

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**

County of Hunterdon  
71 Main Street, Building #1  
PO Box 2900  
Flemington, NJ 08822-2900

**MEDIA RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****DATE: April 1, 2020****Contact: Shaun C. Van Doren, Freeholder Director**  
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## **Hunterdon Freeholders Direct Budget Cuts Allocate \$100,000 For COVID-19 Response Costs Broaden Economic Grants At Special Meeting**

Hunterdon County's Freeholders, at a March 31<sup>st</sup> Special Meeting, called for Departments to reduce discretionary spending, authorized a \$100,000 budget for costs arising from the County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and approved the expansion of the County's Economic Development Municipal Grant Program, in response to economic concerns stemming from the restrictions put in place by the Governor.

Freeholder Director Shaun C. Van Doren stated, "The Freeholders are directing Departments to find budget savings, particularly in light of the need to allocate additional funding for the COVID-19 response costs."

Van Doren said the County needed to create the \$100,000 COVID-19 response budget line to assist in the purchase of needed protective equipment.

The Freeholder Director reported that the County's Health Department and Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has already distributed more than 110,000 protective items to Hunterdon County first responders, Hunterdon Healthcare, nursing homes, care centers, and medical providers.

The municipal grant program was expanded to include more eligible grantees including local merchant groups or business associations that are non-profits.

Economic Development Director Marc Saluk, in proposing the expansion of the municipal grant program stated, "The program will consider funding locally run tools or initiatives that are consistent with the County's economic development programs and goals."

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Saluk reported his office is already discussing potentially impactful projects with local merchants' groups, "in the hope that they shortly lead to programs that can help Hunterdon small businesses in the months to come, and beyond."

Van Doren stated, "We understand the severity of the situation and realize that there are no quick fixes, but we're committed to providing the resources we can to assist our municipalities, the business community, and displaced workers."

Freeholder Matt Holt, the Board liaison for economic development, stated in support of the measure, "These local non-profits represent the combined interests of a lot of small business, including many of our main street merchants, who are pivotal to the county's economy.

If these groups wish to develop tools that will help a wide range of their membership, the County should be positioned to be able to help fund these efforts. The change holds the potential to impact widely across the county."

The Freeholders also approved resolutions in support of several legislative bills that are ready for Governor Murphy's signature that help residents and businesses, including A-3841, which extends the State Income Tax and Corporate Business Tax to match any extension of the federal government's tax filing deadline and A-3857, which makes \$15 million available for grants to food banks.