



UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

**THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2023
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Granados presided over the meeting and called the meeting to order at 6:16 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Roll call showed Chairman Sergio Granados, Vice-Chairwoman Kimberly Palmieri-Mouded, Commissioner Joseph C. Bodek, Commissioner Angela R. Garretson, Commissioner Bette Jane Kowalski, Commissioner Lourdes M. Leon, Commissioner Alexander Mirabella, and Commissioner Rebecca Williams were present, with Commissioner James E. Baker, Jr. absent.

Also present were County Manager Edward T. Oatman, County Counsel Bruce H. Bergen, Esq., and Clerk of the Board James E. Pellettiere.

PRAYER AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The prayer and salute to the flag were led by Clerk of the Board Pellettiere.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

The statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act was read by Clerk of the Board Pellettiere.

APPROVAL OF COMMUNICATIONS

Note and File

Chairman Granados called for a motion to approve the Communications. On a motion made by Commissioner Mirabella and seconded by Commissioner Kowalski, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Thursday, February 9, 2023 - Agenda Setting Session
2. Thursday, February 9, 2023 - Regular Meeting
3. Thursday, February 23, 2023 - Agenda Setting Session
4. Thursday, February 23, 2023 - Regular Meeting

Chairman Granados called for a motion to approve the January Minutes. On a motion made by Commissioner Mirabella and seconded by Commissioner Williams, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT PORTION

The meeting was opened for the purpose of commenting on resolutions being offered for adoption and on any governmental issue that a member of the public feels may be of concern to the residents of the county.

Brian Lopez, of Cranford, noted a letter he submitted to the Board on March 21st expressing his disapproval over the changing of the Union County seal. He noted that while the seal may not be historically accurate in depicting the true circumstances of Hannah Caldwell's death, her death marked an important turning point in the Revolutionary War. He also noted that he disagreed with the notion that the seal glorified gun violence and violence against women.

Joan Peters, of Clark, from Moms Demand Action, commended the Board for their desire to change the Union County seal, noting that in the current climate the representation of a gun death on the seal was inappropriate. She noted a significant rise in gun-related crimes, adding that while she understood the historical significance of the current seal, she was of the opinion that Hannah Caldwell could be honored in a more appropriate way. She noted that one of the new seal options included a portrait of Hannah Caldwell. She thanked the Board for their efforts to this end.

Kathy Jacowitz, of Mountainside, expressed her disapproval over the changing of the current County seal, adding that Hannah Caldwell's bravery and sacrifice were memorialized on that seal. She noted that it was important to remember and preserve our history, warning against the dangers of changing and erasing it. She noted that changing the seal despite strong public opposition would make many constituents feel like their opinions and input were inconsequential.

Barbara La Mort, of Union, and current President of Union Township's Historical Society, spoke in opposition to the changing of the Union County seal. She noted that the seal paid tribute to local hero, Hannah Caldwell, continued to serve as an inspiration for women and girls everywhere today. She encouraged the Board to include the current seal as a third option in the online poll and allow the residents to decide whether it's changed or not. She noted the importance of Hannah's death in turning the tide during the American Revolutionary War. She advised that 16 days after Hannah's death, American forces were able to fend off efforts by British and Hessian soldiers to seize George Washington at Morristown and wondered what the outcome of the war would have been had these enemy forces been successful.

Jeremiah LaPorte, of Elizabeth, noted his approval for the changing of the seal. He noted that Hannah Caldwell could not be honored appropriately if the seal depicted a misrepresentation of her death. He advised, that in his opinion, the seal did stand for gun violence and the maltreatment of women. He noted the many deaths that have resulted from gun-violence, adding that it was time to change the County seal and honor Hannah Caldwell differently.

Jason Spore, of Kenilworth, spoke about growing up in Elizabeth, adding that he was in favor of keeping the current seal. He noted that the issue was bigger than Hannah Caldwell, the seal was a constant reminder of the rich history of Elizabeth and Union County and should be remembered. He advised that he had signed the

online petition started by Kelly Komar. He echoed the sentiments of Ms. La Mort in having the current seal as a third option in the online poll.

Salaam Ismiall, of Elizabeth, and one of the founders of the 1741 Project spoke about his efforts over the last three years to have the Board recognize and honor the death of three slaves that were burned at the stake on the grounds of the Union County Courthouse. He noted that given the Courthouse's history, he was insulted that one of the new seal designs highlighted the structure. He noted the struggles of African Americans during the times of slavery and Jim Crow Laws, adding that Elizabeth had a brutal history of enslavement. He advised that he had been coming to the Commissioners' meetings since 2020 and would continue to do so until his demands were met relative to a memorial for the three slaves burned at the U.C. Courthouse.

James Carey, of Elizabeth, asked the Board to give the 1741 Project the attention it deserved, noting that a monument for these individuals was the first step in reparations. He expressed his concerns about the banning of Critical Race Theory in other states, adding that in NJ race relations had progressed, but more progress was desired. Mr. Carey asked the Board to also recognize Elizabeth's history relative to slavery and the slave trade as many other neighboring towns have already done.

Clyde Dunning, Reverend of Sower of Seeds Faith Ministries, commended his colleague Salaam Ismiall for his efforts relative to the 1741 Project. He noted the importance of remembering the past, adding that he could hear cries for justice outside the U.C. Courthouse and that everyone had a moral obligation, including the Board, to reconcile the tragedies of the past.

Carlos Santos, of Mountainside, noted his disapproval over the changing of the Union County seal. He noted the rich history of Union County, and inquired about the desire to replace the current seal. Mr. Santos advised that he was disappointed in the idea to change the seal as Union County usually did a good job of preserving history, noting several war re-enactments hosted throughout Union County. He also inquired about the cost to replace the seal countywide, adding that these monies could be used to address more pending issues. He encouraged the Board to include the current seal as a third option in the online poll as well as allow residents to see the voting tallies.

Charles Shallcross, of Elizabeth, noted that gun violence should never be forgiven, including the violence perpetuated against Hannah Caldwell. He advised that the Union County Historical Society was strongly opposed to the changing of the current County seal, noting a statement that was submitted to the Board for their consideration. He further advised that the U.C. Historical Society had been instrumental in the adoption of the current seal almost 100 years ago. He agreed that the image on the seal while offensive, honored the sacrifice of Hannah Caldwell and the important role she played in our Country and County's history.

Maria Lorenz, of Elizabeth, spoke relative to the Board recognition of Elizabeth's Special Services and alleged that the organization was guilty of under-classifying children, adding that Elizabeth had the lowest classification rates when compared to other similarly-sized districts. She also advised that Elizabeth did not have a

functioning Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC). She noted that she took the district to court during which time a verbal settlement was reached and her child was offered a special program that was never provided. As a result, she hired an educator in Elizabeth to provide said program and submitted the \$2,500 bill to the district for payment. She advised that the district opted to take her to federal court, during which time the district was ordered to reimburse her for the program as well as her attorney fees. Ms. Lorenz also alleged the district had carried over \$1.5 million of Federal IDE funding that was never spent on special-needs children in the district.

Andrew Minegar, of Summit, and Chair of Summit's Finance Committee thanked the Board for delivering a flat Union County budget for the 4th year in a row. He noted that this was a clear indication of the Board's leadership and fiscal prudence. He thanked the Board for their leadership, noting the significant positive impact of a zero-percent increase in the County budget.

Mark Hurwitz, of Springfield, expressed his opposition relative to the changing of the Union County seal. He noted the importance of Hannah Caldwell's death during the Revolutionary War and inquired about the urgency to have the current seal changed, noting the financial drawbacks of said decision during such economic uncertainty. He noted the shortcomings of the two new seal designs being voted on and asked why a third option to retain the existing seal was not offered. He advised that Historian Thomas Fleming wrote that George Washington could have lost the Battle of Monmouth and still won the war, but had he lost the Battle of Springfield the American Revolution would have collapsed.

Frank Laurie, of Clark, expressed his opposition relative to the changing of the Union County seal. He noted that while the seal could be misleading it offered an invaluable opportunity to educate residents about the important role played by Hannah Caldwell and Union County during the American Revolution. He noted that the seal embodied Hannah Caldwell's love, strength, courage and fortitude in the face of danger, adding that her efforts, along with the efforts of other strong women in American History, helped win America's war on Independence.

Kelly Komar, creator of the online petition to keep the U.C. seal, expressed her opposition relative to the change. She noted the shortcomings of the two designs being voted on, adding that a third option for the existing seal should have been included. She noted that history, no matter how bleak, should be remembered and honored, noting Mr. Ismiall's earlier comments about slavery. She encouraged the Board to listen to the outcry from residents and reconsider their decision to change the Union County seal.

Maria Echeverria, of Elizabeth, made comments and asked questions relative to several Resolutions. She thanked the Board for Reso No. 2023-301 relative to the passing of Brooke Campbell. She also made comments relative to Reso Nos. 2023-306, 2023-307, 2023-317, & 2023-331. Relative to Reso No. 2023-336, noting that 1 in 36 children in NJ were being diagnosed with autism. She also made comments relative to NJ Senate Bill No. S3649 which would ban the sale on non-flushable wipes in NJ.

Bruce Paterson, of Garwood, made comments and asked questions relative to several Resolutions. Relative to Reso No. 2023-308, he inquired about the need for two per diem pathologists. Relative to Reso No. 2023-315, he asked why the County could not hire the entertainment directly. Relative to Reso No. 2023-317, he inquired about the cited projects. Relative to Reso No. 2023-327, Mr. Paterson asked why the residency requirement was being waived for the County's Construction Board of Appeals. Relative to Reso No. 2023-328, he inquired about the services being provided. Mr. Paterson also made comments relative to Reso No. 2023-312, 2023-333, & 2023-338. Relative to the Union County seal, he inquired about the sudden push to replace the existing seal. He noted that the first option depicted a plane flying into the U.C. Courthouse, while asserting the second design was a poor depiction of the Courthouse. He encouraged the Board to scrap the current prospective designs and work together with various County historical societies for proper suggestions.

Relative to Reso No. 2023-308, Director Moran advised that the Medical Examiner had been involved in 1,330 cases, including 356 autopsies. He noted that while Dr. Shaikh was a full-time pathologists, hiring two per diem employees would help to alleviate some of the delays in processing, allowing families to inter their loved-ones in timelier fashion.

Relative to Reso No. 2023-315, Director Durbin-Drake advised that UCPAC would be responsible for organizing eight summer concerts as well as one fall concert and the County's recurring Rhythm & Blues concert series. She advised that UCPAC specialized in these services and would be solely responsible for these events from start to finish.

Relative to Reso No. 2023-317, County Manager Oatman advised that he could not provide individual costs for each project as these projects were consolidated into one for efficiency.

Relative to Reso No. 2023-327, Counsel Bergen advised that due to the specific requirements established by the State of NJ relative to the Construction Board of Appeals, the County was waiving the residency requirement to broaden the selection pool and mitigate certain issues with finding qualified members.

Relative to Reso No. 2023-328, Counsel Bergen advised that this resolution related to legal fees for outside counsel for ongoing legal matters, adding that the law firm charged the County hourly for services provided.

There were no additional questions or comments from the public.

RESOLUTIONS FOR ADOPTION

The following Resolutions were offered for adoption:

- 2023-304 COMMISSIONER JAMES BAKER JR:** Authorizing the County Manager to enter into a contract with Federal Resources Supply Co., Stevensville, Maryland, to provide HazMat IQ Training to members of the UASI DECON Task Force from the Urban

Area Security Initiative (UASI) Region, through the 2020 UASI grant, in an amount not to exceed \$22,300.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-305 COMMISSIONER JAMES BAKER JR: Authorizing the County Manager to award into a contract with WAR Industrial Services LLC, Port Matilda, PA for repairs to the Roll Off System and UASI Neptune Unit located at IMTT in Bayonne using FY20 UASI funds in the amount not to exceed \$22,006.72.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-306 COMMISSIONER JAMES BAKER JR: Amending Resolution Number 2022-1079, a contract with Lehrer-Gibilisco Funeral Home, Inc., Rahway, NJ, for livery services for the period of January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022 to increase the contract in an amount of \$1,683.93 for a total contract not to exceed \$271,683.93.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-307 COMMISSIONER JAMES BAKER JR: Authorizing the County Manager to award a contract with Lehrer-Gibilisco Funeral Home, Inc., Rahway, NJ, to provide livery services for the Union County Medical Examiner's Office for the period of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, in a total amount not to exceed \$225,000.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-308 COMMISSIONER JAMES BAKER JR: Authorizing the County Manager to enter into contracts with two (2) per diem pathologists to be available in the absence of the County Medical Examiner for the period of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023 in the amount not to exceed \$300,000.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-309 COMMISSIONER BETTE JANE KOWALSKI: Amending Resolution Number 2021-131, a contract awarded through advertised public bidding (BA# 2-2021) in accordance with the Local Public Contracts Law N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq., to Kalogridis Contracting LLC, North Brunswick, NJ for the Lenape Park Dam Rehabilitation Project, Borough of Kenilworth, NJ. This Final Change Order Number 1 will decrease the contract amount by \$108,504.62 in an amount not to exceed \$421,495.38.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-310 COMMISSIONER BETTE JANE KOWALSKI: Amending Resolution Number 2023-95, awarding a contract to McMahon Associates, Inc., Burlington, NJ to provide On-Call Traffic Engineering Services, to reflect a vendor name change only from McMahon Associates to Bowman Consulting Group LTD of Burlington, New Jersey.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-311 COMMISSIONER BETTE JANE KOWALSKI: Granting permission to the Township of Scotch Plains to close Mountain Avenue to Park Avenue from Westfield Avenue/East 2nd Street to Front Street on Monday, May 29, 2023 for a Memorial Day Parade.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-312 COMMISSIONER BETTE JANE KOWALSKI: Authorizing the County Manager, through the Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, to execute any and all agreements for the 2023 HEART (History Education Arts Reaching Thousands) Grant Program for the total allocated amount of \$150,000.00 to 65 recipients.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-313 COMMISSIONER LOURDES M. LEON: Authorizing the County Manager to award a contract to SAGE Eldercare, Inc., Summit, NJ, to provide information and assistance to seniors (age 60 years and older and/or their caregivers) regarding health insurance benefits for the period of April 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024 which represents year three of a three-year contract, in the amount not to exceed \$35,000.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-314 COMMISSIONER REBECCA LYNNE WILLIAMS: Authorizing the County Manager to enter into a contract with Dylan's Landscaping Services, LLC, of Union, NJ, for the installation of disc golf tee boxes at Oak Ridge Park, for the Department of Parks & Recreation, Division of Park Maintenance, in the amount not to exceed \$26,295.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-315 COMMISSIONER REBECCA LYNNE WILLIAMS: Authorizing the County Manager to enter into a contract with the Union County Performing Arts Center, Rahway, NJ, for the purpose of talent acquisition, booking and day of facilitation for the 2023 Summer Arts Festival Concert Series, 2023 Rhythm and Blues by the Brook Concert, and the 2023 Fall Concert at Oak Ridge Park, Clark, NJ, to commence upon execution of the contract and through December 31, 2023 in the amount not to exceed \$320,000.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-316 COMMISSIONER REBECCA LYNNE WILLIAMS: Authorizing the County Manager to enter into a contract with KemperSports Management, Inc., Northbrook, IL to provide concessionaire services at Oak Ridge Park from April 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, for the sale of food and beverages with a guaranteed annual concession fee of 8% of Gross Revenue generated.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-317 COMMISSIONER REBECCA LYNNE WILLIAMS: Authorizing the County Manager to enter into a contract with MAST Construction Services, Inc., Little Falls, NJ to provide Owner's Representative/Construction Management Services for the Berkeley Heights Park Project, Lightning Brook Park Project, Green Lane Walking Trail Project, Watchung Stables Therapeutic Riding Ring Project, Echo Lake Dog Park Improvement Project and Glenside Avenue Park Development Project over a 45 month period in the amount not to exceed \$1,269,275.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-318 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS: Authorizing the County Manager to enter into a contract for the renewal of Cellebrite UFED 4PC Ultimate Licenses from Cellebrite, Inc., of Parsippany, NJ in an amount not to exceed \$24,400.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-319 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS: Authorizing the County Manager to enter into a contract with Special Services Group, Denair, CA for the purchase of Pole Cameras in an amount not to exceed \$34,491.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-320 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS: Amending Resolution Number 2022-896, to extend the contract with Catherine Vulcano to serve as an Acting SART/FNE Coordinator for the period of April 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023 and to increase the contract for an additional amount not to exceed \$26,684.00 for a new total contract amount not to exceed \$46,181.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-321 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS: Amending Resolution 2022-989, a contract with Curry Davis Consulting Group, Fairburn, GA for the Administration of the Union County Emergency Rental Assistance Program (UCERAP) to administer the Union County Emergency Rental Assistance Program Round 2, in an amount not to exceed \$8,200,733.48.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-322 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS: Appointing the Union County Department of Finance as the Fiscal Agent responsible for disbursing grant funds for local workforce investment activities under the direction of the Union County Workforce Development Board.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-323 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS: Authorizing the County Manager to distribute Round Three (3) Community Development Block Grant COVID-19 Funds (Phase 3, Round 2), to support activities that prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus, throughout Union County through non-profit organizations and Municipalities as listed. These funds are in the amount not to exceed \$2,129,000.00 for the period of March 1, 2023 through August 31, 2023.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-324 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS: Authorizing the County Manager to apply for and accept funding from the State of New Jersey, Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services, under the Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) Implementation Grant, in the amount not to exceed \$400,000.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-325 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS: Authorizing the County Manager to apply for and accept funding from the State of New Jersey, Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services, under the Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) Implementation Grant, in an amount not to exceed \$400,000.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-326 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS: Authorizing the County Manager to enter into a lease agreement with Union College of Union County, NJ to rent space for the 2023 Intoxicated Driver Resource Center (IDRC) education classes for fifty-two (52) IDRC class dates at a rate of \$247.50 per day during the period of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023 in the total amount not to exceed \$12,870.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-327 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS: Amending Resolution Number 120-77, as amended, which created the Union County Construction Board of Appeals, to eliminate the requirement of Union County residency for members.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-328 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS: Amending Resolution Number 2022-916, a contract to Kingston Coventry, LLC of Parsippany-Troy Hills, NJ, to provide General Counsel and potential litigation services to the County of Union, to reflect an additional amount not to exceed \$30,000.00 for a new contract amount not to exceed \$75,000.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

2023-329 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS: Authorizing the Execution of Participation Agreements and other documents in the Proposed "Second Wave" of nationwide opioid settlements and continued Agreement as to the Material Terms of New Jersey Distribution of Opioid Settlement Funds.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

- 2023-330 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS:** Authorizing the Office of the County Counsel to engage and compensate experts such as court reporters, expert witnesses, examining physicians and other litigation support and specialists which are essential to the defense of the County of Union during the year 2023 in amount not to exceed \$40,000.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

- 2023-331 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS, & THE ENTIRE BOARD:** Amending Resolution Number 2023-148, a contract with Groundwork Elizabeth, Elizabeth, NJ, for the administration and implementation of two programs encompassed under the grant program entitled: "Union County Plant A Seed Grant Program" for the period of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, to reflect an additional amount of \$5,000.00 for a total contract not exceed amount of \$70,000.00; the Community Garden Grant in the amount not to exceed \$20,000.00 and the Union County Kids Dig In! School Garden Grant Program in the amount not exceed \$50,000.00.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

COMMISSIONER SPONSORED RESOLUTIONS

- 2023-332 COMMISSIONER JAMES BAKER JR, & THE ENTIRE BOARD:** Recognizing the month of April 2023 as Alcohol Awareness Month throughout the County of Union.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

- 2023-333 COMMISSIONER JOSEPH C BODEK, & THE ENTIRE BOARD:** Congratulating the following honorees of the Appreciation Award of the Annual Women's High Tea Women's History Month Celebration on Sunday, March 26th, 2023: Barbara Greco-Brady, Rebecca Kerins-Tattoli, Kelly A. Koziol, Danie Orelie-Armstead, and Laura "Sissy" Sasarak; further recognizing the many contributions each of the honorees have provided the City of Linden.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

- 2023-334 COMMISSIONER ANGELA R. GARRETSON, & THE ENTIRE BOARD:** Offering the board's deepest condolences to the family of Andrew Thomas Williams III in their time of sorrow.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

- 2023-335 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS, COMMISSIONER LOURDES M. LEON, & THE ENTIRE BOARD:** Recognizing and congratulating the Portuguese Instructive Social Club on its 101st Anniversary which was celebrated on March 18, 2023.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

- 2023-336 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS, VICE CHAIRWOMAN KIMBERLY PALMIERI-MOUEDED, & THE ENTIRE BOARD:** Recognizing the month of April 2023 as "Autism Acceptance Month" (AAM) throughout Union County; and further recognizing and emphasizing the shift from "Awareness" to "Acceptance".

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

- 2023-337 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS, & THE ENTIRE BOARD:** Recognizing the month of April 2023 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) throughout the County of Union.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

- 2023-338 CHAIRMAN SERGIO GRANADOS, & THE ENTIRE BOARD:** Recognizing the month of April 2023 as National Fair Housing Month throughout the County of Union.

On a motion made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Garretson thanked the public for attending the evening's meeting and sharing their comments with the Board, particularly about the Union County Seal. She thanked Kelly Komar for collaborating her perspective about the Union County seal with Mr. Salaam Ismiall's comments relative to the 1741 Project. She encouraged the public to build a coalition founded on common ground as a means to evoke meaningful change. Commissioner Garretson noted the importance of recognizing all history and thanked Ms. Komar once again for being well-informed.

Commissioner Bodek advised that the County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi would be conducting the Primary Election ballot position drawing on June 6th at the Union County Courthouse in Courtroom 401. He further advised that the drawing process could be attended both in person and viewed on live stream. He noted that seats were limited for those wishing to attend in person.

Commissioner Leon commented on her recent participation in a Women's Leadership Conference in Elizabeth in honor of Women's History Month. She noted that the event provided a wonderful opportunity to recognize and honor notable women in the Union County community. She added that the event had garnered the attention of the International Women Empowerment & Wellness Movement, which provided a holistic approach to issues that unite women relative to business, finances, education, employment, and wellness. She noted that the movement embraced cultural diversity and encouraged women to grow themselves and contribute positively in their communities. On behalf of the Board, Commissioner Leon thanked Director Anderson for her efforts relative to the event.

Commissioner Kowalski thanked the public for their input, adding that many of the points discussed were valid. She noted the County's commitment to preserving history, recognizing the County's Office of Cultural & Heritage for their efforts in highlighting and celebrating history through Union County throughout the year with events such as Four Centuries in a Weekend, among others. Commissioner Kowalski noted that she was of the opinion that the County seal did depict a violent act whose accuracy is questionable, adding that Union County was the only County in the nation with such a seal. She advised that she was in favor of changing the Union County seal and honoring Hannah Caldwell in a much more respectful manner.

Commissioner Mirabella advised that he was not in favor of changing the Union County seal, adding that he had made his sentiments clear to his Board colleagues as well as other local organizations. He noted that Hannah Caldwell was a hero that should be revered and honored for her tremendous sacrifice that turned the tide of the American Revolutionary War. Commissioner Mirabella noted that constituents deserved the opportunity to vote for the current seal. He confirmed the Board's support relative to gun-control and disagreed with the opinion that the current seal glorified gun-violence. On another note, Commissioner Mirabella recognized Sheriff Peter Corvelli and congratulated him on being named Executive of the Year by the Italian American Police Society of NJ. He advised that Sheriff Corvelli was chosen out of a pool of many distinguished executive-level law enforcement officials, adding that the recognition was well-deserved. He thanked Sheriff Corvelli for his long history of service to Union County and congratulated him on the honor. Commissioner Mirabella closed by wishing everyone a Happy Easter, Passover, and Ramadan.

Commissioner Williams advised that the County's Fresh Start program would be returning to provide mobile shower, laundry, and restroom facilities to residents in need. She further advised that the Fresh Start program would be visiting the Elizabeth Public Library on Thursday, April 6th and would be at that location every first Thursday of each month for the remainder of the year. She added that the Fresh Start program would also be visiting the Plainfield Public Library on the third Friday of each month, starting on April 21st. Commissioner Williams noted that Human Services staff would be available on-site to connect residents with resources and services to help promote self-sufficiency. She advised that the Fresh Start program was the first of its kind and was introduced under the leadership of Chairman Mirabella in 2021. She thanked the County's Division of Social Services and Aging as well as local community partners for their efforts to this end. On another note, Commissioner Williams thanked the public for their participation

that evening, noting that she was in favor of changing the current County seal. She advised that she did not like the imagery and after 100 years she was of the opinion that it was time for a change. She noted that she was not anti-history, having served as the Education Director of Plainfield's Historical Society for two years, adding that she preferred Hannah Caldwell to be honored and remembered in a different, more respectful way. She asked the public not to conflate the changing of the Union County seal with nationwide efforts to remove confederate monuments erected by racists as a means to reclaim a dishonorable racist past. Relative to the 1741 Project, she recognized Ethel Washington for initially bringing to her attention the events of 1741, noting Ms. Washington's publications relative to Union County black Americans and black soldiers. Commissioner Williams advised that she was in favor of recognizing and commemorating this painful past.

County Manager Oatman joined Sheriff Corvelli in congratulating the 1st place NY Mets.

Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded thanked the public for their participation that evening, noting that she was pleased that constituents took the opportunity to address the Board and share with them some of their concerns. As a life-long residents of Union County, she noted the rich history of the County, advising that the Board did not take the decision to change the seal lightly and discussions about the potential changed dated back to at least 2018 when she was first elected to serve on the Board. She noted Union County's continued efforts to preserve history, adding that it was important never to forget who we are and where we came from. On another note, Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded advised that April was Autism Acceptance Month, adding that the County was committed to ensuring that all residents feel welcomed and including and can take advantage of the many services and programs offered in Union County. She noted several upcoming events including: sensory-friendly performance by Laurie Berkner at UCPAC, Night Out with NY Red Bulls on April 15th and an Autism Acceptance Celebration in Elizabeth on April 22nd. She also noted that the County would be observing Wear Blue Day on March 31st and would be lighting up the lobby in blue starting on April 2nd. Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded noted that she was proud of these efforts and thanked the Department of Human Services and Prosecutor's Office for bringing awareness to this important cause.

Chairman Granados confirmed his full support in favor of changing the current Union County seal, noting a recent discussion with one of the County's historical societies relative to the suggested change and associated concerns. He advised that the two new seal options being voted on were designed to represent the strong roots, diverse present, and future possibilities of Union County. Chairman Granados noted that the first seal option included a portrait of Hannah Caldwell in addition to other strong symbols of Union County, including: transportation, open space, and the Union County Courthouse while the other highlighted the Union County Courthouse, a recognizable landmark. He advised that it was not the intention of the Board to erase history and or minimize the contributions of Hannah Caldwell, but rather honor her in a different way. Chairman Granados pointed out that Hannah Caldwell was unrecognizable in the current seal, in comparison to the large-scale portrait included in one of the new designs. He advised that the County was working with local historical societies to dedicate a history week in Union County, during which time residents, adults and children alike, would have the opportunity to learn about Union County's rich history. Chairman Granados also advised

that once the seal was changed, updating the existing design would be a gradual process, noting that seals that were currently embedded and or engraved in County structures would remain unchanged. Relative to the 1741 Project, Commissioner Granados thanked Mr. Ismiall and the United Youth Council for bringing this matter to the attention of the Board, attributing certain delays in action to the COVID-19 pandemic. He advised that the Board had been working alongside the Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs and other community partners including Pastor Wanda Lundy from the Siloam Hope First Presbyterian Church to properly research the events to ensure historical accuracy. He added that the Board was working with Pastor Lundy on a comprehensive plan to appropriately acknowledge the tragedy, including signage relative to said to be placed within the site area. Additionally, he noted the Board's efforts with 313 plus organizations to create an interpretive museum with a section dedicated to the events of 1741. Chairman Granados also noted paying tribute to these three souls on Ancestor Remembrance Day in October. He thanked the members of 313 and Snyder Academy for their efforts to this end as well as Salaam Ismiall for his research into the matter. He confirmed that updates on the matter would be forthcoming.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Granados asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. On a motion made by Commissioner Kowalski and seconded by Vice-Chairwoman Palmieri-Mouded, roll call showed eight members of the Board voted in the affirmative, with Commissioner Baker absent.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 P.M.

**UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
2023 MEETING SCHEDULE
REORGANIZATION MEETING - THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 2023 at 6:00 pm
Union County Courthouse- 2 Broad Street. Elizabeth**

AGENDA SETTING SESSION

January 26, 2023
February 9, 2023
February 23, 2023
March 16, 2023
March 30, 2023
April 13, 2023
April 27, 2023
May 11, 2023
May 25, 2023
June 8, 2023
June 22, 2023
July 13, 2023
August 17, 2023
September 7, 2023
September 21, 2023
October 12, 2023
October 26, 2023
November 9, 2023
December 7, 2023
December 21, 2023

REGULAR MEETINGS

January 26, 2023
February 9, 2023
February 23, 2023
March 16, 2023
March 30, 2023
April 13, 2023
April 27, 2023
May 11, 2023
May 25, 2023
June 8, 2023
June 22, 2023
July 13, 2023
August 17, 2023
September 7, 2023
September 21, 2023
October 12, 2023
October 26, 2023
November 9, 2023
December 7, 2023
December 21, 2023



James E. Pelletiere, RMC, QPA

Clerk of the Board

Please note that the County Commissioners' meetings are to be regularly held on Thursday evenings and are scheduled to be held on the same evening, with the Agenda Setting Session to commence at 6:00pm and the Regular Meeting to commence as soon as possible after the Agenda Setting Session, unless otherwise noted.

All meetings are to be held in the Commissioner Meeting Room within the Administration Building, 6th floor located at 10 Elizabethtown Plaza, Elizabeth New Jersey, 07207.

Due to the Covid-19 coronavirus concerns, County Commissioner meetings may be held remotely via Zoom webinar under the procedures conducted, as published, in 2021. If said procedures are deemed necessary, the Clerk of the Board will revise this Public Notice according to law.

Persons requiring a sign language interpreter should contact the Office of the Clerk of the Board at 908-527-4140.