

To: Ancram Town Board

From: Art Bassin

Date: 2/15/2011

Subject: Supervisor's Report – January 2011



Financial Report: Financial reports will be late this month, as our accountant has been sick with the flu this last week. I hope to have the financial reports before our 2/17 meeting, and will circulate them separately. Revenues and spending in January were consistent with expectations and the 2011 budget. The major financial impact in January was the highway department's spending on snow removal. Highway Superintendent Jim MacArthur reports that in January they used about \$41,000 of the \$65,000 annual snow removal budget. As long as we do not have a repeat of January's snows in February and March, we may be able to live within our \$65,000 budget. The town's Tax Collector has collected and paid \$1,094,525 to the town, representing the 2011 town, fire district and lighting district taxes. We have paid the fire district its portion of the collected taxes. As of mid-February, we have about \$1.5 million in the bank. In terms of our outlook for 2011, we will need to see how state aid and the mortgage and sales tax numbers come in during the first half of the year.

2011 Priorities: Here is a brief update on 2011 activities:

1. **New playground** at Town Hall: The Youth Commission plans to do the playground construction on April 30. Details are in the next town newsletter, coming out this week.
2. **Convert the milk factory building into a salt shed:** The Garage Committee is exploring several options for converting the milk factory into a salt shed. Our intent is to come up with a solution which will cost under \$50,000 and be completed this year.
3. **Evaluate highway equipment needs** and develop an equipment replacement plan: Our strategy is to look for used equipment that is in better shape than our existing equipment...priorities are to upgrade our plow trucks and a loader. Highway superintendent Jim MacArthur is hopeful he can find good used equipment at a fraction of the cost of buying new.
4. **Put all Town laws on the internet:** General Code will scan our laws and have us on line via the town web site by year-end. Cost will be \$1750, which has already been approved by the town Board.
5. **Develop an employee manual and town policies & procedures manual;** Jack Lindsey, Jim MacArthur and I are working on this, and should have drafts for the Town Board to review by mid-year.
6. **Complete and adopt zoning revisions** consistent with the new Comprehensive Plan: Hugh Clark and the ZRC are likely to have the first part of the proposed revision to zoning ready for adoption before mid-year.
7. **Complete and adopt Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan:** The Ag & Farmland Protection Plan Committee held its public hearing on the draft Plan on Saturday, 2/12. Minutes will be available before the 2/17 TB meeting. The Committee will formally present the Plan to the Town Board at the 2/17 TB meeting. We will schedule and hold a TB public hearing, and then make any

changes to the Plan we feel are appropriate prior to considering the Plan for adoption as an addendum to the Comp Plan.

8. **Develop an emergency preparedness plan:** John MacArthur has agreed to chair this effort, with Madeleine Israel serving as Secretary. Highway Superintendent Jim MacArthur, Fire chief David Boice and Building Manager George Wittlinger are also on this committee. We expect to have a draft plan for the TB to review by mid-year.
9. **Get a cell tower** and improve cell service: ATT reports they have been talking with four landowners who have parcels in locations suitable for a tower. Two have declined to permit a tower on their land, and two have not yet decided.
10. **Adopt a wind turbine law:** This will be done at the 2/17 Town Board meeting.
11. **Hold a community clean-up day:** Scheduled for Saturday, May 14...details will be coming out a month prior to the event.
12. **Review and revise town fees:** John MacArthur and Madeleine Israel have agreed to lead this effort, and will be reporting on progress over the next few months.
13. **Enforce town zoning and the NYS Building & Fire Code:** I am still looking for ways to enforce these laws without incurring excessive, unrecoverable legal fees for the town. Expect to have more to report in the next few months.

NY State Budget: The Governor presented his preliminary budget, but the impact on the county or Ancram is not yet clear. Preliminary indications are that the state highway aid money (about \$100,000 for us) is still in the state budget. Hardest hit in the Governor's budget appear to be school districts. The Governor is also proposing to limit property tax increases to 2% or the rate of inflation, whichever is less, unless. It's still too early to predict where the state budget will end up, but Cuomo appears to have a lot of public support for his proposals.