



Westchester County Legislator  
**BEN BOYKIN**  
*Addressing the Needs of District 5*



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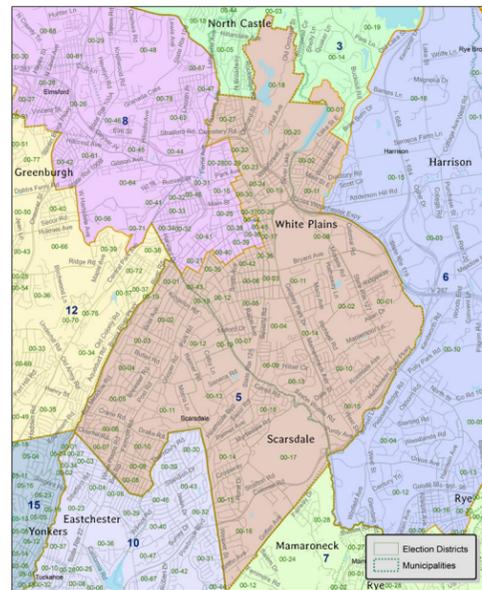
## Redistricting Westchester County's Legislative Districts

A major undertaking at the Board has been the process of redistricting Westchester County's 17 legislative districts, as is required every ten years after a new census. The 2020 U.S. census revealed that our County's population had increased, putting us over the one million mark for the first time in our history. Because the increase is greater in some parts of the County than others, the challenge was to readjust the district lines to make the population of each district as equivalent as possible. We conducted five public input sessions throughout the County to engage residents in this important process, followed by the required public hearing. We worked to ensure that our legislative districts reflected our local municipalities accurately and accounted for our increased County population; the goal being equity in representation for all our residents. ■

## Leveling the Playing Field for County Residents

Recognizing the importance of equity, this year the BOL passed a vital piece of legislation and supported the proposal of a state law that will level the playing field for all. The job market is very competitive in our post-COVID world. We know that there can be uncontrollable factors that make landing the job of your dreams a lot more difficult.

- The **SALARY RANGE TRANSPARENCY LAW**, passed on May 9th, requires employers with more than four employees to include expected salary range when posting jobs to combat gender- and race-based pay inequity. Employers are now required to include an expected salary range when they post a job opportunity in Westchester.
- The Board backed the **NYS CLEAN SLATE ACT**, which automatically seals criminal records from civil review for qualifying people who have served their time and maintained a clean record. While the bill did not pass the State Assembly, we acknowledge the monumental effort that was pushed by the advocates in order for it to have been passed in the State Senate. We look forward to seeing this legislation return for consideration next session. ■



*District 5 Proposed Redistricting Map*

# Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

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

Fall 2022 Newsletter



**Ben Boykin**

Legislator, District 5 ~ *White Plains, Scarsdale, Harrison*  
Chair, Economic Development Committee

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It is exciting to get back to events and to be able to connect with you in person, while still having the option to use video conferencing when needed.

We are still affected by COVID-19 and its variants, and must continue to be careful when we gather together. Please get your booster shots to protect yourself and others.

As Chairman of the Board of Legislators (BOL) Economic Development Committee, I am working with my colleagues and the Latimer Administration to address issues affecting our quality of life. Inflation has increased the cost of nearly everything including food, transportation, energy, and housing. Supply chain issues have impacted our ability to get goods and services that we need.

I have been involved with the following community events and initiatives of special interest to White Plains, Scarsdale and West Harrison:

- Attended and spoke at the opening of the affordable housing facility, The Overture, and attended the unveiling of the Harriet Tubman statue in White Plains
- Started the study for the cost of repairing Lake Isle Dam which affects Scarsdale
- Provided funding for new Cranberry Lake Nature Center in West Harrison

In addition, I had the honor to be elected as 2nd Vice President of the Board

of Directors of the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) at their September conference. As many of you know, I was first elected to the Board of Directors for NYSAC in September 2019 to address critical issues facing counties across the state. I am excited in my new role to further help NY state counties chart a course for a brighter future.

The BOL is doing the required redistricting of the seventeen legislative districts that must be performed every ten years after the census numbers are released. Due to COVID-19, the census numbers were delayed until August 2021. The new legislative districts must be in place prior to the start of the petitioning

process for County Legislators in early 2023. Only minor adjustments were made to Legislative District 5 in order to bring the population within the required range.

It is always nice to see and hear from you. I am honored to serve as your County Legislator. Please continue to contact me and let me know how I can better serve you in White Plains, Scarsdale and West Harrison.

Sincerely,

*Ben Boykin*



## PROTECTING OUR HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

After two years centered around the COVID pandemic, it was necessary for the Board to seek other ways to help keep the general public healthy in mind and body. We passed extensive and substantial legislation to address public health, safety, and well-being.

- **THE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE FACILITIES ACT**, a law that protects health care facility workers and people seeking medical treatment from being physically prevented or otherwise intimidated while trying to obtain rightful, private services from their health care providers, including pregnancy terminations. It bars physical harassment of people entering or exiting, damage to the premises, and attempts to intimidate people within 25 feet of the building. The bill, which took roughly over a decade to pass, was signed immediately into law by County Executive George Latimer on June 27th. I believe this law does not violate one's first amendment rights. I attended and spoke at a rally for protecting a woman's right to reproductive health care.
- State statistics show hate incidents have been on the rise since the coronavirus pandemic started. The majority of serious hate incidents are not addressed by federal and state laws because they do not rise to the level of criminality. It is for this reason that the Board passed a **HATE INCIDENT REPORTING** law requiring all local police departments to report all bias-related crimes and incidents to the Commissioner of Public Safety. These incidents will also be tracked by the County's Human Rights Commission.
- Studies show that households of lawful firearm owners are at a greater risk of victimization than households that do not own firearms. Understanding these statistics, the Board was able to pass a commonsense **FIREARM WARNING LABEL** law. This measure requires gun stores to post signs warning of the significantly increased risk of suicide, homicide, death during domestic disputes, and the accidental deaths of children or others to those who own firearms. The label also adds contact information for the County's Crisis Prevention and Response Team and the National Suicide Hotline. Besides being displayed at retailers, the warning would also be given to people seeking gun licenses in Westchester.
- **FOOD ALLERGIES** are a major health concern for many Westchester families and people across the nation, especially when it comes to choosing where or whether to dine out. In fact, every 3 minutes in the U.S., a food allergy reaction sends someone to the emergency room, and around 1 in 11 Westchester residents live with food allergies. In an effort to further educate restaurant owners and employees on the dangers of food allergies, the Board approved a **FOOD ALLERGY SAFETY TRAINING** law. The bill also requires the posting of signs certifying that employees have completed the training, lists the nine major food allergies, as well as symptoms of an allergic reaction and actions to take in cases of a reaction.
- Our Board **REVISED LONG-STANDING MENTAL HYGIENE LANGUAGE** in the County Charter and sections establishing the Department of Community Mental Health that is offensive to people with developmental or learning disabilities. The new language will refer instead to "individuals with mental illness" and "individuals with developmental disabilities" and will bring the language in the County's laws in line with the **COUNTY'S PERSON-CENTERED APPROACH TO POLICY AND PROGRAMS.** ■



Honoring Ann McPherson for Irish Heritage Month



August Labor Picnic



West Harrison



Reading at the Yonkers Waterfront Library



Highlands Association picnic



Rally Against Lyft

## COUNTY SURPLUS RESULTS IN INFLATION RELIEF FOR TAXPAYERS

Record-high inflation wreaked havoc on the economy beginning late spring of 2022. To counteract price increases, the County was able to use forecasted operating budget surplus to fund relief measures aimed at keeping more money in your pocket. In partnership with County Executive George Latimer, we were able to deliver the following money-saving policies:

- **GAS TAX HOLIDAY**, capping tax at \$0.12 per gallon from June 1 – August 31, 2022
- **NO-FARE BEE-LINE BUSES** from June 1 – August 31, 2022
- **FREE WEEKDAY ADMISSION TO COUNTY POOLS AND GLEN ISLAND BEACH** from July 5 - August 31, 2022
- **FREE COMMUTER PARKING** at the North White Plains Commuter Lot and the County Center parking lot from July 1 – August 31, 2022
- **COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE EXAM FEE-WAIVERS** through December 31, 2022
- **CONVENED ROUND TABLE WITH UTILITY COMPANIES** to combat spiking energy prices
- **ELIMINATION OF THE SALES TAX ON RESIDENTIAL ENERGY**, such as home heating oil, propane, natural gas, electric, coal, and wood, on a quarterly basis beginning December 1, 2022. The savings applies not only to homeowners, but to renters as well, depending on the structure of the unit's heat and electric use
- **THE BOL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR SUNY WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE WITH A 0% TUITION INCREASE.** The budget includes an additional investment from the County of \$557,000 to maintain tuition affordability for its largest academic institution amid record-high inflation. This marks the second consecutive year without a tuition rate increase. The total budget appropriated is roughly \$149.5 million. ■



Scarsdale Train Station



The Overture Ribbon Cutting in White Plains



National Night Out w/Maria Imperial



Speaking at the International Conference on Ethnic & Religious Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding

## SPOTLIGHT ON Parks & Infrastructure Improvements

Our County parks provide vital recreation and respite for Westchester residents, which is why our investment in their maintenance and renovations is so important. Infrastructure upgrades are also very impactful to our quality of life, whether they ease transportation, refurbish public structures, or mitigate the effects of severe climate incidents.

**MEMORIAL FIELD** in Mount Vernon is now open to the public, after many years of deterioration and disrepair. The new stadium is equipped with 3,900 seats; a new scoreboard; a lighted field equipped for football, soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey; an 8-lane track; a sound system capable of handling major concerts or events; 3 tennis courts and a skate park. The project utilized MWBE contracts and created nearly 400 labor jobs. The County is co-managing Memorial Field until the final touches are complete.

Funding for a **NEW NATURE CENTER AT CRANBERRY LAKE PRESERVE** in West Harrison will provide for a larger facility to include a main activities room, office, utility room, outdoor classroom area, restrooms and new water, HV/AC, septic and communications service. The new center will accommodate the long-awaited expansion of their summer camp program.

Capital improvements at **SUNY WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE**, the County's largest academic institution, will include roof replacements where needed, infrastructure upgrades in the Academic Arts, Science, and Maintenance Buildings, and technology updates for improved communication both on and off campus. ■