



Westchester County Legislator
PETER B. HARCKHAM
Proudly Serving the 2nd District

800 Michaelian Office Building
 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
 White Plains, New York 10601

TELEPHONE:
 (914) 995-2810

E-MAIL:
 Harckham@westchesterlegislators.com

facebook.com/westchestercountyBOL
 twitter.com/westchesterBOL
 youtube.com/westchestercountybol

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Dear Friends,

As we slowly climb out of the worst recession since the Great Depression, I continue to place the fiscal well-being of Westchester County as my number one priority. And our efforts, such as reducing the size of the workforce by 12%, decreasing spending and requiring County workers to contribute to their health insurance, are bearing fruit.

The 2010 budget returned a surplus of \$67 Million to fund balance. The 2011 budget returned \$32 Million to fund balance. You might recall that budget cut taxes by 2.2%, reduced the size of the County's workforce by 10%, yet saved important jobs in public safety, health, environmental protection and the social safety net. The County also retained its AAA bond rating.

The 2012 budget, crafted in a bipartisan fashion with the Astorino Administration, delivered no tax increase again, maintained our AAA rating and saved 187 county jobs in Probation and the Department of Public Works, Department of Emergency Services and Parks. The Board of Legislators also continued to make wise investments in repairing our aging infrastructure as well, maintaining Westchester's competitiveness and creating good jobs in the process. Further, the County maintained a healthy 8.1% fund balance.

Appearing before the Committee on Budget & Appropriations in October, Nick Desantis of O'Connor Davies, the County's auditors, said, "The County continues to maintain its fiscal integrity."

In an era of ever shrinking federal and state dollars, we must find cost effective solutions to providing the vital services upon which Westchester residents depend.

Sincerely,



Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Winter 2012 Newsletter



Peter B. Harckham

District 2 ~ Bedford, Lewisboro, Mount Kisco, North Salem, Pound Ridge, Somers



2012 County Budget Delivers 0% Tax Increase

Maintains AAA Rating, Protects Jobs and Services

The Westchester County Board of Legislators, working in a bipartisan manner with the Astorino Administration, passed a budget for 2012 that delivered a 0% tax increase, maintained the County's AAA bond rating and saved important jobs and services. Among those jobs saved were in the Department of Probation. County Legislator Pete Harckham, Majority Leader of the Board of Legislators, fought to restore those jobs.

"These jobs are critical both from a public safety perspective and a tax perspective," said Harckham. "The \$5 we spend daily in the Probation Department to monitor a defendant saves the tax payers over \$300 daily it costs to incarcerate an individual in our corrections system." The Board also restored critical jobs in the Department of Emergency Services

The Board saved important engineering jobs in the Department of Public Works and the Department of Planning to address the scores of capital projects in the pipeline to repair County roads, bridges and other infrastructure. In addition, the Board restored important funding for neighborhood health centers, such as Open Door in Mount Kisco, lowered the proposed parent share of low-income daycare for working parents, saved funding for County nature centers and parks, as well as the County's deer management program.

"This budget continued to provide relief for taxpayers while at the same time maintained important services that the residents of northern Westchester depend upon," Harckham stated. ■



Board 2011 Budget Returns \$32 Million Surplus to Fund Balance

Surplus Validates Board Actions on Budget

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Review (CAFR), prepared by the County's auditors, O'Connor Davies, points out that the Board of Legislators 2011 budget delivered a \$32 Million surplus returned to fund balance. The auditors also quantified that the County's fund balance now stands at 8.1%, well above the 5% sought by the major rating agencies.

The Board's budget, which cut taxes 2.2% versus the 1% proposed by the County Executive, reduced the workforce by 10% and saved important jobs in public safety. The Board's budget met stiff opposition from the County Execu-

tive, who called it flawed and used the line item veto in an attempt to alter the Board's budget. The Board overrode 247 of the line item vetoes.

County Legislator Pete Harckham, who helped craft the Board's budget, said, "The CAFR validates the decisions by the Board of Legislators. We passed a budget that cut taxes historically, reduced the size of the County workforce, decreased spending and maintained the County's AAA rating. At the same time we protected critical jobs and restored vital funding in health, social services and the environment." ■

Harckham Advances Emergency Preparedness Legislation

Cites Lessons Learned from Storms Sandy, Irene and Lee

Citing lessons learned from Sandy, Irene and Lee, County Legislator Pete Harckham sponsored two emergency preparedness bills in the Board of Legislators. Said Harckham, "In these storms, much of northern Westchester was without power for over a week. As a result, cell towers were down, eliminating the only form of communication in many cases, and generators running critical sites such as shelters, Office of Emergency Management headquarters, town halls and other critical infrastructure, were burning out. It was challenging to find replacements."

The first bill forwarded by Harckham would require all cell towers in Westchester be equipped with emergency backup generators with at least a 72-hour supply of fuel. Said Harckham, "With land line phone service down, cell service was the only way to communicate. With cell service down it was extremely difficult for residents, municipal officials and emergency workers to communicate."

The second bill, passed unanimously by the full Board of Legislators, would require the Department of Emergency Services to conduct an audit of both County and local municipal generators. Harckham noted, "It was tough enough to find back up generators for northern Westchester. Had these been countywide events, the results could have been far worse." ■

Harckham Calls for County Sponsored Emergency Medical Technician Training

Brokers Temporary Solution with WCC for Training in Northern Westchester

Responding to pleas from local volunteer ambulance corps for assistance with training challenges, County Legislator Pete Harckham has proposed legislation that allows the Westchester County Department of Emergency Services to provide training to ambulance workers in Westchester. Harckham said: "The County currently provides state-of-the-art training to every police officer and firefighter in Westchester. It just makes sense for the County to fill this gap."

Currently, EMT training is overseen by the State through regional councils. Northeast Westchester is the only region that does not have a "sponsor" to provide training, which then forces volunteer ambulance corps and members to scramble on their own for both basic and continuing training.

At a meeting of the Committee on Public Safety, Harckham was able to negotiate a temporary solution in which Westchester Community College will act as a temporary sponsor of training and will offer classes in North Salem beginning in January 2013.



"This is a good first step in providing stability, but ultimately I think the solution lies in training by the County," Harckham said. ■

Septic Sub-Committee Advances Discussions with Regulatory Authorities

Advanced Septic Technology Considered as Cost-Effective Solution for Cash Strapped Municipalities

The Board of Legislators Sub Committee on Septics, chaired and founded by Legislator Pete Harckham, is advancing discussions with regulatory agencies such as the NYS Department of Conservation, NYC Department of Environmental Protection and the Westchester County Department of Health on a pilot project for using Enhanced Treatment Units and Decentralized Septic Systems as a potential cost-effective solution to waste water challenges in the NYC watershed. "Municipalities no longer have the ability to afford massive

wastewater infrastructure," Harckham noted. "ETU's and decentralized systems provide the same level of treatment at a more competitive cost."

At the September meeting of the Septic Sub-Committee, DEC and DEP officials said they were open to discussing a pilot project in northern Westchester. Harckham called this "an extremely positive development," and added, "We still need to do a great deal of work on the engineering and funding sides. But having them as partners now will help move the ball down the field." ■

County Improves County Roads and Bridges in 2nd Legislative District

Harckham Calls for Faster Pace with Capital Projects



Working together, the Board of Legislators and the County Executive are advancing repairs to County infrastructure in northern Westchester. Most notable was the repaving of June Road in North Salem in 2012. Bedford Center Road in Bedford was repaved in 2011. Last year, bonds were passed to design drainage and the repaving of Reservation Road, in Ward Pound Ridge. "Reservation Road has long been the bane of our existence," said Harckham. "The design work is almost complete, and I look forward to a Bond Act from the Administration in the 2013 Capital Budget to expedite the work. It's in a sorry condition." Recently, the Board passed a Bond

Act to design repairs on the June Road bridge over the Titicus River.

But there are six other County-owned bridges in the 2nd Legislative District that are currently well below par on the rating scale.

"Roads and bridges are the life blood of the economy in northern Westchester," said Harckham. "The Administration needs to expedite this work." In the final 2012 Budget, the Board of Legislators retained dozens of engineers from the Department of Public Works, who are responsible for design and construction oversight, but were slated to be terminated in the proposed budget. ■

County Board Adds Parcels in Northern Westchester to Agricultural District



In September, the Westchester County Board of Legislators voted unanimously to add eight new parcels to Westchester County's Agricultural District as part of the New York State's Agricultural District program. New parcels were added from Bedford and North Salem. Said County Legislator Pete Harckham: "Increasing the number of parcels in our Agricultural District is good for our economy, and it's good for our environment. This is a win-win situation." Members of the Agricultural District do not receive any tax advantages for being in the district but are granted protections to allow them to engage in well-stewarded agribusiness. ■

County Shares \$12.5M in Sales Tax Revenue with 2nd L.D.

2011

Bedford	2,269,772
Lewisboro	1,603,159
Mount Kisco	1,377,823
North Salem	662,779
Pound Ridge	647,919
Somers*	574,857
Bedford Central School Dist.	329,788
Katonah-Lewisboro School Dist.	851,908
North Salem Central School Dist.	327,562
Somers Central School Dist.**	888,851
TOTAL	12,534,418

* Shared with 4th L.D.; **Shared with 4th L.D.

Remembering Judge Kevin Quaranta

1954 – 2012

"This year, northern Westchester lost a dear friend and a model public servant, Judge Kevin Quaranta of Bedford," said Harckham. "Kevin personified the values those of us in public service aspire to: integrity, fairness, excellence and bipartisanship. As a coach, mentor and father, his commitment to the young people of northern Westchester was unparalleled. As a Judge, his dedication to truth, justice and fairness were unwavering. He leaves a legacy that will not be soon forgotten."



Photo Credit: Peter Michaelis