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MONROE TOWNSHIP TODAY

ALL THE ELECTION NEWS YOU NEED & MORE FROM MONROE TOWNSHIP

COUNCILMAN VALENTINE INTRODUCES DATA CENTER BAN FIGHTING FOR THE COMMUNITY WE CALL HOME

My Plan for Responsible Growth and a Better Future for Monroe

By Councilman John Valentine, Candidate for Mayor

Monroe Township is at a crossroads. The decisions we make today about land development, housing, infrastructure, water, farmland and economic growth will shape our community for decades.

My plan is straightforward: protect what makes Monroe special, insist on responsible growth, strengthen our local economy and make sure residents have a meaningful voice in decisions that affect their homes, neighborhoods and future.

MY PLAN: No Data Centers in Monroe

My position on data centers is clear, **I do not support data centers in Monroe Township.** This is why I helped introduce an ordinance banning data centers. Large-scale industrial projects should never be evaluated simply on the revenue they promise to generate. Data centers have become a significant statewide land-use, energy and infrastructure issue. New Jersey has responded with new requirements addressing data-center energy and water consumption, energy infrastructure and transparency. The State is also providing municipalities with guidance for evaluating impacts on water, wastewater capacity, fire protection, emergency response, infrastructure, noise, light and surrounding communities.

As your Mayor, I will support maintaining strong local land-use protections against data centers and will oppose efforts to introduce them through rezoning, redevelopment designations or other changes to our land-use regulations. I will insist that any proposal for an unusually intensive industrial use undergo a comprehensive review before changing zoning or redevelopment plans to accommodate it.

I do not believe we should change Monroe to fit a project. **A project should fit Monroe.** That principle becomes especially important when redevelopment is involved. State guidance specifically directs municipalities considering data-center community-benefit agreements to examine whether the project conforms to the municipal master plan and any redevelopment or rehabilitation plans and to review infrastructure and emergency-response impacts.

That is another reason I believe redevelopment designations deserve heightened scrutiny. As your Mayor, I will continue to fight to keep data centers out of Monroe and pursue economic development that is compatible with Monroe.



Councilman John Valentine, Ward 4
Candidate for Mayor of Monroe Township

MY PLAN: Give Municipalities a Stronger Voice

One of the most important conversations we need to have is about New Jersey's Mount Laurel affordable-housing doctrine and Fair Housing Act. I support affordable housing and believe people of all income levels deserve access to safe, quality housing.

Municipalities also have a legal responsibility to provide a realistic opportunity for their fair share of affordable housing but meeting that responsibility must go hand-in-hand with responsible planning.

Municipalities understand their roads, schools, water systems, emergency services and neighborhoods. We must be able to consider density, infrastructure, traffic, schools, public safety, water availability and the cumulative impact of development when planning our communities.

For the 2025 to 2035 Fourth Round, Monroe Township has accepted a 303-unit prospective-need affordable-housing obligation and a 50-unit present-need rehabilitation obligation. To this point, I have a plan.

(Continued on page 2)

As Mayor, I will establish a **New Jersey Coalition of Mayors & Municipalities** to bring communities facing similar development pressures together. Municipalities should share planning expertise, information and legal resources while collectively advocating in Trenton for sensible reforms that give local communities a stronger voice.

I will also explore whether a legally compliant shared municipal defense fund or legal-resource initiative could give participating municipalities additional resources when major land-use or affordable-housing matters arise.

The goal is not to avoid our legal responsibilities. It is to make sure municipalities have the tools to meet those responsibilities without surrendering responsible planning or the character of the communities they represent.

MY PLAN: Redevelopment Transparency

Another area where I believe Monroe Township needs greater scrutiny and transparency is the use of the ***"Area in Need of Redevelopment"*** process. New Jersey's Local Redevelopment and Housing Law gives municipalities significant powers to identify areas meeting statutory redevelopment criteria and ultimately adopt redevelopment plans.

Redevelopment can be an extremely valuable tool. It can help transform genuinely distressed or obsolete properties, revitalize aging commercial corridors, update functionally obsolescent buildings and attract investment.

But because the designation is so powerful, it should never become routine, automatic or driven by the development someone wants to put on a property.

The question should first be whether the property genuinely satisfies the statutory criteria, and the public should be able to see exactly how that conclusion was reached.

As your Mayor, I will initiate a ***Redevelopment Transparency and Accountability Policy*** for Monroe Township. For every proposed *"Area in Need of Redevelopment"*, I will advocate for a public record that clearly identifies:

- the specific statutory criteria being relied upon;
- the factual evidence supporting each criterion;
- the existing zoning of the property;
- the uses and density permitted before redevelopment;
- the uses and density proposed through redevelopment;
- the professionals and firms participating in the study and planning process;
- the professional fees associated with the designation and redevelopment plan;
- any proposed financial incentives, tax agreements or other public benefits;
- relevant contracts and political-contribution disclosures required by law; and
- the anticipated effects on traffic, infrastructure, water, emergency services, neighboring properties, taxpayers.

As your Mayor, I will advocate for a centralized online ***Redevelopment Transparency Portal*** containing redevelopment studies, Planning Board reports, redevelopment plans, ordinances and resolutions, professional contracts, applicable financial agreements, meeting dates and other relevant public records for each redevelopment area. Redevelopment should work ***for*** Monroe.

MY PLAN: Protect Our Farms, Forests & Water

Monroe's farms, forests, wooded properties and open spaces are not simply vacant land waiting to be developed. They are part of our identity and assets worth protecting. Once farmland is developed, we cannot simply recreate it somewhere else. Once forests are cleared and replaced by buildings, pavement and infrastructure, the character and environmental function of that land change.

As your Mayor, I will advocate for an updated inventory of Monroe's remaining farmland, significant wooded tracts, open space, environmentally sensitive properties and important water-resource areas so we have a clearer picture of what remains before deciding what should be developed. I want Monroe to be more aggressive in pursuing farmland preservation, open-space acquisition, conservation easements and available county and state preservation funding when appropriate. We need to look at development cumulatively rather than parcel by parcel. We need to save our farms and open space.

MY PLAN: Economic Development That Works for Monroe Township

Under my plan, Monroe will actively recruit businesses and appropriate light-industrial that creates jobs and strengthens our tax base while remaining compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. We will focus on our commercial areas and not continually look toward farmland and wooded properties for the next major development. New Jersey's current State Development and Redevelopment Plan emphasizes revitalizing underutilized developed areas while protecting natural resources. We will perfect the Township's permitting and development processes, focused on professionalism, predictability and transparency. Successful economic development creates jobs, expands our commercial tax base, improves existing properties and provides services residents want. As your Mayor, economic development will strengthen Monroe, not overwhelm it.

MY PLAN: Put YOU Into the Decision-Making

Responsible growth requires something that costs taxpayers nothing: ***Listening***. Residents should not learn about a major project only after critical decisions have already been made. As your Mayor, I will push for greater public accessibility to information involving significant development and redevelopment proposals.

Communication is key, and residents will be informed of any major developments using proper communication channels, and easily find information and scheduled public hearings on the Township website. I also want significant land-use proposals presented in language ordinary residents can understand including maps, lot and block numbers. Transparency means more than making a document technically available. It means making government understandable. Residents deserve enough information and enough time to participate meaningfully before consequential decisions are made. After all, these are your tax dollars at work.

John Valentine
Candidate for Mayor

COUNCILMAN VALENTINE TALKS PROPERTY TAXES

A DEEP DIVE INTO YOUR MONROE TWP PROPERTY TAX BILL

☑ **FACT:** The Mayor creates and controls the Municipal Budget

☑ **FACT:** Since the current Mayor took office, municipal taxes increased 27.5% ($23.88 million in 2022 to $30.44 million in 2026, an increase of about $6.56 million)

☑ **FACT:** Since the current Mayor took office, municipal spending increased 18.2% ($40.18 million in 2022 to $47.51 million n 2026, an increase of roughly $7.32 million)

When Monroe Township residents receive a property-tax bill, the entire amount is collected by the township. But that does not mean all of that money funds Monroe Township government. In fact, the property-tax bill combines taxes imposed for several separate purposes, including the Monroe Township Public Schools, County budget, Monroe Township municipal government, the municipal library and open-space. Understanding who receives those dollars and who controls them is an important part of understanding local government.

Where does your tax dollar go?

According to the Gloucester County Board of Taxation's official 2025 Tax Rate Breakdown, Monroe Township's total general property-tax rate was 3.769 per $100 of assessed value. Of that rate, 2.028 supported the local school system, 0.993 supported municipal purposes and 0.652 supported Gloucester County. The remaining portions funded the municipal library and county and local open-space levies.[1]

Expressed as a percentage of the total, approximately:

- 53.8% went to Monroe Township Public Schools.
- 26.3% went to Monroe Township municipal purposes.
- 17.3% went to Gloucester County.
- 1.3% went to the Monroe Township municipal library.
- 1.1% went to the county open-space tax.
- 0.1% went to Monroe's local open-space tax.

Those percentages are based on the official 2025 tax-rate components and are rounded. The school district, county and municipality are separate taxing entities with separate budgets and responsibilities.

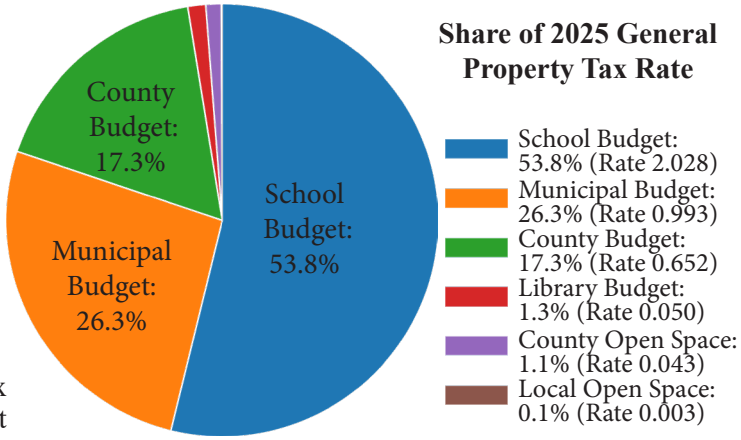
What does Monroe's mayor actually control?

Monroe Township operates under the Faulkner Act's mayor-council form of government. Under Monroe's municipal code, the mayor prepares the proposed municipal budget with assistance from the business administrator. Department heads submit their requested appropriations, and the mayor submits a recommended budget to Township Council.[2]

The mayor therefore has substantial influence over the municipal portion of the property-tax bill including proposed spending for departments, personnel, police, public works, parks and recreation, administration and other operations.

Where Monroe Township Property Taxes Go

2025 Official Tax Rate Breakdown



Total General Tax Rate: 3.769 per $100 assessed value

Source: Gloucester County Board of Taxation - 2025 Tax Rate Breakdown

Township Council has an important role as well. Under Monroe's code, council may reduce items in the mayor's proposed budget by majority vote; increasing an item requires an affirmative two-thirds vote. Council ultimately acts on the municipal budget. For 2026, Monroe's adopted municipal budget calls for $30.44 million to be raised through the local tax for municipal purposes, plus approximately $1.61 million for the minimum library tax. The total municipal budget is approximately $47.51 million.[3]

The mayor and Township Council do not set the Monroe Township Board of Education budget or Gloucester County budget. Those taxing requirements ultimately become components of the tax bill collected from property owners. The school component is particularly significant. The state's 2026-27 Budget for Monroe Township Public Schools in Gloucester County reports a total school levy of approximately $60.38 million.[4]

As residents and taxpayers we need to remember, we have one bill, with several taxing purposes. Your Monroe Township property-tax bill is not simply a "Township tax bill." Monroe collects the taxes, but the dollars support several distinct governmental purposes. Knowing the difference allows residents to ask the right questions of the right elected officials. When the municipal portion increases, residents should look at Monroe Township's municipal budget. When the school portion changes, the school budget and levy should be reviewed. County-tax changes should be evaluated through Gloucester County's budget. Understanding distinctions makes taxpayers better equipped to understand where their money goes, and who is responsible for spending it.

Sources and footnotes

1. Gloucester County Board of Taxation, *2025 Tax Rate Breakdown, Monroe Twp, Gloucester County.* Gloucester County official tax-rate archive
2. Township of Monroe Code, § 3-93, *Preparation of Budget.* Budget procedures
3. Township of Monroe, *2026 Municipal Budget*, Resolution R:157-2026 and subsequent adoption. Monroe Twp 2026 municipal budget info
4. New Jersey Department of Education, *2026-27 User-Friendly Budget - Monroe Township, Gloucester County*. Official Monroe Township school budget data

MONROE'S MILLIONS: FOLLOWING THE MONEY

EIGHT YEARS. A 30.1% INCREASE IN THE MUNICIPAL TAX LEVY. A $47.5 MILLION BUDGET. AND 95.8% OF YEAR-END CURRENT FUND SURPLUS BUDGETED FOR USE.

What Monroe Township's Financial Records Reveal.

Municipal budgets are complex documents. Appropriations, revenues, debt schedules, reserves and statutory calculations can make it difficult for taxpayers to answer a more straightforward question, **"What direction are Monroe Township's finances moving?".**

To provide a clearer picture, we reviewed eight years of municipal budget data for Monroe Township, Gloucester County, covering 2019 through 2026. The records show several measurable trends. The size of the municipal budget has increased.

The amount raised through the local tax for municipal purposes has increased at a faster rate. Salaries and wages have grown. And Monroe continues to use millions of dollars in Current Fund Surplus as a recurring source of budget revenue.[1][2][3]

None of those facts, standing alone, establishes financial mismanagement. Municipal costs rise. Salaries, health benefits, pensions and insurance increase. Capital improvements require funding, and municipalities routinely use available surplus as a source of revenue.

The more important issue is how these numbers move together over time, over the 8-year span.

In 2019, Monroe's municipal budget contained approximately $38.29 million in total general appropriations.

The 2026 adopted budget totals approximately $47.51 million.

That represents an increase of approximately $9.21 million, or 24.1%, from 2019 to 2026.[1][3]

The municipal-purpose tax levy grew even faster.

In 2019, Monroe budgeted approximately $23.39 million to be raised through the local tax for municipal purposes.

The 2026 adopted budget calls for $30,441,281.14.[1][3]

That is an increase of approximately $7.05 million, or 30.1%, over the eight-year period.

The more recent trend is also significant.

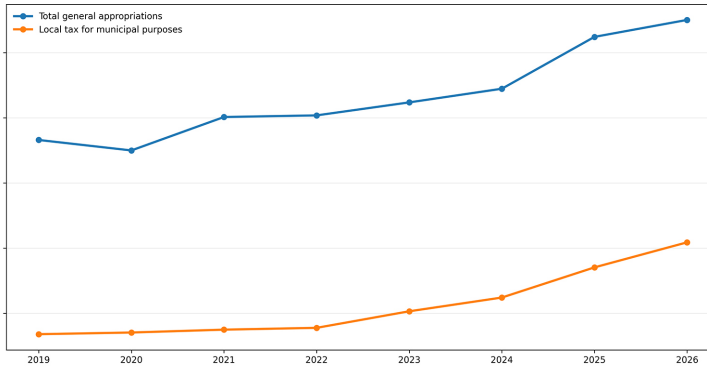
In 2022, the municipal-purpose tax levy was $23,880,555.47.

By 2026, it had increased to $30,441,281.14, an increase of approximately $6.56 million, or 27.5%, in four years. [2][3]

That does not mean an individual homeowner's municipal tax bill increased by the same percentage. Changes in assessed valuation, new ratables and other factors affect how the levy is distributed among properties.

It does mean that Monroe Township is collectively raising substantially more property-tax revenue for municipal purposes than it did several years ago.

Monroe Township Municipal Budget & Municipal-Purpose Tax Levy (2019-2026)



Source: Township of Monroe adopted municipal budget and budget summaries. Values shown in millions.

Understanding Monroe's use of surplus

One of the most important and frequently misunderstood components of a municipal budget is Current Fund Surplus.

Surplus should not be viewed simply as a municipal "savings account." It is a fund balance that can be generated through revenues exceeding estimates, unexpended appropriations, cancellations and other year-end financial activity. New Jersey municipal budgets permit available surplus to be anticipated as revenue in a subsequent budget.[4]

Using surplus is a normal component of municipal finance. It can help stabilize taxes and reduce the amount that otherwise must be raised from property owners.

The financial question is not whether surplus is used. It is how much is used, how consistently it is regenerated and what balance remains available.

Monroe has used surplus as a recurring budget revenue source throughout the period reviewed.

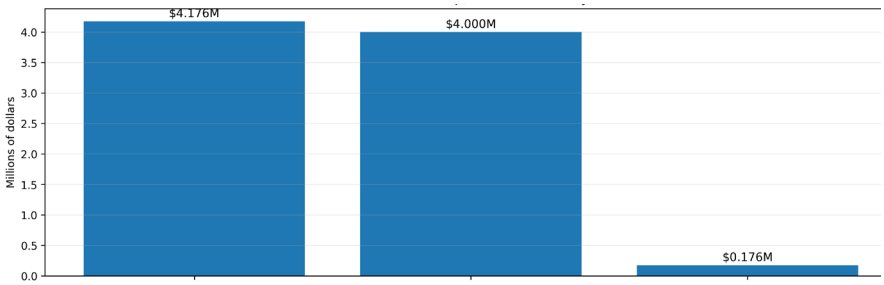
The township anticipated approximately:

- $3.86 million in 2019
- $3.33 million in 2020
- $3.10 million in 2021
- $4.22 million in 2022
- $4 million in 2023
- $4.1 million in 2024
- $4 million in 2025
- $4 million in 2026.[1][2][5]

Since 2022, approximately $4 million of surplus has been incorporated into the municipal budget every year.

A closer look at the 2026 surplus

The appendix to Monroe's 2026 budget provides an important snapshot of that cycle. As of December 31 2025 the township reported a "Current Fund surplus balance" of $4,175,835.49. Monroe then anticipated $4 million of that amount as revenue in its 2026 budget, leaving $175,835.49 as the surplus balance remaining on that budget schedule. [3]



2026 Current Surplus Fund Snapshot

Source: Township of Monroe 2026 Municipal Budget, Appendix to Budget Statement

The $4 million appropriation represents approximately 95.8% of the December 31 surplus balance reported on the schedule. That figure requires context. It does not mean Monroe will end 2026 with only $175,835.49 in surplus. Surplus can be regenerated during the year through municipal financial operations.

The figure illustrates why regeneration is important. When approximately $4 million in surplus is used as recurring budget revenue, the township must continue generating sufficient new surplus if it intends to maintain that level of support in future budgets. Having a surplus is important.

If surplus generation does not keep pace while recurring expenses continue to increase, the municipality eventually must address the difference through some combination of expenditure reductions, additional recurring revenue, taxation or other legally available financial measures.

That is why the more useful financial question is not, "Did Monroe use surplus?" It is, "Is Monroe regenerating surplus at a rate sufficient to support its recurring use while maintaining adequate financial flexibility?"

Payroll is also rising

Personnel costs represent another significant component of municipal spending. Monroe's 2021 budget reported approximately $14.97 million in salaries and wages. That figure increased to approximately $16.85 million in the adopted 2025 budget and $17.96 million in the 2026 budget.[2][3][6]

From 2021 to 2026, budgeted salaries and wages increased by approximately $2.99 million, or 19.9%. The 2025 municipal budget also reported 175 employees, compared with 156 in the 2024 budget. [6]

A closer look at debt

Monroe's 2026 budget summary reports an outstanding general debt balance of approximately $35.08 million, compared with approximately $36.86 million reported in the 2025 budget summary.[3][6]

Debt is not inherently evidence of fiscal weakness. Municipalities appropriately borrow for long-lived public improvements, equipment and infrastructure. The relevant questions are what the borrowing financed, how much annual debt service is required, how debt changes over time and how those obligations fit within the township's overall financial capacity. The 2026 budget appropriates approximately $3.34 million for debt service, compared with approximately $3.08 million in the adopted 2025 budget.[3][6]

What the numbers do, and do not show

The records reviewed for this analysis do not, by themselves, establish that Monroe Township is in financial distress. They do show that taxpayers are supporting a substantially larger municipal government budget than they were eight years ago. From 2019 to 2026, total general appropriations increased approximately 24.1%, while the municipal-purpose tax levy increased approximately 30.1%. Since 2021, budgeted salaries and wages have increased approximately 19.9%. And since 2022, Monroe has consistently incorporated approximately $4 million annually in Current Fund surplus into its budget revenue structure.

New Jersey's Division of Local Government Services has identified liquidity, fund-balance strength, revenue reliability and long-term liability exposure as important measures in evaluating municipal fiscal stress. The division also has warned municipalities to monitor declining fund-balance availability, declining nontax revenue and rising salary and health-benefit costs.[7]

Transparency begins with measurement

A municipal budget tells taxpayers how government plans to finance operations for one year. A multi-year analysis provides something different: perspective. Residents should be able to see, in one place, how Monroe's total appropriations, municipal tax levy, surplus generation and use, payroll, staffing, debt and major recurring revenues have changed over time. An annual municipal financial dashboard covering at least five to 10 years would provide that perspective without requiring residents to work through hundreds of pages of budget documents. Presenting it clearly would allow residents and elected officials alike to distinguish temporary fluctuations from longer-term financial trends, and to ask informed questions about the decisions that will shape future budgets. Because responsible financial management begins with understanding the numbers.You cannot manage what you do not measure.

Sources and footnotes

1. Township of Monroe, Gloucester County, *2020 Municipal Budget*, including comparative 2019 figures. Township records identify the municipality as the Township of Monroe, County of Gloucester.
2. Township of Monroe, Gloucester County, *2022 Municipal Budget -Adopted and Revenue and Appropriations Summaries*. The documents report 2022 total general appropriations of $40,181,841.77, a municipal-purpose levy of $23,880,555.47 and $4.22 million in surplus anticipated.
3. Township of Monroe, Gloucester County, *2026 Municipal Budget and Resolution R:183-2026, Adoption of the 2026 Municipal Budget*. The adopted budget reports total revenues of $47,506,699.14, a municipal-purpose tax levy of $30,441,281.14 and $4 million in surplus anticipated.
4. New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services, municipal budget and financial-reporting materials.
5. Township of Monroe municipal budget documents and revenue summaries, 2019-26. "Surplus anticipated" refers to surplus incorporated as a revenue source in the applicable municipal budget; it should not be interpreted as the township's total surplus balance for that year.
6. Township of Monroe, Gloucester County, *2025 Municipal Budget, Resolution R:142-2025*. The adopted summary reports $46,206,347.20 in total general appropriations, $16,853,470 in salaries and wages, 175 employees and an outstanding general debt balance of $36,859,911.27.7.
7. New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services, 2026 local-government finance and fiscal-stress guidance.

VOTING INFORMATION

Vote-By-Mail • Vote Early • Vote on Election Day • Track Your Ballot

3 WAYS TO VOTE:

1) VOTE BY MAIL (VBM)
2) EARLY IN-PERSON
3) ELECTION DAY

Scan QR Code for more info about the 3-WAYS-to-VOTE or visit https://www.gloucestercountynj.gov/181/Elections *Please note that Vote-by-Mail Ballots cannot be returned at a polling location.

YOUR POLLING LOCATION

To find out where you will be voting, use this polling location finder. Scan QR Code, type in your street address and your zip code or visit: nj.gov/state/elections/vote-polling-location.s

EARLY VOTING DATES, TIME & LOCATION

Early voting starts Saturday, October 24th and runs through Sunday, November 1st. Hours are Monday to Saturday from 10am to 8pm and Sunday, November 1st, 10am to 6pm.

TRACK MY VBM BALLOT

Return your Vote-by-Mail Ballot as soon as possible. Place your ballot in the secure dropbox at the Municipal Building, or mail via USPS, or hand deliver to Board of Elections by 8pm Election Day, Nov 3. Track the status of your ballot online. nj.gov/state/elections/vote-track-my-ballot.shtml

NO DATA CENTERS IN MONROE TWP

VOTE COLUMN B

OUR PLEDGE

Municipal Government Efficiency

- ☑ Control Spending / Eliminate Wasteful Spending
- ☑ Hold the Line on Property Taxes
- ☑ Streamline & Document Procedures & Processes
- ☑ Drive Efficiency Through Continual Improvement
- ☑ Make Municipal Government Transparent

Economic Development

- ☑ Revitalize Monroe's Business Corridors
- ☑ Create a Business-Friendly Environment
- ☑ Address Functional Obsolescence
- ☑ Grow Our Tax Base & Ratables
- ☑ Support Local Business, Attract New Business

Community Empowerment

- ☑ **Keep Data Centers Out of Monroe!**
- ☑ Support Law Enforcement w/ Resources & Tools
- ☑ Support Our Seniors & Veterans
- ☑ Strengthen Public Safety & Infrastructure
- ☑ Demand Responsible Growth
- ☑ Give Residents a Seat at the Table

FOUR CANDIDATES. ONE COMMITMENT. MONROE.



JOHN VALENTINE for MAYOR

★Current Monroe Township Ward 4 Councilman
★Honorably discharged from the United States Military
★Local farmer and owner of Valentine's Farm
★Retired business owner, Union Masonary & Restoration, Inc.
★Council liaison to Environmental Commission, Open Space & Library
★Advocate for responsible growth and transparent government
★Committed to protecting Monroe's farms, open space and character
★Opposes high-density development that sacrifices farms & open space
★**No Data Centers & Mega-Warehouses in Monroe**



BRENDA BROWN for COUNCIL at Large

★Proud 44-year Monroe Township resident
★Nationally Certified School Psychologist
★Decades of professional, volunteer and community service
★Professional background in problem solving and decision-making
★Focused on responsive, accessible and transparent government
★Advocate for seniors, families and residents of every generation
★Committed to ensuring residents have a voice in decisions
★Brings a people-first perspective to local government
★**No Data Centers & Mega-Warehouses in Monroe**



EVERETT DAVIS for COUNCIL at Large

★Served in the U.S. Army and Army Reserve
★Retired from Camden County Department of Corrections
★Two-term president of Local 11 Retired Police & Fire Fighters Union
★Rotary vice president and active community volunteer
★Decades of experience in leadership, public service & public safety
★Supports responsible development and transparent government
★Brings a service approach to government focused on accessiblity
★Strong supporter of law enforcement and first responders
★**No Data Centers & Mega-Warehouses in Monroe**



YVONNE PILLA for COUNCIL at Large

★Brings 40-years of management and customer service experience
★Retired and committed to putting residents first
★Experienced in managing people and solving problems
★Supports responsible growth that protects Monroe's rural character
★Brings a practicle, common-sense approach to decision-making
★Committed to fiscal responsiblity and respect for taxpayer dollars
★Experience with budgets and working within them
★Believes residents deserve transparency and a voice in government
★**No Data Centers & Mega-Warehouses in Monroe**

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HEARTBEAT OF MONROE

John Valentine *for Mayor*
Everett Davis, Brenda Brown & Yvonne Pilla
for Council at Large

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www.heartbeatofmonroe.com
Email: info@heartbeatofmonroe.com
Who led the ban

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