



Township of Bernards

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Mayor Field's Reorganization Meeting Speech 01/05/2021

“Happy New Year and thank you to all who are here and those of you watching online.

Thank you to my colleagues on Township Committee for the honor of serving as Mayor in 2021.

I would like to take a moment to congratulate Joe Esposito as Deputy Mayor, Kate Grochala on becoming our newest Township Committee member, and especially our outgoing Mayor Jim Baldassare. A true leader is one who operates fearlessly in the face of great adversity. 2020 was an incredibly challenging year Jim, and your actions proved you are a true leader.

Thank you to our First Responders for performing under incredible circumstances and risking your own health to ensure that our well-being was a top priority. And thank you to our township employees who did an astounding job during an exceedingly difficult year.

A special thank you to my husband Barry and our two sons, Avery and Jeremy for their unwavering love and support. And of course, I want to recognize my special friends whose relationships I truly cherish and are always there when I need them.

Only a year ago I stood here and was sworn in as a committee member. None of us here this evening could have envisioned the challenges 2020 would bring. Every single one of us has found ourselves putting community first in ways that we never imagined. I am immensely proud of how our community has come together and continues to do so in the face of this pandemic. To former Mayor Baldassare, the members of the committee, and to all our township employees, I say thank you. Your commitment to Bernards has given us tremendous leadership through this crisis and has prepared us for the work that lies ahead.

I accept the responsibility of being your Mayor knowing that we face many challenges. I recognize this seat belongs to you, the residents, and we have the responsibility to do what you have put us here to do - to govern, to lead, to listen, and to work toward a fiscally responsible, community engaged, successful, and strong Bernards.

The Township Committee along with you, the citizens of Bernards, will be at the forefront of every decision that is made. Every idea, ordinance, resolution, or proposal will be a collaborative effort amongst all of us. There are many things that demand our attention in the coming year and that will be our focus during my term as Mayor. Such as:

- My colleagues and I will continue to work with our government and healthcare partners to ensure our safety and security as this pandemic continues.
- We will use every resource at our disposal to help those in our community affected by the current pandemic, particularly our most vulnerable populations. I challenge every resident to join us in looking for ways to help those in need.
- Our business community is the backbone of Bernards Township. We will work together to identify initiatives that support the business owners through the balance of the pandemic, as well as ways to help them thrive going forward. The success of these businesses benefits us both financially and personally – we must remember that these business owners and their employees are our neighbors and friends.
- The Town will continue to examine key infrastructure projects throughout the township and seek ways to have those needs addressed. Our roadways, drainage, walkways, and parks must be maintained to provide the quality of life that you and your tax dollars demand.

- We will work with our partners to ensure Bernards maintains its presence on the leading edge of communication with our residents. Our Rave Mobile Alert 911 System, introduced this year, is a part of the ongoing effort to ensure effective communication. We will enhance this with emphasis on our public television channel and work toward a public meeting broadcast capability that will increase transparency and connection between township residents and your elected officials.
- We will continue to advocate for our fiscal policies which have positioned Bernards Township as a leader in sustainable and responsible government as well as a debt free and tax stable community. Part of this will involve continually seeking opportunities for shared services and reduction of redundancy so that our tax dollars are spent in a way that demonstrates efficiency, effectiveness, and responsibility.
- Starting in the Spring, I will be hosting a “Monthly Meet the Mayor” where I look forward to hearing your concerns and issues. Time and location will be posted on the town’s website.
- Finally, I want to work toward a public recognition of those volunteers who are the lifeblood of our township and who make Bernards the place that it is. Each of our committees, boards and task forces are staffed by volunteers and I thank them for all they do. Without their ongoing commitment to Bernards day in and day out, we would not be able to provide the services upon which our community relies.

In closing, the year ahead is one that finds us all filled with concern and uncertainty, but a lot of hope. Working together we will make it through this and come out a better and stronger community. As your Mayor, I promise that you will always find me ready to listen and work extremely hard to ensure that Bernards can meet any challenge and our residents can rely on their elected officials for proactive leadership that always puts community first.

May God Bless you all. It’s time to get to work.

Janice M. Fields
Bernards Township Mayor