

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that the Legislature of Rockland County will meet in its Chambers in the Allison-Parris Office Building, New City, New York on Tuesday, January 4, 2023 at 7:00 P.M., for the purpose of organizing said Legislature and selecting a Chairperson and such other items as may be required by law, contract or financial necessity.

Very truly yours,

LAURENCE O. TOOLE  
Clerk to the Legislature

Dated at New City, New York  
this 29<sup>th</sup> day of December 2022

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Laurence O. Toole, Clerk to the Legislature

The January 4, 2023 meeting of the Rockland County Legislature will please come to order.

Good Evening. Thank you for joining us tonight. My name is Larry Toole, Clerk to the Rockland County Legislature. It is my honor to Chair this Meeting until the selection of the Chairperson for 2023.

At this time, I will recognize Deputy Clerk Mary Widmer to call the roll.

A Roll Call being taken at 7:02 p.m., the following Legislators were present and answered to their names:

Christopher J. Carey  
Harriet D. Cornell  
Toney L. Earl  
James J. Foley  
Michael M. Grant  
Lon M. Hofstein  
Jay Hood, Jr  
Douglas J. Jobson  
Aney Paul  
Laurie A. Santulli  
Philip Soskin  
Aron B. Wieder  
Alden H. Wolfe  
Itamar J. Yeager

Absent: Legislator Charles J. Falciglia and Vincent D. Tyer

Vacant: Legislative District 15

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Laurence O. Toole, Clerk to the Legislature, led in the Salute to the Flag and delivered the invocation.

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**Nomination by the Honorable Michael M. Grant**

Good evening and welcome everyone. Thank you for joining us tonight. On behalf of all of us here at the Legislature, I want to wish you a happy, healthy and safe new year. It is my pleasure tonight to nominate my friend and fellow Haverstraw legislator, Jay Hood, Jr., to his second term as Chairman of the Rockland County Legislature. A little over year ago, before taking the gavel, Jay spoke with me about “moving out of his comfort zone”, “stepping up” and taking on the challenges of being chair of the legislature. While I understood exactly what he meant, I also knew it wasn’t such a big step, just a logical progression. Over the course of the last ten years - a decade of trials, tribulations, and transformation in County government - Jay had served in a variety of leadership positions. Jay had become an accomplished lawmaker and a valuable member of the Legislature’s leadership team. Notably, Jay had served three times as chair of the influential Budget & Finance Committee, three times as Majority Leader and three consecutive years as Vice-Chair. In addition, he presided over the Rules, Public Safety and Government Operations committees and served as a commissioner on the solid waste authority, now known as Rockland Green. Clearly, his colleagues were comfortable with his leadership qualities and Jay was unanimously elected Chairman of the Legislature last January. Jay did not disappoint us. In his first term as chair, Jay was “in the zone”, deeply engaged in the legislature’s prime objectives to eliminate the Residential Energy Sales Tax and the Motor Vehicle Registration Tax and allocate Rockland’s \$64 million share of the American Rescue Plan Act. Success we should all be proud. Jay also played an integral role in re-districting the legislature and was a key collaborator with the Administration on the Spring Valley Building & Codes initiative. Obviously, Jay likes to get things done. He is a passionate believer in government’s ability to make communities stronger and help them thrive. He cares about people, their hopes and their dreams and he is confident in this Legislature’s ability to help make them happen.

Jay’s ability to reach across the aisle to achieve bi-partisan agreement, on a multitude of issues is well documented. He has a very productive working relationship with the County Executive’s Office and a unique one with Minority Leader Lon Hofstein. Theirs is a rapport built on a foundation of mutual respect for the public interest and bound together by a shared sense of humor - where each think they’re funnier and always winning. For the members of the Majority, Jay’s frequent and focused caucus meetings have been a great addition. He sets aside ample time to meet, either in person or by zoom, so that we can better understand pending county business, float ideas, develop strategies and when necessary, air grievances. Everyone gets their chance to be heard. I know he is committed to continuing them.

Jay, there is much to do tonight so I hope you don’t mind if I skip the traditional biographical info. Hopefully Aron, will let everyone know why you are a lifelong Bonnies and Wildcats fan, how you’ve worked alongside your parents to build a successful law firm and all of the organizations you’ve supported and volunteered your time with.

Julie, Avery and Quinlan are naturally very proud of you tonight. I know you and Julie are committed partners in parenting and you have always had a special bond with your boys. Your mom, Cathy is your partner in business too. I want to thank them all in advance for the compromises and sacrifices another year as chair will bring.

Mr. Toole, colleagues, without further ado, I nominate Jay Hood as Chairman of the Legislature for 2023.

**Second the Nomination by the Honorable Aron B. Wieder**

Good evening, I would like to assure my fellow Legislators and public out there, that tonight at the Rockland County Legislature there will only be one round of votes tonight. It is a pleasure and an honor to second the nomination of Jay Hood Jr. as Chairman of the Rockland County Legislature. Working with Jay in his various capacities over the years I can attest that he likes to get things done. Certainly, this last year during his freshman year as Chairman, County government was able to get many things done. Those successes didn’t just materialize, it took effort including nurturing good working relationships and communication between all 17 members of the Legislature as well as the County Executive and members of his administration. Jay was a leader on both fronts, helping to bring these representatives together in the best interest of Rocklanders. This was no easy feat, because I guarantee you, all 17 Legislators, the County Executive, the members of his administration, each have their own point of view on how to address an issue or solve a problem. Jay brings a lot of government service experience to his position as Chair, including time serving the people of the Town of Haverstraw, they have a strong village and Rockland County. Among his leadership roles, he served as Chair of the Budget and Finance committee and I can tell you from personal experience, the position is an extremely detailed oriented effort. Jay took it on not once, but three times.

Jay is also an attorney in private practice. Anyone who truly knows him will tell you he is a devoted husband to Julie, darling father to Avery and Quinlan and a loving son to Mother Cathy. His door and his ears are open to those seeking his input or advice and I am proud to call him my friend. I can tell you that Jay’s focus has always been on the bigger picture and what will best benefit the people we are sworn to serve. He likes to get things done and under his chairmanship, thus far, he has proven that he can help to do just that.

It is my honor and privilege to second Jay Hood Jr. to serve as the Chairman of the Rockland County Legislature.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 01 OF 2023  
SELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE  
ROCKLAND COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**GRANT/WIEDER: M.V.**

RESOLVED, that pursuant to NYS County Law Section 151 and Rockland County Charter Section C2.04, Hon. Jay Hood, Jr., Legislative District 3, be and is hereby selected Chairperson of the Rockland County Legislature for the year 2023.

The vote resulted as follows:

Ayes:	11	(Legislators Cornell, Earl, Foley, Grant, Santulli, Soskin, Wieder, Wolfe, Yeger, Paul, Hood, Jr.)
Nays:	03	(Legislators Carey, Hofstein, Jobson)
Absent:	02	(Legislators Falciglia, Tyer)
Vacant:	01	(Legislative District 15)

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Honorable Rockland County District Attorney Thomas E. Walsh II administered the Oath of Office to the Honorable Jay Hood, Jr.

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**Statement by the Honorable Jay Hood, Jr., Chairman**

Good evening, everyone and welcome to the Rockland County Legislature’s 2023 Organizational Meeting.

I’m humbled and honored to receive the backing of my colleagues once again as I begin a second term as Chairman of the Rockland County Legislature. It’s a leadership position I take seriously, and I plan to again serve for the good of all Rockland County residents and businesses. Thank you all for your confidence and support.

The past year was one of such tremendous accomplishment that was made all the sweeter because it followed a decade of difficult, deliberate and detailed efforts to turn the county’s finances around. Thanks to the efforts of my Legislative colleagues and County Executive Ed Day and his administration, we are back.

There will be no county property tax increase in 2023, just as there was no property tax increase in 2022. Two zeros in a row and hopefully more going forward is quite an accomplishment with rising costs in healthcare, construction among other lines in the budget.

The county Motor Vehicle Tax and Residential Energy Sales Tax were both cut out completely – together representing the equivalent of a over 9 percent property tax cut.

We see the struggles families are going through and to help, we also reduced the county’s portion of sales tax on gasoline, resulting in a savings of about \$5 per tank fill-up

We have also just increased the income eligibility for seniors seeking a reduction in property taxes, increasing the limit from \$29,000 to \$50,000 for people aged 65 and older.

We are working to implement a new state law to allow up to a 10 percent exemption of assessed value on for a volunteer firefighter or ambulance corps worker’s primary home. We need to show appreciation for our first responders and lower taxes is a great way to show just that.

Capital projects and Open Space Preservation are also on our list for 2023. The Legislature has approved the funding to purchase two parcels on South Mountain Road and two others in Pomona, which we hope will be completed this year.

We also anticipate the opening of the new County Highway Garage, a facility sorely needed to protect the investment that has been made in highway equipment, everything from snowplows to dump trucks, together with a better working environment for our Highway workers.

My thanks to County Executive Ed Day, to Steve Powers and the rest of the Administration for their efforts this past year. We have a great working relationship and I look forward to continuing our work on behalf of the people.

I also want to thank my Legislative colleagues for their support and guidance, as you can tell by our almost weekly caucuses – I lean on all of you greatly. Aaron and Michael, I probably bother the most and I thank you for being there for me.

I can't believe I have to thank him in public, but Lon Hofstein, thank you for working together on many initiatives. We joke around a lot but when it comes down to it- we work well together and get things done.

I also want to thank the Legislative staff for all of its efforts – our Clerk, Larry Toole, Deputy Clerk Mary Widmer, Fiscal Director Nicole Doliner, our Legal Counsel, Elana Yeger and Alejandra Silva-Exias, and our entire staff.

I want to acknowledge my Haverstraw Team, Supervisor Howard Phillips and Chairmen Fred Miller, Mayors Mike Kohut and Rob D'Amelio. I would not be here without your support through the years.

I thank the people of Haverstraw for electing me and placing their trust and confidence in me for the past 15 years. I look forward to seeing you on the campaign trail this coming year as most of us run for another 4-year term.

And most importantly, I also want to thank my wife, Julie, my sons, Avery and Quinlan, and my mother, Kathy, for all of their support. We are a very small but tight circle. Everything I do is for them.

Now onto one of the non-scripted parts- I wanted to properly honor a member of our board- a person that has been here over 39 years and has put her heart and soul into all things Rockland. Harriet Cornell has done so much for all of us and the people of Rockland – We are putting forward a rule change for 2023 creating a Second Vice Chair position which I will nominate her for later this month. As Harriet completes her final year as a Legislator it is only fitting, she has such a position. I hope you will all join me in a standing ovation for Harriet and we are all looking forward to completing this term with you!

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**Nomination by the Honorable Toney L. Earl**

I am honored once again for the opportunity to nominate Legislator Aney Paul to the position of Vice-Chair of the Rockland County Legislature. Legislator Paul selflessly leads and represents this body with integrity and dignity. Her commitment to the people of Rockland County is evident in the numerous community events she attends and supports.

Legislator Paul is currently partnering with TOUCH and the Center for Safety & Change to conduct a county-wide coat drive for Rockland residents in need of coats.

As nursing professional Legislator Paul always advocates for causes that promote health and wellness. She also created the Special Committee on Minorities and Women Business Enterprise and every year she hosts an award program in their honor.

Legislator Paul's dedication to the people of Rockland County and her commitment to public service, make her an excellent choice for this role, therefore, I nominate Legislator Aney Paul for the position of Vice-Chairperson for the Rockland County Legislature.

Thank You.

**Second the Nomination by the Honorable Alden H. Wolfe**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations to you. I will echo the words of my colleague Toney Earl, when I think about Aney Paul I think of her as the quintessential Legislator. She has a positive attitude, she's diligent, she's always engaged, and she's thoughtful. She spends a tremendous amount of time in the community, and she is committed to serving her constituents. She is really everything that one would want in their Legislator and for that she is supremely well suited to serve as Vice Chairwoman to the Legislature which she has for some time now. With that, it's my honor to second her nomination.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 02 OF 2023  
SELECTION OF VICE CHAIRPERSON OF THE  
ROCKLAND COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**EARL/WOLFE: UNAN.**

RESOLVED, that pursuant to NYS County Law Section 151 and Rockland County Charter Section C2.04, Hon. Aney Paul, Legislative District 14, be and is hereby selected Vice Chairperson of the Rockland County Legislature for the year 2023.

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Honorable Rockland County District Attorney Thomas E. Walsh II administered the Oath of Office to the Honorable Aney Paul.

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**Statement by the Honorable Any Paul, Vice Chairwoman**

Good Evening! . I wish you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

Congratulations to the Chair Jay Hood. I would like to take this time to thank everyone for providing me with another opportunity to serve the Rockland County Legislature as its Vice-Chair for the year 2023. I look forward to continuing serving our community in this role. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Legislator Tony Earl for nominating me, and to Legislator Alden Wolfe for seconding the nomination. Thanks to District Attorney Tom Walsh for swearing me in. Thank you also to my Legislative colleagues for putting your faith in me as the Vice-Chair as we embark on a new year and face new challenges together.

A special thanks to our staff. Thank you all for your hard work and we are so proud to have you all as part of our team. Thank you to Mr. Toole who managed the office very well during this pandemic.

I want to thank my husband, Augustine Paul, who gave me his full support. Also, to my family, friends, the Democratic team, unions, other organizations and media for their support.

As we say goodbye to 2022, we recall the many accomplishments and challenges this Legislative body and our Rockland community, as a whole, have faced especially with this COVID.

Let us all work together, together we can make a difference. I will continue to work my best to serve this Legislative body as its Vice-Chair and to serve the people of Rockland County. Thank you again for your support and for this extraordinary honor. May this year bring you lots of joy, happiness, good health and indeed wealth. Stay safe Stay strong!

In closing, I want state a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love". Thank you, God Bless America.

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**Nomination by the Honorable Aron B. Wieder**

This evening it is my utmost honor to nominate Laurence O. Toole to serve as the Clerk to the Rockland County Legislature once again. To be the Clerk of a Legislative body is challenging. The Clerk is the manager of the Legislative staff. The confidence of all 17 Legislators, and most importantly be at the service to the general public. For years, Larry has served the needs of all Legislators. Larry makes himself available, virtually 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. He is always keeping everyone up to date. Larry has proven himself to be a dedicated public servant who treats everyone equally, it doesn't matter if you're a Legislator or what party you belong to or if you are a member of the public, if you need information or some other assistance, Larry will respond to your need. Whatever the task, Larry will handle it all with professionalism and expediency. Over the years I have worked with governmental officials on a local, state, and federal level. Very rarely have I encountered someone with qualities, passion, and dedication to serve the public, as Larry. Larry is the quintessential public servant. I am privileged to call him a personal friend. Tonight, it is with greatest honor that I nominate, Laurence O. Toole, my friend, to serve as the Clerk to the Rockland County Legislature.

**Second the Nomination by the Honorable Jay Hood, Jr., Chairman**

I'd like to second that nomination. Everybody knows how hard Larry works. It is not an easy job, you really have to run a tight ship. Larry does a fantastic job at it. We are glad that he's still going to work for us after a very tough year. We appreciate it. So, with that, I'll second the nomination of Mr. Toole for the Clerk of the Rockland County Legislature.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 3 OF 2023  
APPOINTMENT OF CLERK TO THE  
ROCKLAND COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**WIEDER/HOOD, JR.: UNAN.**

RESOLVED, that pursuant to NYS County Law Section 475 and Rockland County Charter Section C2.05, Laurence O. Toole, Town of Ramapo, be and is hereby appointed Clerk to the Rockland County Legislature for the year 2023 at a salary to be established by the Legislature.

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Honorable Rockland County District Attorney Thomas E. Walsh II administered the Oath of Office to the Laurence O. Toole, Clerk.

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**Statement by Laurence O. Toole, Clerk to the Legislature**

Happy New Year to All! Congratulations Chairman Hood and Vice-Chairwoman Paul on your selections to serve as Leaders of this Body in 2023. Congratulations in advance to the Majority and Minority Leaders and Deputies that will be selected shortly. I am honored and excited to work with you again in 2023.

Thank you, Legislator Wieder and Chairman Hood, for your kind words in nominating me this evening. As long serving Elected Officials and distinguished professionals your leadership, experience, generosity of your time and guidance to our staff here, and to the rest of the County workforce, is very much valued and appreciated.

To the Members of the Body, thank you for your trust and support in me and Mary Widmer this year, and in prior years and over the last two Decades. It is an honor working with all of you serving our County residents. I, along with Mary Widmer and our Staff, look forward to assisting all of you in 2023.

Thank you, District Attorney Tom Walsh, for administering my oath of office. We all Wish you and your good office the very best in 2023. And to County Clerk Donna Silberman thank you for assisting us again, this year!

Best to you all, have a safe, happy and healthy upcoming year!

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**RESOLUTION NO. 4 OF 2023  
AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO THE LEGISLATURE  
TO APPOINT A DEPUTY CLERK**

**GRANT/WOLFE, HOOD, JR.: UNAN.**

RESOLVED, that pursuant to the Laws of Rockland County Section 149-1 (c) the Clerk to the Legislature be and is hereby authorized to appoint a Deputy Clerk to the Legislature for the year 2023 at a salary to be established by the Legislature.

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**Statement by Laurence O. Toole**

It is my honor again to appointment Mary Widmer, as Deputy Clerk to the Rockland County Legislature for the upcoming 2023 Legislative Session. Mary has served as Deputy Clerk to the body since January 2001 with distinction and honor. She and the rest of our support staff are dedicated, hardworking, and professional in providing service to all. I am pleased that Mary and our staff will serve in these roles again for the coming year.

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**RESOLUTION NO 5 OF 2023  
PROVIDING FOR BLANKET BOND FOR ALL  
PUBLIC OFFICERS OF ROCKLAND COUNTY  
AND FIXING AMOUNT OF COVERAGE**

**GRANT/CORNELL: UNAN.**

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 2.01 (h) of the Charter, all officers, clerks or employees of the County of Rockland shall be included in a blanket bond issued in accordance with the provisions of County Law Section 40 and Public Officers Law Section 11; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section C3.02 (d) of the Rockland County Charter, the County Executive shall examine and approve or disapprove the sufficiency of sureties on official bonds and undertakings; and

WHEREAS, the coverage for said blanket bond have previously been reviewed by the Rockland County Department of Law, the Rockland County Insurance Department and the Rockland County Legislature in 2021; and

WHEREAS, sufficient funds exist within the 2023 Budget to fund the premium for said blanket bond, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Legislature of Rockland County hereby approves a blanket bond to provide faithful performance, blanket bond coverage in the amount of \$5,000,000, including the following positions are hereby fixed at \$5,000,000:

1. Commissioner of Finance
2. Budget Director
3. Deputy Budget Director
4. Deputy Commissioner of Finance
5. Commissioner of Social Services
6. County Clerk
7. Director of Purchasing
8. Assistant Director of Purchasing
9. Commissioner of Mental Health
10. Commissioner of Personnel
11. Commissioner of Health
12. Commissioner of Planning
13. District Attorney
14. Director of Insurance & Risk Management
15. Executive Director Sewer Operations & Engineering
16. Sheriff
17. Rockland Community College President
18. Rockland Community College Vice President of Finance and Administration
19. Rockland Community College Associate Vice President of Finance/Controller
20. Rockland Community College Director of Finance
21. Rockland Community College Bursar
22. All other Commissioners, Department Heads, and Directors, and anyone acting in their capacity

and; be it further

RESOLVED, that the Legislature of Rockland County hereby approves a blanket bond to provide faithful performance, blanket bond coverage in the amount of \$5,000,000, and; be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk to the Legislature is directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Rockland County Director of Insurance and Risk Management, and; be it further

RESOLVED, that the County Executive is hereby requested to endorse his approval on said blanket bond and to sign any and all documents in furtherance of this resolution.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 06 OF 2023  
DESIGNATION OF THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS AND SUPPLEMENTAL  
PUBLICATIONS OF THE COUNTY OF ROCKLAND**

**JOBSON/WIEDER: UNAN.**

WHEREAS, the Legislature of Rockland County having heretofore appointed the *Rockland Journal News* as the official newspaper of the County of Rockland; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of Rockland County has previously designated several newspapers as supplemental publications; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of Rockland County having determined that the due process rights of the people of Rockland County will be enhanced by the occasional supplemental publication of legal advertising of the County of Rockland in supplemental publications, as aforesaid; and

WHEREAS, the publication of Rockland County legal notices in said supplemental publication shall be discretionary and for informational purposes only, said papers are not designated as an official publication of the county and need not be used in every instance of the County giving official notice; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that for the year 2023 the *Rockland Journal News* is designated the official newspaper of the County of Rockland for the purpose of publishing all local laws, notices and other matters required by law to be published and that the following:

*Haiti Infos*  
*El Sol de New York*  
*El Clarin Inc.*

are appointed as supplemental publications, for informational purposes of the County of Rockland for the purpose of discretionary publication of legal advertising for the County of Rockland and all its departments and any other advertising authorized by the Legislature.

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**Nomination by the Honorable Michael M. Grant**

Thank you, Chairman Hood. Congratulations and best wishes for another very productive year!

Congratulations as well to Vice Chairwoman Paul, our Clerk Larry Toole and our Deputy Clerk Mary Widmer for your re-appointments. Your exceptional and gracious service is much appreciated by all.

Our next order of business is to select the 2023 caucus leaders. Tonight, it is my pleasure once again to nominate Legislator Alden Wolfe as our Majority Leader. Full disclosure, Alden told me I could skip the traditional curricula vitae, but I would be remiss if I didn't say – I can assure there's a lot there! And I would know. In my time here on the Legislature I don't think there is any other colleague that I've nominated more times, for more leadership positions – Chair, Vice Chair, Majority Leader, and Deputy Majority Leader – than Alden Wolfe.

It goes without saying, Alden has proven to be a dynamic, vocal, and energetic leader of our caucus. He is known to his colleagues as an innovative, thoughtful, and prodigious lawmaker. His interest in public policy is broad and diverse. He willingly shares his knowledge, passion, and experience with all of us.

2022 was no exception. Alden worked diligently in our caucus and across the aisle as Majority Leader and Co-Chair of the Redistricting Committee to get things done. We can expect more of the same in 2023.

Thank you, Mellissa, Morgan, Mario and Matthew, for your loving support of Alden. It energizes his work here!

I am proud to have had the opportunity to work with Alden and I am equally proud to nominate him tonight.

Thank you.

**Second the nomination by the Honorable Aron B. Wieder**

Legislator Alden Wolfe brings so many valuable skills to the position of Majority Leader. He is an accomplished attorney, an experienced elected representative, and most importantly, someone who truly cares about people. I've known Legislator Wolfe for several years and I am honored to not only call him my Legislative colleague, but also my personal friend. He's always open to sharing his knowledge and experience and is always focused on the best ways to serve Rockland residents and business.

Majority Leader Wolfe has a wide range of interests that have often led him to successfully propose county laws to make a difference. The environment, including adequate drinking water and proper notification, pesticides used, human rights, protections of lands that belong to the Ramapough Lenape Nation, consumer protection, including passages of a law to require housing cooperatives to make a timely decision on applications by prospective buyers. This is just a sprinkling of the many initiatives he has spearheaded. It was then Chairman Wolfe who helped steer the Legislature through the worst days of the pandemic, making sure the staff was safe. Legislators were able to carry on with their governmental business, do these through virtual meetings and other measures.

Alden is a devoted father; everyone could attest to that, and very proud of his daughter Morgan, he is a loving husband of Melissa and stepdad to Mario and Matthew. He has proven his leadership abilities time and again, and he's never lost sight of the most important goal to positively serve Rockland County's residents to the very best of his ability.

It is an honor and a privilege to second his nomination as Majority Leader of the Rockland County Legislature.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 07 OF 2023  
ELECTION OF MAJORITY LEADER  
(TO BE VOTED ON BY MAJORITY MEMBERS ONLY)**

**GRANT/WIEDER: UNAN.**

RESOLVED, that pursuant to the Laws of Rockland County Section 149-7 that Hon. Alden H. Wolfe, Legislative District 6, be and is hereby elected Majority Leader of the Rockland County Legislature for the year 2023.

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**Statement by the Honorable Alden H. Wolfe Majority Leader**

Thank you. First, I do want to thank, obviously all my colleagues, I really appreciate the confidence year in and year out. Michael and Aaron, for your kind words, thank you very much for giving the abridged version, because you know, we are the only ones standing between the rest of us going home tonight and perhaps having dinner with our families. So, I do want to thank you all very much.

I look forward to working again with the Minority Leader, whoever that may end up being, and working collaboratively toward achieving the goals that we all have, which is to make Rockland County the best possible place for friends, families and loved ones to live in.

As Majority Leader, it is my prerogative to appoint a Deputy Majority leader, and I would like to again appoint Legislator Philip Soskin as Deputy Majority leader. Phil is always interested and engaged and attends all of the meetings, puts the time in and he's someone that I think we all have confidence in. Thank you, Phil.

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**Nomination by the Honorable Christopher J. Carey**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, it is my honor and privilege to nominate Legislator Lon Hofstein for Minority Leader. Lon once again led his caucus through another productive and successful year. Cat herding any group of politicians is never an easy task. Lon leads by example and always protects his members. That is why it is my pleasure to nominate Lon Hofstein to Minority Leader for 2023

**Second the Nomination by the Honorable Douglas J. Jobson**

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to second the nomination for Mr. Hofstein to be Minority Leader. As Mr. Carey said he has done a great job of keeping everybody in the loop, working well with everyone and trying to always bring the issues that are important to the people forward. It's my pleasure to second his nomination.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 8 OF 2023  
ELECTION OF MINORITY LEADER  
(TO BE VOTED ON BY MINORITY MEMBERS ONLY)**

**CAREY/JOBSON: UNAN.**

RESOLVED, that pursuant to the Laws of Rockland County Section 149-7, that Hon. Lon M. Hofstein, Legislative District 5, be and is hereby elected Minority Leader of the Rockland County Legislature for the year 2023.

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**Statement by the Honorable Lon M. Hofstein, Minority Leader**

To the members of the Minority, I thank you for the honor and the privilege to continue serving as the Minority Leader. To me, the role of minority leader means, to take the time to listen and understand the position of the members of the caucus. Finding a way to come to a compromise and form a position, that I will carry to the members of the majority as well as to the members of the administration. Over the years, I have reached out to you, so that I may hear your opinions, look for your counsel and have always appreciated your support.

We start the year 2023 with the county in a strong financial position. This does not mean we can sit back and relax, for as we read and are experiencing, the stability of our economy is in question. We must remain prudent in the decisions we make for our constituents depend on us to make the right decisions.

In recent years, the members of the majority and minority have been working together and I hope that this will continue. We should never forget that in a true compromise no one leaves happy.

In closing I will share a quote from Socrates "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new".

Minority Leader Lon M. Hofstein appointed Legislator Vincent D. Tyler as Deputy Minority Leader.

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Introduced by:  
Hon. Jay Hood, Jr., Sponsor

Referral No. 9537

**RESOLUTION NO. 09 OF 2023  
APPROVING RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR VIDEOCONFERENCING IN EXTRAORDINARY  
CIRCUMSTANCE PURSUANT TO  
LOCAL LAW NO. 13 OF 2022 AND CHAPTER 123 – OPEN GOVERNMENT**

**GANT/EARL: M.V.**

WHEREAS, On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Governor Hochul signed new legislation codified as Public Officers Law § 103-a that includes amendments to the Open Meetings Law (OML) to make permanent (until July 1, 2024) the expanded use of videoconferencing by public bodies to conduct open meetings, under extraordinary circumstances, regardless of a declaration of emergency; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature of Rockland County has determined that it is in the best interest of its members, and the public alike, to allow for videoconferencing in extraordinary circumstances, as this will allow for its members to participate and carry forward the business of the County in an effective and efficient manner; and

WHEREAS, on May 17, 2022, the Legislature adopted Local Law No. 6 of 2022 which amended Chapter 149 – *Rules of the Legislature* – and created §149-41 - *Videoconferencing in Extraordinary Circumstances* - to allow for remote participation by its members in extraordinary circumstances; and

WHEREAS, on December 28, 2022, the Legislature adopted Local Law No. 13 of 2022, which repealed §149-41- *Videoconferencing in Extraordinary Circumstances* and created Chapter 123 – *Open Government* – which allowed the Legislature as well as all county boards and commissions to opt into allowing videoconferencing for its meetings upon the adoption of a resolution establishing rules and procedures for videoconferencing in case of extraordinary circumstances that complies with NYS Public Officers Law §103; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Local Law No. 13 of 2022 and the newly enacted Chapter 123 – *Open Government*, the Legislature wishes to adopt said rules and procedures; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Legislature hereby amends Chapter 149 – *Rules of the Legislature* – to include the following:

**§ 149-41 Videoconferencing in Extraordinary Circumstances**

- A. Members of the Legislature of Rockland County shall be physically present at meetings unless a member is unable to be physically present at the meeting location due to extraordinary circumstances. For the purposes of this section:**
- (1) **“extraordinary circumstances” shall include illness or disability, supported by medical documentation, caregiving responsibilities, or any other significant or unexpected factor or event which precludes the member’s physical attendance at such a meeting. Extraordinary circumstances shall not include planned vacations or trips, unless such a trip is for County business.**
  - (2) **“physically present” shall mean in-person attendance at a location or locations open to in-person physical attendance by the public and which location or locations have been included on the meeting notice.**
- B. Should a member of the Legislature need to attend and participate in a meeting via videoconferencing due to extraordinary circumstances, the member shall notify the Clerk to the Legislature in advance of the meeting.**
- C. If videoconferencing is used to conduct its meetings pursuant to this section, a minimum number of members must be physically present at the meeting location or locations to meet the quorum requirement pursuant to § 149-2.**
- D. If videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting pursuant to this section, the public notice for the meeting shall inform the public:**
- (1) **that videoconferencing will be used;**
  - (2) **where the public can view such meeting;**
  - (3) **where required documents and records will be posted or available; and**
  - (4) **identify the physical location or locations for the meeting where the public can attend, in accordance with Public Officers Law § 103-a(2) and § 104(4).**

- E. Except in the case of executive sessions conducted pursuant to Public Officers Law §105, the Legislature shall ensure that its members can be heard, seen and identified, while the meeting is being conducted, including but not limited to any motions, proposals, resolutions, and any other matter formally discussed or voted upon.
- F. If videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting pursuant to this section, the Legislature shall accept public comments by email only and the public notice for the meeting shall provide an email address where comments can be sent.
- G. If videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting pursuant to this section, the Legislature shall provide the opportunity for members of the public to view such meeting via video in real time.
- H. Each meeting conducted using videoconferencing shall be recorded and such recordings linked to or posted on the Legislature's website within five business days following the meeting and shall remain so available for a minimum of five years thereafter. Such recordings shall be transcribed upon request.
- I. The minutes of the meetings involving videoconferencing pursuant to this section shall include which, if any, members participated remotely and shall be available to the public pursuant to § 106 of the Public Officers Law.
- J. Meetings of the Legislature that are broadcast or that use videoconferencing shall utilize technology to permit access by members of the public with disabilities consistent with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, and corresponding guidelines. For the purposes of this section, "disability" shall have the meaning defined in § 292 of the executive law.
- K. The in-person participation requirements of this section shall not apply during a state disaster emergency declared by the governor pursuant to section twenty-eight of the executive law, or a local state of emergency proclaimed by the County Executive pursuant to section twenty-four of the executive law, if the Legislature determines that the circumstances necessitating the emergency declaration would affect or impair its ability to hold an in-person meeting.
- L. These written procedures governing videoconferencing in extraordinary circumstances shall be conspicuously posted on the Legislature's website upon its adoption.
- M. This section expires and is deemed repealed the same date that § 103-a of the Public Officers Law expires and is deemed repealed, but in no event later than July 1, 2024.

The vote resulted as follows:

Ayes:	12	(Legislators Cornell, Earl, Grant, Hofstein, Jobson, Santulli, Soskin, Wieder, Wolfe, Yeger, Paul, Hood, Jr.)
Nays:	02	(Legislators Carey, Foley)
Absent:	02	(Legislators Falciglia, Tyer)
Vacant:	01	(Legislative District 15)

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Mrs. Santulli

I am voting yes on this, but I just wanted to bring to attention letter "F" with the ability for the public to comment at meetings. I have been approached by several people within the community that would prefer that they have the opportunity to attend to be able to speak. They feel that it is a right of theirs that is being denied, because people choose to be home and not here in person, that those people will have the ability to email if they choose. But those that are here be allowed to speak. I am just conveying messages that have been sent to me and constituents that would like to be able to have the opportunity to speak to us live here again.

Chairman Hood, Jr.

I did see some comments on Facebook and thought about answering them and I was like, no I am not going to dive into that, but there is a reason why it is the way it is, and we really can't change it. So, I'll have counsel explain why.

Elana Yeger, Esq.

Under the State Law and with State guidance on this, we have been told that in a situation that we are allowing video conferencing and there are legislators that are participation remotely, just as we must treat the Legislators who are participating virtually the same as the Legislators who are participating in person, we are required to treat the members of the public the same as those watching virtually and those that are in the room. Because the members of the public that are watching online cannot comment in real time, we cannot allow those in the room to comment in real time. It would be treating them differently. It would not be an equal treatment. Therefore, for people to be treated in the same way, everybody must submit their comments by emails, those emails are distributed to all Legislators and when appropriate are made part of the record. What I will say is if there is a time for some reason we are not streaming, which could happen at some point, and nobody is watching virtually, public participation would be allowed at that point in person. Only when we are utilizing the video conferencing law that everybody must be treated the same way. We do not have a choice on that.

Mr. Grant

Can that be changed at the State level, for instance, could the State introduce legislation that would change that.

Elana Yeger, Esq.

I think it would give them problems with their open meetings and some people being allowed to participate in a way that others could not. I mean the State can do what it wants and change the open meetings law, but under the current understanding and interpretation of the law, I don't think they could not do that.

Chairman Hood, Jr.

Just for the record, I'd like to say that I would like to get back to in-person comments. I wish the law had provided for that. So, we are going to keep looking into it to see if there is anything we can do.

Mr. Foley

I just wanted to reiterate essentially what Legislator Santulli said that the public has been approaching me on this issue. I do think that the way the State wrote the law that we are kind of in a corner. I do want to say that being able to speak to elected officials in person seems like a very basic right of an American and hopefully we can resolve this. Thanks.

Mr. Carey

I don't want to beat the dead horse, but I believe strongly, as Legislator Santulli said, I have been getting a lot of comments and unfortunately, and counsel made this very clear, time and again, and I am not questioning what the law says, but I am telling you that from people on the street, they think we are dodging issues here in the room by not letting them speak. I know that is not the case, but I am just telling you that the perception is that this is a sweetheart deal that we have collectively done by both sides that lets us go do what we are going to do and not have the ability to have people to come here like we have always done and scream at us when they don't agree with what we have done. I would almost say, I would rather go the other way with this and not have the streaming and let the people who are most impacted by this are the ones that show up here and tell us how they feel. I would like to reverse and go back the way we were. I don't think that is legal, but I understand if you have both at the same time you can't have preferential treatment. I would rather eliminate the streaming and give the people the ability to talk directly to us.

Mr. Yeger

I think it's such a good idea that we should invite the County Executive to come in so anybody who wants to talk to him directly can do that, because while everybody talks about how the Legislature needs to be open. I haven't heard anybody say it about the County Executive yet. At other lower levels of government, for example, at the village and town levels, the Chairperson, theoretically, is the elected executive of that municipality. It's only at this level, in fact, at the state level, the public cannot address State Assembly people or Senators directly on the floor of the Assembly and the Senate. You can barely get through the door in my experienced based on dozens of times being up in Albany. Certainly, at the Congressional level no one is allowed to address them directly. So, here's the only place where we have a hybrid. I would love to see the County Executive join us for direct interfacing with the public as well. Thank you.

Vice Chairwoman Paul

Thank you Chair. As Laurie mentioned, I also heard some people complain about this, but maybe we can look into how we can promote and hear their concerns. We must look into that as the Chair mentioned. Maybe we can research how we can provide that opportunity for them. Thank you.

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**ADJOURNMENT IN MEMORY OF HONORABLE PETER RAMUNDO, SR.**

Moved by Legislator Michael M. Grant/Seconded by Chairman Hood, Jr. and Legislator Harriet D. Cornell

**ADJOURNMENT IN MEMORY OF MORRIS S. JONES**

Moved by Chairman Jay Hood, Jr./Seconded by Entire Legislature

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**RESOLUTION NO. 10 OF 2023  
ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Wieder offered the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Jobson and was unanimously adopted (8:03 p.m.)

RESOLVED, that the meeting of the Legislature is hereby adjourned to Thursday, January 19, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Darcy Shapin-Greenberg  
Legislative Operations Coordinator