



NEWS FROM
ULSTER COUNTY
County Executive Jen Metzger

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Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger Appoints James Amenta as Deputy County Executive

KINGSTON, NY - Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger has appointed James Amenta as Deputy County Executive to replace departing Deputy County Executive Johanna Contreras, who will leave County service on April 25 to accept a position in Congressman Pat Ryan's office. Amenta, a Phoenicia resident, has served for 18 years in the federal government — including 10 years with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and eight years with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security — bringing a wealth of government and management experience to this important position.

In his most recent position as Program Manager at HUD, Amenta co-led a 14-member team that distributed between \$1 to \$2 billion in federal grants annually to support housing and urban development programs. He has led multi-agency initiatives, streamlined compliance efforts, and directed fiscal strategy for 600+ grants per year. Amenta has also spearheaded staff development initiatives, strengthened relationships across government and nonprofit sectors, and championed equitable community access to housing, economic development opportunities, and essential public services.

Prior to his role as Program Manager, Amenta served as Senior Community Planning and Development Representative at HUD, overseeing a portfolio of 55 grantees and managing \$50 million in federal funding for housing, economic development, and public services. He provided regulatory guidance, compliance oversight, and technical assistance; led risk-based monitoring efforts and training programs on fiscal and program regulations; and represented HUD in community meetings and legislative discussions on housing policy and regional challenges.

Prior to his tenure at HUD, Amenta served as Mission Support Specialist at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, where he developed office policies on procurement, asset management, and fiscal controls and ensured regulatory compliance.

“James brings a wealth of government leadership and management experience, a deep knowledge of housing and community needs, and the kind of collaborative, can-do approach to public service that is so important to this leadership role,” **said Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger.** “I have no doubt that he will serve the County well as Deputy County Executive, alongside Deputies Jamie Capuano and Amanda LaValle. I am also thrilled that Deputy Executive Capuano has agreed to assume the additional role of Chief of Staff. I have greatly enjoyed working with Johanna Contreras and appreciate her service to our County. We wish her all the best in her new position, and we look forward to working with her in her new role with Congressman Ryan’s office.”

“I’ve always believed that public service is about tending to what we grow together — ideas, communities, trust. In every position I’ve held, I’ve seen what’s possible when people come together with vision and shared purpose,” **said Amenta.** “Ulster County is already rich soil for innovation and collaboration, and I’m honored to join County Executive Jen Metzger and her deeply committed team. I look forward to rolling up my sleeves and working side by side to nurture a thriving Ulster County.”

Amenta holds a Master of Public Administration from the City University of New York, with a concentration in Public Policy and Urban Affairs, and a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Philosophy from Central Connecticut State University.

In addition to his professional achievements, Amenta has been actively involved in his community since moving to Phoenicia in 2018. He operates a small farm with his wife, where they raise their two children. He co-founded the Phoenicia Farmers Market in 2021 and the Shandaken Community Compost Project in 2024, both focused on local sustainability initiatives. He has also volunteered on multiple local boards and community projects.

In her new responsibilities as Chief of Staff, Deputy County Executive Jamie Capuano will continue to manage and oversee her current portfolio of County departments while taking over the day-to-day operational supervision of staff in the County Executive’s office.

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