

Monthly Updates – from the Mayor – March 2019

Since the minutes from our regular monthly Board meeting are not formally approved and posted on the Village website until the following month, it seems that our residents might be more fully informed of Village affairs by having regular updates posted on our website sooner, rather than later. To that end, it has been decided to provide our readers with some monthly updates, and if there are any concerns or a need for more information, please call (315-673-3112) or email (marboard@twcny.rr.com) the Village Office.

Public Hearing – Local Law #2 of 2019 – Override Property Tax Cap

The purpose of the public hearing is to allow all interested parties the opportunity to be heard regarding Local Law #2, which will allow the Village Board to override a property tax cap that is in excess of the tax levy limit of 2%, mandated by the State of New York

The property tax cap of 2%, which is another State mandate, complicates our budget and at a recent workshop, the Board decided to override the tax cap. We expect to stay under the property tax cap and we have also moved towards consolidation, particularly of the village, town and school district sewer districts. However, the tax cap complicates the Village budget process and we might not be able to abide the formula devised by the State for a tax cap.

Having learned from the experience of several towns, it is best to override, if only to protect the Village from penalty. Should the adopted budget vary from the actual budget, resulting in a tax hike of more than 2 percent, the Village would be responsible for a host of fines for violating the tax cap. The public might think that the Village, by overriding the cap, is just ignoring the law and not in support of a tax cap, when in actuality the Village is very much in favor of it. However, with the Village continuing to receive unfunded mandates from the state, coupled with a cap on its ability to raise revenue, it is very difficult for the Village to plan or even survive. There are too many variables in the tax cap and therefore, the Village Board has proposed this local law to vote to override the tax cap, just to protect the Village from penalty.

Local Law #2 of 2019 – Override Tax Cap Resolution – following the Public Hearing, Local Law #2 of 2019 authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-c was approved by the Board.

Spring Brush Pickup Dates – the Village Board and DPW are going to continue the policy from last year for the 2019 Brush Pickup, allowing brush to be placed at the curb on Saturdays and Sundays for pickup on Mondays from April 1st to May 6th. In addition, during the summer months (June, July and August), brush may also be placed at the curb on Saturdays and Sundays for pickup on the first Monday of each month during those summer months.

Town Trash Days – Town of Marcellus announced the 2019 dates for the Trash Transfer Stations and they are: Fridays, April 26th and May 3rd, and May 10th, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturdays, April 27th, May 4th, and May 11th, from 8 a.m. to Noon. Permits are required and are issued through the Town of Marcellus Clerk's Office. The rates are \$20 for a passenger vehicle, \$35 for a pickup truck, \$45 for a trailer, \$10 for a one-time passenger car, \$3 for tires and \$15 for anything with Freon (such as refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners or dehumidifiers). The Town Board agreed to also have a shred day during the Spring Trash Days. The cost to the Town is \$500 for four (4) hours and the Village will share in that cost. There will be no cost to the residents for the shredding. There will also be an Electronics Waste Disposal Day included with the trash days this year and that will require a special fee. The cost will be \$40 for televisions and monitors over 27", \$20 for televisions and monitors less than 27" and a \$5 miscellaneous fee. This year there will be a charge for flat screen televisions. Some items are not accepted including garbage, OCRRA recyclables, liquids or hazardous

waste including paint, oil tanks, fuel tanks, motor vehicles, and contractor debris (home projects only), All items must be secured and covered when transporting to the Town Transfer Station.

Annual Storm Water Report – was tabled until the next regular meeting of the Village Board in April.

Date and Time for Annual Meeting and Tentative Budget Hearing – the Annual Meeting will take place on April 1, 2019 and includes the appointment of non-elected officials, establishing regular meeting dates, as well as designating official newspapers and depositories. In addition, a Public Hearing will take place on April 1, 2019 to consider the tentative budget for the Village for the next fiscal year. Approval of the final budget will probably take place at the next regular Board meeting, on April 22, 2019.

Updates – Mayor and Board

Police and School Safety – on March 18th, the Marcellus School District held a professional development day and part the day called for Chief of Police Wicks and his team to present CRASE training, a type of training designed as a precursor to doing an active shooter drill as well as providing participants with information to assist in thinking through their responses in a crisis situation. A full day training program, this initiative by the Marcellus Police Department and Chief Wicks will also highlight how well prepared Marcellus School Resource Officers are to handle threats against the school, better in the Board’s opinion than any other school district in the state. The role of Chief Wicks in establishing a School Resource Officer Program at the Marcellus Central School District is especially noteworthy. Now ten years old, the SRO Program at MCS has enjoyed unparalleled success and is touted as one of the finest in Onondaga County, if not the State of New York. Chief Wicks has also been instrumental in exporting this program to other school districts, optimistic that it might become a model to be used on a statewide basis. Working with Assemblyman Al Stirpe, a bill has been introduced into the NYS Assembly to amend the education law, the criminal procedure law and the retirement and social security law, in relation to the creation of a Comprehensive School Resource Officer Training and Implementation Program (SRO TIP) on a State-wide basis.

No Parking – regulations during the winter months, which calls for no parking on any Village streets from 2 a.m. to 7 a.m., ends on April Fools Day, April 1st - no fooling!

Sign Placement – soon the Highway Department will re-install pedestrian crossing signs on Main Street in the Village. The signs are placed in the road, near the crosswalks, warning motorists that all vehicles must yield to pedestrians who are walking the crosswalk – a New York State law. It is hoped that the signs will make it easier for pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren, to cross Main Street safely as well as cause motorists to slow down as they approach these crosswalks.

Flag Replacement – the American flags that line several of our streets in the Village will soon be in place. We thank the American Legion for its efforts in helping to keep these flags in good condition – an excellent example of how committed the Legion is to our Village and its residents. Thank you.

Village Earth Day Participation – the Board would also like to announce that the Village will again participate in an Earth Day clean up on Thursday, April 25, 2019, with a rain day of Friday, April 26, 2019. Fourth grade students from Heffernan Elementary School will participate in this event and we welcome any individuals or groups to join us in helping clean the Village of any litter lying along the roadside and village rights of way. We will meet in front of the Village Hall to distribute bags and gloves. If you’re interested in participating, as a group or an individual, please show up about 1:30 p.m. and contact the Village Clerk at 673-3112 for more information.

Utility Bills – the utility bill that residents receive this month is the last bill for our fiscal year. Residents should note that if not paid by April 30, 2019, the bill will be re-levied to the tax bill for June 1, 2019. If those bills for tenants who pay their own utilities are not paid by April 30, 2019, these too will be re-levied onto the owner's taxes for June 1, 2019. Please note that, unlike previous utility bills, payment for this final bill for the year must be made within the month.

Creek Walk – Fred's Trail – will reopen for the public when the snow finally leaves the trail. At first glance, it appears that the winter weather has not caused much damage to the trail. There were some hardy people who braved the elements to walk the trail this winter, although it was not officially open. We welcome the spring as well as those who will take advantage of this gem in our community.

Budget – the Village Board is working to finalize the 2019-20 Village Budget in preparation for the Annual Meeting. We hope to maintain the Village tax rate at \$6.85 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, a tax levy that will not exceed the NYS Tax Cap Limit. Due to increased costs to the Village, however, this proposed budget will reflect the first full year of increased trash collection rates, from \$45 to \$50 per unit, which became effective January 1, 2019. The news about the financial assistance received by the Village from NYS and from Onondaga County is also mixed. The NYS Governor's Executive Budget for the coming fiscal year eliminates the Village's allocation of State Aid to Municipalities, and also freezes the Village's allocation of State Transportation Aid at current year levels. The good news is that the Village Infrastructure Improvement Program (VIIP) agreement between Onondaga County and the Village has been now been extended for another ten years and includes multiple increases in the amount of financial assistance to the Village over the next ten years. Our budget continues to remain short of what the Board needs to provide adequate services but we do not anticipate a tax increase this year. This makes the fourth year in a row that the tax rate has remained unchanged.

Increase In Sewer Rates – In trying to offset excessive sewer rates, the Village has been successful in securing some major funding. However, the plant upgrade is now almost \$8 million, bids have been awarded, and construction has begun, with a scheduled completion date of late August 2019. Funding can only come from sewer rate increases and as mentioned at previous Board meetings, we found it necessary to approve another sewer rent increase of approximately 33% at our December Board meeting. This will mean a minimum quarterly sewer rate, for Village sewer users, of \$100.00 (from \$75.00) and a minimum annual cost of \$400 (from \$300) and an average annual cost of about \$547.47 (from \$413.13). Keep in mind that this is an average estimate, since sewer rates are based on water usage in the Village. The annual cost for outside users (Town and School District) is anticipated to be \$686.84 (from \$516.41), given that outside users pay an additional 25% over that of the average Village sewer user – an increase of about \$160.00 per year, beginning in 2019. In order to prepare our Treatment Plant for operation well into the 21st century, these increases, while hefty, are unavoidable.

Property Tax Cap – as was mentioned, our Budget is complicated by the property tax cap of 2%, which is another State mandate and at our recent workshop meeting, the Board decided to override the tax cap. The Board certainly favors a tax cap, and we will probably do that. However, there seems to be no meaningful relief from continuous unfunded State mandates and these, coupled with a cap on the Board's ability to raise revenue, it is very difficult to plan or even survive.

Flushable Wipes Are NOT Flushable!!! – We continue to urge residents to avoid using what are called flushable wipes – they are NOT flushable – nor are dental floss, cotton swabs, hygiene products, kitty litter, facial tissue, fats, oils, and grease. All of these should be put in the trash and only human waste and toilet paper should be flushed. To avoid plumbing problems, which will most likely occur on residential property, not

in the Village main, please be aware of this concern. We also reference an Internet video that explains the problems associated with flushable wipes. Please view the following: www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLTVqkXVvNk. It is also posted on the Village website. We also urge residents to review the "Trash NOT Sewer" flyer that accompanied a previous newsletter. The information is invaluable and will help residents understand the importance of putting items in the trash, and not into the sewer.

Homeowner Responsibility for Sewers – property owners should be aware that they are required to maintain the sewer laterals that extend from their homes to the sewer main – typically located in the middle of the road. Sewer laterals are entirely owned by the private property owner, who is responsible for the entire length of the lateral, to the sewer main. At the sewer main, the Village assumes responsibility.

m. New Business in the Village – Look for an early summer opening of a new business in the Village at 4 E. Main St. called Gretchen's Confections, specializing in handcrafted chocolates, baked goods, coffees and soups. It will offer a chocolate shop and café, and will also feature a production kitchen. We welcome this new Village business, a long vacant site on Main Street.

"Olde Home Days 2019" is planned for May 31st, June 1st, and 2nd, in the Village and in Marcellus Park, and honoring the Leadership of the Olde Home Days Celebration. Please support Marcellus Olde Home Days. A fun filled weekend is being planned.

Clean Energy Community – Having been designated as a "Clean Energy Community," the Village of Marcellus has been awarded a \$100,000 grant to implement clean energy projects and will include a retrofitting of existing Village lights, including the historic lights on Main, North and South Streets as well as the coach lights on Kinderwood Drive to direct wire LED type fixtures. Other LED lighting retrofits will or have occurred in the Village Hall, the Village Garage and the Water Pollution Control Plant.

Bridge Work on South Street – there is a planned closure of South Street Road by the Onondaga County DOT (contact is Paul Hood – 315-435-3207) beginning in the fall of 2019 – September or October – for approximately six (6) weeks. The closure of the road, from about the intersection of Bishop Hill Road and South Street to Lee Mulroy road is for bridge maintenance – near Nightingale Mills. Local traffic will be allowed onto the road and Nightingale's will still be accessible but the road will be closed going south from there. This will also affect school bus routes. DOT has a concern about large vehicles travelling north on Route 174 making a turn onto Slate Hill Road and then using Platt Road. It is therefore planning a detour route to the blinking light on Lee Mulroy Road, taking a left onto Main Street and then another left onto South Street (which has limited weight). They do not expect too many large vehicles making deliveries to Nightingales, but there may be a few.

Comp Alliance – will conduct the annual safety and health training for all Village employees, together with the Town's employees, on April 18, 2019 at the Fire House from 9:00 am – 12:00 noon.

Safety Inspections from NYSEG – NYSEG (New York State Electric and Gas) and RG& E (Rochester Gas and Electric) have informed the Village that they will be coming into neighborhoods over the next several months conducting a safety inspection of the natural gas meter and service to ensure the safe delivery of natural gas to homes and businesses. This notice will also be posted on our website to make the residents aware of the inspections.

Village Meetings for April 2019 – a list of those meetings scheduled for April 2019, is provided for those so interested, including the fourth meeting of the Olde Home Days Committee, 2019 will take place on Thursday, April 4, 2019 in the Town Park's Welcome Center, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Please note also that the Budget Agenda Meeting will take place on Friday, March 29th and the Annual Meeting and Tentative Budget

Hearing will take place on Monday, April 1, 2019 in the Board Room, beginning at 7 p.m. The next Regular Board meeting will take place on Monday, April 22nd, at which time the Board will adopt the 2019-2020 Budget and set Tax Rate. In addition, the Village Office will be closed on Good Friday, April 19th, and the Village-wide Earth Day Cleanup will take place on Thursday, April 25th, with a rain date of April 26th. Don't forget to check the Spring Trash Days, which include a Community Shred Day and an Electronics Waste Day as well.