

To: Ancram Town Board
From: Art Bassin
Date: 9/15/2013



Subject: Monthly Supervisor's Report

Financial Report: Revenues for the eight months ending August totaled \$1,101,000 including \$811,000 in property tax receipts and \$182,000 in sales tax revenues received in January, April and July. Full year revenues for sales and mortgage taxes look like they will exceed the 2013 budget by \$25,000 to \$50,000. Expenses for the eight months ending August totaled \$755,000, or about 56% of our full year budget. Cash on hand at the end of August totaled \$1,019,000. Barring any extraordinary events, I expect revenues and spending for the rest of the year to be on budget, resulting in a year end cash position of about \$680,000 which is about \$25,000 better than we budgeted.

Town Issues

1. **Ridgeline Protection** – Hugh Clark and I have continued to work with Don Meltz to better understand how visible each of the designated ridgelines is. We have found that many of the designated ridgelines are visible from under 10% of the town's road miles. We have also found that most of the "visible" portions of the designated ridges are not the ridgelines themselves, but the steep slopes that lead up to the ridgelines. These steep slopes are not part of the ridgeline protection concept as originally presented. We will discuss these visibility issues again at the 9/19 TB meeting. Hugh is working on a revised ridgeline law, which we hope to have before the 9/19 meeting.
2. **Carson Rd Wind Turbine Notices of Violation** – The Zoning Enforcement Officer has withdrawn the Gershon wind turbine notice of violation, and is considering withdrawing the Crocco NOV. The Gershon decision and possible Crocco action are based on the repair and maintenance work done on both turbines in May and June, which seems to have eliminated the low wind speed noise issues with the turbines. There have been no complaints since the repairs were done, but there have not been any high winds, either. Withdrawing the NOV's will give the Town the time evaluate if the repairs and maintenance work done has also reduced or eliminated the high wind speed noises that have been a problem during heavy winds. Withdrawing the NOV's also will allow the turbine owners to focus on working with the manufacturer and installer to keep the turbines quiet, without also having to defend against the NOV. If turbine noise problems reoccur, the ZEO will determine if the NOV's should be reissued, based on the facts, circumstances and conditions at the time the noise problems reoccur. If it turns out that the turbine noise problems were in fact installation and maintenance related, and can be eliminated by better maintenance and management, that will be very good news. But we will have spent a couple of years and a lot of money to deal with an issue that the turbine owners, manufacturer and installer could have taken care of when the noise issues started, which, in retrospect, is troubling.
3. **2014 Tentative Budget** - The Tentative 2014 budget, which we will discuss at a public hearing starting at 6.30 pm on 9/19, shows a property tax increase of about 4.6%, or \$37,000. This is caused primarily by a \$30,000 "library "tax", assuming the 414 referendum passes, and by expected increases in health insurance and retirement fund payments. The Library has done some research which indicates that the Town may be able to exclude the \$30,000 414 payment from the Town tax cap, and that the Town may be able to establish a separate line on the tax bill for the library tax, as is done for the Lighting District and Fire District. There is also no fund balance carry forward budgeted for 2014 at this point, which reduces revenues by about \$65,000, but we have budgeted increased sales tax and mortgage tax revenues at expected 2013 levels, which adds \$40,000 in revenues to the 2014 budget. The 2014 Tentative Budget assumes no salary increases, but makes provisions for a deputy historian position at \$500. There are things we can do to reduce the \$37,000 tentative property tax increase, which we will discuss over the next few months as we get a better feel for costs that are not under our direct control, like the library tax, health insurance and state retirement.