

Attendance Sheets

District	Last Name	Present	Absent	Present/Late
District 10 - City of Poughkeepsie	Atkins	✓		
District 4 - Town of Hyde Park	Black	✓		
District 13 - Towns of LaGrange, East Fishkill, and Wappinger	Bolner	✓		
District 8 - City and Town of Poughkeepsie	Brendli	✓		
District 21 - Town of East Fishkill	Caswell	✓		
District 15 - Town of Wappinger	Cavaccini	✓		
District 6 - Town of Poughkeepsie	Edwards	✓		
District 22 - Towns of Beekman and Union Vale	Garito	✓		
District 23 - Towns of Pawling, Beekman and East Fishkill	Hauser	✓		
District 25 - Towns of Amenia, Washington, Pleasant Valley	Houston	✓		
District 9 - City of Poughkeepsie	Johnson	✓		
District 11 - Towns of Rhinebeck and Clinton	Kearney	✓		
District 5 - Town of Poughkeepsie	Keith	✓		
District 1 - Town of Poughkeepsie	Llaverias	✓		
District 17 - Town and Village of Fishkill	McHoul	✓		
District 12 - Town of East Fishkill	Metzger	✓		
District 20 - Town of Red Hook/Tivoli	Munn	✓		
District 18 - City of Beacon and Town of Fishkill	Page	✓		
District 14 - Town of Wappinger	Paoloni	✓		
District 3 - Town of LaGrange	Polasek	✓		
District 19 - Towns of North East, Stanford, Pine Plains, Milan	Pulver	✓		
District 2 - Towns of Pleasant Valley and Poughkeepsie	Sagliano	✓		
District 24 - Towns of Dover and Union Vale	Surman	✓		
District 7 - Towns of Hyde Park and Poughkeepsie	Truitt	✓		
District 16 - Town of Fishkill and City of Beacon	Zernike	✓		
Present:	<u>25</u>	Total:	<u>25</u>	
Absent:	<u>0</u>			
Vacant:	<u>0</u>			

Date: 11/5/2020

Quorum Present.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Public Hearings

Public Hearing on the Tentative Budget as Submitted by the County Executive for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2021.

Clerk read notice of public hearing.

The Chairman declared the public hearing open.

Olivia Page, opage@vassar.edu, spoke via Zoom in support of reducing the Sheriff's budget and using the funds for mental health and substance abuse initiatives.

Karina Curry, ccarty@vassar.edu, spoke via Zoom in support of reducing the Sheriff's budget and using the funds for housing, mental health, public transportation, and park initiatives.

Lily Berman, lilyannaberman@gmail.com, spoke via Zoom in support of reducing the Sheriff's budget and using the funds park initiatives.

Saije Mischone, tijaunaj@gmail.com, spoke via Zoom in support of reducing the Sheriff's budget and using the funds for housing and mental health initiatives.

Melissa Hoffman, mhoffman@vassar.edu, spoke via Zoom in support of reducing the Sheriff's budget and using the funds for housing and mental health initiatives. Comments attached.

Sara Azcona-Miller, sarazconamiller@gmail.com, spoke via Zoom in support of reducing the Sheriff's budget and using the funds for mental health services. Comments attached.

Marge Carty, ccarty@vassar.edu, spoke via Zoom in support of reducing the Sheriff's budget and using the funds for community and family services, youth programs, and housing support

There being no one else wishing to speak, the Chairman declared the public hearing closed.

The public hearing was adjourned at 7:28 pm.

Wager, Leigh

From: Melissa Hoffmann <mhoffmann@vassar.edu>
Sent: Thursday, November 5, 2020 7:35 PM
To: CountyLegislature
Subject: Re: Public Comment

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

My public comment:

Hi, my name is Melissa and I am a resident of Dutchess County. I believe the proposed budget is shameful and grossly inadequate for meeting the needs of Dutchess County residents. It represents the white supremacy and racism inherent in the Dutchess county government which must be ended immediately. I am calling on Dutchess county to defund white supremacy by cutting the sheriff's budget at least 50% and ending all funding for the new jail, which Dutchess County does not need. This budget gives more power to the carceral system while removing positions and funding for essential services in Dutchess County. As an abolitionist I believe we must put an end to the carceral system in Dutchess county, meaning abolishing the police, sheriff, jails, and court systems that disproportionately target and terrorize black, brown, queer, transgender, and poor people. Instead, we should fund services that provide housing, mental/healthcare, restorative justice, job training, education, public transportation, and parks and recreation. I believe that we must provide housing for all who need it, make mental health services free, unattached to the criminal system, and available 24/7, make college tuition-free, provide youth programming, and make public transportation free. If Dutchess county can show that it is possible to defund crucial services and positions within the public works and transportation and community and behavioral health departments while maintaining the criminal and legal system as the second-highest funded department (after economic assistance and opportunity), it is possible to defund the carceral system. Dutchess county has no excuse. The District Attorney, Probation, sheriff and jail, and detention are not essential services, it is a white supremacist and racist institution. Prove to your constituents that you are not white supremacists and defund the criminal system. Listen to the community organizers and people impacted by incarceration calling for systemic changes in the way Dutchess county cares for its residents.

On Thu, Nov 5, 2020 at 11:39 AM CountyLegislature <CountyLegislature@dutchessny.gov> wrote:

Good morning Melissa:

You will receive the link at approximately 6:30 pm.

Carolyn Morris
Clerk
Dutchess County Legislature
22 Market Street
Poughkeepsie, New York 12601
Tel: (845) 486-2100 . Fax: (845) 486-2113

OFFICIAL AMERICAN FLAG DISPOSAL SITE

-----Original Message-----

From: Melissa Hoffmann <mhoffmann@vassar.edu>

Sent: Thursday, November 5, 2020 10:53 AM

To: CountyLegislature <CountyLegislature@dutchessny.gov>

Subject: Public Comment

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

Hi,

I would like to make a public comment tonight for the public hearing tonight at 7.

Thank you,

Melissa Hoffmann

--

Melissa Hoffmann
Vassar College '21
Environmental Studies
she/her/hers
E: mhoffmann@vassar.edu
P: 201-561-2442

From: Sara Azcona-Miller <saraazconamiller@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 5, 2020 4:32 PM
To: CountyLegislature <CountyLegislature@dutchessny.gov>
Subject: Re: Public Comment

ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

Thank you! I will be speaking off of the attached document and using the email address sazconamiller@vassar.edu to connect to Zoom.

Best,
Sara Azcona-Miller

2021 Proposed Dutchess County Mental Health Budget

By moving money towards mental health services and away from the bloated criminal legal system budget, Dutchess County can better honor its commitment to protecting vulnerable populations, curbing the negative impacts of COVID-19, and strengthening the community. We demand that Dutchess County invest into mental health services instead of making cuts to the budgets of crucial services including Helpline, the Diversion Program (Mobile Crisis Intervention Team), and the Stabilization Center. According to a study conducted by Health Management Associates, insufficient funds and/or budget cuts to public community based mental health services results in an expensive impact on jails and state hospitals. We must move carceral money into the community so that services are accessible from entry points beside the criminal justice system. We recommend implementing the following: supportive housing for people with mental health needs, an increased number of positions, and expanded hours and increased accessibility of mental health services.

A disproportionate amount of money is spent on the criminal legal system at the expense of mental health

- For every \$1 that goes to the Criminal Legal System, the mental and physical health budget gets \$0.41.
- For every \$1 that goes to the Sheriff and jail alone, mental and physical health budget gets \$0.79.

Dutchess County is making drastic budget cuts to crucial services

- HELPLINE (County's 24/7 mental health emergency call and text line) funding is being cut by 17.56% (\$304,029.00). The following positions are being cut as part of the move to consolidate with the 911 system: 1 administrative position, 1 part-time office assistant, and 1 supervising social worker
- The Diversion Program (Mobile Crisis Intervention Team) is being cut by 21.43% (\$349,283.00). MCIT has been almost entirely contracted out to Mental Health America. There are now zero county employees working on this program and the move towards a case management model might leave the Crisis Intervention Team without the clinicians they need to support people in crisis (they already have enough case managers and need clinicians).
- The Stabilization Center is being cut by 27.54% (\$640,845.000). This has been almost entirely contracted out to Mental Health America, PEOPLE USA, and Astor Home. There are now zero county employees working on this program.
- The hours of the Mobile Crisis Intervention Team are expanding, yet funding is being cut. With these cuts and this privatization, it is hard to imagine that these programs can provide the same level of service or pay the contracted employees a living wage. The county decided it can afford to put \$105,899,211.00 into the criminal legal system— just a 3.30% decrease from 2020—while cutting mental health by 5.27%. The county's priorities need to shift if we want to truly protect the community.

There is carceral money in the mental health budget that must be diverted to community based mental health programs

- Court Remands (aka psych incarceration): \$850,000.00 (a 21.43% increase from 2020)
- Doctors, Counsel (Competency and Family Court Evaluations): \$10,000
- Security Services (stabilization center): \$256,207.00 (1.6% increase from 2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic is leading to spikes in suicides and overdoses. Using the criminal legal system to solve these issues will cause more harm, instead we should be investing in community based mental health programs

- COVID-19 has exacerbated many of the underlying causes of substance use disorder such as social isolation, feelings of separation, and trauma. Physical isolation has increased the risk factor of overdoses as have economic and housing insecurity. Dutchess County experienced an 11.5% increase in accidental overdose deaths. (Source: DC Budget)
- The county has also recognized that individuals with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) are at heightened risk of overdose upon release from jail. il. From January 2014 through June 2018, roughly 24 percent of overdose deaths involved an individual previously incarcerated in the Dutchess County Jail (DCJ). In response, the county implemented Medically Assisted Treatment inside DCJ. the (Source: DC Budget)

Why reallocate \$\$ specifically from the Public Services budget into Mental Health budget? History of Police in DC targeting black people with mental health needs

- The fatal police shooting this year of Maurice Gordon, a black Poughkeepsie resident with mental health needs, reveals that police are not well equipped to handle situations involving those suffering from mental illness and money should go to support mental health systems instead
- There are, in the U.S., 10 times as many people being treated for mental illness in jails or prisons than in hospitals, Biasotto said (Record Online 2015 Special Report)

Jail is an unsafe place for individuals with mental health needs. Funneling money for mental health treatment into the prison system is harmful and ineffective.

- The US Bureau of Justice reports that an estimated 16% of the two million prisoners in the US are mentally ill, "often because there is nowhere else for them to go. (NCBI NLM)
- Major problems are associated with incarceration of individuals with behavioral health disorders: Worsening of psychiatric symptoms; abuse by corrections staff (no training in how to work w inmates who have mental health disorders); high rates of recidivism; high rates of suicide; jail and prison overcrowding. (Arundelle)

Increasing mental health funding by diverting funds away from the carceral system would reduce these harmful effects and increase the wellbeing of the community. We recommend implementing the following changes/programs/services:

- Increase Supportive Housing For People With Mental Health Needs
 - Instability/not having basic material needs met can trigger mental health crises. Having reliable housing needs to be the first step in stabilization and recovery.
 - Assertive community-based treatment programs and access to supportive housing are proven alternatives to prison.
 - Care Not Cops suggests implementing: A respite house developed and run by peers, where people go voluntarily for 2 to 3 weeks when in crisis to work through the crisis; A sanctuary home on acreage to support people withdrawal from psychiatric drugs if they choose
- Mental health professionals, not police officers should be dispatched in response to Helpline Calls, which are now co-located with the 911 call center. This shift makes progress with increasing quick access to resources, but it should not mean more police intervention.
- Increase the number of nurses and clinicians at the Stabilization Center.