

**INSTALLATION AND REORGANIZATION MEETING
OF THE 2026 UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
COURTROOM OF THE HONORABLE LISA MIRALLES WALSH, ASSIGNMENT JUDGE
SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COUNTY OF UNION, 2 BROAD STREET, ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2026 AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

The Honorable Lisa Miralles Walsh, Assignment Judge, Superior Court of the County of Union, offered welcoming remarks and introduced the Honorable Nicholas P. Scutari, New Jersey State Senate President, Chairman of the Union County Democratic Committee and Master of Ceremonies, who shall call the Installation Ceremony to order.

The Honorable Lisa Miralles Walsh wished everyone a Happy New Year and welcomed everyone to the Union County Board of County Commissioners 2026 Installation and Reorganization Meeting. She recognized the Honorable Judge James Wilson and the Honorable Carol I. Cohen, thanking them for attending. She also welcomed Governor-Elect Mikie Sherill as well as all the other dignitaries in attendance. She thanked her staff as well as County Manager Edward T. Oatman and Deputy County Manager Amy C. Wagner for their continued partnership. She also thanked Trial Court Administrator Devang Merchant and Operations Division Manager Ryan Kramer for their efforts in facilitating the morning's event. She congratulated everyone being honored and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

2026 INSTALLATION CEREMONY OF UNION COUNTY

WELCOME

Honorable Lisa Miralles Walsh,
Assignment Judge, Superior Court,
County of Union

OPENING REMARKS

Honorable Nicholas P. Scutari, New Jersey Senate
President, and Chairman of the Union County
Democratic Committee

The Honorable Nicholas P. Scutari, NJ Senate President Union County Democratic Committee Chairman welcomed everyone to the 2026 Installation Ceremony of the Union County Board of County Commissioners. He called upon the Honorable NJ Senator, Joseph P. Cryan, to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance & Salute to the Flag.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE &
SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

Honorable Joseph P. Cryan,
New Jersey Senator,
20th Legislative District

The Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the Flag were led by NJ Senator Joseph P. Cryan.

RECOGNITION OF HONORED GUESTS

Honorable Nicholas P. Scutari, New Jersey State
Senate President, and Chairman of the Union County
Democratic Committee

NJ Senate President Scutari noted the many challenges facing NJ, adding that he believed the State was on the right track, recognizing Governor-Elect Mikie Sherrill on her tremendous victory against incredible odds. He added that Governor-Elect Sherrill had shown true leadership during her time in the US Congress, U.S. Attorney's Office and her service in the U.S. Navy.

HONORED GUEST SPEAKER

Honorable Governor-Elect Mikie Sherrill,
State of New Jersey

Governor-Elect Mikie Sherrill thanked everyone for the warm welcome and wished everyone a Happy New Year. She recognized NJ Senate President Scutari, Union County Clerk, Joanne Rajoppi, Union County Commissioners, James E. Baker Jr., Michele S. Delisfort, Alexander Mirabella, Kimberly Palmieri-Mouded, Joseph Signorello III, Stanley J. Neron, and Rebecca L. Williams, as well as outgoing Commissioners Bette Jane Kowalski and Sergio Granados. She also recognized Assemblyman Reginald W. Atkins, Assemblywoman Linda S. Carter, Assemblywoman Annette Quijano, and UC Sheriff Peter D. Corvelli Jr., highlighting the tremendous leadership in Union County. She also recognized US Representative Bonnie Watson-Coleman, highlighting her long service in government, adding that this would be her final year in office. She noted that she was honored to be able to serve as NJ Governor during the semiquincentennial of the United States. She noted the many challenges facing the nation, equating them to the challenges faced during the Revolutionary War. She affirmed her commitment to serving the people of NJ and ensuring the success of all residents. She closed by thanking everyone for welcoming her to Union County, wishing everyone a wonderful 2026.

NJ Senate President Scutari recognized the following esteemed guests and dignitaries in attendance:

The Honorable Lisa Miralles Walsh, Assignment Judge, Superior Court of the County of Union

The Honorable New Jersey Governor-Elect Mikie Sherrill

The Honorable Carol I. Cohen, Superior Court of the New Jersey

The Honorable Congresswoman, Rep. Bonnie Watson-Coleman

The Honorable Congressman, Rob Menendez

The Honorable New Jersey Senator Joseph P. Cryan, 20th Legislative District

The Honorable Assemblywoman Annette Quijano, 20th Legislative District

The Honorable Assemblyman-Elect Eduardo Rodriguez, 20th Legislative District

The Honorable New Jersey Assemblyman Rev. Reginald W. Atkins, 20th Legislative District

The Honorable New Jersey Assemblyman-Elect Vincent M. Kearney, 21st Legislative District

The Honorable New Jersey Assemblywoman Linda Carter, 22nd Legislative District

The Honorable New Jersey Assemblyman James Kennedy, 22nd Legislative District

The Honorable Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi

The Honorable Union County Surrogate Christopher E. Hudak

The Honorable Union County Prosecutor William A. Daniel

Councilman-at-Large Frank J. Cuesta, City of Elizabeth

Councilwoman Patricia Perkins-Auguste, City of Elizabeth

Councilman Nelson Gonzalez, City of Elizabeth

Mayor Terrence Curran, Township of Cranford

Township Commissioner Kathleen Prunty, Township of Cranford

Mayor Jen Blumenstock, Borough of Garwood

Council President Clarissa Nolde, Borough of Garwood

Councilwoman Karina Boto

Councilman Vincent Kearney, Borough of Garwood

Councilwoman Lisa Bonanno, Township of Hillside

Mayor Linda Karlovitch, Borough of Kenilworth

Council President Savino Scorese, Borough of Kenilworth

Councilman Patrick Boyle, Borough of Kenilworth

Councilman Joseph Finistrella, Borough of Kenilworth

Councilwoman Toni Giordano Picerno, Borough of Kenilworth

Councilman William Mauro, Borough of Kenilworth

Councilman Douglas Piper, Borough of Kenilworth

Mayor Derek Armstead, City of Linden

Council President Michele Yamakaitis, City of Linden

Councilman Eloy Delgado, City of Linden

Councilwoman Lisa Ormon, City of Linden

Councilman Barry E. Javick, City of Linden

Councilman Ralph Strano, City of Linden

Councilwoman Monique Caldwell, City of Linden

Councilwoman Christine Hudak, City of Linden

Mayor Adrian O. Mapp, City of Plainfield
Councilwoman Terri Briggs-Jones, City of Plainfield
Councilwoman Julianne Cherry, City of Plainfield
Councilman Jeffrey Brooks, City of Rahway
Mayor Donald Shaw, Borough of Roselle
Council President Cindy Thomas, Borough of Roselle
Councilwoman-at-Large Denise Wilkerson, Borough of Roselle
Councilwoman Isabel Sousa, Borough of Roselle
Councilwoman Rosetta McCamery, Borough of Roselle
Councilman Joseph Signorello, Jr., Borough of Roselle Park
Councilman Jay Robaina, Borough of Roselle Park
Councilwoman Rosanna Lyons, Borough of Roselle Park
Councilman Jorge Casalins, Borough of Roselle Park
Councilman Joseph Petrosky, Borough of Roselle Park
Councilwoman Elizabeth Stamler, Township of Scotch Plains
Deputy Mayor Harris Laufer, Township of Springfield
Mayor Jeremy Berman, Town of Westfield
Councilwoman Jenn Gilman, Town of Westfield
Union County Commissioner Bette Jane Kowalski
Union County Commissioner Sergio Granados

CERTIFICATIONS OF ELECTION

Honorable Clara Fernandez,
Union County Deputy Clerk

NJ Senate President Scutari recognized County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi and her many years of dedicated public service, serving as County Clerk since 1995. He highlighted her advocacy and commitment to accessibility, transparency, election integrity, voter education, and protecting the integrity of the democratic process. He thanked her for her continued efforts.

Deputy County Clerk Clara Fernandez read the Certification of Election of Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi, to the Union County Clerk's Office and certified that County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi had received the highest number of votes and had been duly elected to a term of five years as Union County Clerk of the County of Union at the General Election on Tuesday, November 4, 2025.

Joanne Rajoppi, County Clerk

Honorable Joanne Rajoppi,
Union County Clerk

County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi read the Certification of Election of Commissioners Rebecca L. Williams, Joseph Signorello III, and Stanley J. Neron to the Union County Board of Commissioners. County Clerk Rajoppi certified that Commissioners Rebecca L Williams, Joseph Signorello III, and Stanley J. Neron had received the highest number of votes and had been duly elected to a term of three years as Commissioners of the Board of Union County Commissioners at the General Election on Tuesday, November 4, 2025.

Rebecca L. Williams, Union County Commissioner
Joseph Signorello III, Union County Commissioner
Stanley J. Neron, Union County Commissioner

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE TO COUNTY CLERK JOANNE RAJOPPI

The Honorable Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari introduced Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi and call upon the Honorable Carol I. Cohen, Administrative Law Judge, State of New Jersey, to administer the Oath of Office to County Clerk Rajoppi.

Holding the Bible for County Clerk Rajoppi were members of the Pappas Family.

County Clerk Rajoppi offered her remarks.

County Clerk Rajoppi recognized all the elected officials and dignitaries in attendance and wished everyone a Happy New Year. She noted the honor of being able to serve Union County during the United States' semiquincentennial celebration, alongside so many wonderful elected officials. She spoke to her 35 years of service as County Clerk and 53rd year in public service, crediting both her mother and father for her interest in public service. She recognized her two sons, Peter-Anthony and Andrew Pappas, highlighting their work as Director of Intellectual Property Policy for U.S. Senate Committee Judiciary and Warrant Officer for the U.C. Sheriff's Office respectively. She also thanked the Union County Democratic Committee, including NJ Senate President Scutari, for re-nominating her for the Office of Union County Clerk. She thanked her dedicated and professional staff for their continued efforts. She thanked her Deputy Clerk Fernandez as well as her Commissioner running mates, Commissioners Williams, Signorello, and Neron. She thanked the Honorable Carol I. Cohen for administering her Oath of Office, adding that she was grateful for their friendship of over 50 years. To close, she thanked her sons, daughter-in-law Jackie and her grandchildren Adrianna, Anthony, and Alina, adding that she was so proud of them and loved them very dearly. She thanked the residents of Union County for once again electing her to serve.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE TO COMMISSIONER REBECCA L. WILLIAMS

NJ Senate President Scutari recognized Commissioner Williams as a respected voice on fiscal responsibility, quality of life issues and community engagement. He highlighted her advocacy for inclusive policies, shared services and transparent government, adding that she led with integrity, thoughtfulness and a deep commitment to ensuring Union County was an inclusive place for all.

NJ Senate President Scutari recognized Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman as one of NJ's fiercest advocates in Washington. He congratulated her on an impressive career, adding that while she would be greatly missed, her legacy would live on.

The Honorable Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari introduced Union County Commissioner Rebecca L. Williams and called upon the Honorable Congresswoman, Rep. Bonnie Watson-Coleman, State of New Jersey, to administer the Affirmation of Office to Commissioner Williams.

Joining Commissioner Williams for her Affirmation was her partner, Veronica Taylor.

Commissioner Williams offered her remarks.

Commissioner Williams thanked everyone for attending the Board of County Commissioners 2026 Reorganization meeting. She also thanked the voters for re-electing her to the Board. She thanked NJ Senate President Scutari, Assemblywoman Carter, and Plainfield Mayor Mapp for their endorsement and continued support. She congratulated County Clerk Rajoppi on her re-election as well as Commissioners-Elect Neron and Signorello on being elected as County Commissioners. She also recognized outgoing Commissioners Granados and Kowalski, thanking them for their many years of service and noting the strong legacy they leave behind. She thanked County Manager Oatman and Deputy County Manager Wagner and the County Staff for their continued efforts. She thanked Congresswoman Watson-Coleman for her groundbreaking career in public service and wished her well on her future endeavors. She thanked her family, including her partner, Veronica Taylor, for their continued love and support. She closed by reaffirming her commitment to serving and prioritizing the needs of Union County residents.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE TO COMMISSIONER-ELECT JOSEPH SIGNORELLO, III

NJ Senate President Scutari highlighted Commissioner-Elect Signorello's strong private sector background in finance and technology, in addition to serving two terms as the Mayor of Roselle Park, adding that he brought proven executive leadership and municipal experience to the Board of County Commissioners. He noted Commissioner Elect Signorello's commitment to fiscal responsibility, infrastructure investments and smart redevelopment, bringing a forward-thinking approach to public service.

The Honorable Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari introduced Joseph Signorello, III and administered the Oath of Office for County Commissioner.

Holding the Bible for Joseph Signorello III were his father, Joseph Signorello, Jr., joined by his mother Antonette Signorello and grandfather, Antonio Barritta.

Commissioner Signorello III offered his remarks.

Commissioner Signorello thanked everyone for attending the Board's 2026 Reorganization Meeting. He thanked his mother, father, and brother for their continued support, love and patience and for being the grounding force in his life. He recognized the Roselle Park Democratic Committee and thanked them for their support and encouragement. He also thanked Councilman Joseph Petrosky for his mentorship over the years. He thanked NJ Senate President Scutari and Union County Democratic Committee Executive Director, Joseph Shelley, and other local leaders for their support and confidence. He noted his full commitment to honoring the trust placed upon him by the residents of Union County and serving them to the best of his ability.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE TO COMMISSIONER-ELECT STANLEY J. NERON

NJ Senate President Scutari recognized Commissioner-Elect Neron as a first-generation American with a life-long commitment to public service, noting his decade of service to the Elizabeth Board of Education. He highlighted his commitment to family, community, equity, and opportunity.

The Honorable Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari introduced Stanley J. Neron and called upon the Honorable Judge James Wilson, Supreme Court, State of New Jersey, to administer the Oath of Office for County Commissioner.

Holding the Bible for Stanley J. Neron were his wife Rejeanne Dumas-Neron, joined by their son Noah Neron, daughter Davina Dumas, and his mother Michelin Neron.

Commissioner Neron will offer his remarks.

Commissioner Neron wished everyone a Happy New Year, Happy Kwanza, and Happy Haitian Independence Day. He congratulated County Clerk Rajoppi and Commissioner colleagues Commissioner Signorello and Commissioner Williams on their respective election wins. He honored God for leading his steps and granting him the strength to serve. He thanked the residents of Union County for their incredible support. He recognized the Honorable Judge Wilson, noting their friendship of many years, and thanked him for administering his Oath of Office. He recognized the many dignitaries in attendance, including: NJ Senate President Scutari, Assemblywoman Carter, Senator Cryan, Assemblyman Atkins, Assemblywoman Quijano as well as Elizabeth Council Members Perkins-Auguste, Cuesta, and Gonzalez. He thanked UCDC Executive Director, Joseph Shelley, and the Democratic Party leadership, including Elizabeth Mayor, J. Christian Bollwage, for their endorsement and support. He recognized outgoing Commissioners Granados and Kowalski and thanked them for their many years of service, adding that he would continue to honor their commitment to the residents of Union County. He thanked his family for their continued love and support. To close, he affirmed his commitment to working in faith to provide results for the residents of Union County.

INSTALLATION CLOSING REMARKS

CLOSING REMARKS

Honorable Nicholas P. Scutari, New Jersey State
Senate President, and Chairman of the Union County
Democratic Committee

NJ Senate President Scutari recognized his predecessors Charlotte DeFilippo and Gerald B. Green, highlighting the successful Democratic stronghold in Union County. He thanked everyone for their continued efforts and commitment to public service and wished everyone a Happy New Year and turned the meeting over to Clerk Pellettiere.

The Honorable New Jersey State Senate President and Union County Democratic Committee Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari turned the Installation Ceremony and Reorganization Meeting of the 2026 Board of County Commissioners over to the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, James E. Pellettiere.

2026 REORGANIZATION MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

CALL TO ORDER

Clerk of the Board Pellettiere presided over the meeting and called the meeting to order at 11:50am.

ROLL CALL

Roll call showed Commissioner James E. Baker, Jr., Commissioner Joseph C. Bodek, Commissioner Michèle Delisfort, Commissioner Lourdes Leon, Commissioner Alexander Mirabella, Commissioner Stanley Neron, Commissioner Joseph Signorello III, Commissioner Kimberly Palmieri-Mouded, and Commissioner Rebecca Williams were present.

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

ELECTION OF A CHAIR OF THE 2026 BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The first order of business was the election of a Chair of the Board of County Commissioners for the year 2026.

The Clerk of the Board called for a nomination for the election of a Chair Pro-Tem of the Board of County Commissioners for the year 2026.

Commissioner Palmieri-Mouded recognized Commissioner Lourdes Leon for her tremendous leadership as Chairwoman of the Commissioner Board in 2025. She highlighted her commitment to enhancing access and developing resources for Union County residents, including aging residents.

Commissioner Palmieri-Mouded nominated Commissioner Leon to serve as Chair Pro-Tem for 2026. On a motion made by Commissioner Palmieri-Mouded and seconded by Commissioner Delisfort, roll call showed nine votes in the affirmative.

Chair Pro-Tem Lourdes Leon offered her remarks as Chair Pro-Tem and called for nominations for the election of a Chair of the Board of County Commissioners for the year 2026.

2026 Chair Pro-Tem Leon wished everyone a Happy New Year and thanked her Commissioner colleagues for their unwavering support during her Chairship in 2025. She thanked Commissioner Bodek for his invaluable partnership, serving as her Vice-Chairman. She called for a nomination for the election of a Chair of the Board for 2026.

Commissioner Mirabella highlighted Commissioner Bodek's experience and background in government and his unyielding commitment to serving the residents of Union County.

Commissioner Mirabella nominated Commissioner Bodek to serve as Chairman of the Board of County Commissioner for the year 2026. On a motion made by Commissioner Mirabella and seconded by Commissioner Baker, roll call showed nine votes in the affirmative.



Chair Pro-Tem Lourdes Leon introduced 2026 Chairman Joseph C. Bodek and called upon the Honorable Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari to administer his Oath of Office.

NJ Senate President Scutari highlighted Chairman Bodek's steady leadership and longstanding career in government, serving the residents of Linden for over four decades, noting his commitment to practical and proactive approach to public service. He added that he was honored to be able to administer Chairman Bodek's Oath.

Holding the Bible for Chairman Joseph C. Bodek were his wife Christine, joined by their granddaughters Adalyn Rivera, Aria Rivera, and Evelyn Mary Bodek.

ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIR OF THE 2026 BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
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The next order of business was the election of a Vice Chair of the Board of County Commissioners for the year 2026.

Chairman Joseph C. Bodek called for nominations for the election of a Vice Chair of the Board of County Commissioners for the year 2026.

Commissioner Neron nominated Commissioner Williams to serve as Vice-Chair of the Board of County Commissioner for the year 2026. On a motion made by Commissioner Neron and seconded by Commissioner Signorello, roll call showed nine votes in the affirmative.



Chairman Bodek congratulated Vice-Chair Williams, adding that he looked forward to working alongside her in 2026.

Chairman Joseph C. Bodek introduced 2026 Vice Chair Rebecca L. Williams, and called upon the Honorable Assemblywoman Linda Carter, 22nd Legislative District, State of New Jersey to administer her Affirmation of Office.

Assemblywoman Carter congratulated Chairman Bodek and Vice-Chair Williams, commending Vice-Chair Williams for her progressive approach to government.

Joining Vice Chair Rebecca Williams for her Affirmation was her partner, Veronica Taylor.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL MESSAGE

Chairman Joseph C. Bodek delivered the Chairman's Annual Message:

Good morning everyone and thank you for being here this morning for our Annual Union County Re-Organization. This is more than a procedural transition — it is a moment to reflect on our progress and recommit ourselves to serving the residents of Union County. It is truly an honor to stand before you as Chairman for 2026, and I am grateful to my colleagues on the Board — including those newly joining us this year — for the trust and confidence they have placed in me. Serving alongside you has been a privilege, and I look forward to continuing our work together in the year ahead.

I want to begin by thanking my family and friends for standing by me throughout this journey. To my wife, Christine — thank you for your constant encouragement, patience, and strength. To my son Joseph and my daughter-in-law Claudia, and my granddaughter Evelyn; to my daughter Beth Ann and my son-in-law Joseph, and my granddaughters Adalyn and Aria — thank you for your love and understanding. You are my greatest source of pride and motivation.

I would also like to thank Senate President Nicholas Scutari, Mayor Derek Armstead, Council President Michele Yamakaitis, and my friends Ralph Strano and Christopher Hudak for their friendship, guidance, and continued support over the years. I would be remiss if I did not take a moment to recognize the late Joseph Suliga. For many of us in this room, he was a mentor, a leader, and a guiding force, and in countless ways, he is the reason so many of us are gathered here — and why we are where we are today.

Public service is demanding, and it requires patience, understanding, and sacrifice from those closest to us — and I am deeply grateful for them. In that same spirit, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to our Union County Democratic Chairman and Senate President, Nicholas Scutari, for his continued partnership and leadership. Your collaboration continues to benefit Union County in meaningful ways, and we are thankful for your commitment to the people we serve.

We are also honored to be joined this morning by Governor-Elect Mikie Sherrill. On behalf of the Union County Board of County Commissioners, we welcome you and wish you every success as you prepare for your upcoming swearing-in as Governor of the State of New Jersey. We look forward to working together in the years ahead on behalf of our residents.

I also want to recognize our outgoing Chairwoman, Lourdes Leon, for her leadership throughout 2025. Chairwoman Leon guided this Board with thoughtfulness, collaboration, and a strong focus on connection and accessibility. Under her leadership, Union County strengthened services, expanded outreach, and continued delivering for residents across every municipality. Please join me in giving her a well-deserved round of applause.

As I step into this role, I do so with a deep respect for the trust placed in us as County Commissioners. Every decision we make affects real people — families trying to make ends meet, seniors seeking care, young people building their futures, and workers who keep our communities moving forward. As we look ahead to 2026, this defining year calls for thoughtful leadership, careful decision-making, and a deliberate, strategic approach to serving residents while remaining prepared for change. In Union County, we view this not as a challenge, but as a responsibility — to lead with discipline, focus, and a commitment to delivering real value for the people we serve.

*With that in mind, I am proud to share our theme for the year ahead: **Union County 2026: Honoring the Past, Strengthening Our Tomorrow.** This theme reflects the role we play in a significant year — one that calls on us to remember where we have been, honor those who came before us, and strengthen the foundation for future generations. It speaks to stewardship and continuity — the belief that progress comes not only from creating something new, but from strengthening and building upon what already serves our residents well.*

This year, our nation will mark the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States — a milestone that reminds us of the ideals that shaped our country and the perseverance required to uphold them. Here in Union County, the American Revolution was not a distant struggle — it unfolded across our towns and communities, which served as a critical crossroads in the fight for independence. Places like Elizabethtown, Connecticut Farms, and Springfield were sites of resistance and sacrifice — where local residents stood in the path of repeated efforts to advance through New Jersey. Across what are now our 21 municipalities, communities provided strategic ground and vital assistance that helped protect General Washington's forces. These stories remind us that independence and self-governance were forged not only in famous halls, but in communities like our own.

Throughout 2026, Union County will offer opportunities for residents to engage with this history through educational and community-based programming that promotes reflection and connection across generations. At the same time, 2026 will mark the 25th anniversary of September 11th — a day that forever changed our nation and left a lasting impact on Union County. For many families, first responders, and survivors, September 11th is not a moment frozen in time; its effects continue through ongoing loss and long-term health challenges. Together, these two anniversaries remind us that progress is measured not only by what we create, but by how we honor those who came before us and care for those still affected.

In recognition of the 25th anniversary, Union County will thoughtfully enhance the area surrounding our existing memorial to honor those we lost, those who passed in the years since due to 9/11-related illnesses, and those who continue to live with the lasting effects of that day. This work will be done with respect and intention — ensuring their sacrifices are never forgotten.

As Chairman, my focus this year is grounded in a simple but essential principle: strengthening the foundation of the work we already do. Union County has created strong programs, trusted services, and meaningful partnerships over many years. These are not things to be taken lightly.

In 2026, our responsibility is to build upon them — refining, improving, and expanding their reach where possible. This work would not be possible without the dedication of our County leadership and staff. I want to thank County Manager Ed Oatman, Deputy County Manager Amy Wagner, our Directors, Constitutional Officers, and every County employee who shows up each day committed to public service.

Union County continues to prioritize the safety and well-being of residents across every community through a coordinated, countywide approach. Public safety and emergency response efforts focus not only on protection and preparedness, but also on outreach and building trust with residents. Programs designed to support seniors, individuals with special needs, and families during emergencies remain an essential part of this work, and we will continue expanding awareness and accessibility of these services throughout the year.

Union County is equally committed to the spaces and programs that support residents' quality of life. Our Parks and Recreation system remains one of the County's greatest assets, serving residents at every stage of life through youth programs and sports, senior activities, enriching experiences, and open space that brings people together.

In 2026, Union County will continue investing in park improvements while advancing environmental stewardship through open space protection, tree planting, recycling initiatives, and sustainability efforts to keep our communities healthy and livable.

Supporting our seniors remains a top priority. As our population continues to age, we are committed to ensuring older adults can remain active, independent, and connected to their communities. Through nutrition programs, health services, transportation, recreation, and social engagement, Union County will continue strengthening support for seniors in 2026 by improving access, expanding outreach, and ensuring services remain reliable, responsive, and rooted in compassion.

We are equally committed to our children and young people, who represent the future of Union County. Through recreational programs, educational opportunities, community experiences, and safe spaces for growth, Union County invests in initiatives that promote healthy development and lifelong learning.

By providing opportunities for engagement, creativity, and leadership, we help young people build confidence, develop skills, and prepare to contribute positively to their communities — strengthening the foundation of Union County for years to come.

In 2026, our region will also be connected to a global moment as the FIFA World Cup comes to the area. While Union County is not a host site, this event presents an opportunity to celebrate diversity, welcome visitors, and highlight the culture, hospitality, and community pride that define our County. Through collaboration with municipalities, cultural organizations, and community partners, Union County will focus on opportunities that allow residents to engage with this moment in a way that echoes local character and shared experience.

For me, this commitment to community is deeply personal. My family's roots in Union County go back generations, shaped by hard work, service, and a deep connection to the communities we call home. My grandfather operated a small butcher shop — first in Linden, then in Elizabeth — working long hours to support his family, build relationships, and serve his neighbors. Later, another shop followed, each one rooted in the same belief that community matters and that success comes from showing up every day and doing right by people. That sense of responsibility carried through my family in other ways as well.

My father served as a firefighter for more than 40 years, dedicating his life to protecting others and answering the call to serve whenever it came. Growing up around that example of service — whether in a small family business or in public safety — taught me the value of commitment, resilience, and putting community before self. Those lessons continue to guide how I approach public service today and reinforce why supporting what we have built matters so deeply to me.

Union County has always been built by people who showed up, worked hard, and looked out for one another. That spirit remains at the heart of who we are. To the residents of Union County, thank you for your trust, your engagement, and your partnership. You are the reason we do this work, and your voices matter in every decision we make.

To my fellow Commissioners, County leadership, and staff — thank you for your professionalism, dedication, and commitment to serving with integrity. As we move through this year, let us honor our past, strengthen what we have built, and continue moving forward with purpose and unity. I am honored to serve as Chairman of the Union County Board of County Commissioners, and I look forward to the year ahead. Thank you.

RECESS

Chairman Joseph C. Bodek called for a motion to recess.

On a motion made by Commissioner Mirabella and seconded by Commissioner 12:35pm roll call showed nine votes in the affirmative.

The Board entered into recess.



HONORED GUESTS

The Honorable New Jersey Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari, 22nd Legislative District

The Honorable Lisa Miralles Walsh, Assignment Judge, Superior Court of the County of Union

The Honorable New Jersey Governor-Elect Mikie Sherrill

The Honorable Congresswoman, Rep. Bonnie Watson-Coleman

The Honorable NJ Superior Court Judge James Wilson

State Legislative Delegation

The Honorable New Jersey Senator Joseph P. Cryan, 20th Legislative District

The Honorable Assemblywoman Annette Quijano, 20th Legislative District

The Honorable New Jersey Assemblyman Rev. Reginald W. Atkins, 20th Legislative District

The Honorable New Jersey Assemblywoman Linda Carter, 22nd Legislative District

The Honorable New Jersey Assemblyman James Kennedy, 22nd Legislative District

County Elected/Appointed Officials

The Honorable Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi

The Honorable Union County Surrogate Christopher E. Hudak

The Honorable Union County Prosecutor William A. Daniel

Local Elected Officials

Councilman-at-Large Frank J. Cuesta, City of Elizabeth

Councilwoman Patricia Perkins-Auguste, City of Elizabeth

Councilman Nelson Gonzalez, City of Elizabeth

Mayor Terrence Curran, Township of Cranford

Township Commissioner Kathleen Prunty, Township of Cranford

Mayor Jen Blumenstock, Borough of Garwood

Council President Clarissa Nolde, Borough of Garwood
Councilwoman Karina Boto
Councilman Vincent Kearney, Borough of Garwood
Mayor Linda Karlovitch, Borough of Kenilworth
Council President Savino Scorese, Borough of Kenilworth
Councilman Patrick Boyle, Borough of Kenilworth
Councilman Joseph Finistrella, Borough of Kenilworth
Councilwoman Toni Giordano Picerno, Borough of Kenilworth
Councilman William Mauro, Borough of Kenilworth
Councilman Douglas Piper, Borough of Kenilworth
Mayor Derek Armstead, City of Linden
Council President Michele Yamakaitis, City of Linden
Councilwoman Lisa Ormon, City of Linden
Councilman Barry E. Javick, City of Linden
Councilman Ralph Strano, City of Linden
Councilwoman Monique Caldwell, City of Linden
Councilwoman Christine Hudak, City of Linden
Mayor Donald Shaw, Borough of Roselle
Council President Cindy Thomas, Borough of Roselle
Councilwoman-at-Large Denise Wilkerson, Borough of Roselle
Councilwoman Isabel Sousa, Borough of Roselle
Councilwoman Rosetta McCamery, Borough of Roselle
Councilman Joseph Signorello, Jr., Borough of Roselle Park
Councilman Jay Robaina, Borough of Roselle Park
Councilwoman Rosanna Lyons, Borough of Roselle Park
Councilman Jorge Casalins, Borough of Roselle Park
Deputy Mayor Harris Laufer, Township of Springfield