

## Mayor's Message for February 2018

I am devoting most of this month's newsletter to our ongoing work of developing the 2018-2019 budget for the Village of Rhinebeck. The Board and our department heads are working closely with our Chief Financial Officer on reviewing all revenues and expenses in order to make a plan for the next fiscal year which starts June 1.

Input from all of you is important to this process. We held our first public input meeting on January 26th. If you were unable to make that meeting, you are welcome to come any Tuesday night at 7pm at Village Hall as we continue our work. We will also be holding another public hearing at 7pm on March 13th at Village Hall. Comments by email to any member of the Village Board are another option. This is to say we would love to hear from you and will take every comment into account as we proceed.

Here is the list of goals I set for this year's budget:

- Restore services to Village residents which were cut back by previous budget constraints;
- Address, where feasible, pay equity for village employees so we can provide salaries to retain and attract strong candidates for village jobs.
- Through shared services, continue to reduce costs and eliminate duplication;
- Continue to explore and implement environmental policies for:
  - Protecting our drinking water
  - Provide renewable energy alternatives
  - Waste recycling
  - Transportation
- Implement a plan for maintaining village roads, water infrastructure, and waste water processing;
- Develop future plans for parking, fire protection, and historic preservation.

Our budget schedule is based on deadlines imposed by the New York State. And, we also plan to stay within the 2% NYS tax cap on a yearly fiscal budget of \$2.1 million,

Not everything the Village does is part of the tax process.

The Village Water and Wastewater departments are not included as they are outside of the general tax base. These are "fee" for services that are paid by each consumer based on meter charges. We still develop a budget for each to make sure we don't spend more than we take in.

Included in the tax base are the revenues and expenses from the general fund, police, fire, planning/building and zoning, justice, as well as employee salaries and benefits. Each Board member is responsible for providing input on a different piece of the whole. Trustee Lewit- Highway, Trustee Traudt- Wastewater, Trustee Neuneker- Water, Trustee Rossi- Building Planning and Zoning, Mayor - Police, Fire and General Fund.

Here are some of the key items the Board will be addressing:

- \*Upgrading the lagoon at the Water Department Facility
- \*Expanded parking in the Village
- \*Updating Village code books
- \*Salaries
- \*Obtaining the NYSERDA Clean Community Designation
- \*Completing the shared services study for highway and courts.

This coming year, the fire contract with the Town is up for renewal, as is the union contract for our highway, water, and wastewater employees.

Of course, the costs of labor, health insurance, goods and services are continuing to increase and we have to take that into account in order to move forward within a sound financial framework. I believe we can accomplish this through good planning, hard work, and with input from our residents. I am pleased with all that we have accomplished together this past year on fiscal stewardship while continuing to make the Village of Rhinebeck a great place to live. I look forward to adopting the new budget for 2018- 2109.

Other news: In our Building, Planning and Zoning Dept. I am happy to announce that Ryan Dowden has accepted the position as part time clerk and will be starting Feb. 5th. Please welcome Ryan to our staff if you are at the Village Hall.

Also, in your next water bill, we have included an updated list of all phone numbers for the Village, Town and County. I hope it will be a convenience to have those at hand if needed.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me, I can always be reached at [845-876-7015](tel:845-876-7015) or [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