



CITY OF PEEKSKILL

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

John G. Testa
Mayor

Peekskill Mayor Creates “Advisory Budget Review Committee” To Help Resolve Financial Challenges.

Respected Community Leaders Deborah L. Milone, Bruce J. Lindenbaum and John Reilly.

Committee Members Will Provide Business Expertise, Citizen Input.

For Immediate Release

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PEEKSKILL, NY—An “Advisory Budget Review Committee” consisting of some of the city’s most respected business and community leaders has been created by Mayor John G. Testa to help Peekskill deal with the intensely challenging financial situation the City is currently facing.

As part of his annual “State of the City” presentation, Mayor Testa said he planned to create this committee “comprised of individuals with strong fiscal and business backgrounds to serve in the budget development process” and that the “committee will assist in evaluating services, equitable shared costs and benefits.”

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Municipalities throughout New York State and the country have faced unprecedented hardships due to the dramatic increases in costs and fees that have been imposed on the local level.

“State pension contributions and other unfunded mandates as well as record breaking increases in insurance costs have placed us in a position where we are going to have to make difficult, painful choices,” Testa says. “Citizen input is imperative with a situation of this magnitude, and I am pleased and proud that such respected members of our community have proven willing to step up to assist us in making the hard choices we face.”

Deborah L. Milone, Bruce J. Lindenbaum and John Reilly are the commission members. Each of them has many years of community service and business experience.

Deborah Milone was the first female president in the 80-year history of Peekskill’s Rotary Club. She is also currently on the board of directors of the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce, where she was named volunteer of the year in 2001, and serves on the City’s Zoning Board of Appeals, among many other activities.

Milone is currently vice president of marketing at Guide Communications and was publisher of The Peekskill Herald.

Bruce Lindenbaum helped steer the then Peekskill Cortlandt Chamber of Commerce, towards some of the greatest growth in its history during his term as its president. Lindenbaum is one of the founders of Peekskill Celebration and is currently its chairman.

Lindenbaum is also chairman of the Local #21 Plumbers & Steamfitters Benefit Funds, a vice president of the Hudson Valley Hospital Foundation, and former president

of the First Hebrew Congregation. In the business world, as president of Frank & Lindy Plumbing & Heating Inc. and of Frank & Lindy Service Company, Lindenbaum has helped make both businesses into the most successful operations of their kind in the region.

John Reilly is a longtime veteran of the New York State Banking Department. He retired from the organization as Assistant Deputy Superintendent of Banks. Among his responsibilities were the analysis of risks facing the banks the agency supervised and the management of the Year 2000 conversion of all financial institutions licensed and supervised by New York State.

“Any decisions we make will have a significant impact on the community,” Testa says. “Our city is already operating at a very high level of efficiency. During last year’s difficult budgeting process, we cut away virtually every ounce of fat from our local government operations,” he says.

“Over the last year we have made fundamental changes in many of our basic policies and procedures. Now we will face even tougher choices. And it is imperative that we utilize both the wisdom of our citizens and give them a chance to take part in this process,” Testa says.

Besides setting up the budget committee, Peekskill is taking other steps to ensure that this year’s financial decisions are made as quickly and efficiently as possible. Department heads have already been working generating budgetary information for several weeks. At the beginning of this year the City Council appointed new auditors with an extensive municipal background, who are conducting an intensive analysis of the city government’s books.

Work on the city's budget has started months earlier than usual in an effort to keep time constraints from disrupting the decision making process. Department heads are analyzing their costs, staffs and functions to an unprecedented degree. "I know this is a stressful time for City employees, and I deeply appreciate the work they are doing," Testa says.

"This committee follows with my philosophy of open, inclusive and honest government," Testa says. "The more community involvement in the governmental process, the more trust and support is created. We have no easy choices, and we will have to make some important decisions, and all those who speak of open government should be pleased and proud that we have taken this step."

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