

## **MAYOR MARVIN'S COLUMN**

I am pleased to report that the Trustees and I were able to produce our second consecutive budget with a 0% tax increase. It did not come without pain. It is recognition that during these challenging times, we cannot add to our residents' tax burden.

Since 40% of our budget is generated by non-property tax revenues, the fiscal downturn affected us dramatically. Every one of our revenue sources dropped appreciably, so difficult choices had to be made. Positions in both the Police and the Public Works departments will go unfunded, though services will not be impacted. We will continue to function without a front desk staffer and one secretary will work for seven of us in Village Hall.

We also had several line items that realistically had to be increased, most notably police overtime. Due to the recent bank robberies and the ensuing investigation and surveillance needs, combined with the unanticipated influx of teens on weekend nights, we had to add officers to some shifts. Since safety has to be our number one priority, these funds had to be allocated.

To reach our zero, we dipped into some one time rainy day funds and closed out capital project funds that were allocated in the past but not used.

We also had to increase some user fees to generate additional revenue. We are increasing our alarm permit fee from \$25 to \$50 per year. This fee had not been increased in 19 years. Our building permit fees, unchanged since 1996, will be raised. Despite the increase, they will still remain lower than permit fees in neighboring Eastchester and Tuckahoe. We will also charge utilities a higher fee for street opening permits, again just bringing our fee structure in line with other municipalities.

The change that will be most noticeable is our decision to enforce our parking meter usage beginning at 8AM instead of beginning at 9AM. The Village actually has the authority to enforce from 7AM to 9PM but we have traditionally only enforced from 9AM to 6PM. It is estimated that this additional hour of meter usage will generate almost \$80,000 annually. We plan to have an aggressive public relations campaign so residents and guests will not be caught unaware of the new hours.

We have tapped into every resource, revisited all of our expenditures and capital projects, re-bid our contracts and trimmed the staff to bare bones. I

honestly believe we have nothing left to trim going forward without causing an impact on the services that make our Village unique.

In other developments, the County's Affordable Housing Implementation Plan which must be approved by HUD, has been rejected for a second time. As a result, the County has now hired a public relations/information gathering firm to interact with the municipalities. No one has reached out to us as of yet.

The Village was selected as one of the five "greenest" in Westchester County. I want this award to serve as a motivator to spur us on to do even more. My hope would be that we lead the effort in discontinuing the use of chemicals and pesticides on private as well as public property.

As a result of the recent water main break situation and some ensuing confusion about the use of water, we have now added an emergency announcement section to the Village website. This is in addition to our "e-alert" computer messages so now you can also go directly to our website for emergency information.

Problems with the MTA tracks continue and the response has been really disheartening. Thanks to the intervention of Senator Klein, we are getting some attention.

The update from the MTA is that they did perform "tamping" on the rails but this did not solve the issues. They said they would send someone out this week to assess the issue and would provide the Senator's office with an exact time and date so I may attend as well.

Finally, I also encourage you to mail in your Census form. If not done by April 15<sup>th</sup>, you will receive a visit from a Census worker at your home. The accurate counting of our residents is vital for the receipt of every kind of aid for the next ten years.