

Legislative Review of Westchester County 2009 Proposed Operating Budget Department Budget Worksheet

County Department:	<u>Law</u>	Date of Presentation:	<u>11/17/08</u>
Commissioner Name:	<u>Charlene Indelicato</u>	Commissioner Phone:	<u>995-2690</u>
Committee with Oversight Responsibility for Dept:	<u>Legislation</u>	Committee Chair:	<u>William Burton</u>
Prepared by (Committee Coordinator): <u>Steve Bass</u>			

Budget: Proposed 2009:	\$ <u>13,349,162</u>	Approved 2008:	\$ <u>13,640,592</u>	%Increase/Decrease:	<u>-(2.2%)</u>
Staffing: # employees 2008:	<u>111</u>	Proposed staffing 2009:	<u>110</u>	% +/- Staffing:	<u>-1</u>
Sources of Funding: County:	<u>100%</u>	State:	<u>0%</u>	Federal:	<u>0%</u>
		Grants:	<u>0%</u>		
Mandated portion of department budget:	\$ <u>N/A</u>	% of total dept budget:	<u>NA</u>	% of county budget:	<u>NA</u>

2008 DEPT. HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Did committee invite commissioner in this past year to discuss specific areas of concern? Describe.

The Law Department has at least one representative attend each weekly meeting of the Committee on Legislation. Members work very closely with the department to get a sense of what the staff is doing.

Report on 2008: Highlight of dept's accomplishments *(Usually in executive summary of dept budget)*

Appeals, Opinions and Legislation Bureau: Now conducts Freedom of Information Law Training, Presentations on Ethics for County Employees, local laws on alternate taxable status dates, plastic bag recycling program, social host law, and cold war veteran's property tax exemptions. **Contracts Bureau:** Agreements with Wheelabrator Westchester, L.P. for the Pharmaceutical Take Back Program, to participate in the Hudson Valley Municipal Bulk Purchasing Group, Emergency Shelters and East of Hudson Watershed funds. **Litigation Bureau:** Byrnes, Tornello, Hugh O'Kane Electric Co. are closed cases. A number of others were settled, dismissed or are on appeal. **Family Court Bureau:** The Westchester Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) improved the safety and well being of children by changing systems that are failing to protect them. They review child fatalities, processes and history of the family with DSS to create a corrective action plan and to write all fatality reports.

2009 Operating Budget

Impact of State budget cuts on dept: \$ 0 - known at this time

Specific cutbacks to accommodate reduced spending? Program areas most affected:

Although there is an increase in case load there is a reduction in staff.

What's expected public impact of proposed cuts?

The public should not feel the impact. The County Attorney stated the staff would be able to increase its productivity.

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QUOTES/COMMENTS

Quote from Oversight Committee Chair

"I am pleased to see the increase in case loads has been met by growth in productivity by staff. The impact felt by taxpayers has been reduced by cutting costs," said County Legislator Bill Burton, Legislation Committee Chair.

"However, the amount of frivolous litigation concerns me. We need to be more vigilant about that."

Quote from Budget & Appropriations Chair

"The implementation of HAVA, the new requirements regarding E-discovery, an increased focus on pursuing child support claims and environmental consent orders with the state represent the primary forces behind an increase in the County Attorney's workload," said Alvarado. "The County Attorney's office proposed budget projects an increase of departmental and interdepartmental revenues of over \$450,000 which reflects a modest and appropriate increase in the hourly rate changed to all county departments for law services from \$135 to \$139."

Other Comment(s)/Quotes, Facts

The law department budget is a 2% decrease from last year. The 2009 budget proposes a negative tax levy of (-1,023,605).

The case level increased while the number of attorneys they have has decreased.

The committee reviewed the amount that was budgeted for litigation. They will continue to see if any cuts can be made on that line.

There are four bureaus in the County Attorney's office: Litigation, Appeals, Contracts and Family.

The Law Department generates two separate revenue streams. Departmental revenues generated through charges billed to other county funds. Inter-Departmental revenues received from departments for which the Law Department performs essential legal services.