



Commissioner Meeting of January 14, 2026 at 6:00 PM  
Sussex County Administrative Center  
Commissioner Meeting Room  
One Spring Street  
Newton, NJ

Minutes

**Item**

1. **CALL TO ORDER BY DIRECTOR** Director Space called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL** Director Space, Deputy Director DeGroot, Commissioner Carney, Commissioner Henderson, and Commissioner Silverthorne were all in attendance. County Administrator Christina Marks, Clerk of the Board Linda Miller, and County Counsel Doug Steinhardt, Esq. were also in attendance.
3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG** Director Space asked for a moment of silence and a salute to the flag.
4. **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

"Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 Adequate Notice as defined by Section 3D of Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, has been made by regular mail and email, such notice being submitted on January 6, 2026 from the Administrative Center of the County of Sussex, located at One Spring Street, Newton, New Jersey to the following:

New Jersey Herald

Star Ledger

Straus News

and is also posted on the bulletin board maintained in the Administrative Center for public announcements and has been submitted to the Sussex County Clerk in compliance with said Act." At this time please mute all electronic devices.

5. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** Director Space advised of two changes to the agenda. Item 14D was amended to make a change to the original proposed listed appointments. Item 14F, municipal commissioner liaisons was added. Item 17 to be moved until after Executive Session.

**MOTION** to approve the Agenda as amended was moved by Commissioner Henderson with a second by Commissioner Silverthorne. Deputy Director DeGroot clarified item 14F with Director Space advising it was an add on resolution. All members present voted in the affirmative.

6. **PROCLAMATIONS/CERTIFICATES/PRESENTATIONS**-There were no presentations/proclamations or certificates presented at this meeting.
7. **PUBLIC HEARING** There was no public hearing at this meeting.
8. **PUBLIC SESSION FROM THE FLOOR**

**This Public Session is for those wishing to make a comment of three minutes or less regarding an Agenda Item. Please line up at the microphone and state your name, municipality and Agenda Topic for the record**

**MOTION** to open the floor for public comment was moved by Deputy Director DeGroot with a second by Commissioner Carney. No discussion was had and all members present voted in the affirmative.

Ken Collins, Andover, NJ

Mr. Collins commented on item 25, number 7 – FIRE correspondence regarding the Newton Green. Mr. Collins read the FIRE correspondence sent to the County during his comment.

David DeWitt, Hampton Township, NJ

Mr. DeWitt commented on Resolution C and asked where the Board intended to appropriate opioid settlement funds since President Trump canceled \$1.9 billion in mental health and substance abuse funds. Mr. DeWitt asked if this would be impacted. Director Space advised the funds were settlement funds. Mr. DeWitt expressed concerns about organizations in North Jersey who rely on those canceled funds and urged people to call their representatives.

**MOTION** to close the floor for public comment was moved by Commissioner Henderson with a second by Commissioner Silverthorne. No discussion was had and all members present voted in the affirmative.

## **9. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

Commissioners Silverthorne

“Well, I'm just getting acclimated and get my feet wet. I have orientation coming up next week, but I have managed to do a few things in the past two weeks since reorg.

Ray Sarinelli was nice enough to come meet with me and give me a budget briefing. I went to the Fire Academy graduation at the community college. I attended a solid waste advisory committee meeting last night, which I'm familiar with in my time in Frankford, so that was familiar to me. I also attended several reorgs, Hardyston, Frankford, Lafayette, Branchville, Hopatcong, and I'm going to do Vernon tomorrow. That's about it so far. Thank you.”

### Commissioner Henderson

“Good evening. First of all, once again, I'd like to say Happy New Year to everyone, and I'm looking forward to a productive year with this board.

As with this board, several towns recently held reorganization meetings. I've had the pleasure of attending several, including Frankford and Hopatcong Borough. As former mayor and committeeman of Lafayette Township, I had the honor of swearing in the new committee members, Mayor and Deputy Mayor, along with the fire department officers.

On January 5<sup>th</sup> , I swore in the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Hardyston Township. It was bittersweet, as 47 years ago, I stood before the Hardyston Council to be sworn in as a 911, dispatcher. I guess you could say it's come full circle.

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, Commissioner Carney, Administrator Marks and I attended a meeting with the SCMUA.

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Sussex County Public Academy Safety Academy graduation ceremony for new firefighters and others taking higher level training. Congratulations to all and thank you all the Sussex County firemen for their dedication to our county. I'd also like to thank John Dixon Academy. Director for his professionalism and knowledge he brings to the academy, along with the fellow instructors. Listening to his speech during graduation one paragraph really resonated with me. I think we all can relate in our own life, and I'd like to share that with you. Graduates, remember this. Titles fade, career changes, but character endures. Never stop training. Never stop learning. Take care of your body, your mind and each other. Ask for help when you need it, and always remember why you chose to serve in the first place. I think we all can relate to that.

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, I also attended the Zoom SWAC meeting where a new chair and vice chair was selected. Bill Eaves was selected as a Chair and Vice Chair, Mike Bosniak, I guess that's the correct spelling of his name, right. Their meetings were also approved for 2026 and there was discussion regarding new rules and regulations coming down from DEP, and that's all I have.”

### Commissioner Carney

“Department of engineering and planning manages the Sussex County transportation project delivery program. The program focuses on maintaining county owned and operated roads and bridges along with related infrastructure. The fiscal year 2026 capital program includes 56 projects, consisting of 16 roadway improvement projects, 16 bridge rehabilitation or replacement projects, 10 traffic safety projects, 12 storm water drainage projects and two site development projects. The program encompasses projects in all four phases of the project delivery cycle and project development cycle begins after project prioritization and funding allocations are made. First phase of the process includes project scoping and concept development and public engagement. This phase is followed by preliminary engineering and permitting, which leads directly into the final design and right of way acquisition phase. Once final design is complete and right away is acquired, the project enters in the final phase of construction. And the construction phase includes public bidding, construction in project closeout. Project funding is determined based upon project eligibility, and includes county capital, state aid and federal transportation funding and a 2026 capital program has an estimated value of \$44 million.

Winter storm update - The division remains very busy responding to winter weather events. Today, crews have been activated for nine winter storms. Storm response has included upwards of 4,500 active hours with staff operating equipment in managing the programs 67 plow routes. Winter operations are supported by the Office of Fleet management, which provides real time responses to equipment breakdowns. To date, the total investment of staff, time, materials and equipment is estimated at just over \$1 million.

Our trails grant program - Sussex County Open Space Committee has finalized the 2026 Sussex County trails grant program. The program is expected to open on January 12<sup>th</sup> and run through May 15<sup>th</sup>. The Open Space Committee will be reviewing grant submissions and providing the commissioner board a recommendation for awards. A commissioner announcement of grant awards is anticipated during the summer of 2026. Municipalities and eligible nonprofits are encouraged to submit a grant applications. The grant program is funded by the Sussex County farmland preservation recreation open space trust fund. The program awards grants for construction, rehabilitation, restoration and maintenance of publicly owned, shared use trails and work must be located on permanently preserved public land or within a permanent easement held by a public entity. The program is open to all 424, municipalities working individually or in a partnership the county and non for profit organizations established to protect and manage specific natural resources. Questions or more information the grant program is available by contact and county division of planning, 973-579-0500 that's all I have for that.

As Commissioner Henderson said and Commissioner Silverthorne said, we attended a lot of reorg meetings: Hardyston, Frankford, Lafayette, and also the Fire Academy, which John Dixon does a great job at the Fire Academy in concert with the college, I think there was 50 to 60 graduates. John Dixon was kind enough to have all four of the commissioners, Director Space was away, but the four of us engage with the graduates and hand out pins or whatever we were handing out, so it made us feel that we were part of them, and they're always thankful for our support. We're always here to help support the fire department, all our first responders.

I had a comment at our reorg meeting. Lot of people weren't there. Some of you were maybe read in the paper, but Senator Parker Space was able to solidify \$500,000 from the state for our food pantry. I know a lot of you guys know that we've lost out on a major, major donor, which we call the angel donor, so he was able to solidify that \$500,000 for that for the next year, 2026 I don't know what's going to happen after that, but at least we're in some decent shape. So I just want to shout out and kudos to Senator Parker space for getting that funds. And that's all I have. Thank you.”

#### Deputy Director DeGroot

“First I attended the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, NJTPA meeting. The board approved \$29.3 million for 29 pedestrian, bicycle, and community safety projects, and endorsed NJ DOT updated roadway functional classification system to keep federal funding moving. The Board also advanced local planning and safety programs, including \$4 million for concept studies for projects like retaining walls in Hudson County, corridor safety improvements in Ocean County and bridge evaluations in Bergen, Passaic, Essex, and Hudson counties. The meeting also featured the presentation from IDEA, the implementation, national tools helping local governments deliver safer projects, by Charles T Brown.

Second, Sussex County Library System is inviting readers of all ages to join the 2026 winter reading challenge - reading revolution running the entire month of February. No registration is required. Participants simply read or listen, simply submit raffle tickets at their local library and be entered to win prizes. Winners will be selected in each age group at every branch, with prize bundles for adults, teens and children.

Third, I was honored in leading chapel at Northwest Christian School in Newton. I reflected on Philippians 1-6, which says, and I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. This verse serves as a reminder that God is faithful to complete the good work he begins in each of us, even when growth feels small or unseen. It was a blessing to encourage students to see how God is at work through faithfulness and everyday moments. And I want to thank Principal Cantalupo for the grateful invitation.

Additionally, Administrator Marks and Commissioner Carney, we met with our county surrogate to discuss priorities and review operational plans for the year ahead.

As mentioned by my fellow Commissioners, the majority of us attended various reorganization meetings throughout Sussex County. I attended Hardyston and Hopatcong. In addition, I was also honored to attend the public safety training and academy graduation ceremony alongside my fellow Commissioners. I want to send my congratulations to all the graduates, and to just say thank you for their willingness to protect our residents and neighborhoods. Their service is essential to the safety and well-being of the municipalities that make up Sussex County, and I am grateful for their dedication. Thank you and God bless.”

#### Director Space

“Happy New Year, everyone. I've been busy the last two weeks getting acclimated again as Director. Thank you, Chris Carney for doing a great job last year for us. One of the things that I decided to change this year is the executive session is going back to the end of the meeting. The only time that we'll switch it to the beginning of the meeting is if we have to ask county employees to stay for something that's on the agenda. But other than that, for the time being, it's going to be at the end of the meeting.

We also, I found out yesterday that Sussex County is getting a new prosecutor, Dan Perez from Frankford. He is a defense attorney in Sussex County for a long time, and he was approved. It's a governor's appointment, so it was Governor Phil Murphy's appointment, and he was approved by the Senate Judiciary and the Senate on Monday. That's about all I have for now, other than the health department.

Division of Health Office of Public Health Nursing vaccine programs for children and adults. The Sussex County Office of Public Health Nursing offers immunizations to our underserved and at risk populations through the Vaccines for Children VFC program and the 317 funded adult program. The VFC and 317 programs make vaccines available to children, adolescents and adults who might otherwise go unvaccinated because of an inability to pay for the vaccine, the Office of Public Health Nursing will now obtain the residents information and necessary documentation. Once the documentation has been reviewed, a public health nursing staff member will contact the family to schedule mutually agreed upon date and time for the vaccines to be administered, administered at the public health nursing office during normal business hours. To obtain additional information about these programs, please call the Office of

Public Health Nursing at 973-579-0570, and can we just put the rest of mine on line? Because this is going to be a lot of reading for me, so my comments will be posted online.

Addition:

### **Division of Senior Services**

#### **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program**

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program through Norwescap is staffed with IRS-trained and certified volunteers who assist seniors, low-income and disabled individuals and families with free tax preparation in Warren and Sussex Counties. VITA services will be available by appointment only at two (2) locations in Sussex County.

- **Christ Episcopal Church, 17 Church Street, Newton**  
Mondays and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- **Norwescap Sussex Borough Community & Cultural Center, 37 Main Street, Sussex**  
Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Norwescap will begin scheduling appointments after **January 27, 2026**. To schedule an appointment or obtain additional information, please visit [www.norwescap.org](http://www.norwescap.org) or call 973-784-4900, ext. 2902.

Financial support has been provided in part by United Way of Northern New Jersey.

#### **Senior Services Caregiver Support Group**

A **Senior Services Caregiver Support Group** meeting will be held virtually by Zoom, from **2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**, on **Thursday, January 15, 2026**. This group helps to reduce the negative effects of stress and increases the physical and psychological wellness of the caregiver. It also provides information about programs and services available to the caregiver, information on how to access these services and provides referrals as necessary. Please call the Division of Senior Services at 973-579-0555, ext. 1288 to obtain additional information or to register to attend these meetings.

#### **Senior Game Night**

The Division of Senior Services will host a Game Shop Social on **Friday, January 30, 2026**, from **6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**, at the Stillwater Community Center located at 931 Swartswood Road in Stillwater. Seniors are invited to enjoy a fun evening socializing and playing a variety of board games, card games, etc. Registration is required. Please call the Division of Senior Services at 973-579-0555 to register or obtain additional information.

### **Division of Community and Youth Services**

#### **County of Sussex Participates in NJ Counts 2026**

**NJ Counts 2026**, New Jersey's annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count of unsheltered homeless individuals, is being conducted statewide on Wednesday, **January 28, 2026**. The County will be taking the lead once again on the planning and coordination of this important event in order to capture a statewide count of homeless families and individuals in our community, including where they find shelter, what their needs are and what factors contribute to homelessness. County staff and volunteers will be outreaching community partners, human service provider agencies and shelter locations in an attempt to raise awareness and participation in the event. A full statewide report will be released later this year."

**10. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA** There was no consent agenda at this meeting.

**11. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** There were no minutes approved at this meeting.

12. **ORDINANCE** There was no ordinance presented at this meeting.

13. **APPOINTMENTS AND/OR RESIGNATIONS**

**A. RESOLUTION RE:**

REAPPOINTMENT OF ED MEYER AS A FULL MEMBER TO THE SUSSEX COUNTY PLANNING BOARD FOR A TWO (2) YEAR TERM TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY AND EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31, 2027

**B. RESOLUTION RE:**

REAPPOINTMENT OF JENNIFER JOHNSON AS FIRST ALTERNATE MEMBER TO THE SUSSEX COUNTY PLANNING BOARD FOR A TWO (2) YEAR TERM TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY AND EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31, 2027

**C. RESOLUTION RE:**

REAPPOINTMENT OF BRIAN HAUTAU AS A FARM REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUSSEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD FOR A FOUR (4) YEAR TERM EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY AND EXPIRING ON DECEMBER 31, 2029

**D. RESOLUTION RE:**

REAPPOINTMENT OF ANTHONY LENTINI AS A FARM REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUSSEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD FOR A FOUR (4) YEAR TERM EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY AND EXPIRING ON DECEMBER 31, 2029

**E. RESOLUTION RE:**

APPOINTMENT OF LISA CHAMMINGS AS CHAIRPERSON AND MIKE DOLAN AS VICE-CHAIRPERSON FOR THE SUSSEX COUNTY OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE FOR 2026

**F. RESOLUTION RE:**

APPOINTMENT OF RICHARD MARRA, AS INTERIM PURCHASING AGENT IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX

**MOTION** to adopt the Resolutions A-F was moved by Commissioner Carney with a second by Commissioner Silverthorne. No discussion was had.

**(Roll call vote)**

**Commissioner Carney - YES**

**Deputy Director DeGroot - YES**

**- Commissioner Henderson - YES**

**Commissioner Silverthorne - YES**

**Director Space - YES**

14. **RESOLUTIONS**

**A. RESOLUTION RE:**

AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF PURCHASE ORDERS IN COMPLIANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 ET SEQ. FOR VARIOUS COOPERATIVE PURCHASES AS STATED BELOW FOR 2026 FISCAL YEAR

**B. RESOLUTION RE:**

AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF PURCHASE ORDERS IN COMPLIANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.4 ET SEQ. FOR VARIOUS BID EXEMPT SERVICES AS STATED BELOW FOR 2026 FISCAL YEAR

**C. RESOLUTION RE:**

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN ADDENDUM (#4) TO THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUND PLAN TO APPROPRIATE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR APPROVED OPIOID REMEDIATION USES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$574,663.00 FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026

**D. RESOLUTION RE:**

DIRECTOR'S APPOINTMENTS FOR VARIOUS DEPARTMENT LIAISONS AND COMMITTEES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2026

**E. RESOLUTION RE:**

AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO AN EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT WITH CHRISTINA MARKS AS ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX

**F. RESOLUTION RE:**

Municipal Liaisons

**MOTION** to adopt the Resolutions A-F was moved by Commissioner Henderson with a second by Deputy Director DeGroot. No discussion was had.

**(Roll call vote)**

**Commissioner Carney - YES**

**Deputy Director DeGroot - YES**

**Commissioner Henderson - YES**

**Commissioner Silverthorne - YES**

**Director Space - YES**

**15. AWARDS OF CONTRACT/CHANGE ORDERS/BID**

**A. RESOLUTION RE:**

AWARDING A CONTRACT THROUGH THE COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING PROCESS FOR ANNUAL AS-NEEDED SERVICES FOR SUBSTANCE USE AND PREVENTION SERVICES EXPANSION OF POOL FUNDED BY THE OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUND TO VARIOUS VENDORS FROM FEBRUARY 26, 2026 THROUGH FEBRUARY 25, 2027

**B. RESOLUTION RE:**

AWARD OF CONTRACT EXTENSION FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF RED WING WORK BOOTS OR EQUIVALENT FOR VARIOUS SUSSEX COUNTY DEPARTMENTS TO FLEMINGTON DEPARTMENT STORE, INC. FROM JANUARY 22, 2026 THROUGH JANUARY 21, 2027

**C. RESOLUTION RE:**

AWARD OF CONTRACT EXTENSION FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF WORK BOOTS FOR VARIOUS SUSSEX COUNTY DEPARTMENTS TO SAF-GARD SAFETY SHOE COMPANY FROM JANUARY 22, 2026 THROUGH JANUARY 21, 2027

**D. RESOLUTION RE:**

AWARD OF CONTRACT EXTENSION FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF CLEANING, DISINFECTING AND REMEDIATION SERVICES FOR VARIOUS SUSSEX COUNTY DEPARTMENTS TO JAANK RESTORATIONS LLC (SERVPRO OF DOVER STILLWATER & SERVPRO OF WAYNE) FROM JANUARY 22, 2026 THROUGH JANUARY 21, 2027

The Board of County Commissioners of the County of Sussex has reviewed the Award of Contract/Change Orders/Bids consisting of various proposed Resolutions and determined that adoption of the said Resolutions is in and will further the public interest.

**MOTION** to adopt the Resolutions A-D was moved by Commissioner Silverthorne with a second by Commissioner Henderson. No discussion was had.

**(Roll call vote)**

**Commissioner Carney - YES**

**Deputy Director DeGroot - YES**

**Commissioner Henderson - YES**

**Commissioner Silverthorne - YES**

**Director Space - YES**

**16. FINANCIAL**

**A. RESOLUTION RE:**

PAYMENT OF BILLS LIST A  
December 24, 2025

**MOTION** to Pay Bills List A was moved by Deputy Director DeGroot with a second by Commissioner Carney. No discussion was had.

**(Roll Call Vote)**

**Commissioner Carney - YES**

**Deputy Director DeGroot - YES**

**Commissioner Henderson - YES**

**Commissioner Silverthorne - YES**

**Director Space - YES**

**B. RESOLUTION RE:**

PAYMENT OF BILLS LIST B

December 24, 2025  
**(Commissioner DeGroot Abstains)**

**MOTION** to Pay Bills List B was moved by Commissioner Henderson with a second by Commissioner Silverthorne. No discussion was had.

**(Roll Call Vote)**

**Commissioner Carney - YES**  
**Deputy Director DeGroot - ABSTAIN**  
**Commissioner Henderson - YES**  
**Commissioner Silverthorne - YES**  
**Director Space - YES**

**C. RESOLUTION RE:**  
PAYMENT OF BILLS LIST C  
January 14, 2026

**MOTION** to Pay Bills List C was moved by Commissioner Carney with a second by Deputy Director DeGroot. No discussion was had.

**(Roll Call Vote)**

**Commissioner Carney - YES**  
**Deputy Director DeGroot - YES**  
**Commissioner Henderson - YES**  
**Commissioner Silverthorne - YES**  
**Director Space - YES**

**D. RESOLUTION RE:**  
PAYMENT OF BILLS LIST D  
January 14, 2026  
**(Commissioner Space Abstains)**

**MOTION** to Pay Bills List D was moved by Commissioner Henderson with a second by Commissioner Silverthorne. No discussion was had.

**(Roll Call Vote)**

**Commissioner Carney - YES**  
**Deputy Director DeGroot - YES**  
**Commissioner Henderson - YES**  
**Commissioner Silverthorne - YES**  
**Director Space - ABSTAIN**

**17. PERSONNEL – moved to after executive session**

**18. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT** Administrator Marks provided the following report:

**“Elevator Update**

Repairs were completed ahead of schedule and the inspector was here on 1/6/26 and elevator was back in service on 1/7/26.

**Dennis Library Update** - Bid package was released on 1/4/26. There was a site visit for contractors on 1/12/26. Bids are due 2/11/26. There is an anticipated addendum that will be

needed, which will push the Bid award date to 3/11/26. Construction start date is still anticipated to begin in April. We are currently working on a final plan for the location for the DOT mobile library three days per week with assistance from transit to bring residents to other libraries and should have a final plan in place completed by February 2026.

The RFP for LSRP (licensed site remediation professional services) is expected to be out by end of the week. If you recall, the county extended the current contract awarded to Applied for 90 days as they were delayed due to being pulled by the State of New Jersey for another project. That 90 day extension expires in March and we are moving forward with a new request so that we can received bids and have this completed prior to then.

Notice for the Trails Grant was sent to all municipalities. The Open Space Committee is very supportive of joint projects. The close date for the grant program is May 15, 2026. Once closed, the applications are then reviewed by the Committee with recommendations sent to the Board for consideration and final award anticipated in July of this year.

Department of Engineering has been monitoring the County's salt reserves and the county is currently in good shape, however, based on current usage and possible availability issues down the road, the county will be moving up their mid-season order.

**Frankford campus wells.** The completion of the new wells at the various county complexes in Frankford was completed last year. We are expecting the final inspection to occur by next week and those facilities will be on our new wells at that point.

The Department of Health and Human Services will be resuming their Opioid Settlement Funding at the end of January. There have been additional funds allocated to treatment and adding more vendors for the programs.

The Department of Finance continues to work on their yearend closeouts. Due to new regulations in the Big Beautiful Bill that was signed into law last year, the department is also working on additional information to provide to employees on how to handle their overtime and how to claim a tax deduction on a portion of their overtime pay. The County is not able to give tax and/or financial advice, but is encouraging employees to speak to a financial expert when completing their tax returns for 2025.

The new website will be going live on 1/20/26. The county is very excited to launch this new website, it has been a long time in the making.

**Lafayette Pole Barn** – As I had previously reported in my last report, there are currently issues with the approved contractor on this project. We were able to meet with the owner of the company last Friday, 1/9/26 and I am aware that since Monday, 1/12/26, the contractor is working on the deficiencies and I should have additional information to bring back to the board at the next meeting regarding the status.

Policies/Procedures – The Office of Employee Services and I are working on updating the Employee Handbook, as well as a few additional policies and procedures for the Board to consider.”

**19. COUNTY COUNSEL REPORT** No report.

**20. UNFINISHED BUSINESS** Commissioner Henderson presented a resolution authorizing the county to conduct a feasibility study prior to proceeding with a public sale of the jail. Commissioner Henderson read the resolution into the record and moved the resolution for consideration with a second by Commissioner Silverthorne. Deputy Director DeGroot advised he likes the idea of conducted a study and asked Commissioner Henderson if he had a cost. Deputy Director DeGroot advised the Borough of Pennsgrove conducted a study that cost \$50,000, Mount Holly’s cost \$11,000 and Essex County conducted one on their jail which cost \$200,000. Commissioner Henderson advised that this resolution just asks the administrator to come up with a cost. \$100,000 was originally set aside and about \$55,000 was spent as of today with the process of selling the jail. Director Space further clarified the study will include the Cochran House and the Provident Bank, so it would be all three buildings. Counsel advised that because the County is under certain statutory time constraints, this resolution simply pauses the auction process.

**Roll Call vote on Resolution Re: Feasibility Study**

**Commissioner Carney – YES**

**Deputy Director DeGroot – YES**

**Commissioner Henderson – YES**

**Commissioner Silverthorne – YES**

**Director Space - YES**

**21. NEW BUSINESS** Deputy Director DeGroot asked the Board if there were any objections to him exploring a potential partnership with the historical society to mark the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nation’s founding. Director Space added this event can also be discussed at the upcoming Mayor’s Breakfast and have one large event.

**22. PUBLIC SESSION FROM THE FLOOR**

**This Public Session is for those wishing to make general comments of three minutes or less on non-agenda topics. Please line up at the microphone and state your name and municipality for the record.**

**MOTION** to open the floor for public comment was moved by Commissioner Henderson with a second by Commissioner Carney. No discussion was had and all members present voted in the affirmative.

Ken Collins, Andover, NJ

Mr. Collins spoke about Renee Good, what occurred with ICE agents and his feels about Donald Trump.

David DeWitt, Hampton, NJ

Mr. DeWitt described his feels about the actions of Trump and wanted to know where the Board stood and that silence is not an option and that the Board needs to speak up.

Sandy Pender, Fredon, NJ

Ms. Pender spoke about attending her niece's baby shower, and Hispanic relatives that attended the shower. Ms. Pender described them as friendly, tight knit and a picture of a family and stated she pictured the shower held in another location with ICE agents coming in. Ms. Pender stated the Board took an oath to represent all in Sussex County and asked what they would do.

Laura Haug, Fredon, NJ

Ms. Haug read a poem called The Anchor of the Green and stated that she hopes the benches removed from the park will be restored. Director Space advised that the previous administrator stated the benches were removed to install dividers and they are expected back in the spring.

Kathy Brennan, Hampton Township, NJ

Ms. Brennan wished a Happy New Year. Ms. Brennan stated that she is a part of a group that has been making phone calls to representatives asking to return money that was reduced to Ginnie's House. Ms. Brennan also spoke about her feelings regarding actions by ICE agents.

Norma Brand, Wantage, NJ

Ms. Brand spoke about Commissioner DeGroot's religious comments and she felt that they were not appropriate as a public servant. Ms. Brand also suggested ways a commissioner can be removed in the future and referenced former Commissioner Hayden. Counsel advised that Commissioner DeGroot does not waive his ability to have a personal religious preference or express it from the dais just because he was elected. Counsel further clarified that there is no New Jersey statute that would permit a count level commissioner to be removed from office for missing meetings.

Debbie Mello, Fredon Township, NJ

Ms. Mello advised that she felt excluded based on Commissioner DeGroot's comments of December 17<sup>th</sup>.

Jean Apriage, Hampton Township, NJ

Ms. Apriage asked the Board what would it take for them to stand against the MAGA regime. Ms. Apriage stated that the Board has remained silent and it is time, in her opinion, for the Board to do the right thing about what is going on.

Karen Balzano, Wantage, NJ

Ms. Balzano. Ms. Balzano read a poem by Martin Lee Moeller, a German pastor written in 1946 titled First They Came. Ms. Balzano further stated that silence has a price and she encouraged people to speak up.

John Snyder, Sandyston Township, NJ

Mr. Snyder stated that this is not a democracy, it is a republic. Mr. Snyder congratulated the recently elected officials. Mr. Snyder spoke about the rioting in Minneapolis and Portland.

Sandy Hull, Layton, NJ

Ms. Hull stated that when her children and grandchildren were getting their licenses, she advised them to park under a light in a parking lot and if they are driving home and somebody flashes their light to attempt to pull over, to pull over for the officer and be respectful but lock their car doors and not open windows all the way. Ms. Hull further stated it was her belief that there is a need for laws and immigration and border protection, but it is currently chaotic.

**MOTION** to close the floor for public comment and return to regular business was moved by Commissioner Silverthorne with a second by Commissioner Carney. No discussion was had and all members present voted in the affirmative.

**23. REMINDERS**

Please check the County's website at [www.sussex.nj.us](http://www.sussex.nj.us) for meeting schedules.

**24. EXECUTIVE SESSION – (Closed Session)**

**RESOLUTION RE: PROVIDING FOR AN EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 ET SEQ. – read into the record.**

**WHEREAS**, the subject matter(s) about to be discussed may be excluded from the public portion of the meeting by Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners as an exception to the "Open Public Meetings Act" pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (b); and

**WHEREAS**, it appears necessary for the Board of County Commissioners to discuss such matter(s) in Executive Session.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Sussex, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) and N.J.S.A. 10:4-13 that the Board at this time enter into an Executive Session from which the public shall be excluded; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the general nature of the subject(s) to be discussed relate to the following item(s) authorized by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) as designated below:

(1) **Matters Required by Law to be Confidential:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (2) **Matters Where the Release of Information Would Impair the Right to Receive Funds:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (3) **Matters Involving Individual Privacy:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (4) **Matters Relating to Collective Bargaining Agreements:**

X   (5) **Matters Relating to the Purchase, Lease of Acquisition of Real Property or the Investment of Public Funds:**

Cochran House

\_\_\_\_\_ (6) **Matters Relating to Public Safety and Property:**

  X   (7) **Matters Relating to Litigation, Negotiations and the Attorney Client Privilege:**

Baeli vs County of Sussex  
Coffey vs County of Sussex  
Perez vs County of Sussex  
Mrocka vs County of Sussex  
Bob Siejkowski (Barn View) vs County of Sussex  
Homestead Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center  
FIRE Correspondence regarding the Newton Green

\_\_\_\_\_ (8) **Matters Relating to the Employment Relationship:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (9) **Matters Relating to the Potential Imposition of a Penalty:**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the deliberations conducted in closed session may be disclosed to the public upon the determination of the Sussex County Board of County Commissioners or provided by law that the public interest will no longer be served by such confidentiality; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that upon completion of the business, for which the Board has entered into the Executive Session, the Board shall reconvene and resume its meeting open to the public; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board expects to/not to take formal action after returning from Executive Session except to adjourn the regular meeting.

**MOTION** to adopt the Executive Session Resolution and enter into Executive Session was moved by Commissioner Henderson with a second by Deputy Director DeGroot. No discussion was had and all members present voted in the affirmative.

**MOTION** to adjourn from Executive Session and return to Regular Business was moved by Commissioner Henderson with a second by Commissioner Silverthorne. No discussion was had and all members present voted in the affirmative.

**19. PERSONNEL –**

**A. RESOLUTION RE:  
PERSONNEL AGENDA OF 1/14/2026**

**MOTION** to approve the amended Personnel Agenda tabling the movements for the Sheriff's Office, fire marshal and fire inspector and approve the item for the Department of Health and

Human Services and add the creation of the temporary assistant purchasing agent for part-time/on-call. Moved by Commissioner Silverthorne with a second by Commissioner Henderson. No discussion was had and all members present voted in the affirmative.

**Commissioner Carney - YES**

**Deputy Director DeGroot - YES**

**Commissioner Henderson - YES**

**Commissioner Silverthorne - YES**

**Director Space - YES**

**MOTION** to appoint Mark Snook as Assistant Fire Marshal for the County of Sussex, said term not

to exceed 12 months or until further resolution of the Board of County Commissioners. Motion was

moved by Commissioner Silverthorne with a second by Deputy Director DeGroot.

**Commissioner Carney - YES**

**Deputy Director DeGroot - YES**

**Commissioner Henderson - YES**

**Commissioner Silverthorne - YES**

**Director Space - YES**

## **25. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** to adjourn the meeting was moved by Commissioner Silverthorne with a second by

Deputy Director DeGroot. No discussion was had and all members present voted in the affirmative.