

## **Hunterdon Freeholders Approve COVID-19 Response Plan To Protect The Public And Employees**

Hunterdon County's Freeholder Board approved a COVID-19 response plan Tuesday, that calls for additional budget funding for public health emergency response activities and authorizes the County Administrator to implement telecommuting and alternate work schedules for County employees where necessary.

Freeholder Board Director Shaun C. Van Doren, who issued a State of Emergency declaration for the County on March 16<sup>th</sup>, stated, "Hunterdon County has remained open and operating during the public health emergency, however, we anticipate there may be a need to adjust work schedules for employees in the coming days, as dictated by health conditions and direction from higher authorities."

The approved resolution provides the Administrator with the authority, in consultation with the Board's Director, to establish telecommute, flextime, and alternate work schedule programs for County employees and to re-assign workers where needed temporarily.

Freeholder Matt Holt said, "The County needs to continue to provide services, but will do so in an alternate manner to best protect employees and the public."

The resolution directs the County's Budget Committee to consider redeploying existing financial resources and providing for additional resources for the Departments of Health and Public Safety, the Office of Emergency Management, the Division of Buildings and Maintenance, and other Department budget accounts as needed, for Covid-19 response activities.

According to the resolution, the Chief Financial Officer is authorized to make emergency expenditures as needed for COVID-19 response and the resolution allows a waiver for the use of leave time for any employee diagnosed with COVID-19 or ordered to quarantine or isolation.

Also, the ban on employee travel for official purposes and attendance at conferences through April 22, 2020, that was announced by Van Doren last week, was confirmed in the resolution.

Van Doren said, "In order to create social distancing, the County's various offices have taken steps to minimize public contacts, while continuing to provide public services.

A list of these actions is available on the County website, Facebook and have been communicated to residents at large through the Everbridge citizen notification network and the County's Hunterdon Report and Morning Report email communications."

Van Doren reported, "The County's COVID-19 response team that includes the Health Officer and OEM Coordinator, Administration personnel, and other Department Heads and Constitutional Officers, are in communication on a daily basis to plan and implement strategies for the protection of the health and well being of residents, as well as the employees of Hunterdon County.

The response to the public health emergency and direction from state and federal authorities is constantly evolving. We will make every effort to maintain communication with the residents of the County.”