffer Recreation Inc.
 Bobcat of North Jersey
 Brief Relief
 Brighton Health Plan Solutions
 Britton Industries
 Bruno Associates, Inc.
 Carroll Engineering
 Cascade Cart Solutions
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 CGI Technologies and Solutions Inc.
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 Cintas Corporation
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 City Fire Equipment Co., Inc.
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 Community Associations Inst. NJ
 Complete Auto Reports
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2021

League President's Legislative Priorities



All local government officials, especially local elected officials, have had to quickly adapt to the challenges COVID-19 has brought to our doorsteps. In addition to continuing to fight COVID, working on the promising vaccine rollout, and coming back stronger, League President Janice Kovach, Mayor of Clinton Town, will focus the League on a number of priorities for the upcoming year. While some priorities are in response to the pandemic, others listed below may sound familiar. Municipal property tax relief—the number-one concern for our property taxpayers—remains the League’s top priority.



RECREATIONAL CANNABIS

Municipal governments must be given the power, the personnel, and the revenues that will be needed to address concerns that will be created by this new industry. With the new law in place, our focus now shifts to the Cannabis Control Commission and the anticipated regulations that will regulate this new industry and impact local control.



RESTORATION OF MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Due to rising costs and population growth, municipalities often need to spend more in successive years to maintain services and programs. New Jersey’s two main formula-driven general municipal property tax relief programs are the Energy Tax Receipts Property Tax Relief program (Energy Tax) and the Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Act program (CMPTRA). Though often referred to as “State Aid” programs, both are actually revenue replacement programs, intended to replace property tax relief funding that was formerly generated through taxes assessed and collected specifically to fund municipal programs and services. In 2007, the State distributed \$1.631 billion to New Jersey municipalities. Last year, municipalities shared in only \$1.428 billion. If the 2007 total had been adjusted for inflation (as required by statute), then municipalities, statewide, could have provided residents with \$1.957 billion of relief.



AFFORDABLE HOUSING REFORM

The Executive and Legislative branches have abdicated their responsibilities on this issue and municipalities

are confronted with a dysfunctional, costly, and inefficient court process. It is time for the Executive and Legislative branches to reengage on this issue and ultimately develop a reasonable, rational statewide housing policy.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - POST PANDEMIC

We need to not only learn from the lessons during this pandemic to build a stronger foundation that can withstand future public health and natural disaster emergencies, but also assist in rebuilding our Main Street businesses.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - LIQUOR LICENSE REFORM

The State’s current regulatory structure governing alcoholic beverages remains relatively unchanged for generations and creates impediments for economic growth and development. Reform is needed to modernize these laws, especially in light of the temporary changes made during COVID-19. There will be an expectation from both our residents and the industry that some of these changes will become permanent. In addition, we will continue to advocate reforms that permit municipalities to allow neighborhood restaurants to provide patrons with alcoholic beverages on a limited basis.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - PILOTs

Policies that give municipalities the ability to promote redevelopment are essential. We must guard against efforts to inhibit municipalities from encouraging economic development by entering into Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs) agreements with willing business partners.

Legislative Priorities



OPIOID EPIDEMIC

The League will continue to advocate for intergovernmental cooperation on this menace. That will have to involve federal, state, and county governments listening to and working with local officials on strategies and programs designed to prevent the spread of the epidemic, to effectively treat current victims, and to address the burdens that inflict our families and other caregivers.



PATH TO PROGRESS

Discussion continues on Senate President Sweeney's NJ Economic and Fiscal Policy Workgroup report that discusses how we can address some of our State's chronic budgetary problems. Further public employee pension and benefit programs reforms must be pursued. Civil Service laws and regulations, which often hamstring local shared services efforts, need to be reformed. And consolidation of some school district administrative functions should be considered.



FEDERAL LEVEL ACTIONS

In addition to our immediate needs related to COVID-19, we need to focus Congress on America's need for major investments in our aging infrastructure. And we need our representatives in Washington to see the national

significance of our region's needs. The Gateway Project, which will not happen without federal cooperation, must be fast-tracked. We also need to focus the federal executive branch on local needs, including local rights to regulate the use of the public's rights-of-way. Over the course of the next year, your League of Municipalities will continue its robust advocacy for policies that will allow you to better serve your hometowns. We need all local officials to join in these efforts. Our citizens expect and deserve to have all their elected officials, at all levels of government, working together to address clear and present needs, and to together build a better future for our children, and our children's children.



INTEREST ARBITRATION CAP

The State enacted a permanent 2% levy cap, but included a sunset on the 2% cap on interest arbitration awards. Local officials will continue their calls to restore the 2% cap on interest arbitration awards. Every piece of evidence, statistic, and fact demonstrates that the Interest Arbitration Cap was successful in curtailing property tax increases. Yet the State Legislature appears hesitant to do what common sense demands and extend the cap. The League will not stand by while the interests of property taxpayers are pushed aside in favor of special interests. 



Budgeting for the Elected Official: Everything you Need to Know to Create, Balance, and Approve Your Municipalities' Budget

Saturday March 6, 2021 • 8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
The Conference Center at Mercer
1200 Old Trenton Road • West Windsor, NJ 08550

The League has created a special half-day program geared towards Elected Officials to help them in understanding the Municipal Budgeting Process. The day will be broken into four parts that include:

- Budget Law Overview
- History of State Aid and Other Issues
- What is Budgeting and Why is it Important?
- Planning for the Future

Please join us for this informative program!

REGISTRATION FEE: Member \$75.00* Non-Member \$100.00
*MUNICIPAL: Includes Municipalities, State, County, Local Governments and Municipal Utility Authorities

For more information click the QR code or visit www.njlm.org/seminars



13 Resolutions Adopted at the League's Annual Conference

On Friday, November 20, through a virtual meeting, 13 resolutions mapping the new legislative and policy priorities for the League of Municipalities were adopted at the Annual Business meeting held during the League's 105th Annual Conference.

Proposed by officials currently serving in municipal office, the resolutions are general in nature specifically focusing on municipal government interests. Prior to being adopted at the Business Meeting, the League Resolutions Committee screened these resolutions. The Committee was chaired by then-League 1st Vice President Janice Kovach, Mayor of Clinton Town.

Moving into 2021, these resolutions will join past years' resolutions as key priorities for the League. NJLM staff will be communicating with resolution sponsors to begin working with State and Federal legislators to introduce necessary legislation, as well as taking other steps to see the implementation of these resolutions. 

Index of Approved Resolutions

No. 2020-01 Resolution Supporting Federal Funding for Investment in Bridges and other Critical Transportation Infrastructure

No. 2020-02 Resolution in Support of Federal Efforts to Promote Digital Equity

No. 2020-03 Preserving Local Public Rights-of-Way and Regulatory Authority to Most Effectively Deploy 5G Broadband Access and Bridge the Digital Divide

No. 2020-04 Resolution Urging Support of Community Recovery Efforts in Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic by Enacting Reforms and Improvements to Opportunity Zones

No. 2020-05 Resolution Supporting the Development and Expansion of Waste and Recycling Markets

No. 2020-06 Resolution Supporting Clean Energy Jobs Through the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program

No. 2020-07 Resolution Supporting Local Control of Water Infrastructure Projects

No. 2020-08 Resolution Urging the Waiver of Cost Share Requirements for COVID-19 Federal Aid

No. 2020-09 Resolution Requesting the State of New Jersey to Provide Additional Funding for Dredging Projects

No. 2020-11 Resolution Urging the Governor and Attorney General to Pursue Legal Action Against Fossil Fuel Companies for Damages Caused by Climate Change.

No. 2020-12 In Appreciation of League Senior Legislative Analyst Jon Moran

No. 2020-13 In Appreciation of Former League Executive Director Michael Darcy

No. 2020-14 In Appreciation of League President James J. Perry, Committeeman, Hardwick

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Protecting the Protectors

Introducing the League Conference session **Addressing Mental Health and Burnout for Emergency Personnel**, NJLM 2nd Vice President and Mayor **Raymond Heck** of Millstone Borough—who has also served in law enforcement for 25 years—pointed out the increasing awareness of tolls of first responders and the opportunities for local government officials to assist these critical personnel. COVID-19 is just the latest of emergency situations that are draining manpower and overtaxing emergency services.

First responders, firefighters, dispatchers, corrections personnel, and health officials, all fit under the first responder umbrella in the current pandemic. And under the current extreme pressure, supporting these individuals is critical for local governments.

“I’ve seen many officers—police, fire, and other EMS officers—fall into the vortex of depression that has been created on the job. I’ve seen the burden get so extreme that some people have gone to the ultimate extreme of taking their own lives,” Heck said.

“The goal is to that we identify stressors and try to mitigate them to try and keep our mindset focused on the job and make sure we come back to our family not just physically but mentally capable of being ourselves as healthy individuals,” he added.

Speaker Steve Vrimento, MA, BCET, CTM, Director of Training NJ DHS-DMHAS Disaster & Terrorism Bureau notes that frontline workers may experience illness, personal loss, depletion in the ranks,

and person vs. role conflict when worries about home and family battle with professional responsibilities. To manage this stress, he suggests focusing on the individual for self-awareness, teammates and coworkers for buddy care, and supervisors/team leaders for monitoring.

As an organization, Vrimento suggests:

- Creating a healthy work environment/organizational culture
- Providing supportive leadership
- Providing quality supervision
- Debriefing staff
- Hosting staff/team meetings, retreats, formal and informal opportunities to socialize
- Encouraging formal and informal peer support
- Providing training and education
- Encouraging staff health and wellness.

@ For the full presentation, use your conference ID and login to www.njlm.org/2020conference.

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The New Jersey State League of Municipalities would like to thank its supporters, who value their partnership with the 565 municipalities of New Jersey. For information about the League’s sponsorship program, please contact Michael F. Cerra at 609-695-3481, Ext. 120, or mcerra@njlm.org.



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NJ LOCAL APRIL 18-24 GOVERNMENT 2021 WEEK

#njlocalgovt

This year, the New Jersey State League of Municipalities invites you to celebrate **NJ Local Government Week**.

We invite you to join in with municipalities across the Garden State **April 18-24, 2021**, to engage citizens while celebrating the work of local government.

NJ Local Government Week is a time for municipalities to encourage civic education, community collaboration, volunteerism, and local pride. Municipalities throughout the Garden State are encouraged to participate, and the NJ State League of Municipalities (NJLM) suggests you get the celebration started with the following:

Showcase. Highlight the programs and services you offer, showcasing the hard work of local government and the value residents receive on a daily basis.

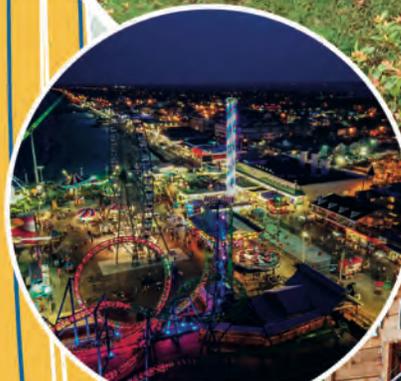
Coordinate. Tap into local resources such as community service and volunteering events in partnership with local organizations to cross-promote NJ Local Government Week.

Exhibit. Encourage citizens to share their civic pride with an essay, photography, or design showcase/contest. Why not make it a feeder program for your entry for the League's Show Off Your Municipality photo contest?

Wondering Where to Begin?

The website includes ideas and materials for celebrating **NJ Local Government Week**, publicity tips and strategies, and links to a sample press release and resolution. Information and resources, as well as a downloadable NJ Local Government Week logo, are available at www.njlm.org/njlocalgovt.

Celebrate Local Government!



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