

New York Coalition



For Open Government, Inc.

Naughty & Nice List 2024

New York Coalition For Open Government, Inc.

Non-Profit | Non-Partisan

***Advocating for timely access to information
& meaningful citizen participation***

www.nyopengov.org

New York City Mayor Eric Adams

- Released his schedule which did not disclose meeting with lobbyists, or phone calls with elected officials.
- Agencies that he oversees such as the NY City Dept of Transportation & the Police Dept have terrible transparency track records.
- The Dept of Transportation typically takes 6 months to respond to FOIL requests and has been sued by Streetsblog twice.
- The Police Dept banished reporters to a trailer outside of police HQ; all press inquires must be in writing and directed to a press office which does not respond promptly; the Dept is encrypting their scanner communication which prevents the public and media from receiving information. A lawsuit by STOP revealed the Dept has delayed 42,000 FOIL requests for over 4 years.

Naughty List 2024

Governor Kathy Hochul

- For not delivering on her promise of a “new era of transparency”.
- For the 2nd year in a row the Governor has vetoed legislation that requires the posting of emergency contracts online.
- The only FOIL legislation signed by the Gov. this year was a law requiring government agencies to notify employees when their records are requested. This bill was opposed by open government groups.

Naughty List 2024

Jim Perry

Niagara Falls City Council President

- For preventing a member of the public from speaking during the public comment portion of a City Council meeting and for requesting to have a police officer remove the individual.
- The individual was speaking about concerns she had regarding the City's animal shelter contract and Mr. Perry did not want to hear it.
- It was terrible conduct on the part of a public official.

Naughty List 2024

City of Amsterdam

- For blocking public access to City Hall by requiring people to have an appointment in order to enter.
- The City also restricted the right to record or take pictures in public places.

Nassau County Police Department

- Has spent 4 years and at least \$100,000 in attorney fees fighting a FOIL request for a phone directory.
- The County has failed to turn over the directory despite multiple court orders and has even been held in contempt of court.
- An outrageous example of the lengths some will go to fight a FOIL request.

Syracuse School Board

- For sending a cease-and-desist letter to a news station asking them to stop contacting board members with questions.

Naughty List 2024

Fredonia Mayor Michael Ferguson

- For not allowing public comments at a Village meeting due to his being annoyed by people speaking about a lawsuit filed against the Village.
- The fact that the Mayor is annoyed by a lawsuit and does not want to hear about is not a reason to ban public comments.

Naughty List 2024

Christopher Scanlon

Buffalo Common Council President

- For many years people have been able to show up at Buffalo Common Council meetings and speak regarding their concerns.
- Scanlon sent an email to his Council colleagues establishing a new rule that requires people to obtain permission from the Committee Chair prior to the meeting in order to speak.

Naughty List 2024

Phil Skowfoe Fulton Supervisor

(Schoharie County)

- On his own eliminated the right of the public to speak at town board meetings. He now requires the public to fill out a form one week prior to the meeting disclosing what you plan to say.
- To make matters worse you are only allowed two minutes at the end of the meeting.

Naughty List 2024

Buffalo Water Board

- For violating the Open Meetings Law by restricting public access to their meetings, not posting meeting minutes as required, and for meeting in a location that is not easily accessible to the public.

Jackie Williams

- For speaking out about the Granville School Board not posting their meeting documents online as required by the Open Meetings Law.
- Due to Jackie's efforts the School Board is now posting their meeting documents online.

Nice List 2024

NY State Authorities Budget Office

Director, Jeffrey Pearlman

- For successfully suing the Orange County Partnership economic development agency.
- The agency argued that they did not have to comply with the Open Meetings Law or Freedom of Information Law.

Nice List 2024

Tompkins County

- The Tompkins County Legislature has made posting county department data online as a way to proactively provide information online.
- The County Legislature also livestreams their meetings and allows the public to comment remotely.

Nice List 2024

Ed Simioni

Southampton Village Trustee

- For speaking out about the importance of addressing Freedom of Information Law requests in a timely manner at a Village Board meeting.

Nice List 2024

Jess Marciano

Medina Village Trustee

- For writing an article in the Orleans Hub educating the public about the Open Meetings Law.

Nice List 2024

Town of Hanover

- For continuing to improve their website after the New York Coalition For Open Government gave their website a failing grade.

Guilderland School Board

- For filling a vacancy on their Board by interviewing candidates in a public session that was videotaped.
- All too often public bodies conduct such interviews behind closed doors.
- There should be nothing secretive about seeking an elected office.

Nice List 2024

Kevin Beary

Colton Town Board Member

- It is rare for an elected official to speak up regarding an improper executive session motion.
- Mr. Beary to his credit did just that.

Nice List 2024

Mark Grimm

Albany County Legislator

- For submitting a great letter to Albany Times Union titled “Public deserves better government transparency”.

**The New York Coalition For Open Government
Is Here to Help**

www.nyopengov.org

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