

Town of Johnsburg Newsletter

On line at www.johnsburg.ny.com

Supervisor's Report

Short Takes

Ron Vanselow Appointed

On Jan. 3, 2008 the Town of Johnsburg Town Board unanimously appointed Ron Vanselow to fill the unexpired term of Supervisor Sterling Goodspeed on the board. Congrats Ron!

Town Budget Discussion

A group to discuss the Town budget and tax situation will have its first meeting at Tannery Pond on Feb. 1 at 4 p.m. Please join us.

Earlier Agendas

Proposed meeting agendas for the town board will now be available online on the town website on the Thursday preceding each board meeting.

Modernizing the Phone System

The Town will be working over the next several weeks to modernize our phone system. The goal will be to avoid frustrating busy signals and establishing a reliable messaging system.

Sliding at the Ski Bowl

The town has reached agreement to return youth sliding to the Ski Bowl. The hill is located behind the warming hut.

Town Launches Newsletter!

Welcome to the first issue of the Town of Johnsburg's monthly newsletter. The goal of this publication is to enhance information available to all citizens about their government. This newsletter will be published monthly in conjunction with Johnsburg Jottings and will likewise be available online at the Town's website, www.johnsburgny.com

Special thanks to JCS Superintendent Mike Markwica and Mrs. Patty Morehouse for their assistance with this endeavor.

Lifting the Veil on Budget & Taxes

Transparency and accountability are the twin hallmarks of successful municipal fiscal policy. That being said, it can still be difficult to understand the relationship between taxes and budget. Tougher still is the identification of trends that create challenges to budget makers and in turn seek out solutions.

If there is one actual barometer for analyzing our town's budget and tax situation, it is the amount of dollars in each budget cycle raised by taxes. Comparing this figure from year to year does much to explain where we are headed financially. In short, identifying the amount of dollars raised by taxes in each year sets aside other revenue sources and looks purely at the burden taxpayers carry to make the government run.

The amount of dollars raised by taxes over the last 5 years according to the town budget records is as follows:

- 2004—\$588,905
- 2005—632,163
- 2006—734,418
- 2007—878,356
- 2008—970,254

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Affordable Housing Initiative

At the Town Board meeting on January 15, 2008 the board will begin discussion of an initiative to protect the ability of area residents to purchase homes in Johnsburg despite increasing market pressures.

One way to deal with the affordable housing issue is to amend the town zoning ordinance to establish inclusionary

zoning. Inclusionary zoning forces developers to construct a portion of every project at an affordable rate. The concept can also be used to require developers to pay capital into funds that are managed by not-for-profit entities to assist with affordable housing. One such fund that already exists is known as the Adirondack Land Trust.

Winter Extravaganza!

Join the fun on January 21 from to as the Ski Bowl Park hosts the 2nd Annual Winter Extravaganza! Activities will include tubing, skiing, skating, ice sculptures and more! Thank you to Jill Broderick, Andi Mckee, the Johnsburg Youth Commission and ORDA for all of their hard work on this event.

Planning Board Achieves Certification

The Town of Johnsbury Planning Board was one of 12 boards recently noted in the New York State Planning Federation Newsletter to achieve certification according to Chairperson Dottie Osterhout.

The process of certification occurs as board members successfully pass a state administered test.

The Johnsbury Planning Board is the only planning board in Warren County to have secured certification according to Osterhout.

The planning board is currently reviewing such projects as the Front Street Development project and the Tall Timbers project. Under the town's new zoning ordinance the planning board's role in review of local projects has increased significantly.

The planning board meets the third Monday of each month at Tannery Pond Community Center, though January's meeting is rescheduled to the fourth Monday due to the holiday. Residents are encouraged to attend these meetings.

(Lifting the Veil, cont.)

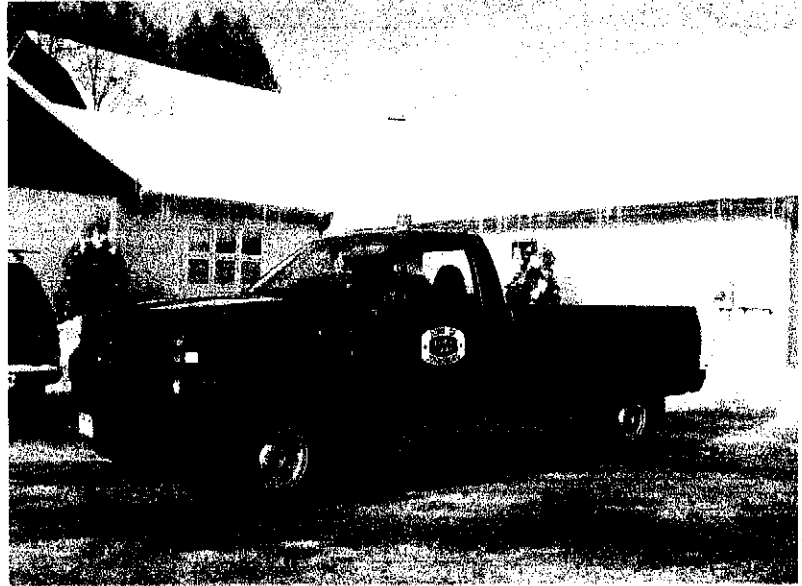
Thus in the last five years, taxpayer contributions to the budget have increased by more than 60%. At this rate, the taxpayer burden, which now hovers near \$1 million annually, will be anticipated to double every 8 years. Why have taxes increased and what can we do about it?

Simply put, much of the increase is attributable to the same pressures we feel in our household budgets. Dramatic increases in the cost of fuel, coupled with the number of buildings owned by the Town has been a significant factor as has the cost of insurance at every level. In general, the State has passed on significant expenses to municipalities without providing commensurate funding.

So what do we do? Over the next several months the Town Board and a group of volunteers will be looking at just these issues. Our focus will be on ways to reform the Town budget by cutting spending and creating other revenue sources. If you are interested in joining this discussion group our first meeting will be at the Tannery Pond Community Center on Feb. 1 at 4 p.m. At that time we will review our most recent budget, discuss reforms that have been identified in the last several weeks, review the biggest pressure points in the budget and then schedule a meeting to discuss possible solutions.

Next Fall as the town budget is presented the key measure of accountability will be in identifying the amount of dollars raised by taxes. Can we change the pattern by controlling spending and creating revenue streams? Stay tuned.

Highway Department Adds New Truck



This 3 1/4 ton heavy duty Ford F250 pick up truck has been added to the town fleet. Town Highway Superintendent Curt Richards is working with town officials on a long range plan to continue replacements for the town fleet.

Ask Annie

By Ann Deppe, Town Assessor

As many of you know I have been the Town's Assessor for the past 10 years. I was elected to office in 1998 while I was the school tax collector. In 2000, after receiving certification from the NYS Office of Real Property, I was appointed the position of sole assessor for the town. I am a member of the NYS Assessors' Association and currently serve as president of the Warren County Assessors' Association. We, as a county association meet monthly and work with legislators, the Office of Real Property and the NYS Assessors' Association to keep updated on the changes that occur with exemptions or anything concerning your valuation. We bring all this information back to our towns to share with you the taxpayer.

My office has a wealth of information readily available to the public which I serve. I am please to be part of the new Johnsbury Town Newsletter. I often answer questions regarding your property and provide maps. This newsletter will provide an opportunity for me to keep you informed on any changes that may occur during the year. I believe public relations with an open door policy is an essential part of good government.

I new welcome any ideas, comments or concerns you may have in regards to serving you better and/or answering any questions you may have on assessments. I will try to be as brief as possible in my explanations. Please submit your question, idea or concern to my office by mail or email.

Thank you for the opportunity of serving as your town assessor.