

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

County Government with a Unified Voice!

SHANEL Y. ROBINSON
NJAC President
Somerset County Commissioner

JOHN G. DONNADIO, ESQ.
Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

September 19, 2025

Virtual Meeting

9:45 a.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

- NJAC President Shanel Robinson called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. and led a moment of silence for Monmouth County Commissioner Lilian Bury who served for nearly 20 years on the Monmouth County board of commissioners and was the woman to serve as Director. Monmouth County Commissioner Dominick DiRocco and Monmouth County Sheriff Shaun Golden reflected on Commissioner Bury's life as dynamic leader and dedicated public servant.

2. ROLL CALL

Executive Director Donnadio took roll with the following members present for quorum.

Shanel Y. Robinson, NJAC President & Somerset County Commissioner
James Kern, NJAC 1st Vice President & Warren County Commissioner
Dominick DiRocco, NJAC Secretary/Treasurer & Monmouth County Commissioner
Shaun Van Doren, NJAC Immediate Past President & Hunterdon County Commissioner
John W. Risley, Atlantic County Commissioner
Tracy Zur, Bergen County Commissioner
Eve Cullinan, Burlington County Administrator
Jonathan L. Young, Sr., Camden County Commissioner
Melanie Collette, Cape May County Commissioner
Kevin Smaniotto, Cumberland County Administrator
Brendan Gill, Essex County Commissioner
Robert Baselice, Hudson County Commissioner
Abe Antun, Hudson County Administrator
Teri O'Connor, Monmouth County Administrator
Douglas R. Cabana, Morris County Commissioner
Deena Leary, Morris County Administrator
Michael Fiure, Ocean County Administrator
Matt Jordan, Esq., Passaic County Administrator
Ron Tappan, Sussex County Administrator

Ed Oatman, Union County Manager
Dan Benson, Mercer County Executive
Mary Melfi, Hunterdon County Clerk
Shaun Golden, Monmouth County Sheriff
George Strachan, Gloucester County Improvement Authority Executive Director
Bob Werkmeister, NJAC Transportation Consultant
John Donnadio, Esq., NJAC Executive Director
Loren Wizman, NJAC Business Development Director
Kim Nolan, NJAC Office Manager

3. MIKIE SHERRILL, DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR

- President Robinson discussed the critical role NJAC plays as a non-partisan organization that advocates on behalf of all 21 counties with a unified and proactive voice. President Robinson introduced Mike Sherrill, the Democratic candidate for Governor. Congresswoman Sherrill discussed her career in public service as a Navy Pilot and congresswoman along with her vision for the State.

4. SECRETARY TREASURER'S REPORT

- A. Secretary/Treasurer DiRocco presented the meeting minutes for NJAC's June 27, 2025 Board of Directors meeting. The Board unanimously approved the minutes on a Hudson County/Cumberland County motion.
- B. Secretary/Treasurer Director DiRocco also presented the NJAC Financials dated August 31, 2025 of which the Board unanimously approved on a Camden County/Ocean County motion.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- A. President Robinson encouraged members to attend NACo's annual conference next year in her hometown of New Orleans where she is having a special gift made for everyone.
- B. President Robinson invited everyone to attend the southern, central, and northern regional county meetings in Salem County on 9/19, Morris County on 10/10, and Union County on 10/24.
- C. President Robinson announced that NJAC is opening the nomination process for the Association's 2026 slate of executive officers. To maintain NJAC's non-partisan rotation of officers, the Nomination Committee must select one candidate from the Democratic Party to serve as Secretary-Treasurer with active NJAC board members given priority consideration. The Secretary-Treasurer will ascend to the 2nd Vice President position in 2027, the 1st Vice President position in 2028, and ultimately President in 2029.

6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- A. Executive Director Donnadio led his report by thanking counties for holding NJAC Foundation scholarship presentations at board meetings throughout the summer. The NJAC Foundation is awarding \$110,000.00 in scholarships this year.
- B. Mr. Donnadio noted that NJAC's next virtual workshop is set for 10/29 with a topic to be determined. The Association's last two virtual workshops on the federal changes to SNAP/Medicaid and a third round of opioid settlements were very well attended.
- C. The Executive Director closed his report by sharing that the topic for this year's Year-End Summit set for Friday 12/19 at the Trenton Country Club is on Health Benefits.

7. JACK CIATTARELLI, REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR

- President Robinson reiterated NJAC's role as a nonpartisan organization and introduced Jack Ciattarelli, the Republican candidate for Governor. Mr. Ciattarelli discussed his plans to fix the State of New Jersey along with his career as a CPA and successful business owner who term limited the elected offices he had as a township committeeman, county commissioner, and member of the General Assembly.

8. STATE HOUSE NEWS *1st Vice President Kern & Executive Director Donnadio provided the following legislative update.*

A. LAME DUCK LEGISLATIVE GOALS DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 1) JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITIES: NJAC is optimistic that the Senate Law and Public Safety Committee will consider legislation to reform the manner in which the State houses juvenile offenders based on the recommendations of NJAC's Working Group on County Juvenile Detention Facilities.
- 2) HEALTH BENEFITS: NJAC has been working with the Administration, legislative leadership, the public sector labor unions, and other stakeholders to address the staggering increases in health benefit premiums for local governments participating in the State Health Benefits Program. Stay tuned for some possible relief.
- 3) WORKING TEST PERIOD: NJAC is optimistic that the State Government Committee will consider legislation to extend the Working Test Period after the General Assembly unanimously passed companion version |in June
- 4) PRIVATIZATION CONTRACTS: NJAC strongly opposes A-919 (*Jackson D-15/Wimberly D-35*), which would effectively prohibit the use of privatization contracts by requiring county governments to pay new employees' wages and benefits at a rate not less than the wages and benefits paid to displaced employees.

B. NEW ADMINISTRATION LEGISLATIVE GOALS DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 1) **SNAP & MEDICAID:** Advocate for Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide grant funding to counties to address the \$78.0 million federal administrative cost shift contingent on using the monies to fund necessary staff, software, and information technology along with various recommendations to streamline services and reduce payment error rates. Cape May County Commissioner Collette discussed her concerns with the State's high payment error rates of which the Association plans to address accordingly.
- 2) **EMERGENCY SHELTERS:** Advocate for the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to include \$10.5 million in matching grant funding for each county to provide emergency shelter services for those in need.
- 3) **911 FUNDING:** Advocate for the new Administration to stop diverting 911 fees as has been the case for nearly two decades and provide adequate funding for county 911 centers. Commissioner Jonathan Young expressed his frustration with the recent cuts to 911 funding and encouraged the Association to once again hold a series of press conferences, write op-ed pieces, and hold accountable the candidates for stating that they would stop diverting fees. Executive Director encouraged board members to review Warren County's lawsuit against the State on the matter and consider joining the suit to support the County's efforts.

C. OFFICIAL LEGISLATIVE GOALS

- 1) **LAME-DUCK GOALS:** Goals should be realistic and achievable before the new Governor and Legislature take office in January of 2026. (A) Establish a legislative task force to review the current juvenile detention facility structure in the State of New Jersey and make recommendations on whether the Youth Justice Commission (YJC), existing county facilities, or an entirely new system would best serve the youth and individuals that oversee them. (B) Extend the Working Test Period (WTP) for local governments from three months to four months along with the ability to extend the WTP to six months at the discretion of the Civil Service Commission (CSC). (C) Provide immediate relief from the staggering 37.5% increase in health benefit premiums for county governments and their agencies participating in the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP) along with long-term structural reforms.
- 2) **SHORT-TERM GOALS:** Goals should be realistic and achievable within the two-year legislative cycle; and, should be specific and tangible, so that we may accurately quantify any potential cost savings or other benefits. (A) Prevent the State from diverting 911 fees to fund general operating expenses and make monies available for county 911 centers to regionalize, upgrade, or maintain a precise, accurate, and reliable communications network. (B) Mitigate the \$78.0 million federal cost shift to counties for the administration of SNAP along with the

development of best practices by the State to reduce payment error rates and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to alleviate worker caseload. (C) Increase the State's annual appropriation for emergency shelters to include matching grant funding for each county to either operate or contract with select agencies to provide vital services for those in need. (D) Reinstate full funding for county reentry services coordinators to help inmates navigate the broad spectrum of services available upon release from a county jail after being incarcerated for 90 days or longer. (E) Streamline Civil Service laws, rules, and regulations, which include an opt-out provision for local governing bodies, authorization to hire grant-funded employees on an "at-will basis," and the establishment of a pilot program where local governments may administer promotional examinations. `

- 3) LONG-TERM GOALS: Goals should be realistic and achievable within the first term of the newly elected Governor; and, should offer viable solutions for long-standing issues that have had a negative impact on county government. (A) Prohibit the imposition of unfunded mandates by legislation, regulation, and directives. (B) Reduce the costs associated with operating and maintaining county court facilities. (C) Offer incentives for the regionalization of services with county jails, EMS, fire, and more. (D) Authorize Class 2 special Law Enforcement Officers to provide court security. (E) Protect the long-term viability of the State's pension systems. (F) Study and recommend best practices for issuing and managing Code Blue alerts. (G) Require site plan approval of projects affecting county roads. (H) Adopt uniform standards in AI, digital, and cybersecurity for counties. (I) Permit the cremation of unclaimed bodies by counties under certain circumstances. (J) Preserve county governments negotiating power under Chapter 78.

9. OLD & NEW BUSINESS

10. ADJOURNMENT *The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 am.*