

ROOM EIGHT NEW YORK POLITICS

WESTCHESTER LAWMAKERS SEEK PARTNERSHIP FROM BUSINESS COMMUNITY ON COUNTY TAX REFORMS

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Westchester Lawmakers Seek Partnership from Business Community on County Tax Reforms
Legislator Jenkins sponsors resolution to implement tax saving measures

(White Plains, NY)~ In heeding the call from county residents to reduce the tax burden, Westchester County lawmakers are considering the passage of a resolution to create a business advisory committee to the Board, to assist the Board on developing policy for implementing recommendations for streamlining and consolidating county government. This comes on the heels of Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's recent local government consolidation law (signed into law in June), giving voters the legal authority to eliminate duplication of services. Cuomo's proposal was based on the work of the Lundine Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness, which reviewed ways that the State's over 4,200 local governments can save taxpayer dollars and become more efficient by sharing services and undertaking regional collaboration. This resolution was introduced in September by Legislator Ken Jenkins (D, I, WF – Yonkers), Chairman of the Committee on Government Operations. The Business Advisory Committee ("Committee") will provide recommendations for policy changes that the County Board could enact that will enable savings to taxpayers estimated to save \$1 billion dollars statewide through municipal modernization, shared services and consolidation.

The 2010 County budget will be presented by the County Executive Monday, November 16th. Several municipal budgets have been presented with proposed tax increases that exceed increases in the cost of living. It is essential that these tax saving measures be implemented to provide the necessary relief to all taxpayers. Through the actions of the County Board, the tax levy's proposed have averaged less than the CPI increases over the last 5 years. "We do not need more studies, we need action to control spending, provide tax relief and save money," said Legislator Jenkins. "This Committee will be tap into the vast intellectual intelligence of Westchester's business community to use best practices that will save taxes. " The Committee --as proposed-- will be similar to the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee reporting to Government Operations of the County Board. The Committee as envisioned will include, but is not limited to members from the Westchester County Association and the Business Council of Westchester who can share best practices from the private sector.

"The formation of this Committee is another important cog in the County Board's Charter responsibility to set policy that result in tax fairness and cost containment," said Legislator Jenkins. The Government Operations Committee is deliberating the resolution and plans to have the item before the full County Board before this legislative term ends.