

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
County Government with a Unified Voice!

ANN M. CANNON
NJAC President
Mercer County Freeholder

JOHN G. DONNADIO
Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
Friday, September 25, 2015
State House Annex - Committee Room 4
Trenton, New Jersey 08608

The meeting was called to order by Ann Cannon, NJAC President and Mercer County Freeholder, at 10:12 a.m. After saluting the American flag, John G. Donnadio, NJAC Executive Director, called roll and a quorum was present.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ann M. Cannon, *Mercer County Freeholder*
Heather Simmons, *Gloucester County Freeholder*
Gary J. Rich, Sr., *Monmouth County Freeholder Director*
Gerald Thornton, *Cape May County Freeholder*
Ken Mecouch, *Cumberland County Administrator*
E. Junior Maldonado, *Hudson County Chairman*
Blanquita Valenti, *Middlesex County Freeholder*
Douglas R. Cabana, *Morris County Freeholder*
Anthony DeNova, *Passaic County Administrator*
Beth Timberman, *Salem County Freeholder*
Peter Palmer, *Somerset County Freeholder*
Richard Vohden, *Sussex County Freeholder*
Vernell Wright, *Union County Freeholder*
Richard D. Gardner, *Warren County Freeholder*
Brian M. Hughes, *Mercer County Executive*
Mary Melfi, *Hunterdon County Clerk*
Frank Bruno, *Somerset County Surrogate*
John Armeno, *Executive Director of the NJ Sheriff's Association*
Jim Blanda, *Camden County Improvement Authority Executive Director*
Michael P. O'Connell, Esq., *Pringle Quinn & Anzano, PC*
Joseph Hannon, Esq., *Partner of Genova Burns LLC*
John G. Donnadio, *NJAC Executive Director*
Loren Wizman, *NJAC Director of Business Development*
Allen Weston, *NJAC Legislative Director*
Kimberly Nolan, *NJAC Office Manager*

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Dennis Bone, *Chairman for SETC*
Sheryl Hutchinson, *Acting Executive Director for SETC*

E. Marie Hayes, *Cape May County Freeholder*
Kim Wood, *Cumberland County Deputy Administrator*
Daniele Spence, *Aide to Freeholder Simmons*
Matt Jordan, *Passaic County Deputy Administrator*
Stephen Gruchacz, *Sussex County Administrator*
Richard Lane, *Sr. Consultant of Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. & NJAC Transportation Consultant*
Robert Werkmeister, *Sr. Consultant of Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. & NJAC Transportation Consultant*
Victor Scire, *Vice President of Marketing for Primepoint*
Jim Jacobs, *Vice President of Business Development for Primepoint*
Peter Crowley, *Executive Director for the Princeton Chamber of Commerce*
Jewel James, *VP of Market Expansion & Policy for Renovate America, Inc.*
Ari Matusiak, *SVP of Corporate Development & New Markets for Renovate America, Inc.*
Michael Yaki, *Senior Counsel of Market Expansion & Policy for Renovate America, Inc.*
Debbie Lynch, *Development Director for CrossRoads America*
Joe McIntyre, *Customer Relations Manager for Election Systems & Software, LLC*
Christine Valeriano, *Regional Sales Manager for Election Systems & Software, LLC*
Chuck Miller, Jr., *Financial Advisor for First Command Financial Services*
Stuart Schwerner, *Administrative Director for JAG Therapy*
Harry Thibodeau, *President for PharmaCare*
Bernie Vitti, *Executive Director of Business Development for PharmaCare*
Angelo Tirone, *Marketing Manager for MRA International*

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Dennis Bone, Chairman for the State Employment Training Commission (SETC), and **Sheryl Hutchinson**, Acting Executive Director for the SETC, provided a briefing on the upcoming Regional Workforce meetings. The goal of the meetings is to promote the alignment of workforce programs with regional economic development strategies to meet the needs of employees and job seekers. The southern region of NJ will have its meeting on October 13th at the Rowan College of Burlington County in Mt. Laurel. The central region of NJ will also hold its meeting on October 13th in Trenton at the NJAC office building. The northern region will hold its meeting on October 14th at Montclair State University.

OFFICIAL REPORTS

1. **Secretary/Treasurer's Report** – NJAC Secretary-Treasurer and Monmouth County Freeholder Director presented the following reports:
 - a. Meeting Minutes – The Board unanimously approved the meeting minutes of June 26, 2015 on a Passaic County/County Surrogate motion. Cape May, Sussex, and Warren counties abstained.
 - b. NJAC Financials – The Board unanimously approved the NJAC financials, dated August 31, 2015 on a Middlesex/Union County motion.

The 2014 Audit for NJAC conducted by Suplee Clooney & Company revealed that the accounting is in order and the organization is in good shape. The report was unanimously approved by voice vote on a Hudson/Somerset County motion.

2. **President's Report** - NJAC President Cannon updated the board members on the following:
- a. Trenton Thunder Baseball Game - NJAC hosted a night of baseball at the Mercer County Arm & Hammer Ball Park on July 23rd. The event was sponsored by NJAC Business Associates CFG Health Network, Dominion Voting Systems, NACo, and Primepoint. This was an enjoyable and casual event for business associates and county officials to network and have a good time.
 - b. County Administrators Certificate Program - NJAC is partnering again with the Rutgers University Center for Local Government Services for the 2015 County Administrators Certificate Program. This unique two day training is open to all local government employees and elected officials who would like to advance their careers in public service. Subject matter experts from across the State will cover essential topics such as public procurement, management challenges, fiscal operations, and ethics. Course will take place on October 23rd and 30th at Rutgers in New Brunswick. Graduates will receive a certificate from the University acknowledging their completion of the training. To do there are over 20 students registered for this program. All were encouraged to attend and promote the program.
 - c. Summit on Bail Reform and Prisoner Re-Entry - NJAC is hosting a Summit on Bail Reform and Prisoner Re-Entry at the historic Trenton Country Club on December 18th. It kicks off with a Board of Directors Meeting followed by two informative panel discussions. Chief Justice Stuart Rabner has been invited to serve as the keynote speaker. The first panel will provide a comprehensive overview of the State's new bail law and speedy trial system. The second panel will discuss successful prisoner re-entry initiatives and other community-based programs as alternatives to incarceration. Board members were encourage to attend and promote the Summit.
3. **Executive Director's Report** - NJAC Executive Director John G. Donnadio thanked county members for inviting him and scholarship contributors to their county scholarship presentation ceremonies.

Claire French, NJAC Immediate Past President and retired Monmouth County Clerk, has been appointed to be a member on the NJAC Foundation Board.

The 2016 NJAC Annual Conference will be held at Caesar's in Atlantic City from May 18th through May 20th.

An Executive Officer position will be open for 2016. Members were asked to contact Mr. Donnadio with any interest as serving as the 2016 Secretary-Treasurer.

Counties were encourage to showcase and promote their tourism.

4. **Legislative Committee Report** - NJAC 2nd Vice President and Gloucester County Freeholder Heather Simmons informed all board members that a copy of the *State House News*, dated September 25, 2015, was enclosed in the provided packets prior to asking Mr. Donnadio to update the board members on legislation in which NJAC is active.

Mr. Donnadio first reported to board members that Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney announced, yesterday during a press conference, a series of legislative proposals that would help improve the performance of county government. The bipartisan bills are the product of working meetings the Senator and his colleagues held with county officials during the summer. One of the bills would build on the state cap law by extending the same limit of budget increases to the independent county agencies and authorities that are currently outside the cap, including boards of taxation, election boards, registrars of deeds, county surrogates, and county sheriff departments.

Among the other bills are measures that will promote more transparency and accountability, including legislation requiring municipalities that grant tax abatements to make sure their county government is informed and a proposal that would have the Superintendents of Elections abide by the same administrative standards as county government.

Another proposal resulting from the collaboration would permit counties to impose a one percent hotel tax, with the revenue dedicated to tax relief. The funds, that would have to be used to offset county spending, would be paid primarily out-of-state hotel guests and would benefit county taxpayers.

Two other proposals would help support court security. One would increase court fees by \$5 for a "Court Security Enhancement Fund" and the other would allow all county sheriffs to provide court security by extending the authority of "class two" officers to include court duties.

- a. County Government Works - In response to legislation that would dissolve county government, NJAC published an op-ed that showcased the vital and growing role counties must play to relieve New Jersey residents and businesses of the highest property tax liability in the nation. A copy of the op-ed was enclosed in each board packet for review and published in several newspapers across the State.
- b. Court Security Plan - NJAC is in the process of reviewing the "Administrative Determinations by the Supreme Court of the Report and Recommendations of the Statewide Judiciary Committee" issued on April 21, 2015 to determine if the report imposes an unfunded mandate on county governments and whether NJAC should file a complaint with the Council on Local Mandates.
- c. Transportation Trust Fund - Last week, Mr. Donnadio represented NJAC on a panel at the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce's Economic Summit to discuss the importance of reauthorizing the Transportation Trust Fund and increasing Local Aid Allocations as a means to mitigate the reliance on the collection of local property

taxes. It appears that State leaders have reached an agreement in principal that would increase the State's motor fuels tax and eliminate the estate tax.

- d. Electronic Waste Recycling - NJAC is working with the county recycling coordinators to advocate for legislation that would ensure the manufacturers continue to provide free and convenient electronic waste recycling programs as recycling vendors are poised to cease operations in the State by the end of the year if the current process isn't modified, which would in turn force counties to either absorb electronic waste recycling costs or eliminate the popular programs entirely.
- e. Electronic Fund Transfers - NJAC is optimistic that the Legislature will soon pass legislation that would authorize all local governing bodies to use electronic fund transfer technologies as the standardized form of payment to individuals and businesses. Current law requires counties to generally pay their bills by paper check.

In the 2014-2015 Legislative Session, NJAC successfully advocated for the following issues:

- Extending the 2.0% cap on binding interest arbitration awards that maintained a level playing field in negotiations with collective bargaining units.
- Protecting \$25.0 million in Local Bridges Futures Needs funding initially frozen by the Department of Transportation.
- Phasing out the termination of \$30.0 million in funding for peer grouping instead of eliminating the monies as originally planned by the State.
- Making pre-adjudicated inmates housed in county jails eligible for health benefits saving counties \$20.0 million each year.
- Authorizing counties to establish mosquito control reserve funds as a means to stabilize the budget process and enhance fiscal planning.

Mr. Donnadio suggested that NJAC promote the following short-term and long-term legislative initiatives; however he would like feedback and suggestions from board members:

Short-Term Legislative Initiatives

1. Requiring municipalities to notify counties of financial agreements for long term tax abatements awarded to redevelopment entities;
2. Authorizing counties to share county tax administrators;
3. Equalizing the pay-to-play threshold of \$17,500.00 with the bid threshold of \$40,000.00;
4. Prohibiting commercial entities from using the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) for businesses purposes; and,
5. Authorizing sheriffs to hire Class 2 police officers to provide court house security.

Long-Term Legislative Initiatives

1. Increasing Local Aid Allocations under the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF);

2. Mitigating the costs associated with providing courthouse security imposed by the Administrative Office of the Courts;
3. Establishing a dedicated source of grant funding for counties to use as seed monies for shared services and regionalization;
4. Providing counties with their fair share of taxes collected from administering 911 dispatch services; and,
5. Requiring all non-governing body entities funded with county taxpayer dollars to comply with the 2% property tax cap levy and all budgetary procedures and requirements of the county.

NJAC will develop formal position statements and proactively advocate for these short-term legislative initiatives and long-term legislative priorities.

The recommendations were approved on a County Surrogate/Sussex County motion.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Somerset County Freeholder Palmer presented before the board a proposed Resolution of Support for the Gateway Project. The Gateway Project is a proposed high-speed rail corridor to alleviate the bottleneck along the Northeast Corridor (NEC) between Newark, New Jersey, and New York City, New York. If constructed, the project would add 25 train slots during peak periods to the current system used by Amtrak (AMTK) and New Jersey Transit (NJT), which has reached full capacity. The planned right-of-way would parallel the current one between Newark Penn Station and New York Penn Station (NYP) in Midtown Manhattan. The project would build new rail bridges in the New Jersey Meadowlands, dig new tunnels under the Hudson Palisades and the Hudson River, convert parts of the James Farley Post Office into a rail station, and add a terminal annex to NY Penn. Some previously planned improvements already underway have also been incorporated into the Gateway plan.

The Gateway Project was unveiled in 2011, one year after the cancellation of the somewhat similar Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project, and was originally projected to cost \$14.5 billion and take 14 years to build. In 2015, Amtrak reported that environmental and design work was underway, estimated the project's total cost at \$20 billion, and said construction would start in 2019 or 2020 and last four to five years.

In 2015, Amtrak said that damage done to the existing trans-Hudson tunnels by 2012's Hurricane Sandy had made their replacement urgent. Construction of a "tunnel box" that would preserve the right-of-way on Manhattan's West Side began in September 2013, using \$185 million in Sandy recovery and resilience funding.

The Obama administration has called the Gateway Project the most vital piece of infrastructure that needs to be built in the United States. It remains unclear how or if it will be funded. In September 2015 joint letter to Obama, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo offered to pay half of the project's cost if the federal government picks up the rest, but did not identify how they would fund it. Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Chairman John J. Degnan said in May 2015 that the agency "would step up to the plate" with regard to funding the project. The governors have asked the agency to oversee the project.

It was recommended and approved for NJAC to support the on a County Executive/Passaic County motion.

The next board meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. in the Oakland Room of the Trenton Country Club.

ADJOURNMENT

The board adjourned on a Warren/Morris County motion at 11:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Donnadio". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

John G. Donnadio, Esq.
NJAC Executive Director