



Supervisor Chris Burdick's Report – January 30, 2015

Great News – 100% Water from the Filtration Plant Starting Next Week

I am very pleased to announce that beginning next week, residents of the Consolidated Water District can turn on their taps and 100% of their water will be from the new water filtration plant. We expect that the quality and taste of the water will be among the best available anywhere. With the water being softer, there no longer should be need for water softening systems or regular replacement of calcified water storage tanks. At long last the important Department of Health required testing and evaluation of the results have been completed. We just got the green light yesterday to proceed. We appreciate the patience of our customers. With the completion of the last phase of this project, I wish to thank Commissioner Kevin Winn, his able Water Division staff and the folks at Hahn Engineering, O'Brien & Gere and Lothrop Associates for their outstanding work.

Emergency Preparedness (and the Blizzard that Didn't Happen)

As 2015 starts off, we have thus far been spared the punishing winter storms that hit us last winter. In my report last month, I mentioned some of the measures we've taken to strengthen our emergency preparedness. My thanks to Department of Public Works Commissioner Kevin Winn, Planning Director Jeff Osterman, Police Chief Mel Padilla and Recreation and Parks Superintendent Bill Heidepriem and their staffs for their response to the January 26 snow storm and for being prepared for much worse.

1. **Enhanced Preparedness** I was pleased that NYSEG and Con Edison, with encouragement from the NYS Public Service Commission, have been more proactive and prepared than for past major storm events – even though this one turned out to be a non-event. NYSEG and Con Edison each hosted a conference call for elected officials which provided an opportunity to be informed on developing storm forecasts, likely impact and measures being taken. It also gave me the opportunity to ask NYSEG the status of activating its storm damage assessment program for Bedford – which I've described in previous columns as a web-based program to enable the town (and other participating municipalities) to provide NYSEG near real time storm damage reports thereby enabling NYSEG to more quickly respond with appropriate resources. Under such a system, the estimated recovery period from a storm of the magnitude of Super Storm Sandy may be reduced as much as two days. For the Town's part, in preparation for the January 26 storm, the Highway Department and Police Department queued up with extra resources. We also had at the ready a warming center at Town Hall with provisions and supplies; and coordinated with the Fire Departments, County and other emergency responders. As it turned out, January 26's storm resulted in no power outages or other serious problems.
2. **Bedford's Hazard Mitigation Plan and Emergency Preparedness Program** Also as earlier reported, the Town is working with Westchester County's consultants on a draft of

Bedford's updated hazard mitigation plan. As part of the effort, we are working on updating the Town's Emergency Management Plan, including the "Call & Check" system for contacting individuals on life support or otherwise at special risk. The Town Board will hold a work session on March 3 to discuss these plans.

Government Efficiency Plan – Meeting the Tax Freeze

As you may know, New York State adopted the Property Tax Freeze Credit as part of the 2015 State Budget. The law allows eligible homeowners a Freeze Credit in year one of the program if the local government, school district, etc. stays within the tax cap. In year two of the program, eligible homeowners would be entitled to the Freeze Credit if the local government, school district, etc. stays within the tax cap and the local government, etc. develops and implements a Government Efficiency Plan which provides long term tax relief through shared services, consolidation or mergers and operational efficiencies. The Government Efficiency Plan must generate sustained savings of at least one percent of the Town's tax levy – base year 2014. You can read more about the Property Tax Freeze in a publication of the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance: <http://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/publications/orpts/pub1030.pdf>

I am confident that Bedford will meet the requirements. Bedford's 2015 budget reflects a 1.67% tax levy increase, comfortably below the cap of 2.25%. The Tax Freeze compliant budget thus enables eligible homeowners to receive a Freeze Credit for year one. Bedford has been ahead of the curve in developing and implementing efficiencies well before the tax cap and tax freeze became law, so we are quite confident that the Town will meet year two requirements. Comptroller Ed Ritter and I will be recommending to the Town Board that we partner with Westchester County in the development of the Government Efficiency Plan, as there are decided efficiencies and benefits in doing so. The Town Board will consider that step at our February 3 meeting as we need to notify the County Budget Office by February 6 of our intention to participate if we wish to do so.

Town Comprehensive Plan

The Town Board will hold a work session this coming Tuesday, February 3, to discuss the process for updating the Town's 2003 Comprehensive Plan.

Chain Stores

Also at Tuesday's work session, we'll be considering issues related to chain stores (a/k/a "formula stores"). We'll discuss concerns we've heard regarding potential adverse impacts chains store may have on the community, regulations and planning tools Bedford employs now to address such impacts and what supplementary measures, if any, may be appropriate.

Comptroller's Report

Comptroller Ed Ritter reported today as follows:

"We are in the process of closing the town's books for 2014. Departments have a cut-off point of January 30, 2015 to submit any remaining invoices chargeable to 2014. 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. The Highway fund looks to be within their 2014 budget, using less of the fund balance originally budgeted for the fund.

We processed our final payroll on December 26, 2014. All year end accruals have been captured from the January 9, 2015 payroll. We have processed W-2 forms for all employees and will distribute them no later than January 30, 2015.

Beginning in 2012 we are required to report all employer contributions for health care on employee W-2 forms. Our soft ware has been updated to properly reflect this information.

With the tax cap law, we were required to report our prior levy and a total of our 2014 budget. This was reported prior to the adoption of the budget as required. The State Comptroller's Office audited my 2015 submission. They determined that it was calculated and filed correctly. The Comptroller's office actually complimented our efficiency in this matter."

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 December 2014. County sales tax shows a 3.51% increase over 2013. This revenue is projected to be \$2,508,382 which is \$108,382 over our budget of \$2,400,000.

Parking has actual data from January through December 2014. The actual percentage over 2013 is a 1.00% decrease. Revenue for the year is \$868,445 which is a decrease of \$8,792 from last year at this time. The revenue for the year is projected to be \$868,445 which is \$61,555 under budget.

Fines and forfeited bail has actual data for January through December 2014. Revenue is \$686,730 which is \$42 over last year's revenue at this time. This revenue is projected to be \$686,730 which is \$136,730 over budget.

Safety Inspection Fees has actual data for January through December 2014. Revenue is \$724,545 which is \$30,115 under last year's revenue at this time. This revenue is projected to be \$724,545 which is \$184,545 over budget.

EXPENDITURES

2014 expenditures are within budget limits for 2014 with the following exceptions:

POLICE DEPARTMENT OVERTIME – 001.3120.0101 has exceeded their budget of \$525,000 by \$246,861.

LEGAL COUNSEL – 001.1420.422 has exceeded its budget by \$35,990.

Engineer – 001.1440.0405 has exceeded its budget by \$29,660

Financial Projections

Since my last report, we have posted to the Town's website, the five year financial projections, which Comptroller Ed Ritter prepared. The projections employ the format and analysis recommended by the New York State Comptroller's Office. This includes a four year look back to actual data from audited financial statements, current analysis and reasonable projections looking five years into the future. The projections assume Tax Freeze compliant budgets. The Town's Capital Plan which covers 2014 through 2022 also is used. The future outlook is positive. The largest improvement is a moderation in increases in employee benefits. On a four year historical analysis the average increases have dropped to 6%. Future debt is based on actual debt service and estimates of future debt service under the Capital Plan. For the General Fund the projections show strong fund balances – one of the key items which rating agencies evaluate when deciding whether to retain the Town's triple AAA credit rating. The projections show a shortfall in 2016 for the Highway Fund but then a surplus which increases from 2017 forward.

Traffic Safety Measures

The Town's Traffic Safety Working Group is continuing to review comments and requests from the community with a view to identifying problems posing the greatest hazards (accident data being an important factor). As part of a comprehensive approach to traffic safety, the Police Department has been testing its newly acquired speed indicator and variable message boards for deployment in a variety of locations throughout the Town. The additional RADAR Traffic Data Recorder recently acquired gives the Police Department increased ability to measure the effectiveness of its traffic safety measures. The TSWG will be meeting again next week for another round of review and possible recommendations to the Town Board.

Possible Police Station Renovations

As reported last month, Lothrop Associates is conducting a feasibility study of the Police Station (last renovated in the 1970s) with a view of determining whether and what renovations may enable the facility to serve the Police Department's mission. This is the beginning of the process, with the next step being a work session on February 24 with the Town Board to report initial findings. We know well the fiscal constraints and the intent of the Town Board to stay within the property tax cap. Stay tuned.

Department of Public Works Report

Highway

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 early 2015. The WCDOH automation demonstration test period was completed in early December and a report was submitted to WCDOH on December 10. Preliminary review by DOH has been positive, but it is ongoing.

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

The U.S. Postal Service occupies its premises in Bedford Hills under a lease which expires on October 31. Of course we wish to have the hamlet of Bedford Hills continue to be served by its own post office, and have devoted a good deal of effort in our attempts to have an agreement in place well before the expiration of the lease. I have been negotiating with CBRE, the leasing agent for the USPS, on a renewal lease and just received a proposed Letter of Intent which provides rent for the initial term beginning November 1, 2015 at \$35 square foot or \$125,440.00 per year. The rent to the Town under the expiring lease is \$79,544.81 per year. I am recommending to the Town Board that we approve the Letter of Intent and authorize me to enter into it on behalf of the Town.

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