

**To: Ancram Town Board**  
**From: Art Bassin**  
**Date: 10/11/2014**



**Subject: Supervisor's Report - October, 2014**

## **Town Issues**

**1. Financial Report** - We ended September with \$633,000 in the bank, after prepaying the full \$288,000 outstanding principal and interest on the garage loan. We expect to receive about \$150,000 in highway aid from the State by year-end, to reimburse us for funds already spent, and an additional \$120,000 in sales tax revenues, and plan to spend about 300,000 over the next three months, resulting in a year-end 2014 reserve cash balance of about \$550,000, which is about \$200,000 under the target level of \$750,000. Other than the decision to prepay the \$280,000 garage loan, we are still tracking close to the budget.

**2. 2015 Preliminary Budget** – We will hold a public hearing on the Preliminary 2015 Budget on 10/16 at 6:45. Taxes are budgeted to remain flat in 2015. There are several uncertainties in the budget that we clarify over the next month, including the cost of the retirement program, and health, property and liability insurance. We still have a handful of budget issues we need to resolve, including whether or not to do an outside audit in 2015, whether to do a dog census and whether to invest in fixing up the town pool and supporting facilities. We also will have to decide what we want to do about the 2015 tax levy, which currently is budgeted to be flat, with a \$99,500 contingent account. At this level, the contingent account, if not needed for unexpected revenue shortfalls or expense overruns, will reestablish the \$750,000 target level of Town reserves by the end of 2017.

## **County Issues**

**1. Airport** – We have applied to the FAA to approve the reclassification of the County Airport to B II from D II, which effectively reduces the required length of the runway safety area from 1000 feet to between 300 and 600 feet, which we can achieve on county owned land for under \$300,000. We have been told it could take a couple of months to get approval. Once approved, we hope to get FAA grant money in 2015 to actually do the work to bring the runway into compliance.

**2. Pine Haven** – Nothing new to report. We expect proposals from private operators who may be interested in buying the nursing home by the end of October.

**3. CEDC/Ginsberg** – There has been a lot of public and supervisor concern expressed in the last month about the CEDC plan to sell 33 acres worth about \$288,000 to Ginsberg's for \$1, as part of a planned \$11 million project to expand Ginsberg's food distribution business in the Claverack/Ghent area. Ginsberg's planned expansion is a very good project for the County, and deserves County and State support, as it will keep Ginsberg's 250 jobs in the County, and position Ginsberg's to add 20 to 30 jobs going forward. The concerns that have been expressed are primarily directed at the apparent conflicts of interests which result from Mr. Ginsberg having been on the CEDC board, and the current chair of the CEDC, David Crawford, also being president of the engineering firm which represents Mr. Ginsberg's company on the proposed deal. These circumstances are complicated by CEDC's attorney refusing to provide assurances, when requested by Hillsdale Supervisor Baer, that the proposed deal met CEDC and NYS legal and ethical standards. This proposed project is too important to be allowed to fail, but the only way to make sure it succeeds may be for Ginsberg's to offer to pay the full value of the 33 acres, the CEDC to produce the letter requested by Supervisor Baer that this is in fact a "clean deal", and for Mr. Crawford to resign from the CEDC Board, so his firm can continue to advise Ginsberg's on engineering matters without an apparent conflict of interest.