

2018 BUDGET MESSAGE FROM DANIEL P. McCOY

I am pleased to present a budget that demonstrates my administration's efforts to stabilize County finances and ensure our County's safety and vibrancy. I am also pleased to present a budget that stays under the State tax cap for the fifth consecutive year despite the continued pressures of unfunded mandates and the real cuts we faced for 2018 in state aid for programs such as foster care.

This budget, like those I have presented for the past five years, continues to build upon a record of fiscal progress and programmatic growth. It is a budget that is both balanced and that continues our strong commitment to programs that are critical to our mission of service to seniors, to children, to veterans and to those who are in need.

My commitment has been and continues to be, to provide these critical services without placing any undue burden on the real property tax payers of our County. So while we have increased our County tax levy by approximately \$1.6 million, our tax rate year over year remains unchanged, largely as a result of an overall increase in the full valuation of real property within the County.

Again, for the second consecutive year, the State Comptroller has placed Albany County into a category of no designation of fiscal stress based on our prudent management practices and impressive record of fiscal improvement and growth.

Notably, while we face additional pressures from unfunded state and federal mandates, and have lost revenues as a result of the statutory change in distribution of the County hotel tax, we have continued to grow our fund balance, nearly doubling our fund revenues since I took office. For 2018, we project a fund balance of over \$60 million, an amount that is prudent and appropriate given the size of our County budget. The intended use of this fund balance is to permit us to offset or minimize tax increases in future budgets due to unforeseen or uncontrollable occurrences, such as further cuts in federal or state funding, additional mandates or decreases in sales tax revenue.

The proposed budget I provide is structurally sound, and does not use General Fund reserves. This was achieved by maximizing efficiencies and revenues. Additionally, this budget contains no reductions to County programs or to the County workforce and includes a 2% raise for non-union County employees.

Also, the budget contains a grant of \$250,000 to the Albany County Land Bank, which has become one of the most successful land banks in New York State. This grant brings Albany County's financial commitment to the Land Bank to total \$2 million dollars and allows the Land Bank to leverage additional funding sources.

Since the opening of the River's Casino and Resort in Schenectady in February 2017, Albany County has received its statutory share of the proceeds. Anticipated revenue for the 2018 budget is set for \$1.6 million. This is a conservative estimate based on the trends so far this year.

I would like to thank our Legislative leadership for working with my administration in our effort to keep Albany County moving forward on those commitments and on our mutual goal of improving the quality of life for all of our residents. By working together the Executive budget was Adopted unanimously by the Legislature with only minor changes. I believe this budget demonstrates our commitment to ensuring the financial stability of our County as we continue our commitment to the important mission of County government.