

# MORRIS COUNTY 2024 OPERATING BUDGET

## Board of County Commissioners

Christine Myers, Director

Stephen H. Shaw, Deputy Director

Douglas R. Cabana\*

John Krickus\*

Thomas J. Mastrangelo

Tayfun Selen

Deborah Smith\*



Introduction – March 13, 2024

\*2024 County Commissioners'  
Budget Committee members

# 2024 Budget at a glance

- 5<sup>th</sup> Year of No County Tax Rate Increase
- Ratable base grew by 8.8%
- Second lowest average county tax in New Jersey (Dept. Of Community Affairs 2023 Data)
- The budget is structurally balanced and cap compliant

	2023	2024
Introduced Budget	\$343.5M	\$365.3M*
Tax Rate Increase	0.0%	0.0%
Strong Ratable Growth	\$107.6B	\$117.0B
County Tax Rate	\$0.250	\$0.240

**\*2024 Budget total artificially inflated by early authorization of \$7.3M in grants**

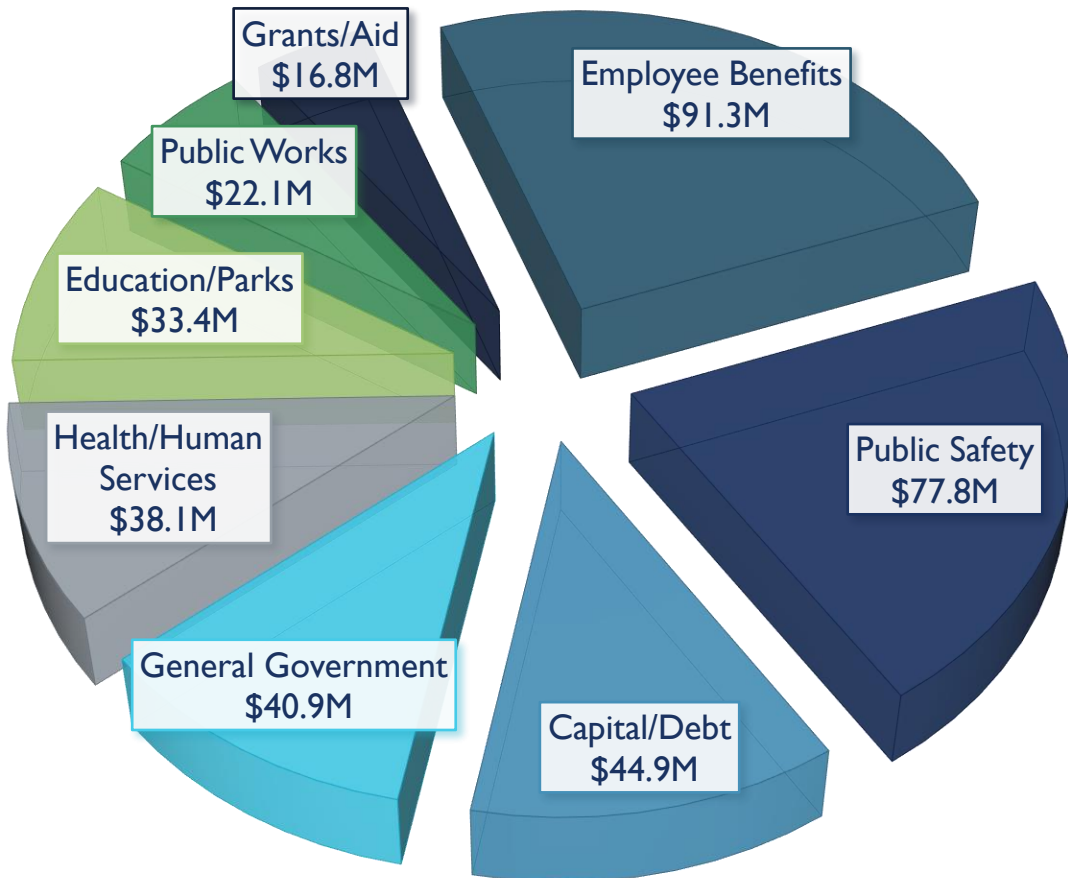
# Maintaining a Strong Fund Balance Maintains a AAA Bond Rating

- Morris County has been rated AAA from both Standard & Poor's and Moody's for **48 years**
- At \$63.2M, Year-End Fund Balance is \$2.5M greater than 2022

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Beginning Year Fund Balance	\$53.5M	\$56.2M	\$57.9M	\$60.7M	\$63.2M
Portion Used to Offset Tax Levy	\$27.1M	\$28.2M	\$28.2M	\$30.2M	\$30.2M
Fund Balance Regenerated	\$29.8M	\$29.9M	\$31.0M	\$32.7M	\$30.2M*
Ending Year Fund Balance	\$56.2M	\$57.9M	\$60.7M	\$63.2M	\$63.2M*

\*The 2024 Regenerated and Year-End Fund Balance are estimated figures.

# Priority Investments in the safety, security and welfare of our residents continue to grow



<b>Budget Area</b>	<b>Percent of Budget</b>
Employee Benefits	25.0%
Public Safety	21.3%
Capital/Debt	12.3%
General Government	11.2%
Health/Human Services	10.4%
Education/Parks	9.1%
Public Works	6.1%
Grants/Aid	4.6%

# Human Services is a major focus of the 2024 Budget

## Veterans' Services

Adding a Veteran Service Officer to process cases more rapidly. Brings office from 3 to 4 VSOs.

Adding a part-time seasonal intern for additional support and to foster interest in aiding Veterans.

## Homelessness Prevention

\$300,000 added to the Office of Temporary Assistance budget to:

- Double in the County Emergency Assistance funding line item from \$150,000 to \$300,000.
- Provide \$150,000 in specific homelessness prevention funding to keep residents in their current housing.



*Commissioners dedicate expanded Veterans Services Office, Nov. 2023*

# Morris County supports our constitutional officers so they can continue to provide the best services to our residents

## The 2024 Budget increases funding to address challenges faced by the:



### County Clerk

- Responding to increasing state election mandates & preparing for the presidential election.



### Surrogate

- Providing online & electronic options to residents probating wills.



### Prosecutor

- Meeting state mandates on the growing amount of video evidence that must be processed and cataloged & expediting the administration of justice.

# Morris County continues to invest in Public Safety initiatives to bolster our municipalities

**Funding once again allocated to absorb the 2024 municipal 911 emergency dispatch cost increases. Services are currently provided to address the following needs:**

- Countywide Interoperable Radio System for all 39 Municipalities
- Countywide Law Enforcement Records Management System - 29 Municipalities
- Full Dispatch Services - 23 Municipalities
- 911 only and Medical Pre-Arrival Directives - 4 Municipalities
- Solely Medical Pre-arrival Directives - 2 Municipalities
- EMS/FIRE Dispatch - 8 Fire Districts/Municipalities

**Funding continues for the County's Basic Life Support (BLS) Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Unit, which responded to over 3,862 Emergency calls in 2023.**

**Daily backup services are provided to local BLS/EMS for all Morris County Municipalities.**

# The 2024 Budget recognizes that Economic Development and Tourism are essential to Morris County's continued success



Director Myers announces America's 250th Anniversary celebration funding, Feb. 2024

## **A record \$900,000 directed to Economic Development and Tourism.**

- \$100,000 earmarked to ensure Morris County takes its rightful place at the center of celebrating America's 250th Anniversary – our nation's Semiquincentennial!

## **Over \$9M to Morris the County Park Commission, stewards of the largest county park system in NJ.**

- Over 4.8 million, residents and visitors alike, are drawn to nearly 20,450 acres of parkland and 38 facilities.
- Included are National & State Register historic sites, golf courses, educational & recreational facilities, arboreta, 250 miles of trails, conservation areas and an ice-skating arena.
- Award-winning program & activities offered year-round.



# The Preservation Trust Fund has protected and enhanced Morris County for more than 30 years

The Preservation Trust Fund Tax will stay level for 2024, at 5/8 cent per \$100 of total county equalized property valuation. It has financed county park improvements, preservation programs and restoration projects through these popular grant programs:



*Parks Farm, Chester Township*

## Farmland Preservation

**\$169M**

## Open Space Preservation

**\$295M**

## Historic Preservation

**\$50M**

## Flood Mitigation

**\$100M**

## Trail Design & Construction

**\$5M**



*Historic Speedwell Wheelhouse Dedication, Oct. 2023*

# Education Opportunities are endless in Morris County and the highest rated

## County College of Morris

- A \$484 million economic impact on Morris County.
- The highest graduation rates of all NJ county colleges.
- #1 in alumni salaries in NJ for the past five years.

## Morris County Vocational School District

- A blue-ribbon school, and US News/Newsweek top-performing high school in the country.
- County allocation to district operating expenses is up \$75,000 for third consecutive year.
- Planned increases paving the way for the new Career Technical Center being constructed on CCM campus.
  - Project will accommodate 500 new students.
- Training in healthcare, information technology, manufacturing and supply chain will ensure a clear and lucrative career path for those who enroll.



# At the core of county government, we invest heavily in our infrastructure

## 2024 Capital Major Components:

- County Roads & Bridges
- Education
- Public Safety
- Human Services
- Park Safety
- Law Enforcement



*Millbrook Avenue Bridge Dedication, Randolph, Aug. 2023*

## Responsible investment to avoid deferred maintenance costs

Description	Dollars
2024 Full Capital Plan	\$60,320,536
Less Grants	-\$10,354,917
<b>Net 2024 Capital Plan</b>	<b>\$49,965,619</b>
Less Legacy Courthouse Project - 2024 budget	-\$15,000,000
<b>Net 2024 Capital Plan of Traditional Projects</b>	<b>\$34,965,619</b>

# County Costs are up, but no increase in the tax rate thanks to prudent fiscal management and a growing ratable base

- Budget increases are being driven by non-discretionary expenses:
  - Health Insurance costs up \$1.9M
- However, thoughtful, mission-driven investments continue:
  - Human Service and Public Safety needs prioritized
  - Focus remains on education and training for students and adults
  - County infrastructure maintained - deferred maintenance costs avoided
- **No tax rate increase for the 5<sup>th</sup> straight year.**
- Budget is structurally stable and sustainable, anticipating the challenges of future years.

