

INSIDE INSIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE SULLIVAN COUNTY MANAGER



LET US DO THE DRIVING...

BY JOSHUA POTOSEK, COUNTY MANAGER

This is a momentous year for Move Sullivan, our public bus system that debuted in 2019.

For one, we've gone back to FREE rides for everyone. For another, we're just about ready to launch TWO new routes. With Monticello (specifically the Government Center) as the hub, Move Sullivan will expand beyond our existing loops in Monticello, Fallsburg, Liberty, Woodridge and Rock Hill to include a loop serving Swan Lake and White Lake, and another serving Wurtsboro and Bloomingburg.

In short, on any given weekday (except holidays), you'll be able to hitch a ride from any of our largest population centers to healthcare offices, parks, stores, downtowns and developments. I truly believe this service has already been a game-changer for our residents, especially those who work hard but can't afford their own cars.

But this service is open to everyone, and I encourage you to give it a try. Details (including times, maps and paratransit info) are available by calling 845-434-4102 or visiting www.move.sullivan.com.

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GET YOUR FOIL ON

FOIL - it stands for Freedom Of Information Law. It's a State law, and it means you have a right to access information that we may or may not routinely make public - with a few important exceptions.

You can't get personal information that would identify someone in a way that violates their right to privacy. You're also not generally able to view interoffice correspondence, confidential litigation documents or info pertaining to children.

But that leaves a lot open to public inspection. So how do you make a FOIL request? Email your request to FOIL@sullivanny.us or pick up a form at the County Manager's Office, the Board of Elections or the Sheriff's Office.

Keep in mind these top five tips:

1. DO be specific. The more we know about what you want, the faster we can get it to you.
2. DON'T send the same request more than one time. Once we've responded, you can rest assured we're working on giving you an answer.
3. DO know what you want. If it's related to the Sheriff's Office or the County Jail, contact them at 845-807-0757. Any other matter goes through the County Manager's Office at 845-807-0450 or FOIL@sullivanny.us.
4. DO expect a charge for paper copies - 25 cents a page is the current rate.
5. DON'T be impatient. Our FOIL officer has five days to make her initial response, which can be extended for as long as needed to gather the requested documentation. She will work on your request as quickly as possible, but she has other duties as well.

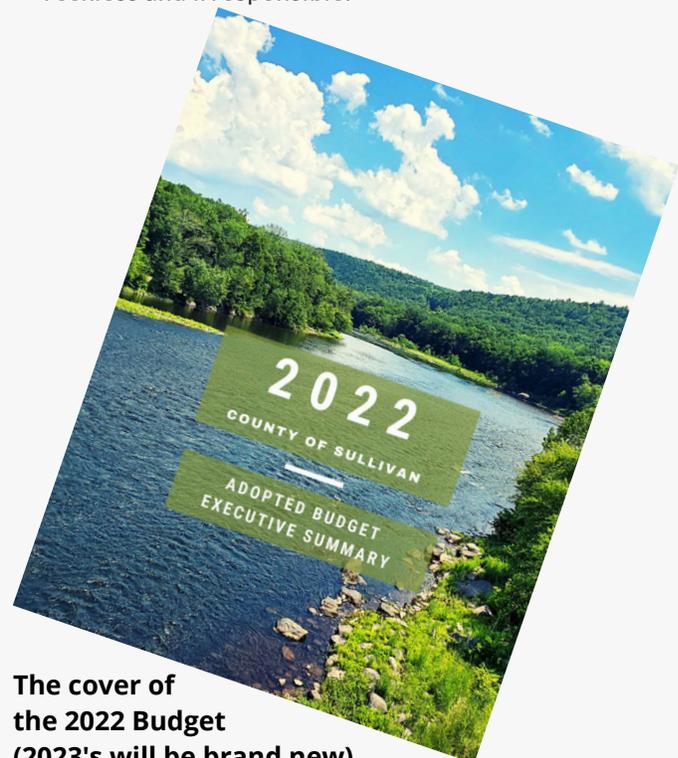
Our FOIL officer is Rosemarie Savaglio, while the Sheriff's Office's FOIL officer is Nadine Bury. Both stand ready to assist you in accessing documents of usefulness. (Just please remember that's not all they do!)

THE PLAN FOR 2023

You hate paying taxes. I'm with you. If there were a way we could fund government without dipping into anyone's wallet, I'd sign up!

But that's not reality and likely never will be. So Sullivan County's Budget Office, along with my office, makes it a point to scrutinize every request we get from every office for funding in the next budget. In this case, that's 2023, and Budget Director Janet Young is already working through those requests, which will be followed by face-to-face meetings with departmental leaders throughout the month of September.

I'll file a tentative 2023 budget with the Legislature by November, one that will keep in mind we have a 2% State-mandated property tax cap (2.84% when you include our growth factor, which has doubled from last year). Being a local taxpayer myself, I will pay close attention to the ultimate impact on all of our wallets. We've enjoyed incredible growth in our economy, job market and population since the COVID pandemic, but I never operate as if that will be sustained. There will inevitably be a downturn, and our financial planning will include that possibility. To do otherwise would be reckless and irresponsible.



The cover of the 2022 Budget (2023's will be brand new)

A DESTINATION IS RETURNING TO CALLICOON

What longtime locals may remember as the Upper Delaware Campgrounds in Callicoon is poised to become Sullivan County's next great park. We're in the process of asking the State for \$500,000 (of which we'd need to match up to \$125,000) to resurrect the campground and add walking trails, an event space, areas for nature observation, children's adventure play features, a dog park, and access to the Delaware River, including a Dept. of Environmental Conservation boat launch. This will all be within walking distance of downtown Callicoon, which will benefit another way, as well. Six acres of this 48-acre site have been set aside for the Town of Delaware to build a wastewater treatment plant that will be out of reach of the floodwaters that have devastated the current facility over the years. We got to this point thanks to the patient and dedicated efforts of our Planning and Grants teams, plus that of the Trust for Public Land, the Town of Delaware, the Upper Delaware Council and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. With crucial funding from the Trust for Public Land, we

collaborated to acquire and master-plan the property. Now we're getting ready to develop it, to put a shine back on this former gem.

In the meantime, visit the existing County parks! Each is uniquely fascinating: Stone Arch Bridge in Kenoza Lake, Minisink Battleground in Barryville, Livingston Manor Covered Bridge, and the Delaware & Hudson Canal Linear Park in Wurtsboro and Summitville.



WISELY SPENDING \$\$\$ SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

Like virtually every municipality across the country, we've been fortunate to receive millions of dollars in Federal aid due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The American Rescue Plan Act, known as ARPA, has funneled \$14.6 million to us over the past two years, and the Legislature has allocated that towards projects that otherwise would have cost taxpayers:

- DPW Highway Program: **\$3,750,000**
- Sullivan County Community College Capital Improvements: **\$4,894,279**
- Revenue Loss Replacement: **\$5,826,356**

We are no longer bonding for road and bridge repairs, and we've been able to fund critical building and heating/ventilation needs at SUNY Sullivan, ensuring it remains open for years to come. Our COVID response efforts continue, as well, with funding available for whatever we seek to accomplish as the need arises.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE

It's a little unusual and a whole lot confusing: there are three elections on August 23 in Sullivan County.

- A Special Election - open to ALL voters in the County - will determine whether Democrat Pat Ryan or Republican Marcus Molinaro replace former Congressman (now Lt. Governor) Antonio Delgado as our representative in the 19th Congressional District.
- A Primary Election - open just to Democratic voters in the County - will determine whether Jamie Cheney or Josh Riley will be the Democratic candidate in the November election for the 19th Congressional District (ultimately pitting them against Republican Marcus Molinaro, since Democrat Pat Ryan will run in November for the 18th Congressional District).
- A Primary Election - open just to Republican voters in the County - will determine whether Terry Bernardo or Peter K. Oberacker will be the Republican candidate in the November election for the 51st NYS Senatorial District.



MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY'RE AT

At some point in our lives, we all need a sympathetic ear or a helping hand. Maybe you're feeling depressed, sad or anxious. It doesn't have to be at a suicidal level - those emotions can wreck your day, week or month, causing a downward spiral. Friends and family may be of limited help. Even those who are well-meaning may not know how to assist or understand the issues you're dealing with.

So where to turn? An easy-to-remember phone number: 988 (or its web equivalent, www.988lifeline.org).

You'll be swiftly connected to someone who is thoroughly trained to listen, understand and assist in whatever way possible. That may be mental health counseling, or food and shelter, or peer support, or something else.

One thing is certain: you will NEVER be told, "Sorry, there's nothing we can do for you."

There are answers. There are people who care. There are places to go.

All you need to do is ask...