

Press



Release

11 New Hempstead Road, New City, NY (845) 638-5100 Fax: (845) 638-5675 Email: legclerk@co.rockland.ny.us.

For Immediate Release

Contact: Laura Incalcaterra
Communications Director
Rockland County Legislature
(845) 638-5184

Seven New County Legislators Sworn Into Office

Stilley First African American Woman On County Legislature

Hood Backed For 3rd Term As Chairman

Paul Serves As Vice Chairwoman

Soskin Named Second Vice Chair

*Democrats Elect Wolfe As Majority Leader; Republicans Elect
Hofstein As Minority Leader; Friedman Appointed Deputy Majority
Leader; Jobson Appointed Deputy Minority Leader*

New City, NY (Jan. 4, 2024) – During its organizational meeting last night, the Rockland County Legislature seated seven newly-elected members, including the first African American woman elected to the board.

The Rockland County Legislature also filled its leadership posts for 2024, reelecting Jay Hood Jr. as Chairman and Aney Paul as Vice Chairwoman. Democrats reelected Alden H. Wolfe as Majority Leader and Republicans reelected Lon M. Hofstein as Minority Leader. Philip Soskin was appointed Second Vice Chair. Joel Friedman was appointed Deputy Majority Leader and Doug Jobson was appointed Deputy Minority Leader.

New legislators elected in November were sworn in individually: Paul Cleary (D-Garnerville) by Hon. Judge Rolf Thorsen; Raymond Sheridan III (R-Pearl River) by Assemblyman John McGowan; Beth Davidson (D-Nyack) by Hon. Keith Cornell; Will Kennelly (R-Congers) by Hon. Justice Michael Bongiorno; Jesse Malowitz (D-Suffern) by Hon. Judge Christopher Exias; Thomas Diviny (R-Pearl River) by Hon. Justice Patrick Loftus; and Dana Stilley (D-Piermont) by the Hon. Judge William Nelson.

All returning legislators, including Itamar Yeger, Toney L. Earl, and Aron Wieder, were sworn in by Rockland County Clerk Donna Silberman.

Laurence O. Toole, the Clerk to the Legislature, was unanimously reappointed to a one-year term, sworn in by District Attorney Thomas Walsh. Mary Widmer was named Deputy Clerk to the Legislature.

“I want to thank my colleagues for their continued confidence in me as I begin my third term as Chairman of the Legislature,” Chairman Hood said. “I take this leadership position very seriously and remain committed to serving for the good of all Rockland County residents and businesses. We have worked hard as a body to find common ground when possible so that we can accomplish a shared vision of goals. I am proud to say that these goals have included not only holding the line on taxes, but actually cutting them. I am hopeful we can continue the trend in 2024.”

Chairman Hood previously served as Vice Chairman and Majority Leader. He has served in the Legislature since 2007 and previously served on the Haverstraw Town Board.

Also an attorney in private practice, Hood earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics from St. Bonaventure University and is a graduate of Villanova School of Law. He and his wife, Julie Meyers, are parents of two sons, Avery, a freshman at Bucknell University, and Quinlan, a sophomore in high school.

Chairman Hood congratulated all of the legislators, including the seven newly-elected members.

“I want to congratulate all of my colleagues who are returning, and I extend a special welcome to the seven new members who’ve joined us tonight,” Chairman Hood said. “One of our seven new members, Legislator Dana Stilley, is the first African American woman to become a Rockland County Legislator and that is something worth noting and worth celebrating.”

Chairman Hood also noted that as 2024 unfolds, County Government is heading into a new reality.

“For the first time in a decade, we are no longer required to submit our budgets for state review and that is because, following years of difficult and deliberate actions, we have turned the county’s fiscal ship around,” Chairman Hood said. “I thank all of the legislators, past and present, who helped us achieve this goal, along with the County Executive and his Administration.”

County government is finally ending its debt service on a deficit reduction bond, has a strong surplus and high credit rating scores, he said.

Chairman Hood noted some of the successes that have been achieved during his terms as Chairman, accomplished through the work of the Legislative and Executive branches:

- Two percent county property tax reduction for 2024.
- No county property tax increase in 2023.
- No county property tax increase in 2022
- Elimination of the county motor vehicle tax and the county residential energy sales tax, the equivalent of a 9.54 percent county property tax cut. Neither was collected in 2023.
- Completion last fall of the new County Highway Department Facility to protect the investment that has been made in highway equipment over the years, everything from snowplows to dump trucks, while also providing a better working environment for county highway workers.
- Increasing the income eligibility for seniors seeking a reduction in property taxes from \$29,000 to \$50,000 for people aged 65 and older.
- Implementing a 10 percent exemption on the assessed value of a volunteer firefighter or ambulance corps worker’s primary home.

- Start of construction on a new Burn Building to enable training for volunteer firefighters.
- Replacement of the dam at the Zebrowski-Morahan Demarest Kill County Park to prevent a potential flooding tragedy in nearby neighborhoods and the downtown business district in New City, the seat of county government.
- The awarding of Rockland's \$63 million in ARPA Funding to assist the recovery of businesses, to promote public safety, improve social services, and to create new green spaces around Rockland County, among other programs. This effort will continue into 2024.

###