



Westchester County Legislator
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Dear Friends and Neighbors:

It is my privilege to serve as your legislator in Westchester County's 8th Legislative District, which includes Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown, Elmsford, Greenburgh and a part of White Plains.

The County Budget over the last 3 years has been reduced by \$100 million, the County tax levy cut by 2.2% and the County workforce reduced by over 15%. So, we're on the right track in terms of smart savings and cutting costs.

What is needed, and what I will continue to work for, is responsible budget choices that maintain necessary social services and essential programs while also working cooperatively with local municipalities to reduce costs via collaboration and consolidation. This effort will result in improving the quality of life for all of us here in Westchester and help strengthen our communities for the future.

If you have concerns or ideas you wish to share, please contact me using any of the methods listed above.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about your County government!

Sincerely,

Utility Reform After Super Storm Sandy

Last year, the Board of Legislators brought in officials from Con Ed and New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG) to review the many problems these utility companies had during their responses to outages caused by Hurricane Sandy. Concerns about the lack of emergency preparedness were then discussed with the Moreland Commission, which was established by Governor Cuomo to investigate the utilities' responses and recommend reforms.

The focus of these post-storm discussions was on three major structural problems that resulted in long response times: overreliance on "mutual aid" from utilities across the country, rather than local labor supplies; poor organization; and ineffective communications.

Given current climate trends, we can count on having to deal with more severe storms and widespread power outages in the future. Utility companies are large corporations whose main mission is to generate profits for shareholders. It is the job of government to make sure that utilities do everything possible to serve the public interest and minimize service disruptions to their customers. ■

Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Summer 2013 Newsletter



Alfreda A. Williams

District 8 ~ Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown, Elmsford, Greenburgh, White Plains



Bronx River Advisory Board (BRAB) & Saw Mill River Advisory Board (SWAB)

The first meeting of the Bronx River Advisory Board (BRAB) took place in 2012 at the Westchester County Board of Legislators. The advisory board was established as a requirement of the "Westchester County Storm Water Management Law" enacted in 2011.

The BRAB was created as a partnership among the municipalities along the Bronx River Watershed and Westchester County. The group's primary objective is to address storm water management and flooding issues in those participating communities.

Now that the organizational process is complete, the BRAB functions

as a self-governed body comprised of the municipal representatives and legislators working with the county personnel to implement the recommendations that the advisory board submits.

Starting this effort is long overdue. The communities in Greenburgh that border the Bronx River sustained serious damage in the fall of 2011. Serious efforts at flood mitigation will arise from this collaboration.

I am also a member of the Saw Mill River Flood Mitigation Advisory Board, which is working diligently to mitigate and eliminate flooding that has plagued residents and businesses bordering the river for many years.

Both advisory boards have made significant progress in cleaning debris from the rivers, with cooperation of the municipalities bordering the rivers, the County and the Army Corps of Engineers, and in the case of the Saw Mill River, the New York State Department of Transportation. My special thanks go to the Department of Public Works leadership and personnel in the City of White Plains, the Town of Greenburgh and the Village of Elmsford for their dedicated work in the cleanup efforts.

Efforts are currently centered on developing a Reconnaissance Plan for both rivers that will include regular clean-up efforts and other measures to lessen flooding in the county. ■



▲ Westchester Legislators MaryJane Shimsky, Alfreda Williams, Lyndon Williams and Judy Myers listen to testimony from employees and concerned residents at a public hearing held in Greenburgh attended by over 250 people on changes at the Westchester Medical Center.



Legislator Alfreda Williams pictured in Tarrytown with performer José Luis Orogco, Children's Librarian Barbara Crespo and children attending the Warner Library's "Songs and Stories" program sponsored in part by the Westchester County Board of Legislators. ▼

New Tappan Zee Bridge Construction

The new Tappan Zee Bridge project is moving ahead at a rapid pace. Highly sophisticated noise monitoring devices have been installed at locations near both the Rockland and Westchester County shorelines as part of the new New York Bridge Project's Environmental Performance Commitments, which are intended to monitor, minimize and / or mitigate potential adverse effects related not only to noise but also vibration and air quality monitoring.

Please note there will be no construction activities at night between 10 PM. and 6 AM, Saturday mornings until midday and Sunday all day. These restrictions will assist in a peaceful existence for those residing close to the Tappan Zee Bridge construction.

The Governor's office named a 29-member Task Force to study and identify mass transit options for the bridge and the I-287 corridor, develop funding strategies for mass transit and create a management plan to ensure a viable transit system. The Task Force is scheduled to make recommendations by the end of this year.

Replacing the Tappan Zee Bridge provides us with the opportunity to develop a regional mass transit system that our area needs. The combined bridge replacement and transit undertaking will be the single largest infrastructure project in the Hudson Valley, creating thousands of jobs and positioning our region for a prosperous and sustainable future. ■

In Big Win For Environment, County Board Passes Hydrofracking Waste Ban

The Westchester County Board of Legislators recently passed legislation protecting our environment from the dangers posed by hydrofracking waste disposal.

Gas producers who use hydrofracking techniques often pass on their fracking liquid to local governments for use on roadways as a de-icing agent or dust control. The problem is that the liquid contains high levels of industrial pollutants and radioactivity.

Companies have tried disposing their waste in sewage treatment plants as well. The plants are not designed for this purpose, however. This waste

damages the facilities and also releases toxic chemicals into our water.

Westchester County has joined other counties in New York, including as Dutchess, Nassau and Ulster, in passing a law banning the use, transfer or storage of hydrofracking waste on all roads and treatment plants in Westchester, both public and private. Penalties for violations can include fines of up to \$25,000 and / or 30 days in jail.

I was proud to co-sponsor this important legislation, which was signed by the County Executive earlier this year. ■

Westchester Legislators Honor 2013 Jandon Scholarship Award Recipients



▲ (l-r) Jane Cecil, Jandon Scholarship winner Ronniel Munoz, Donald Cecil, and Legislator Alfreda Williams

The Westchester County Board of Legislators (BOL) honored the 2013 Jandon Scholarship award winners at a special ceremony in May in the BOL Rotunda.

The Jandon Scholars Program, administered by the Jandon Foundation and the BOL, annually awards fifteen college scholarships to academic achievers. Based on financial need, academic achievement and service to local communities, each Jandon scholarship includes

a \$10,000 award toward a recipient's college costs as well as a laptop computer.

The 2013 Jandon Scholars winners include two students from Sleepy Hollow High School in Tarrytown, Samantha Haughton and Ronniel Munoz.

The Jandon Foundation Scholars Awards have supported 203 Westchester students over the past thirteen years. Jandon Alumni include lawyers, architects, accountants, engineers, teachers and artists, many of them with masters degrees. ■

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Child Care

The Board of Legislators' Community Services Committee has met with the Department of Social Services (DSS) several times to discuss child care subsidies and the Administration's desire to increase the parent share. In February 2012, DSS tried to raise the parent share from 20% to 35%. I'm happy to report that the Board of Legislators succeeded in keeping the parent share at 20% for the duration of the year. Later, the child care programs ran a surplus of \$57,000 for 2012, even with the 20% share in effect. The increase was obviously not necessary.

Preventing the increase kept many children in safe, regulated, and educational day care. It kept day care centers open, workers employed and the local economy moving along, as centers spend a lot of money on milk, food and educational supplies.

The current increase from 20% to 27% went into effect January 1, 2013, causing hard-working, low-income families, many led by single parents, to quit their jobs, go on welfare or put their children in unregulated, illegal daycare. The fiscal necessity for increasing the parent share has still not been demonstrated by the Administration.

Going forward, I will work diligently to return the parent share to 20% or below in 2014.

Reproductive Health Legislation

In 2012, the Board of Legislators approved the Reproductive Health Bill, which was introduced in the Community Services Committee. The legislation was then vetoed by the County Executive. This bill would have protected both men and women from being harassed as they entered a medical facility that provides reproductive health services and other vital



▲ (l-r) Dr. J. Michael Rush of the Lois Bronz Children's Center; Kathy Halas of the County Child Care Council of Westchester; NY State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Legislator Alfreda Williams, former BOL Chairwoman Lois Bronz; and Jennifer Johnson of the Lois Bronz Children's Center

services for women, such as breast cancer screenings and pap smears.

Westchester Medical Center

The Community Services Committee provided a voice for the health-care workers at the Westchester Medical Center during layoffs and outsourcing of services when over 250 people crowded the board room of the Greenburgh Town Hall for a public hearing in March 2012.

There are concerns among employees at the Westchester Medical Center that job cuts and changes among program providers are now affecting service levels. These changes include outsourcing the management of programs to private companies, staffing changes and the manner in which services are delivered. In recent months, the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency program, a mobile health crisis unit deployed in the community with first responders, has been closed down, and the Behavioral Health Center has been put under the supervision of a private company, Liberty Healthcare.

The public hearing gave us an opportunity to gather important information about the quality of patient care at the Westchester Medical Center from the people who are actually doing the work. Both the medical center and the employees should be working to maintain and improve the high quality of health care that everyone expects at the Westchester Medical Center.

Mental Health

The Department of Community Mental Health regularly updates the Community Services Committee on the delivery of services to those in need.

In addition, the committee is currently reviewing, along with the Department of Community Mental Health, the training and procedural guidelines provided to municipal police departments on dealing with emotionally troubled patients possibly suffering from mental health problems who may present a danger to themselves and others. The review should result in better ways to de-escalate situations through non-violent methods. ■