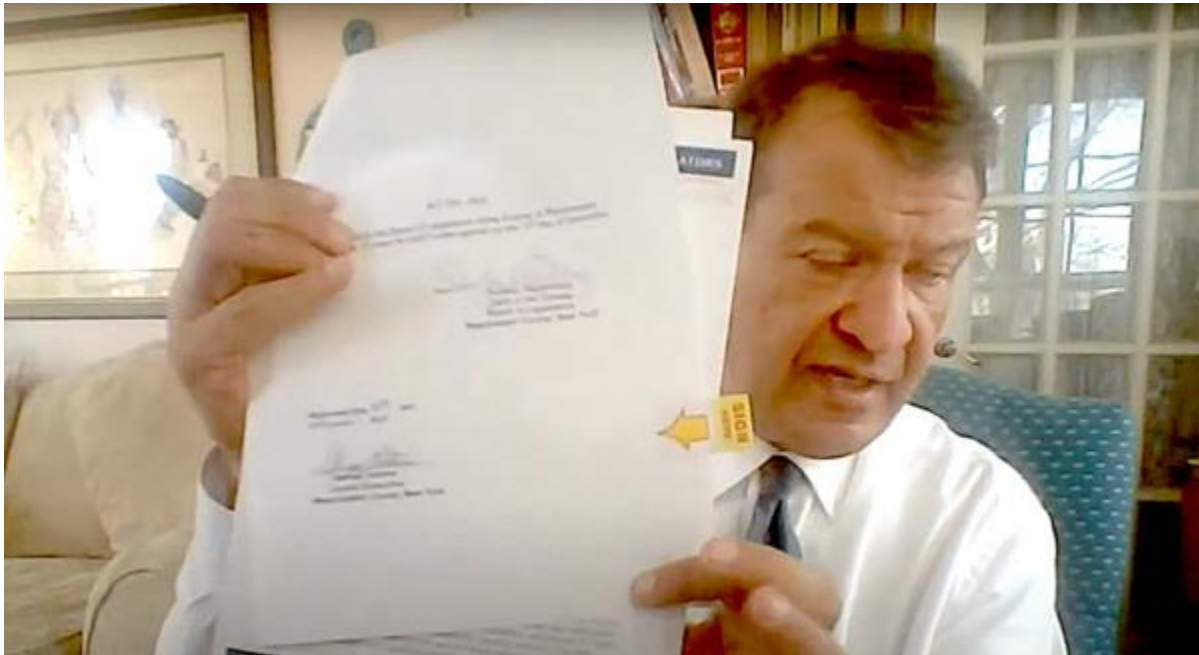


Latimer signs new county budget while at home recovering from Covid

By **Peter Katz**- December 15, 2021

Westchester County Executive George Latimer signed the county's new budget for 2022 at his home where he is recovering from Covid. Latimer spoke about his having contracted Covid, apparently at one of several events he attended last week, and reported that he has a "scratchy" throat and nasal congestion but has been able to conduct county business remotely.



Westchester County Executive George Latimer holds up the new county budget to the camera after signing it at his home, where he remains in quarantine because of Covid.

Speaking via an internet video feed on Dec. 14, Latimer said, "This is an important budget; it represents the third consecutive year we have cut county property taxes. We have been able to cut taxes responsibly again, find new revenue sources, save and provide needed services to county residents."

The budget includes a \$7 million property tax cut, compared with cuts of \$1 million in each of the two previous budgets. The new budget totals \$2.2 billion. The county is closing 2021 with a \$64 million operating surplus.

The new budget includes some specific items to help promote jobs and businesses in the county. It allocates \$25 million for economic development. The tourism and

hospitality sector is set to be supported with \$3 million in expenditures. The category of entrepreneurship is set to receive \$2 million, while workforce training is to be supported to the tune of \$3 million. The category of not-for-profit and religious institution grants and technical assistance has been allocated \$17 million.

In reacting to the new budget being signed, Marsha Gordon, president and CEO of The Business Council of Westchester noted, "His proposed 2022 budget embraces many recommendations suggested in our Economic Recovery Task Force reports we provided him earlier this year."

Gordon characterized the property tax cut as "an essential measure in helping our residents and business owners survive the past two years of crisis."

Michael Romita, president and CEO of the Westchester County Association, said, "This is a strong and responsible budget. It lowers our tax burden, creates opportunity for businesses and residents, and reflects the WCA's priorities in areas such as health care, workforce development, digital connectivity, and affordable housing."