

Town of Johnsburg Newsletter

Supervisor's Report

Town Secures \$123,000 FEMA Funding

The Town of Johnsburg will receive in excess of \$123,000 in FEMA funding for damages caused by a major flooding event last Spring.

The rain event coupled with existing high water and snow conditions caused the failure of the Harrington Road bridge and significant damage at a half dozen other spots throughout town.

Of the entire award, approximately \$60,000 will be directed towards structural systems associated with the Harrington Road Bridge.

Remaining funds will help cover expenses associated with other damage points throughout the community.

The FEMA process has been underway since early summer with Town officials meeting with federal, state and county officials. The federal funds, when awarded, essentially pass through New York State government prior to distribution locally.

A note of thanks to Candace Lomax for her daily work in managing the FEMA effort and to Highway Superintendent Dan Hitchcock for careful record keeping that helped prove the claim.

Town Engineer Delaware Systems, Inc. are completing design work on the bridge.

It is expected that significant site work will permit the bridge to reopen in November with work on the project to be completed in the Spring of 2011.

Some work regarding the bridge project can be handled in house by the highway department while other portions will be contracted out.

Cell Tower Update

An application to site a cell tower on private property in Wevertown is being submitted to the APA.

The Town of Johnsburg has advised the APA that the project would have no adverse impact. This project is expected to move forward quickly.

A North Creek cell tower is more problematic given fewer appropriate sites. One site is still being pursued, but the matter has not progressed with the speed of the Wevertown project.

Central Towers is working with the Town on both matters.

Gaslight Vote Imminent

After months of debate, County Supervisors will finally vote on the future of the Cavalcade of Cars building at the Lake George site.

A long sought economic report raises questions over the financial viability of saving and renovating the building while supporters still believe this solution is cost effective. The County shares participation in the project with the town and village of Lake George (3Ms) and three separate environmental groups. (E's).

While the question has been a difficult one, as a county legislator I am swayed by the economic report which concludes that renovation costs more than it's worth.

Short Takes

Much Needed Lift

In coming weeks a helicopter will begin installation of chairlift towers for the interconnect lift in Ski Bowl Park. With cooperation from Mother Nature, the lift will open in Dec. 2010. The new lift will enable skiers to ski from its summit back into the Burnt Ridge Pod at Gore. In addition to the lift interconnect, shuttle operations will continue to link Gore, the historic Ski Bowl and the Main Street Business District.

ZEO Opening

The Johnsburg Town Board continues to seek qualified applicants for the position of Zoning Enforcement Officer. More information is available at Town Hall.

Safety Crossings

The Town Board recently approved additional signage for North River to promote pedestrian safety on Harvey Road, 13th Lake Road and Old Farm Road.

Budget Calendar

September 30, 2010 -	Tentative Budget to Town Clerk
By October 5, 2010 -	Budget to Town Board Members
Following delivery to Board Members -	Board reviews Tentative Budget. Tentative Budget becomes Preliminary Budget by Board Resolution. Town Clerk reproduces copies for public distribution.
On or before Nov. 8, 2010 -	Public Hearing on Budget.
Before November 20, 2010 -	Preliminary Budget with any changes to be adapted as is or as amended.

Road Proposal

Town Highway Superintendent Dan Hitchcock recently proposed a resurfacing of Durkin Road in North Creek. The project is designed to be highly effective but less expensive than a full blown paving project. If the project is successful, the same concept could thereafter be extended to longer stretches of road such as Hudson Street.

Beaver Dam Research

Legal research is wrapping up with regards to Town options for Beaver Dams on private property that create a risk to public safety. While the Town is hopeful that owners will be cooperative in permitting access to private parcels for the removal of beavers, an alternative is being sought to permit the Town to move forward in the interest of public safety, with or without the private owner's consent.

Reval Edging Forward

The Town Board has given assessor Ann Deppe authority to move forward with first steps aimed at a tax re-evaluation process. Moving now would permit the Town to take advantage of New York State incentives for revals.

Budget Process Underway

Work is underway for preparation of the Town's 2011 Budget.

In a nutshell, the Town is attempting to absorb significant State expenses now shifted to local government by applying local cost savings on several fronts.

The biggest expenditure pressure point is the anticipated State of New York movement of retirement contribution expenses away from the State and towards local municipalities. In Johnsbury, this will likely mean a budget hit in excess of \$90,000.00.

Knowing that the retirement issue was a likely challenge, the Town has been very careful in expending the contingency fund, which as of this publication, has a balance of about \$26,000.00.

Significant gains are also hoped for on the sales tax front, although numbers won't be in until well after the timeline for budget submissions.

In July the Town moved out of the garbage business which has created savings in this area. In previous years the Town contracted with a private vendor to handle solid waste. This service cost the Town on average was \$55,000 per year. Beyond the \$55,000 savings, harder to predict savings are possible as well.

As more people move to private garbage services, use of the transfer station is expected to diminish. This means hauling and tipping expenses will go down as the private services contracted by individuals bypass the local transfer station.

Gauging the amount of additional savings is almost impossible right now, given the Town's limited experience with the new system. In fact, in the first month after the change in garbage service, transfer use increased when compared to the previous month but decreased when compared to the same time period last year.

Put simply, additional savings in garbage expenses is expected but next to impossible to calculate.

In the last two years the Town tax has decreased slightly. The Town tax is coupled with the County tax and in North Creek with the fire district tax to determine the amount of the check landowners actually write.

One confusing factor is the sales tax relationship to the Town Budget.

Last year the State increased the value of Johnsbury land as compared to other town's in Warren County. That change meant more Johnsbury dollars were needed to make up our share of the County obligation.

While this was bad, news in 2010 causing a County increase for Johnsbury in excess of other towns, it is good news in 2011. The reason is that the Town's proportional value defines how and in what amount we receive sales tax distributions. While the added value cost us more in 2010, it will result in a larger revenue distribution of sales tax for the upcoming budget cycle.