



### *Supervisor Chris Burdick's Report – May 2, 2016*



**The Town's 2015 Financial Statements and Supplementary Information – PKF O'Brien Davies, LLP** (the Town's auditors) now is available [click here](#).

**2015 Annual Report of Town of Bedford** now is available, [click here](#).

**Sewers for Katonah and Bedford Hills Business Districts? Maybe.** I first need to emphasize that this project is by no means a sure thing, will take considerable time and depends upon a number of variables going the right way. At the Town Board meeting on April 5, I discussed the possibility of funding for a sewer project which only would serve the business districts of Bedford Hills and Katonah (Bedford Village would not be covered because it is not in the NYC watershed). The plan is a significantly scaled back version of the Malcolm Pirnie project of some 10-15 years ago. That project has been estimated at \$55 million. It is an ambitious project which would sewer large swatches of Bedford Hills and Katonah. It would still tie into the prison system, but would not entail an expansion of that system's capacity. Rather it would rely upon excess capacity of that system – of which there is a fair amount. The Town Board at our April 21 meeting approved my request for authorization to seek \$18 million from Water Quality Improvement Program funds (WQIP), which the County oversees. Following the Town Board action, I joined with a number of other Supervisors to propose on April 25 to the Northern Westchester Watershed Committee (NWWC), a consortium of 12 municipalities, a package of sewer or septic treatment plans. The NWWC is advisory to the Westchester Board of Legislators and its recommendation would be the first step in the process of obtaining WQIP funding. It is important to emphasize the cost impacts on proposed district customers which must be determined. Cost goes to the heart of feasibility, as the voters in the proposed district must approve the plan. Larger plans have been defeated three times in the past. A detailed engineering study and cost estimate will need to be developed.

**Stepping Stones** – At our April 5 Town Board meeting, we approved a two year extension of the special use permit for the operation of Stepping Stones, the home of Bill and Lois Wilson (Bill

Wilson was the found of Alcoholics Anonymous). We further agreed to transfer to the Planning Board the authority for any further extension of the permit following the renewal term.

**Bedford Hills Train Station** – The Town Board heard a presentation from Bedford Hills LIVE on proposals for future programs and activities to be considered including a continuation into the spring and summer of the Farmers Market and for the establishment a community café. The Town’s sub-sublease to the Bedford Hills Historical Museum expired on March 31. The Board also heard an update from Bill Heidepriem, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation on his handling the scheduling of the train station. As earlier noted, the Town still awaits a draft of a new sublease from the MTA, as agent for Metro North Commuter Railroad, for municipal use at nominal or no consideration with an option to sub-sublease the station at fair market rent all of which would be passed through to the MTA. The Board will decided that there should be no further sub-sublease of the station, upon advice of the Town attorneys that the expected sublease from the MTA would prohibit sub-subleasing.

**Committee on Seniors** – The Town Board on April 5 made its first resident appointments to this newly created committee, which will focus on promoting policies and programs designed to help keep Bedford’s senior citizens healthy, vital and active. The Committee will consider existing services and programs provided to seniors, such as transportation, nutritional programs, recreational programs, housing needs and other community support programs. The Committee will consult with the Recreation and Parks Department, the Recreation Parks Advisory Committee and cooperating agencies, both private and public. Congratulations to Josephine Voege (also appointed Chair), Deborah Frishman, Joel Goren, Gina Shea and William Smith. We are grateful for their service to the community.

**Other Appointments** Our thanks and congratulations to Andrew Cunningham – appointed to the Board of Assessment Review, John Loveless, appointed as an alternate to the Board of Assessment Review and Alan Bozian and Amy Greenstein, appointed to the Tree Advisory Board. Thank you.

### **Community Choice Aggregation (CCA)**

The program has been launched which achieves the Town’s purposes of a stable pricing platform and support for the generation of 100% renewable energy. You have choices on what’s best for you. There will be an update on CCA and another opportunity for questions and answers at the Town Board meeting on May 3 at 8:15 PM at the Courtroom at the Town offices (321 Bedford Road, Bedford Hills). Some key points regarding the CCA program:

- Constellation Energy is the new “default” supplier for those in NYSEG’s service area and Con Edison Solutions is the new “default” supplier for those in Con Edison’s service area. Note that if you are using another energy supply company (ESCO) for your electricity, then you are *not* automatically enrolled with the new default supplier. You may want to consider opting in to the program – but please be sure to check your agreement with your ESCO for any termination or cancellation charges,
- Through CCA, we in Bedford are supporting the generation of 100% renewable energy through Renewable Energy Certificates (there is a short *You Tube* video posted on the Town’s website at [www.bedfordny.gov](http://www.bedfordny.gov) click on Westchester Power Program). You’ll also find the Constellation Energy letter and Con Edison Solutions letter which sets out their respective rates and comparisons.

- You will continue to get your bills from NYSEG/Con Edison who will continue to provide service through their poles, lines and electric distribution system. If there is a power outage, you will call them.
- You can opt out, opt in or exercise any of the options at any time during the program. The rates are guaranteed throughout the program, 36 billing cycles for Constellation (through May 2019) and 24 billing cycles for Con Edison Solutions.
- If you have time of day pricing, you may find that it is more cost effective to opt out.
- If you have budget billing, your budget billing will continue for all portions of the bill *except* the electricity supply portion. Contact Constellation/Con Edison Solutions to let them know you'd like budget billing for the electricity supply portion.
- Neither Constellation nor Con Edison will receive account information from NYSEG/Con Edison if you opted out of the program before your new billing cycle.
- Why is this an “opt out” versus “opt in” program? The intent is to replace the “default supplier” with another “default supplier” with stable rates below the trailing 12 month price of NYSEG/Con Edison, which charges rates based on the fluctuations in electricity prices you're your rate changes with each monthly billing cycle. For most of us when we moved into town our real estate agent would tell us who we needed to contact for electricity, for example, “Here's the number for NYSEG to set up your electricity.” NYSEG is the “default supplier”, as is Con Edison in their service area. Bedford along with 20 other municipalities in Westchester County collaborated to provide an aggregate purchasing power to get the best possible rates for our residents and small businesses. It's simply changing the “default” to a new “default”. Programs in other states, such as in New Jersey, tried an “opt in” program, and did not succeed and were unable to provide more competitive rates for their residents and small businesses.
- A few sources of further information: [www.bedfordny.gov](http://www.bedfordny.gov), click on Westchester Power Program; [www.westchesterpower.org](http://www.westchesterpower.org); to elect choices - for Con Ed service area customers 1-888-437-1722, for NYSEG service area customers 1-844-691-6401. Feel free to contact Supervisor Chris Burdick as well at [supervisor@bedfordny.gov](mailto:supervisor@bedfordny.gov) or 666-6530. And, click on [Your Electric Bill](#) for Supervisor Burdick's video on the subject.

## **Public Works Department Report**

Public Works Commissioner Kevin Winn report on April 14:

### Highway

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

Construction on the Railroad Avenue Recycling Center stormwater infiltration system is ongoing as weather permits.

### 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.

### Water Operations

Roosevelt drive water main installation work is completed. The road will likely be paved in May.

**Bedford Hills Train Station** – At the April 21 meeting the Board appointed Superintendent of Recreation and Parks Bill Heidepriem to manage and operate the Bedford Hills train station under the Town’s sublease from the MTA, as agent for Metro North Commuter Railroad. We also asked him jointly with the Building Department to prepare a phased plan, within existing capital and operating budgets, for repairs and improvements to the train station and present the plan to the Town Board for review and approval. The Building Department will continue to perform routine maintenance and repairs. The Board is holding a work session on May 17 to further discuss the station with Bedford Hills LIVE.

**REMINDER TO HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD Will Funds for Paving I-684 Paving Become a Reality? Your Voice Will be Helpful**

Our thanks to Governor Andrew Cuomo, Assemblyman David Buchwald and State Senator George Latimer for increases in funding for the Department of Transportation in the recently adopted State Budget. It includes significant increases in DOT’s capital funding. We now need to urge the DOT and Governor Cuomo’s Office to apply a portion of that increased funding level to pave the portion of the 684 running through Bedford, most of which is the original roadbed. Here is some contact information:

Governor Cuomo: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/contact>; also try <http://www.writethegovernorofnewyork.com/>; also 1-518-474-8390

DOT Albany office: 518-457-6195

DOT Region 8 Acting Regional Director Todd Westhuis: 845-431-5750

If you send an e-mail, please consider copying me and our legislators:

State Senator Latimer: [latimer@nysenate.gov](mailto:latimer@nysenate.gov), 914-934-5350

State Assemblyman Buchwald: [buchwaldd@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:buchwaldd@assembly.state.ny.us), 914-244-4450

Thank you!

**Paving Route 172 – And for a State Road Being Paved** NYS Department of Transportation’s engineer in charge of paving the stretch from Village Green up to Westchester Avenue in Pound Ridge tells me it should be done in about a week. As mentioned previously, it’s a **noisy** operation which can’t be avoided and results in intermittent closure of single lanes. We’re certainly pleased to have the work being done.

**Temporary Police Headquarters** – As reported earlier, the Police Department will be moving to temporary quarters in the lower level of the Town House building at 321 Bedford Road. The carpentry work and finish work has been completed and our thanks again to our Town employees, George Graniero, Peter Welch and Jim McHugh, and our architect George Rosamond of Lothrop Associates for their excellent work. Using our own Town forces for reduced costs significantly while producing an excellent product in good time. The Town Board awarded HVAC to Atlantic Westchester work for the temporary location of the Police Department. We remain hopeful that the department may move into the temporary quarters soon. It is uncertain, however, whether the Verizon strike will affect the move date. We now are targeting the first or second week of June, a bit later than we earlier had hoped, but still well before any construction work will begin on the renovation of the police station.

**New Recycling Center** – thanks to the DPW crew for their efforts on their work on the new recycling center. We expect to open the new center this spring or early summer. DPW is moving ahead with its work on the Adams Street facility – with initial focus on improving salt storage.

### **Historic Building Preservation Commission – Next Steps on Revising the Law**

Our thanks again to those who attended and spoke at the public information sessions regarding the draft Survey of Historic Properties and accompanying proposals for handling permit requests. We also thank the Commission for its enormous effort and study over three years. My colleagues on the Town Board and I attended the public information sessions and listened attentively. We intend to be responsive to the concerns raised. Much work is needed to revise the law and the proposals to ensure a reasonable balance between preserving and protecting the Town's historic properties and private property rights. Many valid concerns were raised with regard to the law's potential effect on property values, the need to minimize subjectivity, the need for certainty, the number of properties subject to regulation and the cost and time involved in the process – just to name a few. The Town Board has asked the HBPC to consider the comments from the public information sessions as well as those received through letters, e-mails and calls. The Board will be meeting with the HBPC in a work session on May 3 in the near future to provide feedback and guidance. Please e-mail your comments to [planning@bedfordny.gov](mailto:planning@bedfordny.gov) or to the Board at [TownBoardMembers@bedfordny.gov](mailto:TownBoardMembers@bedfordny.gov). Also please feel free to call me at 666-6530 or send me an e-mail at [supervisor@bedfordny.gov](mailto:supervisor@bedfordny.gov).

### **Changes to STAR program for Residents New to Town Since June 1, 2015**

The STAR program has been amended to transition the STAR exemption to the payment of an annual STAR check from the NYS DTF-ORPTS for new property owners as of June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. Below is a brief summary:

- Property owners who received the STAR exemption based on their own application on their 2015/2016 school tax will experience no change. As long as they remain eligible they will continue to receive the STAR exemption on their school tax bill and can go from basic to enhanced and back to basic in the same manner as in the past for as long as they remain in their current home.
- New property owners who did not receive the STAR exemption based on their own application on their 2015/2016 school tax will not be eligible for a STAR exemption but will be eligible for a STAR check from DTF-ORPTS for the 2016/2017 school tax and beyond. It constitutes new ownership or a transfer when the new owner is completely different from prior owner (I.e. transfer from husband and wife to wife only may continue to receive the STAR exemption). (Property placed into a life estate may continue to receive the exemption).
- The STAR check program will be administered by the State, therefore when a property transfers, the assessor no longer needs to send STAR application information to the buyer.
- Eligibility for the STAR check is the same as for the STAR exemption, i.e. basic (primary residence, income) enhanced (primary residence, age, income). The STAR check amount will be equal to STAR saving on tax bill.

- Eligible owners must register with the State for the STAR check. Registration is not yet available. DTF-ORPTS will let us know when it is. Eligible owners who register with the State for the STAR check by July 1, 2016 and whose school taxes are levied on or before Sept., 2016 will receive a check in September, 2016. In the future it is intended that the STAR check will be received in the month that the School tax bill is levied.
- DTF-ORPTS call number for Taxpayers 1-(518)-591-5232

You should also feel free to contact the Bedford Tax Assessor at 914-864-3831

### **Applications for Vacancies on Boards and Committees**

The Town Board is accepting applications for vacancies to the Tree Advisory Board – we especially are seeking an arborist. There is a second position available too. If you'd like more information on any Board or Committee, please check on the Town's website. If you are interested in serving, please e-mail your resume with a cover letter to [supervisor@bedfordny.gov](mailto: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**

Under Bedford's Septic System Repair and Replacement Program, the Town now has reimbursed approximately \$25,000 in eligible costs. As you've probably read, you need to have your septic system cleaned and inspected once every five 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. As mentioned, if you have a failing septic system, help is here. Bedford's 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/>. 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](mailto:supervisor@bedfordny.gov)

**For Your Neighbor's Sake** – Please consider your neighbor when you go to work with your lawn mower or weed whacker (or your lawn service uses them). We realize that your busy schedule makes it difficult to find time to get work done on your property. We all try to squeeze in time to do it. But please not too early and not too late. Our Town Code does not permit high noise activities, such as these, before 8 AM or after sunset.

I ask you to please send me an e-mail at [supervisor@bedfordny.gov](mailto: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