

INSIDE INSIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE SULLIVAN COUNTY MANAGER



SULLIVAN COUNTY'S PRIORITIES FOR 2026

BY JOSHUA POTOSEK, COUNTY MANAGER

The new year did not sneak up on us - the County has had a number of major projects ongoing, some of which will be resolved in the next 12 months. Others will take a bit longer.

Here's a preview:

- **Broadband buildout** - Leveraging the largest single grant in our history (\$30M), our partner Archtop Fiber is right now laying fiber-optic cable to bring high-speed Internet to

the majority of Sullivan County, including a wireless signal that will emanate from a dozen of our emergency communication towers.

TIMELINE: Completion by the end of this year, as required by the grant from NYS' ConnectALL program.

- **Airport utilization** - Capable of sustaining itself, if not being a revenue source, the Sullivan County International Airport will be promoted to the business aviation community as a seriously attractive alternative to more congested, expensive general aviation airports closer to New York City. **TIMELINE:** Ongoing.
- **Courthouse expansion** - The State's Office of Court Administration has made it clear that we have to begin work on either expanding the County Courthouse or finding another Monticello location to construct a new court facility. **TIMELINE:** Not yet certain, but we should have details nailed down this year.
- **Comprehensive Plan update** - Last updated decades ago, the County's Comprehensive Plan is ripe for a full review and rewrite. Led by our Planning Division, this major update will touch on all aspects of life, play and work throughout our 1,000 square miles. **TIMELINE:** Significant efforts begin this year.
- **2027 Budget planning** - While the Legislature just adopted a County Budget, work on the next one has already started. Creating 2026's tentative budget was a challenge, and I expect 2027's to be the same, if not more so. Decreasing Federal funding (which decreases State funding), increasing costs, and major projects - like the Courthouse expansion mentioned above - will give me and our budget staff plenty to work on in the months to come. That said, my approach will be the same - to balance citizens' needs with taxpayers' abilities. **TIMELINE:** Work begins in earnest this June.

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2026 BUDGET OK'D

Legislators in December passed a revised 2026 County Budget which manages to keep services intact with just a 2% property tax increase, underneath the State tax cap.

My proposed budget forecast much more than that, and while as a taxpayer I'm grateful not to face a double-digit hike, I have made the Legislature aware that prepping a 2027 budget will be that much harder.

Costs are always rising, but my concern is more that revenues are falling, particularly with sales tax - which, prior to this year, had been outpacing revenues from property taxes. Now, sales tax receipts are declining by the millions of dollars. Couple that with a major County Courthouse expansion being mandated by the State, plus necessarily large employee costs like healthcare and pension contributions, and we'll be looking at a significant property tax increase, cuts in what we offer, or an even deeper dive into our reserve funds (fund balance), potentially removing any financial cushion in future years.

I don't like those prospects any more than you do, but it's my job (and my staff's) to be fiscally responsible, and that means taking into account not only taxpayers but the services we provide and the staff who provides them. We'll know more as the year progresses...



NEW LANDFILL, NEW HAULER FOR COUNTY

With the potential closure of the upstate Seneca Meadows Landfill, we've been actively searching for alternatives. While composting, recycling, and a waste-to-energy plant are alternatives in their own right, we still need somewhere to send upwards of 100,000 tons of garbage every year. So it's with relief that I can share that as of the beginning of 2026, we've switched from Seneca Meadows to various other upstate landfills, to which our trash is being transported by MBI (a reputable vendor with whom we've long been doing business).

The \$10.5 million cost is about the same as with our previous waste hauling arrangement, which is good news for taxpayers as well.

This takes some pressure off the County while we continue to explore ways to otherwise handle and reduce the waste stream.

FAMILIAR FACES IN FAMILIAR COUNTY ROLES

Sullivan County voters chose two familiar faces to lead important County offices in 2026 and the years to come:

- **Kathleen Lara**, longtime deputy treasurer under Nancy Buck, assumed the mantle of County Treasurer in early January. A Sullivan County native and our unofficial "morale officer," Lara is full of ideas and ambition to move the Treasurer's Office ever farther ahead, and I look forward to



working alongside her and her team.

- **Michael Schiff**, known across the County as either "Mike" or "Sheriff," returned to his role as County Sheriff at the beginning of the year, continuing a lifelong career in law enforcement. As head of one of our largest departments, the Sullivan County Sheriff's Office, his experience and that of his team's will undoubtedly improve - and save - many lives.

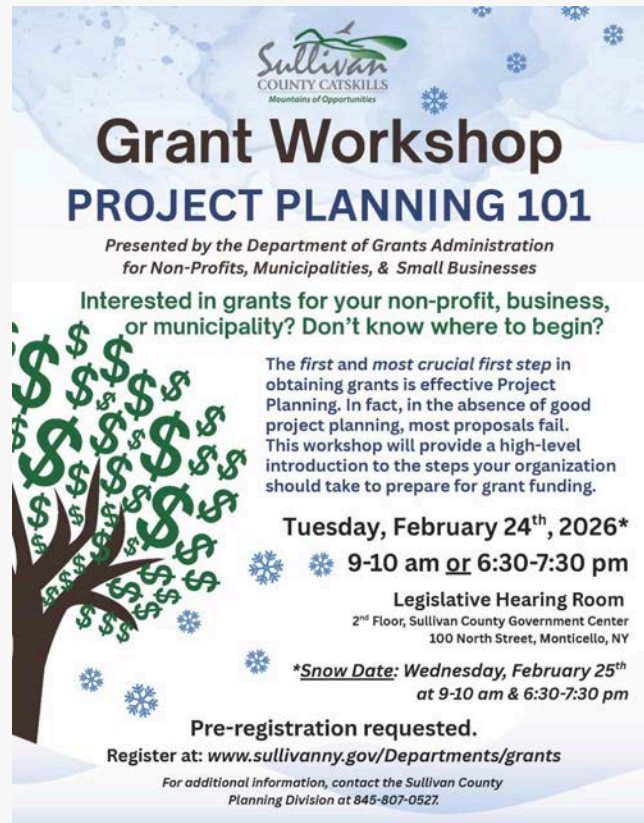


HELPING YOU FIND THE MONEY YOU CAN USE

One of our lesser-known but incredibly important offices is Grants Administration, which falls under the Division of Planning. Overseen by Division Commissioner Heather Brown and Grants Director Arthur Hussey, the department ensures we don't miss any opportunity to relieve local taxpayers of having to shoulder every County initiative, employee or program.

Art and his team, however, also provide advice and support to non-County government entities, like nonprofits, businesses and municipalities. While they can't write your grant for you, they can make sure you know what you're doing to score those necessary funds.

I encourage you to consider signing up for one of their two upcoming workshops (at right)! Scheduled to be convenient, each seminar will focus on the same thing: competently and efficiently preparing to apply for grant funding. Register at sullivanyny.gov/departments/grants, or give them a call at 845-807-0527.



Sullivan COUNTY CATSKILLS
Mountains of Opportunities

Grant Workshop PROJECT PLANNING 101

*Presented by the Department of Grants Administration
for Non-Profits, Municipalities, & Small Businesses*

Interested in grants for your non-profit, business, or municipality? Don't know where to begin?

The first and most crucial first step in obtaining grants is effective Project Planning. In fact, in the absence of good project planning, most proposals fail. This workshop will provide a high-level introduction to the steps your organization should take to prepare for grant funding.

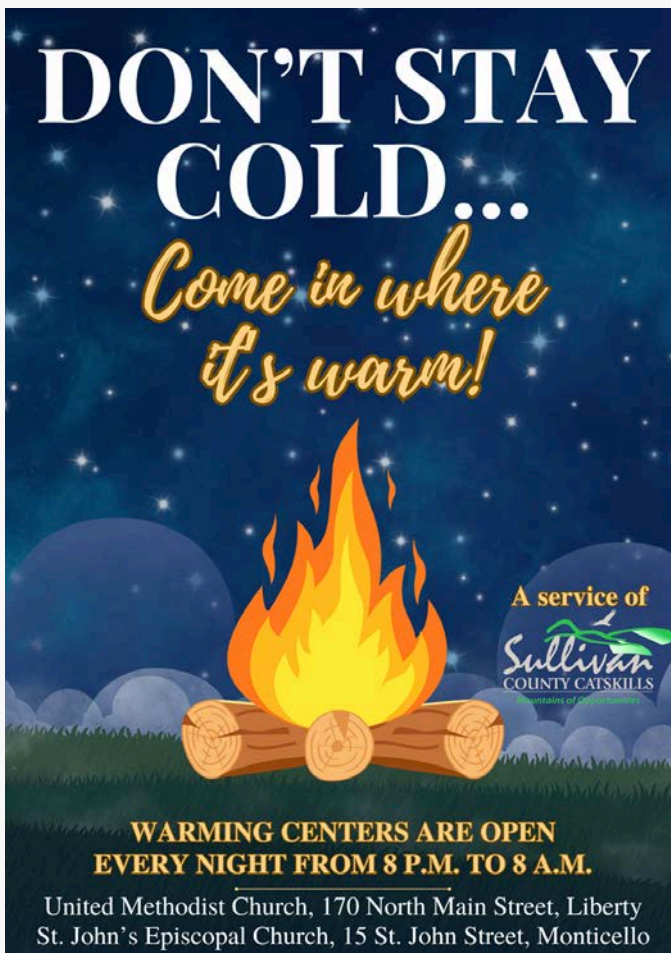
Tuesday, February 24th, 2026*
9-10 am or 6:30-7:30 pm

Legislative Hearing Room
2nd Floor, Sullivan County Government Center
100 North Street, Monticello, NY

***Snow Date: Wednesday, February 25th
at 9-10 am & 6:30-7:30 pm**

Pre-registration requested.
Register at: www.sullivanyny.gov/Departments/grants

For additional information, contact the Sullivan County
Planning Division at 845-807-0527.



DON'T STAY COLD...

Come in where it's warm!

A service of
Sullivan COUNTY CATSKILLS
Mountains of Opportunities

**WARMING CENTERS ARE OPEN
EVERY NIGHT FROM 8 P.M. TO 8 A.M.**

United Methodist Church, 170 North Main Street, Liberty
St. John's Episcopal Church, 15 St. John Street, Monticello

REMEMBERING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the beginning of the American Revolutionary War, and Sullivan County wasn't just close to some of the fighting - a notable battle occurred within our borders, now commemorated by our own Minisink Battleground Park near Barryville. That location will be one of the sites of events that a Delaware Company-led group is planning for this year and beyond. (The Revolutionary War lasted until 1783, so the 250th commemoration will continue every year into 2033.)

Stay up to date by following the "Sullivan County Rev War Semiquincentennial" Facebook page!



**Our own 250th logo,
designed by the
Delaware Company!**

THEY WISHED US A HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Every local school district participated in our annual Holiday Concerts at the Government Center this year. From top to bottom: Rockland HS Band, Sullivan West ES Chorus, Mackenzie (Eldred) ES Chorus, Liberty MS Band, Monticello HS Emerging Ensembles, and Fallsburg Jr.-Sr. HS Instrumental Chamber Ensemble.

