



*Mayor Bill Chegwidden,  
Wharton, NJLM President*

## President's Note:

*Following is an excerpt from NJLM President Mayor William Chegwidden's Acceptance Remarks at the November 2023 League Business Meeting held Nov. 17 in Atlantic City.*

I want to thank Jason [Mayor Jason Karr, Morris Plains] for swearing me in, thank you, Jason. He's from "the community of caring," Morris Plains. He's become a good friend over the years to me; we had the same mentor, Frank Druetzler from Morris Plains, 32 years as mayor.

I want to thank Ray for an extraordinary job that he did this past year, and his leadership over everything that we that we've done. We've helped pass legislation on the priorities that he put in place. Energy Tax Receipts, under Ray's leadership, went from \$75 million to \$150 million. You all know that we still face the rise in costs, we do. We know that we still need that Energy Tax Receipts coming back to municipalities. I said to someone, where are those poles located? They're located in this valley. Who collects property tax? We do. Interesting. Isn't it? That they would take something like that away from us? That we started with. We're going to try to get that funding put back in order.

Affordable housing. We know fourth-round obligation is a hot topic. It's been around a long time; why can't they come up with a solution? We're going to certainly push that this year also, and of course, fight for a better approach. In addition, there is, of course, COAH. How long have you guys heard about COAH? It's been a long time coming, hopefully that gets settled within the next year.

A lot of us are having problems trying to fill our positions in our town halls. I don't know about you, but it's very difficult to try to get somebody to come in. I have a clerk, she was a former student and she said, hey listen Cheg, do you have any ideas? I'm thinking about becoming a legal secretary. Why would you do that? I said, why don't you become a clerk? She said I don't know what a clerk does. I said, I know you, I know you'll figure out what a clerk does. We made her temporary clerk and upped her salary as she got the different certificates. And she's been with us for over 15 years, now.

It's constantly difficult, as you know, to try to bring in qualified people. That's one of the things that we're going to do, [develop a] pipeline for professionals to try to bring them in. Commissioner Suárez, she's unbelievable. She's pushing us and the League is going to get behind you. We're going to go to vo-tech schools. We're going to go to county colleges. Pull them out—hey would you like to come out of high school and have a \$50,000

a year job and know that you can move up in the ranks once you get your certificates? We're going to put boots on the direct ground and we're going to try to put that in place.

These are just some of the priorities. I'm not going to continue to go on, but I want to thank everybody. I've been in the bullpen for a while, as you know. My arm is warmed up, and I'm ready to throw the ball now. Thank you very much.



Trenton's Gold Dome



Local Government Week Logos



2023 Show Off Your City Winner Hazlet

## Action List: January

1. **Legislative Outreach:** We're moving into a new year with almost [40 new state legislators](#) headed to Trenton. It's a great time to set a meeting with your State Senate and Assembly representatives to set your goals for the year. Let the League know if you're coming to Trenton!
2. **Save the date:** Plan to tune in to the Governor's State of the State on January 9. It can be watched on the [Governor's YouTube channel](#).
3. **Local Government Week Planning:** The 2024 NJ Local Government Week will be held April 7-13. We invite you to join in with municipalities across the Garden State to engage citizens while celebrating the work of local government. For more information, visit the [NJ Local Government Week webpage](#).
4. **Photo Contest:** The [2024 Show Off Your City Photo Contest](#) is now accepting entries! Share your municipal pride with photos of your tourist attractions, downtown areas, economic development initiatives, parks, public art, municipal buildings, community groups, and more. Entries will be featured in the April issue of *NJ Municipalities* magazine and on the League's social media, website, and in other League materials. [Enter by February 9](#).

## League News

Congratulations to the newest inductees to the three levels of the Local Government Leadership Program, including the following mayors. Interested in participating in this development program? Visit the [LGLP webpage](#) for program details.

### Municipal Pioneers

- Mayor Michael Inganamort, Chester Township (Assemblyman-elect D-24)

- Mayor Mary Jane Canose, Bernardsville

## Legislative Highlights

**Affordable Housing.** A bill overhauling the state's Fair Housing Act and affordable housing policy is moving through the legislature. Already through an Assembly committee, with the Senate closely behind, the bill was on pace to be voted on before the end of lame duck.

**2024 Calendar Year Budget.** The Division of Local Government Services has issued Local Finance Notice 2023-22 providing updates on the 2024 calendar year budget process for counties and municipalities.

**Boards of Health Legislation.** The Assembly unanimously passed A-117/S-652, which permits the governing bodies of municipalities with Populations of 30,000 or less to serve as the local board of health. The bill, which the League supports, now awaits consideration by Governor Murphy.

## Grant Center

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities has announced a new round of **Community Energy Plan Grants** (CEPG) for New Jersey municipalities. In 2019, the Board established a Community Energy Plan Grant Program. While the EMP provides a framework for a statewide transition to 100% clean energy by 2050, the Community Energy Plan Grant Program provides support to municipalities to develop climate action plans at the local level based on their assessment of which EMP strategies are most applicable in their respective communities.

The Community Energy Plan Grant Program was redesigned for program year 2 by the Office of Clean Energy Equity to prioritize low- and moderate-income and overburdened communities by removing barriers to participation and providing more financial and technical support to those communities that are most in need of these grants.

Program year 3 was approved on November 17, 2023, with some changes made to the program. The changes include:

- Shorter grant timeline, now 12 months.
- Expanded criteria to determine Overburdened Municipalities. MRI score now needs to be 40 or higher to qualify under these criteria.
- Proposed budget now after technical assistance consultations with Sustainable Jersey.

All municipalities are eligible to receive a \$10,000 grant. Municipalities identified as being Overburdened Municipalities (OBMs) are eligible to receive a \$25,000 grant. [OBMs for the current program year](#) can be found online.

**Deadline:** [Applications due](#) Friday, February 23, 2024.

**Contact:** For questions regarding this program, please email [community.energy@bpu.nj.gov](mailto:community.energy@bpu.nj.gov).

## Learning Opportunities

## **Orientation for Newly Elected, Reelected, and Experiences Municipal Officials**

**January 20 and February 3.** Mount Laurel January 20; Rutherford, February 3. A fast-paced update designed to bring officials up to date on important municipal issues. This is a great instruction for newly elected officials and a great refresher for those who are currently serving. In addition, this orientation is a good opportunity for councils and committees to attend together as a jumping off point for the year. The member rate is \$130 per person. The [Newly Elected registration form](#) can be found on the League's seminar page.

## **Municipal Management Workshop Series, General Management Series-Part 1**

**January 23 and 30, January 24 and 31.** Rutherford on Jan. 23 and 30 and Mount Laurel on Jan. 24 and 31. Part 1 of the new [Municipal Management Workshops](#) educational series, the General Management Series, begins this month. Courses will provide an overview of organizational structures, and functions of two major departments within a municipality. Public Works Key points: Equipment Management, Street Repairs, Utility operations, Waste Management, and snow removal. Police and Fire (where applicable) Key points: Training requirements; Police/Fire qualifications; Equipment management and planning; Operation review. Download the [course dates and agenda \(PDF\)](#) or the [Municipal Management Workshop registration form \(PDF\)](#) today.

## **Get to Know Your Executive Board**



### **Mayor Deborah Buzby-Cope, BS, DC, CVCP, CAC, Bass River**

Mayor Deborah Buzby-Cope was elected in 2000 to serve as a Commissioner in Bass River Township and Director of Public Affairs and Safety. In 2004 she was reelected and sworn in as Deputy Mayor and Director of Public Works and Property. In 2008 she became Mayor and Director of Public Affairs and Safety. In 2012, 2016, and 2020 she was reelected and sworn in as Mayor and

Director of Revenue and Finance. She has been the Chair of the League Legislative Committee's Land Use Section since 2022.

She is Past President, Legislative Committee and Board of Directors for the NJ Conference of Mayors, Past Chair of the Nominating Committee of the National Foundation of Women Legislatures, and Past Board of Directors of the Tuckerton Seaport. She is also a Vice Chair of the Pinelands Municipal Council of Mayors and on the Board of Directors for the American Veterinarian Chiropractic Association.

Mayor Buzby-Cope earned a Bachelor of Science Degree through Regents College at the University of New York. Attended Life University in Mariana, GA, and earned a Doctor of Chiropractic in 1991. Became a Certified Veterinary Chiropractitioner in 2002. In 2004 was

Board Certified by the American Veterinarian Chiropractic Association. Became a Veterinarian Assistant through Thomas Direct in 2004.

She and her husband, Dave, enjoy spending time with their daughter, Nikita. The family loves adventure and the outdoors.

## **Council President Barbara Juzaitis, Avalon Borough**

At the time of her election to the League's Executive Board, she was President of the Cape May County League of Municipalities, Trustee of the Avalon Library and History Center, Advisory Council Member of the Cape May County Technical School Allied Medical Program, and Board Member–Public Health Representative for Avalon Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)



Previously she was a Board Member for the American Red Cross Southern NJ Chapter, Acuity Special Care, Atlantic City, Planning and Zoning Board and was Trustee / President Avalon Historical Society.

Currently, Council President Juzaitis is Board Member of the Avalon Emergency Squad and a professional healthcare manager, director, educator, and consultant at hospitals, surgical centers, and long-term care facilities in New Jersey, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, with over 50 years of experience developing and implementing quality, risk, occupational health, and infection prevention programs with a focus on patient and employee safety.



## **Magazine Moment**

**"The league is made up of 564 laboratories, each town experimenting and trying new innovations and concepts to improve the quality of life for their residents. The League is a focal**

**point to showcase the achievements and difficulties that may arise."**

*- Mayor William Chegwidan, NJLM President Q&A, January issue.*

Submit your queries, news items, op-eds, or articles for *NJ Municipalities Magazine* to [aspiezio@njlm.org](mailto:aspiezio@njlm.org). We're now seeking submissions for March (due January 22) and April (due February 16).

Are you and your team subscribing to *NJ Municipalities*? Make it part of a New Year's resolution to improve your local government knowledge by reading the League's magazine in print or online. [Subscribe today!](#)

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