

Citizen Budget BLOG

PLEASE NOTE: The **Citizen Budget BLOG** is comprised of the actual cost cutting ideas submitted by Monroe County residents and taxpayers to the Citizen Budget Initiative e-mail address at citizenbudgetinitiative@monroecounty.gov. The e-mail submissions are posted without attribution or reference to a sender's e-mail address, to protect the sender's identity. Submissions are only edited due to length or to remove certain identifying information. Edited submissions are accompanied by a disclosure statement.

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DATE: 2/01/2006

SUBJECT: County Budget Idea

I do not believe there is any short-term solution to the county's budget woes. I think the budget problems are systemic in nature, rooted in the very fabric of New York's welfare/public entitlement/public financing system. Politicians and policy makers need to start saying NO to many of the benefactors of our current system (welfare recipients, corporations, bureaucrats, special interest agencies, labor unions, PAC's, etc.). Government needs to seriously consider the impact on the taxpayer when it reviews every spending initiative. Costs in New York are out of control and the system is unsustainable. New York needs real tax cuts (read: not reclassifying today's tax as tomorrow's fee) and measurable year-on-year spending decreases (not just smaller increases). I do believe with a deliberate effort on the part of all levels of government (town, county and especially state) that the cost basis of many line items can be reduced. If what I have read is true, the biggest impact on the county budget would be to lower the cost of social services. Perhaps some gains could be made by more aggressively enforcing eligibility rules, raising eligibility requirements, and moving to a tiered reimbursement schedule (only the most deserving with the highest need get the biggest benefits). I would also encourage our local delegation to aggressively lobby Albany to retract many of the unfunded state mandates pushed onto the county or at least reimburse the county for those expenses. Thank you for your attention.

DATE: 2/01/2006

SUBJECT: Idea To Help Monroe County Save Money

To make a long story short I will say this: I had a brief time period where I worked as a home health aid. This experience gave me an inside look at how much waste is going on with Medicaid. Now I do not begrudge these people the services. I am disgusted though with closets full of depends (which our tax dollars pay for) that will never be used. This is just one example of the wastefulness going on. Another...the company that employed me would have me bill an hr for just 10 minutes worth of work. I do not know how much my company at the time billed Medicaid but I do know its another big hole of where the money is disappearing.

DATE: 2/01/2006
SUBJECT: Source of Income

Please correct me if I am wrong. The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) only sends a portion of the fees for vehicle registration renewal in the county if the paperwork is processed through the local DMV offices. If the payments are mailed to another city we get none of the registration fees. Set up a few news stories and a blurb in the local papers to mail your registration renewal to the local DMV office. Depending on the fee the DMV sends us it could be a substantial amount of money for the county. I seem to remember this being mentioned on Bob Lonsberry's show a few years ago.

DATE: 2/01/2006
SUBJECT: Budget

As a former rental property owner I previously made this recommendation to the Dept. of Social Services and now I believe it is more applicable than every. Assuming my information is correct I believe that most "welfare" residents have their utility bills on voucher? My suggestion is to require landlords to install a lock box or limiter on every thermostat in any property occupied by social service recipients. I know for a fact that this would save the county and NY State big money as well as conserve energy. I've witnessed first hand the waste these residents create. Practically every time I entered a property I found the heat set at 85 to 90 degrees 24 hours a day. At the same time the property had windows opened in the dead of winter with the heat cranking! Many times the tenants would not be home but all the lights and televisions were turned on as well. My anger over this situation is indescribable since I have to turn my heat down and use c.f. bulbs to conserve, while my tax dollars pay for so much waste. I'm sure your county employees would agree that if they have to keep the thermostat down at work so should the people living on public assistance.

DATE: 2/01/2006
SUBJECT: Budget

I would suggest, for the long term, that you carefully consider whether or not to replace employees who leave. I once was hired for a clerical job in the DOT. A new position had been created for the person I replaced. I could have done both jobs. Over a period of about six weeks, I not only learned the job, but had caught up with six month's backlog of filing. After that, the work dried up. I had about three or four hours of actual work to do each day. I had to force myself to work slowly so I could make it last as long as possible. I was so bored that I quit to return to my old job, which paid about half of what I was making working for the county.

DATE: 2/01/2006

SUBJECT: Idea

As anyone in our county (or country for that matter...) can attest, almost every intersection is becoming dangerous as busy people push the envelope, and run red lights. My new motto is, wait till it's green, look both ways (twice), yield to the red-light runner, THEN go. While I'm not big on losing personal freedoms, the time has come for government to make our intersections safer. The solution may lie in Cameras at major intersections. While the cameras are very expensive, the quick research that I have done reveals that they can pay for themselves within one year. The result may be: 1) Safer roads for Monroe County residents, and 2) Money which could be used to offset other county costs. Those who wish to speed, run red lights, and put law-abiding drivers at risk, could now be held accountable in a way that is impossible with current sheriff patrols, and perhaps in the long-run, these same lawbreakers would help our county's fiscal health. Thanks for giving us a place to add "our two cents".

DATE: 2/01/2006

SUBJECT: Just Another Letter In The Stack

The welfare program was an excellent idea. Trying to prevent Americans from going hungry and making sure they have proper health care, how can it not be a good idea, that's what the US is all about...or should be. I can't imagine people wanting to get rid of it. I'm proud to admit that the system has helped my family once or twice.. but we're not ones to take advantage. Without it, my family would have gone hungry and I wouldn't have had prenatal care for my boys. Of course everybody knows that there is just too many people taking advantage of the system...but who's holding them responsible? I think its harder to get unemployment. If you think about it and compare the two...with unemployment you have to check in once a week...welfare...what is it, I believe there's a program with food stamps that's once a month or once ever six months. With unemployment you're forced to look for a job and attend meetings...where is that enforced with welfare? I would be thankful to the person who stood up for working Americans, tax paying Americans, Americans that pay to keep this specific program running, stand up for us, hire more people to keep a watchful eye on lazy people who take advantage... they don't just take advantage of the welfare system, they take advantage of the people who pay for it and they also take advantage of the people who could really use it. Taking it away is to hasty...let's improve it. You make these people work, your going to bring more to the economy, monitor them, help them find work, take them off the system and your going to save money. I think subsidy is an excellent way to change the system but your allowing people to live off welfare...I know of people that won't get a job... because they don't have to. I don't want my family's money supporting their laziness. What is that showing their children? If we don't take action now we're just going to have generations repeating itself. My husband and I used it when we needed it, It fed my kids, (I'm grateful) I'm 22, my husband 25...we're young, good parents, and we work hard for our money...I don't want to pay for a 40 year old's Twinkies... =) Well Ma'am, I hope you enjoyed my letter. Please take it to heart...I don't want my kids to have to pay for them either.

DATE: 2/01/2006
SUBJECT: Budget Ideas

Think small, not overkill when it comes to construction projects. Intersection of Clover St (flashing yellow) and Route 251 (flashing red) must hold a record for the number of near-miss accidents. Crossing over Clover requires quick reflexes, luck, and flooring the gas pedal. Why construct a traffic circle and level the road when a traffic light requiring Clover traffic to stop will do? A sign at an intersection in the Victor village warns "SLOW Dangerous Intersection Ahead". How about it?

DATE: 2/01/2006
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DATE: 2/01/2006
SUBJECT: Budget Ideas

We need to cut welfare! The taxpayers can't afford any more! It's too much as it is. We are just about the highest taxed state, and highest taxed county in the whole United States. CUT spending on welfare and Medicare and lower our taxes! We can't take anymore!

DATE: 2/01/2006
SUBJECT: Save \$7M - \$15 Million After Expense

Not sure what the actual Medicare/food stamps/welfare budget is, but I do know it is the larger part of your budget. To reduce cost, start up a hotline for **Medicare/food stamps/welfare fraud** just like the Crime stoppers initiatives. No names should be required. It must be meaningful with a pay-out of \$500 or more. Fraud is causing those expenses to go out of control. After a few publicized cases, YOU WILL SEE VOLUNTARY REDUCTION in cases. Jail time will not be worth the risk of not getting the "FREE MONEY". I think 1/4 of the population in Rochester, knows someone who should not be getting government benefits. No one wants to snitch, but with incentives, that can fix your budget long-term. The money saved though should be going into job training and counseling. Those people when helped will become taxpayers.

DATE: 2/01/2006
SUBJECT: A Way to...

No one likes to pay taxes without seeing some first hand value in it. On the other hand most of us would not mind paying for something if we knew a benefit would be realized for themselves. I think most everyone would like to see improvement in the terrible drivers we encounter on the roads. I have an idea that I think could improve this situation and make money for the county, while at the same time save money for many and make this a better place to live. I suggest that Monroe County implement a mandate that every resident be required to take a mandatory refresher course to review safe driving methods and the current driving laws. This course could be required at license renewal time or some other simple method of scheduling. Each person would be required to pay a fee, part of which would pay for the instructors and the remainder would go to the cities and county for budget purposes. Not only would this make driving a little more tolerable for everyone, it would also reduce accidents, cut down on medical spending, cut down on police & fire depts., time spent at accidents, maybe reduce insurance premiums for owners, etc. Overall, I believe it would end up saving a good deal of money for the county and towns and help with the tax situation. It seems that many drivers have forgotten their safe driver training and I'm sure a refresher course would at last make some people start thinking about the consequences of their unsafe actions on the road. I witness every conceivable rule being broken whenever I drive; i.e. speeding, tailgating, unsafe passing, using cell phones, cutting the short way across intersections when making a turn, failure to stop, failure to signal, etc, etc. etc. It is an atrocious disregard for safety. And the older generation is just as guilty as the young people, so no one should be excluded.

DATE: 2/01/2006
SUBJECT: Budget Ideas

Instead of making cuts to the county police, I'd like to suggest INCREASING their numbers by dedicating patrols to nothing but traffic law enforcement. I'm sure you will agree that traffic law enforcement in Monroe County has taken a back seat in relation to other issues. But issuing more (deserved) tickets would more than pay for additional patrols. How many people do YOU see every day talking on their cell phones while driving, how many motorcycles with no mufflers, how many cars with illegally blacked-out windows? In Henrietta alone, you could generate a fortune just by ticketing speeders and reckless drivers on East Henrietta, West Henrietta and Jefferson Roads alone. Patrol the suburban high school areas during school drive times so students (and parents) remember there actually ARE traffic laws. Patrol the mall areas; you could just sit there and write tickets all day long! You'll be doing everyone a favor by increasing our county revenues AND improving our quality of life in Monroe County!

DATE: 1/30/2006
SUBJECT: Budget Ideas

My ideas for the county budget: Cap the total number of people on Medicaid at any one time; Reduce the number allowed on Medicaid by 10% by 2008; Like unemployment, limit the amount of time a person can be on Medicaid; Limit the total number of lifetime events on Medicaid; Limit the number of times Medicaid will pay for drug treatment.

DATE: 1/30/2006
SUBJECT: The County Budget Forum on Feb.4, 2006

As a taxpayer and involved citizen of the City of Rochester and County of Monroe I am very concerned about the budget shortfall we face in 2007. My main concerns are: 1) Community input, thank you for this opportunity to voice my concerns. This is great first step. Please have follow up and more input from the community. All of us must work together; 2) We need to create good paying jobs, though the Greater Rochester Enterprise, jobs that have a descent standard of living for our citizens; 3)We need more accountability for the County of Monroe Industrial Development Agency to help create good paying jobs for our citizens; 4)We need more cooperation between the City and County to cut waste by eliminating duplication of services; 5)I am very much in favor of eliminating fraud in our Health and Human Services area, but not at the expense of the poor and the needy. We need to protect our most precious resource, our children in the system. We cannot have another child die because the health and human services department is understaffed; 6)We need more help from the Federal and State government for the mandated services we must provide. Please lobby for this with your staff. I will see you at the forum on the 4th of Feb.

DATE: 1/28/2006
SUBJECT: Highway Expenses

I travel quite a bit , and have noticed and OVERWHELMING amount of salt and other "chemicals" being used on our roads. MOST other "snow belt" communities use sand on their roads. They plow and sand them and let mother nature do it's job clearing them. when you use salt, the surface gets slushy and needs further plowing to remove the dangerous slush, which freezes overnight and then needs more salt and more plowing... IE more\$\$\$ thru more overtime... not to mention what it is doing to my vehicles. ME, VT, NH, MN, MI and MANY others use sand and plowing to combat the road conditioned as does UPSTATE NY (tug hill) which gets much more snow than Rochester does. My suggestion is to STOP listening to whoever is telling you to salt the roads so much, and LOOK what other communities are doing. We don't need DRY roads in the winter. just smooth ones..... it MAY fill in the potholes with ice and even make it smoother to drive to work. Just a thought.

DATE: 1/28/2006

SUBJECT: Citizen Budget Initiative

Comment: As regards the County's budget challenges: May I suggest that the Sheriff's road patrol be closely scrutinized, and probably cut, in your budget deliberations? I say this for two reasons: a] the road patrol serves only a minority of County taxpayers, and b] any reductions in police services can be made up by the (generally well-off) communities that are served, by the formation of their own departments.

DATE: 1/28/2006

SUBJECT: Budget Idea

This is more of a money savings idea. Although it is only a drop in the bucket, I'm sure there are more of this problem than I see. What I am referring to is the big waste of money having the parking lot lights on all year at Frontier Field. I can understand a few on, close to the stadium for security, but all of them on! Look around at other county facilities and see how much utility waste is going on there.

DATE: 1/26/2006

**SUBJECT: Cost Savings Ideas for Monroe County
(EDITED DUE TO LENGTH OF ORIGINAL E-MAIL)**

Dear Ms. Brooks, As I listened to the news the other morning, I heard that you were soliciting ideas for Monroe County to cut costs... Unless government in Monroe County (and New York State) comes to grips with the fact that the high cost of living and doing business here is driving business and people out of the state, no progress can or will be made... One of the big things you need to come to grips with is the fact that when you need to cut costs, people are going to be affected. Take a look at your county budget and look at what percentage is actually driven by people's salaries. Yes, it's a huge amount. If you want to cut costs, inevitably, somebody is going to have to go... Has anybody looked at streamlining the way... services are provided? That's the real place to look... Next, it's time to come to grips with the fact that we simply have to custom services because we can no longer afford to supply all of them... Speaking of things to get rid of, you need to take a serious look at what most folks call "dead wood." Every organization has it, but few want to admit to it... Another thing that needs to be killed is what I'll call "the State bid mentality"... The next thing that needs to be killed is the "business can afford" it mentality. For whatever reason, government (everywhere) seems to believe that when you tax (by whatever means) business, they will never pass that increased cost on to the general public. Horse hockey! Business is in business to make money. If their costs go up, they have only two alternatives - cut costs or increase prices... No tirade on cutting costs would be complete without a mention of "special interests." I think it's about time to recognize that we must get back to "majority rule"... Finally, I want you to know that I understand that you're dealing with a union in many cases and when it comes to cuts, they will fight you tooth and nail. They will immediately go to the liberal press and get all sorts of air time showing how if we cut county workers,

innocent children will die of neglect or whatever. It's time to get tough... Hope that helps!

DATE: 1/26/2006
SUBJECT: Citizen Budget Initiative

This may be a small thing but it all adds up. I work in a program that is under contract with the county. I just received in the mail a two page form from a (County) office mailed in a 9 1/2"x12" manila envelope at the cost of 52 cents. It is not usually to receive these forms this way. It would seem that these forms could be held and sent in batches as we receive one for each client we serve, or folded and sent in a smaller envelope for less postage.

DATE: 1/25/2006
SUBJECT: Budget Recommendation

Dear County Executive Brooks, The only truly way to eliminate the perpetual county deficit is to consolidate the overwhelming and overlapping layers of government units in the county. The idea that there needs to be village, town, city, and county governments is absurd. This process was done to a great extent in Indianapolis many years ago and they've had little trouble with budget problems since all the while creating one of the best metropolitan areas in the country. Their taxes are lower and more stable and their services are better. They maintain some semblance of local schools and local planning departments. Until the leadership of this county pushes this idea to the fore-front the public will always rebel. I encourage you to check it out. The county will never regain the greatness it once had without this total overhaul.

DATE: 1/25/2006
SUBJECT: Citizen Budget Initiative

Hi Maggie, Just a suggestion...you and Bob Duffy may want to revisit Wilmot's offer to establish a casino in downtown Rochester. If I remember correctly, he was willing to invest \$500 million. That is the kind of investment the city and county needs rather than the government handouts for projects like the Fast Ferry and Renaissance Square. I know some people may object on moral grounds. However, all one has to do is go up to Casino Niagara in Canada and see how tastefully they have managed casino gambling there. There is all kinds of development going on there. Just food for thought.

DATE: 1/25/2006
SUBJECT: Golf Courses
(EDITED TO REMOVE PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION)

As an avid golfer and one who loves to golf at Durand Eastman, I would love to see the county take back control of these courses. I believe that with improvements to the courses and raising the fees could generate huge revenue for the county. Ever since they were privatized, very little has been done to improve the condition of these courses, meanwhile our county dollars continue to improve the buildings. It bothers me that the current operator is allowed to own a restaurant while our dollars pay for the improvements. I have not golfed at these courses in approx. 5 years because of this. I would also gladly pay higher fees. Raising the fees would only help these courses catch up with others in the area...

DATE: 1/25/2006
SUBJECT: Input to Budget
(EDITED DUE TO LENGTH OF ORIGINAL E-MAIL)

In general, we must control costs. Areas which are out of control are entitlements (Medicaid and social services), public pensions, public education, and workers compensation. We need to eliminate regulations which are hampering business development and growth. We need to cut taxes, both personal and business. And, we need to address eliminating the adversarial relations among political parties, businesses, unions, and government agencies in order to create a business friendly environment... The emphasis needs to be on job creation... if you want to have good jobs, you need an educated work force. The two go hand-in-hand. It's not impossible for Rochester to have both... Entitlements are killing us. They create dependency and stifle initiative. Plus, they are very costly and don't really get at the root problems... Someone is going to have to have the courage to address public pensions. They are out of control and are becoming a real burden to the taxpayers. We no longer can afford COLAS. The private sector doesn't have them. The public sector shouldn't either... Finally, we need to address eliminating the adversarial relationships among political parties, government agencies, businesses, and unions and create a more job and business friendly environment. Good paying jobs in the private sectors would cure a lot of the ills currently plaguing New York State and Monroe County... Thank you for the opportunity to vent some of my feelings. Good luck. Remember, when the going gets tough, the tough get going. Now is the time for strong leadership. Putting off the tough decisions only prolongs and exacerbates the agony.

DATE: 1/25/2006
SUBJECT: Citizen Budget Suggestions
(EDITED DUE TO LENGTH OF ORIGINAL E-MAIL)

In response to your call for citizen suggestions regarding the budget, I have four ideas:

- Consolidation
- Enforced Progress-for-the-buck Accountability
- Integration (Reduction of fragmentation and duplication; too many organizations bidding for few bucks)
- Increased Competent Staffing in Social Services

DATE: 1/25/2006
SUBJECT: Savings

My suggestion is have all those that drive county vehicle's to turn off the engines while dinning in diners and restaurants to save on gas. It is disgusting to see this waste just so the truck is warm (or cool in summer) while the employee sits inside for their breaks or meals. I also have the same complaint with RG&E, the Telephone Company and the City of Rochester.

DATE: 1/25/2006
SUBJECT: Hello

This comment is an idea for helping the budget. Why don't all county and city officials take a pay cut for a year. Bank that money difference...We are expected to live on an income of around 42,000, an example for this household yet we keep hearing how broke the county is. How much more can you take from us? We are one of the highest taxed states. And nothing to show for it. ex: We had to put new tyrods into our 2001 vehicle because our road was so bad, and still is at an intersection. We have one child that has moved out of state, and another planning to do so. In the past two years we have had four families that we know move. Thank you.

DATE: 1/25/2006
SUBJECT: Budget

Stop providing social service clients with everything. Start cutting their benefits. They have better health care than the average working person. Our taxes, fees and generous welfare is killing this state, county and city. Make them accountable. There is no reason people can't work at fast food restaurants. If they don't take a job opening slash their benefits.

DATE: 1/25/2006
SUBJECT: Idea

Time has arrived to consolidate all these local police forces. Drop the sheriffs dept, what is this, the wild west? Get everyone on the same page so when there is a crisis, we won't see the fragmented mess that is happening today. Thanks.

DATE: 1/24/2006
SUBJECT: The County Could Save So Much Money If...
(EDITED TO REMOVE PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION)

What a great idea to ask the citizens for their input. I very seldom respond to things like this but because I have thought this for 15 years I decided that it is worth stating...
(Editor's Note: The writer works for a child care center) Every month I fill out the DOT MATRIX COUNTY BILLING for reimbursement of child care services from the county. The pages are huge and everything is hand written and just my billing is about 8 pages in triplicate. When I do this billing I always wonder why this information isn't on a computer program or on an excel spreadsheet. I bet it takes Hours and Hours of Monroe County workers to read and go through these papers. The county would save money in wasted employee time just by upgrading the county billing for daycares. Just handling the paper work is long and tedious for us and we are just doing our own billing. I can't imagine how many people it takes to go through all the billings of the county. Just a thought that I have had for 15 years, maybe it really will save money.

DATE: 1/24/2006
SUBJECT: Cost Saving Thoughts
(EDITED DUE TO LENGTH OF ORIGINAL E-MAIL)

Some experts claim that from 20 to 30 percent of an organization's cost (people, materials, process, etc.) is caused by work that has to be redone, or not necessary to be done at all. Just think - all budgets reduced by over 20%... How to correct the situation - Take a hard look at everything that is being done to determine if it is necessary. If not, eliminate it. If yes, can it be done faster and with less effort - and at the highest level of quality. This will be hard to do as it will likely affect people's jobs, or at a minimum, what they do and how they do it. But I believe the effort will be worthwhile to save 20% or more of the cost of providing services to the public. Thanks for the opportunity to provide input.

DATE: 1/24/2006
SUBJECT: Budget Ideas for Monroe County

I feel area hiring for Monroe County is still too high, and needs to be addressed. This is true especially for Monroe Community College, where there is still hiring going on despite budget problems in Monroe County. Could you try freezing hiring for now, esp.

for MCC? Maybe get some older professors or staff members to retire, with a buy-out? I also saw that MCC has recently promoted several professors this past year, and that is wrong, when the budget for Monroe County needs to be reined in and revised. The college has way too many people working there for the size of it. When I went there in the 1980's, the college had a lot less employees; now there are too many (hence, the cost factor of paying salaries and benefits, which come out of taxpayers pockets.)

DATE: 1/24/2006
SUBJECT: Monroe County Budget

Can we please start operating the county budget like many of us hard working tax paying citizens run our household budget. Its time to scale back on social services and free handouts and encourage people to get a job and take responsibility for their own actions. Our great country was built by people who weren't afraid to work and challenge themselves. Monroe County is a fantastic place to live with plenty of opportunities-if you're willing to try. Thanks for your time.

DATE: 1/24/2006
SUBJECT: County Budget

Ms. Brooks: As we all know a large part of the Monroe County budget goes for Medicaid. A portion of that money goes towards the purchase of durable medical equipment (DME). High ticket items, such wheelchairs, lifts etc., are given to individuals when it is medically necessary. If the county is paying for these items, why doesn't the county consider reclaiming the DME upon the death of the recipient? A \$6,000 electric wheelchair could be sold to a vendor willing to refurbish it. The item would then be sold as used equipment. I'm sure anyone paying for such an item would welcome the chance to save a few thousand dollars. Currently Medicaid recipients receive the items new, & upon their death their family sells the item or items and profits from the sale. Check the newspaper want ads to see how often this is occurring. It's time to reclaim all of the high ticket items and put that money back into the budget. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the budget process. I wish you well with the task ahead.

DATE: 1/24/2006
SUBJECT: Automobile Expense

First review who is given an automobile and question the need for it versus paying a mileage allowance. Second review the type of vehicle provided versus the basic vehicle needed. For example a Chevrolet Impala LS basic list price is \$20,990 and it gets 21 miles city and 31 highway versus a Chevrolet Cobalt 4 door LS which lists for \$14,340 and gets gas mileage of 24 city and 32 highway with automatic transmission. This difference in acquisition cost and cost of operating when multiplied by the number of vehicles in the fleet could be real money!

DATE: 1/24/2006

SUBJECT: Citizen Budget Initiative

Comment: I would like to suggest that the county further cut social services to help balance the budget. We've been doing too much for too long and it's time to rein in these exorbitant benefits. Make people work for their welfare if physically able. Another way to cut taxes would be to consolidate all the police agencies in Monroe County into a Metro police force. I have to believe it would cut by at least a third the administrative duplication that goes on now between the various town, county and city police forces.

DATE: 1/24/2006

SUBJECT: Countywide Police Force

Form a countywide police force eliminating the Sheriffs road patrol and excluding the Rochester Police dept. That is a start and would save the taxpayers much tax dollars.

DATE: 1/24/2006

SUBJECT: Possible Budget Solutions

Some friends and I travel to Daytona, Florida every year for bike week. An event for the motorcycle community. Daytona makes millions in fines, sales tax and other fees from this event. It's a large scale event and would take time to build but I feel would be worth it in the long run. Just my opinion. Thank you.

DATE: 1/24/2006

SUBJECT: How You Can Cut The Over Spending

To whom it may concern:

1}Cut Wages 20%... on all County Workers... From Top to Bottom; 2}Cut out any pension... have all County Workers contribute to their own plans like the rest of us do... Its a possibility that the county could match up to 6% of the County Workers contributions; 3}Travel to Albany and tell the State Government that all new government give always must be financed through state taxes and not local taxes; 4}Cut health care benefits... Employees must pay up to 60% of their health care costs and Monroe county will pay 40%; 5}Have only one county worker looking in the ditch they are digging rather than the 5 we usually see; 6}No more tax free Zones instead just lower taxes on everyone... or... any business moving to Monroe county and hires over 500 workers will pay no county taxes for 5 years... great for a strong manufacturing base... any existing business who hires one hundred workers pays no county taxes for 2 years... or a percentage there of; 7}The County as well as the localities must understand that higher taxes drives out business as well as the individual. The local paper did a article recently on people leaving NY... and gave a number of reasons and I do believe that taxes was on of the big reasons for their departure; 8}THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS FOR THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS TO LEAD... ONCE

OUR LEADERS LEARN TO LEAD THEN THE BETTER OFF THE COUNTY WILL BE... THANKS FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION...

DATE: 1/24/2006

SUBJECT: Ideas

1.) Find jobs for social service recipients in the private sector and make it mandatory they report, no matter the position, unless there is a physical or mental limitation. Even if that job is minimum wage. They could be compensated for additional coverage AFTER they have met that obligation. Some of those jobs may cover some of that person's benefits partially or in full thus eliminating the county's cost. The County could solicit the private sector for available job positions. Especially those companies that are in any of the Empire Free Zones. Example: A recipient is assigned a job at Lowe's. Then let's say Lowe's has some sort of health insurance. No need for county to continue paying for it. 2.) Place a few extra cents on bottle and can deposits. Every year New York State collects from unclaimed refunds. Can the County get a piece of that?

DATE: 1/24/2006

SUBJECT: Bus Passes

(EDITED DUE TO SPECIFIC INFORMATION PROVIDED)

I HAVE A CONCERN ITS INVOLVING PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE DSS RTS BUS PASSES. THEY'RE RESELLING THOSE BUS PASSES... RESLLING THEM COSTING MONROE COUNTY TAX PAYERS MONEY FOR THIS. I WENT TO DSS AND COMPLAINED ABOUT IT. NOTHING DONE. WHEN I SPOKE WITH THE LADY ON THE PHONE SHE STATED IT WAS NONE OF MY BUISNESS TO SAY ANYTHING...

DATE: 1/24/2006

SUBJECT: Cost Saving Idea

The County should stop paying health insurance premiums for County legislators and should stop including them in the pension plan. I know of no other business that provides such benefits for part time workers. I have a part-time job working 600-700 hours a year and I must pay the full premium for my health insurance. Federal pension guidelines require pension coverage if an employee works 1000 hours in a year. Since many, if not all, of the legislators have full time jobs I doubt that they actually work 1000 hours for the County. Additionally, those who have full time jobs have an opportunity to obtain health insurance through their employer and they are also covered by their employer's pension plan. At a time when the County is making difficult choices reducing needed services it makes sense to first reduce "management perks". I appreciate the opportunity you have given the public to offer their suggestions.

DATE: 1/24/2006

SUBJECT: Suggestion for More Revenue

This may sound a little off the wall, but if the hands-free cell phone use law was really enforced and the monies to be realized from fines due to its flagrant violation were put into a budget deficit reduction fund, I think people would be really surprised.

DATE: 1/24/2006

SUBJECT: Saving Idea For Budget

I am a grandparent who is raising three grandchildren. We have had these children for what will be five years in May. They were placed with us by Monroe County Child Protective. Monroe County Social Services has given us a grant to assist us with the expenses of raising three children. In receiving this grant, I see a waste of money by the county. Every year, in the spring, I am mailed out a long application to reapply and to prove the children are still with us. Again, in the fall, this same procedure occurs, except this time a personal appearance by myself is required. This takes money to print the forms, money to mail them out, money to process the papers upon their return, money for the time of an interviewer to spend going over the application when I return it at the appointed time. It seems that a simple phone call to Child Protective (or a memo would also do) would simply do away with all of the above. It is not only a waste of time and paper for the county, but for myself as an elderly busy grandparent raising three young children who must spend time with the paper work and appointment. I am one person to whom this occurs. I am sure that this procedure is repeated over and over and over during the year. I have read that there are over 14,000 grandparents in Monroe County alone who are raising grandchildren. I do not know how many of these grandparents receive assistance from Social Services, but I am sure that many of them must. I would think that there must be a much simpler cheaper way to verify the facts each year. In my case, it would easy for the social worker to call upstairs to child protective, or check with the court, the school system, etc. to verify that the situation still exists. Thank you for your time. I would certainly appreciate any relief that could be extended in this situation.

DATE: 1/24/2006

SUBJECT: Citizen Budget Initiative

Dear County Executive, My ideas to save on the budget are as follows: 1.) Since the largest part of the budget from what I hear is the Medicaid costs, I believe it would be highly cost effective to hire investigators, or more investigators if they are already in place, to do just as the name implies... investigate whether it be covertly or physically, recipients who are collecting welfare/Medicaid to see that they truly need the service. No one would deny a family much needed assistance if they truly deserve it, but at the same token, we need to take recipients off of it if they are capable of work. We need to encourage people to work instead of encouraging them to be non-productive. 2.) Maintaining County roads. We need to direct the towns that maintain county roads to use less road salt during the winter months. Years ago, it was just hills, bridges,

curves and intersections that were salted. Presently, at least the road I live on, the entire road is continuously salted. This practice is not only detrimental to the environment, it also deteriorates our roads more quickly, so the end result is more tax dollars are wasted rebuilding the roads on a more frequent basis. We need to go back to the old way of salting, i.e. hills, bridges, curves and intersections ONLY. Thank You.

DATE: 1/24/2006
SUBJECT: Questions

Here are some questions we, the taxpayers would like to have County manager Brooks consider, and address when she gives the budget report in 90 days: 1. What percentage of the entitlement budget is used up in overhead? Is this an acceptable number? 2. Are the entitlements overly generous and are more people getting them than actually have a need? What will it take to get these people off the public feed trough. 3. Are your employees' salaries commensurate with similar work in the private sector? 4. Why are county employees' benefit packages grossly out of line with those of the private sector, and what can be done to get them in line? Consider that a large portion of workers in the private sector have either no retirement, or very small. 5. The economy has forced every major company in this area to severely downsize, reducing both employment and budget, many by more than 50%. Justify why this can't be done at your level also. 6. Where's the pork? 7. What agencies have outlived their usefulness, and where is there duplication? 8. Repeat 1 thru 7 for the money we send to the city of Rochester every year, and adjust accordingly. Address these honestly and it is almost assured that we will be running surpluses far into the future. If Ms. Brooks is truly the visionary we think, then it is time for someone to finally step forward and do the things no politician has had the guts to do for decades. Most of us can't afford luxuries in our own homes, why, then, are we funding them in our government, and taking it lying down.

DATE: 1/24/2006
SUBJECT: Medicaid Assessed To Property Owners

I believe and quite angered about being taxed for any portion of the Medicaid bill. Medicaid should be either totally the responsibility of our state (all share in the cost) or taxed through payroll deductions, hitting all employed in the county. Even those who don't live here, but earn money here, then take their earnings to another county. Why is it that every year the property owner is hit with increasing school budgets and county budgets? Higher taxes all passed onto us, the property owners. No wonder this state is losing residents. My wife and I are also getting the heck out of NYS and soon as we retire in the next 3 years. NYS= taxes, more taxes and taxed again on top of taxes. We're sick and tired of it as many others here are. Take Medicaid off the tax roll and do it through the state or payroll, it's the fair way to do it.

DATE: 1/24/2006
SUBJECT: Budget

Reduce or eliminate financial aid to able body people on social services. Why take from the working people and give to the lazy.

DATE: 1/24/2006
SUBJECT: Budget Reduction Suggestions
(EDITED TO REMOVE PERSONAL AND CORPORATE IDENTIFYING INFORMATION)

I heard about this process in the press and I would like to offer a suggestion: I assume Monroe County has a large purchasing expenditure for a wide gamut of items and services. There are several cost reduction initiatives that can reduce this dollar figure. Everything from consigned inventory, where the supplier holds title until the item is needed, to using on-line reverse auction tools to ensure you get a competitive price for what you buy. At **(COMPANY NAME)**, we have achieved, on average, 15% savings using an on-line auction tool for most everything we purchase... Thank you for your time.

DATE: 1/23/2006
SUBJECT: Budget Idea

In the state of the county address it was mentioned how \$16 million dollars could be saved by better policing and monitoring of the welfare program. I believe that also was mentioned that this could be accomplished by 2007 or 09, can't remember exactly. With this kind of misuse of the system known, it would seem prudent to hire more staff in this department to clean up and capture the savings sooner. I think the public would see the justification in this measure. A better set of rules or criteria could be written during this process to use from now on. Then these additional staff could be dismissed. How about a consultant? I think the savings justifies the measures. Thank you.

-- END OF BLOG --