

## UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2025  
AGENDA SETTING MEETING AGENDA

### CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Leon presided over the meeting and called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

### ROLL CALL

Roll call showed Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon, Vice-Chairman Joseph C. Bodek, Commissioner James E. Baker Jr., Commissioner Michèle S. Delisfort, Commissioner Sergio Granados, Commissioner Bette Jane Kowalski, Commissioner Alexander Mirabella, 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.

### 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.

### PRESENTATIONS TO THE BOARD

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A presentation was made by Ritesh Shah, of Ritesh Shah Charitable Pharmacy (RSCP), to the Board relative to the RSCP charitable efforts in increasing access to medications, immunizations, health education, and pharmacy services for uninsured and underserved patients to reduce clinical and social health inequities to Union County residents. The video presentation was followed by a resolution presentation by the Board to Ritesh Shah.

Chairwoman Leon introduced Ritesh Shah, of Ritesh Shah Charitable Pharmacy, a leader in local efforts to increase access to medications, immunizations and pharmacy services for uninsured and underserved patients throughout New Jersey, including Union County.

Ritesh Shah, of Ritesh Shah Charitable Pharmacy, recognized County Manager Oatman, Deputy County Manager Wagner, and Human Services Director Anderson and thanked the County of Union for facilitating this tremendous partnership. Mr. Shah noted that he was inspired by the passing of his younger sister to create a charitable pharmacy for patients who were financially unable to secure life-saving medications, adding that he and his wife, also a pharmacist, had devoted themselves to making a difference in the lives of those in need. He advised that in the last year alone, RSCP, had saved patients nearly \$230,000 by providing vital medications at no cost, noting 1,614 prescriptions filled and 908 refills dispensed. Additionally, he

noted that the pharmacy employed two volunteer pharmacists and currently served 58 patients. He added that this achievement was a reflection of RSCP and the County's commitment to increasing access to critical medications for underserved residents. He thanked the County for their partnership.

Chairwoman Leon thanked Ritesh Shah, adding that the County of Union and Board were proud to support his efforts.

Commissioner Granados thanked Ritesh Shah for the great partnership and life-saving resources provided by RSCP.

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#### **PRESENTATIONS BY THE BOARD**

A presentation was made by the Board congratulating Director Earl Graves, Chief John Sacca, and the Elizabeth Police Department upon receiving a Certificate of Re-Accreditation.

Chairwoman Leon advised that the Presentation by the Board congratulating Director Earl Graves, Chief John Sacca, and the Elizabeth Police Department on receiving a Certificate of Re-Accreditation had been postponed due to scheduling conflicts.

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#### **APPROVAL OF COMMUNICATIONS**

Note and File

Chairwoman Leon advised that the Communications would be approved later during the Regular Meeting.

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#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. February 6, 2025 - Agenda Setting Session
2. February 6, 2025 - Regular Meeting
3. February 27, 2025 - Agenda Setting Session
4. February 27, 2025 - Regular Meeting

Chairwoman Leon advised that the Minutes would be approved later during the Regular Meeting.

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#### **OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK**

Joanne Rajoppi, County Clerk

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Clara Fernandez represented the Office.

There was no question or comments by the Board.

1. Authorizing the County Manager to accept a grant and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the NJ Department of State, Division of Elections for a Mail-In-Voter Education Program for the period of February 29, 2024 through March 31, 2026 in the amount of \$309,090.00. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon)**

**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY PROSECUTOR**

William Daniel, Prosecutor

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1. Authorizing the County Manager to enter into a contract with Cellebrite Inc., Vienna, VA to renew a license for extracting critical digital evidence for the contract period of March 1, 2025 through June 13, 2026, in an amount not to exceed \$53,302.20. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon)**

Commissioner Granados asked Prosecutor Daniel to elaborate on this item.

Prosecutor Daniel advised that this item related to a 15-month renewal for a resource used by investigative personnel within the Prosecutor's Office to search cell phones and other electronic devices during confidential investigations. He added that this resource was of no cost to the County and was funded by monies received from forfeiture accounts related to illegal operations.

**DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

Laura Scutari, Director

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There was no question or comments by the Board.

1. Affirming the County of Union's compliance with the Governing Body Certification of Compliance with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's "Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964." **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon)**
2. Authorizing the County Manager to sign any and all documents necessary to enter into a Collective Bargaining Agreement with the PBA73-County Police Officers, effective January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2027. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon)**

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Amy Crisp Wagner, Deputy County Manager/Director

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1. Amending Resolution 2024-488 to clarify and specify that the increase of \$120,000.00 of CDBG funding for the Linden Home Improvement Program (utilizing City of Linden Program Income funds) in a total amount not exceed \$263,000.00. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon)**
2. Amending Resolution 2023-472 approving the 2023-2024 Consolidated Action Plan, to increase the Consolidated Annual Action Plan budget for 2023-2024 by an amount not to exceed \$120,000.00, for a new total project amount not to exceed \$263,000.00. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon)**

3. Authorizing the County Manager to award funding for the 2025 Infrastructure and Municipal Aid Grant Program in an amount not to exceed \$1,500,000.00 to the twenty-one (21) municipalities in the County of Union. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon)**

Commissioner Granados asked Deputy County Manager/Director Wagner to elaborate on this item.

Deputy County Manager/Director Wagner advised that the 2025 Infrastructure and Municipal Aid Grant Program afforded municipalities within Union County an opportunity to apply for and receiving grant funding for various infrastructure projects including roadway improvements and security measures, among other improvements. She noted this was the ninth year the County was offering this grant opportunity and advised that the monies would be awarded at the next Commissioners meeting.

4. Authorizing the County Manager to award a contract obtained through advertised public bidding in accordance with the Local Public Contracts Law N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq, (BA#20-2025) to Johnston Communications, Springfield, NJ, for a period of twenty-four (24) months with an option to renew for 24 months to provide electronic network equipment, security and cabling to various County Departments in an amount not to exceed \$671,600.00. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon)**

#### **DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING, PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES MANAGEMENT**

Joseph Policay, Director

There was no question or comments by the Board.

1. Authorizing the Township of Berkeley Heights to hang a banner on Springfield Avenue to promote the Kimberly Ann Wilson Foundation 5k from August 21, 2025 to September 21, 2025. **(Commissioner Michèle S. Delisfort)**
2. Authorizing the Borough of Kenilworth to close the Boulevard from 24th Street to 14th Street on May 18, 2025 from 7:00am to 7:00pm for the Kenilworth Street Fair. **(Commissioner Michèle S. Delisfort)**
3. Authorizing the Township of Scotch Plains to close a portion of Park Avenue, from East 2nd Street to Front Street, on Monday, May 26, 2025 from 8:00am to 12:00pm for a Memorial Day Ceremony; on Monday, October 13, 2025 from 8:00am to 12:00pm for a Columbus Day Event; and on Tuesday, November 11, 2025 from 10:30am to 12:00pm for a Veteran's Day Ceremony. **(Commissioner Michèle S. Delisfort)**

#### **DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE**

Bibi Taylor, Director

1. Amending the 2025 Temporary Budget Ch. 96 P.L. 1951 (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-20). **(Commissioner Rebecca Lynne Williams)**
2. Approving transfer of Current Fund Appropriations. **(Commissioner Rebecca Lynne Williams)**

3. Exceeding the County tax levy limit and to establish a CAP Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14). **(Commissioner Rebecca Lynne Williams)**

Commissioner Baker asked Director Taylor to elaborate on the CAP Bank. He also asked if this was done annually and if the monies rolled over.

Director Taylor advised that the CAP Bank was a financial management tool that many counties utilized to essentially bank the difference between the amount being raised in taxes in the current year's budget and the amount the County was allowed to raise statutorily, adding that the County was subject to the 1977 CAP. She further advised that the County was eligible to bank roughly \$14 million under the 1977 CAP and \$24 million under the 2010 CAP. She noted that in the last 10 years, the County had not had to utilize the any of its CAP bank. She once again noted that the CAP was merely a financial management tool that would allow the County to access it in the event of extraordinary circumstances. She added that this resolution was adopted annually once the County budget was introduced.

4. Authorizing the Office of the County Surrogate to exceed the County Entity Budget CAP (P.L. 2015, c.249) **(Commissioner Rebecca Lynne Williams)**
5. Authorizing the Office of the County Board of Taxation to exceed the County Entity Budget CAP (P.L. 2015, c.249). **(Commissioner Rebecca Lynne Williams)**
6. Introducing and Approving the Annual Budget of the County of Union for the Fiscal Year 2025. **(Commissioner Rebecca Lynne Williams)**
7. Requesting permission to apply for a Dedication by Rider for Electronic Receipt Fees pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:4-39 **(Commissioner Rebecca Lynne Williams)**

#### **DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

Debbie-Ann Anderson, Director

1. Adopting the By-Laws of the Union County Behavioral Health Advisory Board. **(Commissioner Kimberly Palmieri-Mouded)**
2. Authorizing the County Manager to enter into a contract with RWJBH – Trinitas Regional Medical Center (TRMC), Elizabeth, NJ to continue the nationally recognized Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) model in Union County for the period of April 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026 in an amount not to exceed \$299,028.00. **(Commissioner Kimberly Palmieri-Mouded)**

Commissioner Williams asked Director Anderson to elaborate on this item.

In partnership with law enforcement and the LEAD model, Director Anderson advised that this one-time funding to RWJBH – Trinitas Regional Medical Center would provide services to individuals suffering from substance misuse to ensure they receive the appropriate medical resources and enhance access to treatment prior to incarceration and or to avoid incarceration.

**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**Victoria Durbin-Drake, Director

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Deputy County Manager/Director Wagner represented the Department.

1. Authorizing the County Manager to execute a License Agreement with the Township of Berkeley Heights, allowing them to plant trees at the Watchung Reservation. **(Commissioner Bette Jane Kowalski)**

Commissioner Baker inquired about the number of trees to be planted.

Deputy County Manager/Director Wagner advised that this item was meant to support reforestation efforts on site.

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**Dennis Burke, Director

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1. Authorizing the County Manager to enter into a contract with Spec Rescue International, Virginia Beach, Virginia, to provide exercise support and training to members of the Metro Urban Search and Rescue (MUSAR) Task Force from the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Region, utilizing 2023 and 2024 UASI grants, from April 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, in an amount not to exceed \$229,495.00. (No cost to County of Union) **(Commissioner Alexander Mirabella)**

Commissioner Mirabella asked Director Burke to elaborate on this item.

Director Burke noted that the County of Union administered the grant portion of the northern New Jersey Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) for emergency fire services. He added that the Metro Urban Search and Rescue (MUSAR) task force provided specialized training on extractions and other operations outside the normal scope of traditional fire rescue. He advised that there were twelve agencies within the region to be trained to this level, including the Elizabeth Fire Department.

**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COUNSEL**Bruce H. Bergen, County Counsel

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There was no question or comments by the Board.

1. Amending Resolution 2024-874, a contract with Hatfield Schwartz Law Group, LLC, Cedar Knolls, NJ, to represent the County of Union in the matter entitled Andrea Simmons v. County of Union et als, to reflect an increase for an additional amount not to exceed \$25,000.00 for a new contract total amount not to exceed \$55,000.00. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon)**
2. Amending Resolution 2024-622, a contract with Hatfield Schwartz, LLC, Cedar Knolls, NJ, in the matter entitled Meghan Tomlinson v. County of Union, et al, to reflect an increase to the contract amount not to exceed \$15,000.00, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$55,000.00. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon)**

**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MANAGER**Edward T. Oatman, County Manager

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County Manager Oatman addressed the public...

*There has been a great deal of discussion and some misinformation about the purpose of these two resolutions. To be clear, the resolution authorizes the County to issue a request for proposal (RFP) to put the jail property up for potential sale. It does not approve any specific sale, nor does it finalize any decision. It simply opens the door to explore potential interest and assess the property value. This is the first step in a larger and longer process, one that includes public input, transparency, and multiple stages of review before any action is taken. As County Manager I have a fiduciary obligation to the residents of Union County. We have a responsibility to explore opportunities that could result in meaning property tax relief for everyone, potentially exceeding 100 Million dollars. At the same time we are committed to ensuring that any future use of the property reflects the values and needs of our community. To that end, the RFP will include clear limitations on how the property can be used, specifically, if any proposals are received by operators interested in continuing to use it as a correctional facility, we will, consistent with state law, restrict use to housing individuals involved in the criminal justice system exclusively, such as those facing criminal charges. Other types of use will not be permitted under the terms we set. We do not control who may submit a proposal, but we do control the process. Let me emphasize, this step does not bind us to any sale. It simply allows us to gather the information we need to make an informed decision with public transparency. We are hopefully that this RFP will attract a diverse range of bidders from a variety of industries, reflecting innovation, creativity, and investment potential that exists across our region. Additionally, we must take into account the cost of inaction. Demolishing the facility will cost at least \$50 million. Renovating it for any other purpose will cost more than \$100 million. These are substantial figures that would impact the County's long-term finances. This resolution is the responsible first step that will allow us to evaluate all the possibilities both financial and practical while upholding our obligation to act in the best interest of Union County's residents. Thank you.*

1. Authorizing application for the subdivision of property owned by the County of Union, known as Block 338, Lot 1, within the City of Elizabeth, Union County, New Jersey. **(Commissioner Alexander Mirabella)**
2. Authorizing the County Manager to advertise for and consider bids to ascertain the interest in possible purchase of property owned by the County of Union known as 15 Elizabethtown Plaza, Elizabeth, NJ, no longer needed for public use, at public auction pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12-13 et seq. **(Commissioner Alexander Mirabella)**

**COMMISSIONER SPONSORED RESOLUTIONS**2025 Board of County Commissioners, Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon

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**OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE BOARD**

James E. Pellettiere, Clerk of the Board

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There was no question or comments by the Board.

1. Sponsoring the Union County Fatherhood Initiative Coalition in an amount not to exceed \$1,000.00 in support of their "13th Annual Fatherhood Conference - The Fatherhood Resource Hub" to be held on April 5, 2025. **(Commissioner Rebecca Lynne Williams, & The Entire Board)**
2. Supporting New Jersey Senate Bill No. S3736 and Assembly Bill A5035, requiring the State Treasurer to reimburse county treasurers for defense costs and administrative expenses incurred by counties in defending certain lawsuits during supersedure of a county prosecutor by the Attorney General. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon, & The Entire Board)**

**LAUDATORY RESOLUTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF CONDOLENCE**

1. Congratulating Head Coach Ben Candelino, Assistant Coach John LaRocca, Assistant Coach Randy Westrol, Alteric Hines, Lawrence Thomas, Allan Richardson, Malik Jackson, Donald Stewart, Kaseem Patterson, Arthur Negron, Robert Coen, Laquan Harris, Alcides Catanho, Lamont Pleasant, Luther Wright, Isaac Morgan, Tyrone Brown, Stefano Calella, and Michael Brennan of the 1990 Elizabeth High School Boys Varsity Basketball Team upon being honored by The Elizabeth Athletic Hall of Fame Association at March Madness for their remarkable achievements, including winning the Union County Tournament, Group 4 State Championship, and the Tournament of Champions on Friday March 21, 2025. **(Commissioner Sergio Granados, & The Entire Board)**
2. Recognizing the month of April 2025 as Autism Acceptance Month; encouraging the continued awareness of Autism and promoting a greater understanding, respect and acceptance of those with Autism. **(Commissioner Sergio Granados, Commissioner Kimberly Palmieri-Mouded, & The Entire Board)**
3. Congratulating Dr. Frank DePinho as the 2025 Grand Marshal and Henrique Mano as the 2025 Honorary Marshal, and recognizing Rosa Tavares Pinho as the 2025 Posthumous Marshal of the Elizabeth Portugal Day Committee on Wednesday, March 26, 2025. **(Commissioner Sergio Granados, & The Entire Board)**
4. Congratulating Sister Percylee Hart on an exceptional career as an educator and a principal, which was highlighted by her four decades as principal of Union Catholic High School. **(Commissioner Sergio Granados, Commissioner Alexander Mirabella, & The Entire Board)**
5. Wishing Ruth E. Positan a Happy 100th Birthday and recognizing all that she has accomplished in her life on Friday, March 21, 2025. **(Commissioner Bette Jane Kowalski, & The Entire Board)**
6. Recognizing Giovanni Lavorato for his years of service in Linden and Union County. **(Vice-Chairman Joseph C Bodek, & The Entire Board)**



7. Extending the Board's deepest condolences to the family of Patricia A. La Placa during this time of sorrow. **(Vice-Chairman Joseph C Bodek, & The Entire Board)**
8. Congratulating Commissioner Kimberly Palmieri-Mouded, Jo-Ann Horton Givens, Beverly Harris, Jannet Revollar, Christal Blue, Kareema Vauters, and Angie Perez upon being honored as Woman of the Year at Ola Edwards Community School on Friday, March 21, 2025. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon, Commissioner Michèle S. Delisfort, & The Entire Board)**
9. Congratulating Union County Healthcare Associates upon their Grand Opening Celebration on Friday, March 21, 2025. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon, Commissioner Sergio Granados, & The Entire Board)**
10. Congratulating the Fire and Rescue Department of Kenilworth upon hosting their first Beefsteak Fundraiser on Friday, March 21, 2025. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon, Commissioner Sergio Granados, & The Entire Board)**
11. Recognizing National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week from April 13-19, 2025, in honor of the men and women whose diligence and professionalism keep our citizens safe; and further acknowledging four telecommunicators for their outstanding service: Andrew Foster, Thomas Gesior, Anthony Longo, and James Kaiser. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon, & The Entire Board)**
12. Congratulating Ritesh Shah, CEO/Managing Partner of Legacy Pharmacy Group and founder of Ritesh Shah Charitable Pharmacy, a charitable pharmacy whose mission is to increase access to medications, immunizations, health education, and pharmacy services for uninsured and underserved patients to reduce clinical and social health inequities in our community, on the celebration of Charitable Pharmacy's provision of medical and pharmaceutical health services to Union County residents; saving patients nearly \$230,000 within the last year alone. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon, & The Entire Board)**
13. Congratulating Union County Commissioner Sergio Granados, Stanley J. Neron, Mayor Raymond A. Giacobbe, Assemblywoman Linda S. Carter, New Beginnings Kingdom, Wells Fargo, and Moms Helping Moms Foundation upon being honored at the United Way of Greater Union County Circle of Hope Gala on March 20, 2025. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon, & The Entire Board)**
14. Recognizing the month of April 2025 as Alcohol Awareness Month (AAM) throughout the County of Union. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon, Commissioner Kimberly Palmieri-Mouded, & The Entire Board)**
15. Recognizing the month of April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) throughout the County of Union. **(Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon, Commissioner Sergio Granados, & The Entire Board)**

**ADJOURNMENT**

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Chairwoman Leon asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. On a motion made by Commissioner Mirabella and seconded by Commissioner Kowalski, roll call showed nine members of the Board voted in the affirmative.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 P.M.

## UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS 2025 MEETING SCHEDULE

### REORGANIZATION MEETING - MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Union County Courthouse- 2 Broad Street, Elizabeth

#### AGENDA SETTING SESSION

Thursday, January 13, 2025\*  
Thursday, January 23, 2025  
Thursday, February 6, 2025  
Thursday, February 27, 2025  
Thursday, March 13, 2025  
Thursday, March 27, 2025  
Thursday, April 17, 2025  
Thursday, May 15, 2025  
Thursday, June 12, 2025  
Thursday, July 24, 2025  
Thursday, August 21, 2025  
Thursday, September 4, 2025  
Thursday, September 18, 2025  
Thursday, October 16, 2025  
Thursday, November 13, 2025  
Thursday, December 4, 2025  
Thursday, December 18, 2025

#### REGULAR MEETINGS


Thursday, January 13, 2025\*  
Thursday, January 23, 2025  
Thursday, February 6, 2025  
Thursday, February 27, 2025  
Thursday, March 13, 2025  
Thursday, March 27, 2025  
Thursday, April 17, 2025  
Thursday, May 15, 2025  
Thursday, June 12, 2025  
Thursday, July 24, 2025  
Thursday, August 21, 2025  
Thursday, September 4, 2025  
Thursday, September 18, 2025  
Thursday, October 16, 2025  
Thursday, November 13, 2025  
Thursday, December 4, 2025  
Thursday, December 18, 2025

#### Special Meeting\*

Please note that the County Commissioners' meetings are to be regularly held on Thursday evenings. These meetings 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, 6<sup>th</sup> floor located at 10 Elizabethtown Plaza, Elizabeth New Jersey, 07207.

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

  
James E. Pellettiere, RMC, QPA  
Clerk of the Board