COUNTY OF ROCKLAND
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Edwin J. Day
County Executive

December 11, 2015

To: Laurence O. Toole, Clerk
Rockland County Legislature

From: Edwin J. Day
County Executive

Re: Resolution No. 547 of 2015 - Accepting Report of the Budget & Finance Committee After Its Review of the Rockland County Proposed 2016 Budget.

Resolution No. 548 of 2015 - Adoption of the 2016 County Budget.

Resolution No. 549 of 2015- Appropriation of Budget Items for 2016.

In accordance with the County Charter of Rockland County, on October 1, 2015, I respectfully submitted my 2016 Proposed Budget for your consideration.

I thank Finance Commissioner Stephen DeGroat, all department heads, and our entire County workforce for working tirelessly to prepare a responsible budget that provides for essential county services that protect our residents and does not waste precious taxpayer dollars.

As a former member of the Legislature, I fully understand the Legislature's prerogative and responsibility as the appropriating body to review the Proposed Budget and to make modifications where it deems proper. However, as the Chief Fiscal Officer for the County of Rockland, I have the fiduciary responsibility to object to a number of the Legislature's amendments to the 2016 County Budget.

The 22 line-item vetoes described in the attached schedule will help continue our efforts to ensure fiscal responsibility and commitment to action.

The vetoes include:

- 13 reallocations for Department of General Services security guards currently staffing county properties
- Six reallocations to fund positions that will have no work/official duties following the closure of Summit Park Hospital and Nursing Care Center on December 31, 2015

As part of my administration's efforts to re-design and strengthen our government, my Proposed Budget for 2016 called for the replacement of unarmed security personnel with law enforcement officers from the Rockland County Sheriff's Department. This move would bring the County's security force up to a highly professional level by utilizing armed, uniformed members of the Sheriff's Office to keep our workforce and residents safe, all at a significant cost savings of more than $1 million to local taxpayers. This approach would reflect the practices other most municipalities in the region.

While our existing security personnel provides information and directions, they are ill-equipped to handle today's violent threats.

Now, more than ever, we must harden security at all county facilities. We cannot allow some Legislators to play politics with the lives of our employees and visitors. On October 1st, I acted upon my authority to direct Sheriff Falco to handle security at all county facilities, ***a function which already falls under the responsibilities described by his department.***

Of particular concern to me was the Legislature's restoration of the six Finance Department positions assigned to Summit Park. This move was illogical. ***The Legislature's amendments restore positions for which there is no work.*** According to the changes, as of January 1, 2016, we will have an empty nursing home and hospital, and no duties to assign these employees.

It is my fiduciary responsibility to veto what I consider the Legislature's ill-advised amendments. I simply cannot compromise on these 22 changes.

On October 1st, I proposed a $723 million spending plan for 2016 that included a modest property tax levy increase, which equated to an additional $4 per month for the average Rockland County homeowner. *It was a budget that paid back the debt my Administration inherited and kept our government running for the price of a cup of coffee per month from each property taxpayer.* Last week, the Legislature passed a series of amendments establishing a tax increase of 9.86%.

Our constituents expect us to demonstrate the fiscal discipline necessary to balance our budget and manage county services in the most cost-efficient manner possible. In the days ahead, I remain confident that members of the Legislature will reach across the aisle and work collaboratively with my administration to achieve that goal of good governance.

Pursuant to Section C4.08 of the County Charter, for the reasons described above, I specifically append the attached schedule and this memorandum to the budget and object to and disapprove the amendments made by the Legislature as detailed in the attached schedule.

Edwin J. Day
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Attachment