



News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

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May 22, 2018

Freeholders Adopt Somerset County Budget, Reduce Tax Rate

SOMERVILLE – The Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders has adopted a 2018 budget that reduces the county tax rate.

“While Trenton is poised to increase the burden on taxpayers, Somerset County is once again keeping its pledge to deliver quality services to residents in a cost-effective manner. There will be no increase in the county taxes Somerset County residents pay,” said Freeholder Mark Caliguire, finance committee chair. “We manage government efficiently and effectively in Somerset County, and the results speak for themselves. The work gets done and residents this year won’t pay a penny more than last year.”

“I am proud of the work our staff has done to manage government the way it should be managed,” said Freeholder Director Patrick Scaglione. “No county has a better open space program than Somerset. No county has better parks than we do. No county maintains their roads and bridges better than we do. And we provide these services and programs as efficiently as anyone.”

The \$237,581,934 county budget includes \$191,689,404 to be raised by taxation. The 2018 county tax rate will decrease by 1.15 percent, from .3213 to .3177 per \$100 of assessed value. The average county home valued at \$430,474 will see an overall county tax decrease of 7 cents for the year.

This tax reduction is possible because spending has been controlled, the county has seen additional revenue from its shared jail program with Hunterdon County, and there is a 2.25-percent increase in the county’s ratable base.

Somerset County also has retained its triple-A ranking from the major bond-rating services: Moody’s, Fitch’s and Standard & Poor’s.

The 2018 county budget will:

- Keep health-benefits costs flat for the first time in a decade.
- Fully fund the new Partnership Health Center for county employees.
- Fully fund the Somerset County Emergency Services Training Academy.
- Maintain 248 center lane miles of county roads and 752 bridges.
- Maintain 38 park, recreation and open space areas encompassing 15,000 acres.
- Provide nearly 200 shared services with local governments and other organizations in the county.
- Provide partial funding for the Vocational-Technical High School, Raritan Valley Community College, Board of Social Services and Park Commission.

The budget includes the following shared services that save taxpayer dollars:

- Recycling for all 21 municipalities, including schools.
- Transportation services for three municipalities and four nonprofit organizations.
- Vehicle Maintenance for 14 municipalities.
- Vehicle Fueling for more than 50 agencies.
- Statewide emergency services training.
- Health services for eight municipalities.
- Housing inmates from Hunterdon County.

Somerset County covers all costs for the following services that benefit residents:

- 911 public safety answering points (PSAPs) for 20 municipalities.
- Full dispatch service for 15 municipalities, 14 police departments, 38 fire departments and 18 EMS stations.
- A statewide cooperative purchasing program.

Visit <http://bit.ly/SCBudget18> to view the budget document and budget presentation.

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