

Legislation Meeting Agenda



Committee Chair: Colin Smith

800 Michaelian Office Bldg.
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601
www.westchesterlegislators.com

Monday, February 3, 2025

1:00 PM

Committee Room

CALL TO ORDER

Please note: Meetings of the Board of Legislators and its committees are held at the Michaelian Office Building, 148 Martine Avenue, White Plains, New York, 10601, and remotely via the WebEx video conferencing system. Legislators may participate in person or via Webex. Members of the public may attend meetings in person at any of its locations, or view it online on the Westchester County Legislature's website:

<https://westchestercountyny.legistar.com/> This website also provides links to materials for all matters to be discussed at a given meeting.

Legislator Emiljana Ulaj will be participating remotely from 520 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, NY 10591.

Legislator Colin Smith will be participating remotely from 1132 Main Street, Suite 1, Peekskill, NY 10566.

MINUTES APPROVAL

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. [2025-21](#) PH-Battery Energy Storage Systems

A RESOLUTION to set a Public Hearing on "A LOCAL LAW adding Chapter 637 to the Laws of Westchester County to require notification to the Department of Emergency Services of Battery Energy Storage Systems by local municipalities in the County of Westchester. [Public Hearing set for _____, 2025 at _____ .m.]. LOCAL LAW INTRO: 2025-22.

COMMITTEE REFERRAL: COMMITTEES ON LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Guests: Law Dept.: Assistant Chief Deputy County Attorney Justin Adin and Assistant County Attorney Alida Marcos; DES: Commissioner Susan Spear, Douglas Stiller, Chief, DES Special Operations, and Chris Johnson, Deputy Chief, DES Special Operations; New Rochelle Fire Chief Andrew J. Sandor, Chair, Westchester County Fire Advisory Board

2. [2025-22](#) LOCAL LAW-Battery Energy Storage Systems

A LOCAL LAW adding Chapter 637 to the Laws of Westchester County to require notification

to the Department of Emergency Services of Battery Energy Storage Systems by local municipalities in the County of Westchester.

COMMITTEE REFERRAL: COMMITTEES ON LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Guests: Law Dept.: Assistant Chief Deputy County Attorney Justin Adin and Assistant County Attorney Alida Marcos; DES: Susan Spear, Commissioner, Douglas Stiller, Chief, DES Special Operations, and Chris Johnson, Deputy Chief, DES Special Operations; New Rochelle Fire Chief Andrew J. Sandor, Chair, Westchester County Fire Advisory Board

3. [2025-23](#) PH-Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Services Members

A RESOLUTION to set a Public Hearing on "A LOCAL LAW amending the Laws of Westchester County with respect to a Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Services Members." [Public Hearing set for _____, 2025 at _____,m.

[LOCAL LAW INTRO 2025-24].

COMMITTEE REFERRAL: COMMITTEES ON LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Guests: Law Dept.: Assistant Chief Deputy County Attorney Justin Adin; Budget Dept.: Deputy Director Christina Rampata

4. [2025-24](#) LOCAL LAW-Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Services Members

A LOCAL LAW amending the Laws of Westchester County with respect to a Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Services Members.

COMMITTEE REFERRAL: COMMITTEES ON LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Guests: Law Dept.: Assistant Chief Deputy County Attorney Justin Adin; Budget Dept.: Deputy Director Christina Rampata

II. OTHER BUSINESS

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT



Kenneth W. Jenkins
County Executive

January 17, 2025

Westchester County Board of Legislators
800 Michaelian Office Building
148 Martine Avenue
White Plains, New York 10601

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Legislators:

Attached hereto for your consideration is “A LOCAL LAW adding Chapter 637 to the Laws of Westchester County to require notification to the Department of Emergency Services of Battery Energy Storage Systems by local municipalities in the County of Westchester.”

This proposed law would require all local municipalities within Westchester County to provide written notification to the Department of Emergency Services (“DES”) for all new and existing non-residential Battery Energy Storage Systems permitted, installed, or modified in Westchester County. Battery Energy Storage Systems (“BESS”) are a type of energy power that uses batteries to store electrical energy. It is a technological solution that can help prevent renewable energy waste, stabilize the electrical power grid in real time, and balance supply and demand needs when the electrical grid fluctuates due to weather, outages, or congestion on the grid. However, most BESS use lithium-ion batteries, which are deemed hazardous materials by the United States Department of Transportation, and can pose significant safety concerns, including risks of fire, thermal runaway, toxic gases, and even explosions in localities where these BESS are placed.

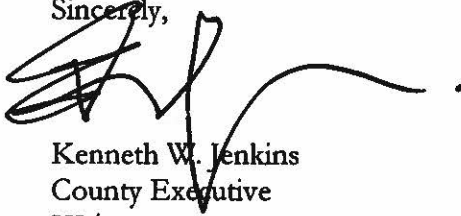
This local law is designed to increase safety and transparency within the County by establishing clear notification requirements for local municipalities regarding new installations, modifications and existing non-residential BESS. This will ensure greater coordination and planning for emergencies, which will enhance safety for residents and first responders in Westchester County. Specifically, this notification requirement will allow DES to properly plan for emergencies that can arise from the installation or modification of a BESS in the County and to properly create contingency plans for dealing with emergencies that could be exacerbated by the presence of a BESS.

DES oversees the County’s Emergency Communications Center, commonly referred to as “60 Control,” which provides primary dispatch services for 52 fire departments and 32 EMS agencies in Westchester, and handles fire and EMS mutual-aid requests going in and out of the County. Further, DES works with the County Fire Coordinator and Deputy Fire Coordinators, who serve as liaisons between the County and local municipal fire departments, to mitigate potential fire emergencies within the County. Having advanced knowledge of the presence of a BESS at a location will allow DES to better inform the first responders to the risks faced at the location.

As such, this law requires local municipalities to provide written notification to the Commissioner of DES, or their designee, of any existing BESS in the municipality as well as any approval of plans for new BESS in the municipality or modifications to existing BESS. The written notification shall include the: (1) address of the (proposed) location of BESS site; (2) zoning district designation for the parcel(s) of land comprising the project site; (3) size and capacity of the BESS; (4) pertinent contact information for the owner, operator, and contractor responsible for the management and installation of the BESS site; and (5) relevant installation, operation, and inspection dates for the subject BESS.

I recommend the approval of the attached Local Law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kenneth W. Jenkins', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Kenneth W. Jenkins
County Executive
KJ/nn
Attachments

TO: HONORABLE BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER

Your Committee is in receipt of “A LOCAL Law adding Chapter 637 to the Laws of Westchester County to require notification to the Department of Emergency Services of Battery Energy Storage Systems by local municipalities in the County of Westchester.”

Your Committee is informed that the proposed law would require all local municipalities within Westchester County to provide written notification to the Department of Emergency Services (“DES”) for all new and existing non-residential Battery Energy Storage Systems permitted, installed, or modified in Westchester County.

Your Committee is advised that, Battery Energy Storage Systems (“BESS”) are a type of energy power that uses batteries to store electrical energy. It is a technological solution that can help prevent renewable energy waste, stabilize the electrical power grid in real time, and balance supply and demand needs when the electrical grid fluctuates due to weather, outages, or congestion on the grid. However, most BESS use lithium-ion batteries, which are deemed hazardous materials by the United States Department of Transportation, and can pose significant safety concerns, including risks of fire, thermal runaway, toxic gases, and even explosions in localities where these BESS are placed.

Your Committee recognizes that this local law is designed to increase safety and transparency within the County by establishing clear notification requirements for local municipalities regarding new installations, modifications and existing non-residential BESS. This will ensure greater coordination and planning for emergencies, which will enhance safety for residents and first responders in Westchester County. Specifically, this notification requirement will allow DES to properly plan for emergencies that can arise from the installation or modification of a BESS in the

County and to properly create contingency plans for dealing with emergencies that could be exacerbated by the presence of a BESS. Your Committee recognizes that DES oversees the County's Emergency Communications Center, commonly referred to as "60 Control," which provides primary dispatch services for 52 fire departments and 32 EMS agencies in Westchester, and handles fire and EMS mutual-aid requests going in and out of the County. Further, DES works with the County Fire Coordinator and Deputy Fire Coordinators, who serve as liaisons between the County and local municipal fire departments, to mitigate potential fire emergencies within the County. Having advanced knowledge of the presence of a BESS at a location will allow DES to better inform the first responders to the risks faced at the location.

As such, this law requires local municipalities to provide written notification to the Commissioner of DES, or their designee, of any existing BESS in the municipality as well as any approval of plans for new BESS in the municipality or modifications to existing BESS. The written notification shall include the: (1) address of the (proposed) location of BESS site; (2) zoning district designation for the parcel(s) of land comprising the project site; (3) size and capacity of the BESS; (4) pertinent contact information for the owner, operator, and contractor responsible for the management and installation of the BESS site; and (5) relevant installation, operation, and inspection dates for the subject BESS.

Moreover, and as you know, your Honorable Board must comply with the requirements of the State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA"). Your Committee is informed that the proposed project does not meet the definition of an action under New York State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA") and its implementing regulations 6 NYCRR Part 617. Please refer to

the memorandum from the Department of Planning, dated January 14, 2025, which is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Legislators. Your Committee concurs in this conclusion.

The Committee, after careful consideration, recommends the adoption of this Local Law.

Dated: January __, 2025
White Plains, New York

COMMITTEE ON

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SUBJECT: Chapter 637- Battery Energy Storage NO FISCAL IMPACT PROJECTED

OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT

To Be Completed by Submitting Department and Reviewed by Budget

SECTION A - FUND

GENERAL FUND

AIRPORT FUND

SPECIAL DISTRICTS FUND

SECTION B - EXPENSES AND REVENUES

Total Current Year Expense \$ -

Total Current Year Revenue \$ -

Source of Funds (check one): Current Appropriations Transfer of Existing Appropriations

Additional Appropriations

Other (explain)

Identify Accounts: N/A

Potential Related Operating Budget Expenses: Annual Amount N/A

Describe: A Local Law adding Chapter 637 to the Laws of Westchester County to require notification to the Department of Emergency Services of Battery Energy Storage Systems by local municipalities in the County of Westchester.

Potential Related Operating Budget Revenues: Annual Amount N/A

Describe: _____

Anticipated Savings to County and/or Impact on Department Operations:

Current Year: N/A

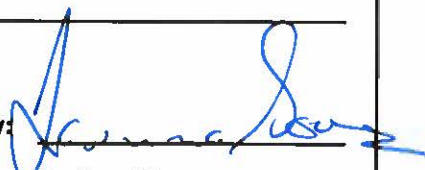
Next Four Years: N/A

Prepared by: Patricia Haggerty

Title: Sr. Budget Analyst

Department: Budget

Date: January 15, 2025

Reviewed By: 
PH
Budget Director
Date: 1/15/25

RESOLUTION NO. ____ - 2025

RESOLVED, that this Board hold a public hearing pursuant to Section 209.141(4) of the Laws of Westchester County on Local Law No. ____ - 2025, entitled "A LOCAL Law adding Chapter 637 to the Laws of Westchester County to require notification of the Department of Emergency Services of Battery Energy Storage Systems by local municipalities in the County of Westchester." The public hearing will be held at __.m. on the ____ day of _____, 2025, in the Chambers of the Board of Legislators, 8th Floor, Michaelian Office Building, White Plains, New York. The Clerk of the Board shall cause notice of the time and date of such hearing to be published at least once in one or more newspapers published in the County of Westchester and selected by the Clerk of the Board for that purpose in the manner and time required by law.

LOCAL LAW INTRO. NO. - 2025

A LOCAL LAW adding Chapter 637 to the Laws of Westchester County to require notification to the Department of Emergency Services of Battery Energy Storage Systems by local municipalities in the County of Westchester.

BE IT ENACTED by the County Board of the County of Westchester as follows:

Section 1. A new Chapter 637 is hereby added to the Laws of Westchester County to read as follows:

Chapter 637

Notification of Battery Energy Storage Systems by Local Municipalities in Westchester County

Sec. 637.01. Definitions

1. Battery Energy Storage Systems – One or more devices, assembled together, capable of storing energy in order to supply electrical energy at a future time, not to include a stand-alone 12-volt car battery or an electric motor vehicle.
2. Commissioner – The Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Emergency Services
3. Department – The Westchester County Department of Emergency Services.

Sec. 637.02. Applicability

1. The requirements of this Local Law shall apply to all local municipalities within Westchester County.
2. The requirements of this Local Law shall apply to:

- A. all new and existing non-residential Battery Energy Storage Systems permitted, installed, or modified in Westchester County; and
- B. modifications to, retrofits or replacements of an existing non-residential Battery Energy Storage System that increase the total Battery Energy Storage System's designed discharge duration or power rating.

Sec. 637.03. Notification Requirements.

- 1. Municipalities shall provide written notification to the Commissioner, or their designee, of any existing Battery Energy Storage Systems in the municipality within 30 days of being notified of this local law by the Commissioner, or their designee.
- 2. Municipalities shall provide written notification to the Commissioner, or their designee, within 30 days of any approval of plans for new Battery Energy Storage Systems in the municipality or modifications to existing Battery Energy Storage Systems. Approved plans shall include the issuance of a building, electrical, or special use permit for any Battery Energy Storage Systems by a municipality within Westchester County.
- 3. This notification requirement shall not replace any requirement for local municipalities to refer applications for certain planning and zoning actions to the Westchester County Planning Department pursuant to New York General Municipal Law §239-m or Sections 277.61 and 277.71 of the Laws of Westchester County.
- 4. The notification to be provided to the Commissioner pursuant to subdivision 1 and 2 above shall include the following information:
 - A. Address of the (proposed) location of Battery Energy Storage Systems site;

- B. Zoning district designation for the parcel(s) of land comprising the project site;
- C. The size and capacity of the Battery Energy Storage System;
- D. Contact information, when available, for:
 - i. The owner of the Battery Energy Storage System site;
 - ii. The operator of the facility containing the Battery Energy Storage System; and
 - iii. The contractor or other individual responsible for installation of the Battery Energy Storage System.
- E. The following dates for the Battery Energy Storage System:
 - i. The date the Battery Energy Storage System components are expected to be on site, if known;
 - ii. The date the Battery Energy Storage System is expected to be operational and/or the date which the Battery Energy Storage System became operational, if known; and
 - iii. The date of the final inspection of the Battery Energy Storage System by the relevant permitting official of the municipality.

Section 2. Upon the effective date of this local law, the Commissioner, or their designee, shall notify forthwith the following individuals and bodies within each local municipality in Westchester County of the notification requirement established by this Local Law:

- A. Planning Board;
- B. Department of Planning;

C. Clerk; and

D. Chief Executive of.

Section 3. This Local Law shall take effect immediately.

Westchester County

Kenneth W. Jenkins
County Executive

January 21, 2025

Westchester County Board of Legislators
800 Michaelian Office Building
148 Martine Avenue
White Plains, New York 10601

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Legislators:

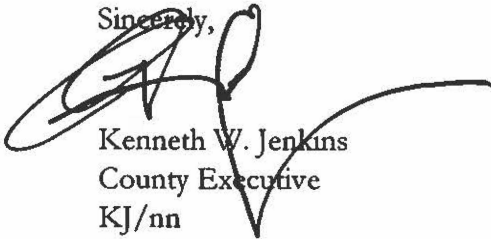
Attached hereto for your consideration is "A LOCAL LAW amending the Laws of Westchester County with respect to a Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Services Members."

Volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers provide a significant benefit to residents and taxpayers through their countless hours of service protecting our communities. Accordingly, in conformance with New York State Real Property Tax Law ("Real Property Tax Law") Section 466-a, the County enacted Chapter 475 of the Laws of Westchester County ("Chapter 475") authorizing a ten (10) percent tax exemption for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance service members with two (2) or more years of service. In order to qualify for the exemption under Section 466-a/Chapter 475, a volunteer had to serve in an organization that provided services where the volunteer lived.

The Real Property Tax Law was amended to add a new Section 466-l. This Section allows local jurisdictions to expand the tax exemption where the property owner serves in a neighboring municipality. If adopted, the attached Local Law would amend Chapter 475 to expand the County's existing exemption to cover individuals who volunteer anywhere in the County. By expanding the opportunity to provide this critical tax exemption, it will help improve recruitment and retention of our volunteer fire and ambulance services.

I recommend the approval of the attached Local Law.

Sincerely,



Kenneth W. Jenkins
County Executive
KJ/nn
Attachments

2025.01.14 JRA

TO: BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER

Your Committee is in receipt of a communication from the County Executive recommending adoption of “A LOCAL LAW amending the Laws of Westchester County with respect to a Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Services Members.”

Your Committee recognizes that volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers provide a significant benefit to residents and taxpayers through their countless hours of service protecting our communities. Accordingly, in conformance with New York State Real Property Tax Law (“Real Property Tax Law”) Section 466-a, the County enacted Chapter 475 of the Laws of Westchester County (“Chapter 475”) authorizing a ten (10) percent tax exemption for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance service members with two (2) or more years of service. In order to qualify for the exemption under Section 466-a/Chapter 475, a volunteer had to serve in an organization that provided services where the volunteer lived.

Your Committee is informed that, The Real Property Tax Law was amended to add a new Section 466-l. This Section allows local jurisdictions to expand the tax exemption where the property owner serves in a neighboring municipality.

Your Committee has been advised that, if adopted, the attached Local Law would amend Chapter 475 to expand the County’s existing exemption to cover individuals who volunteer anywhere in the County. By expanding the opportunity to provide this critical tax exemption, it will help improve recruitment and retention of our volunteer fire and ambulance services.

Your Committee is advised that the proposed Local Law does not meet the definition of an action under New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (“SEQRA”) and its implementing regulations 6 NYCRR Part 617. Please refer to the memorandum from the Department of Planning, dated January 12, 2023, which is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Legislators. Your Committee concurs in this conclusion.

Based on the foregoing, your Committee recommends the passage of this Local Law.

Dated 2025
White Plains, New York

COMMITTEE ON

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SUBJECT: Tax Exemption-Volunteer Firefighters NO FISCAL IMPACT PROJECTED

OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT

To Be Completed by Submitting Department and Reviewed by Budget

SECTION A - FUND

GENERAL FUND

AIRPORT FUND

SPECIAL DISTRICTS FUND

SECTION B - EXPENSES AND REVENUES

Total Current Year Expense \$ -

Total Current Year Revenue \$ -

Source of Funds (check one): Current Appropriations Transfer of Existing Appropriations

Additional Appropriations

Other (explain)

Identify Accounts: N/A

Potential Related Operating Budget Expenses: Annual Amount N/A

Describe: A Local Law amending the Laws of Westchester County with respect to a Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Services Members.

Potential Related Operating Budget Revenues: Annual Amount N/A

Describe: _____

Anticipated Savings to County and/or Impact on Department Operations:

Current Year: N/A

Next Four Years: N/A

Prepared by: Patricia Haggerty

Title: Sr. Budget Analyst

Department: Budget

Date: January 17, 2025

Reviewed By:
PH Budget Director

Date: 1/17/25

RESOLUTION NO. ____ – 2025

RESOLVED, that this Board hold a public hearing pursuant to Section 209.141(4) of the Laws of Westchester County on Local Law Intro. No. ____ - 2025, entitled “A LOCAL LAW amending the Laws of Westchester County with respect to a Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Services Members.” The public hearing will be held at __.m. on the ____ day of _____, 2025 in the Chambers of the Board of Legislators, 8th Floor, Michaelian Office Building, White Plains, New York. The Clerk of the Board shall cause notice of the time and date of such hearing to be published at least once in one or more newspapers published in the County of Westchester and selected by the Clerk of the Board for that purpose in the manner and time required by law.

LOCAL LAW NO. -2025

A LOCAL LAW amending the Laws of Westchester with respect to a Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Volunteer Ambulance Service Members.

BE IT ENACTED by the County Board of the County of Westchester as follows:

Section 1. Section 475.01 of the Laws of Westchester County is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 475.01. Purpose

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance service members, who are qualified real property owners, with the tax exemption authorized by Section 466-a of the Real Property Tax Law, and to continue this exemption in the case of certain un-remarried spouses of deceased volunteers pursuant to that law. The exemptions authorized by this Chapter are subject to all the qualifications and limitations set forth in Sections 466-a and 466-l of the Real Property Tax Law.

Section 2. Section 475.21 of the Laws of Westchester County is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 475.21. Qualifications and Limitations upon Exemption.

Such exemption shall not be granted to an enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or incorporated voluntary ambulance service residing in the County of Westchester unless:

- (a) ~~the applicant resides in the city, town, or village which is served by such~~ incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or incorporated voluntary ambulance service for which the applicant serves is located within the County of Westchester;

- (b) the property is the primary residence of the applicant;
- (c) the property is used exclusively for residential purposes; provided however, that in the event any portion of such property is not used exclusively for the applicant's residence but is used for other purposes, such portion shall be subject to taxation and the remaining portion only shall be entitled to the exemption provided by this Chapter;
- (d) the applicant has been certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or voluntary ambulance service as an enrolled member of such incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or voluntary ambulance service for at least two years. It shall be the duty of each incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, and incorporated voluntary ambulance service to file an affidavit of a responsible officer annually, prior to the applicable taxable status date, with the assessor or other appropriate agency, department, or office of each assessing unit served by such incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, or incorporated voluntary ambulance service listing its enrolled members with two or more years of service. Each incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department, and incorporated voluntary ambulance service shall also file such an affidavit with any other jurisdiction within the County of Westchester, upon request of an enrolled member or the assessor of that jurisdiction.

Section 3. This Local Law shall take effect immediately and shall apply to assessment rolls prepared on the basis of taxable status dates occurring on or after such date.