

To: Ancram Town Board
From: Art Bassin
Date: 1/12/2014



Subject: January 2014 Supervisor's Report

Town Issues

1. Financial Report - Preliminary December 2013 financials indicate we ended the year where we expected to. We have about \$745,000 in the bank, which represents two years of Federal, State and County payments to the Town, and slightly less than the \$799,000 annual town property tax levy.

2. Ridgeline Protection - The ridgeline and steep slope protection law has been referred back to the ZRC for additional review and a revised recommendation. ZRC will encourage Planning Board participation in the discussions to develop a revised ridgeline & steep slope proposal that will have the support from the Town Board needed to be adopted. I am inclined to go with a law that requires all new construction project to consider the guidelines, with major subdivisions with sites on steep slopes or visible portions of a ridgeline required to follow them, and minor subdivisions, single family and 2 family projects strongly encouraged to follow them. Under this framework, there would be no need to do a map of designated ridgelines or steep slopes, or list the parcels which might be affected, because each building site would be evaluated when it was presented to the Planning Board or Building Inspector for approval.

County Issues.

- 1. Airport** – The Airport Committee continues to meet to determine if there is a less expensive, less disruptive way to install a FAA recommended (but not required) safety zone on the north end of the County airport. It appears that there are options that would preserve the Meadowgreens golf course and minimize disruption on other neighbors. The Committee is on track to make its recommendations to the BOS in February or March.
- 2. 2012 County Audit** – The BOS was briefed on the County's 2012 Audit last week. The audit was due to be filed with the State by 9/30, but because the auditors were new and the County is still operating on multiple accounting systems, things took longer. To their credit, one of the auditors commented that "you're running out of cash". The county ended 2012 and 2013 with about \$4 million in cash, half of it restricted...so we had about \$2 million available...and a biweekly payroll of about \$2 million. Until the County starts to get its property tax payments from the Town Collectors late in February, things will be tight.
- 3. Pine Haven** – Looks like Pine Haven could lose \$3 million in 2014. It is budgeted to break even. Don't ask me why. The County probably does not have the cash on hand to fund Pine Haven at this level of losses without borrowing. The County needs to form a committee to explore options to sell or outsource the management of Pine Haven. While it is important that we keep Pine Haven's 120 beds available in the County, there are organizations that would be far more skilled at managing the facility than the County. We need to get Pine Haven into the strongest management hands we can, for the benefit of Pine Haven's residents and the County's taxpayers.
- 4. Solid Waste** – This is another area that we need to look at outsourcing. The County loses about \$500,000 a year operating the County's system of solid waste stations. We need to explore if private contractors could run the operation more efficiently.