



Westchester County Legislator  
**GORDON A. BURROWS**  
*Proudly Serving the 15th District*



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## Animal Shelter

Several years ago, I was happy to help facilitate an Agreement between the City of Yonkers, the County of Westchester and the State of New York to build a new animal shelter on county-owned property near the Ridge Hill development. As part of the arrangement, the County conveyed a 1.62 acre site adjacent to the County's Material Recovery Facility to use for the sole purpose of building an animal shelter.

I am pleased to announce that the shelter is nearly completed and will be opened shortly. This new facility will provide a state of the art facility for our "furry friends" and be more conducive for adoption.

If you are interested in adopting a pet, please consider this shelter. The life you save will return so much to your family.

## Animal Abuse Registry

Late last year, the Board of Legislators approved legislation to establish an animal abuse registry in the County to effectively "speak up for those who cannot." The registry database will consist of a list of animal abusers so as to ensure that they do not have access to another pet. In addition, the evidence linking animal abuse to domestic violence was quite remarkable, and it is my hope that such a registry will significantly curtail abuse of any kind.



# Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

*Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years*

Summer 2013 Newsletter



**Gordon A. Burrows**

District 15 ~ Yonkers



## Bipartisan Budget Passed with No Tax Increase

Dear Neighbor,

I am pleased to report that the 2013 budget, which was approved by the Board of Legislators and signed into law by County Executive Robert P. Astorino on December 7, 2012, once again carries a zero percent tax increase in the county portion of your taxes. This is the third consecutive budget passed in Westchester without a tax increase.

The finalized budget was ultimately a compromise between both political parties and both branches of government. No one party, individual, or branch of government received all of their initial requests. The final result was a responsible, balanced coalition spending plan. Unfortunately, when it came time to vote on the budget bill itself, eight legislators decided to walk out of the Board's chambers, refusing to compromise; however, two courageous Legislators chose to act independently of their party, stay in the Board chambers, and helped to finalize the plan. In the end, the 2013 budget still provides residents with an optimal number of services, many of which County taxpayers have rightfully come to expect, in a most responsible way. Going into negotiations, I never wavered from my belief that both raising taxes and irresponsibly raiding reserve funds were wrong for Westchester, and those item objectives were non-negotiable for me. I am glad that the 2013 budget conforms to these two essential tenets.

The County continues to face ongoing fiscal challenges, such as the rising costs of unfunded state mandates, spending and the unsettled contract with the county's largest union. Because of the latter issue in particular, some very difficult cuts had to be made, many of which could have been avoided had the CSEA union and the County been able to arrive at a mutually agreeable contract, particularly as it related to the rates for healthcare contributions. For the 2014 budget, I believe layoffs can, potentially, be avoided if such an agreement is reached. Ideally, negotiations must take place now rather than during the upcoming election season. Overall, it is my hope that there will be an agreement in place which incorporates concepts similar to the contracts reached with three of the County's other unions. The solution to these expired contracts can be achieved if we work together, as evidenced by the 2013 budget process.

Sincerely,

*Gordon A. Burrows*

### Highlights of the 2013 budget include:

- Subsidized day care will be funded with a 27% parent share, instead of the 35% initially proposed by the county executive but above the 20% proposed by the Democratic majority.
- Public safety, emergency services, probation, and the DA's office will receive additional funding. Parks will see the restoration of four positions, including three curators, and the Department of Public Works will see the return of five engineering positions. In all, the coalition budget restores 30 positions (25 filled and 5 vacant).
- Arts Westchester will receive \$1.25 million and Cornell Cooperative will receive \$800,000. In both cases, more than initially proposed but less than what the majority of Democrats had sought.
- Funding was added for three programs, included in the County Office, for Women related to Small Business Training, Domestic Violence Training and Tot Drop & Human Trafficking. Community Capital Resources, that helps small businesses throughout the County, received restored funding. Key senior citizen services for Elder Abuse Legal Services and training received funding.

## Progress on Affordable Housing Settlement

The terms outlined in the 2009 Affordable Housing Settlement continue to be dutifully fulfilled by the Astorino administration. The requirement to build 750 units is currently ahead-of-schedule. While the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has looked to go beyond the “four corners” of the original agreement, both the county executive and I have remained steadfast in opposing any federal government overreach. HUD’s claim that Westchester’s zoning is discriminatory, is simply baseless, as has been concluded by third-party, non-partisan professionals. HUD’s “grand experiment” to dismantle local zoning would potentially create a situation where high-rise, high-density structures could be built in absolutely any neighborhood. Rest assured, County Executive Astorino and I will continue to work tirelessly to protect our local communities by ensuring that the federal government does not irresponsibly overreach on the original settlement terms.

## Work In Committees

I sit on three committees at the Board, including: Government Operations, Public Safety and Legislation. We dealt with some very important issues in each of those committees in the past year. Of particular significance, in the Legislation Committee, we tackled the very important and complex issue of establishing a Local Development Corporation or LDC. An LDC is an entity that gives non-profit organizations the borrowing power of a municipal government, in this case, Westchester County. That means that non-profits that help provide the services and programs that serve our residents can finance capital projects at very low interest rates. The creation of the LDC will mean more jobs and a more robust and effective non-profit sector. The LDC Legislation eventually passed in a vote by the entire Board of Legislators.



Government Operations is the main committee to review tens of millions of dollars in bond acts. These bonds allow the County to do things like repair roads, bridges and other infrastructure.

A very important issue that we have been working on in Government Operations is the County Executive's proposed redesign of Playland Amusement Park. County Executive Astorino selected a group called Sustainable Playland to manage Playland.



In the coming weeks, the Board of Legislators will be reviewing the proposed changes that Sustainable Playland intends to make at the park. The Board must approve those changes before work can begin at Playland. Playland suffered significant damage during Super Storm Sandy, and repairs are still being made there. Fortunately, most of the park is operational, and Playland opened on time for the season.

### I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Much of the job of a county legislator is staying in touch with the residents - it is important that we hear from you so that we can continue to represent your best interests.

Over the course of my legislative terms, I have always held an “open door” policy. You can contact my office at - 914.995.2830 or email me at [Burrows@Westchesterlegislators.com](mailto:Burrows@Westchesterlegislators.com).



## Community Events

By far, the best part of being the legislator for our district has been speaking with the many thoughtful people of our community. I have met many of you at festivals, award presentations, parades, school functions, Eagle Scout presentations, veteran ceremonies, and other events. It is nice being able to welcome new businesses to our community too, such as the opening of Elite Furniture in Yonkers. Honoring those who have dedicated their time and resources to our community is something that always invigorates me.



## Park Passes

We have finally turned the corner here in Westchester County from the long cold months of Winter into the beautiful warm days of Summer! Our parks are open year-round and with the season for golf, hiking, biking, swimming and nature walks just getting under way, now is the perfect time to get your Westchester County Parks Pass!

An individual pass costs \$60 for a three year pass. At just \$20/year, a parks pass is a tremendous value. Family rates are also available. Resident park passes are available year-round at a variety of locations throughout the County. A County Parks Pass is your key to 18,000 acres of parkland and 50 plus recreational areas, *your park pass will unlock the fun to:*

- All county-owned parks, pools and beaches where a park pass is required. For swimming, the pass admits the holder plus two adult guests and children under 12.
- The six all-weather tennis courts at Tibbetts Brook Park in Yonkers.
- The boat launch at Glen Island Park.

*You'll also enjoy a treasure trove of discounts to:*

- Golf at all six county-owned courses – for the park pass holder only. Guests of pass holders pay the full rate, and junior golfers pay junior rates and must be accompanied by an adult park pass holder.
- Parking – where parking is charged, park pass holders pay reduced rates, except Playland.
- Camping, boat launching at George’s Island Park, at the Sportsman Center in Cortlandt.
- Tuition for our Westchester Summer Music Center, a six-week music instructional program for children entering grades 3 through 12.

For more information, visit: <http://parks.westchestergov.com/park-passes>.

