

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

Public Information Department  
County of Warren



## **Freeholder Board Introduces Budget Reducing County Purpose Tax**

(WHITE TOWNSHIP, NJ, February 27, 2019) – The Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders introduced a \$91 million budget for 2019 that reduces the County Purpose Tax by more than a half million dollars.

For the first time since 2013 the County Purpose Tax is less than \$70 million, and the freeholders said the overall spending plan is the lowest it has been since 2004.

The freeholders will hold a public hearing and vote on adopting the budget on March 27 at 7 p.m. in the Freeholder Meeting Room of the Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building. The proposed budget is available for public review on the Warren County government website at [www.co.warren.nj.us/budget.html](http://www.co.warren.nj.us/budget.html).

“I’m very happy with our budget process this year. Everything went extremely well,” said Freeholder Director Jason J. Sarnoski, adding he was pleased to be introducing a budget that reduces the tax levy.

Freeholder Richard D. Gardner credited county Chief Financial Officer Daniel Olshefski and his team, as well as the County’s department heads, for holding the line on spending.

“I am very proud of the work done by this Freeholder Board and our County professionals,” Freeholder James R. Kern III said. “Over the past few months we have come together to deliver a budget that cuts spending and taxes for our residents.”

Warren County is utilizing less money to run county government than it did 15 years ago. Moreover, through continued “Pay As You Go” budgeting practices, the County will reduce its total debt to around \$2.2 million by the end of 2019.

Debt service requirements will decrease \$562,300 – a 34 percent reduction – in 2019 due to reduction in Open Space Bonds. The freeholder board places a high priority on reducing the County’s debt to minimize the financial burden on future generations.

Despite the low debt position of the County, the freeholders noted that Warren continues to maintain a healthy capital spending program that prioritizes important projects and maintains facilities and infrastructure at the high level the public expects.

The freeholders plan to increase the County's Capital Projects Budget by \$1.3 million this year, adding 2.5 miles to the annual road resurfacing projects for a total of 16.5 miles scheduled for work this year. The increase will help to catch up with maintenance deferred in prior years due to budget constraints and a sluggish economy.

The County also is putting aside money for proposed renovations to the Warren County Library's Catherine Dickson Hofman Branch in Blairstown, as well as plans for new Division of Roads facility in the southern part of the County. The proposed budget also provides additional capital support to the Warren County Community College for HVAC upgrades at the main campus.

The County Library Tax will remain flat for the third year in a row despite the fact that the county opened a brand new, state of the art, 9,000-square-foot Southwest Branch just last year. This will result in a reduced Library tax rate due to a small increase in the Net County Valuation.

The County Open Space Tax also will be reduced by one-half cent this year. This will trim the amount of taxes collected by more than \$0.5 million, but will not impact the County Open Space, Farmland Preservation, and Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund programs paid for through this tax due to the reduction in open space debt payments of approximately the same amount.

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