



Supervisor Chris Burdick's Report – December 2, 2015



Last night the Town Board recognized the long service of Francis Corcoran as a member of the Town Board for nearly 12 years, as he leaves the Board to serve the community as a member of the Westchester County Board of Legislators. We will miss Francis as a colleague on the Board, but know that he will be working hard for us in his new post. Thank you Francis!

Adoption of 2016 Budget

Following a public hearing on December 1, the Town Board adopted the 2016 Town budget. The budget meets the Town Board's objectives of staying below the tax cap, maintaining or improving Town services and providing a sustainable financial course in the coming years. The budget carries a tax levy increase of 1.93% which is comfortably below the State tax cap of 2.17%. The budget soon will be posted on the Town's website together with my budget message, tables other explanatory materials.

Property Maintenance Code

The Town Board held a public hearing on December 1 to consider a new law to provide tools to the Building Inspector to take action against neglected houses in disrepair where the owners or property manager have disregarded repeated notices of violation of New York State or Town building or property maintenance laws. Following the public hearing, the Town Board adopted the new chapter. The law, which applies to both vacant and occupied properties, provides that following notice and an opportunity to cure violations, if a property owner fails to act, the Town will have the authority to carry out the work and impose a lien on the property which will appear in the tax bill. The property owner would be given notice of action by the Town Board to authorize the Building Inspector to take the corrective action. The law is not intended to be punitive but rather to spur action.

Proceeding to Demolish Derelict Zombie House; and Repair Zombie House in Disrepair

The town is utilizing Chapter 42 of the Town Code “Unsafe Buildings” to commence a proceeding to demolish the derelict and unsafe house at 53 Jay Street in Katonah. Over nine years ago, the owner abandoned the house and moved to Montana. On December 1 the Town Board held a public hearing to hear from attorneys for the loan servicing agent. The attorney for the loan servicing agent appeared at the hearing, but did not present any engineering report, inspection report or any other information in response to the Building Inspector’s report to the Town Board that the building is unsafe and should be demolished. The Board determined that the loan servicing agent, through its attorney, failed to refute the Building Inspector’s report and had no concrete plan of action. The Board then adopted a resolution to affirm its October 20, 2015 order to demolish the house and instruct the Building Inspector to seek bids for the demolition.

In another proceeding under Chapter 42, the Board scheduled a public hearing for 8:00 PM on December 15 in regard to the Board’s November 17 order to require the repair of an unsafe house at 8 Old Deer Park

Bedford Hills Train Station

At the December 1 meeting, the Town Board approved a three month extension until March 30, 2016 of the sublease of the train station to the Bedford Hills Historical Museum. The sublease provides that the Museum work cooperatively with community groups (Bedford Hills Live, the Bedford Hills Free Library and Bedford Hills Neighborhood Association) on the shared use of the station building. The Museum and the community groups, through the Museum, may use the premises for exhibits, displays, materials, farmers market, artisans’ market and for such other uses as approved in advance by the Town’s Superintendent of Recreation and Parks (Station Master). The Town’s lease from Metro North Railroad expired on September 30 and the Town continues in possession on a month to month basis. The sublease also is subject to such month to month occupancy. The MTA earlier this year informed the Town that it is subject to the Public Authorities Law which stipulates that the lease must be at market rent except that it may be leased to a governmental entity for municipal purposes (the municipality may not sublease the premises, except at market rent which would flow to Metro North). The Town has requested a renewal lease to the Town for municipal purposes with an option to convert the lease to other than municipal purposes at market rate.

The Museum and other community groups have injected new life and energy into the station which the Board applauds.

Possible New Committees

The Town Board is considering establishing two new advisory committees, a Committee on Seniors and a Mandate Relief Working Group. The Board will discuss the proposals further at the December 15 meeting or the January 5 meeting.

Vacancies on Boards and Committees

The Board is accepting applications through December 31 for vacancies on the following:

- 1) Board of Assessment Review
- 2) Conservation Board
- 3) Tree Advisory Board
- 4) Veterans Advisory Committee – see description below

If you are interested in serving, please e-mail your resume with a cover letter to supervisor@bedfordny.gov. You also may mail it to me at Supervisor, 321 Bedford Road, Bedford Hills, New York 10507.

Septic Law on Cleaning and Inspection: Septic System Program – Open for Business

State regulation requires that you have your septic system cleaned and inspected within the past four years. Septic inspections are required by New York State law as incorporated in town law. You don't want to encounter septic system problems in the middle of the winter.

If you have a failing septic system, help is here. Bedford's Septic System Repair and Replacement program is open for business. If you are in the New York City watershed, you may be eligible for reimbursement up to 50% of approved eligible expenses for repair or replacement of a septic system, as well as design engineering costs not to exceed 20% of total construction costs. If you received a letter from me about the septic law, you're in the watershed. Almost all the properties in Bedford Hills and Katonah and many in Bedford Village are in the watershed. We now have a number of items posted on our website at <http://www.bedfordny.gov/departments/planning/septic/>. *Westchester County does not permit us to reimburse you for repair or replacement before October 6.* If your septic collector or contractor reports that your system is in failure, and you wish to benefit from the reimbursement program, go onto the website and download the application form which provides the simple steps you should take. Still have questions? Please call me at 666-6530 or e-mail me at supervisor@bedfordny.gov

Veterans Advisory Committee

At its November 5 meeting, the Town Board adopted a resolution for the formation of a Veterans Advisory Committee. The mission of the committee is to “focus on awareness, recognition, advisory and overall support of military veterans and family members who are residents of the Town of Bedford. Also act as a central point of contact and liaison for the Town in coordinating support from other County, State or Federal military-associated organizations. Provide a forum for members of the Committee to coordinate with residents throughout the Town to support community initiatives and volunteerism that benefits veterans, and their families and at the same time are consistent with the Town's strategic visions of an inclusive and supportive environment. It will also increase awareness and understanding among Town residents of the unique challenges faced by current and former members of the military and their families; and assist wherever and whenever possible.”

The Committee will meet and report periodically to the Town Board

Antioch Homes Affordable Housing Proposal

We expect a decision this month on the Town's application to the New York State Office of Community Renewal for a \$421,050 Community Development Block Grant to defray the cost of infrastructure work and refurbishment for the adaptive re-use for affordable housing of the Antioch Baptist Church's vacant church on Railroad Avenue. As earlier reported, the church building is one of the three buildings making up the development. The Westchester County Board of Legislature unanimously approved two other funding components: (1) East of Hudson Water Equality Improvement Program funds; and (2) acquisition and rehabilitation funding. We are advised that the grant decision will be made in December. If approved, we anticipate that the work will be commenced in the first half of 2016.

Comptroller's Report

On November 15 Comptroller Ed Ritter reported as follows:

The Tentative budget has been filed with the Town Clerk on October 30, 2015. This was presented to the Board on November 5, 2015 by the Town Clerk. The budget document is now a public document. Any changes or amendments to it need to be done publicly. The next step for the Board is to accept this budget which would then become the Preliminary Budget. A public hearing will then be held and any final changes or amendments would be done at this time. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the board will vote to adopt the Preliminary budget.

At present the total tax levy for the entire budget is 1.93%. This is below the tax cap. At this time we do not have any final numbers from our healthcare provider. This has been estimated for budget projection purposes.

The town's auditors will be here on December 1 & 2, 2015 to begin preliminary audit work for 2015.

REVENUE AREAS OF NOTE

Mortgage Tax has actual data from October through August 2015. The actual percentage over 2014 is a 13.11% decrease. This amount has been used as a basis for projecting the remainder of the year (through September). Mortgage tax is projected to be \$969,725, which is \$30,275 under budget.

Sales Tax has actual data from January through September 2015. County sales tax shows a 1.47% decrease over 2014. This revenue is projected to be \$2,486,991 which is \$86,991 over our budget of \$2,400,000.

Parking has actual data from January through October 2015. The actual percentage over 2014 is a 2.52% increase. Revenue to date is \$860,900 which is an increase of \$21,134 from last year at this time. The revenue for the year is projected to be \$891,272 which is \$38,728 under budget.

Fines and forfeited bail has actual data for January through September 2015. Revenue is \$511,751 which is \$3,583 under last year's revenue at this time. The revenue is projected to be \$681,956 which is \$31,956 over budget.

Safety Inspection Fees has actual data for January through September 2015. Revenue is \$488,034 which is 44,517 under last year's revenue at this time. This revenue is projected to be \$703,979 which is \$36,021 under budget.

EXPENDITURES: 2015 expenditures are within budget limits at this time except as follows:

Credit Card Fees

001.1375.400 this amount has offsetting revenue. A budget adjustment will be on the November 17, 2015 agenda for consideration.

Personal Services – Town House Maintenance

001.1620.100 this is due to additional retirement in the department. A budget adjustment will be on the November 17, 2015 agenda for consideration.

Taxes on Town Property

001.1950.421 this is due to additional, one time taxation for the Post Office. The current Assessment Roll reflects the tax exempt status going forward.

Fall Clean Up Season

The Department of Public Works Highway Division picks up loose leaves in designated hamlet areas, typically properties of one acre or less, between October 1 and November 30 each year. The estimated collection schedule and designated hamlet areas are listed on a leaf schedule which is posted on the Highway web site each fall. At all other times, leaves must be bagged for pickup. The DPW Highway Division also picks up bundled brush less than 3' long and less than fifty pounds. In order to have bagged leaves or bundled brush picked up, please contact the Highway Division at 666-7669. Pick up typically occurs within two weeks.

Please be aware that only leaves and small twigs should be put into bags. Bags filled with dirt, rocks, grass clipping and branches will not be accepted since they make composting very difficult and, due to the weight of each bag, require more labor and equipment. We encourage residents to mow or compost leaves whenever possible. Literature on mowing leaves is available at <http://www.leaveleavesalone.org>.

In addition, residents may drop off tree debris at our Beaver Dam Compost Facility, 115 Beaver Dam Road, next to the Dog Park. It is open for residents to dispose of recyclable wood waste (logs and branches up to 6" diameter, brush, and leaves), as well as pick up wood mulch and leaf compost. This service is free to Town of Bedford residents between 7:30 AM and 3:00 PM Monday to Friday, excluding Town holidays.

Office of Emergency Management

With hurricane season upon us, we thought it would be helpful to update the community on what we've been doing to bolster our storm preparedness. The Police Department has established an

Office of Emergency Management which I have tasked with coordinating with the Town's fire departments and ambulance corps. We have quarterly OEM meetings with these other agencies. A fall "desk top" storm response exercise is being scheduled.

Within the Town we prepare for any potentially serious weather events. The Police Department, Department of Public Works and Recreation & Parks Department each holds emergency preparedness meetings with senior staff (and in the case of the Police Department its community relations sergeant) to discuss plans should a potential weather event actually affect our area. Among the preparations:

1. Participation in the OEM conference calls among other agencies and weather reporting services.
2. Readiness of vehicles in our fleet (which vehicles may be needed, ie 4x4's, which are actually present or whether any of them are in the shop for service. The feasibility if they are in the shop to expedite the service to get them ready in time. Availability of safety equipment such as protective helmets for operating police officers (in case the UTV had been deployed, etc.)
3. Projected staffing levels over the period for which the weather event has been projected. Posting for additional manpower during periods that are forecast to be most significant. Placing restrictions on any time off requests during the projected operational periods.
4. Coordinating with each of the other departments as to the readiness of generators to be used to power critical intersections within the town (such as I-684 & Route 22 and various others).
5. Schedule times for release of information to public such as updates and suggestions on how to prepare for a weather event (batteries, water, etc). Also plans for deploying our large message boards to display warning messages in the days leading up to event.
6. Plans for "reverse 911" notification in the case of a weather event with widespread power outage, property damage or other heavy impact.
7. Conduct re-familiarization training with our OEM software and testing remote connections for our laptops from Bedford Hills Fire Department Emergency Operations Center to Police Department headquarters.
8. Coordinate with Bedford Hills Fire Department to see if its EOC will be available and who will be primary contact if we want to activate the EOC at BHFD.
9. Ascertain the availability of supervisory personnel over the storm period forecast for continuity of operations if it is a prolonged event.
10. Making preparations for possible opening of the warming center to the community in the event, including checking inventory, scheduling personnel, determining availability of community volunteers to help staff.
11. Make ready the "Call and Check" program for residents (seniors, disabled or others with mobility issues) who have registered with the Town for a call to check on them.
12. Constant monitoring of weather services forecasts and adapting to changing needs as necessary, to include scaling back planned resources if threat is decreasing or scaling up planned resources if threat is increasing.
13. Report and advise the Supervisor on status of emergency preparations and recommended action.

Please be sure you and your family are prepared as well. See the following guide: http://www.fema.gov/pdf/areyouready/areyouready_full.pdf . Please also see below for emergency notifications from your utility company and NIXLE alerts.

Continuing Patching, Guard Rail Work

The weather has cooperated and the forecast is for an unusually warm December. The Highway Department is taking advantage of the window of opportunity for continuing with pothole repairs, guard rail work and other road work. Do let us know if you feel we've got some patching to do. Please call our pothole hotline at 914-666-7669 or send an e-mail to supervisor@bedfordny.gov. For state road potholes, please call 1-800-POTHOLE. Please identify as best you can the area that needs attention.

Keep Posted!

NIXLE Alerts - for up to date notifications (weather, road closures, etc.) [Click here](#) . You can register for notifications or enter your zip code to receive local alerts.

For the Town Calendar, [click here](#)

Reminder: Emergency Information from NYSEG and Con Edison

Con Edison notified us that you now can *text* Con Edison about power outages. Here's the message they sent us:

“Prefer texting? No problem. Sign up by texting REG to OUTAGE (688243) and we'll text instead of calling.

But don't wait for us to contact you. The sooner we know about a power problem, the sooner we can respond. Reach us at conEd.com, by texting OUT to OUTAGE after you sign up for texting, with our My conEdison app for Droid and Apple devices, or by calling 1-800-75-CONED (1-800-752-6633).”

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