

## Former NJSACOP Presidents Bring Leadership Skills to Elected Office

On Election Day, two former presidents of the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police—both now retired—were elected to their local governing bodies.

In Sayreville, John Zebrowski won a three-year term, as the Republicans will now possess all seats on the Borough Council, as well as the mayor's seat, for the first time in the history of the municipality. And, in Middle Township, Chris Leusner has won a committee seat on the three-person, all-GOP governing body, following in the footsteps of his father, a former elected official.

"Having spent my entire adulthood serving the public, my service on the Borough Council is a natural extension," Zebrowski said. Added Leusner: "After 26 years in law enforcement, I was looking forward to the right opportunity for another chapter to continue serving the public."



*John Zebrowski and Chris Leusner*

The NJSACOP interviewed the former police chiefs, now elected officials, to learn more.

### **Committeeman Chris Leusner**

Leusner, who served as NJSACOP President from 2019-2020, was informed in March by the long-time mayor of Middle Township, Tim Donahue, that he would no longer be running for the Township Committee.

"After my career in law enforcement, I was looking forward to the right opportunity to serve the people in a different capacity," he said. "I care a lot about this community and still wanted to be involved after my law enforcement career. So, I ran for office."

Similar to Zebrowski, Leusner does not want to interfere in police operations in his role as an elected official. "We have a great department, a great police chief and a great working relationship," he said. "It is her job to run the department. I am going to be there to give her what she needs."

The committee-elect, a Republican, said it is an honor to follow in the footsteps of his father, Chuck, a retired school teacher, who served 24 years on the governing body, from 1982-2006, and still lives in town. "My dad is a Democrat. So, we agree to disagree," Leusner said, with a laugh. "But he really supports me."

Leusner is one of the original six coalition members of the Cape Regional Wellness Alliance, a group of community leaders founded in 2016 charged with administering grant funds from New Jersey Health Initiatives to reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Cape May County.

He is known for introducing the "Handle With Care" partnership with local schools to alert the district to students who might need extra support after witnessing or experiencing a traumatic incident. That program is now statewide.

### **Councilman John Zebrowski**

Zebrowski, a 35-year police veteran, served as Sayreville police chief from May 2011 through August 2022. He was then approached by former Mayor Kennedy O'Brien to join his team, as he considered a new run for office. Zebrowski agreed, beginning his service in February of this year to fill an unexpired term on the Borough Council.

On November 7th, Zebrowski was elected to a three-year term on O'Brien's team, which had a clean sweep.

"My role changed from being the leader of a law enforcement agency to a team member of a larger group," he said. "I transitioned from directing agency supervisors of the police department to providing support for the department heads of our community's agencies in order to better respond to the requests from the residents of Sayreville."

As a lifelong Sayreville resident Zebrowski said, he offers plenty of perspective and is proud to be able to recognize and respond to the diverse interests among residents. His leadership role with the NJSACOP prepared him for his next important step.

"During my time as police chief, I always appreciated the confidence that Mayor O'Brien showed in me," said Zebrowski, who served as NJSACOP state president in 2021-2022. "I am proud to be part of a strong team to move Sayreville forward and ensure it remains in a position to be successful in serving our constituents."

Zebrowski is also a practicing attorney in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and a Certified Public Manager for the State of New Jersey. He is also Director of Organizational Development for Extra Duty Solutions and serves as co-host of "Chief Talk," the NJSACOP podcast series.