



Nassau County Village Officials Association

Representing the 64 villages in Nassau County, New York
with a combined population of 450,000 residents

Government Closest to the People

February 2019 Newsletter

**FEBRUARY 2019
GENERAL
MEMBERSHIP
MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 12, 2019
6:30PM
WESTBURY MANOR**

**Bringing Resources
to Main Street**

**Presented by:
Eric Alexander,
Vision LI
John Keating, PSEG
&
Lyle Sclair, National
Grid**

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:

Dear Colleagues:

Have you ever heard the phrase "Leave well enough alone?" It means you should avoid trying to correct or improve something that is already adequate.

After years of an unrelenting assault on aid for local governments, Governor Andrew should have left well alone. Instead, he chose to try and bury local governments once and for all by eliminating AIM funding for most local governments in his proposed 2019-20 budget. This draconian move cuts \$60 million in funding across New York State. On Long Island, towns and villages will lose \$19 million. Every Nassau County village, with the exception of five, will lose aid.

As expected, the governor's opening salvo drew widespread criticism from mayors and town supervisors across Long Island, from both side of the aisle. Governor Cuomo has been relentless in his effort to eliminate village government. And it's a battle the NCVOA has been involved with since Mario Cuomo was governor.

In late 1993, the NCVOA embarked on a mission to fight for fiscal equity for its villages and their residents. Under the direction of NCVOA President Harry Taubenfeld, the NCVOA called on then-governor Mario Cuomo to restore the revenue sharing to local municipalities that had been drastically reduced under his administration.

In the past twenty-six years, Nassau County's 64 incorporated villages have seen state aid plummet to near nothing. During the same period, escalating unfunded state



*President Ralph Ekstrand
Mayor of the Village of Farmingdale*

mandates have unfairly shifted costs for state initiative to local governments and their residents. Now Governor Andrew Cuomo has continued his father's anti-local government legacy by proposing drastic reductions in AIM funding.

This makes no sense, particularly since villages are the state's most efficient form of government. For the past several decades, Nassau County's 64 incorporated villages have been working together to share services and increase efficiencies.

Our pleas for rectifying this longstanding inequity have fallen on deaf ears. The state refuses to acknowledge the vital role of local governments, despite independent studies qualifying the value.

A December 2014 report presented by Cornell University's Department of City and Regional Planning, the Community and Regional Development Institute, and the Fiscal Policy Institute entitled ***State Austerity Policy & Creative Local Response***, stated:

"Currently, most government functions in New York State are handled by municipalities and school districts rather than the state. Local governments (except NYC) can only raise property taxes and fees, and have been keeping their expenditures steady over the past 10 years when adjusted for inflation.

"State aid for counties and towns has dropped dramatically over the past 10 years, while aid to villages is flat. School districts have also seen drops in state aid.

"To control property taxes, the state promised three policy changes. However, a lack of mandate relief meant localities had to make ends meet with cuts and higher taxes, hurting economic prospects."

Long Island and the downstate region are particularly impacted by revenue sharing inequity as we receive a disproportionate amount. According to the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government at SUNY Albany, "New York City and the downstate suburbs give far more to Albany in revenues that they get in state-funded expenditures." Downstate communities account for 27 % of the state's total tax dollars, yet only 17 % is returned in state aid. For every dollar we generate in taxes, only 72 cents of state aid is returned.

It is time once and for all for the state to correct the imbalance by committing to sustained and equitable revenue sharing. Restoring AIM funding is the first step in addressing this inequity. I urge you to capitalize on the widespread media coverage of Governor Cuomo's proposed AIM reduction by contacting your state representatives and securing their support.

Sincerely,



Mayor Ralph Ekstrand

NEW NEWSLETTER:

We hope you like the new look of our newsletter and the **DID YOU KNOW?** feature (below) which will appear with a new entry each month and also be displayed and collected on our website.

NEW WEBSITE:

It's a New Year and we very soon will have a New Website. Our new website will have new features, new functionality, a cleaner look and be mobile device friendly. It will display a photo of your village hall or a village scene of your choosing on your village information page and, rotating with others, on our home page. It will be easier for you to update your village information page. Just give us the information in a fill in the blanks form, and we will update your page for you.

DID YOU KNOW?

Your Village May be Entitled to Additional Revenue.

Does your village collect utility gross receipts taxes from utilities and franchise fees? If so, you may be owed thousands of dollars. The NCVOA has entered into a referral agreement with Municipal Audit Services, LLC (Muni) permitting villages to avail themselves of Muni's services. Muni is a consulting company specializing in tax compliance and recovery of tax revenues from telecommunication service providers and utility companies in the form of gross receipts taxes and franchise fees paid by cable companies to municipalities in New York State.

To date, Muni has provided audit services to over 40 of our member villages and has recouped over \$1,500,000. Each of Muni's clients has experienced at least one recovery with most having received two or more. Muni's fee is 100% contingent on success. They are paid only if they uncover errors or omissions which results in a recovery or increased revenue. There are no other fees or expenses. In addition to the benefits received by a village, the NCVOA receives a 5% referral fee from Muni.

December 2018 Meeting Attendees



Guest Speaker Tom Donoto of Michael Haberman Associates (a Friend of the NCVOA) explained village assessment options and the impact of Nassau County assessments and answered questions



Farmingdale Mayor and NCVOA President Ralph Ekstrand with Trustee Cheryl Parisi.



East Williston Mayor and NCVOA Past President David Tanner with Westbury Mayor and NCVOA Past President Peter Cavallaro..



Flushing Bank Executive Vice President Pat Mezeul, Friends of the NCVOA, with North Hills Village Clerk Marianne Lobaccaro and Mineola Village Clerk Joe Scalero.



Freeport Mayor and NCVOA Immediate Past President Bob Kennedy with Old Westbury Trustee Leslie Fastenberg.



Munistat AVP Tom Cartwright, Friends of the NCVOA, with Oyster Bay Cove Deputy Mayor Richard MacDougall.



NCVOA Counsel Gary Fishberg and Saddle Rock Mayor Dr. Dan Levy.



NCVOA Executive Director Emeritus Warren Tackenberg and LI Business Council Chair Rich Bivone.



Baxter Estates Village Clerk Chrissy Kiesnen and Mayor Nora Haagenson.



NCVOA Executive Director Emeritus Warren Tackenberg, Sea Cliff Mayor and NCVOA 2nd Vice President Ed Lieberman, and South Floral Park Mayor Geoffrey Prime.



North Hills Mayor and NCVOA Past President Marvin Natiss with Trustee Phyllis Lentini and Deputy Mayor Dennis Sgambati.



Old Brookville Mayor and NCVOA Past President Bernie Ryba with NCVOA Executive Director Ralph Kreitzman.



Plandome Heights Trustee Al Solomon with Mayor Ken Riscica.



Sea Cliff Mayor and NCVOA 2nd Vice President Ed Lieberman and Hempstead Mayor Don Ryan.



The Last Word:

"Permanence, perseverance and persistence in spite of all obstacles, discouragements, and impossibilities: It is this, that in all things distinguishes the strong soul from the weak."

Thomas Carlyle

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