

INSIDE INSIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE SULLIVAN COUNTY MANAGER



'26 BUDGET CONFRONTS FISCAL CHALLENGE

BY JOSHUA POTOSEK, COUNTY MANAGER

As County Manager, I'm responsible to present a proposed County budget to the Legislature every year. I did just that in October, handing legislators a \$305.7 million budget for them to review, tweak and adopt in December.

They - and you - may have plenty to say about it, since the budget includes a proposed 9.1% property tax levy increase. I've recommended dipping into our fund balance (unassigned reserves) to lessen what otherwise could have been a double-digit tax increase, but as a fellow taxpayer, I very much recognize this is unwelcome news.

We've held the line on spending more - the proposed 2026 budget is less than 1% larger than the 2025 adopted budget. But costs continue to rise at an inflationary pace, while our sales tax revenue - having outpaced property tax income in recent years - is now falling. In fact, we're projected to be at least \$5 million under what we estimated to receive in sales tax this year. That lost income has to be made up somewhere, and while room and mortgage taxes have remained strong, we don't yet have enough economic development in this County to adequately supplement our tax base. So we're looking at a property tax hike. The budget I propose to the Legislature does not cut services, even costlier ones over which we have fiscal discretion, like Move Sullivan, the EMS fly cars, and the Care Center at Sunset Lake. And it sets aside funding for maintaining our roads and bridges, along with improvements to our rail trails, SUNY Sullivan and our DMV office. It also includes a strategic plan that envisions building a composting facility, tearing down the old jail, and relocating offices for better efficiency.

As I told legislators, however, this County and our business partners must aggressively pursue economic development if we wish to avoid stretching taxpayers beyond their limits.

The proposed budget is available for you to review at www.sullivanyny.gov (look under Helpful Links). And comments are welcome, including at two public hearings, both in the Hearing Room of the Government Center: Dec. 2 at 5 p.m. and Dec. 4 at 10:45 a.m.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS ISSUE:

AIRPORT TERMINAL
TAKES ITS BOW - 2

BIG PHARMA'S DOLLARS
PUT TO GOOD USE - 3

DEVELOPING A DIVERSE
WORKFORCE ACROSS
THE COUNTY - 4

NEW AIRPORT TERMINAL IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

With construction complete, the new terminal at Sullivan County International Airport is now in the County's hands, and we plan on aggressively marketing it to the business jet community. We strongly feel there is untapped wealth and potential in the Airport - so much so that it could completely relieve taxpayers of having to shoulder any costs of operating the facility. The challenge before us is to attract the plane owners and aviation businesses who will appreciate the Airport's lower costs and room to expand vs. other general aviation airports closer to NYC. We're not planning to offer scheduled passenger service there, as that's been unsuccessfully tried before. But we do intend on having a restaurant - with scenic views from the second floor - that is open to the public in 2026. More to come!



A NEW DESTINATION FOR YOUR WASTE

Prompted by the anticipated closure of the upstate Seneca Meadows landfill, legislators in October authorized our Division of Public Works (DPW) to switch both haulers and landfills.

MBI will now be trucking our trash to up to three different landfills around New York State (closer to us than Seneca Meadows), for about the same price as we've been paying.

We're also investigating a waste-to-energy plant for the County, though no decision to proceed has been made yet.

And I've set aside \$150,000 in the proposed 2026 County Budget to design a composting facility at our Monticello Transfer Station. We already accept compost, but we ship it out of the County, depriving ourselves of both the valuable end product and revenue of compost.

3,000 DAFFODIL BULBS TO BLOOM THIS SPRING



The County was proud to join with Liberty resident Dr. Hope Blecher-Crone and the Daffodil Project to plant 3,000 daffodil bulbs in front of the Government Center and at our Maplewood DPW facility.

When they bloom next year, they will be a visible and poignant reminder of the millions of lives lost in the Holocaust, particularly the children who were killed.

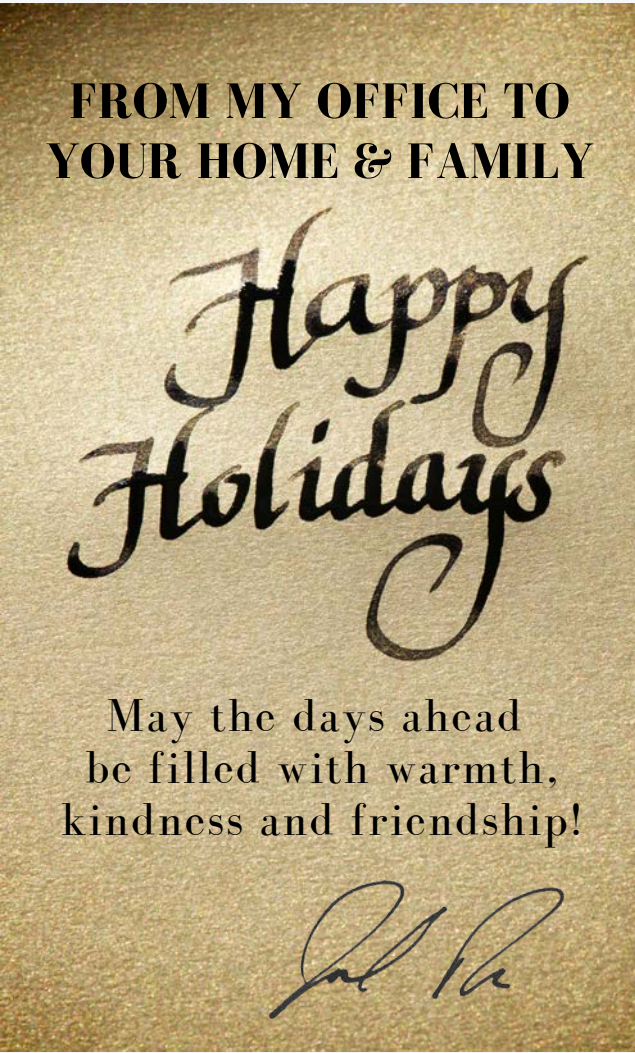
Look this spring for the flowers along Sturgis Road, near the bus station in Monticello.

Opioid Settlement Fund Direct Share Fund Balance (as of 10/6/25)		
Restricted: \$467,110.69; Unrestricted \$1,274,203.86		
Opioid Settlement Fund Direct Share Contract 2025 Authorizations	2024-25 Authorized	2025-26 Authorized
• Catholic Charities (School-Based Prevention Program) • Catholic Charities (Clinical Support) – <i>unspent in 2024-25, not renewed.</i> • Bold Gold Media Group (Marketing-Public Service Announcements) – alternative funding source obtained for 2025-26 • Lamar of Scranton (Marketing-Signage) • Village of Liberty Police (Officer Emergency Assistance Program) • Village of Liberty Police (Overdose Quick Response Team) • Town of Fallsburg Police (Overdose Quick Response Team) • Sullivan 180 (School-Based Prevention Programs) • Action Toward Independence (Housing, transportation and case management for persons with substance use disorders) • Corona Self-Help Center (Peer Services and Supports) • Cellebrite Subscription (Technological Support for Sheriff's Office Narcotics Investigations) \$27,486 (unrestricted use expenditure)	• \$25,000 • \$218,210 • \$60,000 • \$33,000 • \$11,000 • \$15,000 • \$15,000 • \$89,000 • \$85,000 • \$73,032 • \$32,200	• \$25,000 • 0 • 0 • \$33,000 • \$11,000 • \$15,000 • \$15,000 • \$99,500 • \$85,000 • \$32,500 • \$27,486* *\$60,330 to be added later to add capability at DA Ofc

HOW WE'RE SPENDING OPIOID SETTLEMENT \$

Municipalities across the nation have received billions of dollars in opioid settlements with Big Pharma companies. These monies are meant to help us cope with the drug epidemic that those firms helped create and deepen.

So what are we doing with the millions we've gotten? In accordance with State law, we've published it on the County's website. Find it at www.sullivanyny.gov/Departments/Countymanager/OpioidSettlementReport.



A MOMENT TO BE PROUD

In October, legislators recognized Hispanic Heritage Month in Sullivan County with a proclamation noting we have close to 15,000 residents of Hispanic ethnicity, from lawyers to farmers, bus drivers to human resources professionals. We're grateful for the talent, culture, skills and values that Hispanic-Americans bring to Sullivan County, and we're proud to call them neighbors!



District 6 Legislator Luis Alvarez (left), himself a pioneer of Latino representation in the County, presented the legislative proclamation to Joel & Ana Santiago from Monticello (in front) and Porfirio "Juni" Vega of Wurtsboro.

MAKING WORK 'WORK'



Our Center for Workforce Development hosted its second annual Workforce Summit in October, and the topic was attracting, accommodating & retaining the differently-abled. Clockwise from the top:

- CWD's DEI Resource Coordinator Scott Curry organized & led the summit.
- Over 50 different local employers attended.
- CWD Director Loreen Gebelein (right) welcomed attendees.
- Sullivan County Human Rights Commission Executive Director Ramone Wilson was the keynote speaker and also joined a panel of local advocates and employers.
- Anthony Martinez of New Hope Community spoke to his own personal experiences.

