

# WEST HARRISON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

## MINUTES OF MEETING: February 11, 2009, Mintzer Recreation Center

Board members present: Jeff LaGrotte, Gregg Rosenberg, Charlie Russo, Lori Wilson, Jo Ann King, Angela Amodeo, Mario Gallo. Absent: Gerri Barbagallo.

**President Lori Wilson** called to order and welcomed all. Also welcomed **Westchester County Legislator John Nonna**.

The **minutes of the January 21<sup>st</sup>** meeting were approved.

**Treasury Report: Jeff LaGrotte** - Balance \$20,233.00. Budget is being reviewed to allocate properly

**President Report: - Lori Wilson** - The Main St. Project is starting this week with off-road work for now, then in 2 weeks the road will be closed.

There has been recent vandalism at the library – report anything you see.

People think that the Lake St. at the site of the construction has been narrowed but the town said that the width of the street is unchanged..

### **Committee Reports:**

**Membership** - Dues must be paid for 2009 to participate in our the member of the month drawing from tonight on.

125 members have paid so far.

**Building Community & Fundraising – Mario Gallo** – Starry Night is the theme of our dinner dance and silent auction will be held Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>. The cost is \$60 for members and \$65 for non-members.

**Seniors – (Lori)** – The committee is meeting Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> with Ron Belmont, Rocco, Joe Cannella. There are many people working on the annex building. Mayor Walsh gave a guided tour. Walls and roof are in.

**Member of the Month** – was chosen. **Donna D’Alessandro** received a box of candy and lottery tickets purchased at The Jottery.

**Our next meeting** will be here at the fire house on Wednesday, March 18.

**Guest Presentation: Westchester County Legislator John Nonna** – He gave a history of Westchester County. Established in 1683. The legislature was at first known and worked as the Board of Supervisors. The position of County Executive was first approved in 1937. The Board of Supervisors was replaced in 1970 with the Board of Legislators. The base salary of a legislator is \$49,200.00 and is a part time job of about 15 to 30 hrs a week, and they receive stipends for chairing committees. There are 17 legislators representing 50,000 people each. Their role is to pass a budget, borrow money, enact laws, allocate money, create and abolish departments, fix number of hires. The County Executive is to supervise, direct and control the counties progress and services., prepare the budget, enforce laws the laws enacted by the legislature. It is a full time job.

The County budget is 1.7 billion dollars. 32% is received from property taxes, 28% from sales taxes. The rest comes from federal and state aid, fees and fines, and mortgage tax. 1/3 of sales tax revenue goes back to towns, villages, and school districts. 17% to 20% of a county residents property dollars goes to the county. Harrison gets \$3,300,000 in sales tax and \$1,200,000 in sales taxes. ½ of sales tax revenue goes to the state. Of the 1.7 billion dollar budget, 1.35 billion is mandated by NYS and the Federal government.

Social Services and Medicaid is about 1/3 of that. NY is only one of two states that forces a portion of Medicaid to the state which shifts it down to the county. The health department is also a large chunk of mandated programs for children with special needs and preschool. Other funds t go to other health department programs, Corrections Dept., Dept. of the District Attorney, Consumer Protection, County Clerk and Westchester Community College. The state could take over all the jails in the counties. They are eliminating their contributions to state prisoners being held temporarily in county jails.

Non-mandated money amounts to \$414 million. The biggest piece being the B-Line Bus System which is subsidized to \$40 million. \$91 million goes to employee health insurance, (County employees pay nothing toward their health insurance). \$20 million to Public works, \$55 million to Parks & Recreation, \$9 million to Emergency Services, \$1.1 million to the Westchester Library System, \$69 million to debt service, \$15 million to forensic and other labs and research, \$37 million to Public Safety, \$2 million in various children's programs. \$234 million to Environmental Facilities Dept. for waste water treatment plants- 194 miles of sewers and 4000 manholes, 42 pump stations., water districts, the Materials Recovery Facility in Yonkers.

Concerning the town/government relationship, County government is making sense. It respects home rule concerning land use, zoning, police, etc.. They can work together to resolve problems like water quality, sewer, affordable housing, etc. The need for regional government- County - is strong on certain issues, like social services, public health, environmental facilities; emergency services- that include mutual fire fighting aid, hazmat equipment and staff; Public Safety that includes crime analysis, aviation units, counter terrorism, bomb squad, environmental crimes, police/fire training facilities, forensics, ballistics,DEA,task force; Transportation – Bee Line Bus System and the Westchester County Airport. Towns cannot provide these services on their own.

County is patrolling state roads for no reimbursement. Our state senators are trying to restore this money.

Alternatives to county government: Give everything back to the state – they are cutting millions of funding – they should take back the jails. If they took over the airport, they would expand it – we are controlling that now. Towns and villages would have to take on much more. Connecticut – they are a much smaller state and don't make municipalities pay for Medicaid.

Improvements could be made to county government instead of getting rid of it: There are 96 separate taxing districts. The future of local governments needs to be studied. More shared services. Consolidation of school districts.

Role of citizens. Only you can change the way government works. If you don't like it, you have to make your voice heard.

Respectfully submitted,  
Angela Amodeo, Secretary