



NEWS FROM **ULSTER COUNTY**

County Executive Jen Metzger

******For Immediate Release******

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Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger's 2024 Budget Prioritizes Infrastructure, Housing, and Climate with No Property Tax Increase

MANDATES, CONTRACT COSTS DRIVE BUDGET INCREASE, NON-MANDATED SPENDING KEPT UNDER 1.4%

MARLBOROUGH, NY - Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger continued her push to carry County government to all corners of Ulster County by delivering her 2024 Executive Budget Address at the Town of Marlborough Town Court in Milton on Tuesday afternoon, after holding her Inauguration in Rosendale and State of the County Address in Ellenville. The 2024 Executive Budget will limit the increase in non-mandated spending to 1.4% and keep property taxes flat while making investments in priority areas to improve infrastructure, address the housing crisis, protect the environment, and help Ulster residents thrive.

The 2024 proposed Budget includes \$413 million in spending, up from \$381 million in 2023. Of the new spending, \$9 million is funded by federal and state grants at no cost to the County. \$17 million is directly attributed to mandated and required contractual spending, with the majority of that cost coming from just three mandated programs – Medicaid, Safety Net, and Early Intervention.

With those required costs driving the increase, non-mandated expenses in the 2024 Executive Budget are limited to a less than 1.4% increase. The 2024 Executive Budget also maintains a maximum fund balance as permitted by County policy, reserving 20% of operating expenditures in a “rainy day” fund to protect taxpayers.

“We are in a very strong financial position as a County going into 2024,” said **Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger**. “This budget is the result of diligent work, careful planning, and creative thinking on how to use limited resources to tackle the challenges we face and capitalize on opportunities. It is a budget that allocates resources where they are needed

most, builds on the County's strengths, and responsibly manages government finances to deliver for our residents and businesses.”

2024 EXECUTIVE BUDGET TOPLINES:

- **\$413 million total budget**, an increase of \$32 million from 2023.
- **The budget increase includes:**
 - **\$9M in state and federal grants** at **no cost** to the County.
 - **\$17M in mandated and contractually required** costs.
 - **\$5M in non-mandated spending**, a **less than 1.4% increase**.
- **Property Tax** - The 2024 Executive Budget keeps the **property tax levy flat**.
- **Sales Tax** - The 2024 Executive Budget projects **Sales Tax to remain flat** from the prior year's budget.

2024 EXECUTIVE BUDGET INITIATIVES:

- **Infrastructure** - Dedicates nearly \$20 million to improvements for roads and bridges.
- **Housing** - Provides long-term funding to new Housing Action Fund, dedicating 25% of annual revenues from motel/short-term rental bed tax; creates new Housing and Homelessness unit to help meet emergency housing needs.
- **Mental Health** - Continues funding for supplemental mental health supports for middle schools county-wide; invests \$3.8M in a County Community Behavioral Health Center that will provide 24/7 crisis stabilization services.
- **Education** - Invests \$6.9 million in operating assistance for SUNY Ulster to ensure our residents have equitable access to higher education.
- **Government Operations** - Dedicates \$18M to a Government Operations Center capital reserve fund, cutting bonding costs in half for the new facility.
- **Public Transit** - Dedicates 25% of annual motel/short-term rental bed tax to improving UCAT routes and service for visitors and residents alike.
- **Expanding Access** - Invests \$700K in Phase 1 improvements to Trudy Resnick Farber Building in Ellenville to transform the building into a community service hub that provides equitable access for the western part of the county.
- **Energy Improvements** - Establishes a Decarbonization Capital Reserve (\$18M) and creates an Energy & Electrification Manager to oversee projects at County facilities.
- **Professional Development** - Establishes a robust training program for employees and an Ulster County Leadership Academy for emerging leaders in the County workforce.

A full transcript of the County Executive's 2024 Executive Budget Address is attached.

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