

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 3, 2013

**ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS RE-ELECT
BLONNIE R. WATSON PRESIDENT & PATRICIA SEBOLD VICE PRESIDENT FOR 2013**

Unanimous Re-Elections take place during the Board's January 2nd Reorganization Meeting

(Newark, NJ) – Freeholder Blonnie R. Watson of Newark and Freeholder Patricia Sebold of Livingston were re-elected President and Vice President, respectively, of the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders during the Board's Annual Reorganization Meeting held on Wednesday, January 2, 2013, at the Hall of Records.

Freeholder President Watson was nominated by Freeholder Brendan Gill of Montclair, Freeholder Rufus Johnson of Newark and Freeholder Sebold, while Freeholder Vice President Sebold was nominated by Freeholder Carol Clark of East Orange, Freeholder Rolando Bobadilla of Newark and Freeholder Watson. Watson and Sebold, both re-elected unanimously, were sworn-in by Judge Jerome St. John of the New Jersey Appellate Court.



During her remarks, Freeholder President Watson thanked her colleagues saying, “To all of you, my esteemed freeholder colleagues, I am deeply honored and grateful for your vote of confidence in re-electing me as your president. To take this office for the seventh time is both inspiring and humbling, and I *assure* you that I am well aware of the awesome responsibility that comes with leadership, and that I am prepared to continue to provide leadership to this esteemed body.” She went on to say, “I am sure that all of you will agree that at this time in our history, the qualities of leadership are constantly being tested. I know you and the residents of Essex County expect me to be prepared and to provide leadership founded on integrity, accountability and accessibility. I commit to be unbending when important principles are at stake, yet kind and caring when faced with the everyday problems of real people.” She spoke with pride about all the Board has accomplished, as well as optimism about the Board's ability to overcome challenges they will face in 2013. She thanked the Board's staff, County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo and his Administration, and her husband, Lewis, for their help and support, and concluded her remarks saying, “Thank you, Essex County, for affording me the opportunity to have a job that I love.”

Freeholder President Watson has been an At-Large member of the Essex County Board of Freeholders since 1996, having been elected to six consecutive 3-year terms, and will begin her seventh consecutive year as the Board's President. Prior to beginning her first term as President in 2007, she served as Vice President of the Board from 1998-2002. She serves as President of the High Park Gardens Cooperative Corporation in Newark and is a former Board member of the National Association of Housing Cooperatives. Freeholder President Watson is also a housing consultant, a retired U. S. Postal Service executive, former Commissioner on the Newark Zoning Board of Adjustment and former Essex County Democratic County Committee Chair for Newark's Central Ward. She is a member of the National Congress of Black Women and the Newark Housing Authority's Dr. MLK Blvd. Stakeholders Committee. She has received numerous awards and

recognition for her public and community service and has been named twice in the Congressional Record by Congressmen Peter Rodino and Albio Sires.

“I am honored and humbled to be elected Vice President for the 2013 term”, said Freeholder Sebold, and directly addressing her colleagues, said, “I thank all of you so much for your support.” She spoke proudly about her years on the Board since 1993 and especially about her role in researching the establishment of an open space trust fund, sponsoring the resolution to create the Essex County Recreation and Open Space Advisory Board, and serving as one of its members ever since, “which has given me great satisfaction in developing a better quality of life for all.” She also recounted the County’s impressive progress and accomplishments in recent years: fiscal stability, the County’s improved bond rating, modernized roads and bridges, the new Leroy F. Smith, Jr. Public Safety Building, Veterans Memorial Park and Hospital Center, and the new interactive green energy exhibition at the Environmental Center, adding, “...and the list goes on and on.” Remarking that the economy is not in good condition, she concluded her remarks by saying, “We must all work together putting Essex County First; that is *our* mission, and that is *my* mission. As Vice President of this Board, I will work as hard as possible to do what is best for all the people in our county.”



Freeholder Vice President Sebold has been an At-Large member of the Freeholder Board since April 1993, having been elected to seven consecutive terms. She is currently serving as Vice President for the second consecutive year, a position she also held on five previous occasions in 1996 and from 2003-2006. Freeholder Sebold taught English at West Orange High School from 1970 until her retirement in 2001, served on the Essex County Vocational Schools Board of Education, as a Commissioner on the Essex County Board of Elections, and has been chairperson of the Livingston Democratic Municipal Committee since 1976. She is a member of the League of Women Voters, the Sierra Club and the Boards of Trustees of the United Jewish Communities of MetroWest and the Jewish Community Housing Corporation.

The opening and closing prayers were offered by Reverend Dr. Jason C. Guice, Pastor of Newark’s Hopewell Baptist Church.

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