

*Mayor's Budget Statement
September 26, 2011*

Tonight's agenda is dedicated to adopting our 2011 Municipal budget for Barnegat Township. While I'm certain that there will be some comments, concerns and recommendations from our residents, we all need to understand that this year's budget of some \$20.5 million dollars, is \$400,000 less than last years budget and includes a reduction in the local tax levy. Considering what the Township was faced with this year, including, increased State mandates, increased fixed costs and a 2% tax levy cap, we were still able to reduce our spending by utilizing meaningful shared services agreements, reducing the number of full time employees and shopping for more cost effective opportunities that resulted in saving all of us some money.

While the Township's portion of your tax bill represents only about 30% of your overall taxes, it is important to understand the Township has no control over the other 70% of that bill. The County tax rate is determined by them and the school tax rate is voted on by you, the Barnegat taxpayers. The recent re-assessment in Barnegat may or may not have resulted in a tax increase to you, as a taxpayer, but was necessary in order to attempt to equalize the tax burden throughout the township.

The 2011 budget that is on tonight's agenda is a responsible budget, taking into account all that is needed to run our town efficiently, effectively and to provide all the expected "quality of life" services, that are so important to our residents.

While I understand and appreciate that this committee has serious concerns over the assessment process in Barnegat, we need to acknowledge that the budget is a fiscally responsible document that is required to properly manage our community. Our fight is with the inadequate property assessment system in New Jersey and I have full faith and confidence in Marty Lisella that he will work hard on behalf of Barnegat to change the flawed and unfair property assessment system in New Jersey.

**Jeffrey M. Melchiondo
Mayor, Barnegat Township**

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