



## ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

### ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION

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### Ulster County Legislature Adopts 2024 Budget

(Kingston, NY) – After approving the 2024 Budget Wednesday night in a bipartisan vote of 19-2, the Clerk of the Legislature has delivered the Adopted Budget to the County Executive for signature. The total spending plan of \$411,975,038, will not raise taxes and is offset by an appropriation from the fund balance of \$17,740,919.

“I am proud of the deeply considered and deliberative work of the Ulster County Legislature in passing the 2024 Budget. This spending plan will have a real and positive impact on the lives of Ulster County residents. We have made significant investments in our roads and bridges, mental health, housing, and to address climate change. The 2024 budget is a testament to our dedication to addressing the diverse needs of our community,” said **Chair of the Legislature Tracey Bartels (District 16 – Towns of Gardiner & Shawangunk)**.

“I voted yes on this Budget and am proud of some of the changes made by the Legislature to financially strengthen the County, but caution the next Legislature to critically examine the ballooning size of our Budgets and ensure that the County can weather the looming possibility of diminishing state and federal aid, economic crises and lowering than planned tax receipts,” said **Minority Leader Kenneth J. Ronk, Jr. (District 13 – Town of Shawangunk)**.

“This Budget represents a significant investment in our infrastructure, mental health support system and emergency services and is a product of hours of diligent research and examination by the members of the Ways & Means Committee and our financial team. I look forward to overseeing its implementation in the next year and working with my colleagues and the Executive to bring us further into compliance with the fund balance policy,” said **Legislator John Gavaris (District 15 – Village of Ellenville & Town of Wawarsing)**, Chair of the Ways & Means Committee.

Legislators made several changes to the Proposed Budget, including amendments to reassign County services between Departments, removed disparities in pay between certain positions compensated at different levels, contract with grant writers to pursue wider funding opportunities, established a new executive level position of Director of Parks to oversee the development and expansion of County trails and public land, while preserving open spaces.

Among one of these changes was the reassignment of the Bright Futures Initiative from the Youth Bureau to the Office of Employment & Training. This vital service provides youth employment to school age children whose graduation is in jeopardy.

“Reassigning the Brighter Futures Initiative from the Youth Bureau to the Department of Employment & Training will better serve our young people. Allowing them the opportunity to receive wraparound services from youth employment to training while they are in school, to connect with technical training and career opportunities in local businesses and industries. We look forward to seeing this program flourish in its new home,” **said Legislator Megan Sperry (District 17 – Towns of New Paltz & Esopus)**, co-author of the budget amendment.

Other changes include an amendment to the Budget that would provide for the funds to contract with a grant writer in order to pursue grant opportunities outside the present capacity of the County government.

“Contracting for an outside grant writer will allow the county to be flexible and responsive to new funding streams from state, federal and not-for-profit sources that are available to local governments as we work to establish an in-house grant writing team in the near future. I am grateful to my colleagues for their support for this amendment,” **said Vice Chair Peter Criswell (District 7 – City of Kingston)**, the author of the amendment.

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