

2020 Reorg Meeting
January 6, 2020
Minority Party Address – Charles V. Hassler

Good evening everyone and Happy New Year to all.

Thank you for coming out tonight for the Board's Annual Reorganization Meeting.

Thank you to Judge Telsey and Judge Chetney for administering the oaths of office.

Thank you to Col. Rojas and the Salem County Vocational and Technical School ROTC Honor Guard. They always do such a fine job.

Thank you to Renee Parks for her rendition of the National Anthem.

I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate my good friend Lee War on his re-election to the Board. Lee is starting his 20th year on our Freeholder Board, which is quite a feat.

Lee – congratulations and I'm looking forward to working with you again. You always have good, sound advice for me and you've kept me out of trouble, when I listen, so far.

I'd also like to congratulate Scott Griscom on his re-election. I've been fortunate to be able to work with Scott on some very important issues that affect all of our residents in the county. I look ahead to having that same relationship as we go about the county business.

And I want to congratulate Dale Cross on his being elected as the new Salem County Clerk. I've known Dale for many years. We worked together at the nuclear plant and I'm sure he will bring those skills he has developed over a long career there to this very important position.

I'd like to congratulate all who were elected in our municipalities throughout the County. Those office are as important, if not more important sometimes, than those of ours up here.

I'm here tonight to give the minority address to the County. I have just completed my second year on the Board and I'm planning on running for another term this year. I've enjoyed my first term on the Board, especially when we see things getting done. However, over the last two years we've seen the power swing from party to party and right now the County is under Republican party control. Lee and I have worked with this Board as the minority party and we've been respected and included in the affairs of the County. With that, I'd like to thank Director Laury and Freeholders Griscom and Ostrum for giving us that respect and for giving us the support when we've asked for it on issues we think are important. Last year, Lee stated in his address that we would not be obstacles to the process of running the county and I don't think we have been, and we won't be as we move forward in 2020.

We will continue to look at protecting and enhancing farmland preservation and open spaces while looking at ways to blend in controlled growth when the opportunities arise. We will continue to support and look to enhance benefits for our disables and those with special needs and for our senior citizens. We will fight for the rights of our veterans, who everyone knows, without them we would not be able to stand here today. Thank you for that. We need to respect all our county workers who do a fine job for all of us, and all of our law enforcement community who are under fine leadership.

On the administrative side of the county, I feel we have the right people in place and they are very effective in keeping the day-to-day operations of running county business. So as I see it, we have good people trying to do what is best for Salem County and its' residents.

But even with that, we have challenges ahead.

As I mentioned earlier, we have to find a good way to blend in the advances we need to make in our county to expand our ratable that help our tax base. WE are continually looking for opportunities.

We need the municipalities to let us know when there are opportunities and where we can play a role in bringing in these new businesses. The county can assist you to bring these new ventures to fruition. We all want more ratables and the jobs that normally come with them, but we can't say yes we want them, but put it somewhere else. We have designated re-development zones in many municipalities; we have designated opportunity zones that have increased interest nationally. We have many contacts with the State and the many programs where we can direct your efforts for help. The 3rd District Legislators have always been supportive of the County when a plan is brought before them and they will continue to do that. Our congressman is also willing to lend assistance when he can.

We, as a Board, are working hard to progress the county while maintaining the quality of life all of us enjoy. It can be done. But we can't let some of these opportunities go by as they may not be back again.

We, as the Board of Chosen Freeholders, will continue to work hard for all of our residents of our County.

Again, I'd like to thank everyone for coming out tonight and I hope you know that we are available and will be doing our best in the year to come to make 2020 a very good year for our county.

Thank you.