

## Mayor's Message for November 2017

October was a very busy month in the Village of Rhinebeck. Our village highway crews have been working hard every day to clear leaves from the streets and keep the culverts and drains open. Our recent heavy rainstorm is an example of why that is so important.

The water department found the cause of that persistent water problem on Rhinecliff Road. It was a small hole in the water main which is now repaired.

Village water and waste water departments are working jointly to devise some new security measures which would warn operators about potential problems with pumps and controls. If implemented, this early warning system would allow better planning and greater flexibility in staffing, likely saving time and money.

Speaking of saving money, our Village Treasurer (Karen McLaughlin) presented the first ever "State of the Village" at the last board meeting. As Karen explained: "Our goal is to be smarter in how we organize our finances, and to make certain our expenditures are cost effective so that we hold the line on taxes. An important first step was to create the following overview, which will allow us to plan more efficiently. The Village concluded the 2016-17 fiscal year with revenues of \$2,367,554 and expenses of \$2,142,891, thus increasing the village's fund balance by \$224,663 and bringing the unreserved fund balance to \$782,929."

It's a longstanding tradition in volunteer fire departments to hold a "wetdown" to celebrate the arrival of a new engine. On Oct. 15th, the Village Fire Department hosted other local departments and the public to celebrate engine 59-22. Named in honor of John McGuire and Henry Campbell, the "John Henry" was sprayed with water as part of the celebration, hence the term "wetdown". The "John Henry" is now up and running, providing protection for all of us, and enhanced safety for our heroic volunteer firefighters. Like their fire coats, this engine will be part of their gear. It gives them the tools to respond quickly and safely to put out the fire. For a firefighter, time is critical, and having the right tools saves time, saves property and saves lives,

Sharing services in local government increases efficiency and saves money. We recently announced that the Village and Town are studying both highway and court facilities with those goals in mind. We have also been working with Red Hook Town and Village to maintain the joint public access channel (PANDA) for continued broadcasting of our board meetings. Televising is an important part of transparency in government.

We are also in the process of working with the Town of Rhinebeck for shared use of our BobCat and its' accessories. The Village has agreed to purchase two trucks from the Town in exchange for granting the town a ¼ share of the equipment.

You may see some young faces in Village Hall in coming months. We are very happy to have students from Rhinebeck High School working with Village Clerk Pat Coon. They will help in sorting, scanning, and archiving important village documents. The students are getting community service credits, and we get help in updating and filing our records. Meanwhile, students from the senior English class will be writing a series of papers on our local government. The first one will be "Why is there a Town and Village of Rhinebeck, and what are the differences?" A very good question, we all look forward to reading those essays.

As you know, parking can be a problem in the village especially when there is a big event like Sinterklaas. We are hoping that a new agreement between the Village of Rhinebeck and Northern Dutchess Hospital will help alleviate the parking problems. Event visitors can now use the existing parking lots at the hospital for "Village Authorized Event Parking". This agreement does not eliminate or restrict village residents who allow parking on their properties for events at the Fairgrounds. I recently had a great meeting with many of those who do, to talk about how to improve safety at their locations. we also discussed the importance of letting the Village know in advance of their intent by filing a no-cost "Event application

I continue the task of finding a replacement for the job of Emergency Response coordinator. This is an important position involving responsibility for the Planning, Response, Recovery, and Mitigation of any emergency situation which could arise in the Village and/or Town of Rhinebeck. The first step in this process was to develop a job description, including determining the priorities of the job and the time commitments that are required. This has now been completed and is in review. The next step will be advertising for candidates.

Some good news in the fight to ban the barges on the Hudson River. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has signed legislation into law establishing "tanker avoidance zones" along the Hudson. Kudos to our residents, our municipalities and groups like RiverKeeper and Scenic Hudson for this win! However, the battle is not yet over. The legislation came about following a June 2016 proposal by the U.S. Coast Guard to increase petroleum vessel traffic along a 91-mile stretch between Kingston, Ulster County and Yonkers in Westchester County, potentially endangering our environment and the village water supply.

Our environmental committee recently recommended that both the Village and Town become NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities. This program gives us road maps to implement clean energy actions, save energy costs, and improve the environment. One of the actions the Village is working on is converting the 243 existing streetlights to LED. It's projected that this could reduce the energy needs by a whopping 65% and save a lot of taxpayer money.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me. I can always be reached at [MayorBassett@VillageofRhinebeckny.gov](mailto:MayorBassett@VillageofRhinebeckny.gov) or come to see me during open hours from 1pm to 2pm daily.

Sincerely,  
Gary Bassett  
Mayor, Village of Rhinebeck