

**To: Ancram Town Board**  
**From: Art Bassin**   
**Date: July 11, 2010**  
**Subject: Supervisor's Report – June 2010**

## **Financial Results – Revenues uncertain, costs under budget**

**YTD June Financial Results:** Revenues through the end of June were \$1,052,000. In July we will receive our second quarterly sales tax check, which should be around \$40,000. For the second half of the year, we are expecting an additional \$250,000 in sales & mortgage tax revenues, and state highway aid. Expenses in the general fund and in the highway department through the end of June totaled \$525,000, and continue to track under budget and under last year. Through the end of June, we were \$166,000 under budget, with the highway department contributing \$134,000 of this total. The highway department will use up some of this budget under run in July, as it has been paving roads during the past month. Spending through June is \$156,000 under last year's level of spending, with the highway department contributing \$106,000 of this savings. Cash in the bank totaled \$1,217,000, at the end of June, down about \$82,000 from the end of April.

**Full Year Estimates:** Highway spending will increase in the July-August period as the highway crew continues to repair and pave roads. Based on our average monthly spending rate of \$88,000 through June, we could spend an additional \$525,000 over the rest of the year, plus about \$200,000 on top of that for the incremental cost of road repair. If we spend at this pace, and we get the \$250,000 in state sales & mortgage tax revenues and highway aid budgeted over the next six months, we will end the year with about \$700,000 in the bank, excluding any garage related spending or borrowing.

## **Garage Project**

Over the past month we have continued to work on the plans for the new highway garage and salt shed at the current site on Town Rd. The Town Board has approved resolutions to authorize spending up to \$500,000 to expand and renovate our current garage building from a 32x80 structure to an 80x80 structure. The Board also approved a resolution to borrow up to \$400,000 to finance this new garage facility, subject to a special referendum to approve the loan on August 21. Information about the garage project and the referendum on the garage loan will be sent by mail to all residents in late July and in mid-August. The mailings will explain the garage plan and budget, and how the special referendum will work. We will also schedule special town meetings to go over the garage plan with the architect and the garage committee, so everyone can get their questions answered before the 8/21 referendum on the garage loan. We are on track to put the garage out for bid by 8/1, and we expect to have the bids back before the 8/21 referendum.

## Project & Activities Updates

**1. ATT Cell Tower – Revisions to Town law planned:** Councilman Chris Thomas has reviewed the cell laws from Copake & Malta, and has concluded that the Malta law, with some modifications may work for Ancram. The Malta cell law was recommended to the Town for consideration by planning consultant Nan Stolzenburg, who worked with the Town on the Comp Plan, and is now working with the Zoning Revisions Committee. The Town Board will review this proposal at the next meeting, will schedule a public hearing on the revised cell law, and will plan on passing it in August.

**2. Ramp for Ancramdale Polling Place - a lower cost plan:** We have received a third proposal for the ramp at Friendship Hall from a local carpenter -- \$5800, down from the \$8400 and \$6400 previous quotes. We are waiting for one more quote before we apply to the State for a grant to support 50% of the cost of installing the ramp. Neighbors Helping Neighbors has raised over \$2400 toward the ramp installation.

**3. Revaluation Review/GAR Report – indicates Ancram assessments are equitable, but there are still some “anomalies”:** The Revaluation Review Committee met twice over the past month to discuss how to identify properties which may be over or under assessed within the framework of a total assessment which GAR determined to be equitable. Normally, property owners who believe their properties are over assessed will discuss their concerns with the Assessor, and apply for relief through the grievance process at the Town and County level. To supplement this process, the Committee is trying to find a way, using the assessment data on file, to determine which properties appear to be “anomalies”, and are assessed at levels that higher or lower than comparable properties in the data base. If we can use the data already in the computer to identify these properties, the Assessor can then review each of these “anomalies” individually. to determine if the assessed value is appropriate, or if an adjustment is necessary.

**4. Town Recreation Plan -- need a new committee to work on long term town recreational plan:** The Youth Commission is finalizing plans to install the Town Playground at Town Hall this fall. The next step in the development of a long term town recreational plan is to set up a committee to look at how to use the rest of the Town Hall land, how to use the Blass park facilities, what to do about improving the conditions at the swimming pool, what facilities we need in Ancramdale & Boston Corner, and how to expand and take advantage of the hiking, biking, hunting and fishing opportunities that exist in Ancram.

**5. Community Days Coming Up – August 14 & 15:** Councilman Jim Miller and the Community Days Committee have been working to finalize plans for the August 14-15 festivities. Details will be coming out soon, but mark the calendar now, so you don't miss the fun.

**6. Communications Committee Plans to mail newsletter – needs to expand email list to keep mailing costs manageable:** Councilwoman Madeleine Israel is developing a mailing list of people without email addresses so we can mail the Town Newsletter to them at home. Ms. Israel is preparing a post card mailing to everyone who is not on the email list, or who is on the email list but is not identified by name, just by an email address. Anyone who gets the postcard will be asked to email Ms. Israel and me with their email addresses, so we can delete them from the hard copy mailing list. The post card should be coming out in the next week or so.

**7. 2011 Budget Process – will start next week:** Budget forms will go out by month end to all department heads. Preliminary departmental budgets will be due back by the middle of August. The Town Board will get a first look at the preliminary 2011 budget requests from the departments in August. We will schedule budget workshops and hold a public hearing on the budget in September, and approve the 2011 Budget in October.

### **The Challenge: Reallocate spending to fund new needs & priorities**

The challenge for the rest of this year is still to get the garage built for under \$500,000, and, to do this with as little borrowing as possible. Any cost savings against budget this year will minimize the amount of garage debt we will need to incur. The challenge next year will be to reduce “business as usual” spending by 10%, so we will be able to pay off any garage debt sooner, and reallocate these savings to fund the capital plan, to replace equipment and facilities over time, without raising taxes. As our priorities and needs change, our spending has to change to reflect the new priorities. We have to decide what we are not going to do, so we can afford what we need to do. Next year’s budget will be the first opportunity we have to change how we spend our money to reflect our new priorities and needs.