



Supervisor Chris Burdick's Report – December 24, 2014

As 2014 draws to an end and I complete my first year as Supervisor, I'd first like to thank the people of Bedford for giving me the honor of serving you. Though the following is my last report for the year, we are planning a digital Annual Report for the Town which we hope to have available early in 2015.

2015 Final Budget; Financial Projections

The Town Board adopted the Town's 2015 Budget on December 2 following a public hearing. The adopted budget, which is posted on the Town's website, is the same as the Preliminary Budget which the Board adopted in November. Also included on the website are my budget statement and Town Comptroller Ed Ritter's budget statement. As I had mentioned in my previous report, the tax cap is 2.25% and the adopted 2015 budget is comfortably under the cap with a 1.67% levy increase. The Budget meets our objectives: maintain or improve existing service levels; stay within the property tax cap; maintain healthy fund balances; and keep our triple AAA bond rating. As noted in the budget statements, the Town is making modest and gradual increases in services. To mention a few, these include the 2015 paving budget slightly at over \$1.1 million; funds to carry out needed capital improvements in the Adams Street Highway Department garage, IT infrastructure, truck and vehicle replacements; an increase in funding for each of the hamlet libraries; funds for Town co-sponsored community events; and \$17,500 in additional funds for traffic safety measures. We also have modest improvements planned for each of the hamlet parks and are considering renovations to the Police Station (see below).

Ed Ritter has updated the Town's five year financial projection for the General Fund. We anticipate that with the improving economy, substantial reduction in the Capital Plan and prudent financial management, the updated projections show a significant improvement over last year's. The projection, which can be accessed at www.bedfordny.gov (click on 2015 Budget) that the Town is on course to continue to meet the just mentioned Town Board's objectives. Our Comptroller projects unrestricted fund balances for years 2015 through 2020 to be 26.6% of the operating budget or better. We anticipate that the projections for the Highway Fund, to be completed shortly, will show similar improvement.

Comptroller's Report and Budget Update

In his December 22 report to the Supervisor and Town Board, Comptroller Ed Ritter wrote:

The 2015 Budget has been adopted with a tax increase of 1.67%. This is far below the allowed cap of 2.25%. The Highway fund has followed the 5 year projection perfectly with a reduction in fund balance allocation and the addition of funds into the paving budget which lessens the amount needed in the Capital Plan for future years.

The finance department is working on year end close out procedures. A preliminary projection for the General Fund shows a potential surplus mostly attributed to additional revenue from the Building Department and a substantial grant realized in 2014 from prior years. Mariann Harold has joined the finance office in December. She will be handling payroll, workers comp and parking as well as many other day to day tasks.

The conversion of all financial and payroll data from the KVS system to the Springbrook system has been placed on hold until January. Hopefully all the kinks will be ironed out by then.

REVENUE AREAS OF NOTE

Mortgage Tax has actual data from October through September 2014. The actual percentage over 2013 is a 8.43% decrease. This is the final for the year. Mortgage tax is \$1,101,935, which is \$151,935 over budget.

Sales Tax has actual data from January through October 2014. County sales tax shows a 3.82% increase over 2013. This revenue is projected to be \$2,531,801 which is \$131,801 over our budget of \$2,400,000.

Parking has actual data from January through November 2014. The actual percentage over 2013 is a 1.53% increase. Revenue to date is \$866,358 which is an increase of \$13,061 from last year at this time. The revenue for the year is projected to be \$890,982 which is \$39,018 under budget.

Fines and forfeited bail has actual data for January through October 2014. Revenue is \$577,602 which is \$11,460 under last year's revenue at this time. This revenue is projected to be \$649,236 which is \$99,236 over budget. (Analysis attached).

Safety Inspection Fees has actual data for January through November 2014. Revenue is \$714,866 which is \$77,295 over last year's revenue at this time. This revenue is projected to be \$846,150 which is \$306,150 over budget.

EXPENDITURES

2014 expenditures on target for this time of the year with the following exceptions:

POLICE DEPARTMENT OVERTIME – 001.3120.0101 has exceeded their budget of \$525,000 by \$103,439. As of December 12, 2014 the total spent is \$628,439.

LEGAL COUNSEL – 001.1420.422 has exceeded its budget by \$1,134 but is projected to exceed its budget by an additional \$30,000.

Traffic Safety Measures

The Town Board at its December 15 meeting approved recommendations of the Traffic Safety Working Group and Police Chief Mel Padilla to purchase traffic safety equipment to be used throughout the Town. Two recent Traffic Consultant Reports recommended the installation of mobile and/or permanent speed indicator signs as part of a comprehensive approach to traffic safety. Consistent with those recommendations the Board authorized the purchase of two mobile variable message speed indicator signs and one additional RADAR Traffic Data Recorder (the Police Department already has one radar recorder unit). The additional RADAR Traffic Data Recorder will give the Police Department increased ability to measure the effectiveness of its traffic safety measures. The mobile nature of the equipment allows the deployment throughout the entire Town the same traffic safety measures recommended by the Town's traffic safety consultants. The purchases were within the Town's 2014 operating budget and did not require tapping fund balances.

The TSWG is reviewing comments and recommendations which the public submitted and will be making further recommendations to the Town Board in early 2015.

Possible Police Station Renovations

Recognizing present and future fiscal constraints, the updated Capital Plan which the Board adopted in May recognized fiscal constraints, but at the same time the need to replace aging or obsolete computer servers, police and highway vehicles and other equipment which have come to the end of their useful lives. The updated Capital Plan, which covers the years 2014 through 2022, removed two costly projects: a new highway facility estimated to cost between \$13 and \$15 million dollars and a new police building estimated to cost \$10 million. The Capital Plan includes \$2.5 million to upgrade and expand the Adams Street Highway Garage and \$375,000 for 2016 a new roof, insulation and solar panels for the Police Station (planning for the 2016 improvements will take place throughout 2015). It is anticipated that more is needed for the Police Station, last renovated in the 1970s.

A cursory walk-through of the Police Station reveals underutilized space or space which should be re-purposed. Police Chief Padilla made an initial assessment of the building, discussing it with his staff and with me and we determined that it would be appropriate to commission a feasibility study for reconfiguring the interior layout. At its December 15 meeting the Town Board approved Lothrop Associate's proposal for a feasibility study of the facility. Lothrop brings its considerable experience to the project (as part of its 2005 DPW Master Plan study, Lothrop was asked to review and comment on a Police Department needs assessment and facility master plan prepared by other consultants) and also is engaging an architect who is nationally recognized as an expert in law enforcement needs and facility functionality.

Department of Public Works Report

In his December 10 report to the Supervisor and Town Board, Department of Public Works Commissioner Kevin Winn wrote regarding November operations:

Work during the month included pothole patching, installation and maintenance of drainage systems, dirt road grading, and snow and ice removal.

Consolidated Water District Microfiltration Plant

Operations continue to go well, and we have received positive feedback from customers on the taste and softer quality of the new supply. It will be blended with the existing groundwater supply until WCDOH approval to operate the plant in unattended mode is received. This is anticipated in late 2014 or early 2015. The WCDOH automation demonstration test period was completed in early December and a report will be submitted to WCDOH this week.

The DEP has finalized the water supply agreement to incorporate remaining Town comments. The Town has provided documentation of the existing system and district population for the agreement appendices for DEP review. The easement description is being finalized between Hahn Engineering, the water plant contractor's surveyors, and NYC DEP.

Recycling

The facility is functioning well. Monthly revenue to the Town from the recycling contract is averaging approximately \$700 per month.

Bedford Hills Post Office Lease

We are continuing negotiations with CBRE leasing agent for the U.S. Postal Service, on the renewal of the USPS lease from the Town which expires October 31, 2015. We had hoped to have an agreement by year end; now we're looking at the first quarter of 2015. You can see why we started this process in February.

Emergency Preparedness

- a. Updating the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan Last week, DPW Commissioner Kevin Winn, Planning Director Jeff Osterman, Police Chief Mel Padilla and Recreation and Parks Superintendent Bill Heidepriem and I reviewed the Town's draft hazard mitigation plan with the County's consultants. The Town is ahead of other Westchester municipalities in its portion of the Plan. In addition, Bill Heidepriem and I are working on updating our internal Emergency Operation Plan (adopted in 2006).
- b. Quicker Storm Damage Assessment
 - i. NYSEG As earlier reported, the Town is continuing its work with NYSEG to implement NYSEG's storm damage assessment pilot program. We expect that NYSEG's system will go "live" shortly. The web-based program would allow the Town to provide NYSEG near real time storm damage reports thereby enabling NYSEG to more quickly respond with crews and resources. Our ground responders (Police, EMT, Highway) would provide central dispatch the location of roads blocked, broken poles and other damage. With this data entered and reported into the shared website, NYSEG's response time should be significantly improved, resulting in better public safety and service. The estimated recovery

period from a storm like Super Storm Sandy may be reduced as much as two days. The Town has tested the ArcGIS software platform on which the NYSEG system is based.

- ii. Con Edison Our thanks to the Bedford Hills Fire Department for hosting a Con Edison refresher demonstration of its “Dashboard” storm assessment system. As with NYSEG, Con Edison’s web based interactive system will accelerate its ability to direct resources to Bedford in the event of outages. We are hopeful it too will provide improved response and recovery time.
- c. Generator for Town Offices at 425 Cherry Street Good news! Thanks to Building Department head Steven Fraietta and Beach Electric the generator is installed and fully operational. It will enable the Town to fully operate with staff available for “grey sky” duties in the event of a major storm event or other emergency. The project was funded through the updated Capital Plan.

Addressing Wastewater Issues

I am making arrangements with the Chairman of the Northern Westchester Watershed Committee (NWWC) to schedule a NWWC meeting in February or March to consider a proposal from Bedford requesting NWWC funds for (1) a Septic Failure Repair Fund of as much as \$3.5 million for residences (including enhanced treatment units where a conventional system is not possible); and (2) a Feasibility Study for Enhanced Treatment Units for the hamlets of Katonah and Bedford Hills which would cost approximately \$50,000. As earlier mentioned, the Town Board supports the proposals and Messrs Osterman, Winn and I met in September with Pete Harckham, DEP Deputy Commissioner David Warne and members of his staff. They responded quite positively to the proposals, and I am cautiously optimistic that we’ll be able to move forward on them.

Reminder: Emergency Information from NYSEG and Con Edison

Both NYSEG and Con Edison encourage customers with special needs to enroll in special services for them.

“NYSEG is committed to providing their customers with safe, reliable energy delivery. They also offer many services for special need customers, including:

- Special Identification for households where everyone is elderly, blind or disabled
- Large print, sight-saver Bills for visually-impaired customers
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) grants
- NYSEG’s Energy Assistance Program (EAP)
- Project SHARE emergency energy assistance program

If you or someone in your household relies on life-sustaining equipment, you should contact NYSEG immediately!

How to call NYSEG:

Electricity interruptions or emergencies: 1.800.572.1131 (24 hours a day, every day)

Customer relations center: 1.800.572.1111
Payment arrangements: 1.888.315.1755
Hearing and speech-impaired: Dial 711 (New York Relay Service)”

**“Message from Con Edison: Customer Central Special Services
Safety for Special Customers:**

It is important that we have a record of everyone who uses electrically operated life-support equipment or has medical hardships so we can contact them in an emergency. To learn more and complete the survey, please visit the link below. You can also let us know by calling 1-800-75-CONED (1-800-752-6633). Con Edison customers can enroll for this service by visiting www.conEd.com, clicking on Customer Central, and then the “special services” link. You will need your account number. To keep our records current, each year we send a letter asking you to recertify.

<http://www.coned.com/customercentral/specialservices.asp>

Customers with Special Needs:

We recognize that senior citizens and people with disabilities need special attention. That’s why we offer a variety of services and billing and payment options that make life a little bit easier for the elderly, visually or hearing-impaired, or customers with permanent disabilities. Please visit the link below to view the *Customers With Special Needs* brochure.

<http://www.coned.com/customercentral/specialservices.asp>”

I ask you to please send me an e-mail at supervisor@bedfordny.gov should you have any questions or comments on this report or any of our work on the Town Board.


Chris Burdick
Town Supervisor