

Hunterdon Board Prepares Oversight and Fiscal Controls For American Rescue Cash

Citing the County's track record of excellence in implementing financial controls, Hunterdon County's Board of Commissioners took action to prepare for the receipt of more than \$24 million in funds from the new American Rescue Plan, by authorizing the Board's Budget Committee to develop the initial plan for the administration of the funds.

County Commissioners Matt Holt and Shaun C. Van Doren serve on the Board's Budget Committee.

Holt, a longtime member of the Budget Committee, stated, "The U.S. Treasury Department will prepare rules regarding the use and accounting for the funds. The one thing that new law states the funds cannot be used for, unfortunately, is to reduce taxes. Which is an acknowledgement of who now runs Washington.

It is reported that the County is in line for over \$24 million which can be used, according to various reports, to pay COVID-related expenses; cover lost revenues due to the pandemic; maintain critical services; provide additional assistance to residents and small businesses; and invest in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure, among other uses."

Van Doren, who served as the Board's Director last year, said, "The Budget Committee will be reviewing the parameters set down in the law to determine how and where best to direct the monies. The Committee will analyze the County's current financial status and make recommendations to the full Board of County Commissioners."

Holt, who has served as Board Director on three occasions, added, "Our taxpayers here in Hunterdon County can rest assured that the significant and detailed financial controls and systems of accountability that are in place for the county budget and tax dollars will be also be implemented to ensure that every dime of these funds are managed and expended properly and appropriately."

Holt pointed out, "The county's financial controls have been certified for four consecutive years by the independent auditor, who has issued an audit with no issues or recommendations, often called a clean audit, for each of those four years. That fact should give everyone confidence in how the new funds will be handled."

Holt said he expects there will be many claimants seeking access to the funds. "In whatever manner the federal funds are ultimately distributed, in my opinion, it must be done fairly, transparently, and with full accountability," the Commissioner concluded.