

Town of Johnsburg Newsletter

Supervisor's Report

Short Takes

A Note to Voters & Aspiring Politicians

It has been my privilege to serve two terms as your Supervisor. Over the next 13 months I will continue to devote my time and energies to the position you have entrusted me with. After that, I will return to my full time law practice, wife and kids. I'm a two term kind of guy.

Bridge Progress

Footings have been poured and construction is progressing rapidly on the Harrington Road bridge. Work at the site is under the direction of Tom Suozzo of Delaware Systems Engineering and Town Highway Superintendent Dan Hitchcock.

County Budget

In a year marked by continuing cuts and general budget stabilization, the County budget will contain a tax increase of just over 1%.

Train Operator Selection Process Underway

County supervisors are reviewing two proposals for railroad operations which could dramatically alter the transportation landscape for the communities located along the train line.

One of the proposers, Iowa Pacific Holdings, is a multi-national corporation operating 6 railroads in the U.S. and 2 in Great Britain.

The Iowa Pacific proposal identifies 2 freight opportunities along the line and additionally anticipates major upgrades to passenger service. In addition to tourist operations, the proposal specifically anticipates connecting rural Upstate commuters to Saratoga, Albany and Manhattan.

While the line has been controversial, the current proposal which anticipates the return of ski trains, dinner cars and daily commuter operations in season seems to do much to turn the corner for many doubters.

While the train will do much to enhance the tourism industry, its service to residents should not be underestimated. Imagine the consequence of a daily August link to Saratoga or the opportunity for public schools to visit metropolitan cultural attractions via rail.

Inner-connect in Place

With help from Mother Nature, the Hudson lift at the North Creek Ski Bowl will operate as early as mid December. From the summit of the lift, skiers can ski trails back to the base area at the Ski Bowl or back to Gore proper. From the base of Gore's current North Chair, skiers can ski a trail which ultimately merges with the historic Oak Ridge Trail at the Ski Bowl.

In addition to the trail inner-connect, shuttle service will link Gore, the Ski Bowl and the North Creek Business District.

Once the lift is operational, Gore will be a massive ski facility sprawling across multiple peaks. The ski facility will be the 6th largest east of the Mississippi River.

The Hudson lift and the shuttle service literally connect the mountain to our Main Street.

As Mountain Manager Mike Pratt said recently, "The hard work to put the infrastructure in place is 99% completed and we're ready to show it off for all the skiers and riders."

OCC Tax Czar

Under the leadership of board member Ron Vanselow, the bed tax committee is working hard to analyze and allocate funds with respect to bed tax applications.

Budget Update

The preliminary budget which includes a tax decrease of 2.86% is moving forward with slight adjustments. Fire companies in the Johnsburg Fire Protection District will receive a slightly larger budget allotment to help the companies with expenses largely imposed by continuing State mandates.

NARRATIVE BUDGET – 2011

I am pleased to present my third budget as Johnsburg Town Supervisor.

Each budget cycle provides its own opportunities and challenges and this one is no exception.

As a main highlight to this budget presentation I begin by indicating that taxes in the town's preliminary budget were reduced for the third consecutive year. Below is a chart of the reductions for this year and the preceding two years:

2011 Budget	Down 2.86 %
2010 Budget	Down 0.01 %
2009 Budget	Down 1.43 %

In addition to lowering town taxes this budget also marks the town's conclusion of a debt line in the budget that has appeared there for the last several years. The combined tax reduction and elimination of \$75,000.00 of projected borrowing renders this budget not only a strong one but one of a transitional nature.

In facing this budget we became aware very early in the year of a potential challenge. Town officials across the state were advised that the New York State Retirement contribution would be shifted more dramatically to the towns. This was not a matter of choice on the part of town governments across New York State and each municipality in their own way attempted to prepare for this challenge during the course of the year.

In Johnsburg we were particularly frugal with our contingency fund, the net effect of this frugality is an estimated increase in the unexpended balance. In addition to the contingency fund frugality we were also able to take other steps that helped not only prepare for the anticipated additional retirement expense but strengthen the budget generally and protect the taxpayer.

Additional changes include the privatization of solid waste and recycling. Though this proposal was initially somewhat controversial, it truly became a win-win scenario for the people of the town. Privatizing garbage permitted us to eliminate \$56,000.00 in immediate contract projected expenditures from the budget. The privatization also permitted individual residents of the town to join a more comprehensive recycling program than was available through Warren County. In most cases the cost for solid waste and recycling with a private carrier is less than it was for using the municipality. Even for those who did not see a cost benefit, there was a significant reduction in the expenditure line of the town budget.

In addition to the solid waste savings the town also benefited by a substantial increase in sales tax revenues. During the 2010 budget cycle the State of New York recomputed the value of the Town of Johnsburg as a ratio to all land in Warren County. While this created budget pressure in 2010, meaning that our share of tax responsibility was greater, it paid a windfall in 2011 projections. This windfall occurred because sales tax distribution is computed based upon the value of each town as a ratio to the whole county. When our value increased our sales tax distribution increased dramatically as well. It is projected that increased sales tax income will be in the area of \$130,000.00.

Thus I am pleased to present a budget that reduces taxes and eliminates borrowing in the amount of \$75,000.00.

As always the budget is the product of a great amount of teamwork in Town Hall and I would be remiss if I did not offer a note of thanks to all staff people in Town Hall including Candace Lomax, Don Greene, and Cherie Ferguson. I would also like to thank Town Highway Superintendent Dan Hitchcock for his assistance in preparing the Highway end of the budget and his understanding of the challenges that our community members face.