

To: Ancram Town Board
From: Art Bassin 
Date: August 17, 2010
Subject: Supervisor's Report – July 2010

Financial Results – Tracking along at expected pace

YTD July Financial Results: Revenues through the end of July were \$1,165,000. In July we received our second quarterly sales tax check, of \$53,000, and a \$46,000 Chips State highway aid check. For the rest of the year we expect an additional \$150,000 in sales & mortgage tax revenues, and state highway aid.

Expenses in the general fund and in the highway department through the end of July totaled \$750,000, and continue to track under budget and under last year. Compared to the budget, we are about \$55,000 under. Versus last year, the highway department has spent \$112,000 less through July 2010 than through July 2009, while general town spending is about flat to last year. The town is using savings on business-as-usual to fund the \$81,000 unbudgeted capital spending on the solar panels (\$21,000), the new grader (\$33,500) and the town garage architectural and engineering effort (\$26,000). Cash in the bank was \$1,082,000 at the end of July.

Full Year Estimates: Based on an estimated “normalized” town spending rate of about \$100,000 a month, we should spend an additional \$500,000 over the rest of the year. If we spend at this pace, and we get the \$150,000 in state sales & mortgage tax revenues and highway aid expected by the end of the year, we can anticipate ending the year with about \$700,000 in the bank, excluding any garage related spending or borrowing.

Garage Project

Garage bids are due in this week – the building bids came in yesterday, and the electric, heating and overhead door bids will come in on Thursday. We will have final estimates for the new garage for the Town board meeting on Thursday night. I expect the garage project to come in under \$500,000. Even when it does, we still plan to work with the low bidder in each category to reduce costs further. Two garage communications pieces went out over the past few weeks, explaining what the plans are.

The challenge is to get the garage built by the end of the year so the highway crew can move into new quarters before January 1. We will do this with as little borrowing as possible while we maintain adequate funds in the bank for emergencies.

The special election to get voter approval for borrowing up to \$400,000 to help finance the garage will be on August 21, from 12 to 9 at Town Hall. Once this is approved, I can begin negotiations with the banks for the best interest and repayment terms.

There is still time to register or to get an absentee ballot – contact me or Town Clerk Monica Cleveland if you need help with either one.

Projects & Activities

1. **Public Hearings:** On Thursday August 19, we will be holding public hearings on the proposed extension of the terms of the Town Supervisor, Town Clerk and Town Highway Superintendent to four years from two, and on the proposed revision of the town's cell tower law, prior to the regular Town Board meeting, starting at 6 p.m. at Town Hall. A copy of the proposed revised laws are on the Town web site at www.townofancram.org.

On reflection, I have concluded that it makes sense for the town clerk and highway superintendent to have four-year terms, but I believe it is appropriate for the town supervisor to have a two-year term. The reason is that a two-year term for the supervisor allows voters to either endorse or reject a majority of the town board every other year, which should keep the town board sensitive to the wishes and needs of the voters and responsive to them. But that's what the public hearing is for, to hear your wishes.

2. **Community Days:** Early indications are that Community Days were a financial success and met the objective of raising money to support the playground fund. While the Committee has not yet totaled up all income and costs, it's likely that Community Day activities and events generated several thousand dollars for the playground. Larry Saulpaugh, the individual injured at the tractor pull when his tractor flipped over, has two broken legs. Thanks to fast action from the participants at the tractor pull and the many Ancram firefighters who were there, Larry was freed from under his tractor very quickly, and avoided more extensive injuries.
3. **2011 Budget Process:** I have reviewed all department budget requests, and have a preliminary 2011 budget to share with you. I will email it around in the next day or so, and will have hard copy at the board meeting for town board members. The highway department has identified \$75,000 in annual savings mainly from cutting back on the number of miles of road we will pave, and we have over \$25,000 in savings from the general fund, so it is looking like we will be able to allocate \$100,000 per year to repaying the garage loan and funding a capital projects fund without raising new taxes.
4. **Ramp for Ancramdale Polling Place:** We expect to start work on this project in September, and be done in October. While Neighbors Helping Neighbors raised about \$2500 at their Memorial Day BBQ, we will need about \$6000. I plan to send around an email appeal for donations to the Ramp Fund later this month.
5. **Revaluation Review/GAR Report:** The Revaluation Review Committee is preparing a report on its findings and recommendations, to be available in September or October.

- 6. Town Recreation Plan:** We need a new committee to work on a long-term town recreational plan. This effort would be focused on figuring out how to best use Blass Park and the area around Town Hall that will not be used for the new playground, how to improve the conditions at the swimming pool, what facilities we should consider in Ancramdale & Boston Corner, and how to expand and take advantage of the hiking, biking, hunting and fishing opportunities that exist in Ancram. No volunteers have yet stepped forward to serve on this committee.

- 7. Communications Committee needs to expand email list to keep mailing costs manageable:** Councilwoman Madeleine Israel has managed to get the mailing list down to close to 800 from 1100 over the past few months. But to make mailings more affordable, we need to add even more emails and reduce the mailing list again...so if you know anyone who got the mailing by mail but has an email address, please ask them to let me or Madeleine know who they are, so we can take their names off the mailing list, and save the town some more money. Besides, if you get the news via email, the photos will be in color. By regular mail, everything will be black & white.