



Board of County Commissioners

County of Hunterdon
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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Commissioner Lanza Calls For 2026 Tax Rate Freeze At Reorganization Meeting

“Proposes New County Grant Program To Deliver Direct Support For Fire & EMS Providers”

The Hunterdon County Board of Commissioners held its annual Reorganization Meeting on January 6, 2026, establishing its leadership team for the year ahead and reaffirming the county’s continued commitment to fiscal responsibility, public safety, and strong municipal partnerships. During the meeting, Commissioner Director Lanza called for a freeze on the county tax rate for 2026, reinforcing the board’s dedication to fiscal discipline and its pledge to put taxpayers first.

During the meeting, John E. Lanza was sworn into his fifth term of office by his father, John R. Lanza, before being administered the Oath of Office for a second consecutive term as Commissioner Director by the Honorable John J. Burke III. Commissioner Jeff Kuhl was elected Deputy Director for 2026 and sworn in by Assembly Republican Leader John DiMaio, while Commissioner Zachary T. Rich was sworn in by Senator Doug Steinhardt.

Also in attendance were Assemblyman Erik Peterson, representatives from the offices of U.S. Senator Cory Booker and Congressman Tom Kean, Hunterdon County constitutional officers, municipal mayors and councilmembers, and county staff.

Scout Troops 108B and 108G proudly led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Chaplain Larry Coyne delivered the Invocation and Benediction.

Director Lanza expressed his gratitude to his family, colleagues, and the voters of Hunterdon County for their continued support, before outlining the Board’s key priorities for 2026, emphasizing fiscal stewardship, municipal partnership, public safety, farmland preservation, and economic growth.

“I am deeply grateful to the voters of Hunterdon County for once again entrusting me with the honor of serving another term,” said Director Lanza. “That trust guides every decision we make on behalf of our residents and taxpayers.”

Lanza highlighted the county’s exceptional financial standing, noting that Hunterdon County remains debt-free and achieved its lowest county tax rate in 11 years following consecutive, historic tax rate reductions in 2024 and 2025. He emphasized that preserving those gains is central to the board’s mission in the year ahead.

“In 2026, protecting last year’s historic county tax rate reduction will be a top priority of this Board,” Lanza said. “Our goal is clear: hold the line on taxes while continuing to deliver essential services and invest wisely in our communities.”

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Reaffirming a new era of collaboration with municipalities, Director Lanza pointed to nearly \$4 million in direct grants distributed to Hunterdon's 26 towns in 2025 and introduced a proposal for a new \$500,000 grant fund dedicated to assisting local fire and EMS organizations in purchasing life-saving equipment and critical response gear.

Director Lanza further announced that the county will solicit bids in early 2026 for Phases 2 and 3 of the Emergency Services Training Center, a nearly \$10 million, debt-free project supported by a \$3.2 million federal grant.

Additional initiatives outlined for 2026 include the launch of the Hunterdon County Improvement Authority, aimed at helping municipalities reduce borrowing costs, continued preservation of farmland and open space amid state housing mandates, and expanded support for small businesses, tourism, and film production through the county's 'Explore Hunterdon' brand.

"As we begin 2026, our focus remains on strong partnerships, smarter government, and always putting taxpayers first," Lanza said. "Together, we will continue to keep Hunterdon County one of the safest, healthiest, and best places in America to raise a family."