

Press



Release

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For Immediate Release

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Legislators Request Comptroller To Review Specific Issues In County Executive's Proposed Budget

Wolfe, Grant, Schoenberger Raise Concerns About Revenue, Tax Cap, Deficit

New City, NY (Oct. 21, 2015) – Three Rockland County Legislators have written to the New York State Comptroller's Office to request that specific issues be reviewed in the County Executive's proposed 2016 budget.

Legislature Chairman Alden H. Wolfe, Budget and Finance Committee Chairman Legislator Michael M. Grant and Legislator Ilan S. Schoenberger have identified at least six specific issues in the \$723 million proposal.

"It is my belief that the County Executive's proposed budget for calendar year (2016) overstates revenue and underestimates expenditures that will increase the deficit in Rockland County," Schoenberger wrote.

The Comptroller's Office was given the task of reviewing the county's annual proposed budget under a 2013 state law that also authorized the county to borrow \$96 million to use toward paying down its budget deficit.

In their Oct. 5 letter, Wolfe and Grant specified five issues in County Executive Ed Day's proposal:

- Day has budgeted ZERO DOLLARS for a reserve fund for deficit reduction as required by county law.
- Day has included a "one shot" sale of the Sain County Building for \$4 million without a formal appraisal and without yet marketing it – a process that could take considerable time.

- Day has budgeted ZERO DOLLARS for the Summit Park Hospital and Nursing Care Center, instead relying on an optimistic three-month period to close the facility in compliance with New York State Department of Health regulations. Legislative approval is required to approve any closure.
- Day has included \$1.8 million for Community College charge-backs. Such charge-backs to Rockland's five towns were eliminated by resolution in 2013.
- Day has included \$2.5 million in salary savings via a Voluntary Separation Incentive, but no such incentive has been approved by the County Legislature.

In his Oct. 15 letter, Schoenberger voiced most of the same concerns, adding that Day's proposal also increases taxes above the amount allowed by the tax cap. He notes that no prior discussions about raising the cap were held between Day and Legislators and that it would require 60 percent of the 17-member Legislature to support busting the cap.

"We wrote to the Comptroller to highlight some of our concerns and we hope to receive strong feedback," Wolfe said. "Our residents, our taxpayers are relying on us to do the very best we can when it comes to providing necessary services in as cost-effective a budget as possible."

"Without changes, many of these proposed revenues are nothing more than phantom revenues that cannot be realized in 2016 and that will drive the deficit back up," Schoenberger said.

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