

**To: Ancram Town Board**  
**From: Art Bassin**  
**Subject: Supervisor's Rept**  
**Date: October 19, 2023**



**1) Financial Report** – Another normal financial month. The YE 2023 fund balance projection (cash plus T Bills) is \$1,182,000, up about \$60,000 from our previous projection, primarily due to moving proposed spending on housing (\$35,000) and the grant to Ancram Opera House (\$67,500) to 2024, offset by a \$20,000 reduction in expected NYSERDA grant revenues, lower mortgage tax revenues and higher legal expenses. Cash and T Bills at the end of September totaled about \$1,361,000. As of 9/30 our T-Bill portfolio was at \$1,185,000, and cash on hand was about \$176,000. We have a treasury bill for \$250,000 maturing in mid-October which we will use to pay bills, including a second payment on the sand/salt shed. I anticipate we will be able to continue to invest \$1 million in short term (1, 2, 3 month) T- Bills over the rest of the year. Yields on the 1, 2 and 3 month T-Bills are still around 5.3-5.4%. Our year-to-date interest earned on T-Bills is about \$56,000 compared to a full year budget of \$30,000. If yields stay steady, we could earn another \$15,000 in interest by the end of the year. **Building Department** activity continues to be strong, with fees continuing to exceed plan. We continue on track to hit about \$75,000 in building permit fees this year, compared to a budget of \$45,000. **Court Fines** in September were a negative \$2,700 because we paid NYS more than we had collected. Through September YTD, we are about \$20,000 under a court fee budget of \$25,000, and are likely to end the year with a \$15,000 negative variance.

**2) 2024 Preliminary Budget** – We will have a public hearing on the 2024 Preliminary Budget at the 10/19 Town Board meeting. The 2024 Preliminary budget targets a 2024 tax levy flat to 2023 at about \$714,000. Compared to the 2023 original budget, major proposed 2024 cost increases of about \$71,000 include salary increases in the 3-3.4% range (\$20,000), attorney fee increases (\$15,000), NYS retirement system costs (\$12,000), health insurance (\$10,000), utilities (\$5,000), CRB training (\$5,000), court costs (\$2500) and cemeteries (\$2000), and are offset by about \$82,500 of cost reductions, including reductions in building equipment (\$30,000), contingent (\$30,000), assessor (\$20,000), ZRC (\$2,500) and central data (\$2000). Revenues are budgeted to decrease about \$4,000 due to a decrease in NYSERDA grant revenues of \$71,000 offset by revenue increases in interest (\$30,000), building department fees \$15,000), sales tax (\$12,500), planning fees (\$2,500 and franchise fees (\$2,500). To keep 2024 taxes flat at the \$714,000 level, we have budgeted \$103,000 in fund balance, which is an increase of \$5,000 from the allocation of fund balance in the 2023 budget. While we can and will keep town taxes flat again in 2024 by using fund balance, we may have to deal with a weaker sales and mortgage tax environment over the next few years, factor that we may need to factor into our capital spending plans and consider postponing some major strategic investments, or getting loans or grants to help fund essential projects. Our projected 2024 capital spending totals \$552,500 (a new plow truck - \$300,000; two new truck bodies - \$150,000, Housing Committee - \$35,000 and Ancram Opera House - \$67,500) which will reduce our fund balance to \$629,500 at the end of 2024. Major unknowns that will have to be resolved before we finalize our 2024 budget are what 2024 sales and mortgage taxes are likely to be, how much T- Bill interest we can reasonably expect and how much health insurance will go up. We are assuming 2024 sales tax revenues will increase about 3% along with inflation, and T Bills will continue to yield in the 5-5.5% range for short term investments, but may adjust these assumptions as we see actual results over the next month and see that happens with the possible federal government shutdown and levels of inflation. We will do a public hearing on the Final Budget in November.

**3) O&G Industries** – No new news on this. The ZBA will meet with O&G later in October to start the review process.

**4) Revaluation** – We will get an update on our Article 7s and SCARs from Attorney Jon Tingley in executive session at the 10/19 Board meeting.

**5) Planning Application Process Review** – Nan Stolzenburg indicates she has completed her process and has distributed the new forms. Next step is to start using the forms, see how they work and make any necessary tweaks.

**6) BAR Reappointments** - BAR appointments terminate as of 9/30 of each year, so we will consider reappointing Frederique Abramovici for a second 5 year term, and Joe Brown for a second one year term as an alternate member.

**7) Columbia County Appointments** – We will consider two County appointments - Suzan Flamm as Ancram’s representative on the County CSCTF. And Steve Savarese as the Region 8 (Copake, Hillsdale, Ancram) representative to the County Planning Board.

**8) Accessory Residential Use Fee Reduction** - Please review the list of specific fees included as accessory residential use fees that J Hoffman distributed last month, and be prepared to propose any fees in that list that we should exclude from the fee reduction,

**9) Pro-Housing Community Designation** – Jane Meigs has proposed a few edits which have been included in this resolution, which we will consider for adoption at our 10/19 meeting. NYS has established a Pro-Housing Communities program to give communities who qualify for the program preferential access to certain grant funds.

**10) NYS Mandatory Training** – We have scheduled three sessions of the mandatory preventing sexual harassment and workplace violence training, which will be conducted by the Columbia County trainer.