

To: Ancram Town Board
From: Art Bassin
Date: August 12, 2018
Subject: Supervisor's Report



1. Financial Report – Another normal financial month in July. General fund spending through YTD July was about flat to last year, and Highway spending YTD through July, excluding the \$240,000 for the new grader, was about \$70,000 under last year. Cash on hand as of the end of June was \$1,070,000. YE cash projection is \$822,000, down \$19,000 from last month's YE projection of \$841,000 and \$105,000 better than the YE budgeted cash number of \$736,000. The improvement versus budget in YE cash projections are primarily caused by better than budgeted sales tax receipts. About \$900,000 of our \$1,070,000 in cash on hand is on deposit with TD Bank in their liquid investment account, which currently earns 1.6% and floats with changes in the Fed Funds rate.

2. Comp Plan Review Process – The Comp Plan Review Committee will meet again on Monday, 8/20 to start working on the strategies and action plans to implement the revised Vision and Goals.

3. 2019 Tentative Budget – I will present the “final” Tentative Budget at the 8/16 meeting, and we will schedule a public hearing on the Tentative Budget on 9/20, prior to the Town Board meeting. The Tentative Budget includes a \$30,000 increase in the sales tax to reflect our actual experience for the past few years, a \$10,000 increase in interest to reflect higher interest earnings from our TD Bank account, and a 2.5% salary increase for all employees except the Town Board, Town Judges and Town Supervisor. Departmental spending is pretty much in line with 2018 budget spending, with some line item adjustments to reflect actual experiences in 2018. The 2019 Budget is on track to reduce taxes by 1% while we maintain a \$130,000 “contingent account” to fund long term capital spending needs and to provide a buffer in the event we see an unexpected drop in state funding or sales & mortgage tax receipts.

4. NYS Property Tax Related Charitable Reserve Funds – Nothing new to report. We are waiting for an IRS decision on whether this NYS plan is “legal” or not, and for the outcome of a lawsuit brought against the Federal Government by NYS and several other states alleging the SALT tax cap is not legal. The County and local School Districts are waiting for clarification on the legality of this program as well. Even if this program is declared legal later this year, the accounting systems to allow this program to be implemented may not be available until 2019, so it's unlikely this program will be available this year.

5. Speed Limit Enforcement – Speeding in the hamlets has been identified as a major problem by participants in the Comp Plan Review Process. In addition to a stronger law enforcement presence in town, installing radar speed signs that track your speed and flash how fast you are going may contribute to slowing traffic down. These signs also track and record vehicle speeds from both directions, which will allow us to schedule law enforcement at the right times to issue speeding tickets. Two of these speed control signs would cost between \$5500-\$6000. Recommend we approve a resolution allowing us to purchase two of these signs to see if they contribute to slowing people down.

6. Weight Limits on 8/8a - In addition to concerns about speeding, participants in the Comp Plan Review Process have expressed concerns about heavy truck traffic, especially in Ancramdale. The Town can pass a local law establishing weight limits on town and county roads to try and reroute heavy trucks away from areas we want to protect from heavy truck traffic. The immediate concern is the center of Ancramdale, and weight limits on 8 and 8a in Ancramdale would, if enforced, reroute truck traffic to 82 or 22. Recommend we approve a resolution to retain

an attorney to draft a local law to establish weight limits on 8 and 8a. If we start the local law process now, we would probably be ready to consider the local law for adoption in 90 days, following a public hearing. Over the next 90 days we will work with State and County law enforcement to figure out how to enforce weight limits on 8 and 8a, and on other roads in town where there already are weight limits.

7. Sawchuk Road Septage – DEC has requested additional information from Floods Sanitation to complete Flood's application for renewing his registration to dump septage on a farm along Sawchuk Rd. The additional information is due 9/4, and if it's not provided, the dumping of septage will have to stop by 9/14. If DEC renews the permit to dump septage, the Town could consider taking action to stop the practice as a violation of our Zoning Code. If we were to do that, Flood may seek the support of Ag & Markets, arguing that spreading septage is a normal agricultural practice. Ag & Markets has indicated they will normally intervene to protect a farmer spreading septage if the septage is being used to grow agricultural products.

8. Unsafe Buildings – Code Enforcement officer Ed Ferratto plans to contact all owners of vacant/unsafe buildings to remind them of the violations outstanding on their buildings and to request they remedy the violations. We have identified about 15 structures around town that are "vacant/unsafe and potentially a threat to public safety.

9. Fire Fighter Cancer Benefit – NYS has passed a law effective 1/1/19 requiring Fire Districts provide volunteer fire fighters monetary assistance if they are diagnosed with cancer. The County has proposed to fund the cost for this program for the fire fighters in the county by using County workers compensation funds which are available because of the sale of the Pine Haven nursing home a few years ago. The cost to the County for this program apparently is 50% of the cost a fire district would incur. Recommend we support this proposal.

10. Trim River Birches at Town Hall - The 7 river birches adjacent to the Town Hall need to be trimmed back to remove branches leaning on the building and to raise up the canopy. Hope to have some proposals by Thursday.

11. Houghtaling House – Jim has gotten one proposal to demolish Houghtaling house according to the RFP, which we will review on Thursday, and one request to postpone awarding the bid so this second bidder can try and get an asbestos survey done to determine if there is asbestos on the inside of the house or not. If there is no interior asbestos, the cost of demolition could be significantly less than if there is interior asbestos. As you may recall, we tried to get an interior inspection done early in 2017, but the unsafe condition of the house caused the asbestos inspector we talked to to conclude that it was unsafe to enter and inspect the interior, so we had to assume there was interior asbestos and proceed accordingly. It's unlikely the second bidder will be able to get an experienced asbestos investigator to enter a condemned building, so this may not be a valid proposal. We will discuss Thursday