

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Brought To You By The Rockland County Legislature

Vol. 1, Issue 3

Legislative Actions: Meeting Of Nov. 15, 2016

The 17-member Rockland County Legislature holds two full board meetings each month where it votes on a variety of issues that affect the daily lives of 326,000-plus local residents. This is a bi-weekly recap of some of the highlights of each meeting.

## Highlights In This Update:



**Personal Care To Keep You Home**



**Updating 'The Jewel Of Rockland'**



**Nonprofit Organizations Speak Out  
Against Proposed Funding Cuts**

PLUS: DEMANDING FUNDING TO PAY FOR STATE, FEDERAL MANDATES  
BALLARD JOINS EMC ~ WHERE TO GO TO HELP FIGHT HUNGER

### HELPING YOU STAY IN YOUR HOME

We all want to be able to stay in our homes for as long as possible, despite our age or our infirmities. Providing **Personal Care Services** can help local residents do just that - and perhaps avoid the need for a more costly nursing home or other facility completely. Legislators voted 13-1 to approve agreements with 17 local care provider agencies who provide such personal care help. The program is overseen by the **Rockland County Department of Social Services**, with the \$800,000 it expends reimbursed by Medicaid. Personal care can include everything from helping a person bathe, take medications or use a toilet, to changing their beds and doing their laundry, getting them into a wheelchair or helping them write out their bills.

## SPEAKING OUT AGAINST PROPOSED 2017 COUNTY BUDGET CUTS

More than two dozen people spoke during a public hearing on the County Executive's proposed 2017 county budget, including numerous representatives of nonprofit organizations whose funding has been cut. The representatives focused on the benefits of the services provided by their organizations and requested that funding be restored. Among the agencies represented: **Rockland 21C**, oversees 46 Family Resource Center Programs at schools throughout the county & provides a blend of services and programs to boost the healthy development of children; **Child Care Resources of Rockland**, helps families figure out how to select early childhood or before/after-school programs for their children & also provides professional development to staff at early childhood and school age programs in the county; **Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Rockland**, best for its mentoring efforts but also facilitates court-ordered visits between non-custodial parents and their children; **Keep Rockland Beautiful**, provides environmental awareness education to children through organized programs run in conjunction with local schools; and **Rockland YMCA**, runs the Child Care Program at **Family Court**, helping to keep child who accompany their caregivers to the courthouse outside of the courtroom and in a wholesome Children's Center during proceedings. It would cost about \$1.3 million to restore funding for all 34 organizations that were cut in the County Executive's proposed 2017 spending plan. Page One Photo: (far right) Christine Olivier, program director for Garner Arts Center, speaks at public hearing.

## NECESSARY UPDATES AT THE 'JEWEL OF ROCKLAND COUNTY'

Lots of necessary updating is happening at **Rockland Community College** – or, as many fondly refer to it, “The Jewel of Rockland County.” Legislators voted 13-1 to support four measures that allow the college to be reimbursed for 50 percent of the costs associated with each effort. They include the installation of new carbon monoxide detectors in various campus buildings at a cost of \$22,105; the emergency repair of the heating system to Brucker Hall at a cost of \$76,477 and the removal and installation of part of the Field House roof system at a cost of \$57,412. Legislators voted 12-1 to approve an agreement with **Ecosystem Energy Services USA, Inc.** to provide energy efficiency upgrades and renovations across the campus at a cost of \$11.13 million. Legislator Michael Grant, who works for **Orange and Rockland Utilities, Inc.**, abstained. O&R is covering \$1.1 million of the total costs through incentives. About \$5.6 million will be reimbursed by the state. About \$4.5 million will be paid through a financing agreement with municipal leasing consultants.



**Daniel T. Brucker Hall at Rockland Community College in Ramapo**

## BALLARD JOINS EMC

Legislators voted 13-1 to confirm the appointment of **Gillian E. Ballard** to the **Rockland County Environmental Management Council**. EMC works to effect environmental improvements and awareness, sponsoring the Eleanor Burlingham 5th Grade Earth Day Essay Contest to encourage youths to go outside and observe interactions between plants and animals, and presenting the Green Champion Award to an organization, business or group that shows an exemplary focus on the environment among other efforts. Ballard is perhaps best known for her role as President and CEO of **Rockland County Big Brothers-Big Sisters**, whose stated mission is “to provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported 1-to-1 relationships that change their lives for the better.” She lives in Sloatsburg.

**DEMANDING FUNDING TO PAY  
FOR STATE, FEDERAL MANDATES**

With yet another unfunded mandate put in place, Legislators voted 13-1 on a resolution that would aid child care providers. It calls upon **Gov. Andrew Cuomo** and the **state Senate and Assembly** to enact legislative and regulatory changes to implement the **federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act, or CCDBG**. The CCDBG provides access to quality early learning to children from low-income families, but there is insufficient federal and state funding to implement the mandated new requirements put in place under the act. Legislators are calling upon the state leaders to provide the \$56 million needed to cover the costs of criminal background checks and new professional development requirements. Additionally, the same resolution requests the state to create an **Early Childhood Learning Fund** with a dedicated revenue stream to serve a greater number of eligible children; only 92,000 of the approximately 676,000 children eligible statewide were served at any time.

**The Rockland County Legislature  
Sends Its Best Wishes For A  
Very Happy Thanksgiving!**

**As we prepare to enjoy our national meal, we have neighbors who need help to make dinner a reality for them and their families.**

**Please visit the following sites to learn more about getting involved in the fight against hunger, including where to donate food and money that can keep helping long after the leftovers are gone.**

**Rockland Community Against Hunger**

<http://www.rocklandhunger.org/food-pantries-feeding-programs/>

**People to People**

<http://www.peopletopeopleinc.org/>

*Note: Two members of the 17-member Legislature were absent on Nov. 15; another left early without asking to be excused and his unauthorized absence, in accordance with the rules, was recorded as an automatic no vote. Another legislator left early but sought authorization. Therefore, the votes noted in this report were 13-1.*

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