Nassau County Village Officials Association

Representing the 64 villages in Nassau County, New York
with a combined population of 475,000 residents

Government Closest to the People

March 2024 Newsletter

OUR NEXT MEETING WILL START AT 6:30 PM

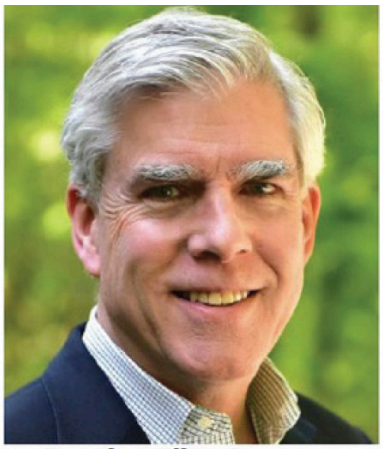
TUESDAY, MARCH 12TH DINNER AT WESTBURY MANOR

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

PORT WASHINGTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT. CHAIRMAN & EX-CHIEF CHRISTOPHER M. BOLLERMAN

EMS COST RECOVERY

Your Fire Chief or President of a department providing EMS is welcomed to join



President Elliot Conway
Mayor of the Village of
Upper Brookville

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The New York Legislature committees review many thousands of bills each year.

In the first six months of 2023 lawmakers introduced 14,916 bills. By year end, 871 bills passed by the Legislature were signed into law.

The NCVOA is advocating for bills to reduce crime:

- **Higher penalties for repeat offenders.** The New York Times reported that a third of all shoplifting arrests in New York City last year involved just 327 people, according to police. Collectively, the suspects were arrested and rearrested more than 6,000 times. Assembly Bill A5029 increases penalties for repeat offenders.
- **Fentanyl Epidemic.** We support three bills to reduce fentanyl and other drug overdose deaths in New York State. More than 5,800 lives were lost in New York in 2021 from drug poisoning.
  - S07816/A8383 authorizes bail for certain felony offenses involving the manufacture, sale, distribution, or possession with intent to sell synthetic opioids.
  - S07790/A8384 establishes the sale, delivering or administering of certain controlled substances as manslaughter when he or she knows or has reasonable grounds to know that a controlled substance is likely to cause the death of another person or contributes to, or aids in the death of such other person.
  - S07763-A /A8395 makes the possession and use of xylazine illegal with an exception for its use only in veterinary practice.

- **Discovery Roll Back.** The current timing for discovery is draconian. Charges are being dismissed against culpable, guilty people —often for the failure to deliver small pieces of paper that are not relevant to the prosecution or the defense. In Nassau County, thousands of viable cases have been thrown out due to the burden of excessive discovery. We support modifying discovery laws in S05885/A7033.

- **AIM Funding Increase.** The Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) program provides state aid to all our villages. It was intended to share a portion of the personal income tax funds paid by our residents to the state. Our local government costs constantly increase but AIM has not increased in 15 years. Last month, NYCOM just released a letter signed by 350 mayors to state leaders calling for an increase in AIM Funding.

- **EMS Cost Recovery.** In April 2022 the EMS Cost Recovery Act became law allowing New York's volunteer fire departments to recover costs associated with their ambulance services. The law expires in 2026 if it is not renewed. We are urging legislators to make the law permanent. Many of our village residents are paying twice for EMS services. They pay health insurance premiums that cover EMS transport service. They're also paying for the service through their property taxes. This new funding source can materially improve fire department budgets. The Firefighters Association for the State of New York (FASNY), with other volunteer fire service organizations strongly support this legislation.

- **Nassau County's exploding white-tail deer herd.** We are working with legislators and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) on legislation to reduce the adverse health and safety risks that come with invasive deer herds. The deer spread tick-borne diseases including Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Lyme Disease, Encephalitis and meningitis. There has been a large increase in deer-vehicular collisions in many villages.

- **Financial Literacy.** We support efforts to incorporate financial education into the high school curriculum to improve New York State residents' personal finance. A2298/S4860 will require high schools to provide a course in Grades 9-12 in financial literacy, and requires students to complete the course to graduate. The course will be taught on a pass or fail basis and will not affect the student's grade point average. State Education Commissioner Betty Rosa and state Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli recently called for a mandatory financial literacy course. A knowledge of personal finance, budgeting and especially the time value of money is crucial, particularly for young people, in making successful personal career choices, improving one's quality of life, and providing peace of mind.

- **Vexatious Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests**. FOIL was intended to encourage transparency and accountability in government but many New York villages have reported frivolous or burdensome requests likely intended for harassment purposes. We join with the New York Conference of Mayors in support of legislation to protect municipalities from vexatious requesters. They consume valuable staff resources, often at great expense, and undermine our efforts to serve the public we represent.

If you support any or all of these initiatives, we encourage you to follow up with your legislators.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LOBBY DAY

If you have time, join us on March 20th for the New York Conference of Mayors (NYCOM) Local Government Lobby Day. We will gather at the Renaissance Albany Hotel near the Capitol Building at 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Information and registration is here:

https://www.nycom.org/2-uncategorised/1827-local-government-lobby-day

There is no fee for the event NYCOM asks that you register by March 15th. Continental breakfast and a box lunch are included.

NYCOM and the Association of Towns (AOT) are joining forces to ensure that our state budget priorities are at the forefront of the State Legislature's mind during the final weeks leading up to the Budget's adoption.

The day will begin with a discussion led by NYCOM and AOT staff updating you on the status of our key funding priorities. Following that, there will be a news conference, after which you will have the opportunity to meet with your Senate and Assembly representatives to reiterate our position on these initiatives.

As the math shows, thousands of other bills compete for their attention. For best results, you are encouraged to begin scheduling those meetings now.

Thanks for your support!

Elliot S. Conway
President, NCVOA

MAYORS AND ELECTED LEADERS RALLY FOR MORE STATE AID ON ROCKVILLE CENTER VILLAGE STEPS

Based on excerpts from LI HERALD article by Daniel Offner posted February 29, 2024

At a news conference on Feb. 22, The New York Conference of Mayors (NYCOM) and 20 government officials from across Long Island to kicked off a statewide campaign to urge Gov. Kathy Hochul and state lawmakers to increase unrestricted Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) aid to cities and villages for the first time in 15 years.

Municipal officials said that the funds directly impact local governments' ability to respond to growing demands for public safety and other essential services.

Mayor Francis X. Murray, the immediate past president of NYCOM spoke first.

"Each year, the purchasing power of the aid we receive, just like anyone here can attest, gets smaller and smaller," Murray said. "That's why it's important for all of us, as leaders in municipal government from New York state, to stand together and demand the state meet the moment and deliver more AIM funding."

Albany Mayor Kathy M. Sheehan, the president of NYCOM, said that the hard-earned income tax dollars the state collects are supposed to help ensure that local governments have the necessary funding to address the challenges they face, including aging sewage and water infrastructure and needed improvements in police and fire services. "And those challenges have only grown, not shrunk," Sheehan said.

Sheehan said funding for AIM is down roughly 9 percent since 2009. Meanwhile, the state continues to increase funding for education and counties.

NYCOM Executive Director Barbara Van Epps said the demand for essential services is rising, while the ability to fund them has not increased as rapidly.

“If we can’t provide those services, either those services are going to be cut or we’re going to have to turn back to our taxpayers in order to fund them, and that’s something we do not want to do,” Van Epps said. “We do not want to raise property taxes. We are subject to a property tax cap. We have a constitutional tax limit. We are restricted in that sense.”

Decades ago, she explained, the state realized that it needed to help local governments provide these services, so it created a revenue-sharing program. The program was intended to share the revenue of the progressive personal income tax as it grew so that local governments wouldn’t need to rely solely on property and sales taxes.

“It worked for a long time, Van Epps said, “But unfortunately, AIM was created in 2006. That is the latest iteration of revenue sharing, when in fact it is not revenue sharing at all. There is no formula. There is no percentage. There is no maximum amount of funding that we are guaranteed year in and year out.”

“You want New York state to be more affordable?” Van Epps said. “You want New York state to be safer? Well, guess what, that’s what local governments want too. So let’s work together to achieve those goals. That’s what we need to do. But we cannot be successful unless the state of New York is willing to invest in us and support the local governments that do what we do to help our communities every day.”

Sheehan added that while the amount taxpayers have given to the state has increased every year, the aid given back to its communities has shrunk.

“This is your money that is sitting in New York state’s capital, and we want it back,” Sheehan said. “We want it for our communities. We want it to be able to do good.”

“The suburbs-security, peace, comfort, but I digress. You have a question on your homework?”

SUOZZI SWORN INTO 118TH CONGRESS

The 3rd Congressional District of New York is now represented by Congressman Tom Suozzi. He won the special election and was sworn in on February 28th, replacing George Santos. He will be up for reelection this November. He previously served as Glen Cove mayor, Nassau County executive and U. S. Representative from 2017-2023. The office service link is: *https://suozzi.house.gov*

Photo credit: Phi Nguyen, Photographer, U.S. House of Representatives

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NOTICE FROM THE NASSAU COUNTY CHIEF FIRE MARSHAL

The Fire Marshal Bulletin has published updated NYS and Nassau County Fire Prevention Ordinance code requirements and NFPA reference standards for television and film production and the need for notification to the Fire Marshal's Office prior to any filming. The required notification to the Fire Marshal's Office in advance could prevent any unnecessary pauses in production which would cause an unnecessary delay and increased costs. Check the NCVOA website this week for the notice.

Michael F. Uttaro, Chief Fire Marshal & County Fire Coordinator
Nassau County Fire Marshal's Office
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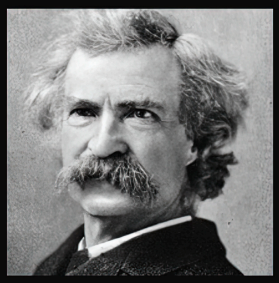

To be great, truly great, you have to be the kind of person who makes the others around you great.