ROCKLAND BUSINESS ASSOCIATION LUNCHEON

BY: Keith S. Shikowitz, Editor in Chief/Investigative Reporter

The Rockland Business Association (RBA) held its November luncheon at the Hotel Nyack on November 19, 2026. The keynote speaker was County Executive Ed Day who delivered a State of the County type speech. Jeffrey Greenberg was the emcee for the event. He opened by thanking the media outlets that were in attendance, "I want to thank the Rockland News, Rockland Business Journal, and the Rockland Post for joining us this afternoon for our November luncheon for the RBA."



Jeffrey Greenberg CEO RBA

"A couple weeks ago we submitted and, and disseminated, our new bylaws to the community, 18 years that we had, pre-existing bylaws, and we worked very hard to update them for modern times and the modern needs of our board and our members. With regards to that, we have, a new slate of, our executive board as well as, new board members, so. On that note, I'm going to call up the chairman of the RBA, Michael Beckerle, to proceed with motions, pageantry. All the fun stuff. Greenberg explained.

Beckerle took to the podium. "I'm Mike Beckerle, Chair of the RBA board, Beckerle Lumber. We have 4 locations in Rockland County. I'm going to be boring as usual, but more boring than usual, I guess, because I'm going to pretty much read a script here. There's 2 main, orders of business. First, We to call to order the official annual membership meeting of the Rockland Business Association. Again, I'm going to read and apologize for that."

He said that this is an important moment for the RBA as they continue to strengthen their organization, modernize their governance and position themselves for continued growth and success. As chair of the board, he called the annual membership meeting of the RBA to order. The first order of business is the adoption of the RBA's revised bylaws.

https://youtu.be/bG0XE0wjdvg

"Thank you very much. The next order of business is the election of the Board of Directors. Jeffrey had sent out a list of the board of directors. We want to make sure that the strength of the RBA comes not only from our membership but also from the dedicated individuals who volunteer time, expertise and leadership to guide this organization.

Our board plays an essential role in shaping the association's strategic direction, ensuring that we continue to serve Rockland County's business community. Again, I apologize for all the reading. I'd like to improvise better than this, but I want to welcome John Fredette of O&R and Sophia. The board of directors has approved the slate of nominees for election by the membership. At this time, I will entertain a motion to elect the slate of directors as presented.

He asked for a motion and a second which he got and the vote was unanimous for approval of the slate of directors.

"It's very quiet. Everybody's paying attention or are you falling asleep? The final thing is the recognition of the 2027 Executive Leadership."

He read the list of the names of the Executive Leadership people.

"I just want to recognize those people, so we can get a little round of applause for the new leadership, especially for me. Under our newly adopted bylaws, the formal election of officers is conducted by the Board of Directors at its meeting immediately following this annual membership meeting, so we look forward to formally confirming this leadership. Some closing remarks is only about 15 minutes longer."

He concluded the business part of the meeting by stating, as they look forward to 2027, he wanted to emphasize that today's actions are more than governance. They're about building the RBA that is stronger, more accountable, more engaged, and better positioned to advocate for the businesses and organizations that make Rockland County such a special place.

"Our mission remains clear to serve our members and promote the economic well-being of Rockland County to a board or members and our partners, thank you for your continued confidence in the RBA. So, with no further business before the membership, I will entertain a motion to adjourn the annual membership meeting."

The motion was made and seconded and the meeting was officially adjourned. Greenberg came back to the podium.

Beckerle added, "I do have one little comment I want to make if I could just do not too much preaching, but last week was Veterans Day and I saw a thing on PBS Newshour. Judy Woodworth had a little thing about Veterans Day. I thought it was very, appropriate, and it kind of woke me up a little bit, you know, we all say thank you to the veterans as we pass them,

I think, but one comment, one of the veterans made was that we all have to be Americans worth fighting for. I thought was a very powerful statement. I'm going to leave on that note

Greenberg returned and opened with a joke. "We were going to do sprinklers and a fireworks show because that is just tremendously exciting to you all we know that's why you came today to see that unfortunately the fire department wouldn't let us do that."

"I do want to thank, Mr. Mike Beckerle for his chairmanship over the past year and into 2027 he's been an exceptional partner to work with. He's an avid supporter of the community, not just himself, but as well his company, his brothers, they're tremendous, to us and to everyone beyond. Thank you very much, Mike, for all that you do for us. Today's lunch is sponsored by Teno West. I'd like to take a moment for Teno to join us to give us a couple of words."

"Thank you everyone. I tend to try to sponsor this event every year but I'm always, interested in hearing what our County Exec has to say about all the great things happening in Rockland County. This is a large crowd this year.

I've really enjoyed the, getting to meet, new people as well as touch base with people I haven't talked to since last year. These are great events that the RBA puts together and, I love being a sponsor and continue to be a sponsor of the RBA and this time I just want to say thank you all. Thank you all for coming being yourselves, being sponsors in all your own ways for the RBA. Let's have a great lunch every afternoon and look forward to hearing what Ed Day has to say about the great things happening in Rockland County, great things to come. Thank you very much."

"As we close out November, just wanted you to know, remind everyone we don't have a luncheon in December, and earlier in this month we, had elections, everybody knows, and there's, quite a transition not only locally but nationally." Greenberg stated.

"I do want to recognize a couple of people in the room, first and foremost representing, Senator Bill Weber we have John Mulgrew former State Senator David Carlucci, Doctor Francis Pratt. County legislator, Will Kennelly, Town supervisor -elect from Clarkstown, Eugene Bondar.

On that note, The only person in the world who didn't have an election this year was, our primary speaker today and I thought there's no better person to introduce that speaker than his genuinely good friend and, my senior advisor and former president and CEO of the RBA Mr. Al Samuels."

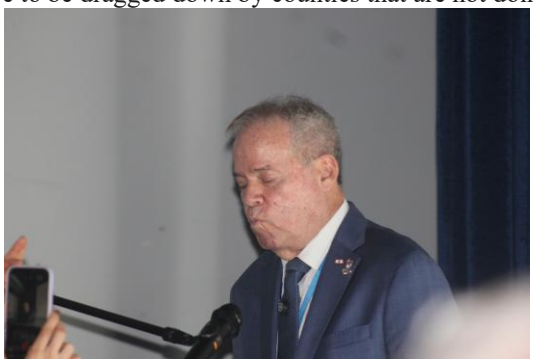
"Mike, I first would like to thank you on behalf of all veterans for what you said. I'm sure it's echoed wherever veterans gather. Ed Day, friend of 30 years. Professionally and personally. Today, Rockland County has the greatest fiscal strength of all 62 counties in the state of New York, and that's according to Tom DiNapoli, the state comptroller. Our taxes have been kept low. We have a new comprehensive plan. Under Ed's direction, we have an official Office of Economic Development. Tourism and film, which has done great work and which we worked with very closely, I did previously, Jeff does now, and all of that is to the good of Rockland County. I, like Teno, I very anxious to hear what Ed has to say about where we are from his perspective and where we are going, ladies and gentlemen, our County Executive Ed Day.

https://youtu.be/nEWjMoCYF4M

Day continued, "While Rockland County's financial position is stronger than ever, we are not immune to the challenges that are ahead. Rising healthcare costs, pension costs coupled with new financial burdens passed down by Albany and the federal government are making it increasingly difficult for counties to maintain essential services without placing additional strain upon our beleaguered taxpayers. One of our greatest concerns involves the changes to the SNAP programs, the supplemental nutrition Assistance Program. Beginning October 1, 2026, the federal government's share of the SNAP administrative course dropped from 50% to 25%. Under New York's current funding structure, counties must cover the full non-federal share, increasing our responsibility from 50% to 75% on those costs."

According to Day, that is not sustainable and there's no way of putting it, but it's happening right under our noses, and it's important that people pay attention and speak up when you have to. When it comes to levels of government that are above us and we don't have control over. But that's only part of the of the concern. The second challenge involves new SNAP benefit cost sharing requirements tied to statewide payment error rates.

"It angers me to have to have to tell people who've been working their you know what off to make sure that we are doing the best we can and then have to be dragged down by counties that are not doing the job.



County Executive Ed Day

Recent state data put Rockland's error rate at 5.6% below the 6% threshold. By placing it at the highest costs here, because we're doing the job the right way, we would be exempt from this based upon what we're told. But look a little deeper into what they're saying. What they're forgetting to tell you is that they're not measuring county by county because they don't know how to deal with that. Literally, that's the response we got. I don't know how to do that. So, they go by the state. The state's over 10%." Day explained.

"Because New York State is horrible at monitoring these programs, the rest of the counties that have been doing the job are going to have to paying the bill. That is just not right, no other way of putting it, but unfortunately, it happens to be govern all too often. Whether Albany will pass these benefits costs down to us remains to be unresolved, but the potential financial consequences are significant. Without state action to absorb these burdens, Rockland projects a potential impact of approximately $6.8 million in 2007 and nearly 20.6 million in 2018. We cannot continue that on the road. We're working very hard to make sure we maintain levels of funding. We cannot continue to do that. We have already accounted for the anticipated 2027 course in our proposed budget, which is still holding county property taxes flat this year in 2027, but we can't keep going to the well."

https://youtu.be/pgfDCux7V1I

He stated that this purchase was a record-breaking 236 acres. That is the largest purchase ever made under the county's open space acquisition program. That is significant. I do have a folder that I open up once in a while that talks about what my campaign platform was in 2014, and one of the major things we had in there was preserving Rockland and preserving as we now remember, we worked together on this. Open space was critically important to make sure that we have, we moderate the expansions that are going on in Rockland County.

He concluded, "In 2027, we're working on enhancing trails and recreation across our parks and open space purchases, and of course, we'll be seeking grant funds to cover these courses whenever possible. This brings me back to why gatherings like today are so important. The Strong government and strong business community go hand in hand. That has not always been the case. It is the case the last few years and will continue to be the case here in Rockland County. When government runs efficiently, businesses benefit from greater stability and predictability. The business people out there know exactly what I'm talking about. Here in Rockland, we will continue doing what we've been done since day one, making responsible decisions, protecting taxpayer dollars, and planning not just for the next budget cycle, but for the next generation. Because our goal has never been to simply balance the budget. Our goal has been to build a county that is financially strong, economically competitive, and a place where businesses can thrive and families can afford to call home. That is the Rockland County we have worked to build, and that is the Rockland County we are committed to protecting. Thank you very much for your time."

As people were being served their lunch, Greenberg came back to the podium and went over the events that the RBA had planned for the near future. He thanked everyone for attending and hoped to see everyone at the holiday parties.