

County Legislator Ben Boykin
Panel Discussion on 2017 Westchester County
Budgets
Scarsdale Forum

Thursday, January 26, 2017



Panelists

- Legislator Ben Boykin, Moderator; Chair, Public Safety and Social Services Committee
- Legislator MaryJane Shimsky, Chair, Infrastructure Committee
- Jonathan Mark, Mayor, Village of Scarsdale
- Carolyn Stevens, Former Mayor, Village of Scarsdale
- David McKay Wilson, Tax Watch Columnist, The Journal News

2017 Budgets

- Operating, Capital and Special Districts Budgets
- Operating Budget, \$1.81 billion; approved by vote of 10 to 7
- Capital Budget of \$303 million and Special Districts Budget approved by same margin
- I voted against all the 2017 Budgets

Operating Budget Issues

- \$1.81 billion, a \$9 million increase from 2016
- No increase in County property tax levy of \$548.4 million
- No property tax increase in seven years
- 2017 Operating Budget is not balanced and is not sustainable
- No financial flexibility in budget

Operating Budget Issues – con't

- \$15 million included for airport privatization
- 3% growth in sales tax; surrounding counties using 1% to 2%
- \$2.9 million of revenue from State Aid for indigent defendants – vetoed by Governor Cuomo on Dec. 30, 2016
- \$8.5 million borrowings for tax certiorari
- \$4.2 million of borrowings for pension obligations through the NY State Pension Fund Stabilization Program
- No funds are included to cover union contracts, all of which have expired
- One shot revenues and borrowings to balance budget

Operating Budget Issues – con't

- Most funding for non profits saved
- Public Safety Department at risk – staffing for three officers included, but Department is still at least ten officers short
- Unrestricted fund balance could be adversely affected by budget shortfall of \$18 million in 2016 and expected shortfall in 2017
- County's bond rating could be lowered leading to higher borrowings costs

Operating Budget Issues – con't

- With new Federal Administration, County Budgets could be impacted - \$249.6 million federal funding and State Aid of \$183.8 million in 2017 Operating Budget
 - Social Services - \$267.8
 - For other Departments and Accounts - \$165.6
- 2017 Operating Budget a ticking time bomb
- The bomb is going to explode
- Taxpayers will face large property tax increases in future years

Questions and Answers