



News from the Office of **ADAM J. BELLO** **MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

For Immediate Release
December 14, 2020

County Executive Adam Bello's First Budget Passes with Historic and Unanimous Support

ROCHESTER, NY – Monroe County Executive Adam Bello announced the passage of the 2021 Monroe County budget with unanimous approval from the County Legislature, making it the first County spending plan to pass by a 29-0 vote in nearly 20 years. The historic support for the County budget highlights County Executive Bello's priorities as he guides Monroe County through the COVID-19 pandemic. This was the first County spending plan prepared under the leadership of County Executive Bello.

"The 2021 County budget protects our community's public health and positions Monroe County for an uncertain year as we continue to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, positions our community for economic recovery and invests in programs and services that will help all families in Monroe County," said Bello. "When I ran for County Executive last year, I made a promise to put the people of our community first. While the uncertainty of 2020 has presented difficult challenges as we look ahead to 2021, I am incredibly proud of the work of my administration to focus on the needs of our community throughout this challenging year, maintaining our commitment to serving our residents first and foremost."

Overall, the 2021 budget reduces the tax rate by \$0.26 to \$8.53 per \$1,000 assessed value, the largest decrease in the County tax rate in almost 20 years. The \$1.237 billion spending plan includes an increase of just \$4.7 million or 0.38% over the adopted 2020 budget, well below the rate of inflation. County Executive Bello's fiscal responsibility reflects the economic hardship felt throughout the community as a result of the economic shutdown from COVID-19. With continued economic uncertainty and state aid reductions looming, the 2021 spending plan appropriates \$11.6M of previously assigned fund balance within its General Fund to partially offset the loss of sales tax revenue and the 20% withholding of state aid.

The 2021 County budget changes several budgetary tactics used by previous administrations. No longer included is the "Snow Tax," a below-the-line fee that removed the cost for snow and ice removal on county roads from the general levy. Instead, it has been returned to the tax levy where it belongs. This change eliminates \$5 million in extra charges and will reduce the overall "County Services to Localities" charge by an average of 12 percent on the 2021 tax bill.

Additionally, County Executive Bello has committed to phasing out the sale of delinquent tax liens, which were once used to bolster revenue during difficult budget years. This tactic worsened



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problems with crumbling, vacant “zombie” homes in communities and neighborhoods throughout Monroe County, and stymied homeowners struggling to pay their bills to catch up and stay in their homes. The sale of delinquent tax liens is on track to be completely eliminated by 2022.

Developed in the midst of a global pandemic, economic uncertainty and political differences, the 2021 spending plan maintains County Executive Bello’s commitment to the public health and wellbeing of Monroe County, while also responding to recommendations of the Monroe County Transition Report.

Early Intervention:

The enacted 2021 budget expands the Early Intervention services program staff to provide more support for children with special needs, improves transportation services for pre-school special education students and fully funds all child protective service staff positions.

Childcare Funding:

Childcare funding in the 2021 budget reflects the growing demand for affordable and reliable childcare for families throughout Monroe County. It adds \$180,000 to the County child care commitment, bringing the total financial support to just over \$1 million more than the state-mandated requirement. At the same time, Monroe County is slashing the parent fee for child care by 60 percent to 10 percent. That is the lowest amount allowed under state regulations.

Economic and Workforce Development:

With high unemployment, the County is making critical investments in workforce development programs to directly link job training with job opportunities. The 2021 spending plan merges the County divisions of Economic Development and Workforce Development so they can work as one to make connections between employers and employees. It also retools and strengthens the County’s workforce development training program with MCC under the rebranded MPower program. MPower aims at bringing workers displaced by the economic downturn into sustainable, rewarding career paths in essential industries.

Addressing Addiction Epidemic:

The enacted 2021 County budget makes a significant investment in the County’s efforts to combat the opioid crisis and expand addiction services throughout Monroe County. In addition to the recently hired Addiction Services Director, Monroe County’s first ever addiction services team - the Improving Addiction and Coordination Team (IMPACT) – is fully funded in this year’s



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proposed spending plan. The eight-member IMPACT team will operate out of the Monroe County Department of Public Health, and will coordinate services and care for this multi-faceted program.

A PDF copy of the proposed 2021 Monroe County budget can be found at www.monroecounty.gov/budget.

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