

If Chautauqua County received an unrestricted gift of \$500 thousand, how would you spend it?

Legislators Running response

Elisabeth T. Rankin - Republican District 12 Jamestown

There are many worthy places to spend these funds. I would say the top issues would be:

- Incentives for regionalization and consolidation. Regionalization and consolidation will provide cost savings and provide efficiencies by reducing duplicated services. Incentives would help the transition to the new structure without harming the municipalities involved. Included in the incentives would be to ensure that the neediest in the community would not be harmed by the changes; for example, the new location of a county or town office may be difficult for someone to get to if they have limited transportation. Municipalities, courts, and school districts would all be eligible. Some of the funds may be used as a loan to keep funds in circulation.
- Promoting Chautauqua County to potential businesses. Marketing and promoting Chautauqua County to potential businesses that will bring jobs to the county.
- Assistance for Abandoned and Dilapidated housing. These houses are a blight to our communities. Demolition is costly to the city. Neighbors are concerned about safety, property values and quality of life. Addressing this issue is a signal to prospective employers that we are serious about our neighborhoods, signals current residents that we care about their concerns and input, and improves the overall quality of life in our city and county.

David Wilfong - Republican District 11

I am really partial to my home city of Jamestown. I would give 100,000.00 dollars to the Mental Health Association of Chautauqua County in care of Rick Uber. They are really fighting an uphill battle with the opioid epidemic.

I am also involved with the Blackwell Chapel Baby Café of Jamestown. I would give them 100,000.00 dollars to establish a relationship with UPMC Chautauqua

WCA to give new mothers more options during the Pregnancy and better post-delivery care.

I would give 100,000.00 dollars to the City of Jamestown to use in the demolition of the many abandoned houses in my community.

I would give the Chautauqua County Humane Society 100,000.00 dollars to put into a trust for the operational expenses of that organization.

Lastly, I would give the Jamestown Renaissance Corp. 100,000.00 dollars to further promote their "Grow Jamestown" program and their "Hands on Jamestown" program.

Frank Besse - Democrat District 11

I'd develop a forward-focused, innovative business competition with large cash prizes for aspiring entrepreneurs to create both large and small businesses with a focus on small-scale manufacturing, technology, and office-based employers. This would cultivate talent locally while also drawing in talent from around the region. We would leverage this program to get support supplemental education and programming for the benefit of our entire region. This one-time investment would catalyze a new kind of economic development and have lasting positive impact on our community for years to come.

John Davis - Republican District 16

Recognizing that our county has many deserving individuals, organizations, and groups, I would make the gift available to those who are seeking funds that would benefit public health. Interested parties would be required to fill out an application seeking one of 20 grants of 25,000.00. This would allow for the gift to be distributed in a way that would benefit multiple areas throughout the county. Priority would be given to groups that desire to have an impact on good health through projects such as walking trails, park renovations, or community gardens.

Mark J. Odell - District 7

Many uses for an unrestricted \$500,000.00 to the County would present themselves quickly. Funding for Regional Solutions, the Opioid Crisis, Natural Resource Preservation, or adding to the Reserve Fund would all be admirable. O would allocate this 'gift' to support the good work of a little-known jewel called the Chautauqua County Land Bank. They assist communities in addressing the issues of blight caused by property values and further deterioration of Chautauqua County's housing and commercial stock by stabilizing neighborhoods, encouraging private investment, and improving the quality of life for our citizens \$500,000.00 would fund about 20 blighted home demolitions which would pay off with improved neighborhoods and property values.

County Executive response

George Borrello

I would create a fund for the purpose of funding proper dissolution/merger studies conducted by an independent firm, like the Center for Governmental Research (CGR). This would give municipalities looking to dissolve or merge the proper information to then pass on to their voters. The voters can then make an informed decision when voting on a potential merger or dissolution of a government entity such as a village. 90% of dissolutions votes fail throughout New York State, a mere 10% success rate, because the voters do not have good, unbiased information to work with in most cases. We have a 75% SUCCESS rate in Chautauqua County because we've insured that third-party studies are done so voters have good information to make an informed decision