

## COUNTY REGULAR TAX LEVY UP ANOTHER 3.89% IN 2012

The County of Union did not hold budget hearings in 2012. Since the public was shut out of the process, the Union County Watchdog Association hosted a free interactive event focusing on the 2012 Union County Budget on April 23, 2012 at the Cranford Community

Center. John Bury, an actuary specializing in pensions and retiree health care costs, After a review of ten years of audits has developed this easy-to-follow presentation with clear visual aids that reveal what your government doesn't want you to know.

### HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Union County 2012 regular budget increases to \$489 million.
- Property tax levy up 3.89% from 2011 to \$302.5 million with an additional \$11 million to be levied in Open Space and additional taxes.
- Debt tops \$700 million when UCIA leases of \$145 million are added to the official debt.
- 2012 debt service in the budget is \$50.7 million, up 15% from 2011.

### Westfield/Summit On Top

Posted on countywatchers.com

By John Bury | April 14, 2012

The regular county tax levy for Elizabeth went up between 2008 and 2009 by \$3.68 million (though they have declined since then). That was the only year-over-year tax increase bigger than the \$3 million (11%) that Summit taxpayers will absorb in 2012. Westfield takes over the top spot in regular taxes to be paid to the county at \$32 million.

### Taxes and Debt in Union County

By John Bury | April 24, 2012



(above) John Bury's presentation on the county budget can be viewed on countywatchers.com

UNION COUNTY TAXES BY TOWN FROM 2006 TO 2011  
(Does not include Open Space Trust Fund)

	"Percentage Increase 2011/2006"	UNION COUNTY TAXES BY TOWN FROM 2006 TO 2011 (Does not include Open Space Trust Fund)						2012 COUNTY TAXES PER TOWN (Does not include Open Space Trust Fund)			
		2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	"Percentage Increase 2012/11"	Dollar Change 2012/11	2012	2011
Berkeley Heights	29.23%	\$14,090,197	\$12,837,490	\$11,870,630	\$11,480,665	\$11,030,926	\$10,903,453	2.82%	\$397,711	\$14,487,909	\$14,090,197
Clark	34.95%	\$10,512,369	\$9,808,393	\$9,573,772	\$9,310,224	\$8,417,867	\$7,789,904	8.14%	\$855,581	\$11,367,951	\$10,512,369
Cranford	32.78%	\$16,926,821	\$15,499,049	\$14,605,050	\$13,818,896	\$13,285,752	\$12,748,353	6.31%	\$1,068,189	\$17,995,010	\$16,926,821
Elizabeth	35.60%	\$31,680,133	\$31,644,766	\$31,163,873	\$27,482,564	\$25,145,097	\$23,363,270	-1.97%	(\$625,022)	\$31,055,111	\$31,680,133
Fanwood	31.84%	\$4,743,955	\$4,522,723	\$4,180,983	\$3,897,249	\$3,781,928	\$3,598,158	7.05%	\$334,377	\$5,078,332	\$4,743,955
Garwood	34.01%	\$2,832,712	\$2,616,182	\$2,386,725	\$2,181,017	\$2,011,903	\$2,113,756	7.40%	\$209,713	\$3,042,425	\$2,832,712
Hillside	39.73%	\$8,153,264	\$8,151,725	\$7,753,447	\$6,933,141	\$6,197,199	\$5,834,811	1.96%	\$159,910	\$8,313,174	\$8,153,264
Kenilworth	17.26%	\$6,849,577	\$6,792,756	\$6,697,063	\$6,335,564	\$6,101,291	\$5,841,416	2.83%	\$193,628	\$7,043,105	\$6,849,577
Linden	29.50%	\$24,083,961	\$22,753,870	\$22,651,417	\$20,088,692	\$19,721,612	\$18,597,663	3.22%	\$766,513	\$24,860,474	\$24,083,961
Mountainside	16.13%	\$7,072,304	\$6,893,781	\$6,651,147	\$6,434,601	\$6,245,115	\$6,089,768	8.11%	\$573,915	\$7,646,219	\$7,072,304
New Providence	34.36%	\$10,471,278	\$9,567,095	\$8,911,219	\$8,192,617	\$7,993,827	\$7,793,563	8.12%	\$850,177	\$11,321,455	\$10,471,278
Plainfield	44.96%	\$12,517,401	\$12,645,094	\$12,301,435	\$10,648,492	\$9,692,077	\$8,635,251	-1.11%	(\$138,441)	\$12,378,961	\$12,517,401
Rahway	49.48%	\$13,652,046	\$13,544,917	\$12,796,890	\$10,807,050	\$10,011,995	\$9,132,985	1.35%	\$183,830	\$13,835,876	\$13,652,046
Roselle	41.31%	\$6,877,087	\$6,654,640	\$6,172,068	\$5,649,286	\$5,348,250	\$4,866,517	4.15%	(\$285,293)	\$6,591,794	\$6,877,087
Roselle Park	31.91%	\$5,062,050	\$4,744,385	\$4,617,735	\$4,428,281	\$4,135,873	\$3,837,599	1.37%	\$69,247	\$5,131,298	\$5,062,050
Scotch Plains	26.58%	\$16,366,083	\$15,319,649	\$14,470,439	\$14,150,513	\$13,720,697	\$12,929,093	8.32%	\$1,361,021	\$17,727,104	\$16,366,083
Springfield	31.72%	\$12,142,220	\$11,211,548	\$10,432,604	\$9,915,274	\$9,383,078	\$9,218,435	4.25%	\$516,282	\$12,658,503	\$12,142,220
Summit	24.02%	\$27,808,360	\$26,711,085	\$25,227,031	\$23,740,722	\$23,761,759	\$22,422,311	10.78%	\$2,998,725	\$30,807,086	\$27,808,360
Union Twp.	22.66%	\$29,302,996	\$27,165,992	\$26,223,049	\$25,555,234	\$23,823,241	\$23,889,835	2.72%	\$796,193	\$30,099,190	\$29,302,996
Westfield	33.71%	\$29,955,405	\$28,209,896	\$26,313,580	\$25,125,241	\$23,592,003	\$22,404,102	6.92%	\$2,072,530	\$32,027,935	\$29,955,405
Winfield	12.46%	\$68,308	\$61,135	\$56,010	\$54,546	\$55,363	\$60,739	8.58%	\$5,861	\$74,170	\$68,308
<b>Total</b>	<b>31.12%</b>	<b>\$291,168,527</b>	<b>\$277,356,170</b>	<b>\$265,056,167</b>	<b>\$246,229,869</b>	<b>\$233,456,853</b>	<b>\$222,070,982</b>	<b>31.12%</b>	<b>\$12,374,547</b>	<b>\$303,543,083</b>	<b>\$291,168,527</b>

## UCWA UNLEASHES NEW WEBSITE

By Tina Renna | April 10, 2011

The Union County Watchdog Association has developed a new website. It is modeled after the County of Union's site which looks like it was modeled after the City of Elizabeth's site despite the county contracting to pay \$136,000 for its development in 2010. The cost of Elizabeth's site and the vendor is unknown at this writing. Inquiries will be made.

The UCWA site was put together by a team of volunteers and their faithful web guru, open government activist Mike Pierone of Lattice Design, who was paid \$1,360 for special programming. Since the watchdog site is a parody of the county site there was no original design needed, as the County appears to have done with Elizabeth's site. Content for the UCWA site was picked up from our old site, as was done with the county's site.

The cost of the UCWA site was 1% that of the County's. Even if the site was done from scratch without volunteers the cost would have been

approximately \$13,600, 10% of what the county paid. This project by the UCWA was done to illustrate the waste and appearance of impropriety in the way the County of Union distributes no-bid contracts.

The UCWA site includes all the features offered in the County site and much more. For instance, the County's website does not offer the extensive archive of public records that the watchdog site does. Even the cost of incidentals that the UCWA did not account for would not account for the \$136,000 the County contracted for. This figure does not include the countless man-hours that County employees used to assist the web designer.

The County cost also does not include the funds already paid to the Union County Alliance, which receives an annual grant of \$322,125 to develop, create and maintain as needed web-based communications.

We don't know much about the vendor who received this contract. An OPRA request revealed it was a company by the name of Web Creations located in Clark. They do not have a website of their own.



↑ **County of Union's Taxpayer**  
**UnionCountyWatchdog.org \$1,360** →

*“Information is the currency of democracy.” - Thomas Jefferson*

The UCWA strives to make county government more transparent by gaining access to public records and being a public resource for information. The UCWA believes that good government can only be achieved through a checks and balance system that includes the watchful eye of the people.

# UCWA BLOG SITE COUNTYWATCHERS.COM

County Watchers Tina Renna and John Bury regular blog about issues concerning Union County. The blog posts news and the latest public records the UCWA are able to acquire. More importantly the site reveals what those records mean and how they affect the taxpayer. Visitors are welcomed to comment on the blog. The blog has many helpful links and archived entries and you can sign up to receive updates. Visit: [www.countywatchers.com](http://www.countywatchers.com)



Union County Watchdog Association, Inc.  
 P: 908-709-0530 - F: 908-709-9209  
 Email: [info@unioncountywatchdog.org](mailto:info@unioncountywatchdog.org)

### Mission Statement

*The Union County Watchdog Association is a nonpartisan nonprofit 501(c)3 organization working on behalf of the residents and taxpayers of Union County monitoring the activity of county government and advocating change to eliminate waste, corruption and incompetence.*

## UC WATCHDOG ASSOCIATION

With most households in the Union County area owning a computer, there is no better time in the history of man for citizens to be informed and engaged with the governmental process.

The UCWA routinely requests public records pertaining to the expenditure of tax dollars by Union County government and the independent county authorities through the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) and posts them on our website for easy public access. Many of these documents are not posted on government websites.

## SHINING A LIGHT ON GOVERNMENT

The UCWA maintains a presence at freeholder meetings and monitors county documents for red flags which would lead to further investigation. We are a public resource for citizens who do not know how to go about obtaining public records.

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders has been controlled by the Union County Regular Democratic Committee for over a decade now. All 9 freeholders are elected at-large. The voter registration demographics of the county suggest that it will be next to impossible to elect a freeholder who isn't appointed by the dominant party's power-brokers. A rival political party could only garner support from like minded people. An independent citizen watchdog group made up of people with different political affiliations is more appealing to citizens who want to be involved, yet not join a particular political party.

We hope to succeed in seeing more citizen participation in the electoral process by educating the public as to how county government affects their property taxes as well as their public safety. Holding the County of Union accountable to the people, will lead to greater government transparency and accountability.

## The County Watchers

The citizen watchdogs of government in Union County, NJ

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### Raiding the Open Space Trust Fund

By John Bury | April 29, 2012

As noted before, Union County does it by declaring they can use Open Space trust fund money to pay the salaries of parks employees maintaining lands NOT purchased through the Open Space trust fund. They are wrong but it allows them to misappropriate that money for current expenses so they make believe they can do it. Revenue items of \$2,350,000 and \$2,800,000 were included in the 2011 and 2012 budgets respectively.

However, after a review of ten years of audits, it looks like they're stealing even more.

The UCWA obtained [this list](#) of all acquisitions through the Open Space trust fund through March, 2011 which, when totaled, adds up to \$68,466,428. Of that \$67,833,477 represented purchases through 12/31/2010 which is the time period of this review.

[Summary audit information](#) shows \$78,835,839 in Commitments (payouts from the trust fund) up through 2010. Of that amount, the UCWA spreadsheet shows \$10,165,403 in grants to municipalities through 2011.

The trust through 2010 reported receiving income of \$97,880,928 broken down between:

- Regular tax levy: \$88,431,126
- Added Taxes: \$377,155
- Contributions: \$474,700
- Interest Income: \$898,094

Search

#### UC Need to Know

- Tax Levy by City
- Employee List (2/24/11)
- Taxes by County
- Appropriations by Department
- Grants

#### UC Fiascoes

- Courts Building
- Delaney Hall
- Dog Park for \$800,000+
- Golf
- Lifetime Health Benefits
- Musicfest
- Open Space Tax
- Pension Padding
- Renewable Energy Boondoggle
- Trademarking County Seal
- UC Directions
- UCJA/Covanta Deal
- Vendors in the news
- Website for \$130,000+

**LIKE US ON** **FOLLOW US ON**

## JOIN OUR MAILING LIST!

Fill out form below and send it to UCWA  
 202 Walnut Avenue, Cranford, NJ 07016  
 or fax to: 908-709-9209  
 or submit by email to:  
[info@UnionCountyWatchdog.org](mailto:info@UnionCountyWatchdog.org)



**Make a donation of \$25 or more and receive a T-shirt.**  
*(While supplied last. With this coupon.)*

**YES!** Please keep me informed about Union County Government

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**YES!** I'd like to make a donation of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

and receive a T-shirt

Size: M : \_\_\_ L: \_\_\_

XL: \_\_\_ XXL: \_\_\_

Make Checks payable to UCWA.

# COUNTYWATCHERS.COM: CITIZEN WATCHDOGS OF UNION COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## A County Watchers Year in Review "2011"

The County Watchers have been publishing their blog since June 2005 in response to the cut backs of local media coverage.

Although the freeholders have almost a half a billion dollar budget and commands approximately 1/4 of our property tax bills most of what you read in the printed media are positive stories which come directly from the county's extensive office of public information. Union County is spending more on Public Information salaries than any other county in the state.

The government is in control of the printed media but they will never have control over our digital democracy. Since its formation the Union County Watchdog Association has maintained a presence at every regular meeting of the freeholders and has been investigating county spending and shenanigans and posting our findings to the internet for free public access.

The following are excerpts from our last year in review. To keep up to date please visit countywatchers.com daily or better yet, join our email list via request to info@unioncountywatchdog.org. We do not share our contact list with anyone.

## JANUARY

### January 9, 2011

Sheriff Froelich, Clerk Rojappi and Freeholders Sullivan, Kowalski and Carter are sworn into office. "New Jersey, take notice. Union County is in charge...You [Republican Party] had the second coming of Jesus Christ, Chris Christie, against us. And you lost." Senator [Ray] Lesniak, during the election night victory celebration at L'Affaire, as quoted in The Westfield Leader/Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times.

### January 18, 2011

UCWA and Westfield Leader successfully lobby county to post their minutes in a searchable format on their website.

## FEBRUARY

Freeholder Nancy Ward announced she would not be seeking re-election.

### February 5, 2011

The UCWA announces they have made the 2010 Check Registry available in an easy to search data base.

### February 10, 2011

The County Watchers report Union County gave lifetime health benefits to all non-contractual employees.

## MARCH

### March 2, 2011

County Watchers report Jail overtime on track to increase 50% in 2011.

### March 10, 2011

County Watchers report on another pension padding which Union County is infamous for.

### March 26, 2011

The County Watchers report that Union County First Alert, an emergency notification system funded by a Federal grant, is being used by the UC Alliance to distribute their fluff newsletters.

### March 29, 2011

County Watchers report on the hiring of the new Finance Director, BiBi Taylor of East Orange, a former municipal finance director in Plainfield and Dover.

## APRIL

### April 10, 2011

The UCWA unleashes their new website.



### April 19, 2011

The Home News Tribune reports the Rahway Valley Sewage Authority was supposed to save more than a million dollars a year instead sewer ratepayers in Central Jersey, including thirteen Union County towns, continue to lose money on \$36 million 'boondoggle'.

### April 22, 2011

County Watchers offer a budget comparison. Union County taxes will rise to \$291,168,537 in 2011. In 2009 they were \$265,056,170. Pending what Hudson does, both the dollar (\$26,112,367) and percentage (9.85%) increase would be the largest of any county in the state. Over that period six counties have been able to lower their tax levy and Cumberland seems to have frozen theirs.



WHAT FREEHOLDERS MEAN BY BELT TIGHTENING

### April 25, 2011

County Watchers report that the Union County Democratic Chairman has had permission from the freeholders to work her

county job as Director of the Union County Improvement Authority from home since 2004. Charlotte DeFilippo's current salary is \$147,712 this is up \$107,712 since she took over this position after taking control of the freeholder board.



## MAY

### May 3, 2011

County Watchers report a citizen watchdog was verbally abused by the retiring Finance Director. John Bury was called a "f\_\_ing a\_\_hole" while attending a public meeting of the freeholders.

### May 12, 2011

Union County passed their budget and raised taxes 5.1% in 2011 and blamed Governor Chris Christie though many counties either lowered taxes or kept them stable. Union County's two year increase in taxes was 9.85%. "This is another example of this governor's wrong priorities," said Sebastian D'Elia, a union county spokesperson.



"These Knuckleheads are blaming me?"

### May 26, 2011

County Watchers report the Rutherford Institute filed a free speech lawsuit against Union County Officials for censoring local activist Tina Renna and disrupting her local TV program.



**JUNE****June 19, 2011**

County Watchers report on the solar panel scam playing out in Union County.

**June 21, 2011**

County Watchers report Freeholder Daniel Sullivan's called political opponents a terrorist organization because he didn't like the way the Democrats for Change challenged his Regular Democratic Organization in the Primary. *Dan el Sullivan*

**June 28, 2011**

The Wall Street Journal reported 22.1% of Union County homeowners properties are "underwater" meaning they are worth less than their mortgage balances.

**JULY****July 19, 2011**

The County Watchers break the story of county manager George Devanney's early retirement, while the department head meeting where he made his announcement was still in progress.

**AUGUST**

Daniel Sullivan, former freeholder liaison to the Union County Utilities Authority, was appointed interim director of the UCUA at a salary of \$130,000 because he (a) needed a job and (b) would do what he's told.

**August 1, 2011**

The County Watchers report on Union County's debt crisis. According to the latest available debt statement data (2009) Union County's debt ratio is .68% (fifth-highest among counties which average .44%) with net debt of \$524,305,474 (fourth-highest) and both are escalating as golf clubhouses, dog parks, hockey rinks, and solar panels get put on the card.

**August 23, 2011**

the Union County Prosecutor released a scathing report on the management of the 2010 Union County Musicfest with 28 recommendations but concluding that "there is insufficient evidence which warrants the filing of criminal charges in this matter."

**SEPTEMBER****September 25, 2011**

The Star-Ledger confirms former County Manager George Devanney is under investigation by the F.B.I.

**OCTOBER****October 2, 2011**

County Watchers report a new employee lawsuit has been filed: Richmond Lapolla vs County of Union, George Devanney, County Manager and Individually. Lapolla is latest employee to sue county over petty political retaliation. These types of employee lawsuits have cost taxpayers millions in recent years.

**October 11, 2011**

The UCWA release their review of the prosecutor's 2010 Musicfest report. The UCWA states that there is enough that is not cited in the prosecutor's report that calls for an independent criminal investigation. "They shouldn't be allowed to police themselves.", stated Tina Renna.

**October 18, 2011**

Sen. Raymond Lesniak & former Freeholder Wohlrab were featured in Bergen Record series on organized crime and trash firms.

**October 20, 2011**

The UCWA files suit charging Union County Alliance is a public agency subject to the Open Public Records Act. The county awards the non-profit Alliance a no-bid contract in the amount of \$352,085 annually. The UCA publishes the Directions Newsletter which mailed to every postal patron before the primary and general elections.

**NOVEMBER****November 8, 2011**

Union County 2011 General Election Results – Democrat freeholders sweep county government again. Mayor of Cranford, Daniel Aschenbach lost his reelection bid. Aschenbach had publically denounced the Union County Citizen's Forum Show which was produced at Cranford's TV 35.

**November 2011**

Covanta suckered the Union County Utilities Authority into extending their incinerator lease agreement through 2050 creating \$24 million in new debt and locking in profits for Covanta by allowing them to enforce guaranteed tonnage requirements on the UCUA and individual towns that are substantially above what the county and those towns are now bringing in.

**DECEMBER****December 2, 2011**

The County Watchers report on an incident that recently occurred at the jail. At the prior nights freeholder meeting an Executive Session was called and the reasons included "illegal activity by county employees." Sources have confirmed that the incident involved the jail.

**December 4, 2011**

The County Watchers report County Manager Alfred Faella was charged in a DUI incident while driving his county issued vehicle. He later pled guilty and lost his take home county vehicle privileges.

**December 15, 2011**

The UCWA release a report on Musicfest 2011. They make the recommendations to shut down future Musicfests and replace the Union County Prosecutor to restore the public's trust in law and order. County announces

**December 18, 2011**

The County Watchers report on how Union County golf operations were in 2011.

**December 20, 2011**

the UCWA asks the prosecutor to enforce the Open Public Meetings Act. They assert that the freeholders violated the law when they discussed a 50-million dollar project in executive session, out of public view.

**December 26, 2011**

the UCWA announces it has filed a law suit in Union County Superior Court asserting the Union County Performing Arts Center is a public agency subject to the OPRA.

**December 26, 2011**

The County Watchers report the UCWA has saved taxpayers at least \$131,112,000 in 2011.

# COUNTY IS LAYING OFF 10% OF ITS EMPLOYEES - BUT THE WRONG 10%

## When will they layoff the people who do nothing? Or worse?

Posted on countywatchers.com  
By Tina Renna | April 8, 2012

On March 21, 2012 the county sent a letter to the Division of State & Local Operations outlining their Layoff Plan. This was almost two months to the date the County Watchers reported on connected employees being given generous raises and promotions.

It didn't go unnoticed that Matthew Dirado, Head of Personnel who is receiving on the job training as he has no human resources background, was given a \$25,529 raise bringing his salary to \$119,999. I've been told this has been a point of contention in union negotiations, Matt was told to give it back if he wants employees to give up anything. His wife, Nicole Dirado, former freeholder Clerk, was transferred to the Clerk's office in January, she replaced the former Deputy County Clerk and was given a \$6,686 raise, this was \$5,330 more than the former clerk and more money for on the job training. That brings the 2012 Dirado family compensation package increase to \$32,215.

Could it be the county didn't know they were in the midst of fiscal struggles just two months ago? They are spinning this \$36 million dollar budget gap as a sudden thing, they seem dazed and confused by it. Shouldn't all upper management be replaced? That's what a private company would do to survive and move a company forward. Get rid of the idiots that caused this mess and hire professionals to turn it around.

Then there's the Brandon Thomas question to answer. Representing workers targeted for layoff at Runnells, Brandon asked the freeholders at their last regular meeting, "When are you going to lay off the guys that sit in the back, do absolutely nothing all day and make \$90,000?"

Fair question. But Brandon didn't get an answer.

The county is targeting 129 employees for layoff at Runnells. Overwhelmingly minority, while all the white bosses get to keep their jobs – where is the outrage? Marylou Marcio, former Deputy County Manager Liz Genievch's sister, is in charge of the three departments where most service employees are being eliminated, her salary is \$100,225. Who will she be supervising? Is she being kept on to supervise any outside vendor the county will bring in to privatize these departments?

Here's who else isn't getting laid off at Runnells. 4 people who supervise maybe 10 people will keep their jobs, but their clerk (salary \$45,500) is targeted for layoff. Keeping their jobs: Director of maintenance, Senator Scutari's uncle, (\$106,033); and his assistant director of maintenance, Democratic Chairman of Roselle Park (\$75,859); a Charlotte errand boy (\$81,690); and a Trade Supervisor, former Deputy County Manager Liz Genievch's nephew (\$65,442).

Glenna Bowen isn't getting laid off, Glenna is former county manager George Devaney's mother-in-law (\$51,776.45) and is the Runnells Hospital Foundation Director, we will continue to pay the salary of a non-profit's director. Her husband Ronald Bowen doesn't work at Runnells but I wanted to mention he isn't getting laid off either. He had an electrician position created for him salary \$54,169, the position was converted from a Building Maintenance Worker Salary \$49,345. George Devaney signed off on the job on 7/25/11, he retired effective 8/1/11.

Runnells marketing/public information department remains intact, including Rahway Councilman Robert Rachlin. So does the outside marketing contract that does the marketing work for them. Runnells has been bleeding money. What are these people doing all day?

There are no layoffs in the following departments:

- Freeholders Office
- County Manager
- County Clerk

Prosecutor's office no layoffs – in fact assistant prosecutors were given raises in January

Public information – where ever they are scattered, not one employee is targeted. The staff photographer even gets to stay (\$60,568).

County Counsel's office - No show / low show politically connected part timers are not losing their jobs. Neither are the full timers that are also partners in law firms. Only one employee is targeted – a Keyboarding Clerk, she is the daughter of Sheriff Ralph Froehlich.

And it looks like maybe 10% of Freeholder Sullivan's relatives have made the list after all – if you include in-laws. His niece is targeted, Erin McKenna in Parks and Community Renewal. I don't know for sure how many other relatives of Sullivan's is on the payroll. He won't say. Freeholder Scanlon's son, Patrick Jr., resigned his position as a laborer recently, this position is now being eliminated.

The county claims that they eliminated 30.91 FTE's vacancies, I didn't look at all of the recent position controls, however I did find one discrepancy. Muftau Moshood's name caught my eye because I knew this position wasn't eliminated as the county listed, Alicia Batista filled this position on 1/3/12. The salary they list (\$59,292.05) isn't correct either. This makes all of their paperwork suspect. Do they know what they are doing? Are they sitting in the back and doing absolutely nothing all day?

These lists are submitted to the state for approval, county has to give a reason, they list the reasons why, they state then determines if these employees can in fact be laid off. The county controls whose names are put on the list, Civil Service employees can bump another employee within their departments only.

*(The below documents are available on the countywatchers.com blog.)*

- Second Layoff List
- First Layoff List
- List of Vacant Titles to be Eliminated
- Letter to state outlining county layoff plan

## GROWTH IN TOP LEVEL COUNTY WAGE EARNERS

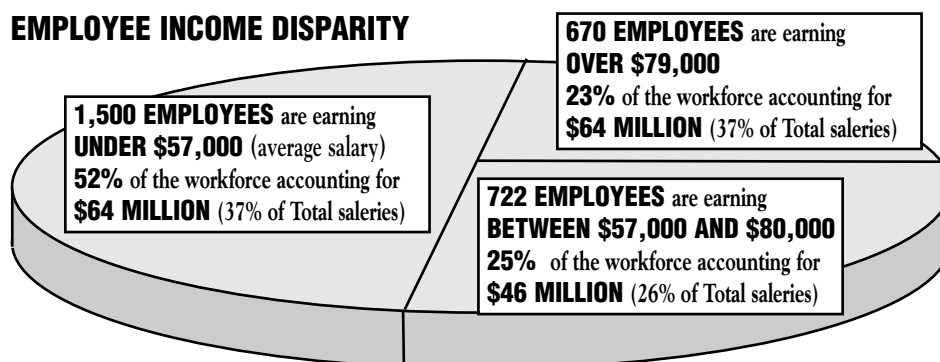
*(Employee lists from 2000 to present can be found on unioncountywatchdog.org)*

### GROWTH IN TOP LEVEL COUNTY WAGE EARNERS

*Does not include seasonal or part timers or cost of benefits.*

	2002	2011
Total number of employees	2785	2870
Total payroll	\$128,184,265	\$174,605,288
<b>Employees earning over \$89,000</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>485</b>
	3% of workforce	17% of workforce
Total earned by top level earners	\$8,645,316	\$49,201,326
	7% of payroll	28% of payroll

## EMPLOYEE INCOME DISPARITY



# MUSICFEST CANCELED UNDER SUSPICION OF MISSING MONEY

## Musicfest 2011 Cost Analysis Report & Recommendations: Shut it down & Send us a new county prosecutor

Posted on countywatchers.com

By Tina Renna | December 15, 2011

The Union County Watchdog Association has concluded its report on Musicfest 2011. Using the Open Public Records Act we reviewed documents associated with the costs of Musicfest and can only guesstimate that this event cost \$1,197,754 – on paper.

Unlike prior years, we had no official statistics for comparison. There was no official statement from the county about how many people attended Musicfest 2011 or what the event cost. According to records obtained through the OPRA, parking revenue for 2011 increased by \$12,486.20 in 2011. Total revenue collected in 2011 was \$59,320.05 (or about 5,932 cars) this is up from \$46,833.85 in 2010 when the county claimed to have kept no records of parking receipts and that over 80,000 people were in attendance.

As in prior years, the county won't officially state how many employees are involved with the planning and running of Musicfest year-round. And there are costs, such as support for the Union County Directions Newsletter, that simply can't be quantified. The public has no way of knowing what is going on with the Union County Arts Center. Who is on their payroll? What vendors are they paying? Why did George Devanney recuse himself from decisions involving the Arts Center right before he resigned and the prosecutor released his report on Musicfest 2010? What the public does know is that the Union County Prosecutor didn't address any of these questions in his report.

Not included in the costs of Musicfest are the employee salaries associated with miscellaneous tasks throughout the year. How many hours does the County Manager spend organizing this event? How many employees spend how many hours in meetings preparing for the event? How many employees spend how much time setting up, cleaning up? Miscellaneous tasks of the Finance Department, Public Information Department, etc. And in 2010 – the Union County Prosecutor's Department investigation into the cash that went missing from Musicfest.

The county claims to have just one employee assigned to run events such as Musicfest: Jean Foley, Program Coordinator of Special Events/Bureau Chief Recreation, salary \$70,937.31. However, UCMusicfest.com lists the following county employees as contacts for Sponsorship information: Cheron Roundtree, Director for Intergovernmental Policy and Planning salary \$69,938.81; General information: Victoria Drake-Durbin, Administrator Open Space Trust Fund salary \$104,465.

This annual boondoggle with no official cost or accountability needs to end. The people responsible for it need to be held accountable. The UCWA has done all we could to shine a light on our government. It would take a higher power to bring about change.

Despite the prosecutor finding gross mismanagement of Musicfest 2010 and concluding "the use of public monies demands much more than it received" not one county employee has been held responsible.

Freeholder Chairwoman Debra Scanlon went on the record by stating the freeholders had nothing to apologize for in regards to the management of Musicfest 2010 or county manager George Devanney. Freeholder Daniel Sullivan responded to Tina Renna seeking an official apology on behalf of the UCWA "You want me to apologize? I'll apologize to everyone that has to listen to their baloney."

Further, the freeholders allowed former County Manager George

Devannney to be very much involved with the running of Musicfest 2011, and refuse to answer the public's questions as to what capacity he did that in since he had resigned his position as county manager just prior to the Prosecutor releasing his report. The County Prosecutor and his First Assistant were still publicly socializing with the Devanney family shortly after they released their report into the investigation of Musicfest 2010.

During Musicfest 2011 county government still incurred costs for George Devannney's non-profit, Love Hope Strength Foundation, which has sent George, his wife, their friends and county vendors on exotic mountain treks.

With the release of this report the UCWA is calling on Governor Christopher Christie to investigate the Union County Prosecutor's investigation into Musicfest 2010. We strongly believe that the integrity of this office is questionable and the results of the Prosecutor's findings, which led to no one being held accountable nor any official apology for this grossly mismanaged event, led to Musicfest 2011 not being much more transparent than prior years.

Union County government is lawless and in contempt of the public. At the very least, the state can take action to restore the integrity of the Union County Prosecutor's office and the public's trust in law and order.

*(The following art links available on the countywatchers.com blog.)*

UCWA Report Musicfest 2011 Cost Analysis

Letter to Governor Christopher Christie

UC Prosecutor Report on Musicfest 2010

UCWA Report on UC Prosecutor Musicfest 2010 Report

UC Prosecutor Letter – Will not investigate Musicfest

## What the Prosecutor found

Monday, August 29th, 2011

Quote from Theodore J. Romankow, Prosecutor of Union County

*"Following an investigation, spanning over five (5) months, including interviews of numerous witnesses, and a review of a multitude of documents, I have concluded that there is insufficient evidence which warrants the filing of criminal charges in this matter [Musicfest 2010]"*

Of course there was insufficient evidence. There are lemonade stands run with tighter fiscal oversight. The financials of musicfest are a mess and though money was missing there is no way to know, or prove, whose pocket it ended up in. The prosecutor correctly decided not to spend more resources on chasing down the thieves. But was there criminal activity that, in a perfect world, would be prosecuted? Decide for yourselves based on the prosecutor's report with 28 separate recommendations for the County.

The prosecutor put the cost of the 2010 musicfest at \$1,121,573.42 (though including \$75,000 from 'Rain Insurance from 2008' is questionable). On November 16, 2010 a UCWA press release put that cost at \$1,029,670 with stark similarities to the prosecutor's numbers released nine months later. On September 16, 2010 then County Manager George Devanney put the cost at \$350,000.

However, what's left out of the official's numbers are the ancillary expenses. How many county employees work on this event throughout the year? How much income could Oak Ridge have generated if it were being used as, I don't know, maybe a golf course? What fees (ASCAP; liability insurance; catering) are hidden within the county budget that should be allocated to putting on a massive rock festival? How less safe are Union County residents when resources are diverted to chauffeuring rock semi-stars and guarding a VIP tent?

# THE ISSUE OF THE OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND (OSTF)

## Open Space Trust Fund Raid Details

Posted on countywatchers.com  
By John Bury | May 4, 2012

### The Evidence:

There have been \$68,466,428 in Open Space Trust Fund (OSTF) purchases with the \$8,020,044 spent for the St. Agnes Church Property in Clark on December, 2007 being the last major purchase.

Revenue from taxes and grants was more than sufficient to make those purchases however the county bonded for \$39,110,207 purportedly to make those purchases. But the audited revenue figures of the OTSF do NOT show that bond money coming into the OTSF though county budget figures do show \$28,695,202 through 2012 going out from the OSTF to repay those bonds.

*Bury asked these pertinent questions at the April 2012*

*Freeholder meeting and received no response from the Freeholders.*

*(Video of the meeting can be found on countywatchers.com.)*

Though there was silence from the county people are noticing. At the May 1, 2012 Summit Council Meeting it was reported that there was an hour-long discussion on withholding the Open Space tax during which Thomas Garvey, president of the Summit Taxpayers Associations (STA), made these remarks:

The purpose of my remarks tonight is to make a specific call for action regarding the Union County tax levy as follows:

Where as;

### Union County spending is completely out of control

as evidenced by their ignoring the governors 2% nominal spending cap, increasing Summit residents tax levy by 10.94%, voting life time health benefits to employees which will cost taxpayers over \$50MM (estimate). These same benefits are not available to most taxpayers or to our own city workers. For some perspective, the average NJ resident pays \$1,802 in state income tax and the average Summit resident pays more than twice this amount or \$3,999 in Union County tax alone.

### Union County borrowing is completely out of control

as evidenced by growing County debt which now totals over \$556 MM and is up \$154.7MM and 38% over the past 5 years. This debt does not include an additional \$150 MM in lease obligations which require payments of \$12.9MM per year.

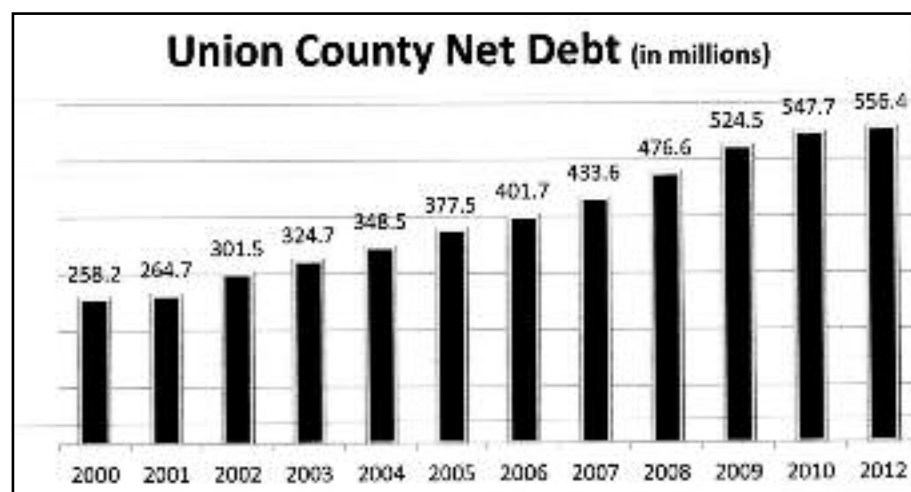
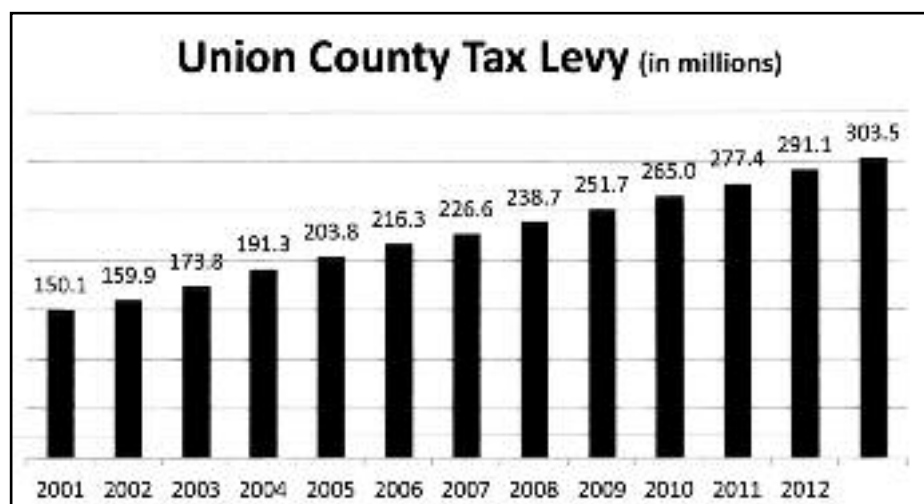
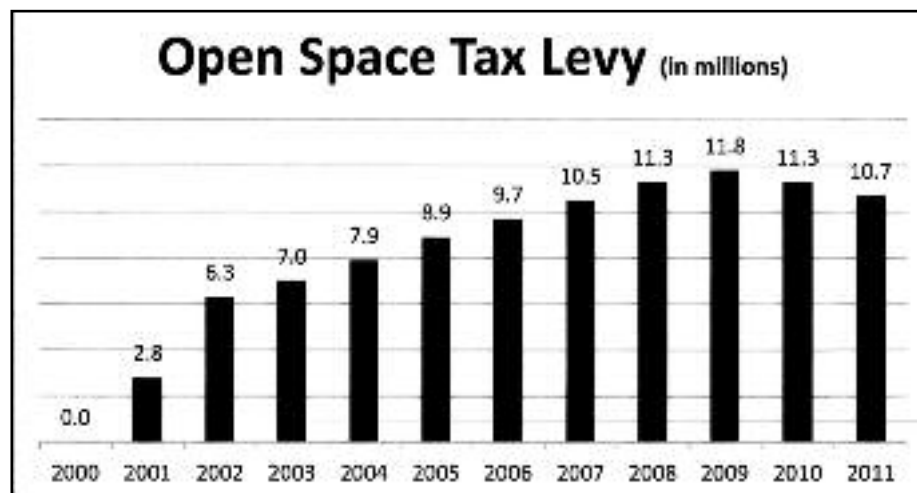
### Union County accountability is completely out of control

as evidenced by their ignoring 3 months of personal appearances and petitions from members of Summit City Council and providing no audit-able documentation or receipts of any kind to support tax levy demands totaling almost \$32 MM per year.

### Therefore,

the Summit Taxpayers Association requests that Summit City Council pass a resolution calling for the withholding and escrow of 1/2 of the Union County Open Space Tax (approx \$521 M) levied for 2012.

The argument for this request is outlined above but is also grounded in the belief the Open Space fund and tax levy are currently being used for purposes other than originally intended when approved. We also recommend Summit Council approve money to be used for a legal defense of this action.



**THE ESTIMATE FOR THE COUNTY DEBT SERVICE IN 2012 IS A WHOPPING \$39 MILLION!**

	PRINCIPAL BALANCE	2012 DEBT SERVICE
Bonds prior to 2011:	\$233,628,000	\$26,875,692
Bonds 2011:	\$ 80,000,000	\$ 8,917,480
Bond Anticipation Note:	\$130,000,000	\$ 2,000,000
2003 ERI:	\$ 6,980,000	\$ 1,200,733
Dam Loan:	\$ 2,912,714	\$ 206,095
Bonds Authorized/Not Issued	\$102,871,286	\$ 0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$556,392,000</b>	<b>\$39,200,000</b>