

2009 GUIDE TO THE SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

A Message from Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay



Never have County Legislators been more important than in recent years as they find themselves pinned between federal or state mandates and local needs. Issues once addressed only in the halls of Congress or state capitols are now being debated in county legislatures throughout the nation. Programs once funded with federal dollars are now being funded through state and local budgets. Like never before, the decisions made by the County Legislature impact the citizenry.

The Suffolk County Legislature has a long track record of passing innovative, groundbreaking legisla-

tion that Counties and States across America look to emulate.

For our democratic system of government to prosper, it is vital that citizens get involved in government at all levels. We want your participation and input. We encourage you to be familiar with our process, to be informed on the issues, and to share your thoughts, concerns and ideas with us.

This guide serves to explain the legislative process in Suffolk County. At a time when citizen apathy is on the rise across the country, it is our hope that those learning from this guide will translate their knowledge into involvement. Our system depends on it.

Suffolk County Legislators

District	Legislator	District	Legislator	District	Legislator
1	Edward P. Romaine	7	Jack Eddington	13	Lynne C. Nowick
2	Jay H. Schneiderman	8	William J. Lindsay	14	Wayne R. Horsley
3	Kate M. Browning	9	Ricardo Montano	15	DuWayne Gregory
4	Brian Beedenbender	10	Cameron Alden	16	Steven H. Stern
5	Vivian Vilorio-Fisher	11	Thomas F. Barraga	17	Lou D'Amaro
6	Daniel P. Losquadro	12	John M. Kennedy, Jr.	18	Jon Cooper

History of the Suffolk Legislature

The Suffolk County Legislature was established in January 1970, thus replacing the 200-year-old Board of Supervisors. With the establishment of the Suffolk County Legislature, the county was divided into 18 legislative districts. Every two years, the residents of each of the districts elect a representative to the Legislature. Every ten years, after each U.S. Census is tallied, the boundaries of the legislative districts are redrawn according to the redistribution of the population.



Powers of the Legislature

Based on the Suffolk County Charter, the Suffolk County Legislature has the power to:

- Organize, alter and abolish any unit of County government or to transfer any function or duty from one such unit to another.
- Make appropriations, levy taxes and incur indebtedness for the purpose of carrying out any of the powers and duties conferred or imposed on the County or any Officer, Board, Commission or other authority.
- Investigate the performance of any of the functions, offices or departments of Suffolk County government.

How the Legislature Works

The Suffolk County Legislature is the elected body that is responsible for setting County policies, reviewing the administration of government, appropriating funding, levying taxes, reviewing and adopting the annual budget.

The Legislature is comprised of 18 County Legislators who are elected to two-year terms to represent the citizens residing in a Legislative District.

“General Meetings” of the County Legislature occur 14 times a year in the Legislative Auditorium at the William H. Rogers Legislature Building in Hauppauge or at the Evans K. Griffing Building in Riverhead. Live audio-feeds of our sessions are broadcast on the Internet.



Presiding Officer Lindsay Chairs the Legislative Meetings.

Now, when the Legislature is in session, interested individuals can log-on to our web site, www.SuffolkCountyNy.gov/legis, and listen to our discussion and our votes. Prior to each General Meeting, the Legislature holds Committee Week. There are eleven (11) standing committees of the Legislature. The public is always welcome to attend both the Legislative and Committee Meetings.

2009 Suffolk County Legislature General Meeting Schedule

Feb. 3	9:30 a.m.	Hauppauge
March 3	9:30 a.m.	Hauppauge
March 24	4:00 p.m.	Hauppauge
April 28	9:30 a.m.	Hauppauge
May 12	9:30 a.m.	Hauppauge
June 9	9:30 a.m.	Hauppauge
June 23	9:30 a.m.	Riverhead
Aug 4	4:00 p.m.	Hauppauge
Aug 18	9:30 a.m.	Riverhead
Sept 17	9:30 a.m.	Hauppauge
Oct 13	9:30 a.m.	Hauppauge
Nov. 4	10:00 a.m.	Hauppauge
Nov. 17	9:30 a.m.	Hauppauge
Dec. 1	9:30 a.m.	Hauppauge
Dec. 15	9:30 a.m.	Hauppauge

Legislative Committees

Leadership, membership, jurisdiction and schedule of Legislative Committees are determined by the Presiding Officer who also assigns each bill to a committee. Committee leadership is the Committee Chair and Vice Chair. Committees discuss proposals, bring in experts to inform committee members, listen to testimony from concerned citizens and vote on bills. If a bill is

tabled in Committee, it will appear on the Committee's next agenda under "Tabled Resolutions." If a bill is passed through the committee, or receives the approval of a majority of the Members present, it will move to the agenda of the next regularly scheduled General Meeting for consideration by the full legislature.

2009 Committee Assignments & Schedule

Monday Committees

1/26, 2/23, 3/16, 4/20, 5/4, 6/1, 6/15, 7/27, 8/10, 9/11 (Fri.), 10/5, 10/19*, 11/9, 11/23, 12/7

Veterans & Seniors 11:30 a.m.

STERN - Chair
EDDINGTON - Vice Chair
Browning, Montano, Schneiderman
Environment, Planning & Agriculture 1:00 p.m.
SCHNEIDERMAN - Chair
D'AMARO - Vice Chair
Beedenbender, Cooper, Losquadro

All Committee Meetings are held in the Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, North County Complex, Bldg. No. 20, North side of Vets Memorial Hwy, Huppauge

Tuesday Committees

1/27, 2/24, 3/17, 4/21, 5/5, 5/19**, 6/2, 6/16, 7/28, 8/11, 9/8, 10/6, 10/20*, 11/10, 11/24, 12/8

Budget & Finance 10:00 a.m.

GREGORY - Chair
D'AMARO - Vice Chair
Beedenbender, Kennedy, Losquadro
Consumer Protection 1:00 p.m.
KENNEDY - Chair
MONTANO - Vice Chair
Beedenbender, D'Amaro, Romaine
Public Works & Transportation 2:00 p.m.
BEEDENBENDER - Chair
STERN - Vice Chair
Horsley, Losquadro, Romaine

**Capital Budget Committee Meetings 5/19 - 5/21

Wednesday Committees

1/28, 2/25, 3/18, 4/22, 5/6, 5/20**, 6/3, 6/17, 7/29, 8/12, 9/9, 10/7, 10/21*, 11/13 (Fri.), 11/19 (Thurs.), 12/9

Ways & Means 10:00 a.m.

D'AMARO - Chair
BEEDENBENDER - Vice Chair
Alden, Nowick, Viloria-Fisher
Parks & Recreation 1:00 p.m.
VILORIA-FISHER - Chair
HORSLEY - Vice Chair
Alden, Nowick, Stern
Economic Development, Higher Education & Energy 2:00 p.m.
HORSLEY - Chair
STERN - Vice Chair
Alden, Kennedy, Viloria-Fisher

*Operating Budget Committee Meetings 10/19 - 10/22

Thursday Committees

1/29, 2/26, 3/19, 4/23, 5/7, 5/21**, 6/4, 6/18, 7/30, 8/13, 9/10, 10/8, 10/22*, 11/12, 11/20 (Fri.), 12/10

Public Safety 9:30 a.m.

EDDINGTON - Chair
GREGORY - Vice Chair
Barraga, Browning, Losquadro
Labor, Workforce & Affordable Housing 1:00 p.m.
NOWICK - Chair
BROWNING - Vice Chair
Barraga, Eddington, Gregory
Health & Human Services 2:00 p.m.
BROWNING - Chair
KENNEDY - Vice Chair
Barraga, Eddington, Gregory

Meeting schedule subject to change. Call to confirm dates and times

How to Speak Before the Legislature

The public, after filling out a "speaker's card," has the opportunity to address the Legislature for three minutes on any topic during the "public portion" at the beginning of each Committee and General meeting. During official "public hearings" which have set times on the General Meeting agenda (2:30 p.m. for day meetings and 6:30 p.m. for night meetings), members of the public who fill out speaker's cards may address the Legislature on specific resolutions

on the agenda. Members of the public are allowed to speak for five minutes during public hearings. Speaker's cards are available from the Legislative Clerk's Office in the lobby before the meetings. Arrive early, speaking order is first come, first heard. Speakers will address the Legislature from the podium in front of the horseshoe. Speakers will have the opportunity to submit their comments in writing to the Legislative Clerk, please bring 20 copies.

Legislation

Proposed bills are filed with the Clerk and "Laid on the table" at each General Meeting. Bills are categorized as:

□ **Resolutions**- only effect the operation of government. Passed by a majority vote of the Legislature

□ **Local Laws**- generally speaking, regulate the behavior of citizens or entities within Suffolk County. Require two public hearings, one held by the Legislature before the Committee may pass it, one held by the County Executive before he/

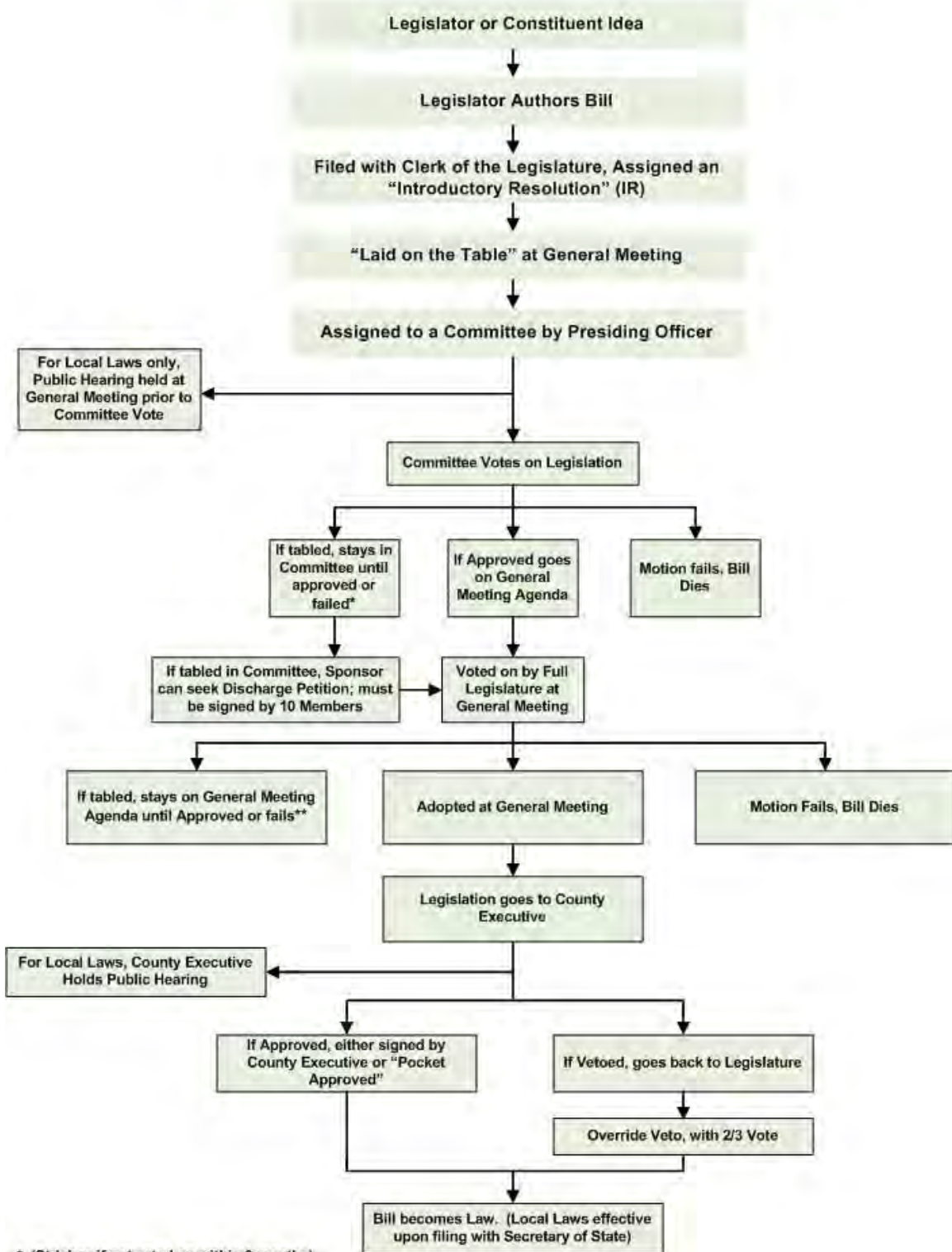
she may sign it. Requires a majority vote of the Legislature for passage. Must be filed with the Secretary of State before it becomes law.

□ **Certificate of Necessity**- may be presented by the County Executive at a General Meeting if the case can be made demonstrating a need for immediate consideration of a Resolution; bypasses Committee process. This requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the body for adoption.

□ **Home Rule message**- a request by the County Legislature for specific leg-

islation from the New York State Legislature concerning the property, affairs, or government of Suffolk County. It is initiated by the State Assembly and/or the Senate. The Home Rule request must accompany State legislation in order for it to be voted on by either House. If the County Executive endorses a Home Rule request a majority vote of the Legislature is necessary. If it is not endorsed by the County Executive, a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Suffolk County Legislature is required.

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



* (Stricken if not acted on within 6 months)
 ** (All Legislation dies at end of 2 year session)