

## **Hunterdon ‘Ahead of the Curve’ With Public Safety Programs Established Four Years Ago**

Hunterdon County was ‘ahead of the curve’ when the county instituted a digital school building mapping program for law enforcement and put in place the text 9-1-1 alternative emergency communications program, both in 2018, providing safety and security in the schools and elsewhere, Commissioner Susan J. Soloway reported at the Board of Commissioners June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Soloway, the Board’s liaison for the Public Safety Department reported, “Digital school mapping and text 9-1-1 are risk reduction actions that were within the county’s jurisdiction and have been implemented and active since 2018.”

The Critical Response Group’s digital school building mapping platform provides technology that sets up grid mapping in buildings, particularly the schools, putting information at the fingertips of every responding law enforcement officer on a phone, tablet or laptop.

Soloway said, “The Public Safety Department reports that in the county nearly 75% of school buildings are now mapped and nearly 90% of law enforcement has access to mapping platform.”

Soloway added, “The system has been used for missing person searches, and, in addition to school buildings, mapping has been put in place for the Hunterdon County Complex, NJ Festival of Ballooning, Hunterdon County 4H Fair, Round Valley Reservoir, and other municipal points of interest.

This system puts the county first responders in the best position possible when responding to critical events and is important for maintaining the county as one of the safest in the nation.”

Soloway noted, “That same year the County’s 9-1-1 communications operation instituted the text to 9-1-1 program, as an alternative method for the public to reach out for help in critical or dangerous situations.

We know that in some critical incidents, there are circumstances in which people witnessing suspicious activity, people in danger, or people desperately in need of medical help cannot talk – but are able to text on their mobile phone.

The text 9-1-1 option can be used to directly communicate with the County's 9-1-1 communications center. And through its use, dispatchers can accurately determine the location of the texter.

And with the digital grid mapping program available to law enforcement, individuals can be quickly located in a building.”

Soloway concluded, “When it comes to public safety, where the county has the authority and jurisdiction to take action, the Board has done so.

The Board of Commissioners, the Sheriff, the Prosecutor, the Department of Public Safety and local law enforcement and first responders will continue to maintain Hunterdon County as one of the safest places to live, by staying ahead of the curve.”