



State of the County Warren County, New York

Kevin Geraghty, Chairman

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STATE OF WARREN COUNTY NEW YORK



Warren County has demonstrated fiscal responsibility and strategic investment in essential services and infrastructure over the past two years.

Consecutive reductions in property tax rates, alongside increased spending in critical areas, reflects the county's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for its residents while maintaining fiscal stability.

BUDGET YEAR 2024



The Board of Supervisors adopted a \$192.8 million budget for 2024 marking the fourth consecutive year of a countywide property tax rate decrease. The rate was reduced by \$0.29 to \$3.28 per \$1,000 assessed value, resulting in a \$58 reduction for a homeowner with a property assessed at \$200,000.

However, challenges in road and infrastructure projects, county buildings, mental health issues, and law enforcement needs required the county to allocate an additional \$8.0 million at the beginning of 2024 to address these issues.

The resulting General Fund balance was reduced to \$32.3 million which is still at the Comptroller's recommended General Fund level.



KEY ALLOCATIONS IN 2024

- **Public Transportation Funding:** Funding was provided to continue public transportation services through a new contract with CDTA. Warren County contributes .25 percent of mortgage recording tax to fund this effort. 2024 contribution was approximately \$800,000.
- **Infrastructure:** Initially \$4 million was allocated to pave county roads and maintain road conditions. An additional \$3.2 million was allocated to repair storm damage and upgrade culverts. Additional funding from the State and Federal Government supplemented this expense.
- **Education:** Increased funding was provided to SUNY Adirondack to adjust to state directed sponsorship contribution levels (one third of funding provided by local sponsors).
- Additionally, the budget addressed rising costs in state retirement, Medicaid, and personnel funding. The county eliminated 13 full time and six part time positions. Six full time positions were also added, five of which were funded 72% by New York State.

BUDGET YEAR 2025



- The Board unanimously approved a \$207.1 million budget for 2025, representing a 7.4 percent increase from the previous year. However, after accounting for revenues on anticipated fund balance appropriations, the actual budget increase was roughly three percent.
- Even with the spending increase much of which was driven by unfunded New York State mandates, the property tax rate decreased by two cents to \$3.26 per \$1000 of assessed value. This was the fifth straight year of tax rate reductions.
- Of particular note, Warren County assessed property value increased from \$15.1 billion to \$16.2 billion in 2024 which is substantial for a county of our size.

SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF THE 2025 BUDGET



- Infrastructure: \$5.1 million was allocated for road maintenance which is an increase of \$1.1 million.
- Workforce Investment: Recent labor contracts resulted in a \$1.7 million increase in employee wages for 2025, aiming to improve workforce retention. No new positions were created and four full time positions were eliminated.
- Public Works: Additional expenditures were approved for DPW to consolidate waste hauling across the county which will provide significant cost savings to towns within the county.
- It's noteworthy that for the first time Warren County exceeded the New York State property tax cap with a 6.62 percent increase. The decision was driven by escalating costs in state mandated services, retirement, and inflation related expenses

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW



- All indicators show Warren County's economy is on solid footing as we head into 2025.
- Tourism revenue is projected to increase 12 percent in 2025 due to Lake George waterfront developments funded by NY State Downtown Revitalization Initiative(DRI) funds and winter sports investments funded by the Olympic Regional Development Activity (ORDA). Tourism represents a third of the county's economy.
- Property Values were up 8 percent last year but should see a more moderate increase in 2025. The average cost of a home in Warren County is \$325,000.
- The county unemployment rate is projected to decrease by .2 percent to 3.6 percent.
- Expanding high speed internet access, particularly in rural areas, will remain a focus for improving both economic opportunities and education.
- Healthcare will remain as one third of the county's economy.



WARREN COUNTY 2040

- This year Warren County will unveil its Comprehensive Plan – Warren County 2040.
- The plan will provide a critical roadmap for navigating the county’s future.
- With an aging population, workforce shortages, and a moderate housing crisis, strategic planning will be essential to ensure sustainable growth and economic resilience.
- Warren County 2040 is the product of a significant investment of time and energy over the past two years by Supervisors, County Staff, and members of the general public.
- The plan was a comprehensive, collaborative effort that will be released in March.

MAJOR 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- Senior transportation program that was a collaborative effort between Office for the Aging and Office of Veterans Affairs.
- Warren County achieved a clean external audit for the 22nd consecutive year.
- Established a risk management office as part of the County Attorney's Office saving the county over \$50,000 in insurance costs in the first year.
- Implementation of electronic monitoring of juveniles to prevent detention and placement.
- Development of a composting pilot to determine the feasibility of a countywide composting site.

MAJOR 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONT)



- Completed 100% assessment of the 1500 countywide culverts and bridges. This will guide DPW repair and replacement of culverts well into the future.
- Obligated 100% of \$12.4 billion in ARPA funds that were awarded to the county.
- Effectively managed the large influx of visitors during the Eclipse with no incidents.
- County bond rating remains at AA with minimal outstanding debt at \$44.5 million.
- Received \$2 million in grant funding for various projects countywide.

MAJOR 2025 GOALS



- Maximize use of almost \$8 million in Occupancy Tax to prioritize enhancing infrastructure to support tourism, investment in outdoor recreation, and hospitality.
- Continue efforts to retain and attract new businesses, particularly in technology and healthcare related products maximizing tax benefits for start-ups and small businesses.
- Continue investment in roads and public transportation.
- Increase focus on expanding cellphone coverage across the county.
- Work to expand healthcare services in rural areas, focus on improving mental health resources, and begin to address the growing demand for senior care services.
- Work with the City, Towns, and Village to develop a strategy for addressing the critical emergency medical services (EMS) which will begin to see a gradual increase over the coming years.
- Continue to invest in workforce development initiatives for youth through school upgrades, vocational training programs, and partnerships with local businesses.



MAJOR 2025 GOALS (CONTINUED)

- Work with counties in NYSAC Northern Region to resolve Regional Forensics Center challenge.
- Begin discussions on options and alternatives for the Warren County Rail Line.
- Address a rapidly aging fleet of patrol cars for the Sheriff's Department.
- Implement county composting pilot.
- Begin to implement recommendations included in Warren County 2040.
- Remain good stewards of the county taxpayer dollars and maintain transparency with county residents.

CONCLUSION



Thanks for the collaborative and collegial atmosphere in 2024. Our Committees and the Board of Supervisors worked efficiently and effectively to provide the very best service to the residents of this county.

There will be challenges in 2025 but we will continue to focus on the most important projects and priorities that will make this county one of the best places to live in the State and the country.

Most of you know this from your work as Supervisors on our various Committees but we are blessed to have the most professional, competent, and dedicated county workforce and Department leaders that always strive to do the right thing for our constituents.



QUESTIONS ?