

Mayor's Column
January 5, 2014

The year 2015 brings many changes at Village Hall. Last year's unprecedented turnover of staff was bittersweet and we did lose decades of municipal government experience.

However, with every change there are also positives. New staffers bring new ideas and energy that benefit the Village.

Technology is one such area where our new Village Administrator and Village Treasurer bring expertise and experience in services which we will be implementing in the coming months.

Internally, we have a new system for organizing our financial records, allowing department heads to see the status of line item year to date spending in real time, which is a major benefit for planning.

We also now have the capability to issue birth and death certificates, which contrary to conventional thinking take a great deal of staff time, on line.

In person counter service will always remain available, but the online option offers flexibility in conveyance and hours of operation.

As an added benefit, we also receive some revenue from the online operation that would have otherwise gone solely to the state coffers.

As of January 15, requests for new recycling bins and bulk pick-up from the Public Works Department as well as Paddle and Tennis Permits may be completed online. In addition, on the same January 15th date, residents will be able to come to Village Hall and purchase their yearly parking, or building permit with a credit card as well.

Following on the heels of this automation, house alarm permits will be available for registration and/or renewal online by April as well.

Current permits expired on December 31, 2014 so for one last cycle, a \$50.00 check must be mailed in to avoid late penalties.

As point of information, 1250 alarm permits are currently registered in the Village. We suggest yearly maintenance of each system to avoid malfunctioning and false alarms which have topped 375 this year.

By the second half of 2015, property taxes paid by credit card will also be accepted online as well as at our front desk, provided the card user pays the requisite convenience fee.

In the area of parking, we will be rolling out a program that allows for electronic payment at meters as an option to the current coin only method.

Even more far reaching is an upgrade to our Village wide resident notification system.

We have implemented what is familiarly called a reverse 911 system which allows us to contact every resident on the resident's choice of communication, be it a land line, cell phone, text message, email, or all of the above.

The system is particularly inclusive to a whole segment of our Village population that does not use a computer and thus does not take advantage of our current e-alert system. The goal of the Village is to have the capacity to reach our entire Village by using multiple technologies. The new system also provides a needed level of redundancy when certain forms of communication go down while others remain operable. Villagers will also have any option to choose to be contacted with information of timely interest and/or only emergency announcements. The phone call or reverse 911 will only be used for messages in the emergency category.

The added benefit of this system is to be able to zero in on areas affected by a certain emergency in real time. As example, if a water pipe breaks on one street, only those residents affected will be called. To sign up for the new emergency notification system online just go to the Village website at www.villageofbronxville.com, click on **E-Services**

on the top right hand side of our home page and then click on **Sign Up For Emergency Alerts** and you will be connected to the Swift911 site and be able to establish a username and password. We also encourage you to sign up for other Village online services available through our **E-Services** page so you can receive timely information on Village Board meetings and other announcements.

We chose our particular purveyors of these services based not only on pricing but the level of security they offered.

As example, when paying property taxes online, only the homeowners will have access to this particular assessed value. The public at large will not be able to view the tax amounts and parcel numbers online.

We know the days of being personally in the Village during the business hours of 9am to 4pm are a throwback. Our new technologies acknowledge the fact that we are a customer service business as well as a government and need to have the capacity be accessed twenty-four hours a day to accommodate the 2015 life-style.