

**180th ANNUAL REORGANIZATION BUSINESS MEETING
CAMDEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JANUARY 4, 2024 – 12:00 P.M.
520 MARKET STREET
6TH FLOOR MEETING ROOM
CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY 08102**

The meeting was called to order by the Clerk of the Board of Commissioners, Karyn Gilmore, at 12:00 p.m. The Clerk then called the roll.

PRESENT: AL DYER, MELINDA KANE, JEFFREY NASH, VIRGINIA BETTERIDGE, JONATHAN YOUNG, SR., EDWARD MCDONNELL, LOUIS CAPPELLI, JR.

The Clerk stated that the meeting was advertised in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Ms. Gilmore then asked everyone to stand for a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance which was led by Commissioner Nash.

Ms. Gilmore welcomed everyone to the 180th Annual Reorganization Business Meeting of the Camden County Board of Commissioners. Ms. Gilmore said the first order of business is the swearing-in of our newly elected Commissioners.

**OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED
TO JONATHAN YOUNG, SR.**

Ms. Gilmore said it is her honor and privilege to call upon Senator Cruz-Perez to administer the oath of office to Jonathan Young, Sr. for the Office of Commissioner. Senator Cruz-Perez administered the oath of office.

**OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED
TO LOUIS CAPPELLI, JR.**

Ms. Gilmore called upon Senator Cruz-Perez to administer the oath of office for the office of Commissioner to Louis Cappelli, Jr. Senator Cruz-Perez administered the oath of office.

NOMINATION FOR COMMISSIONER DIRECTOR

Ms. Gilmore opened the floor for nominations for the office of Director of the Board of Commissioners for the year 2024.

Commissioner Jeffrey Nash said it gives me great honor to nominate a person who has been the glue that has kept this Board together for many years, Lou Cappelli. Director Cappelli has been a passionate advocate for Camden County. He more than anyone I have ever met in

government fights for the issues that are important to him and to our community, for example, gun control, fighting the opiate epidemic, and economic development. He will compromise, which helps the Director with six other Commissioners who are very active and interested in their own worlds, but he will never compromise the interests of our residents. His loyalty to government, party and friends is unmatched and it is my honor to nominate Lou Cappelli to once again serve as this Board's Director.

Commissioner Cappelli thanked Commissioner Nash for his kind words.

The Clerk asked for a second to Commissioner Nash's nomination. Commissioner McDonnell said in recognition of his remarkable and continued success as head of this government I am honored to second the nomination of Louis Cappelli as Director of the Camden County Board of Commissioners.

The Clerk said we have a motion and a second and called the roll:

Dyer	-	Aye to Louis Cappelli, Jr. as Director
Kane	-	Aye to Louis Cappelli, Jr. as Director
Nash	-	Aye to Louis Cappelli, Jr. as Director
Betteridge	-	Aye to Louis Cappelli, Jr. as Director
Young	-	Aye to Louis Cappelli, Jr. as Director
McDonnell	-	Aye to Louis Cappelli, Jr. as Director

Ms. Gilmore congratulated Director Cappelli.

OATH OF OFFICE **ADMINISTERED TO COMMISSIONER DIRECTOR**

Senator Cruz-Perez administered the oath of office for Commissioner Director to Louis Cappelli, Jr.

Commissioner Director Cappelli said thank you Jeff and Ed for those very kind words and the entire Board for your support, It is truly an honor and privilege to serve with each of the elected Commissioners sitting up here. It is a great team dedicated to the public.

NOMINATION FOR COMMISSIONER DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Commissioner Director Cappelli asked for nominations from the floor for the office of Commissioner Deputy Director of the Board of Commissioners for the year 2024.

Commissioner Young said I would like to nominate Ed McDonnell as Deputy Director of the Board for 2024. Ed, your service to this County since 1995 on this Board is unmatched. The things you have done with the Board of Elections to make sure that office always runs smooth as

well as what you have done with our finances and our budgets throughout the years, and we keep steadily dropping our rates and it is because of your hard work and dedication. You are also a great friend and colleague to all of us on this Board. We cannot forget the work you do for the disabled community, the Miracle League and education. I am honored to nominate Ed McDonnell for Deputy Director.

The Commissioner Director asked for a second to Commissioner Young's nomination. Commissioner Melinda Kane said it would be my honor to second the nomination of Dr. Edward T. McDonnell to once again be the Deputy Director of the Camden County Board of Commissioners. Ed has served the residents of Camden County for almost 30 years as a Freeholder and a Commissioner and we have all benefited from his leadership, compassion, guidance, intelligence, experience, and many times, his sense of humor. I thank you for your continued dedication to Camden County and it is my honor to second the nomination for my friend and colleague, Ed McDonnell.

Commissioner Director Louis Cappelli, Jr. asked for the Clerk to call the roll. On roll call, the Commissioners voted as follows:

Dyer	-	Aye to Edward T. McDonnell as Deputy Director
Kane	-	Aye to Edward T. McDonnell as Deputy Director
Nash	-	Aye to Edward T. McDonnell as Deputy Director
Betteridge	-	Aye to Edward T. McDonnell as Deputy Director
Young	-	Aye to Edward T. McDonnell as Deputy Director
Cappelli	-	Aye to Edward T. McDonnell as Deputy Director

Director Cappelli said I welcome Ed as the Deputy Director once again. His service to the community since 1995 especially to the special needs citizens of our County is second to none. Congratulations, Ed.

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED TO COMMISSIONER DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Senator Cruz-Perez administered the oath of office for Commissioner Deputy Director of the Board of Commissioners to Edward T. McDonnell. Commissioner Deputy Director McDonnell thanked everyone for their vote of confidence and support.

Commissioner Director Cappelli said congratulations Ed. I would like to take this moment to recognize our Camden County Sheriff, Whip Wilson, who is in attendance today.

Commissioner Director Cappelli opened the meeting to the public for discussion of the resolutions to be acted upon.

Seeing no one wishing to speak, Commissioner Nash made a motion to close the public portion with a second by Commissioner Betteridge and on roll call, all Commissioners present voted aye.

Commissioner Director Cappelli said after review of Resolutions 1 through 55 by each Commissioner, the Resolutions are being presented by the consent of the entire Board of Commissioners.

MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTIONS 1 THROUGH 55

Commissioner Director Cappelli asked for a motion to adopt Resolutions 1 through 55. Commissioner Young made a motion to adopt with a second by Commissioner Dyer and on roll call, all Commissioners voted aye.

Commissioner Director Cappelli opened the meeting to any member of the public who wished to address the Board of Commissioners.

Sean Brown, 412 North 40th Street, Camden. Mr. Brown said I was on the School Board for three years, from 2010 to 2013, and in 2011 the district was going through a lot of changes. There was a huge grant that we were asked to approve, and I wanted to actually see what was going on at the schools. I remember going to Camden High when Mr. Dyer was Vice Principal and from that time, I saw him as a strong leader that held people accountable, loved the students and had a great relationship with people. He was also serious about getting the work done. I saw him rise in his career with the district. When he was in charge of CHA, I was a coach and on the board of the soccer club at the time. Again, I was super impressed with how he navigated some very difficult circumstances, got money in the hands of some organizations and literally thousands of children, at least in Camden, benefitted from his leadership in that organization. I just wanted to say congratulations Commissioner Dyer. Thank you for being a gentleman and for giving me good advice.

Mr. Brown said, Commissioner Director, as you may remember, I got my start at 18 years old when I worked at the building that is now demolished when I was an intern at the County Clerk's Office under David Mayer's leadership at the time. I got to meet Mr. Nash at the time when I was doing voter registration. It is really interesting when I go out to other places in New Jersey, especially South Jersey, to see that when it comes to Camden County's library system, the police department, the services we get right here in this building from the County for organizations that I represent or work with that there is no better County that I have ever experienced here in this State. I, in a long journey, went from a critic to a fan and a supporter because I know how much work it takes for Mr. Ross as Administrator to get this done. The money, the team, the support, the relationships that you have with the State, the federal government, and the municipalities. It takes a lot of work, and I don't know if the general public really understand the bureaucracy and how many challenges have to be overcome in order to have a county that is run as well as this. I just wanted to take a rare opportunity to compliment you on your leadership and wish you all success. If there is anything I can do, I am here for you.

Director Cappelli said thank you Sean for those kind words. We appreciate all the hard work you do in the community. You have been doing it for years and if not for people like you Camden would not continue to rise.

Dylan Hackney here on behalf of the office of Congressman Donald Norcross. I have had the pleasure of getting to know all of you very well. On behalf of the Congressman, congratulations to those who were sworn in today. Happy New Year and if there is anything you ever need, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office. Thank you for the hard work each of you do.

Director Cappelli said I know Congressman Norcross wanted to be here, but his duties take him out of the country this week. We thank him for all the hard work he does on our behalf and for all his constituents in the 1st District.

Seeing no one further wishing to speak, Commissioner Nash made a motion to close the public portion with a second by Commissioner Kane and all Commissioners present voted aye.

The Commissioner Director called upon the Commissioners for their comments.

Commissioner Young said I would like to thank the residents of Camden County for having so much trust and faith in what we do. The old saying is true. Good government wins every time. I say it every year. We are not a bunch of politicians on this Board, we are true servants of the public and in everything we do we always keep the residents of Camden County in the forefront. There has never been a conversation that we have had, that I have ever heard someone say, “hey I am really going to benefit from that”. It has always been the residents first. That is why I really enjoy being on this Board and the things we do for Camden County. It translates down to our employees. Sean, I agree with you because I travel the State and I can tell you the things that we do in this County, when I mention it to other people their eyes pop out of their head. I talk about our Employee Connections all the time and how they have become one. We are a big family here and we give back to the community in more ways than people can ever imagine. Thank you all for bringing me in as an outsider who didn’t grow up in Camden County, who didn’t grow up in New Jersey, who came in and felt that I was really part of a bigger picture and a great family here in Camden County. It has been a tremendous ride for me. I am going into my third term, and I do not take it lightly. Happy New Year to everyone. Have a prosperous year.

Commissioner Nash said it is hard to believe this is the 180th Reorganization ceremony in the County because it feels like just yesterday we started. I do want to welcome everyone. Thank you very much for coming. I want to congratulate Director Cappelli, Jon Young and Deputy Director McDonnell on your elections and swearing in this afternoon. I want to wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year.

Commissioner Dyer said Happy New Year to everyone. Congratulations to Jon Young, Lou Cappelli and Ed McDonnell. I would like to thank the public servants for the great job they do. We had two additions this year. Bob Harris has done a fantastic job. We did a presser yesterday and it was his first time in front of the microphone and the cameras and he did a great job. Jim, as an engineer, I know it was tough replacing Kevin, but you stepped in and are doing a fantastic job. People are calling me all the time to tell me that you explain things in layman’s terms, and everybody appreciates that. For me, this is my third year as a Commissioner. I recall

when I got sworn in, we were at the height of the pandemic and Director Cappelli, my wife and I were the only ones in the room. I came in from City Committee in Pennsauken where the Clerk read our resolutions. As we got to the portion of the meeting where we read our resolutions, I paused because Director Cappelli said my name and I just looked at him because I didn't know head to read my resolutions. There were 38 resolutions and that was my first time reading resolutions. Working with these Commissioners has been great. These Commissioners are all very talented and do a great job. They are great public servants.

Commissioner Kane said congratulations to Lou, Ed, and Jon. After going this week to different communities for reorganization meetings and seeing people sworn in to town council which is where a lot of us started and to see the thrill it is to step up, sit here and look out. I remember my first day as a councilwoman in Cherry Hill and knowing what an honor and a privilege it was and there is not a time that I come up here and sit down that I don't have that same sense of how lucky I am to serve the residents of Camden County and to work with such amazing people. Very often you will work some place where you say we feel like family, but we really do feel like family here. I would like to thank everyone for working hard every single day and night and weekend. Happy New Year. I look forward to seeing what 2024 brings for all of us and Camden County.

Commissioner Betteridge said Happy New Year everyone. It is a pleasure to sit here this afternoon and congratulate three of my colleagues whom I have known for many years. Director you are doing an outstanding job. I learn so much from you and I enjoy our conversations so thank you for that. Ed, we go back many many moons. Thank you for taking me under your wings and always providing the guidance I need as the newest member. Thank you, Deputy Director, for all that you do. To my friend, Jonathan Young whom I have known for a number of years, one of the most memorable moments with you is many years ago when you came on Board you met my son and you made an impression. My son is now 25 years old and he carried your business card in his wallet and probably still has it. It is a pleasure to have these warm stories because that is what community and family is about.

To the staff that is here today thank you for taking time out from your busy afternoon and those who are on virtually. Thank you for all that you do for Camden County and the service that we collectively as a team provide.

Deputy Director McDonnell said congratulations to Jon and Lou on their reelection. Congratulations to you Lou on being elected Director again and good luck to you in the year coming. I want to thank AnnaMarie who wasn't feeling well today but came in to hold the Bible for me. To all the employees of Camden County, thank you so much for all that you do. We get a lot of the praise, but you deserve all the credit. We appreciate you all very much. Happy New Year to everyone.

Director Cappelli said I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the public for electing me for another three years. It is truly an honor and a privilege to serve on this Board. I take that responsibility very seriously as do all my colleagues up here. 2023 was such a great year because of the teamwork of all the Commissioners and the employees. It really was a very special year. It felt as though everything was clicking and I think the residents benefitted

from a lot of the work we did this year and will continue to benefit from it in the future.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their hard work and for placing their trust in me again to serve as Director. I have all the confidence in the world with Ed being Deputy Director that this government will continue to operate as smooth as it has and very efficiently working closely with Ross and the rest of the administration. Thank you and congratulations Ed.

I would also like to thank my wife Laura for being here today. She is my true partner and allows me the freedom and the opportunity to do what I do as a member of this Board so thank you for all you do, and I love you.

I want to take a moment to reflect. We talked about some of the great things that have happened in 2023. The Police Department continues to do great work. Crime continues to drop. We are 50-year lows as far as crime in Camden City and I think as well throughout Camden County so the work we are doing here is having an impact. We had Dr. Gupta come here from the White House. The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy was here to recognize the work being conducted in the Camden County Correctional Facility regarding the MAL Program which is transformative medications for opioid use disorders allowing those who are incarcerated to come out of the jail in much better health and able to work in the public and get their lives back together. We were also able to put Naloxone throughout the County parks system and on school buses. That was another exciting part of the year and of course our open spaces. Our parks, our recreation facilities, our activities, and special events continue to grow. The Link Trail continues to grow and that is something that our residents truly appreciate. I can't tell you how many times somebody has come up to me and said "what a great job with the parks", or "thank you for this event". I think our parks and our special events are what our residents recognize the most as far as what we do here in the County.

Director Capelli said I would also like to take a minute to recognize Jon Young who also was reelected and has the confidence of the public. He has just completed a term as President of the New Jersey Association of Counties which is a non-partisan organization that advocates for legislation and policy directors on behalf of county governments. He did a great job serving there. He has been serving two roles over the past year in addition to his occupation. I know that took a lot of time Jon, but you did a great job. Finally you were able to reverse a policy in the State where the tax collected on cell phones, which was enacted by Governor McGreevey, were supposed to go directly to 911 systems but never did until this year because Jon Young got that done. Great work!

There are lots of great things ahead. Our Community Nutrition Center will open in September of 2024. The new space will allow us to expand our delivery of meals to those who cannot afford meals on their own. A new Health First Care and Wellness Center will be opening in Camden City at the Wiggins Community Hub and we continue to work with the homeless. We have several initiatives that resulted in a 2% drop this year in the number of unsheltered homeless folks in Camden County. We expect that number will continue to decrease this year as we implement some new projects and initiatives. Roadwork continues to go on unabated. Kings Highway will be the big project this year, but we have seen major work to Berlin Cross Keys Road in Gloucester Township and Winslow. That was 1.25 miles of work that took place in a

very heavy traffic area. The work on Kings Highway will not only improve traffic but also pedestrian traffic, making it a lot safer. We are very excited about that. 2024 will be a transformative year for the Walter Rand Transportation as we redevelop that.

I want to thank the employees of Camden County because all that I mentioned and all that we are about to do doesn't happen without truly talented and dedicated people. We, the Board of Commissioners and the residents of Camden County are very fortunate to have what I call the best workforce in public government in the State of New Jersey. Thank you for all your hard work and the work you are about to do in 2024.

Finally, I want to thank my Aide Lisa. Lisa came on board this year and I want to thank her for all her hard work.

There being no further business, the Director asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Young made a motion to adjourn with a second by Commissioner Kane at 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karyn Gilmore
Clerk of the Board