

2025  
Message to the Legislature



**Edwin J. Day**  
County Executive  
March 4, 2025

Members of the Legislature, elected officials, county employees, and everyone joining us virtually—thank you for attending the 2025 State of the County.

We've made tremendous progress, but we're facing new challenges. Ongoing high inflation is leading to sales tax revenues leveling off. They had been growing significantly year over year.

My administration is always searching for savings both big and small to help offset any potential losses. Our Finance Department is saving us \$30 million for capital improvements by paying upfront with our fund balance rather than borrowing... paying interest on a bond would have doubled the cost. We also do whatever renovations we can in-house with our Facilities Department to save even more money. Just this past year our team renovated new offices for our Veterans Service Agency and Office for the Aging. Our Highway Department saved more than half the cost of resurfacing 14 miles of county roads last year by securing about \$2 million in state funding. Our Insurance Department saved the county \$50,000 a year by transitioning two insurance cases from a prescription that cost \$2,000 per month - to over-the-counter options. Our Public Transportation Department is purchasing two dozen new TRIPS paratransit buses using only state and federal funding, and ZERO county tax dollars. Our Purchasing Department is partnering with neighboring New York municipalities and school districts to streamline our purchasing process.

Through our new Empire State Cooperative Procurement Alliance, we will issue more cooperative bids, leveraging our collective purchasing power to buy high quality products and services for the \*lowest\* prices. Let's not forget our record-breaking \$316,000 in Tourism Grant Awards. These grants are utilized to promote our local events to tourists outside of Rockland to offset costs for residents. The average household in Rockland would have to pay an additional \$618 in yearly property taxes to maintain current services if not for tourism-generated sales and local taxes.

These are just a few of the strategic moves my administration is making that led to recent praise by New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli at a RBA luncheon.

Now thanks to the hardworking people in this administration we are able to do more for our taxpayers while yet again decreasing property taxes. That includes providing free TOR bus service for the fifth year in a row. Again we secured state and federal funding for this utilizing ZERO county tax dollars. It also includes our Office of Fire and Emergency Services' HERROS program. This program provides tuition reimbursement to volunteer emergency responders. In its 3rd year we have reimbursed nearly \$230,000 in college tuition. Well-deserved assistance for these men and women who put their lives on the line. Our Office for the Aging - celebrating 50 years of dedicated service to older adults - provides over 1,700 home-delivered meals provided to caregivers, more than 700 rides, and over 1,500 hours of respite care every year to residents. Our Human Rights Department launched a statewide No Hate New York license plate program. This Proceeds from the plates will go into a fund to support anti-hate education, awareness campaigns and programs not just advancing human rights but fostering inclusivity.

Our Department of Consumer Protection recovered over \$55,000 in refunds for victimized consumers. Our Probation Department secured nearly \$80,000 in restitution for 300 crime victims. Our Veterans Service Agency secured \$2.5 million in additional benefits for our veterans. The Rockland County Sheriff's Office is launching a Cryptocurrency Unit, dedicated to investigating cryptocurrency crimes, and also a Real Time Crime Center. This will centralize information and technology resulting in faster emergency responses and quicker arrests. And let's not forget our Law Department's incredible victory in the election law case against the state. The new law demanded that local elections occur only in even numbered years.

I'll be honest, this fight was a matter of principle as we have a constitutional right to say when and how our local officials are chosen and thanks to this victory that will continue.

Unlike other governments that are constantly wasting money and over taxing to cover costs, this administration is only making investments that maximize returns for Rockland's future. This includes our Personnel Department conducting leadership training for staff. These courses hone management skills of employees, preparing them for advancement opportunities within this administration. We are also marketing for new candidates to ensure we attract the best of the best to work for the County. Our Youth Bureau is working hard to prepare our future workforce. Last year, this department helped 500 young people complete nearly 100,000 hours of hands-on work experience. Our Rockland Conservation & Service Corps, celebrating its 25th anniversary, has corps members completing thousands of hours of environmental service projects countywide every single year. These programs - and more - are equipping our youth with the skills to succeed in the workforce and beyond.

Our outstanding Department of Social Services remains a statewide leader in child welfare. Ranked in the top 10% statewide, DSS excels in employment services, benefit timeliness, child support enforcement, and foster care placement. We are bolstering our efforts to ensure that individuals with disabilities have the support, resources, and opportunities they need to thrive. This includes our Department of Mental Health, in partnership with Capabilities Partnership, launching a much-needed program to help families secure services from the New York State Office for People with Disabilities, or OPWDD. I'm also proud to share our Office for People with Disabilities is hosting the second annual Accessible Family Fun Day in May. The FREE event for those 12 and older with special needs features an array of adaptive sports and activities. On top of providing vaccinations to uninsured, our Rockland County Department of Health has also conducted its own auditing of over 60 schools and daycares, leading to increased compliance with state vaccination requirements in schools protecting children at all age levels.

Every year we invest in our Contract agencies which are our boots on the ground for community assistance. But rest assured our Audit Department keeps a close eye to ensure duplicate funding is not issued and meets with departments to ensure they are properly monitoring that this funding is being spent appropriately. We are proud to share the County's unemployment rate is 2.9% one of the best statewide and lowest in the Hudson Valley. It is because of the collective work and investments my administration is doing, along with community partners like Rockland Works which helps jobseekers find employment.

We continue to deliver on my promise to preserve Rockland's open spaces. Last year, our Division of Environmental Resources preserved over 300 acres from development under our Open Space Acquisition Program. We also distributed \$10 million in ARPA grants to create or enhance over two dozen permanent parks, playgrounds, and community gardens countywide.

Speaking of ARPA, as I promised we left no money on the table. We obligated every single penny of the \$63 million we received from the federal government to Revive and Rebuild Rockland. The biggest investment made, was utilizing half of it to support affordable workforce housing projects. This country - and our county - are being crippled by a nationwide housing crisis. One of the main driving factors behind it is the lack of housing. Unfortunately, this is leading to the dangerous overcrowding issues we see in Rockland.

Since being mandated by New York State to enforce the Uniform Code in the Village of Spring Valley, our Office of Buildings and Codes has conducted nearly 4,000 inspections in 3 years. Those inspections resulted in over 16,000 violations and nearly \$700,000 dollars in fines collected. That is just Spring Valley, and we all know for a fact it is happening in other areas of the County as well.

As a former civic association president, I understand the importance of maintaining the character of existing neighborhoods. Our Planning Department is working on a critical update to the Countywide Comprehensive Plan—a blueprint for Rockland’s future. As the county tackles the housing crisis, this will play a crucial role in ensuring responsible development. This as our Office of Community Development is working tirelessly to increase housing attainable to the average Rocklander.

We currently have a deficit of 4,200 housing units for residents earning under \$60,000. That includes teachers, first responders, retail workers, government employees, seniors on fixed incomes and more—all struggling to afford living here. To bridge this gap, we launched the Housing Action Loan Opportunity (HALO) Awards. HALO provides low-interest loans to create and preserve financially attainable housing.

I’m proud to highlight this County program is supporting:

- 308 affordable units at the former Haverstraw Chair Factory
- 81 affordable units in downtown Haverstraw
- Preservation of 90 units for low-income seniors in Haverstraw
- 52 new units for low-income seniors in Clarkstown

Remember this is a leg up and not a handout. And as this is a revolving loan, payments flow back into the program for future housing projects for those at or below the Area Median Income. The ultimate investment for one of the county’s most pressing needs. This is in addition to redeveloping the Sain Building into workforce housing, with the continued support of our County Legislature. This housing crisis did not develop overnight, and it won’t be solved overnight. But my administration is committed to creating safe housing attainable to all. So I ask our families at home to be patient. We are making real progress and will not stop fighting to improve housing affordability for everyone. I also urge my partners in government and our County legislators to stand with me in breaking down financial barriers for families that benefit generations to come.

To my dedicated employees—we have achieved far more than we ever imagined. We rescued and revived this County thanks to your tireless work. But our work is far from over. I ask each of you—our employees, department heads, commissioners, and legislators—to stand with me as we continue creating a county our families can be proud of. Let’s keep pushing forward, solving problems, and delivering results.

And as always, let us take a moment to honor those who serve—our military members who defend our freedom and our everyday heroes—the police officers, volunteer firefighters, EMTs, and Auxiliary Police who keep us safe.

May God bless you all, may God bless Rockland, and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you!

# OFFICE FOR THE AGING

Cheryl Dean Ward, Director

## 2024 Achievements

- The OFA team successfully moved the entire operation from Building B, 3100 square feet, to Building F, 24,000 square feet. Building F offers space to provide a tremendous scope of services to the elders of Rockland County including a unique space to create collaborations with community partners interested in hosting scheduled office hours at our location. These partnerships have and will continue to make it easier for clients and their families to obtain information about services and will improve outcomes for the older adults served by RCOFA. After eight months of operating in the new facility, RCOFA hosted an open house to showcase the services and programs offered to older adults of Rockland. The open house was attended by over 100 guests including contractors, vendors, elected officials, and county staff members.
- Throughout the year, OFA has offered a comprehensive selection of activities which promotes educational, physical, and social well-being for participants. These programs include Zumba, A Matter of Balance, chair yoga, Bingocize, game day, cyber security, and falls prevention events.
- Secured a partnership with Rockland BOCES to provide student technical assistance to older adults of Rockland. This program was and continues to be offered in the newly created Tech Lab at the OFA.
- The continuation of Falls Prevention program was highlighted by the Falls Prevention event held in September at Haverstraw Bay County Park. This program brings to scale and sustains evidence-based fall prevention programs that have been proven to reduce falls, fear of falling and fall-related injuries in older adults.
- Success has been realized with the ElliQ program which promotes and distributes proactive care companion technology to older adults, reducing social isolation by supporting independence, connection, and engagement. ElliQ proactively suggests activities and initiates conversations, building context through artificial intelligence (AI) to inform follow-up conversations that create a sense of relationship with the AI. To support health and wellness, ElliQ offers medication reminders for each user's unique condition(s).
- Collaboration with the Center for Safety and Change, DSS, and other community partners has provided RCOFA the opportunity to maintain elder abuse services and programming which increases awareness of the existence of elder abuse in our community and offers continued support and solutions.
- RCOFA developed and implemented an engaging Community Outreach program with programs and office hours in local libraries, senior housing complexes and community centers across Rockland.
- Positive results tackling the challenges of transportation were evidenced with the participation in a pilot transportation program, GoGo-Grandparent. NYSOFA provided funding for this pilot program and RCOFA maximized this by providing over 700 one-way rides to 61 older adults for medical appointments including dialysis and physical therapy throughout Rockland and surrounding areas.
- Caregiver services and supports have provided 1500 hours of respite care to many caregivers as well Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) units to older adults in need. Additionally, well over 1400 home delivered meals have been provided for continual relief to caregivers as they provide care to their loved ones within the community.
- Additional senior activity centers opened to provide a hot meal and social activities to the older adults of Rockland County. The Orangetown Senior Center was re-opened after closing during COVID, and the Haverstraw Senior Center hosted its grand opening in October 2024. RCOFA contracts with Meals on Wheels to facilitate these and three other senior activity centers located in Nyack, Clarkstown, and Ramapo; there are five activity centers in total throughout Rockland.

## **2025 Goals**

- The RCOFA will evaluate and restructure the assessment team to best serve the older adults of Rockland. Systems will be streamlined, and training will be provided to effectively utilize universal systems and tools for efficient and effective delivery of services. This overhaul will provide OFA with the ability to increase the number of older adults served with home delivered meals, personal care services and caregiver programs.
- Implement internal processes and restructure staffing patterns throughout OFA to foster an efficient work environment offering increased programming and services to Rockland County elders. Additionally, the restructure plan will assist with employee retention and growth within the department.
- A greater presence of RCOFA through outreach and programming will be realized in the underserved communities of Rockland especially, but not limited to, Spring Valley, Haverstraw, and Nyack. The establishment of Grab-and-Go meal programs as well as an additional senior activity center in Spring Valley will enable RCOFA to better meet the needs of this vulnerable population within these communities.
- Maximizing the space in building F, RCOFA will design and develop a courtyard garden suitable for innovative programs, including but not limited to nutritional, health & wellness, educational, creative, and social activities.
- A sustainable transportation program will be facilitated by RCOFA through the continued development of GoGo-Grandparent, the Independence Project, and onboarding of a transportation contractor.
- Increased attention will be given to the caregiver program to develop a more comprehensive plan of service for qualifying individuals of Rockland County.
- Continual growth of the community outreach program to reach the younger older adults of Rockland with office hours, educational, social, and health & wellness programs offered in libraries, senior housing complexes, community centers, and senior club locations.
- Embracing the history and growth of RCOFA will be the focus as we embark on a yearlong celebration highlighting 50 years of service to the older adults of Rockland County. Through this campaign, the OFA will provide a selection of themed events dating back to 1975, culminating a 50th Anniversary Celebration in the fall of 2025.

## **AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN DEPARTMENT (ARPA)**

Jenna Nazario, Director

## **2024 Achievements**

- Fully obligated the full \$63 million received from the Federal Treasury to Revive and Rebuild Rockland.
  - Affordable Housing Projects- \$29,513,138.96
  - Open Space Projects- \$22,358,167.20
  - Climate Mitigation-\$ 259,800
  - Transformational Impacts- \$1,470,879.63
  - Mental Health Initiatives- \$650,076.81
  - Community grants- \$5,964,036.16
- Launched, in partnership with Community Development the Rockland HALO fund, allocating \$13.5 million to affordable housing development.
- Partnered with Planning Department to launch the County's new comprehensive plan.
- Partnered with Sheriff's Department to create new 911 software system that will improve response rate and increase ability to respond to mental health related issues.
- Partnered with Facilities Management to create 3 county open space projects.
- Partnered with Facilities and Environmental to increase land preservation opportunities.

- Partnered with local nonprofits to increase food recovery, improve population health, and assist small businesses.
- Showcased 18 new parks/playgrounds funded under the Urban Green Space Grant.

## **AUDIT DEPARTMENT**

Linda Hill, Auditor

### **2024 Achievements**

- Developed a new policy for holding public events.
- Assisted County Executive staff with budget reviews.
- Co-led a Lean Project to streamline and re-design the contract agency application process and share information across departments.
- Reviewed migrated contract agencies and the departments monitoring process.
- Continued to monitor all Procurement Card purchases.
- Successfully completed the 2023 Financial Statements for the Deferred Compensation Plan for Employees of the County of Rockland.

### **2025 Goals**

- Further reduce the use of paper vouchers and implement new training.
- Improve the accounts payable workflow for department heads and management staff.
- Continue to monitor contract agencies.

## **BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

Allison Weinraub, Commissioner

Patricia Giblin, Commissioner

### **2024 Achievements**

#### **Presidential Primary**

- Presidential Primary April 2, 2024
- Early Voting 998
- Total Votes cast 5,841

#### **Primary Election**

- State and Local Primary June 25, 2024
- Early Voting 446
- Total votes cast 12,027

#### **General Election**

- Early Voting 60,692
- Absentee and affidavits 23,114
- Total votes cast 150,825

#### **Voter Outreach**

- The board strengthened and expanded our voter outreach approach.

**Schools:**

- We visited nine local schools to register the students to vote. We assisted them in filling out the registration form and informed them of their options for absentee voting.

**Post Offices and Libraries:**

- Supplied all 15 local post offices throughout Rockland registration forms and absentee applications. We send to all 14 libraries.

**Villages and Towns:**

- All Towns and Villages were sent registration forms and absentee forms, English and Spanish and flyers seeking poll workers.

**Citizenship Ceremony and Community groups:**

- Participates in the Citizenship Ceremony and will send and attend voter outreach groups including the NAACP and special interest groups.

**2025 Goals**

- Continue to move forward and update the election process by purchasing new updated equipment. With the use of grant money, we will be able to replace our fleet of poll pads. The old ones are more than five years old and are unable to be updated.
- With new poll pads and our previous purchase of voting machines we will be able to reach our goal to increase speed, accuracy and modernize the Election process.
- Voters expect more and we strive to make the voting process as seamless as possible.

**DEPARTMENTS OF BUDGET & FINANCE**

Stephen DeGroat, Commissioner

**2024 Achievements**

- Submitted Annual Financial Report (AUD) & Fiscal Stress Test to NYS Comptroller.
- No Revenue Anticipation Notes (RANs) issued.
- No Tax Anticipation Notes (TANs) issued.
- County made full payment of pension bill without having to borrow from New York State.
- Successfully remained under the NYS Tax Cap for the 2024 and 2025 Budgets.
- Purchased debt software, Debt Book to organize all county serial bonds.
- Worked with RCC to develop a plan to address financial issues.
- Resolved all fiscal issues with county departments.
- Met with departments to successfully balance the 2025 budget.
- Reconciled all Village & School re-levy of taxes.

**2025 Goals**

- Continue to receive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award (CAFR) by the Government Finance Officers Association.

- Continue working with other credit rating agencies for upgrades.
- Continue not issuing a Revenue Anticipation Note (RAN) or Tax Anticipation Notes (TAN).
- Collaborate with the five towns on a county-wide property tax software system.
- Work with Drescher Malecki CPA firm to determine fiscal condition of RCC.
- Work with bankers at D.A. Davidson to determine short term financing options for RCC.
- Review current interest rate environment for possible capital borrowing in 2025.
- Collaborate with the Sewer District for upcoming capital borrowing.

## **OFFICE OF BUILDINGS & CODES**

Edward Markunas, Director

### **2024 Achievements**

- 100% of 1-year commercial/assembly inspections have been completed.
- 33% of 3-year residential inspections have been completed on target to complete 3-year inspection.
- 280 building permits issued in 2024.
- Conducted approximately 800 fire safety inspections and 700 construction inspections.
- 205 collections matters referred to law in 2024.
- Six litigation hearings opened in Supreme Court.
- Implemented inspection zones and sectors within the Village of Spring Valley.
- Successfully trained staff and code enforcement officers on the newly adopted complaint module with additional training to follow (GovPilot).
- Contracted with International Code Council for 3rd party plan review.

### **2025 Goals**

- Full implementation of the GovPilot system modules to enhance the tracking and management of complaints, fire inspections, construction inspections, applications and permitting processes.
- Contract with additional NYS certified Code Enforcement Officers.
- Continuing efforts to achieve compliance with building codes and regulations in the Village of Spring Valley through inspections, enforcement actions, and educational outreach. This includes conducting regular inspections to identify violations, enforcing compliance with necessary corrective measures, and providing educational resources to residents and businesses to increase awareness and understanding of relevant codes and regulations. The goal is to ensure public safety and code adherence within the community.
- Crosstrain code enforcement officers in plan review and application processes. This will ensure that officers are proficient in reviewing building plans, assessing permit applications, and understanding the requirements for compliance with building codes. The goal is to enhance the team's flexibility, improve overall efficiency, and ensure that officers are well-rounded in both enforcement and administrative functions.

# COUNTY CLERK

Donna Silberman, County Clerk

## 2024 Achievements

- Officially launched our mobile outreach program that delivers services directly to towns and villages making it easier for residents.
- Through updated technology, we have committed to eliminating language barriers for residents.
- Installed talk boxes on all workspaces to provide for better communication with the public.
- Increased interest on our banking accounts, by opening higher paying savings account.
- New security cameras were installed in the search room for added security to the public.
- Digitized older records such as Oaths of Office.
- Our Archives Department digitized the process for requesting the destruction of records through OnBase. This will streamline the process and minimize any errors.
- Researched other payment systems to upgrade ours. This will include a reduced service fee, and digital payment options including Apple Pay.
- Police Departments now have the ability to file ERPO's (Extreme Risk Protection Order) digitally, which saves the department time and helps keep their officers on the road.

## 2025 Goals

- Continue to digitize additional court records to make them accessible on-line.
- Create on-line ordering program on our website to provide copies of basic documents.
- Continuing to work to pass legislation to allow for filing of federal immigration documents in our office.
- GIS linking of deeds with section/block/lot so that it can be connected to the county planning department parcel look up.
- Continuing public outreach (i.e. Senior Centers, Veteran Groups) to educate about the services available in our office and the dangers of property fraud.
- Continuing with our extended office hours to help working individuals who need access to the office outside of normal business hours.
- Continuing to expand our Mobile Passport Unit. The unit was a huge success in 2024, and we are looking to expand our reach.
- To streamline the Pistol Permit process and digitize the records, making it easier to track the progress of the application by working with the other agencies involved.

# OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Alexandra Obremski, Director

## 2024 Achievements

- Successfully awarded \$13.5 million in ARPA funds through the County's Housing Action Loan Opportunity (HALO) program to four developers of affordable housing projects throughout the County.
- Held the County's 2d annual housing forum and released the findings of the Housing Needs Assessment.
- In addition to our annual HUD grant allocations for CDBG, HOME and ESG the County was awarded the following competitive grants:
  - HUD's Lead Hazard Reduction Grant \$7 million, Healthy Homes Supplement \$400,000 for the remediation of lead and other household hazards
  - NYS Homes and Community Renewal awarded
    - \$325,800 in the Pilot in Lead Prevention Program
    - \$267,000 in RESTORE – Residential Emergency Services to Offer (Home) Repairs to the Elderly
- Retained Arch Street Communications for the development of a marketing and education campaign to dispel myths about the need for affordable housing.

## 2025 Goals

- To conduct our third Housing Forum in April.
- Successfully issue the RFP for the redevelopment of the Sain Building Site.
- Continue to develop the County's housing marketing and education campaign by conducting community outreach and soliciting feedback.

# CONSUMER PROTECTION

Kimberly Vonn Ronn, Director

## 2024 Achievements

- CP Licensing Division administered the issuance and renewal of over 2,700 licenses. This number includes a combination of Home Improvement, Plumbing, HVAC, Electrical, Second-hand Precious Metals, Tax Grievance and Towing license types.
- Overhauled the Consumer Complaint and Enforcement Division, implementing new policies and procedures for the department to handle licensed and unlicensed contractor complaints through administrative procedures, which has significantly increased revenue and compliance.
- CP Enforcement Division overseen by Deputy Director Heffernan handled over 1,000 code cases, collected \$350k in fines and secured over \$55k in refunds for victimized consumers.
- Initiated a Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign attending over a dozen public speaking engagements to educate the public on common scams and fraudulent schemes because education is the best protection from scammers.
- Reinvigorated the use of the County's Law regarding Unfair and Deceptive Trade Practice against unscrupulous businesses scamming consumers.

- Continues to develop and implement a new software system to process license applications electronically.
- CP inspectors began administering a new local law to inform and warn those purchasing firearms of the risks associated with owning weapons.

### **2025 Goals**

- Increase public awareness campaigns to educate Rockland County residents about consumer protection trends, issues and scams.
- Update Department website and social media pages to keep consumers informed.
- Continue partnership with Sheriff's Department to investigate and resolve consumer complaints and robust enforcement against unlicensed contractors.
- Continue partnership with the Planning Department in the development of a multi-agency, electronic software system for licensing applications and consumer complaints.

## **DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

Tom Walsh, District Attorney

### **2024 Achievements**

- The District Attorney's Office ICAC (Internet Crimes Against Children) Task Force continues to be a regional leader in protecting innocent children by working with local, state, and federal agencies to identify individuals online who are attempting to lure children to meet for sex or looking to disseminate child sexual abuse material (CSAM).
- Welcomed the first electronics detection K9 in Rockland County history. K9 Remy is a one-year-old black lab who was born in Holland. She is trained to locate electronic devices such as laptops, cellphones, SD cards, and USB drives that contain explicit and illegal content. There are approximately 100 electronic detection K9's in the entire country.
- It is a priority for the Office to educate and protect senior citizens from scams targeting them. The Office has attended over a dozen meetings at senior club meetings, senior living facilities, and community meetings to give the most up to date information on scams and how they cannot become a victim.
- The Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program named Project Connect was piloted at the Clarkstown Police and now has been rolled out to the Orangetown, Ramapo, Haverstraw, Stony Point, and Piermont Police Departments. This is a pre-arraignment program for low-level nonviolent offenders with substance abuse and co-occurring disorders. Participants work with peers, are assessed and referred for treatment. If they engage for 30 days, the charges are withdrawn.
- The Rockland County District Attorney's Office (RCDAO) Drug Task Force is focused on combating open air and street-level narcotics dealing in Rockland County. The Task Force is staffed by seasoned prosecutors and District Attorney investigators, and police officers from the Clarkstown PD, Orangetown PD, and the Town of Haverstraw PD who work closely with various law enforcement agencies to combat drug distribution and related violence in each of Rockland's towns and villages.
- The Rockland Crime Analysis Center provides real-time analysis, criminal intelligence and other important information to enhance the capacity of law enforcement within Rockland County.
- Created a Community Affairs Division led by a Senior Assistant District Attorney to develop and strengthen partnerships with community organizations.
- In collaboration with local police departments and school districts, we held mock DWI accident demonstrations for high school students showing the real consequences of drinking while driving.

- The Office used various social media platforms to keep the public updated on important cases, Office programs, and community events.

### **2025 Goals**

- Reduce gun violence and eliminate illegal handguns with an emphasis on the removal of untraceable ghost guns.
- Hold “Gun Buy Backs” events with local police departments to give individuals a safe way to get rid of unwanted firearms.
- Continue to pursue alternatives to incarceration by working with diversion and specialty courts.
- Host “Drug Take Back” events throughout the year and in different locations in Rockland County to make it easier for residents to discard prescription drugs.
- The RCDAO Drug Task Force will be holding seminars to discuss Fentanyl and other pressing issues facing the community.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**

Jenna Nazario, Director

### **2024 Achievements**

- Awarded \$298,000 in Tourism Grant funds.
- Increased marketing and tourism promotion for Rockland and partner organizations.
- Utilized I LOVE NY grant funds to increase marketing and social media.

### **2025 Goals**

- Allocate over \$300,000 in Tourism Award funding.
- Develop and launch new interactive Explore Rockland website.
- Develop and launch Economic Development newsletter.
- Host first annual Economic Development Summit in partnership with RBA and IDA.
- Work closely with all municipalities to develop a comprehensive County wide economic development and tourism plan.
- Create new tourism itineraries for REV 250 and FIFA 2026.
- Create and distribute more enhanced Rockland County 2025-2027 guide.
- Increase opportunities for micro and small businesses to build capacity through partnerships with local nonprofits.
- Host mini workshops throughout the year with RBA and IDA.
- Attend travel shows, IPW show to promote Rockland as a premier tourism destination.
- Attend state and federal economic development conferences to gain increased knowledge and networking opportunities for economic growth in the County.
- Increase knowledge to organizations to promote state grants and opportunities, i.e. CFA, DRI.

## **DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**

Kevin McGuiness, Coordinator

## 2024 Achievements

- Acquired and preserved 308 acres of property through the Open Space Program.
- Hosted a successful Solar Eclipse viewing party at Haverstraw Bay Park where hundreds of attendees were treated to free eclipse glasses for the event.
- As a result of park users feedback, installed 4 benches, 2 water fountains and a porta-potty at Kennedy Dells Park.
- Upgraded and expanded the dog run, replaced a bridge and improved another stream crossing at Kakiat Park.
- Installed 13 new benches at Haverstraw Bay Park.
- Rehabbed the bluebird and kestrel boxes at Kennedy Dells Park with the assistance of the Audubon Society.
- Utilized the Rockland Conservation & Service Corps members to evaluate all County Park trails and make recommendations for improving safety, sustainability and ease of use.
- Utilized Rockland Conservation & Service Corps members to build a new, approximately 2-mile trail to a new viewpoint in Clausland Mountain Park.
- Researched and summarized the Status of Agriculture in Rockland County.
- Began the assessment process for the potential removal of the County owned Sloats Dam in Sloatsburg.
- Environmental Education – Staff at the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Division of Environmental Resources (DER), in partnership with other agencies, educated 1,431 youth and adults throughout Rockland County. Approximately 33 education programs and topics were presented which included Rockland Planning Land Use with Students (RPLUS), Conservation Field Days, American eel lifecycle, A Day in the Life of the Hudson and Harbor estuary, macroinvertebrate education, tabling events, and others. The EMC facilitated the Eleanor S. Burlingham Earth Day Creative Arts Contest for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in Rockland County. They received 46 submissions from 48 students across the County. The board selected 8 students to be recognized for their submissions at a local ceremony.
- Community Science – A total of 149 individuals participated in 5 community science projects coordinated by the DER and other partners. These projects were the American eel project at Minisceongo Creek, Water Assessment by Volunteer Evaluators (WAVE), two bird walks, and one cleanup event. For the American eel project at Minisceongo Creek, 68 volunteers counted, weighed, and relocated 13,705 glass eels over the 11-week monitoring season. For the WAVE project, 17 volunteers collected samples from 5 streams across Rockland County. For the two bird walks, 30 volunteers participated to identify and count birds in Orangeburg and Piermont. The data they collected were uploaded to the ebird platform. For the annual cleanup event, staff worked with Keep Rockland Beautiful (KRB) and the Minisceongo Creek Watershed Alliance members and partners to coordinate and lead clean ups at various sites in the Minisceongo Creek watershed. 34 volunteers participated in this cleanup and removed 37 bags of trash, 3 bags of recyclables and bulky items totaling 970 pounds.
- Environmental Volunteer Award - This year, Carolyn Hill was selected as the County Executive's Outstanding Environmental Volunteer for her volunteer work with the Turtles of Western Highway. A tree was planted in her honor at Kennedy Dells County Park, followed by a recognition ceremony.
- Pollinator Meadows and Garden – The SWCD worked with the County Parks Department to plant pollinator meadows in two Rockland County Parks – Samuel G. Fisher Environmental Mount Ivy and Kennedy Dells Park (approximately 1.5 acres each). The EMC planted and maintained one pollinator garden in Kennedy Dells Park.
- AEM – SWCD and DER staff worked with 2 farms to complete Tier 1 and Tier 2 assessments for the NYS Agriculture Environmental Management (AEM) program.
- Trout Stocking – Rockland SWCD, Parks staff, and the United Sportsmen Association of Rockland stocked 5 approved waterways in the County with a total of 1,200 Brook Trout.
- Made strides in being more present on Facebook for DER. Views, visits and follows have all significantly increased.

- Took over the management of Cropsey Farm and animals living there when RFA shut down.

## **2025 Goals**

- Implement the digital park reservation permitting system through Community Pass.
- Upgrade the dog park at Kennedy Dells Park.
- Install new fitness trail stations at Kennedy Dell Park.
- Improve/update content, ease of use, maps and appearance of website, include ability for users to report issues and/or provide feedback.
- Improve parking and trailhead at Dater Mountain Nature Park and Clausland Mountain Parks.
- Develop plan for new Eagle Valley Park in Sloatsburg.
- Seek grant funding for the design and improvements of the new Eagle Valley Park.
- Integrate new acquisitions into South Mountain Park.
- Initiate a “Get to Know Your Parks” social media campaign and possibly include guided hikes/tours.
- Continue and expand the wildflower/pollinator meadow project (2-4 additional acres).
- Install osprey nest platform at Haverstraw Bay Park.
- Install aerators in the ponds at Demarest Kill and Haverstraw Bay parks.
- Improve plantings and pollinators at Demarest Kill Park.
- Install a public walking path connecting Dutch Garden north to the Demarest Kill Park.
- Utilize additional SWCD funds to support local farms.
- Utilize the Rockland Conservation & Service Corps members to build two new trails on newly acquired South Mountain parcels to create loop trail with Long Path.
- Create small parking area/trailhead at newly acquired South Mountain parcels.
- Restart the Farmland & Agriculture Preservation Board and reengage in Agriculture District efforts.
- Continue the assessment process for the potential removal of the County owned Sloats Dam in Sloatsburg and apply for grant funding.
- Look for other opportunities to improve stream connectivity via culvert improvements.
- Increase fishing access and total amount of stocked trout along the Ramapo River in Sloatsburg and the Demarest Kill on the DePew Farm.
- Repoint structures and improve pathways at Dutch Garden.
- Improve access to Gordon Property.

### Soil & Water Conservation District

- Continue to provide free education programs and educate at least 775 youth and adults.
- Continue to coordinate community science volunteer programs in the County.
- Plan and maintain pollinator meadows and gardens.
- Continue work with AEM and local County farms.
- Develop and distribute two newsletters.
- Purchase no-till seeder for use by County farms.

### Environmental Management Council

- Continue to coordinate the Annual Eleanor Burlingham Creative Arts contest.
- Recruit more board members.
- Maintain native garden planting at Kennedy Dells Park.

## **OFFICE OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Chris Kear, Director

## **2024 Achievements**

- Updated the Rockland County Hazardous Mitigation Plan.
- Updated the Rockland County Mutual Aid Plan and passed Legislative resolution.
- Purchased a new pick-up truck for FTC-Delivery TBD.
- Purchased a new Bobcat Telehandler for FTC Delivery TBD.
- Removed 1200 gallons of contaminated Hazardous Materials foam.
- Purchased 1980 gallons of new environmentally friendly hazardous materials foam.
- Officially opened the new Fire Operations Building.
- Hired 10 new county Fire Instructors.
- Successfully created a new Hazardous Materials Compliance Technician position and hired 3 for the position.
- Successfully facilitated three Emergency Operations exercises.
- OFES responded to and played an integral role in several major brush fires in Rockland County and with resources to Orange County.
- Successfully began using the new Tyler Portal for 911 addressing requests.
- Developed a new process to obtain detailed and accurate information for Fire Alarm database and working with Sheriff's Communications.
- Purchased \$55,000 in new personal protective fire gear for fire instructors.
- Added new carriers to county owned cell towers for increased revenue.
- In partnership with the New York State Department of Homeland Security, performed an analysis of tidal surge concerns and created Hurricane Planning Zones for the communities along the Hudson River.
- In partnership with the NYS DEC, we updated the Geographical Response Plans for the CSX River line and Port Jervis Rail Line.
- In partnership with the Sheriff Office, worked on the development of the County's Domestic Terrorism Annex and membership of Threat Assessment Management Team.

## **2025 Goals**

- Purchase a Hazardous Materials Petroleum Response vehicle.
- Purchase a SCBA Maze Training Trailer.
- Purchase a new Flashover and Backdraft Simulator.
- Add a new Safety Pavillon to the FTC training grounds.
- Replace OFES SUV vehicle.
- Begin looking at upgrading the OFES Emergency Operations Center.
- Continue to add technological enhancements to training classrooms.
- Ordering a new Technical Rescue Team Response Trailer.
- Continue to enhance the training ground with improvements such as new lighting, training props, new fire hydrants and signage.
- Facilitate two functional exercises which will bring all key public and private sectors together for training and planning purposes.
- Purchase a FAAC Pump Training Simulator.
- Update the Emergency River Response Plan.
- Create a Ceremonial Unit through OFES.
- Continue to work with the Sheriff's Department on the Domestic Terrorism Plan.
- Facilitate a Mass Casualty Incident exercise.

- Continue to collaborate with Facilities and Sheriff's department on the Line of Duty Death Memorial for Rockland County Firefighters.
- Completed new hires for Emergency Planning Coordinator and Data Entry III positions.
- Continue to grow the HERROS volunteer tuition reimbursement program.
- Explore new cell tower locations in Rockland County.

## **DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES**

Catherine Johnson Southren, Commissioner

### **2024 Achievements**

- Established weekly meetings between DGS Department Directors, Law Department and Deputy County Executive to ensure consistent and efficient collaboration.
- Facilitated meetings with 29 of Rockland County's 36 departments to address immediate concerns and discuss long-term goals. (Remaining Departments will be scheduled for early 2025.)
- Created a comprehensive system to monitor DGS Departments statuses. Implemented Purchasing tracker to re: RFPs and contracts. Implemented ITS tracking system re: help desk tickets to improve issue resolution. Created Facilities Maintenance tracker re: maintenance requests and capital projects.
- Collaborated with multiple departments to commence the creation of a comprehensive database for County owned properties.
- Launched a long-anticipated People Soft Assessment. Contracted with ERPA, a consulting agency, to review Personnel, Purchasing, and Finance Department technology and reporting needs.
- Completed revisions and updates to the Department of General Services website, ensuring accurate and up-to-date information.
- Oversaw DGS Departments coordination of office moves including Veterans Services Agency, Consumer Protection, ARPA and Office for the Aging.
- Collaborated with DGS Departments and Personnel to facilitate the Police Exam.
- Collaborated with DGS Departments and Environmental Resources to implement Community Pass management cloud software.

### **2025 Goals**

- Complete revision of 'EXECUTIVE ORDER 2022-2: RFBs AND RFPs Through Purchasing Department.' Determine Appropriate Department Responsibilities (Purchasing, Facilities Management, Law). Revisit Law Department Development of template for Capital Projects (Facilities Management, Highway, Sewers).
- Complete ERPA People Soft assessment to facilitate most effective use of existing modules and/or need for additional services. Personnel (near completion), Purchasing (commenced), Finance (involvement is integral and is to be further pursued).
- Determine full and complete information regarding property owned or leased by Rockland County to ensure accurate information and facilitate centralized access. Complete database for properties owned by the County of Rockland, Conduct further investigation regarding county owned property and eliminate any potential conflicts or issues, including but not limited to Building A (Friedwald), Building R (Daycare), Building J (Cornell Cooperative Extension). Commence determination of properties leased by County of Rockland. Develop database for properties leased by County of Rockland.

- Develop Master Plan (living document) to assess and coordinate Capital Projects including (but not limited to) county elevator replacement and county building renovation; New City: Sheriff's Ops Building (Old Highway Garage), Alison-paris Rockland County Building (Law Department, Probation, Board of Elections including Warehouse), Sain Building (future plan); Pomona: Building A 4th Floor), Building D (Department of Health-revisit prior existing renovation plans).
- Develop Master Plan for Program Conference Room usage. Determine existing locations and needs (accommodate trainings, meetings, other).
- Assess ITS Department and implement necessary changes. Consider current and appropriate technology resources, conduct assessment of programs utilized, determine Department role(s) and assistance provided, review staffing requirements (training and certifications).
- Facilitate meetings with remaining Rockland County Departments to introduce the role of DGS and provide Departments with the opportunity to address any concerns.
- Receive weekly statistics from all DGS Departments for input into DGS trackers which will facilitate production of monthly, quarterly, annual reports to ensure status awareness and identify any problemed areas. ITS to continue weekly submissions commenced October 2024. Purchasing to continue weekly submissions commenced January 13, 2025. Facilities to commence weekly submissions January 20, 2025.
- Achieve 100% compliance among all DGS personnel in completion of the 2025 Employee Engagement Survey. Provide means for all employees to be included in the survey results; Assess paper survey, determine efficacy of centralized computer access for employees without computer access.

## **Facilities Management**

Robert Gruffi, Director

### **2024 Achievements**

- Capital Project 2105 – Police Academy Track – Completed track construction. Track turned over to the Sheriff for daily operational training.
- Capital Project 1519 – County Government Center Buildings, Infrastructure & Parking Improvements
  - Courthouse Main Entrance Pedestrian Bridge – Design completed. Bidding Completed. Contract for Construction awarded. Construction started.
  - Courthouse HVAC Cooling Tower - Design completed. Bidding Completed. Contract for Construction awarded. Construction started.
  - County Office Building Exterior Doors - Design completed. Bidding Completed. Contract for Construction awarded. Construction started.
- Capital Project 1523 – Rockland County Firefighter Memorial – Memorial Design completed. Bidding complete. Contract Awarded for Sculptor to design and fabricate firemen statue.
- Capital Project 2111 – Building C Interior and Exterior Renovation Improvements – Building Elevators design renovation completed. Construction started in October.
- Capital Project 2110 – Building F Renovation – Renovation completed. Office for the Aging relocated to 1st Floor of Bldg. F in October.

### **2025 Goals**

- Elevator Renovations: Renovations of the following elevators started in October and are expected to be completed by December 2025 in Building A, Building C, Building F, Building L, Fire Training Center, Sheriff Building, County Office Building.
- Capital Project 1521 – Sheriff's Operations Building – Design, bidding and construction contract awarded in 2024. Construction to take approximately 12 to 14 months.

- Capital Project 1528 – Relocation of County Departments – Design, bidding and construction of the Sheriff's Intelligence Unit Real Time Operation Center.

## **Information Technology Services**

### **2024 Achievements**

#### County-wide Telephone System

- Installed various call processing systems and call centers throughout County agencies and departments.

#### Networking & Network Security Units

- The Networking Unit upgraded various systems throughout 2024 including those that provide vital backup and recovery of our network resources and data.
- Our ITS Helpdesk successfully responded to over 6,000 end user tickets.
- ITS continued to perform multiple county-wide phishing and educational campaigns in 2024.
- ITS dramatically impacted the number of end users not correctly identifying possible malicious emails.
- Finalized and passed Penetration Tests both internally and externally.
- Implemented WiFi solution in several County buildings.

#### Peoplesoft, OnBase & eClinical Works

- Implemented and activated multi-factor authentication for the Peoplesoft application.
- Increased 3rd party application integration by enabling a GL interface with Energov and also expanding our eProcurement punchouts to additional suppliers.
- Expand employee self-service options to include viewing yearly W2 documents online and opting out of receiving paper W2 documents.
- Successfully implemented payments to various union members based on settlements and negotiations.
- Upgraded our Helpdesk ticketing system to include new applications and provide more detailed tracking and reporting capabilities allowing us to address root cause and chronic issues.
- We continued to scan and index records for the Law Department and the Probation Department allowing these departments to destroy old paper records and provide faster and more efficient retrieval.
- With our Document Management System, we expanded and implemented various online forms and workflows for the Department of Personnel, Office of Fire and Emergency Services and Buildings and Codes Departments.
- Completed implementation of Trizetto as the new clearinghouse for claims submission, electronic remittance, and electronic payment within eClinicalWorks
- Enable more automation within the eCW claims and remittance processing to streamline business processes and reduce workload on DOH and ITS staff.
- OnBase County Onboarding process. It streamlined the onboarding process for all new hires by providing digital new hire forms for them to complete prior to their orientation day, as well as a way for them to review and accept county policies after orientation. This cut the orientation time in half. The forms are then delivered to the appropriate departments (finance/benefits) via workflow for processing in Peoplesoft.

#### Web Services

- ITS assisted the Department of Personnel in redesigning and consolidating the content on their pages, making it easier for residents to find information about job announcements, exam information, and more. In addition, residents can sign up to receive announcements for jobs located within County Government, Towns, Villages, and School Districts directly in their email inbox.

## **2025 Goals**

- PC upgrade project to refresh PCs throughout the County.
- Upgrade all County PCs to Windows 11.
- Fully implement a public access WIFI solution to all County buildings.
- Expand the use of document management and implement complex workflows for various departments.
- Continue projects to scan historical paper records and index them throughout County agencies.
- Continue to upgrade and enhance various vital applications throughout the network.
- Reinforce, expand, and enhance our end user Cyber Security training.
- Migrate from web filtering from standalone products to firewalls as a proxy.
- Implement a SIEM solution for the County network.
- Look to upgrade PeopleSoft to the latest available version across all modules.
- Migrate Board of Elections server to new, more robust servers.
- Upgrade eClinicalWorks to the latest stable version.

## **Purchasing Division** **Paul Brennan, Director**

## **2024 Achievements**

- Contract Life Cycle Management System implemented November 2024.
- Periscope's E-sourcing implemented August 2024.
- New Procurement Policy Guide distributed to departments.
- Requisition refresher training provided to all PeopleSoft Requestors.
- Contract Management Training provided both virtually and in a classroom setting.
- Continued Succession Planning and internal training. Sabrina Samuels attended NIGP's Procurement Leadership training, SAMPO's annual procurement conference and was promoted to Assistant Director.
- Awarded new contract for 1005 renewable electricity.
- Issued an RFI for a public vehicle charging station program.
- Analysis of vehicle purchases shows better coordination is possible to aggregate and purchase vehicles on a quarterly basis. The State Contract for MRO Supplies is limited and does not satisfy the needs of county departments. Will switch to a National Cooperative Contract which covers more items and provides rebates back to the County.
- Reviewed the Standard Operations Procedure Manual for the Purchasing Division.

## **2025 Goals**

- Complete implementation and roll out functionality of Contract Lifecycle Management Software System to County Departments by March 30, 2025.
- Increase training offerings and frequency of training for county departments on procurement policy and procedures, contract administration and submitting contract requests through OnBase.
- Complete implementation and roll out full functionality of Periscope's Sourcing software to Purchasing Division Buyers by June 30, 2025.
- Integrate the use of AI in the procurement planning, market research and solicitation development and evaluation process.
- Timeliness of E-Performance Completion – meet all required due dates.

- Complete Utility Audits – Water Audit currently underway. Electricity and Natural Gas to be initiated in 2025.
- Implement Velocity Chemical SDS Management Software by June 30, 2025.
- Continue Succession Planning and related employee training.
- Partner with the Planning Department on Sustainability issues in the supply chain to identify possible target areas.

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

### **Dr. Mary Leahy, Acting Commissioner**

#### **2024 Achievements**

- RCDOH secured \$200,000 in Round 4 of the State Septic System Replacement Program, marking the county's inaugural participation in this initiative. The aim is to enhance water quality in areas classified as impaired waterbodies by the NYSDEC, providing support to homeowners for replacing cesspools and upgrading or replacing septic systems.
- 214 mosquito pools tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) in 2024, fortunately, none of them tested positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). This marked the highest number of positive mosquito pools in a season, with approximately 1/3 of submissions testing WNV positive, also occurring much earlier in the season.
- Successfully launched the Tyler software system in June, and RCDOH is now accepting, reviewing, and approving plans and permit applications digitally. Applicants can upload documents and make payments online for the many Environmental Health programs. In 2024, RCDOH accepted 714 permit and plan submissions and collected \$176,345 in revenues via the Tyler system.
- Launched new efforts to develop a County Water Plan and implement the County Water Conservation Plan by reengaging membership and reconstituting the Water Task Force.
- Expanded Emergency Medical Services community-based trainings and outreach efforts for employees, community organizations, and local businesses training close to 5,000 people in 2024 with regular trainings of Stop the Bleed, Hands only CPR, First Aid, and Basic Life Support CPR. A better prepared public can assist someone in need before help arrives.
- The RCDOH Early Intervention staff have been active and instrumental in navigating the many hurdles being faced statewide since October when NYS overhauled computer platforms, from NYEIS to the EI-Hub. They have been assisting other counties and NYSACHO to identify glitches, find work arounds, and develop state level guidance.
- Preschool program provided services to 1,745 children. RCDOH was successful in increasing placement options locally by assisting the Clarkstown Central School District in opening 1 new 4410 program in May, offering 1 full day class for 12 children, and 2 additional half-day classes in September for 12 more students. Meetings to expand further were held in August with St. Dominic's to develop similar service options.
- The Emergency Preparedness Program held its first-ever Integrated Preparedness Planning (IPP) workshop in collaboration with several Disability, Access, and Functional Needs (DAFN) community partners. The workshop aimed to gather feedback from County DAFN partners to enhance various emergency preparedness response plans.
- Provided vaccinations to the uninsured and health information to the public in various locations across the County utilizing the newly obtained Mobile Vaccination van, primarily in Suffern, Ramapo and Haverstraw.
- Responded to the Change Healthcare cyber security incident which deeply impacted our Department's ability to process medical claims. Collaborated with the Department of General Services team to rapidly identify, contract with, and implement a solution with a new clearinghouse vendor.

- The Disease Control Immunization program audited 39 schools and 23 daycares in 2024, more than any other year, leading to increased compliance with NYS law in school facilities for children at all age levels.
- Healthy Neighborhoods team successfully secured a competitive \$100,000 grant through the Nicholas and Zachary Burt Memorial Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Grant Program to purchase and install carbon monoxide alarms countywide. The HNP staff also visited over 450 homes this year, installed 618 smoke alarms, 383 carbon monoxide alarms and completed 42 home radon tests.
- With increasing public health focus on Lead based hazards, RCDOH held 6 EPA certified RRP (renovation, repair & painting) training classes, certifying 99 individuals to safely remediate lead hazards. Prevention inspections were conducted by lead investigators at 64 properties. The number of children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels (EBLL) dropped from 67 children in 2023 to only 55 children in 2024 likely due to our continued efforts.
- Facilitated 9 School Coalition meetings to plan professional development for educators on physical activity and healthy nutrition in school. Collaborated with the Rockland Teachers Center on implementing 5 professional learning programs directly benefitting 117 educators. All North Rockland Central School District schools assessed their school's physical activity and nutrition policies and practices.
- Worked with Child Care Resources of Rockland (CCRR), Village of West Haverstraw and the Village of Haverstraw to implement strategies to improve access to physical activity and healthier food choices in community settings, worksites, and early childcare (ECE) Settings. Implemented Two (2) StoryWalk® Projects at Emeline Park and Peck's Pond with collaboration and support from the Villages of Haverstraw and West Haverstraw.
- Assisted with food distribution three times a month as a member of the Rockland Community Against Hunger Steering Committee at 16 food programs that feed roughly 30,000 people per month. The 2024 Get Fresh intake/distribution was 285,066 lbs., equivalent to 199,562 meals.

## **2025 Goals**

- Now that the County has received funds in Round 4 of the State Septic System Replacement Program, RCDOH will utilize the GIS data to generate the lists and notify all qualifying properties. Internal mechanisms for approvals will be put in place and the program will be promoted through a variety of outlets to get the word out.
- Launch the new mandated and grant funded Lead Rental Registry (LRR) program that will improve the prevention of lead poisoning in children. 5 new grant funded positions will be created and filled to support the new responsibilities. Public outreach and community partnerships will be formed to facilitate implementation. External capacity to mitigate lead hazards will be strengthened with local training and certification of property managers and contractors. Partnership with the Office of Community Development will continue and expand to ensure the DOH prevention funding and OCD mitigation funding is effectively leveraged and efficiently coordinated.
- Launch the Electronic Service Request (ESR) component of the Tyler software system that will replace and centralize current online complaint modules. The system will be used for intake, tracking, and reporting on all complaints or service requests received by all public inputs. We will also be migrating all fine invoicing, payment collection and tracking into the Tyler software system. This will expand payment options for fines to include online credit card, online eCheck, or in person credit card with readers already in place. This migration will allow the Department of Law to utilize online credit card payment options on fine collection activities they conduct for RCDOH and potentially other Departments as well. There will be an added benefit of electronic records retention for RCDOH enforcement files that will be linked to the fines and payments in Tyler.
- Implement improvements to formal enforcement processes that will help leverage compliance more efficiently. Specifically, to incorporate some of the practices being recommended by Department of Law for compliance agreements. Policies and procedures will be revised, agreement templates developed, and the process will need to be tailored to work across all of RCDOH's diverse programs.
- Emergency Medical Services aims to identify and partner with a community agency to build out and facilitate the use of the Ambu bus kit previously purchased through grant money. The aim is to facilitate the safe and expedient transportation of mass casualties during a natural or man-made incident.

- The County EMS Office will create a simulation lab where EMT students and agency providers can come and train utilizing simulation manikins in “real” life scenarios to create realistic training opportunities for our EMS Providers.
- With support create goals at the county level to address the needs of the EMS agencies and providers in Rockland and build upon the EMS capabilities locally. Kick off the Rockland County EMS Sustainability Committee by hosting a screening of the ‘Honorable but Broken’ documentary.
- Utilize the Mobile Unit more frequently to conduct broader targeted outreach among at risk, uninsured populations by offering VFC and VFA vaccines. Maintain trust with those we have served this way in 2024 and prevent illness in the community.
- Enhance the Department's medical dispensing capabilities by upgrading existing mass dispensing sites and identifying potential new locations throughout the County. Increase the number of cross trained Department staff by expanding access to emergency trainings through both online and in-person resources.
- RCDOH aims to complete the approval process of a Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) for Rockland County and tap into this national resource. This program would establish a pool of vetted medical volunteers who could be called upon in emergency situations to assist the RCDOH stand up clinical operations.
- Complete the arduous task of converting the EI program from NYEIS to the EI-Hub. Continue to engage with the state and regional partners to correct the issues being created and minimize the impacts to our already overburdened RCDOH caseload and county based provider limitations.
- Continue to collaborate more closely with local code enforcement agencies and Department of Law on more complex housing issues caused by the widespread housing crisis in Rockland County.
- Find creative solutions with local law enforcement to curb the rising usage and concerns with e-cigarettes and vapes among youth. Education, outreach and facility inspections will increase with the RCDOH seeking maximum fines for any NYS ATUPA law violations. The Tobacco Program anticipates changes to NYS Enforcement regarding illegal products for sale given the current difficult situation caused by illegal vapes and marijuana products in stores.
- To educate, inform, and engage county residents about pedestrian and bicyclist safety issues, NYS Vehicle and Traffic Laws (V&TL), and promote behavior change in order to reduce roadway injuries and fatalities.
- Maintain RCDOH’s representation on the New York Statewide Breastfeeding Coalition and attend regular and event planning meetings to increase the rate of babies who are exclusively breastfed and duration rates of breastfeeding in Rockland County.
- Work with municipalities, childcare sites, and the Haverstraw Stony Point Central School District (North Rockland) to adopt food standards and food procurement policies or practices and promote physical activity.
- Promote and improve food nutritional quality, nutrition education, and nutrition policies or systems in the community and at supplemental food programs in the county. Serve as a resource in the areas of Professional Development, Hunger Task Forces, Farmers’ Markets, Food Recovery, etc. to coordinate local, regional, and statewide nutrition resources, messages, procurement, and food security information that focuses on collaboration, integration, and the promotion of nutrition services.
- Continue to diversify the implementation of the 5-year Public Health Infrastructure grant provided by NYSDOH to retain and recruit a capable public health workforce. Vacancies for specialized positions are always a concern and there is a focus in 2025 to find new ways to utilize the funding and entice good candidates.

# HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Charles Skip Vezzetti, Superintendent

## 2024 Achievements

- Rockland County Highway has resurfaced a total of 14 miles of County Roads. Of the total amount spent on the resurfacing \$1,977,189 was reimbursed through the NYS Capital Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS).
- Road Resurfacing program over the past 20 years has steadily increased the useful life of pavements as follows:
  - Chipseal Surface from a 7-year average to a 9-1/2-year average
  - Microseal Surface from a 10-year average to a 12-year average
  - Asphalt Overlay from a 10-year average to a 14-year average
- Construction of the New Highway Facility is complete. All Highway Department staff have moved into the buildings. Authorization for construction of Building 8 was approved. The New Highway Facility won the APWA NY Metro Chapter Project of the Year Award.
- Began design of the North Main Street and Zukor Road Improvements Project. The project will reconfigure the stop-controlled intersection into a roundabout.
- Solicited bids and award construction of the Suffern Lane at Hammond Road Intersection Improvement Project. This Federally and State aided (95% Fed and State – 5% local) project will convert the two-signal intersection into a single four-leg roundabout.
- Design has started on the Wayne Avenue Retaining Wall Reconstruction Project. The project consists of replacement of the entire wall after a partial collapse of the wall occurred near the intersection of Wayne Avenue and West Main Street.
- Began construction of the Suffern Lane at Hammond Road Intersection Improvement Project. This Federally and State aided (95% Fed and State – 5% local) project will convert the two-signal intersection into a single four-leg roundabout.
- Began construction of the West Washington Road Bridge. This federal and state funded project will replace an obsolete bridge, improve approach road grades and alignment. Pascack Brook was realigned, and the bridge opening was made significantly larger to reduce the likelihood of area flooding, which has occurred more frequently in recent years.
- Began and completed construction of the Calls Hollow Road Culvert in the Town of Haverstraw. This BridgeNY funded project repaired the existing structure along with extending the upstream wingwall to provide stabilization of the roadway.
- Began construction for the Complete Streets – Countywide Sidewalk Project on Highview Avenue. The multi-year project will start with work on Highview Road. Bids were opened on August 6<sup>th</sup> and work was awarded to D.S. Meyer Enterprises, LLC. Sidewalk and curb have been placed from West Maple to Remsen. Construction will be completed by June 2025.

## 2025 Goals

- Continue updating our fleet of vehicles thanks to the Equipment replacement Bond (Capital Project 3421 - \$7,500,000) over three years.
- Continue Road Resurfacing program to maintain the useful life of pavement surfaces at a 10-year life expectancy or greater. This Goal also dovetails with reducing or stabilizing maintenance costs for future years.
- Complete construction of the Suffern Lane at Hammond Road Intersection Improvement Project.
- Complete construction of the West Washington Road Bridge.
- Continue construction for the Complete Streets – Countywide Sidewalk Project for multiple locations throughout the County.
- Begin construction of the Wayne Avenue Retaining Wall Reconstruction Project.

- Begin design of the William Street bridge replacement project.
- Begin design of the Tweed Boulevard wall replacement project.
- The New Highway Facility was nominated for the 2025 National APWA Project of the Year Award.
- Hosting the APWA NY Metro Chapter Annual meeting and equipment show in May.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

Spencer Chiimbwe, Commissioner

### **2024 Achievements**

- Historic hosting of MLK III.
- Inducted four community members into the Civil & Human Rights Hall of Fame.
- Opened a Human Rights Satellite Office at Finkelstein Memorial Library.
- Hosted three fair housing information sessions at our satellite offices with Westchester Residential Opportunities.
- Hired a Fair Housing Manager to enhance our case intake process.
- Hosted an International Human Rights Day Breakfast.
- Named Co-Chair of the Mid-Hudson Hate & Bias Prevention Regional Council.
- Assisted in hosting 2nd annual Housing Forum with Community Development during Fair Housing Month (April).

### **2025 Goals**

- Continue to collaborate with the New York State Division of Human Rights.
- To increase and improve public outreach through events and community engagement.
- Host the Community Fair Housing Expo.
- Participate in the renaming of the RCC Ellipse Building after Dr. Gordon.
- Follow up meeting to discuss the launch of Human Rights Law Clinic at Dominican University.
- Collaborate with community leaders to participate in all cultural and religious events including, Jewisha Heritage Month, Pride Month, Black History Month, Juneteenth, Asian Pacific Month, St. Patrick's, etc.
- Human Rights Award Announcement during Women's History Month.

## **INSURANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**

Thomas Torpey, Director

### **2024 Achievements**

- An upturn in the number of claims from the TOR busses in 2023 was observed. It was suggested to Transport they get some kind of explanation from Transdev, to see if we can make some improvements for 2024. We got a detailed report from Transdev, where they acknowledged the problem and had already taken steps to retrain drivers. The number of claims returned to the prior to 2023 levels.
- A review of slip and fall claims was done to find out if we are within the normal range for slip and falls per number of employees, as compared to other municipalities. It turns out we are within the range of normal for municipalities.
- A review of claims costs found two claimants that were being prescribed prescription lidocaine patches at a cost of \$2,000 a month. There is no difference between the prescription and OTC patches that cost

\$29 per month. We had an IME done on one claimant and the IME took him off the patch all together and took him off prescription NSAID and had him take OTC Advil. For the other claimant we had her doctor to agree to stop the lidocaine prescription and switch to OTC. Total savings to the County \$4,000 per month.

- A settlement was negotiated with Genesis relating to a disputed workers compensation claim from 1984. Genesis was taking the position that they were not liable for the claim because it was not actually a 1984 claim but a 1982 claim. They were not going to pay any more going forward and were threatening to try to claw back the over \$200,000 they had already paid. To avoid costly litigation a settlement negotiated. The settlement closed three open old workers compensation claims. Genesis paid the County \$100,000 and we are now responsible for the three claims. It is unlikely that we will not have to pay out more than the \$100,000 as the claimants are elderly.
- Applied for and received a reimbursement for the purchase of safety equipment from Safety National. There was \$10,000 for 2023 and \$10,000 for the 2024 policy years. It can be used for safety training, or the purchase of safety equipment. It was used to offset the cost of body cameras for the Sheriff's department.

## **2025 Goals**

- Complete RPF for our workers' compensation third party administrator.
- Continue to investigate workers' compensation fraud.

## **DEPARTMENT OF LAW** Thomas Humbach, County Attorney

## **2024 Achievements**

- The Office worked on the creation of the revamped Assigned Counsel Program, established pursuant to County Law § 722, which will operate as an independent program in conjunction with the Rockland County Bar Association to administer indigent legal services. The program and terms have been agreed to by the Rockland Bar Association and the County, and final approval is pending with the New York State Office Indigent Legal Services.
- The Office created a new 1174-a litigation team to prosecute Vehicle & Traffic Law 1174-a violations. Pursuant to the statute, a driver of a vehicle cannot pass a school bus when the red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended. In 2024, we prosecuted approximately 98 cases in six (6) local justice courts.
- The Office is continuing to prosecute Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) and temporary ERPOs filed by the Sheriff's Office pursuant to NY CPLR §§ 6342-6348, which prohibits a person from purchasing firearms, rifles, and/or shotguns upon a finding that there is probable cause to believe the respondent is likely to engage in conduct that would result in serious harm to self or others. This year, the Office prosecuted 11 cases, which is more than double the amount of cases from last year.
- In 2024, the Office completed and launched its state-of-the-art, cloud-based, automated contract and resolution workflow, which integrates the DCE process on OnBase with the contract and resolution processes on LegalStratus/Salesforce, which is the Office's legal case management system. The new workflow also features an auto-generated, editable contract feature which enables vendors and Departments to execute contracts electronically via Box Sign. The new workflow has standardized the contract and resolution processes, streamlines operations and will improve and boost efficiency, productivity and accuracy.
- In 2024, the Office assisted the Environmental Resources Division/Parks Commission in acquiring seven (7) properties, totaling more than 70 acres, for the Open Space Program. This process entailed negotiating the sale price, at several instances below the appraised value, spearheading the title search

and ensuring all issues were resolved, and handling the closings to acquire the properties. Currently, the Office is in the process of acquiring five (5) more properties, totaling more than 260 acres.

- The Office continued to assist Records Access Officers (RAOs) across the County with evaluating and responding to Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests. This year, the County received close to 1,800 requests as well as an unprecedented number of identical FOILs sent to multiple agencies and FOIL Appeals.
- The Office also continued to review and analyze the current County FOIL processes and its electronic FOIL management system, GovQA, and began working on improvements to both. One such improvement they worked on with DGS-ITS was the creation and rollout of a new electronic RAO Designation Form. They also worked with the Departments to update their RAO designations and to clear out any backlogs of pending FOIL requests. Further, the Office developed a subject matter list for this Office and worked with the RAOs to develop subject matter lists for their Departments, in accordance with the requirements of the FOIL statute. The Office also worked with DGS-ITS to develop an online Subject Matter Directory containing the subject matter lists as well as a link to the GovQA website. The webpage is available at [here](#).
- In 2024, the Office worked with DGS-ITS and various other stakeholders to create a new DCE-400 for purchase orders and a new DCE-150 and DCE-250 for capital projects; they also revised the current DCE-100, DCE-200 and DCE-300. The DCE-150 and DCE-250, in particular, will greatly improve organization and precision because they will ensure that all requests in connection with a capital project are received, reviewed and processed simultaneously and that they are sent together to the Legislature for approval.
- In 2024, the Office, together with various other stakeholders including the County Executive's Office, the Department of Mental Health, DGS-Purchasing, the Insurance Department and the District Attorney's Office, revised several DCE backup documents including the Statement of Disclosures and the Project Manager Designation Form and also drafted a new rider for grant agreements. The new documents have clearer directions and are more reader friendly. In addition, the revised documents will ensure that the required certifications for grant funds are now being applied to all vendors receiving grants. Additionally, the Office drafted a new comprehensive manual for the submissions of DCE-100s, 200s, 300s and 400s. The manual contains step-by-step instructions for County personnel submitting DCEs along with explanations and samples of backup documents. The new and revised documents will be rolled out countywide in early 2025.
- The Office is continuing to seek education, mentorship and outreach opportunities. In May, the Office participated in a United Way of Rockland Day of Caring event. We volunteered to participate in a beautification project at a Jawonio site. In June, we organized our Second Annual Take Your Kid to Work Day, which the County Executive's Office again extended to all County Departments.
- The Office is an accredited CLE provider. In 2024, the Office hosted three (3) CLEs on the following topics: (i) "Originalism Versus a 'Living Constitution' Also Known as Strict Constriction Versus a Changing Constitution"; (ii) "The Supreme Court and the Rise of Social Media"; and (iii) "Cybersecurity for New York and Beyond, Navigating Legal Challenges in the Digital Age Before AGI."
- Litigation Cases of Interest:
  - *County of Rockland, et al v. Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, et al. (Congestion Pricing Case)*: On March 27, 2024, the Law Department, on behalf of the County, filed a Complaint in the United States District Court, Southern District of New York, against the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority ("TBTA") and the Metropolitan Transit Authority ("MTA"). The case became necessary following enactment by the New York State Legislature of the MTA Reform and Traffic Mobility Act in 2019, authorizing the Manhattan Central Business District (CBD) Tolling Program. The purported goal is to reduce traffic congestion in the CBD and create a dedicated funding source for the MTA's capital needs. The Complaint asserts causes of action alleging that the congestion pricing toll is, in essence, an unauthorized tax, is an excessive fine violative of the Eighth Amendment, as well as a violation of the Equal Protection Clauses of the New York and United States Constitutions. The case is ongoing and is now being handled by outside counsel. Our motion for a stay enjoining implementation of the Congestion Pricing Plan, which went into effect on January 5, 2025, was denied. The Trump administration has halted federal support for the program, leading to growing uncertainty about its future.

- *County of Rockland v. State of New York (Even Year Election Case)*: The Office brought a lawsuit, on behalf of the County, which successfully challenged the constitutionality of Chapter 741 of the Laws of the State of New York (the “Even Year Election Law”). The County of Rockland, along with seven (7) other New York State Counties, brought actions for declaratory relief against New York State and Governor Hochul to challenge the constitutionality of and enjoin the enactment of the Even Year Election Law. Said law was slated to go into effect on January 1, 2025. The venue of the consolidated action was Onondaga County (Syracuse) based on the “first-in-time rule” for venue determination. In a Decision, Order and Judgment dated October 8, 2024, the Supreme Court, Onondaga County (Neri, J.), declared the Even Year Election Law unconstitutional and enjoined the State Defendants from enforcing and/or implementing same. Defendants, the State of New York, Governor Hochul and Dustin M. Czarny (Commissioner of the Onondaga County Board of Elections) filed a notice of appeal on November 7, 2024. Defendants are permitted to appeal directly to the Court of Appeals pursuant to CPLR 5601(b)(2), which provides that an appeal “may be taken to the court of appeals as of right” from “a judgment of a court of record of original instance which finally determines an action where the only question involved on the appeal is the validity of a statutory provision of the state or of the United States under the constitution of the state or the United States.” CPLR 5601(b)(2) (emphasis added). Here, the Court finally determined the action in favor of plaintiffs, and where the only question on appeal is the constitutionality of the Even Year Election Law, this appeal is within the jurisdiction of the New York State Court of Appeals. The appeal has not yet been perfected.

## **2025 Goals**

- As noted, the Office created a new 1174-a litigation team to prosecute Vehicle & Traffic Law 1174-a violations. In 2025, we are looking to expand to an additional five (5) courts.
- The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been created to aid in the development of the County’s 2025 Comprehensive Plan. The County Executive’s Office and the Planning Department wish to create a committee where members of the community can meet with other County Departments and provide input and information to the TAC that otherwise might be overlooked in developing the Comprehensive Plan, including concerns about areas of overdevelopment or other concerns that communities face every day. A Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has been assembled for this purpose. In 2025, this Office will draft a set of policies and procedures for the CAC to guide them in their operations as well as an Executive Order adopting those guidelines.
- In compliance with the PERB decision in the Employee Pharmacy Case, the Office will undertake a multi-part project on behalf of the County with the goal of dispersing reimbursements of retroactive copayments made by employees, retirees, their dependents and surviving spouses during the period from February 1, 2013 through January 31, 2025.
- In 2025, the Office will draft a Privacy Policy to inform the public about the types of data this Office collects, the purposes for which it is used, and the measures in place to protect it. The Office will also create an AI policy to ensure that artificial intelligence technologies are used responsibly, ethically, and in a manner that aligns with public interests and the County Attorney’s philosophy.
- The County currently has guidelines and policies governing County technology resources, social media and communications with the media that date back as far as 2010. In 2025, the Office will work with the County Executive’s Office, DGS-ITS and other relevant Departments to revise and update these guidelines and policies and to consolidate them into one Executive Order.

## **DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**

Susan Hoerter, Acting Commissioner

## **2024 Achievements**

- As the department charged with managing and distributing Rockland's Opioid Settlement funds, funds were used to support the opening of Rockland's first Oxford House which now houses eight men in recovery.
- Opioid settlement funds were utilized to procure single-point-of-contact services for the 311 call center.
- Pending final numbers from the Medical Examiner, Rockland's number of deaths due to overdose are anticipated to have decreased by 30% in 2024 vs. 2023, from 40 to 28. Although the relationship of our efforts to the decrease in overdose deaths is unknown, RCDMH continued to focus on harm reduction techniques including increasing access to Narcan, offering Fentanyl test strips and xylazine test strips.
- Partnered closely with the Rockland County District Attorney's Office, Clarkstown PD and the Crime Analysis Center to jointly analyze overdose information, create follow up plans and implement strategies to prevent further overdoses.
- Partnered with Rockland Paramedic Services to implement the Leave Behind Narcan Program. This program allows Paramedics to leave Narcan on scene following a non-fatal overdose.
- Partnered with local peer agencies to follow up on all overdoses within the county.
- Partnered with the DEA, local police, peer, prevention and recovery agencies, and treatment providers for Drug Take Back Days.
- Expanded substance use disorder treatment in the jail by increasing the number of individual and group clinical sessions.
- Procured community re-entry services at the jail for inmates with mental health and substance use disorders being released back into the community.
- Created the "OPWDD Navigator Program." DMH contracted with Capabilities Partnership (CPI) to make it easier for individuals with intellectual or developmental delays to submit eligibility paperwork for OPWDD services.
- Contracted with Jawonio to offer recreational and social programming for adults with an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD); events included a Halloween Dance, Holiday Ball and Thanksgiving Feast.
- To assist more individuals with applying for OPWDD eligibility, DMH has contracted with a local psychologist to assist with necessary evaluations.
- Contracted with Cluster, utilizing OMH funding, for 20 new Treatment Apartment beds. These beds are available to adult individuals with a Serious Mental Illness that work with the coordinator of our Adult Single Point of Access program to ensure eligibility.
- In recognition of the efforts of front-line behavioral health workers, DMH hosted it's second Provider Appreciation Day which focused on wellness.

## **2025 Goals**

- Fully implement the Anderson Center for Consulting and Training's program to expand the county's Think Differently campaign and ensure businesses, first responders and medical staff can respond to the needs of individuals with I/DD, furthering their inclusion into our community.
- Fully implement supports for agencies to provide complex clinical care and housing for Rockland's highest need individuals.
- Fully implement supports for Nyack hospital to assist individuals discharged from the behavioral health emergency department or inpatient unit to successfully return to their homes and communities.
- Improve the amount of data gathered from provider agencies and Nyack hospital and utilize that data to inform decision making regarding service provision and community needs.
- Implement 311 single point of contact call center.
- Consolidate existing mobile crisis services under the new OMH guidance.
- Implement employee wellness newsletter.

- Expand and improve school-based DBT utilizing a new provider.
- Obtain ability to provide CEUs for additional disciplines and fully implement the Behavioral Health Training Institute of Rockland County.
- Incorporate new programs into the System of Care: Youth ACT, HBCI, HBCI for youth with IDD, and CTI.
- Review and improve DMH audit policies and procedures.
- Expand the number of social and recreational events available for individuals with IDD.
- Procure Harm Reduction Vending Machines and Nalox-boxes.
- Open another Oxford House to provide housing to people in recovery.

## **OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

Jacki Scott, Director

### **2024 Achievements**

- Updated our department website with the help of our IT Department and new staff.
- Had previously designed posters for the Board of Elections to help those with disabilities at the polls. Posters were put out at some of the most popular voting sites during our last election. The purpose was to alert folks with physical disabilities that they do not have to wait in line to cast their ballots if voting in person.
- Expanded resilience and trauma-based training in Rockland County. The steering committee began training in the first level of Breadth Body Mind (BBM) an integral part of building resilience to trauma. It was a 2-day training and all who participated received certification in the Fundamentals of BBM.
- Held another Resilience training in Haverstraw at the Haverstraw Center with members of the Haverstraw and Challenge Collaboratives. Because of that training, other groups are requesting trauma-based training.
- The Office for People with Disabilities was an integral part of the Rockland County Transition Fair planning committee. We held the event on April 17 at the Palisades Center. There were tables set up from many community-based agencies, schools, and other organizations that service those with disabilities. It ran smoothly and participants could easily access information, ask questions, and get feedback to their questions and concerns. There was quite a large turnout.
- Participated in Metro-North Railroad Accessibility task force. We held quarterly meetings at which there were presentations of crew training, station ambassadors and customer service coordination updates. We discussed the fact that accessibility issues continue to be an ongoing problem at Rockland's railway stations. A feasibility study is presently being conducted by Metro-North at the Pearl River train station on whether a high-level platform can be installed. When the study is complete, Metro-North will report back to us. After much discussion, NJ Transit is now talking about a feasibility study at the Suffern Train Station for accessibility. This is desperately needed.
- Worked with the Holocaust Museum at RCC to make it more accessible to all visitors. Work began to accommodate those that may be visually impaired or hearing impaired, or who have emotional or learning challenges, as well as those with physical challenges. The museum's accessibility improvement is a work in progress.
- Held monthly meetings and worked closely with the Challenge Collaborative to bring representatives from community-based agencies and school districts to share information and insights and to learn from a multitude of presenters on a variety of topics of interest to the group.
- Throughout the year, the department educated, answered questions, intervened when necessary, and worked to bring parties together when issues arose for our constituency to bring all parties to consensus whenever possible.

- Worked with DAC and the Challenge Collaborative along with all providers and schools to address the needs of individuals with alternative abilities and their families in the effort to maximize access to equitable health, well-being, education and employment resources in Rockland County.
- Along those lines, we embarked upon an initiative entitled “Think Differently”. Along with DAC members, we began introducing this to the various communities and school boards in the County. It is a movement to help change the way individual, businesses, and communities relate to our fellow neighbors with special needs. We brought it to the County Executive, who embraced the idea. Together we brought it to the Legislature, where it was greeted with great enthusiasm and voted in unanimously. The County Executive then signed it and announced the initiative. With this in place, we hope to help folks look past the differences and embrace the inherent potential of all individuals of all walks of life. We look to celebrate everyone’s intrinsic value to the community. This will be on-going.
- The Reaching for the Future Guides were completed, and I distribute them at many of our events.
- The first Accessible Family Fun Day for Rockland County was held on June 23, 2024 at RCC fieldhouse. This is the first time an event such as this has been tried in Rockland County. Many individuals and families were asking for sports and social activities for those who are differently abled and want them to take place of outside of school or their place of residence. The event was very successful with approximately 150-200 people including those that accompanied the participants attended. The most popular activities were basketball, soccer, the driving simulator, the police dog demos, the yoga and exercise, the sensory activities, the ax throwing, fishing, and archery, and the Connect 4 and Jenga and a sensory room. Goodie bags and medals were also given out.
- Participated in inter-county office meetings and attend necessary community meetings and collaboratives to learn, share information and exchange ideas.

## **2025 Goals**

- Work with DAC and the Challenge Collaborative along with all providers and schools to address the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families in the effort to maximize access to equitable health, well-being, education and employment resources in Rockland County. Part of that goal will be to continue with our initiative entitled “Think Differently”. In 2024 DAC members and I began introducing this to the various communities and school boards in the County. It is a movement to help change the way individual, businesses, and communities relate to our fellow neighbors with special needs. With this initiative we hope to help folks look past the differences and embrace the inherent potential of all individuals of all walks of life.
- Expand the Resilience Coalition to include additional Rockland County representatives who wish to be part of this evidence-based solution to trauma. We are currently meeting with interested individuals and school districts, such as North Rockland, who want to stage Resilience events with film showings, debriefing sessions, and the development of action plans.
- Work with the Transition Consortium committee to coordinate, implement, and participate in the Annual Rockland Transition Fair to be held April 10<sup>th</sup> at Palisades Center.
- Work with Transition Guide committee to update the present guide that allows students and their families to discover all the community-based agencies, schools, and services that are available to those who are differently.
- Continue to participate in inter-county office meetings and attend necessary community meetings and collaboratives to learn, share information and exchange ideas.
- Continue work with the Metro North Taskforce to expand accessibility at Rockland’s rail stations and continue work with the United Way Transportation Committee to improve our public transportation needs in the County.
- Translate the Office for People with Disabilities brochure into Spanish.
- Further expand the Office People with Disabilities website.
- Hold the 2nd Accessible Family Fun Day on May 30<sup>th</sup> at RCC.

# PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Lori Gruebel, Commissioner

## 2024 Achievements

### **Police/Patrol exam:**

- Exam date was September 28, 2024.
- Announcement created and posted.
- Project plan created and executed- no errors.
- Applications-reviewed and processed (approx. 3000).
- Training for monitors and exam supervisors created and executed- 100% participation rate.
- Space mapping completed and furniture and stanchion layout was completed.
- Correspondence with candidates with details for exam day (initial letters)  
Monitors (staffing for exam day)
- Met with key players as well including RCC, facilities, law enforcement and purchasing to discuss the project plan and timelines.
- Recruited and received applications for Exam monitors to work.
- Police/Patrol Recruitment (see below).
- Exam day project plan executed with 100% compliance and paperwork to the State with 100% compliance.

### **Recruitment: started and executed a multi prong approach to recruitment**

- Recruitment initiatives:
  - Attended 25 recruitment events across the County.
  - Posted over 115 job opportunities for County Departments and local jurisdictions on the County webpage, Indeed, LinkedIn and/or Handshake (as well as other sites such as the NYS Association of Counties).
  - Continuous recruitment decentralized and T and E examinations (in house vs. State).
  - Increased usage of the County's LinkedIn page and spotlights.
  - Added LinkedIn Job Slots with at least 1 position, possibly a second, filled less than 3 months after usage began- on going with 5 active slots.
- BOCES IMA:
  - Created and executed project plan with six (6) pillars for recruitment including community outreach, social media, advertising, job fairs, Rockland Works partnership, campaigns.
  - Created and implemented social media campaigns (positions, benefits, exam holdings etc)- over 60 postings.
  - Increased social media presence, increased quality and content of posts (including video); some of the highest reviewed posts for Rockland.gov to date.
  - Highlighted exam series including but not limited to: social welfare examiner, continuous recruitment exams, Correction Officer Exam, Police/Patrol Officer exam, Caseworker, public health, engineering etc.
  - Launched our own Instagram and Facebook page with daily increase followers.
  - Police/Patrol- flyers, videos, joint job fairs, online content (Facebook, Instagram, Linked in), partnership with the Sheriff and Chiefs.
- NY HELPS – LOCAL program:
  - Coordinated the submission of over 300 titles to the NYS Department of Civil Service for consideration into the NY HELPS – LOCAL program for positions to be outside the competitive class with over 100 approved and 50 placements.
- Held our first (2) career fairs through meet and greet covering over 200 candidates/residents.

- Reviewed and revised over 150 job specifications and series for improved testing from the State.
- Working with over 30 community members for grass roots outreach increasing our diversity and candidate pool for potential hires.
- Website:
  - Executed content improvements to webpages including accordion style information/formatting, imbedded videos, dedicated pages

## **2025 Goals**

- Expand recruitment- hired a dedicated recruitment and retention coordinator to work with BOCES, the County Departments and local municipality/schools and law enforcement on recruitment efforts. This will be further reaching recruitment efforts targeted to include not only Rockland but all eligible candidates in NY, NJ and CT. Expanding geographic searches coupled with growing the recruitment efforts. Some examples are partnering with all Rockland high school guidance counselors, partnering with colleges and universities for larger candidate pools, BOCES adult education and career services as well as with community outreach contacts. Social media outlets and web site expansion and re branding with campaigns, spotlights, website revamp and more frequent social media posts targeting open positions.
- Expand training to include labor relations actions, payroll transactions, civil service actions, certifications and hiring covering over 14,000 clients. Training for all levels of employees either through learning journeys, in person and online training targeting retention and succession as well as promotions in teams/across teams.
- Automation for benefits and payroll through Peoplesoft to reduce manual processes and giving over 2,000 current employees plus our retirees ease of more online support and self-service options.

## **DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING**

Douglas Schuetz, Acting Commissioner

## **2024 Achievements**

### Land Use

- Completed 606 General Municipal Law (GML) Section 239 referral reviews for all municipalities within Rockland County. These 616 total applications included the review of 670 individual items as municipalities often refer multiple items in one application (i.e. site plan and special permit before the same Board). In total, the department reviewed 3,053 acres, 2,989 proposed dwelling units, 238 new lots, and at least 3,690,538 sq. ft. of additional space. Of the 670 items reviewed, eight included development proposals that entailed the construction of 25,000 square feet or greater; one with 10 or more new lots; and 12 included development plans for 50 or more new dwelling units. Among the reviews were 65 subdivisions, 193 site plans, 294 variance applications, 47 special permit applications, 8 zone change proposals, 12 map amendments, and 30 text amendments. An additional 21 reviews covered items such as carnival permits and site master plans.
- Planned, coordinated, and oversaw all functions of the Rockland County Planning Board including the meeting planning, the preparation of meeting agendas and minutes and all other administrative functions related to the County Planning Board. All members of the County Planning Board completed all County Mandated trainings in 2024. The Rockland County Planning Board reviewed and provided input and advice the County Planning Department on 39 GML 239 referrals in 2024. The County Planning Board received training through the County GIS portal. Two new Planning Board members were appointed, representing the Towns of Haverstraw and Ramapo.

- Coordinated a team of interdepartmental subject matter experts to develop and implement a digital records management system focused on a land information central database. Went live with the system for several departments (Planning, Health, Emergency Services, Drainage, Highways, Sewer District) in June 2024. Presently, there are 100 county employees with access to the applications. Training classes were offered to all intended users prior to launch, with higher level training for administrative support offered post-launch to provide additional technical knowledge to more advanced subject matter experts. Within 4 months of going live with the digital records system, the Planning Department successfully trained 22 of 23 municipalities (our customers) and has received very positive feedback. As a result, an estimated 95% of GML land use referrals applications are now submitted digitally. Some key project benefits include improved communication between departments; linking with County GIS; replacement of outdated technology; significant reduction in paper and physical storage requirements; improved access to records (as the department is also scanning and linking older GML reviews); improved efficiencies; streamlined process and strengthening of relationships with local governments. Finally, it should be noted that the digital records management system project was part of the Rockland County Shared Services Program.
- Reviewed several large-scale projects, including Letchworth Road Residential Development, Haverstraw Chair Factory Site Redevelopment and One75 Senior Housing.
- Through the SEQRA process, reviewed four Scoping documents for major proposed projects.
- Planned, coordinated, and oversaw all functions of the Rockland Municipal Planning Federation (RMPF). This included planning educational sessions and helping to advertise educational sessions sponsored by other agencies so that planning board and zoning board of appeals members could continue to attain their State-mandated training hours and complete or be re-certified in the Rockland County Certification Program. Training sessions were held both virtually and in-person. Recordings of all virtual sessions in 2024 have been posted to the Federation's YouTube Channel. The Planning Federation directly offered seven educational sessions (16 training hours) and promoted an additional eleven sessions (24.5 training hours) by other organizations in 2024. In total, the Federation sponsored or promoted 18 educational sessions in 2024 for a total of 40.5 hours of training. Educational sessions sponsored by the Planning Federation covered overviews of the role of land use boards, affordable housing, the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), a model Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) law, and updates on relevant case law. In addition, the Federation held its 33rd Annual Dinner Meeting at The Nyack Seaport in March 2024. Federation training sessions were attended by 456 individuals who earned a total of hours of 946 hours of training credits in 2024.
- Planning Department staff regularly participated in the educational training webinars conducted by the Conservation and Land Use Program for the Hudson River Estuary and attended several conferences on affordable housing and sustainable development.
- Planning Department staff were trained as educators as well as participated as mentors in Rockland Planning Land Use with Students (RPLUS), a program that teaches local high school students about sustainable development.
- Drafted and finalized the Six-Year 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Plan for all departments in the County.
- Reviewed and prepared SEQRA determinations for County capital projects, which included preparation of seven Notes to File for Type II Actions and seven Short Environmental Assessment Forms for various projects including open space acquisition and new trails.
- Filled two additional planning positions and now have a full staff of planners.
- Staff provided assistance and guidance, as needed, to other County departments related to the SEQRA process.
- Drafted a GML Section 239 Referral Guide.
- Staff planned, coordinated and were liaison to the Rockland County Planning Board, Historic Preservation Board, and the Rockland Riverfront Communities Council. Each board meets monthly, and staff are responsible for setting the agenda, compiling minutes, keeping web pages up-to-date and ensuring that the boards remain active so that they can provide relevant feedback regarding issues associated with their expertise.
- Continued cross-training efforts of staff so that responsibilities and duties can be successfully completed by others. This was important due to the large number of recent retirements and new hires. Staff also attended many training sessions that focused on not only land use issues and daily tasks, but also on office protocols and management information.

- The Planning Department was awarded a \$15,000 grant from the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities (CEC) Program to purchase an electric ATV and electric landscaping equipment for use in County Parks.
- The Planning Department secured a grant from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Office of Climate Change, to develop a Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Climate Action Plan, advancing the efforts of the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Task Force.
- The Planning Department initiated and successfully brought the resolution to establish a CSC Task Force to the County Legislature, leading to the passage of Resolution No. 622 of 2024, officially creating the task force.
- Planning staff prepared and submitted a grant application to the NYS Hudson River Estuary Program for the development of a Countywide Natural Resources Inventory (NRI).
- The Planning Department hired a Sustainability Coordinator to lead sustainability initiatives and advance plans outlined in Rockland County's CSC and CEC Action Strategy.
- The Planning Department collaborated with the Rockland Municipal Planning Federation and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Clean Energy Siting Team to host and facilitate a training session on Model Battery Energy Storage Systems Law.
- Planning staff participated in other County department studies, including but not limited to the following: Shared Used Path Feasibility Study, Clarkstown Safety and Sustainability Study for State Routes 303 & 304, Community and Housing Needs Assessment and the Strategic Economic Development Plan. Planning staff also participated in the following: Route 59 Area Transportation & Land Use Study implementation efforts, and the Rockland County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2024.
- Finalized contracts with planning consultant and project management consultant for County Comprehensive Plan Update. The 18-month project will be an update of the 2011 Plan creating a vision for the County and guiding future development and investments. The update will result in useful tools and information to move the County forward by addressing economic development, housing, sustainability and include populations projections and a build-out analysis for the County.

## GIS

- Continued to update and maintain mission critical street, address point and various other emergency response layers for the County 911 dispatch and records management system (Motorola Flex). Data layers are also shared with other dispatch systems including the Town of Clarkstown (NewWorld) and the Town of Ramapo (Central Square).
- Completed mandated tax map maintenance of more the 90,000 parcels countywide. Updated and delivered the 2023 tax maps to Towns and Villages.
- Continued to satisfy map/data requests from other County departments and personnel.
- Successfully cross-trained staff with various specific projects and datasets and participated in numerous training opportunities.
- Continued to update GIS Portal – Prepared new and updated data in preparation for the County Comprehensive Plan, Interactive Mapping Applications, Data and Maps for the public to access. Added updated imagery, land use data and more to the site.
- Developed and successfully implemented the necessary GIS layers required for the Tyler records management system.
- Provided GIS data to other County studies/projects, including but not limited to the following: (i.e., OFES Hazard Mitigation Plan, Geographic Response Plan, Route 303/304 Study, Tyler records management software, etc.)
- Continued to partner with the Rockland County Sewer District No.1 to implement a GIS-based project for sewer infrastructure, leveraging the existing Planning Department's County GIS Portal infrastructure, resulting in savings to the District.
- Partnered with Rockland DOH to provide GIS assistance with the lead registry and tobacco sales projects.
- Partnered with Community development to update a mapping application to assist with their community block group grants.
- Continued to manage the Pictometry imagery project; This shared services initiative is a multi-year program to capture orthographic and oblique aerial imagery as well as the subsequent derivative products such as elevation (Lidar) and planimetric (buildings, roads, driveways, etc.) data.
- Continued to train County and other municipal staff on the use of the imagery software.

- Successfully developed, reviewed and awarded two RFPs for critical department functions - Tax Mapping and the Rockland County GIS Portal.

## **2025 Goals**

### Land Use

- Continue to review the GML development applications referred by towns and villages.
- With the RMPF, coordinate and plan educational sessions for municipal planning and zoning board of appeals members, including sessions already in the planning phase.
- Review and prepare State Environmental Quality Review Act determinations for County capital projects for all departments.
- Review DEIS, FEIS, Scoping documents and other SEQRA-related documents for large-scale development proposals and planned municipal comprehensive plan updates.
- Continue to refine, improve and provide training for the new interdepartmental Rockland County land use records management system. Coordinate with local municipalities to provide digital GML submissions.
- Work with the Capital Projects Committee to create the six-year Rockland County Capital Improvement Program Budget for 2026-2031.
- Continue to staff, plan and coordinate the three boards/councils that focus on land-use related issues (Hudson River, development applications, historic preservation).
- Continue training and cross-training efforts for all staff so that seamless transition can continue to occur, and new employees can obtain necessary insight into office protocols, management guidance and policies.
- Finalize creation of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for update to Comprehensive Plan.
- Work with Planning consultant team and Project management contractor to update advance update to Comprehensive Plan.
- Research and implement ways to improve the overall GML process.
- Update Planning web page on County site.
- Develop a GML Section 239 Referral Guide.
- Finalize creation of Climate Smart Communities Task Force and hold at least 2 meetings.
- Continually update Rockland County's CSC application to advance the County's CSC certification.
- Finalize contract with NYSDEC and other paperwork for climate smart grant to prepare a Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Government Operations Climate Action Plan.
- Issue RFP for Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Government Operations Climate Action Plan.
- Review proposal, interview potential contractors and retain consultant(s) for Government Operations Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Government Operations Climate Action Plan
- Continue to explore additional grant funding opportunities that align with the County's sustainability objectives.
- Develop a Rockland County Sustainability Program webpage and integrate it into the Planning Department's website. Update the overall department website.

### GIS

- Maintain and improve the quality of the GIS data products, which contribute to/serve as the digital foundation for various mission critical systems such as the Rockland County GIS Portal, the 911 computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system, the Board of Election voter database system among others. Create new GIS data layers where necessary.
- Continue to improve the performance, functionality and appearance of the Rockland County GIS Portal. This effort will provide greater flexibility in updating data more frequently, launching new topic-specific applications faster and making other technological improvements.
- Work with the Consultant to develop and launch a digital StoryMap of the Comprehensive Plan for the public to monitor progress of the study and implementation of future recommendations.
- Continue to educate and train municipal employees and Planning Federation members, zoning boards, planning boards, clerks, engineers and others about the existing online GIS applications (Municipal Map)

and GIS data (parcels, flood zones, wetlands, etc.) available through the GIS portal. These applications and GIS data are very useful for subdivision and site plan review, environmental analysis and code enforcement.

- Continue to utilize the Tax Map Issue Tracker to work with the Town Assessors and the Real Property Director to resolve new and outstanding tax mapping issues as they arise. Continue to train Town Assessor staff on the use of the Issue Tracker system.
- Continued maintenance of the GIS layers required for the centralized Rockland County land use records management system (Tyler).
- Develop/release new products/annual updates from the aerial photography program (Pictometry).
- Continue to update and develop GIS data layers for the County's dispatch and records management software (Motorola Flex).
- Continue to work with the Rockland County Sewer District No.1 to implement a GIS based project for sewer infrastructure, leveraging the existing Planning Department's County GIS Portal infrastructure.

## **PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

Joseph DiCarlo, Director

### **2024 Achievements**

- Serviced over 550 Family Offense petition for victims of domestic violence, over 740 custody and visitation petitions for our county residents, along with numerous other petitions to assist residents with access to the Family Court.
- Established a procedure to re-establish collaboration with the Center for Safety and Change for victims of Domestic Violence who are seeking orders of protection and need further support to remain safe.
- Via their work with the STOP FEAR Coalition, co-chairs SPO Cherron Petruzzi and SPO Jennifer Williams planned and presented an incredible conference on STALKING for the community. The conference presenters included SPARC and Anna Nasset, who shared her incredible story as a survivor of stalking violence. The conference was attended by over 100 local professionals and students working in this field.
- Throughout 2024, the Probation Department continued to provide our criminal justice system partners with the Domestic Violence Program for Men, a weekly accountability program for referents.
- The Domestic Violence Program for Men has serviced over 62 referrals in which proceeds from the classes generated \$24,810.00, collected by the Center for Safety and Change and placed in an emergency fund for victims and survivors of domestic violence in our community.
- The Probation Department graduated 3 additional instructors this year, and our instructor team developed and implemented an annual recertification training program for our sworn peace officer staff. The instructor team now has trained instructors in several specialized areas, including Procedural Justice, Motivational Interviewing, Defensive Tactics, and Crisis Intervention for Law Enforcement.
- Specialized training for staff that included taser training and first aid tactical training.
- Collected and disbursed over \$ 212,355 in fines, fees and restitution for the County and distributed \$79,908 in restitution to approximately three hundred (300) victims of crime.
- DWI supervision- completed intakes and currently monitoring over one hundred IID Conditional Discharge clients.
- Conduct 100% of court ordered investigations in accordance with the Timeline established by the Department. COMPAS Screenings were completed on all applicable defendants.
- Conducted GIVE (Gun Involved Violence Elimination) details with various local police departments during 2024, which resulted in taking several guns and illegal weapons taken off the streets throughout the year.
- Supervising Probation Officer Cherron Petruzzi has been accepted into the 2024 Rockland County Leadership Rockland Program.

- Probation Officer Julia Corletta was selected to attend the 2024 Rockland County Emerging Leaders' Program.

## **2025 Goals**

- Continue to build ongoing relationships with the Department of Social Services by attending monthly meetings to discuss at risk youth and make referrals for services when appropriate.
- Improve and strengthen collaborative efforts among probation officers, school staff and resource officers throughout Rockland County by making monthly school visits.
- The Juvenile Unit will have a designated officer who will become the Yasi Collaborative Training Coach.
- The Juvenile Unit will work collaboratively with the presentment agency to modify/enhance probation conditions based on the individual needs of the youth and the needs and safety of the community.
- Increase participation in community service projects to foster accountability and connections such as working with the Haverstraw Collaborative and the Partnership for Safe Youth.
- Probation looks to increase our diversion rates above 88% of youth ages 17 years of age and younger.
- In 2025 the Department of Probation shall continue our effectiveness in community supervision and focus on increasing our quality of service throughout the County.
- Enhance our victim contacts in the PSI and Supervision stages Probation work.
- Probation shall continue to collaborate with the Village Spring Valley Police, Sheriff, and local police agencies under NYS Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE). GIVE is a key component of New York State's shooting and homicide reduction strategy and provides state funding to local law enforcement agencies for equipment, overtime, personnel, as well as focused training and technical assistance.
- Continue to collaborate with all local enforcement in the supervision of gun related cases, sex offenders, domestic violence and high-risk cases in the community.
- Probation shall continue to provide domestic violence, custody, visitation and other miscellaneous intake services for Rockland County.
- Probation will continue to work with our partner agencies, the Police, The Courts, Sheriff, The DA, PD and County Attorney to protect our communities and streamline our processes with raise the age implementation for 17-year-olds.
- Continue to provide electronic home monitoring and Pre-Trial Supervision services to the county's courts.
- Probation looks to increase our diversion rates above 86% of youth ages 17 and under from entering the Family Court system by. To continue to partner with DSS, BOCES and Mental Health to enhance supervision and increase positive outcomes for our youth.
- To continue to train and utilize staff to provide evidenced based programming to the individuals and families we work with.
- With accredited trainers, continue to develop a departmental training "core" curriculum for the Department and collaborate with regional Probation Departments for training opportunities.
- Continue to review and update our existing policies; and add new policies to accommodate rule changes and changes in practice.

**PUBLIC DEFENDER**  
James Licata, Public Defender

## **2024 Achievements**

- Transition to paperless files is almost complete. Will continue next year.
- Retirements in October 2024 and January 2025. Succession planning will continue next year.
- Office re-design partially completed.
- Scanning and shredding completed on all files. Will continue to scan and shred current files.

- Worked with Bar Association/Assigned Counsel (18-b) on CLE's and trainings regarding new laws.
- Will continue coordination with the Bar Association/Assigned Counsel (18-b) on CLE's and trainings as significant changes to discovery and bail statutes have occurred.
- Reviewed 2023 County of Rockland Employee Engagement Survey results. Proceeded to address changes and comments in each topic area. Will do same with 2024 County of Rockland Employee Engagement Survey results.
- Negotiated with County Law Department and Michael Hoblin to finalize contract with Rockland County Bar Association regarding Assigned Counsel (18-b).

## **2025 Goals**

- Continue transition to paperless files.
- Continue implementation of succession planning for anticipated retirements in 2025.
- Continue office re-design plan with Facilities.
- Continue procedure to scan and shred all current files to make them searchable and accessible to our attorneys and staff.
- Continue coordination with Rockland County Bar Association/Assigned Counsel (18-b) to work with CLE's and trainings regarding new laws.
- Continue coordination with Rockland County Bar Association/Assigned Counsel (18-b) with CLE's and training on significant changes to discovery, bail statutes and new Department of Motor Vehicle regulations.
- Review the 2024 County of Rockland Employee Engagement Survey results. Analyze each topic area and determine areas in which improvement is needed. Review with management team and implement a plan to improve. Track progress and report results mid and end of year.
- Indigent Legal Services (ILS) has requested a re-organization with stronger supervision within the Public Defender's office. Coordinate with Deputy County Executive to implement plan.
- Oversee the preparation and presentation of in-office CLE's in order to become an accredited CLE provider.

## **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

Douglas Schuetz, Acting Commissioner

## **2024 Achievements**

- The Department continues to be funded via State, Federal and local transportation dollars (No County tax dollars).
- Continues to spend down its Federal CARES Act funding that has covered the increased operating costs associated with the post-COVID transportation operating climate.
- Continued to provide a full level of TRIPS and TOR bus service. TOR is the only transit system in our region that has not cut any service in the COVID era.
- Continued to sustain expanded cleaning and sanitizing procedures and methods for both the TRIPS and TOR bus systems in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Continued with waiving fare collection.
- Demand for the ADA TRIPS service continued to grow in 2024. The Department added a new full-time driver position and has hired 11 Relief Drivers since 2023 to help meet increased demand and ensure that Regular TRIPS can continue to offer service for Rockland seniors and people with disabilities who may not qualify for the ADA TRIPS service.
- Reached milestone of having the largest number of TRIPS drivers in history (27) in the face of the ongoing regional bus driver shortage.

- Reviewed and processed 577 Regular TRIPS, ADA Trips and Reduced Fare applications from public transit riders.
- TOR's bus fleet has an average age of 5.8 years, with the replacement of 16 more buses programmed for the next 1-2 years.
- Purchased 2 new 30' bus options from an Athens, GA contract that are scheduled to be produced and placed into the TOR bus fleet in late 2025.
- Provided more than 1.1 million rides through our TOR and TRIPS bus services.
- The Department exercised the 7th-year Contract Option for Transdev to operate TOR.
- Continued to provide all Departmental services, including customer services, and met all Federal and State mandates and requirements during the year.
- Completed the Department's NYS DOT Public Transportation Safety Board Site Review for TRIPS. This assessment includes an audit of the Department's compliance with its System Safety Program, as well as a review of bus operators, staff training program, bus accident analysis preventability/ retraining program, bus maintenance program and drug and alcohol program.
- Completed the Federally mandated National Transit Database (NTD) Annual Report, NTD Sampling Project, Title VI Report, Public Transportation Safety Agency Plan, Drug and Alcohol Testing Program, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program (DBE), and Transit Asset Management Plan.
- The Department continued to provide oversight and administered STOA funds for eligible Rockland County bus operators on behalf of the NYS DOT, including TOR, TRIPS, Monsey Trails, Kaser bus, Village of Kaser, Clarkstown MiniTrans, Rockland Coaches and Hudson Transit.
- The Department provided guidance and assistance to the Village of Kaser in establishing its new municipal bus service and applying for STOA.
- Continued to be the lead on interfacing with regional transit agencies, including MTA Metro-North and NJ Transit, coordinating the County's efforts to improve transit service, transit options and transit access for Rockland County commuters, and in seeking equity from the MTA for the value gap that exists between what the County pays to MTA versus what it receives in return.
- Continued Rockland's role in regional transportation planning with County Executive Ed Day serving as a Principal of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) and voting at February's Annual Council Meeting to approve the 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- Continued to monitor NJ TRANSIT and MTA Metro-North Commuter Rail service performance and advocated for improvements for Rockland County residents.
- Supported the County Executive's successful efforts to once again obtain a waiver from Metro-North's fare increases for West of Hudson riders.
- Launched the new TOR Ferry Connection bus service to coordinate with Metro-North's pilot Summer Weekend Ferry service for the Haverstraw-Ossining Ferry. Secured funding from Metro-North to pay for the TOR Ferry Connection, which served the Ferry Landing, Village of Haverstraw, Garner Arts Center, Rockland Lake, the Village of Nyack and the Palisades Center Mall.
- Supported the County Executive's efforts in opposition to MTA's congestion pricing program, which severely impacts Rockland County's Manhattan-bound commuters.
- Supported the County Executive's efforts with State elected officials to introduce legislation to provide a rebate for the congestion pricing toll for Rockland County residents and to increase the minimum amount of funding that MTA is obligated to provide to Rockland County (via the DORF account) from \$2 million per year to \$10 million per year, in lieu of the transit service they do not provide for Rockland County.
- The Department's Travel Demand Management (TDM) Program continued its work to help reduce congestion and improve air quality through the promotion of transit and park & ride programs and utilizing NYS DOT dollars to fund Park & Ride maintenance programs throughout the County.
- Continued Right-of-Way (ROW) acquisition for the West Shore Railroad Safety Improvement & Quiet Zone project. Continued adhering to Federal Railroad Administration procedures and the specific Federal Highway Administration procedures required of this Locally-Administered Federal Aid Project.
- Held kick-off meeting with Stakeholder Advisory Committee as well as the first Public Information Session for the Route 303 and 304 Safety and Sustainability corridor study, which are funded by NYMTC UPWP funds.
- Coordinated, managed and funded capital improvements at various park & ride locations, including Suffern Lot F Park & Ride facility, Spring Valley Transit Center ring road and bus layover area and Stony

Point Park & Ride facility. These projects were funded with 100% New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) funding through the Public Transportation Modernization and Enhancement Program (MEP). No County tax dollars were used for these projects.

- Continued working with NYMTC, NYS DOT and other stakeholders on implementing goals from the Route 59 Area Transportation & Land Use Study.
- Completed the mandated NY State Transportation Operating Assisting (STOA) Audit, Single Day Federal Audit and 17-a Annual Financial and Performance Review reporting.
- In coordination with NYMTC, continued ongoing review of programmatic and analytical elements of regional emission analyses and transportation conformity determinations.
- Completed mandates and needs of CMAQ/TDM for the program year and continued to work with regional partners to complete the required federal mandates for on-going transportation funding.
- Continued to secure Federal and State funding for operations and capital infrastructure improvements.
- Worked with regional partners to update NYMTC's Regional Transportation Plan.
- Through the Department's Bus Shelter Program, made repairs, replaced panels and installed solar lighting kits on shelters throughout the County. In 2024, there was expenditure of more than \$500,000 towards the Bus Shelter Program, which included the repair of more than 30 bus shelters, installation of 9 new shelters and the completion of two major ADA compliance projects at Park & Rides. Completed the Department's Bus Shelter Solar Lighting Campaign which retrofitted 135 bus shelters County-wide with lighting to enhance safety and increase ease of use at night for transit ridership. Continued the Department's bus shelter power washing program for all shelter infrastructure.
- Continued to conduct data analysis activities, prepared public data products and provided technical support regarding the results of the 2020 Census for Rockland County and its towns and villages.
- Assisted Facilities Management in making needed improvements to the Building T facility HVAC system.

## **2025 Goals**

- Continue to provide full levels of TRIPS and TOR bus service.
- Initiate TOR Bus procurement process for replacement and expansion bus purchases.
- Purchase as many as 23 new TRIPS paratransit service buses using Federal and State funding and NO COUNTY TAX DOLLARS.
- Conduct pre-production and oversight activities for the production of 2 new 30' low-floor Gillig TOR buses that are scheduled to be placed into service in late 2025.
- Complete work on the TOR Routing Analysis to identify strategies to improve service performance and efficiency, and begin to implement planned technology improvements.
- Adjust schedules for TOR routes to address traffic congestion impacts, improve on-time performance and potentially serve new destinations with demonstrated high demand for transit service.
- Determine and implement service improvements to TOR that meet the County's established Routing Guidelines, including significant ridership demand, operational considerations that are deemed safe and efficient, and sustainable funding.
- Release an RFP for the public transit management, operations and maintenance for the TOR bus service and award a new contract for these services.
- Continue to secure Federal and State funding for operations and capital infrastructure improvements.
- Continue to utilize Rockland County's allocation of approximately \$24.5M in Federal transit funding from both the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to cover increased operating costs of public transit for both TOR and TRIPS caused by COVID, including the purchase of personal protective equipment and continued emergency relief operating assistance.
- Secure additional annual funding from Metro-North for TOR to continue to serve as a connecting service with Hudson Link, Metro-North and the Haverstraw-Ossining Ferry Weekend service (should Metro-North continue the pilot in 2025).
- As part of an overall and ongoing campaign to gain equity from MTA, continue to support the County Executive's advocacy efforts for Rockland residents to be provided a rebate for MTA's congestion pricing toll, continue to be exempt from any proposed MTA fare increases, for Rockland County to receive a

minimum allocation increase from \$2 million per year to \$10 million per year from MTA's DORF account, and continue to push MTA for improved rail service and accessible stations in Rockland County.

- Prepare for and complete the Department's 2025 FTA Triennial Review.
- Prepare for the mandated NY State Transportation Operating Assisting (STOA) Audit, Single Day Federal Audit and 17-a Annual Financial and Performance Review reporting.
- Complete all quarterly Federal & State transportation mandates.
- Continue to monitor NJ TRANSIT and MTA Metro-North Commuter Rail service performance and advocate for/negotiate improvements for Rockland County residents.
- Complete ROW acquisition and Final Design phase for the Railroad Safety & Quiet Zone project. Continue working with NYS DOT and CSX to gain consensus on requirements associated with this Locally-Administered Federal Aid Project.
- Continue work with NYMTC on the Federally-required programs and projects.
- Continue to secure Federal and State funding for operations and capital infrastructure improvements.
- Continue to bring all County bus shelters to ADA standard; continue to identify appropriate locations for new bus shelters; replace existing bus shelters that have reached the end of their useful lives; continue to repair and replace components and panels as needed and administer the bus shelter power washing program.
- Continue implementing the ADA Transition Plan for County bus shelters and park & rides.
- Continue to fund Park & Ride maintenance programs throughout the County utilizing County's TDM program.
- Continue to coordinate and manage capital improvement/state of good repair projects at various park & ride locations throughout the County, as needed. No County tax dollars will be used for these projects.
- Continue to provide training and cross training opportunities to staff in order to continue to provide essential services and to aid in our efforts toward succession planning.
- Continue the Clarkstown Safety and Sustainability Study for the Route 303 & 304 corridors, including consultant oversight and additional public information sessions.
- Continue to assist the Town of Ramapo and NYS DOT with Route 59 Area Transportation & Land Use Study recommendation implementation efforts.
- Participate in the Comprehensive Plan update project with the Planning Department.
- Continue work with the US Census Bureau and State Data Center as 2020 Census data continues to be released and analyzed.
- Complete an Intermunicipal Agreement with the town of Orangetown for the construction of the new Sparkill Park & Ride facility, and process the State MEP funding reimbursement process between the Town and NYS DOT. 100% State funding (no County tax dollars).
- Continue to improve customer service for both TOR and TRIPS services by capitalizing on recent phone system upgrades and in developing call centers to more directly route customers.
- Continue to assist Facilities Management to make improvements to the Building T facility and systems, including a roof replacement, HVAC system, generator, security enhancements and fuel tank replacement, by providing Federal and State funding, input to procurement solicitation documents and oversight regarding the adherence to Federal and State guidelines and requirements.

## **SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Louis Falco III, Sheriff

### **2024 Achievements**

#### **Police Division**

- Plans underway for permanent headquarters location for the Mounted Unit.
- Bid was awarded for the renovation of the old Highway Department offices and garage, which will house the Transport Unit, the Livery Unit and REACT.

- Repowered department Marine Unit vessels Marine One and Marine Two.
- Completed RFP to train officers to become licensed rotary aircraft pilots.
- Trained a new Patrol K9 to replace K9 Lennon who is reaching retirement. Replaced tracking K9 after the unexpected passing of K9 Ott.
- Successfully integrated members of the Spring Valley Police Department into REACT.

### Corrections

- Continued compliance with the 166 standards for the New York State Sheriff's Association Jail Accreditation Program and DCJS requirements.
- Tek84 Intercept body scanner installed in Visiting Search area and registered scanner with NYS Department of Health and obtain permit. Author Division Policy for Tek84 Scanner.
- Replaced UPS Under Central Control.
- Upgraded Correction Officer Scheduling System to the newest version.
- Replaced Back Elevator camera with POE V Cell Camera.
- Added 12 Think Lite Air purifiers throughout the jail, through a grant from NYSSA.
- Replaced 70 staff members body armor, either stab, ballistic, or both.
- Obtained and outfitted new Community Service van.
- Administered acquisition and installation of new Mental Health cubicle.
- Administered acquisition and installation of new cabinetry, counters, table and chairs for staff breakroom.
- Upgraded to new stun cuffs.
- Awarded new facility radio contract.
- 14 new Correction Officers hired in 2024.
- Basic Correction Academy held August – October 2024, ten officers graduated. The academy was extended from eight weeks to nine weeks, to conduct Reality Based Training with relevant scenarios including the recruits visiting Nyack Hospital to train in a typical patient room for hospital post assignments.
- Assisted the Rockland County Department of Personnel with instructors for their Physical Agility tests.

### Civil Division

- The Civil Enforcement Division seized approximately \$3 million dollars for reimbursement to the residents of Rockland County and other plaintiffs in court related actions and generated over \$350,000 in revenue for the County of Rockland.
- Re-accredited with the New York State Sheriff's Association by maintaining standards and operating procedures consistent with the State Sheriff's Association accreditation program as well as the standards of the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. This re-accreditation is good for a five-year period and would mark our fourth consecutive accreditation.
- Acquired additional licenses for Civil Serve software program to avoid intermittent service interruption.
- Upgraded employee scheduling software with phone app (POSS).

### Communications Division

- Implementation and takeover of Sheriff's Office "Patrol" Dispatch.
- Roll out of IAED, ProQA Emergency Priority Dispatch System.
- Train and implement Protocol 41 for mental health distress calls to 911 – BHRT.
- Continue and complete a training academy with 7 new staff members.
- Install, configure, and implement 4 new dedicated "call taking" positions.
- Install, configure, and implement Vesta Auto Abandoned Callback feature.
- Discuss and formalize a plan to implement Orangetown EMS Dispatch.
- Roll out Flex Mobile and Flex Touch to Fire and EMS agencies.

### **2025 Goals**

### Police Division

- Replace all Police Division mobile data terminals (MDTs) and expand deployment where necessary.
- Establish new K9s in the disciplines of patrol/narcotics and accelerant detection.
- Establish a new, dedicated specialty vehicle (Chevy Tahoe) for drone operations.
- Relocate the Rockland County Intelligence Center to Building A and establish a Real Time Crime Center and Cryptocurrency Investigation Unit.
- Purchase a new County helicopter and dedicated hangar facility.
- Commence design and construction of the new Mounted facility on the Ramapo Equestrian Center property.
- Obtain DCJS accreditation for REACT.

#### Corrections

- Begin Cornerstone project to replace door control systems and upgrade current Stentofon system.
- Install ramps on Recreation Yard steps.
- Repair housing unit shower walls and ceramic tiles where needed in kitchen.
- Replace water fountains with new top dispense style water source units.
- Upgrade all laptops throughout the facility currently being used as electronic logbooks.
- Continue compliance with DCJS and the New York State Sheriff's Association Jail Accreditation Program to meet accreditation standards.
- Initiate process to create ADA compliant cell.
- Hire 18 new officers.
- Conduct Correction Officer Basic Academy for new hires.
- Conduct Supervisor Academy for new Sergeants.
- Install security screening/fencing from floor to ceiling of upper tier in each housing unit.

#### Civil Division

- Implement new Power DMS/Power Ready software for field training new deputies.
- Research and implement Risk Management/IA/Use of Force software to prevent undue liability toward this agency.
- Develop a training in-service program for police dispatchers in civil law enforcement in coordination with the police academy.
- Re-develop a redundancy plan in case of a network failure for division operations.
- Develop a policy to deal with the artificial intelligence technology and its use in law enforcement.

#### Communications Division

- Procurement of International Academies of Emergency Dispatch – ProQA Emergency Priority Dispatch System.
- Procurement of four additional dedicated call taking positions.
- Procurement of Vesta Auto Abandoned Callback feature.
- Completed an 11-month training academy of 8 new staff members.
- Two “life-saver” incidents, including our first choking/Heimlich save.
- Completed a takeover of EMS Dispatch in the Town of Ramapo.
- Replaced the entire Pomona Dispatch Lighting System.
- Purchased two new generators for radio system sites– Jacki Jones Mt and Cheescote Mt.

**SEWER DISTRICT #1**  
Michael Saber, Executive Director

**2024 Achievements**

- Treated 9.17 billion gallons of wastewater between the two wastewater treatment plants
- Completed emergency repairs on the Lower Main Interceptor.
- Completed Odor Control Upgrade project.
- Bid construction phase for the Sludge Thickeners Upgrade project.
- Bid construction phase for the Screening Improvements project.
- Began engineering report for Pump Station Telemetry Upgrade.
- Began design for the Pump Station Screenings Upgrade project.
- Continued infiltration and inflow removal program.

**2025 Goals**

- Bid construction phase for the Sludge Dewatering Upgrade project.
- Bid construction phase for RBC repairs.
- Complete Main Pump Station Upgrade project.
- Start construction phase for the Sludge Thickeners Upgrade project.
- Start construction phase for the Screening Improvements project.
- Begin engineering report for upgrade of 5 pumping stations
- Begin design for the Twin Avenue Sewer Upgrade project.
- Begin design for the electrical grid at the wastewater treatment plant in Orangeburg.
- Complete DEIS and seek public comment for potential diffuser on outfall for wastewater treatment plant in Orangeburg.
- Meet SPDES permit limits at both wastewater treatment plants.
- Perform more public outreach.

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Joan Silvestri, Commissioner

**2024 Achievements**

- Rockland County remains a leader in the state for Child Welfare measurements and results, including placements, safety checks etc. Currently in the top 10% of performers statewide in Employment, benefit timeliness and Child Support Enforcement efforts and children in foster care placement.
- Despite the large increase in homelessness on a state and federal level, Rockland's homeless population has remained relatively stable with little or no increase in numbers. This was achieved through strategically maximizing grants and leveraging relationships with community partners and nonprofit agencies, redeployment of staff resources and the development of overall homeless strategy plans. Rockland's rate of homelessness is 1/6 the national average and has not shown any significant increase.
- Fully deployed a DSS call center (leveraging the new phone systems capabilities) to enhance client experiences at DSS significantly reducing hold and wait times.
- Despite staffing shortages, successfully met the need for an increased demand for eligibility services.

- Implemented real time two way mobile and stationary certified translation devices throughout the agency to improve client experience and reduce the demand for multilingual staff. These devices are fully operational within the buildings as well as all field locations.
- Deployed a safety alert system for use by all field staff via a mobile apt that alerts law enforcement and supervision if field staff encounter danger.
- As the previous vendor exited their contract to operate the Warming Center, DSS successfully brought in house the daily operation of the center. This required hiring 22 staff, developing all procedures and protocols, putting in place contracts for security and food delivery in a very short time frame. All objectives were met with the center opening on time and fully operational on November 1st.

## **2025 Goals**

- Continue to support the community, adjusting resources to meet those requirements ensuring that we identify gaps in services and respond in a timely way to emerging needs.
- Continue to work with landlords to identify affordable housing for DSS clients despite the dramatic increase in housing costs.
- Continue to advocate and lobby the State for an increase in the housing allowance for Temporary Assistance that does not provide sufficient funds for individuals to secure safe housing.
- Fully deploy Reception/lobby resign by deploying self-serve benefit application and document submission.

## **STOP-DWI**

Albert Del Principio, Coordinator

## **2024 Achievements**

- There were over 600 DWI arrests made in Rockland County in 2024.
- Rockland County STOP DWI held in-person monthly English and quarterly Spanish Victim Impact Panels serving over 400 court mandated DWI offenders.
- Created the 2025 in-person English and Spanish Rockland County Victim Impact Panel Calendar. Added two additional Spanish Victim Impact Panels for 2025 making the Spanish Victim Impact Panel now available every other month.
- The STOP DWI Victim Impact Panel calendar has been published and provided to all County Court clerks, Rockland County Probation, Rockland County TASC (Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime) and Rockland County Drug Court.
- Updated the County STOP DWI Website and NYS STOP DWI Website.
- Completed and submitted the 2025 Rockland County STOP DWI Plan to the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.
- Submitted accurate STOP-DWI report of expenditures for Quarters 1, 2, 3, 4 and the annual report to the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.
- Increased coordinator and consultants in-person school presentations/assemblies at high schools, middle schools, and community events.
- Shared funds and STOP DWI equipment with the Rockland County Sheriff's Office and our (8) municipal police departments with monies allocated for DWI enforcement.
- Increased funding to the RCSO and 8 police departments for overtime impaired driving enforcement to \$7,000 for the 2025 calendar year.
- Purchased and maintained in-stock, up to date, DWI enforcement equipment and shared with the Rockland County Sheriff's Office and our (8) municipal police departments.
- Provided additional opportunities for training sessions, quest speakers for law enforcement agencies.

- Held a Mid-Hudson STOP DWI awards ceremony for Rockland County Law enforcement officers with the highest number of impaired driving arrests.
- Created a partnership with Optimum Media. Optimum created several 30 second commercials and ads to air online and on the various media outlets. Highly successful exposure.
- Attended regional Mid-Hudson regional New York State STOP-DWI Victim Impact Panels, information sessions, meetings, and conferences.
- Attended New York State STOP-DWI Foundation meetings and conferences.
- Attended New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee meeting and conferences.

## **2025 Goals**

- Explore the possibility of introducing and funding the purchase of fluid testing equipment for roadside drug-impaired driver investigation. This would be in collaboration with the V/T/C Courts, RC DA Office, RC Chief's Association, and Director of the RC Police Academy.
- Create the 2026 in-person English and Spanish Rockland County Victim Impact Panel Calendar.
- Provide the Victim Impact Panel calendar to all County Court clerks, Rockland County Probation, and Rockland County TASC (Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime) and Rockland County Drug Court.
- Continue to hold in-person monthly English and quarterly Spanish Victim Impact Panels.
- Complete and submit the 2026 Rockland County STOP DWI Plan to the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.
- Submit accurate STOP-DWI report of expenditures for Quarters 1, 2, 3, 4 and the annual report to the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.
- Increase coordinator and consultants in-person school presentations/assemblies at high schools, middle schools, and community events.
- Locate and utilize additional Victims of Drunk Drivers willing to share their stories at our Victim Impact Programs.
- Share County funds allocated for overtime reimbursement for DWI enforcement and STOP DWI equipment with the Rockland County Sheriff's Office and our (8) municipal police departments with monies allocated for DWI enforcement.
- Maintain funding to the RCSO and 8 police departments for overtime impaired driving enforcement at a minimum of \$7,000 for the 2026 calendar year.
- Purchase and maintain in-stock, up to date, DWI enforcement equipment and share with the Rockland County Sheriff's Office and our (8) municipal police departments.
- Provide opportunities for training sessions, quest speakers for law enforcement agencies.
- Continue to attend regional Mid-Hudson regional New York State STOP-DWI Victim Impact Panels, information sessions, meetings, and conferences.
- Continue to attend New York State STOP-DWI Foundation meetings and conferences.
- Continue to attend New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee meeting and conferences.
- Focus on additional advertisement opportunities.

## **VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY**

Susan Branam, Director

## **2024 Achievements**

- We moved to a new office space in late 2024. We have more than double the space from our previous office to include a new conference room that we plan on using for meetings/trainings/info sessions with the veteran community and also added a veteran food pantry.
- Helped veterans obtain an additional \$2.5 million in Federal benefits, above and beyond their prior benefits.

Success stories:

- A 2-tour combat veteran and Purple Heart recipient fell on hard times. He was homeless, suffering from his combat injuries, and hopeless. He had stopped going to VA healthcare because he had become despondent. He was living on \$720 a month. Through the combined help of DSS, VA healthcare, VFW Post 9215, Veterans Memorial Association of Upper Nyack, an outpouring of community support, and the Dwyer Program he was temporarily housed, provided transportation to start utilizing VA healthcare again, and was given some food gift cards to supplement his income. We helped him file for benefits with the VA and he was awarded compensation for his many combat injuries. He was placed in his own apartment in and looking forward to getting a job.
- A surviving widow of a Vietnam-era veteran contacted our office when she had a deposit in her checking account of over \$100,000. We had helped her file for Death Indemnity Compensation over 7 years earlier because we believed that her husband should have been getting benefits before his death. He knew that he had been exposed to Agent Orange during his service-not in Vietnam, but in Fort McClellan, Alabama. Year after year, the VA denied first him, and then his wife for any benefits. He was determined that his illness was due to his exposure to Agent Orange. The VA admitted that her husband had indeed been exposed to Agent Orange during his service and his death was a result of that exposure which means that she was awarded the back moneys but also will receive a monthly payment for the rest of her life. The money doesn't bring her husband back, but it fulfills his desire to make sure that his wife was taken care of after he was gone. This entire process helps to change the VA by first setting precedence in VA case law and then hopefully one day the VA will change their regulations to make such issues presumptive so that other veterans will be able to get these benefits easier in the future.

## **2025 Goals**

- Conduct outreach to reach more veterans in underserved populations.
- Expand food pantry services which helps veterans and surviving spouses.
- Hold ongoing information sessions for topics includeing veteran benefits, veteran/surviving spouse benefits for aging individuals, and IT training for Veteran specific issues (VA healthcare, VA App, VBA, etc).

## **YOUTH BUREAU**

Gabriella Marano-Holahan, Assistant Director

## **2024 Achievements**

### **Youth Employment Program (YEP)**

Empowering Rockland County Youth for Workforce Success in 2024

In 2024, our program equipped young people aged 14–24 with the skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed to thrive in Rockland's workforce and beyond. Through comprehensive training and employment initiatives, we enabled youth to build a foundation for success while supporting local employers.

- Trained and Employed 482 Youth: Over 482 young individuals gained meaningful work experience, bridging the gap between education and employment.
- Delivered Over 96,000 Hours of Paid Employment Experience: Rockland County youth collectively contributed 96,636 hours to local employers, fostering mutual growth and success.
- Graduated 93 Participants from the T.E.E.N. Works Program: The T.E.E.N. (Teen Employment Education Network) Works program offered three sessions (two in spring, one in summer) of intensive pre-employment training. This 4-week program engaged participants in hands-on activities to build critical soft skills, including communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. Graduates demonstrated their capabilities through supervised community service projects.
- Achieved a 99.7% Job Placement Completion Rate: Nearly every youth placed in employment completed their assignment, showcasing their dedication and preparedness.
- Earned High Supervisor Ratings: 98% of youth workers received outstanding evaluations (3 or 4 on a 4-point scale) from supervisors for their skills and positive work attitudes.

- Secured Year-Round Employment Opportunities: Leveraging ARPA funding from 2023 and new NYS year-round funding, the program provided uninterrupted employment opportunities for youth throughout the year.
- Fostering Future Leaders: Through this program, we're not just preparing the next generation for the workforce—we're shaping responsible, self-sufficient individuals ready to make a lasting impact.

### **Rockland Conservation & Service Corps (RCSC)**

- RCSC builds the capacity of municipalities and organizations to address community needs. RCSC continued to recruit and train members to meet community needs in environmental issues and gain an understanding of the factors affecting Rockland and New York's environmental resources.
- Coordinated volunteers for 33 Get Fresh deliveries drawing over 70 volunteers in 2024 totaling over 210,929 pounds of recused food to our local food pantries.
- 28 Summer Corps Members dedicated 10,042 hours of environmental and conservation service in partnership with 7 host sites.
- Significant projects include Palisades Interstate Park Commission utilized 12 members to repair the Appalachian Trail after a devastating storm in July 2023, ensuring it was safe and re-opened for public use. Built a new 1.8-mile trail (Yellow Trail) at Clausland Mountain Park.
- Completed 6 "Friday Projects:" county-wide environmental projects which channeled the strength and skills of the Conservation Members towards projects that improved county sites and resources.
- Co-facilitated Rockland Planning Land Use with Students (RPLUS), virtually engaging over 300 students from 11 local high schools in land use planning and sustainability education.
- Hosted four Repair Cafes attended by 275 people and taking on 275 repairs of items such as radios, computers, phones, furniture, mixers, musical instruments, toys, jewelry and clothing.
- Received the 2024 Watershed Wavemaker Award: Recognized for a unique approach to providing opportunities for youth to gain experience in the environmental field.

### **New York State Office of Children and Family Services Funding**

In total, the Rockland County Youth Bureau received \$680,788 in funding from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), a 111% increase in funding from the previous year, which was allocated to 34 programs across 20 different Rockland County agencies, reaching over 6,600 Rockland County youth.

- The Youth Bureau allocated \$324,299 in Youth Development Program (YDP) funding to 19 direct service programs across 12 Rockland County agencies that served approximately 5,000 Rockland County youth. Funded agencies include CANDLE, Center for Safety & Change, Chiku Awali, Cornell Cooperative Extension Rockland, Mental Health Association, Martin Luther King Multi-Purpose Center, RCADD, Rockland 21C, Rockland Pride Center, Rockland County YMCA, VCS, Inc. and the Village of Haverstraw.
- The Youth Bureau also received \$105,401 in Youth Sports and Education Opportunity (YSEF) funding, which was allocated to 7 youth sports programs across 6 agencies, serving nearly 500 Rockland County youth. Funded agencies include CANDLE, Chiku Awali, Children of Promise Stable (COPS) Barn, Girls on the Run Hudson Valley, Martin Lither King Multi-Purpose Center, and the Village of Haverstraw. The Youth Bureau was also awarded a one-time Youth Sports and Education Opportunity Infrastructure (YSEF-I) fund of \$10,344, which was allocated to COPS Barn, who used the funds resurface their outdoor riding arena where therapeutic horseback riding lessons are given to youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- The Youth Bureau was allocated \$240,744 in Youth Team Sports (YTS) funding. This funding was allocated to 8 agencies to run youth team sports programs that served over 1,200 Rockland County youth. Funded agencies include: Clarkstown Soccer Club, Clarkstown Youth Lacrosse, Nanuet Little League, NY Boulders Youth Baseball Camp, Ramapo Midget Football, Rockland Rowing Association, Rockland County YMCA, and the Village of Haverstraw.

## 2025 Goals

### **Celebrating 50 years of the Youth Bureau and 25 years of Rockland Conservation & Service Corps**

- Employ and train at least 500 young people through the expanded Youth Employment Program.
- Mobilize volunteers for at least 30 Get Fresh food deliveries.
- Engage 26 Conservation Corps members in environmental service throughout 10 host sites in Rockland County, delivering over 9,500 hours of service to the community.
- Host the 25th Annual Rockland County YouthFest/Government Day.
- Train and mobilize Corps members to prepare for, mitigate and recover from significant weather events during their service period.
- Train Youth Employment Program and Conservation & Service Corps employers and site supervisors on best practices on positive youth development and youth engagement.
- Host four Repair Café events.
- Establish a network of school and community staff responsible for supporting Runaway and Homeless young people to facilitate improved attendance, engagement, and academic success of homeless children and youth.
- Establish a Youth Service Network comprised of young people developing leadership skills through community service outreach and youth advocacy.
- Conduct a county wide youth focused needs assessment to support expanded outreach and funding opportunities.