

September 22, 2011

Good evening Chairman Marinich, Majority Leader Howard, Minority Leader Whalen, members of the county legislature, department heads, staff, and guests.

I first want to recognize County Attorney Joseph Sluzar and thank him for his nearly seven years of dedicated service to Broome County government.

As you know, I was sworn into office on April 21. That evening, I told you that I would lead by example.

I started by relinquishing my take home vehicle privilege and had both Deputy Executives do the same. Then, I identified six more individual take home vehicles and relinquished those privileges.

In May, the two Deputy Executives and I turned in our county-provided cell phones. Over the summer, we audited cell phone usage, which resulted in significant savings.

The next step in leading by example and tightening our belts is salary reductions. My salary, both Deputy County Executives' salaries and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget's salary will be reduced by 3% in 2012. All Admin II salaries are frozen for the sixth time in eight years. I have also introduced two resolutions to the Legislature that propose increases to the employee share of health insurance to reduce taxpayer burden. I hope the Legislature will take action on those resolutions soon.

I intended to deliver a 2012 budget with a zero percent increase in the property tax. I began the budget process by meeting with the Office of Management and Budget Director Marie Kalka about developing a leaner budget. Throughout the month of May, I personally met with department heads and advised them of my budgetary expectations.

Broome County's department heads submitted to me budgets that collectively contained a slight negative in net county support for 2012. I personally want to thank them for a job well done.

I especially want to thank Marie Kalka and the staff of the Office of Management and Budget for their work on this, my recommended 2012 Budget.

On September 6, we were ready to go to print with a 2012 budget with a slight decrease in property taxes. Then Tropical Storm Lee arrived. As a result of the storm, Broome County experienced infrastructure damage. We have identified numerous projects that must be started and completed in the weeks and months ahead. We must borrow 6.2 million dollars to begin rebuilding.

As a result, the property tax increase in my recommended budget is now 1.57%. This 1.57% in property tax is due to the additional cost of principal and interest in 2012 for a flood related loan, which will most likely be reimbursed at the rate of 87 ½ cents per dollar in future years.

Budget Highlights

My 2012 budget contains

Property tax levy = \$68,985,964.

- This amounts to approximately \$10.40 to the average taxpayer with a home assessed at \$80,000

Total Appropriations = \$360.6 million

This includes:

- A Medicaid increase \$700,000
- Retirement costs went up \$1.7M
- All contract agencies are reduced by 3%

Total Revenue = \$288.1M

Projected revenue includes:

- Sales tax revenue of \$77.8M. Sales tax continues to improve. YTD growth is at 12%
- The District Attorney has a new revenue stream of \$200K for traffic diversion fees
- An increase of \$250K from sale of tax acquired property
- Charge back to municipalities of the true cost for elections which is an increase of \$192K

Staff reductions include:

- Total staff FTE savings of \$3.1M = 112 positions eliminated or unfunded
- 72 employees took advantage of the retirement incentive
- There is a potential for 5 layoffs

Tropical Storm Lee caused terrible long-term devastation to our community. All 16 Towns, 7 Villages, and the City of Binghamton are affected. Some businesses and residents may never fully recover their losses.

Fortunately, we had no loss of human life. That was thanks to the extraordinary efforts of many including our Office of Emergency Services headed by Brett Chellis under my direction. All of the following were on the ground helping people regain their lives: the National Guard, the State Office of Emergency Management, and hundreds of first responders, and also our own employees from Willow Point Nursing Home, Transit, Solid Waste, Aviation, Office for Aging, IT, Planning, Central Foods, Youth Bureau, the Law Department, Parks, Security, Mental Health, CASA, Public Works, DSS, Health Department, OMB, my own staff, and the Office of the Sheriff.

I would also like to give a special acknowledgement to the New York City Fire Department's Incident Management Team for their assistance with the evacuations and rescues and the first steps on the road to recovery.

Many, many people in this community are struggling to recover from the devastating floods. This recovery has been my focus since the rivers crested on September 9. We still have evacuees in shelters and Broome County is working every day to care for these folks until they can return home. Those that have returned to their homes will need our support, assistance, and leadership in the months to come. Many businesses vital to the economic stability of our community have suffered tremendous losses. The County must take an active role in their recovery and rebuilding. Recovery will remain my focus until this crisis is over.

I am confident that our 2012 budget will responsibly and efficiently address the foreseeable needs of our community for the coming year.

I look forward to working with the Legislature in finalizing this budget that maintains the services to our constituents without overburdening our property taxpayers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick J. Brennan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patrick J. Brennan,
County Executive