



NJLM President Mayor  
Paul Tomasko, Alpine

## President's Note:

This spring the League is fighting in Trenton for the interests of local governments. On Tuesday, March 25, 2025, League Executive Director Michael F. Cerra testified on the FY26 State Budget and offered concerns about Energy Tax Receipts, Affordable Housing, and cost increases for municipalities in the State Health Benefits

Program. Cerra urged the legislators to begin restoring the over \$330 million diverted from property tax relief programs going back over a decade. The Municipal Relief Fund, which was funded at \$75 million in FY23 and \$150 million in FY24, was excluded from the FY25 budget and the proposed FY26 budget.

In addition, he testified on the continuing rate increases borne by local government employers and employees in the State Health Benefits Program. The unsustainable increases over the past three plan years have been 16%, 7%, and 22%. Local government employers and their employees can expect a double-digit increase in premiums for the third time in four years. The State budget should look to provide relief for what could be yet another staggering premium increase.

Lastly, Executive Director Cerra reported that over 430 municipalities submitted resolutions indicating their voluntary compliance with the requirements of the new affordable law signed by the Governor last year. Of that, 159 were "challenged" by the New Jersey Builders Association and of that 159, 67 were challenged by the Fair Share Housing. The League has been hosting biweekly information Zoom calls for the impacted municipalities as an effort to level the playing field. As some towns negotiate settlements, the calls will continue as long as necessary and the League will remain actively engaged to protect the interests of the municipalities.

Millstone Borough Mayor Ray Heck, League Past President, testified last month at an informational Assembly Public Safety Committee hearing on warehouse development, fire safety, and the need for planning flexibility. The Chairman, Assemblyman Joe Daniels, noted the need to allow municipalities to pause development and amend their Master Plans without legal penalty when it becomes necessary to change the zoning. Mayor Heck discussed public safety, health, and fire suppression materials. In addition, he noted the need for improved training, pre-fire planning, and enhanced fire protection standards as well as firefighting tactics.

The efforts of the League and all of you help support and sustain the state's municipalities, which are beautiful and diverse and certainly worth celebrating.



This month we congratulate Dr. Christopher H. Tamburro, Mayor of Verona Township, and Verona's municipal employees, for the winning Show Off Your City entry featuring the Verona Community Pool's twin water slides in use. See the winning entry, runners up, and other highlights from the nearly 50 municipalities who entered this year in the April edition of *NJ Municipalities* magazine.

Finally, best wishes to all this month as we celebrate Local Government Week April 6-12. The hard work that goes on in town, township, city, and borough halls around the state may seem invisible to residents. By taking the time to show off your communities and celebrate what makes local governments so critical, you have the opportunity to thank local workers and connect on a deeper level with residents.

## Action List: April

1. **[Attend/testify at the final Legislative Public Hearing](#)** for the FY26 Budget. The last Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee hearing for the FY2026 Budget will take place Thursday, April 10 at 10:00 a.m. remotely. Individuals will only be allowed to testify at one Senate public hearing and/or one Assembly public hearing. You must register to testify for the April 10 public hearing. Please let us know if you plan on testifying.
2. **Finalize your plans for Local Government Week 2025.** We invite you to join in with municipalities across the Garden State from April 6-12 to engage citizens while celebrating the work of local government. NJ Local Government Week is a time for municipalities to encourage civic education, community collaboration, volunteerism, and local pride. [Share your activities](#) with the League and use the hashtag #NJLocalGovt on social media when sharing event reminders, updates, and interesting facts via X and Facebook.
3. **New Magazine Subscription System Launching - Watch for Renewal Emails** starting this May, a new online system will make it easier for *NJ Municipalities* magazine subscribers to update and manage their subscriptions online throughout the year. Renewals will come via email rather than mail as they have in previous years. If your subscription is part of a group subscription, renewals will be sent to the person responsible for managing your group. This exciting change leads the League's transition to a new subscription management system for *NJ Municipalities* magazine. In other exciting news, the magazine's longtime Subscription Manager Tom Fratticcioli has retired. Tasneem Kapadia, Advertising Manager, will be taking over his role of subscription management.

## Learning Opportunities

### Accumulated Sick Leave Payouts, Vacation Carryover, and Related Issues

Confusion and questions are still perplexing municipal officials on how to legally and practically account for Paid Time Off for active and retiring municipal employees. This webinar discussion presented by NJLM Labor Counsel Joseph Hannon, Esq., of Genova Burns and NJLM Labor Consultant Matthew U. Watkins of NJ Community Solutions on April 11 from 10:30 a.m.-12 noon will include suggestions on calculating retirement payouts, sick leave buy-backs and management of vacation carryover.

To aide in the discussion, those planning to attend may submit questions ahead of time. Please send your questions to [dholland@njlm.org](mailto:dholland@njlm.org) [<mailto:dholland@njlm.org>] and use the subject line "Sick Leave Webinar Questions." [Registration](#)

[<https://www.njlm.org/DocumentCenter/View/11615/Accumulated-Sick-Leave-Registration?bidId=>] is required.

**CEUs:** CMFO/CCFO-1.5 Bud, CTC-1.5 Gen/Sec, CPWM-1.5 Govt, RMC-1.5 Fin, QPA-1.5 Off Admin, CPA-1.5 Fin, RPPO/RPPS-1.5 M/S, NJCLE-1.8, PACLE-1.5; SHRM-1.25 PDC

## Grants

### T-Mobile Hometown Grants

T-Mobile Hometown Grants is a \$25 million, five-year initiative to support the people and organizations who help small towns across America thrive and grow. Hometown Grants are given every quarter to up to 25 small towns. Apply for funding to support a community project of your choice, like revitalizing or repurposing a historic structure, creating a downtown asset or destination, or improving a space where friends and neighbors gather. Projects that add to a sense of place or could lead to further investment are of particular interest.

Projects must be completed and usable by the public by May 31, 2026. Make sure to consider these parameters when choosing the kind of project you are proposing for this grant.

### Due Date

The portal will close on the last day of each quarter and reopen for the new quarter on the first of the month. All Hometown Grants applications will be notified 30–60 days after the end of each quarter on the status of the submission.

### To apply

[Create an account with T-Mobile Hometown Grants](#)

[<https://nationalmainstreetcenter.submittable.com/submit/ac8b3679-fa43-4014-b6bf-705b75098f34/t-mobile-hometown-grant-application-q1-2025-application-open-january-1-march-3?>

[icid=MGPO\\_TMO\\_P\\_HMTWNGRNTS\\_5860E717E9A704D742097](#)] and follow the steps on the application site.

## Meet Your Executive Board: Mayor M. James Maley Jr.

Since 1996, James (Jim) Maley has served as the Mayor of the Borough of Collingswood, where he has held elected office since 1989.



Mayor M. James Maley,  
Collingswood

During his tenure as Mayor, the Borough has had a series of successes in commercial and residential redevelopment. *Forbes* magazine has named Collingswood one of the 10 Most Transformed Communities in America. The borough's downtown has been named one of the Great Places in America by the American Planning Association, the first place in New Jersey to receive the distinction. In addition, Collingswood's Farmer's Market has been named America's Favorite Farmer's Market by the American Farmland Trust.

Mayor Jim Maley heads up the law firm of Maley Givens. His redevelopment work has been recognized with an Achievement in Planning Award from the New Jersey Planning Association.



2025 Show Off Your City  
Winner Verona

## Write for the League

The June (due April 15) issue has a focus on Municipal Vision and Visionaries (think ADUs, town centers, planning outlooks, and what the future's municipalities will look like). See the [author's guidelines](#)

[<https://www.njlm.org/804/Submit-Editorial>] for more information. Submit your queries, news items, op-eds, or articles for *NJ Municipalities* magazine [by email to Amy Spiezio](#) [<mailto:aspiezio@njlm.org>].

## Subscribe Today

Are you and your team [subscribing to NJ Municipalities](#) [<https://www.njlm.org/712/Subscribe>]? Inspire your local government work by reading and building a library of the League's magazine in print or online. [View a sample of the magazine.](#) [<https://www.njlm.org/714/Magazine-Sample-Bookshelf>]

## Support the League's Magazine

If your municipality has recently used a vendor and you feel that their services would benefit other municipalities, [email Tasneem Kapadia](#) [<mailto:tkapadia@njlm.org>], Advertising Manager, with their details so she can send them information about the League's magazine. Advertising in *NJ Municipalities* magazine promotes their services and could benefit other towns.

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