

**INSTALLATION AND REORGANIZATION MEETING
OF THE 2020 UNION COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
COURTROOM OF THE HONORABLE KAREN M. CASSIDY, ASSIGNMENT JUDGE
SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COUNTY OF UNION, 2 BROAD STREET, ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY**

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 AT TWELVE O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON

The Honorable Karen M. Cassidy, Assignment Judge, Superior Court of the County of Union, called the Installation Ceremony and Re-Organizational meeting to order at 12:00 PM. She congratulated those that had won their respective elections during the last general election cycle and extended them her well wishes. She welcomed everyone to the ceremony, noting the recent remediation and upgrades that had been done and continue to be done throughout the courthouse, thanking the Board for facilitating the much needed updates to the facility. She turned the meeting over to the Honorable J. Christian Bollwage, Mayor of the City of Elizabeth.

GREETINGS

Honorable Mayor J. Christian Bollwage, City of Elizabeth

Honorable Mayor J. Christian Bollwage thanked everyone for attending the ceremony. In particular, he thanked Honorable Judge Cassidy for hosting the ceremony. He welcomed all elected officials and honored guests to the City of Elizabeth, and encouraged all to patron the stores and restaurants downtown. He introduced and turned the meeting over to the NJ State Senator of the 22nd District and Chairman of the UCDC, the Honorable Nicholas P. Scutari.

Master of Ceremonies, the Honorable Nicholas P. Scutari,
New Jersey State Senator, 22nd District and Chairman of
the Union County Democratic Committee (UCDC).

Honorable Nicholas P. Scutari noted the joyous and momentous nature of the day's proceedings, noting that the ceremony was a means to celebrate the Board, constitutional officers, and county government as a whole, noting in particular the past success and continued success of the Democratic Party. He turned the meeting over to Reverend Reginald Atkins for the Invocation.

INVOCATION

Reverend Reginald Atkins, Zion Family Worship Center,
Roselle, New Jersey

Reverend Reginald Atkins of the Zion Family Worship Center, of Roselle, offered the day's invocation.

CALL TO PRESENT THE COLORS

Honorable Peter Corvelli, Union County Sheriff

THE PRESENTATION OF THE COLORS

Union County Sheriff's Honor Guard

THE POSTING OF THE COLORS

Union County Sheriff's Honor Guard

The Presentation of the Colors was performed by the Union County Sheriff's Honor Guard, led by Honorable Peter Corvelli, the Union County Sheriff. He called for the presentation of the colors.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Honorable Peter Corvelli, Union County Sheriff

Union County Sheriff, the Honorable Peter Corvelli led the Pledge of Allegiance.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Marie Oakie

Mrs. Marie Oakie sang our National Anthem, the Star Spangled Banner.

The Honorable Sheriff Peter Corvelli called for the Honor Guard to end their detail.

RECOGNITION OF HONORED GUESTS

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari acknowledged the many Honored Dignitaries that were present for the 2020 Installation Ceremonies.

HONORED GUESTS

The Honorable Karen M. Cassidy, Assignment Judge, Superior Court of the County of Union

The Honorable United States Representative Bonnie Watson-Coleman, 12th Congressional District

The Honorable United States Representative Tom Malinowski, 7th Congressional District

The Honorable Governor Phil Murphy, New Jersey

The Honorable Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, New Jersey

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

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

The Honorable New Jersey Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, 21st Legislative District

The Honorable New Jersey Assemblywoman Annette Quijano, 20th Legislative District

The Honorable New Jersey Assemblyman Jamel Holley, 20th Legislative District

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

The Honorable Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi

The Honorable Union County Sheriff Peter Corvelli

The Honorable Union County Surrogate James S. LaCorte

Acting Prosecutor Lyndsay Ruotolo

The Honorable Mayor J. Christian Bollwage, City of Elizabeth

The Honorable Mayor Adrian Mapp, City of Plainfield

The Honorable Mayor Patrick F. Giblin, Township of Cranford

The Honorable Roselle Park Municipal Court Judge Gary A. Bundy

The Honorable Elizabeth Municipal Court Judge Jubilo Afonso

The Honorable Tony Teixeira, Elizabeth Democratic Chairman

Jorge A. Estrada, Esq

Reverend Reginald Atkins, Zion Family Worship Center, Roselle, New Jersey

Reverend Carmine Pernini, Zion Lutheran Church, Rahway, New Jersey

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari noted the presence of several other Mayors, including Shelley Brindle of Westfield and Raymond A. Giacobbe, Jr. of Rahway, among others. He also asked the other local dignitaries in attendance, including School Board and City Council Members, among others to stand and be recognized.

CERTIFICATIONS OF ELECTION

Honorable Joanne Rajoppi,
Union County Clerk

James S. LaCorte, Union County Surrogate
Bette Jane Kowalski, Union County Freeholder
Sergio Granados, Union County Freeholder
Rebecca L. Williams, Union County Freeholder

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari called upon the Honorable Joanne Rajoppi, County Clerk to certify the election.

County Clerk Rajoppi noted the importance of the Certifications of Elections.

The Certification of Election of Surrogate James S. LaCorte to the Union County Surrogate as well as Freeholders Bette Jane Kowalski, Sergio Granados, and Rebecca L. Williams to the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders was read by Joanne Rajoppi, Union County Clerk. Ms. Joanne Rajoppi, Clerk of the County of Union, certified that Surrogate James S. LaCorte received the highest number

of votes and was duly elected to a term of five years as Union County Surrogate at the General Election on November 5th, 2019. Furthermore, Freeholders Better Jane Kowalski, Sergio Granados, and Rebecca L. Williams received the highest number of votes and were duly elected to a term of three years as a Member of the Board of Chosen Freeholders at the General Election on November 5, 2019.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE TO JAMES S. LACORTE

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari introduced Surrogate James S. LaCorte and made comments relative to his achievements and success as Union County Surrogate and congratulated him on his re-election. He called upon the Honorable Roselle Park Municipal Court Judge Gary A. Bundy to administer the Oath of Office to Surrogate James S. LaCorte.

Holding the Bible for James S. LaCorte were his daughters Meredith Carpenter and Kristin Kloss, son-in-laws Robert Carpenter and Terry Kloss, and grandchildren Amanda and Thomas Carpenter, James Terrence and Corinne Kloss.

Honorable New Jersey State Senator Scutari called upon Senator and Union Township Democratic Committee Chairman, Joseph P. Cryan, to make a gift presentation to newly sworn-in Surrogate James S. LaCorte on behalf of the Union Democratic Committee.

Senator and Union Township Democratic Committee Chairman, Joseph P. Cryan, commended Surrogate James S. LaCorte for his outstanding work over the years, noting his distinguished character and professionalism and congratulated him on his re-election as U.C. Surrogate.

Surrogate James S. LaCorte recognized and thanked his immediate family, noting that he was infinitely proud of his daughters and the people they had become; he added that his wife was instrumental in raising them to be the women they are and that she would be equally proud of them. He spoke relative to the enjoyable and rewarding experience of being a grandfather to his wonderful grandchildren. He recognized and thanked his political family, including Mayor J. Christian Bollwage for his many years of friendship and for facilitating the revitalization of the City of Elizabeth; Senator Joseph P. Cryan for being a hardworking and dedicated Senator worthy of praise; and NJ State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari for his confidence and support as he pursued re-election. He commended the Democratic Party as a whole for their beliefs and approach to government as a tool to facilitate the enrichment of the lives of their constituents. He acknowledged the responsibilities of U.C. Surrogate and vowed to continue to provide consistent quality and sympathetic services to those his office serves, recognizing the difference in his approach to the position following the tragedy of September 11, 2001 during which time 60 Union County residents perished.

GENERAL REMARKS

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari commended the Democratic Party in Union County for their strong leadership and success, since taking over (majority of the Union County Freeholder Board and countywide elections) in 1997. He commended his fellow Democrats and colleagues for their continued hard work in fueling the overall success of the party and government as a whole. He recognized his predecessors Charlotte DeFilippo, former UCDC Chair and Assemblyman Jerry Green for guiding the way to the Democrats' continued success, noting that they would be proud of the

current state of affairs. He also thanked the current members of the Democratic Party for their continued hard work in guiding and conserving the vision of the party, recognizing NJ State Senator Joseph P. Cryan as a crucial and instrumental component of the Democratic Party.

Honorable New Jersey State Senator Scutari called upon New Jersey State Senator Joseph P. Cryan to offer remarks.

NJ State Senator Joseph P. Cryan recognized Mayor of Springfield Chris Capodice and Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman. He congratulated Republican Jon M. Bramnick for winning his respective race and thanked the Honorable Judge Karen M. Cassidy for hosting the Reorganization Ceremony. He noted that in his experience, it was crucial for government to function well in trying times. He thanked the Board and the other Honored Dignitaries present from around the state for continuing to do great things in spite of current difficulties; he congratulated them on a job well done. He thanked New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari for his kind words, noting that despite having a difference of opinions regarding certain matters, he admired and commended Senator Scutari and looked forward to working with him as our Chairman, not only in 2020 but in 2021 and the decade ahead.

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari thanked State Senator Joseph P. Cryan for his kind words.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE TO FREEHOLDER BETTE JANE KOWALSKI
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The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari made comments relative to Freeholder Kowalski, noting her serving as Chairman of the Board the previous year. He noted her strong advocacy for parks, education, community service, advising that she played an instrumental role in reintroducing limited one-seat rides through the Raritan Valley Coalition. Senator Scutari spoke highly of Freeholder Kowalski, noting her reputation amongst her fellow Board Members, her steady hand, and her consistent willingness to volunteer her time.

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari introduced Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski and called upon the Honorable Congressman Tom Malinowski, 7th Congressional District, to administer the Oath of Office to Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski.

Holding the Bible for Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski was her husband Andrew Lanset.

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari called upon Congressman Tom Malinowski to offer his remarks.

The Honorable Congressman Tom Malinowski noted the honor it was to swear-in friend and Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski. He thanked her for her vouch of confidence and partnership as he sought election to the House of Representatives. He noted the importance of the day's ceremony in taking an Oath to conserve and support the values and principles on which The United States was founded. He cited the importance of strong partnerships in government as it relates to making progress.

Honorable New Jersey State Senator Scutari called upon the Honorable Cranford Township Mayor Patrick F. Giblin to make a gift presentation to newly sworn-in Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski on behalf of the Cranford Democratic Committee.

Cranford Mayor Patrick F. Giblin acknowledged Governor Phil Murphy, thanking him for taking the time to swear him in to his second term as Mayor earlier in the week. He thanked NJ Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney as well as Senator Nicholas P. Scutari. He congratulated Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski on her re-election, noting her tireless efforts and advocacy as it relates to the Raritan Valley Coalition, Flood Control, Parks and Recreation. He added that the Township of Cranford was incredibly proud of Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski and her achievements.

Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski thanked her running mates Surrogate James S. LaCorte and Freeholders Sergio Granados and Rebecca Williams, noting that it was an honor to run alongside them and continue to serve with them and the Board as a whole. She thanked Governor Murphy for attending the Re-Organizational Ceremony and for his support as it relates to Planned Parenthood. She also thanked Congressmen Malinowski for swearing her in. She thanked NJ Senator Nicholas P. Scutari for his guidance, especially in the last year. She noted her efforts going into 2020, noting that government runs better when everyone collaborates to achieve the desired goal. She advised that she would continue to focus and advocate for transportation, flood control, and education, and other important initiatives. She closed by thanking everyone for their support and the opportunity to continue to serve as a dedicated public servant.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE TO FREEHOLDER SERGIO GRANADOS
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The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari made comments relative to Freeholder Sergio Granados, who secured a third term as Union County Freeholder, noting that he was the youngest person voted to the Board. Senator Scutari commended Freeholder Granados for all his continued hard work and efforts, recognizing him as a dear friend. Senator Scutari noted how proud he was of Freeholder Granados and the work he has done and continues to do, establishing himself as a dedicated public servant and dynamic leader.

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari introduced Freeholder Sergio Granados and called upon the Honorable Elizabeth Municipal Court Judge Jubilo Afonso to administer the Oath of Office to Freeholder Sergio Granados.

Holding the Bible for Freeholder Sergio Granados were his Goddaughters Isabella & Sofia Afonso, Godsons Tony & Teo Teixeira joined by Elizabeth Democratic Committee Chairman Tony Teixeira, Michelle Silva Afonso, Benjamin Afonso and Edward Afonso.

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari called upon the Honorable Elizabeth Democratic Committee Chairman Tony Teixeira to make a gift presentation to newly sworn-in Freeholder Sergio Granados on behalf of the Elizabeth Democratic Committee.

Elizabeth Democratic Committee Chairman Tony Teixeira thanked the members of the Elizabeth Democratic Committee for their continued support and confidence as well as Mayor J. Christian Bollwage of the City of

Elizabeth and other elected officials throughout the city. He made comments relative to his relationship with Freeholder Granados, noting that he considered him family and was very proud to be there today to present newly sworn-in Freeholder Granados with a small token of appreciation.

Freeholder Sergio Granados wished everyone a Happy New Year. He commended his running mates Surrogate James S. LaCorte and Freeholders Bette Jane Kowalski and Rebecca Williams, and expressed his honor at being able to serve alongside his Freeholder Colleagues, noting that they are truly an inspiration. He thanked all the local elected officials and residents as well as his family and friends for their support. He noted that one victory was a collective victory for the Democratic Party. He expressed his vision for 2020, noting that he would continue to work hard to meet the needs of Union County residents and improve their quality of life. He looked forward to continuing to collaborate with his colleagues to build a brighter and more prosperous future.

GENERAL REMARKS

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator Scutari called upon the Honorable United States Representative Bonnie Watson-Coleman to offer remarks.

Honorable United States Representative Bonnie Watson-Coleman expressed her well wishes for the New Year as well as her delight at being able to attend the Ceremony. She congratulated Surrogate James S. LaCorte and Freeholders Better Jane Kowalski, Sergio Granados, and Rebecca Williams for securing a new term in their respective offices. She congratulated NJ Senator Scutari for a successful election cycle and outcome. She made heart-felt comments relative to The United States, recognizing it as the greatest country in the world. She emphasized the importance of democracy as it relates to protecting and facilitating live, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all the citizens of this great nation. She asked everyone to pray for the U.S. military as well as foreign diplomats, and other Americans scattered across the farthest reaches of the world. She closed by expressing her gratitude at being able to address the public during the Ceremony.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE TO FREEHOLDER REBECCA L. WILLIAMS

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari made comments relative to Freeholder Rebecca Williams, noting her high level of commitment to the position of Freeholder and previously as a Plainfield Councilwoman. He noted her focus on financial matters and constituent outreach, advocating for greater quality of life for all residents. He spoke relative to her responsibilities and successes as Chair of the Policy and Administrative Code Committee and Member of the Open Space Trust Fund. Senator Scutari noted that Freeholder Williams was at the forefront of LGBTQ advocacy, working closely with the Office of LGBTQ Affairs. He recognized Freeholder Williams for being accessible to constituents, noting her grass roots approach to the role and the respective responsibilities of being a public servant.

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari introduced Freeholder Rebecca L. Williams and called upon the Honorable New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy to administer the Oath of Office to Freeholder Rebecca L. Williams.

Joining Freeholder Rebecca L. Williams for her affirmation were her mother Lynn Williams, sister Renita Williams, brother Richard Williams, friends Veronica Taylor and Eileen De Freece, Godson Liam Phillips-Brown and brother Finley Phillips-Brown.

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator Scutari called upon the Honorable Mayor and Plainfield Democratic Committee Chairman Adrian Mapp to make a gift presentation to newly sworn-in Freeholder Rebecca L. Williams.

The Honorable Mayor and Plainfield Democratic Committee Chairman Adrian Mapp congratulated Freeholder Rebecca L. Williams, recognizing her great influence in Plainfield as well as in his personal political career. He congratulated the Board for having such a tremendous figure working and serving with them and alongside them.

Freeholder Rebecca L. Williams thanked everyone for attending the Re-Organizational Ceremony. She congratulated her running mates Surrogate James S. LaCorte and Freeholders Better Jane Kowalski and Sergio Granados for securing a new term in their respective offices. She also thanked the Honorable Karen M. Cassidy for hosting the event. She recognized her family and thanked them for attending and for their continued support. She thanked Assemblywoman Linda S. Carter, Mayor Adrian O. Mapp, and Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman. She thanked County Manager Edward T. Oatman and New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari. Freeholder Williams expressed her honor at being sworn in by Governor Murphy and thanked him for continuing to support Planned Parenthood. She vouched to continue working diligently for the residents of Union County.

GENERAL REMARKS

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari asked City of Elizabeth J. Christian Bollwage and Elizabeth Democratic Committee Chairman Tony Teixeira to join him to honor Freeholder Angel G. Estrada, who will be serving his last term as Freeholder in 2020.

Senator Scutari spoke highly of Freeholder Angel G. Estrada and his distinguished and successful career as a public servant for nearly 20 years.

Mayor J. Christian Bollwage of Elizabeth commended Freeholder Angel G. Estrada for his many years of dedicated service and commitment, in particular to the City of Elizabeth and as member of the Freeholder Board. He spoke relative to Freeholder Estrada's impressive career, noting that his wisdom and presence would be sorely missed.

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari called upon the Honorable New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy to offer remarks. Governor Murphy noted the honor is was to be invited to attended the Re-Organizational Ceremony, having attended a few during the last several years. He marveled at all of the elected officials present. He recognized State Senators Cryan and Scutari as well as NJ Senate President Sweeney, noting their extensive experience in politics and their understanding relative to making government effective. He expressed his honor at being asked to swear-in Freeholder Williams, recognizing her incredible leadership and an example of why the Humanities are an important course of study. He expressed his admiration for Union County and its diversity, citing it as the quintessential county. He commended law enforcement and first responders for their tireless efforts in making sure their communities are safe and secure. Governor Murphy closed by commending all of the great elected officials in attendance as well as all those around the state for their continued efforts in ensuring the success and prosperity of New Jersey.

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari spoke relative to NJ Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, recognizing him as a close friend and ally, despite not always seeing eye to eye on certain matters. He commended Senate President Sweeney for his strong leadership, noting that he was always focused on the goals of the Democratic Party as a collective, rather than his own individual goals and desires.

The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari called upon the Honorable New Jersey Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney to offer remarks.

New Jersey Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney noted his close friendship with State Senator Nicholas P. Scutari. He commended Senator Cryan for his strong leadership and for embracing the responsibility of the office formerly occupied by Raymond J. Lesniak. Senate President Sweeney spoke relative to his career as a Freeholder, noting that he had enjoyed the position very much. He commended the Freeholder Board for its diversity as well as one of being one of the finest in the state, an example for all other Boards. He closed by congratulating all the newly sworn-in Surrogate LaCorte, and Freeholders Kowalski, Granados, and Williams for securing an additional win.

ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE 2020 BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
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The Honorable New Jersey State Senator and UCDC Chairman Nicholas P. Scutari turned the Installation Ceremony and Reorganizational Meeting of the 2020 Board of Chosen Freeholders over to the Clerk of the Board of Chosen Freeholders, James E. Pellettiere.

ALL TO ORDER

The Clerk of the Board called the Re-Organizational meeting to order at 1:33PM.

ROLL CALL

The Clerk of the Board called the roll.

On a motion made by Freeholder Kowalski and seconded by Freeholder Garretson, roll call showed nine members of the Board voted in the affirmative.

PRAYER AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

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

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

The Clerk of the Board read the Open Public Meetings Act.

ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN OF THE 2020 BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

The first order of business was the election of a Chairman.

The Clerk of the Board called for a nomination for the election of a Chairman Pro-Tem of the Board of Chosen Freeholders for the year 2020.

On a motion made by Freeholder Palmieri-Mouded and seconded by Freeholder Rebecca Williams, roll called showed nine members of the Board voted in the affirmative for Freeholder Kowalski to serve as Chairman Pro-Tem.

Chairman Pro-Tem Bette Jane Kowalski called for nominations for the election of a Chairman of the Board of Chosen Freeholders for the year 2020.

On a motion made by Freeholder Garretson and seconded by Freeholder Staten, roll called showed nine members of the Board voted in the affirmative for Freeholder Mirabella to serve as Chairman of the Board of Chosen Freeholders for the year 2020.

Chairman Pro-Tem Bette Jane Kowalski introduced the 2020 Chairman Alexander Mirabella and called upon the Honorable New Jersey State Senator Scutari to administer the Oath of Office to Chairman Alexander Mirabella.

Holding the Bible for Chairman Alexander Mirabella were his wife Phyllis, son Alexander and daughter Micayla.

ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE 2020 BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

The next order of business was the election of a Vice Chairman for the Board of Chosen Freeholders for the year 2020.

Chairman Alexander Mirabella called for nominations for the election of a Vice Chairman of the Board of Chosen Freeholders for the year 2020.

On a motion made by Freeholder Granados and seconded by Freeholder Hudak, roll called showed nine members of the Board voted in the affirmative for Freeholder Angel G. Estrada to serve as Vice Chairman of the Board of Chosen Freeholders for the year 2020.

Vice Chairman Estrada thanked the Board for their confidence. He noted his previous service of two vice-chairmanships and two chairmanships. He stated that it was a pleasure to work with each and every one of the Freeholders, regardless if they agreed or disagreed with the topic at hand. He commended Assemblywoman Annette Quijano on her work in adoption legislation that allows undocumented individuals to obtain drivers licenses.

Chairman Alexander Mirabella introduced the 2020 Vice Chairman Angel G. Estrada and called upon Jorge A. Estrada, Esq., to administer the Oath of Office to Vice Chairman Angel G. Estrada.

Holding the Bible for Freeholder Estrada were his three grandchildren, Keith, Alexandra, and Julian, joined by his wife Teresa Estrada, daughter Lilian Duryee and son-in-law Christopher Duryee, son Daniel and his daughter-in-law Magda Noga Estrada.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL MESSAGE

Chairman Alexander Mirabella delivered the Chair's Annual Message as stated:

**“Union County 2020”
Inclusion, Safety, and Outreach**

Reverend Clergy, Judge Cassidy (thank you for the use of your court room today), members of the Freeholder Board, elected officials, friends, family and citizens of Union County: I would like to thank you for joining us as we welcome another New Year.

Many thanks to Senator Scutari for swearing me in. I appreciate our friendship from my first day on this Freeholder Board.

I have always admired your public service since your Freeholder days to your many years as my State Senator. I appreciate your hard work and dedication as our Chairman – you have led us to unprecedented victories and brought our party together and work tirelessly leading our party in Union County.

Thank you for all you do!

I always appreciate the friendship of Mayor Bollwage – I had the chance to attend Elizabeth's Reorganization on New Year's Day and I'm continually impressed with the Mayor's accomplishment and his vision for his City!

I want to introduce my family who is here, my wonderful wife Phyllis and children Alex, his girlfriend Becca and Micayla, sister-in-law Antoinetta and [...]

I want to congratulate our new Vice Chairman, Angel Estrada – we have served together for over 2 decades, quite a record, and I know he will work hard, as he always does, and will be a great partner.

To my colleagues being sworn in today, I wish you the best of success and congratulations on your re-election.

I would like to thank Freeholder Kowalski for her outstanding leadership of this Board in 2019 – we had a very productive year, kept focused on our priorities and accomplished a very aggressive agenda.

Freeholder Granados on his re-election – he is clearly one of the hardest working public servants in the entire state of New Jersey.

Freeholder Williams elected to her first, of many, full term on the board. She is passionate in her conviction and is a large part of the heart and soul of this board.

Together with Freeholders Garretson, Hudak and my running mates, Freeholders Palmieri-Mouded and Staten, we make quite a team!

I want to congratulate Surrogate James S. LaCorte on his re-election. He has done a fantastic job for a long time in Union County.

As we stand on the cusp of a new decade, I would like to pause for a moment and reflect on the state of Union County last year.

Over the past 12 months we have moved forward on Veterans' services, improvements to our recreation facilities, and new Shared Services to help Municipalities.

As 2019 drew to a close, we achieved:

Renewal of off-peak one-seat ride service on the Raritan Valley Line

A green light for the Tremley Point connector road in Linden;

And, the purchase of additional open space for Nomahegan Park.

While this record is very satisfying, we cannot rest here. We face many new challenges today.

Among those challenges is a rising tide of intolerance that has spread across America.

And so I pledge, here and now, that this Freeholder Board will do everything in our power to help strengthen the bonds in our community so that every individual, from every walk of life, truly feels that they are at home here in Union County.

With that in mind, this year my Chairman's Initiatives aim at supporting the pillars of strength that define our community: our beautiful neighborhoods, our wonderful can-do spirit, and the rich diversity of our citizens.

My Chairman's Initiatives are titled, "**Union County 2020: Inclusion, Safety, and Outreach.**"

First, let's start with the basics -our public safety infrastructure.

My first initiative is called "**Keeping Union County Safe and Secure.**"

This is a shared services initiative that helps local communities expand their access to emergency services and public health.

One highlight will be the expansion of the **Union County Regional Dispatch Center** in Westfield.

The Dispatch Center handles 14 municipalities, along with two medical centers, and six County and regional emergency response teams.

With our population growing, now is the time to expand this essential community resource.

Also, we are going to provide seven local fire departments with new radios, to help improve communications with County personnel during emergencies.

My second initiative addresses another basic foundation of community life, and that is our economic health.

Titled "**Union County Means Business for All,**" this initiative aims to support entrepreneurship and career development among our residents.

We are going to partner with the **Union County Economic Development Corporation** on programs that focus on women, minority, veteran, and LGBTQ businesses.

We will also explore a program with Union County College for a new **Business Trades Apprenticeship** program. I appreciate the partnership of President McMenamain.

And, in another expansion of shared services, with the help of our grant writer, we will offer a **new Grant Writing portal** to help our municipalities connect with new funding opportunities.

There is another element that is equally essential, and this is one that really gets to the heart of who we are as a community.

And that is, respect for the fundamental human rights and dignity of every person.

Over the years, this Freeholder Board has fostered many programs that help ensure everyone in Union County feels safe, secure, included, and respected.

We have advocated for equal rights and equal dignity, and we have reached out to those who are under-served, and under-appreciated.

With the next two initiatives, entitled "**Union County 2020**" and "**Union County Cares,**" we are going to build on this foundation, and continue working to create a community in which everyone counts.

And so, our first order of business this year is to start from the ground up.

We are commencing an all-hands-on-deck effort to raise awareness about **the 2020 Census**.

Simply put, if we want to make sure that everyone counts in our community, we need to make sure that everyone is counted.

The Census is fundamental to everything we do as a community, including grants for public safety, roads and bridges, and social services.

We are working with our UC-STEP student volunteers and many other community partners to get the word out.

This year we will also reach out to Union County residents with new programs focusing on acceptance and inclusion.

Some are modest in scale, but they can make all the difference for someone who needs a helping hand.

For example, we are launching **a new mobile shower and laundry service** for people in need.

This year we will also commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment in honor of the hard-fought battle for women's voting rights.

We will also **improve access to the indoor riding ring** at Watchung Stable for people with disabilities, and we will be **reviewing signage at all of our County parks** to ensure that everyone who comes to enjoy them feels at home.

And, we will continue to expand on our public recreation resources in Union County.

One major project this year will be the development of a Master Plan for the reservoir in Clark.

Education remains a top priority for this Freeholder Board.

We will also explore a partnership with the Union County Vo-Tech schools in Scotch Plains, to establish a working farm created and run by the students.

This new facility will provide many new opportunities for hands-on learning, and connect our youth with important new trends in urban agriculture and the farm-to-table economy.

This project will build on the phenomenal growth we have seen in the Vo Tech schools' campus over the years.

Union County's Vo-Tech schools regularly rank near the top in state and national surveys. This Freeholder Board is proud to support outstanding, free public education!

We continue to be proud to support scholarships for qualifying students at Union County College, which has ramped up its programming at all three campuses (Cranford, Elizabeth and Plainfield), and is among the top two-year institutions in the entire State of New Jersey.

Kean University has grown into a world class institution with new additions to its campus including the new Hynes Hall, set to open this year.

This County has enjoyed a terrific partnership with retiring Kean University President, Dawood Farahi -I wish him the best. He truly has significantly improved the campus and enhanced the worldwide reputation of Kean University!

I want to close by drawing your attention to one especially important outreach project that we will undertake in 2020.

This next initiative builds on our past work.

In 2006, we became one of the first counties in New Jersey to extend health benefits to Domestic Partnerships; and later, one of the first to support marriage equality.

Letters and emails of support came pouring in from all over the county.

These messages inspired us to keep working hard until the equal rights of LGBTQ families and individuals are the law of the land.

I will repeat what I said in this very room 14 years ago, almost to this day:

“We are proud to live with residents who support the principles of fairness and dignity for all Americans. Rest assured, this Freeholder Board will never back down from doing the right thing.”

And so, I am very proud to announce that this year, Union County is joining the **Prevention Access Campaign**.

This campaign is a community of advocates in almost 100 countries across the world, who are working to end the dual epidemics of HIV and HIV-related stigma.

Governor Phil Murphy, has also joined New Jersey in this global effort.

The centerpiece of the Prevention Access Campaign is “U = U,” which stands for “**Undetectable equals Untransmittable.**”

U = U is a message of strength and unity.

It stands for the triumph of the global fight against AIDS through science, research, and education.

And, it recognizes that ignorance is one of the last remaining barriers to fall before the epidemic is stopped.

Union County will help amplify the U = U message, and I am proud to say that we have already laid the groundwork through our Office of LGBTQ Affairs.

We created this Office in 2018 with a mission to educate and inform.

Since its launch, the LGBTQ office has worked to connect our residents with community resources and leading advocacy organizations.

I am proud to say that we will be joining with the Hyacinth AIDS Foundation on the U=U campaign.

And, we will be supporting Garden State Equality in their fight for an end to laws that discourage people from getting a diagnosis and receiving treatment.

And since it will be such a busy year, I would like to take a moment, in advance, to recognize our entire Union County team of employees for their diligence, professionalism, and dedication to public service.

County Manager Oatman, Deputy County Manager Wagner and the rest of the directors in our County deserve the credit for our County's outstanding service and reputation.

I also want to thank Jim Pellettiere, our Freeholder Clerk; and Niko Micheludis, my confidential aide, who works as hard as anyone in the County.

I'm proud of each County employee, who in their own way, contribute to all our collective success.

Thanks to their efforts in years past, we are all looking forward to a brighter future.

All of my personal public service would not be possible without the support of my family, my children Alex and Micayla and my wife Phyllis.

Phyllis, who is a part of as many boards and committees as I am, always finds time to keep our family all together and give me the help I need – whether its advice or just to listen.

You continue to be my inspiration – I love you!

And with that, I thank you all for joining us today, and I wish you all a happy and successful new year.

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION:

Reverend Carmine Pernini, Zion Lutheran Church,
Rahway, New Jersey

Chairman Mirabella called upon Reverend Pernini to offer the Benediction.

Reverend Reginald Atkins gave the Benediction

RECESS

Chairman Alexander Mirabella called for a motion to recess at 2:08 PM.

On a motion made by Vice Chairman Estrada and seconded by Freeholder Granados, roll called showed nine members of the Board voted in the affirmative.