



Supervisor Chris Burdick's November Report

DECEMBER 31, 2019



RING IN THE NEW YEAR AT THE
SWEARING IN CEREMONY OF:

Kitley Cavill, Westchester County Legislator, Dist. 2
Chris Burdick, Town Supervisor
Ellen Calves, Councilperson
Babbi M. Billker, Councilperson

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2020 AT NOON
 BEDFORD TOWN HOUSE, 321 BEDFORD ROAD, BEDFORD HILLS, NEW YORK

STATEMENT FROM BEDFORD TOWN SUPERVISOR CHRIS BURDICK ON VIOLENT ANTI-SEMITIC ATTACKS IN ROCKLAND COUNTY

We are shocked and horrified by the violent attacks last night at a rabbi's home in Monsey which followed a series of recent anti-Semitic attacks and incidents.

The victims are in our thoughts and prayers as we stand together as a community condemning these acts. In addition to measures which County Executive George Latimer has taken, I have directed the Bedford Police Department to take further protective actions. Ensuring the safety of our residents and visitors is the principal mission of the Bedford Police Department, and takes special significance while members of our community are practicing their faith and peacefully gathering.

In response to these attacks, Police Chief Padilla has directed his department to increase high visibility patrols in and around places of worship and are coordinating security measures with local religious leaders.

This is in addition to other layers of deterrence we have deployed to enhance safety for our communities of faith.

Please see my [December 27 newsletter](#) for the

- January 2 agenda for Town Board Work Session with Bedford 2020, Organizational Meeting and Regular Meeting
- Westchester County Shared Services Plan Unanimously Approved, including Pilot Program for northern Westchester Wireless/Cell Tower Plan
- Comptroller Abraham Zambrano Financial Update Update on Merestead

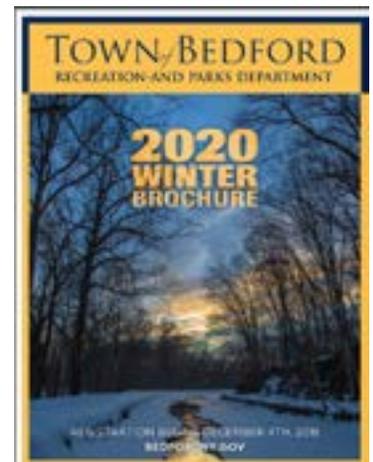
Westchester County 2020 Shared Services Plan Plan for Northern Westchester Wireless/Cell Tower

On December 16, the County's 2020 Shared Services Plan was unanimously approved. It includes a pilot program to create a wireless/cell master plan for northern Westchester which I proposed and developed with supervisors of northern Westchester towns and the mayor of Mt. Kisco. Seven municipalities which form the consortium are Bedford, Lewisboro, Mt. Kisco, North Salem, Pound Ridge, Somers and Yorktown.

As I work extensively with my colleagues from these other municipalities through my work on East of Hudson Watershed Corporation and Sustainable Westchester, I suggested the initiative last year and it began in late 2018 with a request from us to County Executive George Latimer to support our desire to develop an integrated, regional approach to wireless communications, including emergency communications and addressing cell service deficiencies. We explained that one of our highest priorities is to develop an integrated, regional approach is for expert, independent consultancy services for our municipalities, rather than each municipality hiring its own.

We asked the County to consider providing funding for such consultancy services in the amount of \$190,170 under a [proposal from CityScape](#), renowned national experts in the field. Under the State's shared services program, the County is eligible for reimbursement from the State to the extent of savings through a consolidated approach.

Our thanks to County Executive George Latimer and our County Legislator Kitley Covill for fully funding the cost of the consultancy services in the County's 2020 Budget and including the project in the County's 2020



[Click to view](#)

Permitted Uses for Merestead Under Town of Bedford Zoning Code

I mentioned in my December 27 newsletter that County Executive George Latimer and County Legislator Kitley Covill hosted a public information session at Merestead on December 7, 2019 to present to the community, the County's efforts to save the Merestead mansion from further deterioration resulting from insufficient funds for its repair and maintenance. [Merestead is a County Park](#); see newsletter for [background on the Merestead property](#). I mentioned, as I have previously, that the Town fully supports the County's efforts to obtain funds from a trust created to benefit Merestead so the County may apply such funds to cover, in part, the restoration costs. Both the Town and the County are mindful of and sensitive to concerns voiced at the meeting regarding potential impacts of the County's uses at Merestead.

County Executive Latimer explained at the meeting that the County will observe the Town's zoning and planning processes for such uses at the property. He asked me to provide a summary of the Town's planning and zoning provisions which govern the permitted use of the property. Please see the [attached letter](#) and [summary](#) which I provided CE Latimer on December 30.

County Executive Latimer's 2020 Shared Services Plan Passes Unanimously

Westchester County Executive George Latimer convened the County's Shared Services Panel for a meeting to vote on the 2020 Westchester County-Wide Shared Services Plan.

Of note in this year's plan was the creation of the "WestchesterShares" portal, which was paid for by a grant from NYS Department of State. This is a web based portal that will serve as a virtual marketplace for municipalities and school districts to share services, procure goods collaboratively, and find the best pricing. It will be an opportunity to find real procurement savings for all municipalities in Westchester.

The Portal, which only allows registration by municipal officials, can be seen here: westchestershares.com

New York State law requires the Shared Services Panel, which includes the Mayor/Supervisor of each municipality in Westchester County, to vote on the plan that must be submitted to the state by the end of the year. The vote was unanimous in favor of the plan's adoption.

Latimer said: "Shared Services programs are here to help our local municipalities and school districts find ways to save taxpayer dollars by sharing resources, technology and areas of expertise. Westchester County is full of taxing entities, which is why my Administration feels it is so important to include all of them in our Shared Services Panel. The greater reach we have, the greater savings we can provide to hardworking Westchester County taxpayers."

State law also enables County Executives to invite the participation of school districts, which the Latimer Administration has done wholeheartedly.

Assistant Director of Operations Susan Spear said: "This portal will be a game-changer for local leaders looking to generate serious cost savings. The evidence is already there, we were watching the municipalities sign up for the portal in real time before our meeting had even ended."

[View the PPT presentation](#)

Comptroller's Report

Comptroller Abraham Zambrano provided the following update on December 12 for financial activity for November:

EXPENDITURES

General and Highway Funds.

The overall year-to-date expenditure percentage for the General and Highway funds are 81.6% and 80.2% which are slightly below the 83% mark after eleven (11) months of activity has been recorded.

These percentages are consistent with seasonal spending in both funds and based on historical trends, activity for December will increase. In addition, year-end processing will be increasing in order to record expenditures in the proper year.

REVENUE AREAS OF NOTE

Mortgage Tax.

Mortgage tax revenue for the Town's 2019 budget year was revised by the Westchester County Clerk's office. The total for year is \$814,639 instead of \$821,517 as reported in October.

Based on the updated amount, 2019 mortgage taxes revenues are 4.33% lower than the same period in 2018.

The County reported \$158,932 in Mortgage Taxes collected for October and November which will accounted for in 2020.

Sales Tax.

At the time of this report, the Westchester County Department of Finance had not released the sales tax amount for the month of November.

However, as previously reported, based on information received through October, we are projecting being able to exceed the amount budgeted for 2019 by approximately \$400,000 as the result of the increase in the Westchester County sales tax rate that was put into effect on August 1.

Parking.

During the month of November, the Parking Bureau was able to offer parking permits in lot 1 in Katonah

to over 30 residents who had been on the waiting list more than a year, and based on lot usage data, we were also able to move the waiting for lot 4 in Bedford Hills. As of the date of this report, we have 240 residents on the list. The oldest date for lot 1 is January 2019 and February 2019 for lot 4.

At the time of this report, parking revenues for the year exceed 2018's collections for the same period by over \$100,000. However, projections through the end of 2019 indicate that parking revenues will not meet budget.

Fines and Forfeited Bail.

The collection of fines imposed by the Justice Court are currently two months in arrears due to the timing of the processing by the NYS Office of Court Administration. Fines collected through September are still indicating that projected revenues will exceed budget by year end by approximately \$90,000.

However, 2019's collected fines are 1% below 2018 amounts.

Safety Inspections.

Safety Inspections fees through November 30th show a slight increase in activity in the Building Department.

As of October 31st, revenues are now 12.38% greater than the same period in 2018. Projections through year end indicate that revenues collected will exceed budget.



[Click to view](#)

2020 DEC Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Grant Applications Submitted

I previously mentioned that the Town is pursuing several grant opportunities. One of the grant programs is under the New York State Department of Conservation (DEC) for electric vehicle charging stations.

We just submitted today two grant applications; one for a charging station in the parking lot for the Town's offices at 425 Cherry Street, Bedford Hills, New York and the second application for Commuter Lot 3, at 50 Wood Bridge Road in Katonah.

These locations will make charging easily accessible to the public 24/7. The Town has applied for grant funding of \$36,000 (\$18,000 per each charging station). The grant is awarded on a reimbursement basis such that the DEC reimburses approximately 70% of the costs, with the Town being responsible for the remainder.

We are working on two additional applications in partnership with the Katonah Museum of Art to install two ZEV charging station in KMA's parking lot. We anticipate filing the applications in January.

My thanks to my intern, Alexa Ruscito, a graduate student a graduate student in PACE's School of Environmental Policy and Tim Parker, an intern who assisted with his reviewed the application.

DEC Tree Maintenance Grant Application

The Town is planning to submit a grant application to the New York State Department of Conservation under the Round 15 Urban and Community Forest Grants Program for Tree Maintenance in the next few days in consultation with Kevin Wynn, Director of the Department of Public Works; Christopher Soi, Director of the Recreation and Parks Department; Jeffrey Carpenter, Chairman of the Tree Advisory Board, and Simon Skolnik, Chairman of the Conservation Board.

Besides providing a street tree inventory, the Round 13 grant program funded a Tree Management Plan, which identified areas within the inventory where new trees can be planted. Tree Maintenance work will entail primarily removing those trees identified in the Round 13 Urban and Forestry Grants Program Tree Inventory as dead and in poor or moderate condition. Trees to be removed are located in various areas within our town.

In 2018 and 2019 the Town of Bedford performed a tree inventory and developed a tree management plan covering our three hamlet areas, our major parks, and other areas of interest, including non-state connecting highways. As the state will not accept one grant application that covers both tree planting and tree maintenance, and that we are only allowed to apply for one application, this

specific grant application will be applied to ensure that our existing stock of street trees are safe and will only cover tree maintenance as identified in our Tree Management Plan.

If awarded the maximum grant from the state of \$50,000, the town would be responsible to provide a 25% matching fund of \$12,500.00. In its authorization for this grant application, the town must recognize that this grant is a reimbursable grant, requiring the town to first pay the costs for the project work plan, and then receive compensation from the state after submission of all required documentation.

The DEC is providing funding for municipalities to further their efforts to ensure that our street trees are properly maintained and that areas identified for planting trees in our inventory be addressed in future years.

As part of this application, Bedford 2020 will partner with the town to assist in providing public outreach describing the goals for the work, and publicize our efforts within our municipality.

The grant decision will be announced in May 2020.

Prior Posts Of Continued Relevance

Sustainable Westchester Announces Electricity Discount Through Community Solar

You do not need to have solar panels to receive a discount on your electricity bill.

Community Solar is guaranteeing savings of up to 10% of your electricity bill (the entire bill, including delivery charge and taxes). It is available for both NYSEG and Con Edison customers and whether or not you are enrolled in Westchester Power. [Please click here for further information and to enroll](#)



Go Solar – With No Solar Panels on Your Home!



Sustainable Westchester is now providing another way for Westchester residents to support renewable energy! **Community solar offers guaranteed savings, with no investment, and without putting solar panels on your property.**

There are now opportunities for both ConEd and NYSEG customers to subscribe to community solar projects offering electricity bill savings of up to 10%!

- For NYSEG customers, to enroll click [here](#).
- For ConEd customers, to enroll click [here](#).

For more information about community solar, and Sustainable Westchester's community solar program, visit the [Solarize Westchester website](#). Community Solar is compatible with both Sustainable Westchester's Westchester Power CCA and if you are enrolled with another ESCO. If you already have solar on your property, or if you are a NYSEG customer on budget/level billing, unfortunately you cannot subscribe to community solar.

What Is Community Solar and how does it work?

Community solar enables people to subscribe to a large solar farm located in their utility area with no money down and no cost to cancel. Energy produced from the solar farm is sent to the electric grid and

Prior Posts Of Continued Relevance Bedford Central Elementary Schools

The Bedford Central School District has been working on Long Range Facilities Plan Development. In that connection it is considering capacity utilization of each of the five elementary schools in the District. Studies of consultants which the District engaged project declining enrollment and corresponding decrease in utilization. The District is considering "8 alternatives for school configurations" which include the closure of one or of two elementary schools.

The District held what its consultant, Dr. Mann, described as listening sessions to hear from the public regarding possible closure(s). Those attending the sessions strongly objected to closure of any elementary school to which one or more School Board members replied that no one wants to see any of the elementary schools close.

The District invited the community to provide suggestions on how unused capacity might be utilized.

The decision regarding closure is solely within the authority of the School Board. Pound Ridge Supervisor Kevin Hansan, Mt. Kisco Mayor Gina Picinich and I wish to partner with the District to help to avoid closure.

In addition to considering the feasibility and practicality of utilization of unused capacity, there may be shared services opportunities and other measures to save money.

Our role is, as best we can, to help find solutions.



[Click to view](#)

Autism Registry Forms

An [Autism registry](#) has been implemented on the Bedford Police Department website. The Bedford Central School District has been given access to the forms to distribute to students and parents. You can also [download the forms here](#).

[BluePath Service Dogs](#) co-founder Michelle Brier stopped by with future autism service dog Parker.

This sweet little guy on the left will one day provide safety, companionship and opportunities for independence for a child with autism.

BluePath helped to develop the Town of Bedford's voluntary Autism registry which gives first responders vital information to help individuals with special needs in emergency situations; it has been proven particularly helpful for children on the spectrum with elopement concerns.



*I welcome suggestions and comments to my monthly reports,
my weekly newsletter and my news to the community.*

Best regards,

Chris