



*News From*

# Cheryl Dinolfo

## *Monroe County Executive*

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### **DINOLFO'S FIRST BUDGET HONORS PROMISE OF FLAT TAXES AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

*2017 Budget Closes \$24.7 Million Mandate-Fueled Deficit; Saves \$3.4 Million through LDC Dissolution; Maintains Quality of Life Services; Cuts Structural Deficit*

Monroe County Executive **Cheryl Dinolfo** tonight presented her first County Budget to the County Legislature, which stands as a testament to fiscal discipline throughout County government. In this budget, **Dinolfo** honors her promise to deliver flat property taxes, establish Truth in Budgeting and maintain a fiscally responsible County government, without sacrificing vital quality of life services. The proposed 2017 Budget holds the property tax rate flat at the rate set in 2008, establishes annual savings through the dissolution of Local Development Corporations (LDCs) and reduces the County's structural deficit.

*"One year ago, I made a promise to the residents of Monroe County – to work tirelessly for our families and to increase transparency, control spending and not increase the property tax rate,"* said **Dinolfo**. *"I'm proud to announce that, in my first year, we have succeeded in meeting each of those goals by establishing oversight and accountability in the 2017 County Budget."*

#### **A Promise of Property Tax Rate Stability**

The 2017 Budget preserves the property tax cut delivered in 2008, holding the rate flat at \$8.99 per \$1,000 of full value.

*"I made a promise to ensure that every family, child and resident in Monroe County has the opportunity to succeed,"* said **Dinolfo**. *"Whether through County services or job development, I promised to work for each and every resident and put families first – which also means keeping the tax rate flat. I made a promise to never raise taxes as County Executive and I'm proud to honor that commitment."*

#### **Practices Fiscal Discipline**

Mandated expenses comprise a staggering 85% of the 2017 Budget. However, through **Dinolfo's** top-to-bottom review of all County departments, the County has increased efficiencies and renewed its commitment to effectively manage its limited resources. This 2017 Budget streamlines operations, saves taxpayer dollars and makes County government more efficient, sustainable and accountable.

*"For every single dollar Monroe County spends, \$0.85 has already been spent by Albany and Washington,"* said **Dinolfo**. *"We need meaningful mandate reform at the State and Federal level because local property taxpayers are paying the price of mandates year after year without relief in sight."*

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In order to close a \$24.7 million budget gap, **Dinolfo** utilized a combination of operational savings and increased non-tax revenues including: operating savings of approximately \$3.4 million from LDC dissolution; lower growth of health insurance cost of \$1.8 million; growth in real estate valuations for a total of \$9 million; continued responsible sale of property tax liens for a total of approximately \$9.5 million; and growth in sales tax revenue of about \$1 million.

The 2017 Budget also successfully reduces the County's long-term, structural deficit. **Dinolfo** raised the bar in her first budget to face the challenges of an under-performing state pension fund and the pressure of unfunded mandates. As a result of her commitment to growing the local economy, the 2017 Budget reduces the two-year forecasted structural deficit by \$3.1 million.

### **Dissolution of Local Development Corporations**

**Dinolfo's** decision to dismantle three Local Development Corporations had a major, positive impact on the 2017 Budget. By eliminating contractual payment obligations and replacing them with lower debt service and well-planned operating expenditures, overall costs were reduced by \$3.4 million this year. This decision also created the opportunity to better plan capital project financing by strategically using a "pay-as-you-go" approach.

*"Upon taking office, one of my first priorities was the dissolution of Local Development Corporations in Monroe County," said **Dinolfo**. "We are stronger together and thanks to cooperation at the Local, State and Federal levels, three LDCs have been dissolved and their functions have been returned to County oversight with a significant cost savings of \$3.4 million in this year alone. Moving forward, we will be putting money aside each year in order to 'pay-as-you-go' for future upgrades and technology expenditures, which will reduce our need to borrow money and improve the overall outlook of our budget."*

### **Truth in Budgeting Initiative**

The 2017 Budget establishes accountability through several formatting changes. These changes build upon **Dinolfo's** commitment to establish Truth in Budgeting and increase overall transparency within the budget itself. The grant budget is now included as a part of the operating budget to more accurately reflect the County's current budgetary practices. Additionally, several positions have been reclassified and transferred to the appropriate department in order to reflect an accurate depiction of the County workforce. It is important to note that while moving positions this budget includes no new positions. For the first time in fourteen years, the County will experience no layoffs. Cost savings will still be derived through a reduction in 2.5 full time equivalent vacant positions.

*"Chief among my priorities in this first County Budget is to establish the practice of Truth in Budgeting," said **Dinolfo**. "Truth in Budgeting improves the budget by more clearly representing the actual spending practices of Monroe County. The 2017 Budget provides taxpayers with the ability to better understand where each and every dollar is spent."*

### **Complies with Taxpayer Protection Act and New York State Tax Cap**

Although the percentage of its budget the County controls on a local level continues to be just 15%, the 2017 Budget holds non-mandated spending below the rate of inflation which puts the 2017 Budget in full compliance with the Taxpayer Protection Act.

The Act, passed by the County Legislature in 2007, continues to serve as a first-of-its-kind local property tax cap by requiring annual increases in discretionary spending to be no greater than the rate of inflation. Holding growth to less than 0.9%, the Budget is also in compliance with the New York State Property Tax Cap and will ensure that local taxpayers are eligible for a 2017 property tax rebate under the New York State Property Tax Freeze Credit Program.

*“I’m proud that the 2017 Budget is in full compliance with the Taxpayer Protection Act and the New York State Property Tax Cap,”* said **Dinolfo**. *“By adopting fiscally disciplined strategies, we are able to deliver a budget that is fully balanced and responsible, making County government more efficient, sustainable and accountable.”*

**No Reductions to Vital Quality-of-Life Services**

Under **Dinolfo’s** leadership, the 2017 Monroe County Budget responsibly funds the services that are vital to maintaining our community’s high quality of life, including in the areas of parks, public safety and transportation infrastructure.

The 2017 Budget provides a stable property tax rate, controls spending growth to less than the rate of inflation and reduces the County’s mandate-driven forecasted structural deficit by \$3.1 million, all while responsibly funding the important services local residents expect and deserve.

*“The 2017 Monroe County Budget holds the property tax rate at the same level it has been since 2008, keeps spending under the rate of inflation, takes advantage of LDC dissolution savings and manages to reduce our year-to-year structural deficit all while making no cuts to any quality of life services,”* said **Dinolfo**. *“Our future is bright and I hope the families of Monroe County feel confident in their County government moving forward because I am certain that we are able to face the future with confidence and strength.”*

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