

STATE OF THE COUNTY

2018-19



CHAIRMAN JOHN M BECKER
MADISON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

INTRO

Good afternoon; I would like to thank everyone for being here today. 2018 promised to be a year of transition and change. In my first State of the County in 2008, I said, “If you do not like change, go home and hide under your bed.” Every year since, and since the beginning of time, things change. The question is do we embrace change and shape it, maneuver it, and set it on a path that is beneficial for all and leave our destiny better than we found it, or ignore our fate and just hope things work out. Some choose the latter and this is exactly why we are in the situations we are in, in Washington, D.C. and Albany.

At the local level, we do not have that luxury. Problems identified and that rise to the top need to be addressed. Under my chairmanship, as well as many of you on this board, we have taken on the challenges and changed to move our county forward. That is no small feat. As local leaders, you have embraced change and have chosen to move your towns forward as well – congratulations. Your town and county are much better for you being engaged, informed and proactive.

These are some of the highlights for 2018 and goals for 2019.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND FINANCE, WAYS & MEANS

In 2017, the county started renovations to our historic Courthouse. With it being an approximate \$18 million dollar project, along with a new Highway garage for the southern end of the county at \$13 million dollar, the Finance Committee used the \$20 million dollar radio project payments to roll over and finance both the courthouse and the garage. Stretching the capital payments to 25 or 30 years will not result in any increase in our tax rate. The radio project could only be financed for 10 years and the payments end in 2020; in time to bond for both of the other projects. We also created a position and appointed a new Finance Director this year who reports to the County Administrator. This has helped tremendously with bringing the Munis System to a more palatable level of use for our employees. In 2019, we look forward to our negotiation partners in our unions to be able to advance in a uniform way for all of our residents of Madison County. Through Purchasing, we will be saving \$1.5 million dollars over 10 years with a lease fleet of cars.

The County Clerk's Office and DMV had a very busy year. Despite some unexpected adjustments to personnel, the Motor Vehicle Department

processed 124,195 transactions, an increase of 6% and increased their retention to the County to over \$1.2 million dollars, an increase of just over 10%. This was all due to the addition of EZ-Pass Sales, the amazing customer service of our DMV clerks, our careful attention to auto-dealer paperwork, and the addition of a second camera & scanning station.

In May, the Clerk's office began accepting electronically filed court cases, increasing the efficiency of processing for our recording clerks and attorneys alike. Since then, 45% of court filings in Madison County were processed electronically. The addition of the acceptance of credit cards in the Clerk's office also provided more payment options for our customers. With mortgage tax, DWI fees, clerk fees and real property transactions, the Clerk's Office as a whole brought in more than 1.9 Million Dollars in revenue, an increase of nearly 6%. It was also boosted in part by selling large prints of our historic maps, at the suggestion of our esteemed County Historian.

A special thanks to the County Records Management Coordinator who completed a 2 and a half year project of scanning every pistol permit record, making it possible for our 911 dispatch to share this important

information with law enforcement officials as they respond to emergencies, increasing officer and community safety!

HIGHWAY, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

The Madison County Courthouse is truly living up to that “historic” feel. 110 years ago, the cornerstone containing the time capsule was laid, which was opened this last spring. The new copper roof was completed and a new eagle was sculpted and is ready to sit atop of the porch roof. It currently rests in the atrium of the DMV. This project, along with a very aggressive floor rehab in the County Office Building will be done by May 2019.

The County Highway repaired and rehabilitated many miles of roads, culverts and bridges this year. Over 27 miles of road, with a combination of hot mix paving and cold in place recycling, is planned for 2019 summer projects. 85 new cross culverts were installed in the fall to allow for settling before finished products will be put in place. Also a long awaited new highway garage will begin construction in 2019 for the southern part of the county. It will replace the garage in Morrisville. It will be a bigger garage on a larger lot for better

movement of equipment and material. This \$13 million dollar project should be completed in the spring of 2020.

PLANNING

Again, the Planning Department continues to knock it out of the park, literally, securing grants for our newest park, Delphi Falls in the Town of Cazenovia. The hard working Planning staff has been busy designing many improvements for the new Delphi Falls Park. Also, the team won a highly competitive grant from the Reimagine the Canals contest, netting the Village of Canastota a cool \$1.5 million dollar for a pocket neighborhood along the Old Erie Canal. The Erie Canal is one of our best assets in Madison County. It's good to see this long forgotten asset being brought back to life. In addition, Planning has been working with our Administration and Oversight Committee to rework the long neglected Cowaselon Creek Watershed. A complete rehab is planned for this asset to the muck farms of Lenox and Sullivan. This project was started in the late 40's and 50's and is in much need of maintenance. Partnering with Soil and Water Conservation Service, Planning, and the A&O Committee, I am confident that this once

useful asset put in place so long ago by the Army Corp of Engineers will again function for all the land owners of this area.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Our Emergency Management Team finally received the grant to study a merger with the Onondaga County 911 System. This is only a study, and if the Board did not look at all of our options, we would not be doing our job.

Also our Sheriff's Office signed a deputization agreement with the Oneida Nation. This not only supports our strong commitment to corporation, but helps both agencies in a time of crises. This agreement added another 35 deputies to help our Sheriff's Office.

The Drug Task Force, with the leadership of our Sheriff Todd Hood and Oneida County Sheriff Rob Maciol, has also been active the last 12 months. Together, they seized \$66 thousand dollars of cash, 2 houses, 7 vehicles and 15 illegal handguns.

The one initiative by the Sheriff's Office that all of us should be proud of is our school officer patrol program. This initiative was presented to our public safety committee, backed by Sheriff Hood and

many of our schools. The County is funding approximately half of the costs of the program with casino revenues that come to the county. The other half is paid for by the participating school districts. The Board of Supervisors adopted this in December of 2018. It is a no brainer that our number one priority should be the safety of our children.

This year, the Sheriff's Office will also be a part of the Enterprise Fleet lease agreement where all patrol cars will be turned over every two years, keeping our deputies safe and giving them the most up to date equipment that they can use effectively to safely accomplish their jobs.

In 2018, the Board launched an initiative, our customer satisfaction surveys, for people who interacted with county services, which has led to our success plan to help us continue to provide service excellence.

The 2019 County budget funds all of our initiatives, building projects, maintenance projects with a minimal 0.365% increase in the tax levy, resulting in most towns seeing a decrease in their tax rate.

In short, 2018 was a success by all measures resulting in:

- a tax rate decrease;

- a \$6 million dollar grant for bridges and culverts for project totaling \$8.8 million dollars;
- the completion of the purchase of Delphi Falls, the County's newest park, thanks to a very generous donation of \$750 thousand dollars from Harold Jones;
- the securing of a \$500 thousand dollar REDC grant will go to park improvement for Delphi Falls; and
- a \$1.5 million dollar grant going to Reimagine the Canals; and
- over \$1.3 million dollars in federal and state funds being awarded to the Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management.

For 2019, we will see our historic courthouse finished in May with a ribbon cutting and celebration on Saturday, May 25th with live bands and tours of the building culminating with the 10th Mountain Division Band and a world famous Zambelli Fire Works show.

Our Buy Local Campaign should continue to catch headlines as it is fully implement in 2019. Buy Local – keep your sales tax here.

Also, I look forward to our continued cooperation and partnership with the Oneida Nation and its people. Not too long ago, it

would have been hard to fathom our partnership would be as strong as it is today. The Oneidas continue to invest in our county, with the opening of their \$40 million dollar Point Place Casino last spring, creating hundreds of new jobs and creating new venues for people to visit.

In closing, I want to mention our most important asset. Buildings are great, our history is rich, but without a dedicated workforce none, and I repeat none, of this would be possible. Our employees are the best, most dedicated and we value them greatly. Also, our residents, we are here to provide you with the best, highest quality, and friendliest service possible. So, from the Board of Supervisors, thank you. To our staff in Maintenance, Public Health, Social Services, Clerks/DMV, Sheriff, Landfill, Highway, Finance, Planning and everyone in between, let's all work cooperatively to make 2019 a year that we can all be proud of here in Madison County, the best county in the State of New York and in the good ol' USA.