

# News Alert

## Rensselaer County Legislature Office of the Minority 270-2892

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### **Rensselaer County Democratic Minority Legislators Study County Executive Jimino's Proposed 2009 Budget**

**Troy**—Members of the Democratic Minority in the Rensselaer County Legislature are carefully examining the Tentative 2009 County Budget and the Budget Message filed by Republican County Executive Kathy Jimino. The Budget Message states that there is no increase in the average tax rate for County taxpayers, despite large increases in meeting State mandates. If so, it would be the first time in many years that there has not been a significant increase. The Minority members, who have long complained about relentless tax increases, welcome this change, but are making certain that the actual numbers add up.

There is reason for concern. The Tentative Budget does not comply completely with the requirements of the County Charter, which states that it must include a proposed appropriation resolution and a statement regarding the cumulative tax rate prior to chargebacks. Instead there is a bare statement in the Budget Message that there is no property tax rate increase. The Minority members have stated that they will be going through the Budget line by line to be certain that the taxpayer is protected.

The Minority has also expressed concern that some of the revenue projections in the Budget may be overly rosy, taking into consideration the current troubled economy. For example, the Tentative Budget assumes that 2009 sales tax revenues will increase over the amount anticipated for 2008, an assumption that is highly questionable in light of reduced spending and the recent drop in the cost of gasoline.

The revenue sources present some other issues. First, the Tentative Budget relies heavily on increased fees in the County Clerk's office totaling almost a million dollars. Second, it dips deeply into the County's already insufficient fund balance, leaving the County highly vulnerable to cash flow issues.