

Westchester County Legislator
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Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

2024 Year in Review



Nancy E. Barr

District 6 ~ Harrison, Rye Brook, Port Chester



Dear Friends & Neighbors,

We concluded another productive year at the Board of Legislators and I am pleased to share some of the highlights in this annual newsletter. I proudly voted yes for the 2025 Operating Budget, which prioritizes vital services for County residents while upholding fiscal responsibility. The Budget maintains the fund balance and avoids borrowing for operating expenses or cash flow. S&P Global Ratings recently upgraded Westchester to an “AAA” bond rating; Westchester is the only County in New York State to receive this high rating. Westchester once again earned the highest possible rating of “AAA” from Fitch Ratings, reaffirming the County’s commitment to financial health and fiscal management. As of this writing, Moody’s Investors Service rates Westchester at “Aa1 Stable.”

I currently chair the Board’s Committee on Human Services, and co-chair the Board’s Families Task Force. These leadership roles, in addition to my appointment to the National Association of Counties’ (NACo) Human Services and Education Steering Committee, have allowed me to focus on issues of immense importance to me – families, children, health and mental health.

In keeping with these priorities, I was pleased to be able to continue to support several local nonprofit organizations in the 2025 budget, including The Sharing Shelf, the Carver Center’s Citizenship Classes and FSSY’s Reading Buddies Program in the Port Chester School District. I was also able to support Cancer Support Team for the first time with mid-year funding in the 2024 budget.

I continue to serve as Vice Chair of two other critical Board Committees - Budget & Appropriations and Public Works & Transportation. These assignments ensure I remain immersed in the Board’s day-to-day operations and key decision-making, enabling me to best serve my constituents. When I am not in the office, I am out and about in our district, meeting with constituents, welcoming new businesses, celebrating cultural events, milestones and holidays, and honoring residents who make important contributions to our community. This year is off to a great start, and I look forward to the work ahead.

Please reach out to me or my Legislative Aide Debbie Friedman to let us know about local community groups & organizations of which we may not be aware, to share ideas for the betterment of our community, or should you require assistance from our office:

- Legislator Nancy Barr: 914-995-2834; Barr@westchesterlegislators.com.
- Legislative Aide Debbie Friedman: 914-995-2820; DebbieF@westchesterlegislators.com

I thank you for your continued support and wish you all the best in 2025.

Warmly,



Holi Celebration at Crawford Park



Valentine's Day with Rye Brook Seniors



Shake Shack Ribbon Cutting

Environment & Sustainability

My colleagues and I continue to prioritize initiatives to combat climate change and protect green and County-owned spaces.



Summer Interns Tour County's Materials Recycling Facility



Touring Muscoot Farm



Port Chester Youth Bureau Visits CompostEd

FLOOD MITIGATION: Passed in 2024, the Flood Mitigation Bond Act provides \$2 million to enhance flood planning and grant applications, complementing the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s Resilient NY program for broader flood mitigation. At the end of 2023, the Board also approved a new County position, Director of Flood Mitigation and Resiliency, to facilitate a more coordinated, county-wide approach to better address the impact of flooding and severe weather storms. This position was filled in 2024.

STRICTER PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORIZED DUMPING: This law imposes stricter penalties for unauthorized dumping on County-owned property to ensure waste is disposed of properly and to safeguard the County’s green spaces, thereby helping to keep our parks clean and safe for all residents to enjoy. ■

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Housing

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: The Board's commitment to affordable housing is stronger than ever. In 2024, utilizing \$35.7 million in New Homes Land Acquisition and \$8.1 million in Housing Infrastructure funds, the County partnered in the creation of over 1800 new and affordable housing units across multiple municipalities. I expect development of affordable housing to continue to be a priority in 2025.

OFFICE OF HOUSING COUNSEL: The County's newly created position, Director of the Office of Housing Counsel, which I advocated for in the 2024 Budget, focuses on providing eviction prevention legal services for income-eligible individuals, to help ensure access to quality legal representation for those who need it most. ■

Advocating For People With Disabilities

ADVOCACY: I prioritize advocating for people with disabilities to raise awareness and help ensure they have equal access to opportunities and services. I continue to support the County's job fairs for people with disabilities, and at my request, the Board of Legislators & County Executive's office hosted a celebration for the 34th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

NEW PARATRANSIT VEHICLES: This \$1.75 million Bond Act will finance the acquisition of new energy-efficient hybrid paratransit vehicles – specially designed for people with disabilities. This funding will help to upgrade the paratransit fleet, while continuing to prioritize and safeguard the environment. ■



Westchester Celebrates ADA Anniversary

Promoting Public Safety

As a Legislator, one of my primary responsibilities is to protect Westchester residents, whether at home, on County roads, or in the public arena. This past year, my colleagues and I took multiple steps to enhance safety in our community. Below are some highlights.

PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINTS SYSTEM (PSAP) BOND ACT: The Board approved a \$1.3 million investment in infrastructure to modernize 911 Call Centers that handle emergency calls and coordinate responses.

STOP ARM LEGISLATION: The Board amended this legislation to strengthen protections for children at school bus stops, and to prevent death and injuries caused by motorists who illegally pass a stopped school bus.

SAFETY MEASURES FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT: This legislation provides free home locks and security cameras for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence.

ANTI-TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE PROGRAM ACT: This Act supports the District Attorney's office and local law enforcement in combating human trafficking in Westchester County. Funded by a Department of Justice grant, the Task Force will improve victim identification, investigative methods and prosecution strategies, and will partner with police to target trafficking hotspots. ■



Harrison Fire Department Swearing In

Infrastructure & Technology

Investing in infrastructure to meet the needs of today and tomorrow is a priority.

LAND EXCHANGE WITH WESTCHESTER JOINT WATER WORKS (WJWW): The Board approved a land exchange with WJWW to enable them to build a new water filtration plant to provide safe drinking water to thousands of Westchester residents. The agreement ensures appropriate environmental safeguards at the site.

LAB & RESEARCH FACILITY REHABILITATION & UPGRADE: The Board passed a \$4.2 million bond to design a new facility to house the Office of the Medical Examiner and the Department's Forensic, Environmental and Microbiologic Divisions, which conduct a range of scientific tests pertaining to public health and criminal evidence.

ROADWAY CULVERT RESTORATION: This Bond Act finances a project to inspect and evaluate culvert structures along County roads. It will address flooding and determine necessary maintenance, rehabilitation, or replacement, establishing a priority-based schedule.

PORT CHESTER WATER RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY (PCWRRF): The Board approved an \$11 million Bond Act to finance a portion of the cost of design, construction management and construction for the replacement and upgrading of the electrical system and replacement of the heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems at the PCWRRF. The Board also approved a \$750,000 Bond Act to finance a study to evaluate the rehabilitation or replacement of the deteriorating outfall pipe. These investments will ensure the facility's efficiency and resilience for years to come. ■

PHOTO GALLERY



Ashley Welde Memorial Tree Planting



With Nina Jones, In Memoriam



Kiwanis Club Annual Holiday Dinner



Carver Center Citizenship Class



Summer Reading Buddies in Port Chester Schools



PCRB Chamber of Commerce Golf Outing



Honoring Harrison Resident Christina Hughes



Celebrating Catherine Morlino's 100th Birthday



Rallying for Teachers - Fix Tier Six

Advancing Community Well-Being

SENIOR PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS: The Board amended this law to exclude Social Security income from eligibility calculations, so more seniors will be eligible for relief. This change, approved by New York State, provides greater financial support to seniors with fixed incomes.

MENTAL HEALTH: A \$1 million bond will fund the reopening of a County-operated mental health clinic in White Plains, providing essential support for individuals with urgent mental health needs and meeting increasing demand for services. The Clinic is expected to open in 2025.

ADDRESSING HATE: As Co-Chair of the Board's Families Task Force, I hosted a dynamic virtual panel discussion focused on hate crimes, incidents and discrimination. This event underscores my ongoing commitment to drive positive change by providing residents with the tools and resources they need to address these pressing issues. View the panel discussion at: <https://westchestercountyny.granicus.com/player/clip/7005>

UNCLAIMED FUNDS: The Board of Legislators joined forces with the NYS Comptroller to send letters to residents who have unclaimed funds which they are entitled to retrieve. We held in-person workshops to assist individuals to submit their claims. This program helped Westchester residents reclaim millions of dollars. Visit the NYS Comptroller's website to check whether you have unclaimed funds: <https://www.osc.ny.gov/unclaimed-funds> ■



Holocaust Remembrance