

To: Ancram Town Board
From: Art Bassin 
Date: 7/18/2011
Subject: Supervisor's Report – June 2011

Financial Report: Revenues and expenses continue on budget for the first six months of 2011, in both the Highway Department and Town Government. Ancram's total spending for the first five months was \$803,000, including \$98,000 for a plow truck and a front end loader for the Highway Department. Cash in the bank as of 6/30/11 was \$1.0 million. Major financial projects under way include the conversion of the Milk Factory building to a salt shed (about \$65,000 including a new roof) and the purchase of another used plow truck (\$25,000). Based on revenue and cost trends so far this year, and spending about \$175,000 on capital projects, we expect to end the year with about \$500,000 in the bank.

Town Projects, Activities & Issues

1. **Zoning Revisions:** We will hold a public hearing on the first seven amendments to the 1972 Zoning Ordinance on 7/18 at 7 pm, and will then consider the proposed amendments for adoption at the 7/21 Board meeting.
2. **New playground:** Essentially completed. Come over and play
3. **Summer Kid's Camp:** Camp has about 50 kids this week, and is going great. Everyone seems to be having a lot of fun. There is still time to sign up kids or grandkids for weeks during the rest of the summer. Contact Camp Director Ruth Thomas (ancramcamp@fairpoint.net).
4. **2012 Budget Process:** I will prepare the tentative 2012 budget assuming no town property tax increase again in 2012, and will circulate it before the August Town Board meeting.
5. **First garage loan repayment:** The first payment on our 10-year garage loan will be due in August.
6. **Ancram pool:** The pool is open for business. Lessons available Monday-Wednesday-Friday from 9 to 12. Lessons are free. Open swimming is available M-W-F 1 to 6, and Tuesday & Thursday from 10 to 6. For more information, email the Youth Commission - Colleen Lutz (lutzc@fairpoint.net) or Ruth Wittlinger (rudis31@aol.com).
7. **Grievance Day:** Ten property owners came to Grievance Day in May concerning 15 parcels – about 1% of the properties. The Board of Assessment Review adjusted two parcels. In addition, seven property owners had requested and received adjustments which had been approved by the Assessor prior to Grievance Day, and were ratified by the Board of Assessment Review at its May meeting.
8. **Property Values -** We were notified last month by the State that based on the Assessor's decision to lower the assessed value of all Ancram residential properties by 10%, our assessments are at 100% of fair market value as of the valuation date for this year's tax role, which was July 1, 2010. This confirms the conclusion of the GAR Report done about a year ago, which stated that our 2008

revaluation was accurate, done consistent with NYS guidelines, and that Ancram properties were, as of the revaluation, assessed at fair market as of that valuation date.

County/State Issues

- 1. Property Tax Caps:** The 2% property tax cap for 2012 was passed by the State. This will not affect the town much, as I plan to recommend that we keep town taxes flat again in 2012. County is also looking at how to keep taxes flat in 2012.
- 2. County Manager:** The County Manager proposal is still being discussed among supervisors and in the media. It's still too close to call the vote at this point. I believe that good management matters, so I support the need for a County Manager, and believe a County Manager will help the County run better and save millions of dollars for taxpayers. Supervisors who oppose the County Manager idea are reluctant to add another highly paid senior manager, given tight budgets, possible layoffs and an uncertain economic environment. Their opposition results from a sense that a full time professional County Manager will not make much of a difference compared to the 23 part time supervisors who now run the county, and will not be able to pay for himself in a reasonable period of time.
- 3. Walmart Consolidation:** The County continues to explore the costs and issues related to moving about 450 county employees to the old Walmart building in Greenport. There has been a lot of media attention on this over the past few weeks. A final decision on whether to buy the Walmart building will be made after the County completes its financial analysis and other due diligence – probably in the next 60 days or so.
- 4. Insurance:** The County put the \$900,000 property and liability insurance policies out for bid last month, for the first time in years, and accepted a bid which lowers the County's 2012 insurance costs by \$200,000. Increasing the frequency of competitive bidding for items like insurance is one of the things a County Manager would be able to do to save us money.