



## Supervisor Chris Burdick's September Report

October 1, 2019



This issue is a resend of 9.30 with additional update from the Bedford Village Fire District.

The [September 27 weekly newsletter](#) contains new posts with updates on the 2020 budget; Governor Cuomo names the Town of Bedford as a *Climate Smart Community*; 2020-2029 Capital Plan; Resident Members Sought for Planning Board Subcommittees for New Town Comprehensive Plan; Update on Sewer Project; Resident Members Sought for Complete

## Nearing Completion of Tentative 2020 Town Budget

I'd like to provide some more details regarding the 2020 Town Budget which the Town Board will consider at our work session on Thursday, October 3. We are hopeful this will be our last work session on the budget, after which Comptroller Abraham Zambrano in his capacity as Budget Officer for the 2020 Budget will file the tentative budget with the Town Clerk.

Comptroller Zambrano provided the projections and details to the Town Board for consideration at the work session at which we will hear from the Commissioner of Public Works Kevin Winn; Recreation & Parks Superintendent Christopher Soi; and Building Department Inspector Al Ciraco. Comptroller Zambrano will report on any other departments and aspects of the budget not previously considered at the September 17 budget work session. [Comptroller Zambrano's memorandum to the Town Board provides:](#)

- tax cap calculations
- details on changes from the 2019 budget for both tax and non-tax projected revenues (e.g., mortgage tax, sales tax, water rates, parking, fines and penalties, fees for parks programs)
- details on changes from the 2019 budget expenditures (e.g., salary and wages pursuant to collective bargaining agreements)
- electricity and vehicle maintenance
- workers' compensation and health insurance
- Open Space levy
- debt service
- liability insurance
- event co-sponsorship
- Supervisor's office interns
- Justice Court intern
- Information Technology
- New York State Retirement System contributions
- libraries
- outsourced contracts related to energy conservation and Climate Action Plan
- Fly Car contract
- municipal buildings repairs & maintenance
- software licenses
- payments to New York City for portion of parking fees received
- Town Clerk, Personnel and Finance Department reserves for uncompensated absences
- reserve for certioraris
- contingency
- paving

## Comptroller's Report

**Town Comptroller Abraham Zambrano furnished to the Town Board on September 13, 2019 the following report on results for August 2019:**

### **EXPENDITURES**

#### **General and Highway Funds.**

The overall year-to-date expenditure percentage for the General and Highway funds are 61.5% and 64.8% which are slightly below the 66% mark after eight (8) months of activity has been recorded.

These percentages are consistent with seasonal spending in both funds.

### **REVENUE AREAS OF NOTE**

#### **Mortgage Tax.**

According to the Westchester County Clerk's Office, mortgage tax collection for the Town's 2019 budget year totals \$775,565. Based on the current collection trends, projections for the rest of the year are indicating that we will end the year below the budgeted amount.

However, at this point, year-to-date mortgage taxes revenues are only 2.50% lower than the same period in 2018.

#### **Sales Tax.**

At the time of this report, the Westchester County Department of Finance had not released the sales tax figures for the month of August; which will reflect the sales tax rate increase. Based on historical trends and data analysis, we are projecting being able to exceed the amount budgeted for 2019 by more than originally anticipated, as the result of the recently State Legislature approved increase in the Westchester County sales tax rate.

Better projections for the rest of year will be possible, once August sales tax amounts are reported.

#### **Parking.**

Permit renewals continued during the month of July and August for the 2019/2020 parking year. Based on updated lot usage data, a number of residents on the waiting list will be able to obtain permits in the prime lots, in Bedford Hills and Katonah. At this point we are projecting that the amount budgeted for the year will be exceeded.

#### **Fines and Forfeited Bail.**

The collection of fines imposed by the Justice Court are recorded a month in arrears due to the timing of the processing by the NYS Office of Court Administration.

Fines collected through June are still indicating that projected revenues will exceed budget by at least \$100,000 by year end.

#### **Safety Inspections.**

Safety Inspections fees through August demonstrate a surge of activity in the Building Department, but at this point revenues are 1.6% higher than for the same period in 2018.

Based on projections through year end, we are estimating that revenues will exceed the budgeted amount for the year.



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## Update on Northern Westchester Wireless Committee

**Readers of this newsletter may have read my report earlier this year that I have launched a committee with the Supervisors of Lewisboro, North Salem, Pound Ridge, Somers and Yorktown and the Mayor of Mt. Kisco to explore creating a northern Westchester master plan and approach to wireless and cell service.**

As you may know, the Town of Bedford created a Wireless Communications Working Group and upon recommendation of that committee, the Town Board engaged communications consultants CityScape to prepare a master plan for the Town of Bedford.

The Northern Westchester Wireless Committee (NWWC) met on September 24 and heard presentations from three consultants. At the outset, I explained that the goal is to engage a consultant who will work on the wireless needs around the northern part of the County.

We would ask Westchester County Executive George Latimer to consider including the consultancy fees in the 2020 County budget. We were pleased that joining us at the meeting were Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins as well as Susan Spear and Aviva Meyer with County Executive Latimer's.

We were advised that we should provide a letter to County Executive Latimer as soon as possible, even if we don't have hard figures from the consultancy firm we'd like to engage.

They explained that the County Executive submits budget requests to the legislature by November 8. As I mentioned earlier, I submitted a request to the County earlier this year to include in the County's 2020 Shared Services Plan to NYS the costs of creating the northern Westchester wireless master plan. The County is receptive to the proposal, as is NYS.

The northern Westchester plan would derive from a similar scope of services which CityScape, consultants to the Town of Bedford's Wireless Facilities Working Group is providing for the Bedford.

One of the principal objectives is to lay out a path for a robust wireless communications network for first responders, including police, fire and volunteer ambulance and other agencies and cellular service providers.

Public engagement would be included such that all stakeholders including but not limited to emergency service providers, citizenry, tower owners and wireless service providers are brought into the process. We intend to include conversations with state agencies, such as Department of Transportation and Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, which has cell towers at their Bedford Hills facilities; the MTA, NYSEG, Con Edison and school districts. The intention is to be all inclusive.

The scope of the consultancy services, among other things, should include the creation of a master map across all northern Westchester areas showing existing coverage (including gaps in cell service); a map showing optimal coverage and a plan for achieving it; incorporation of County and local emergency services

We scheduled our **next meeting for October 8 at 8:30 AM** to consider proposals and a budget request letter to CE Latimer.

The meeting will be held in the Courtroom of Bedford Town Offices at 321 Bedford Road, Bedford Hills and is open to the public.

## Bedford Village: Update on Proposal for a New Firehouse/Emergency Services Department

### **Bedford Village Fire Commissioner Heather Feldman has provided me the following update...**

For those who haven't yet seen it, following is an opinion issued by the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) [regarding the work they have focused on since their formation in May](#). If you don't have time to read the document in its entirety, the scope of work and the conclusions they have drawn to date are reprinted below:

- 1.** Determine the viability of renovating the existing firehouse/emergency services department to meet state and industry codes and best practices; thereby precluding the need for an alternate site.

The result of this work was unfortunately to conclude that renovations to the current site are practically and economically prohibitive and that any renovation would be inadequate.

- 2.** Should a new site be required, evaluate the process the BVFD used to select the location under discussion (550 Old Post Road), as well as any other potential sites.

This review has enabled the CLC to conclude that the BVFD diligently evaluated multiple properties and that the community is best served by siting a new firehouse/emergency services department at 550 Old Post Road, as the site is significantly preferable to any other apparent alternative.

- 3.** Should a new firehouse be built, how can the design and construction most effectively mitigate the tax, town, and environmental impacts.

The CLC is working through their thoughts on this topic and will opine in the coming weeks.

The first in a series of public conversations related to plans for the proposed new building was held on Tuesday, September 24th. Approximately 60 members of the community attended the presentation led by new project architect John Sullivan (Sullivan Architecture in White Plains) and the other professionals who have been involved in the planning process. There was robust conversation, probing questions, and good ideas – all of which brings the BVFD closer to a proposal that best meets the needs of the community as a whole.

The new, highly functional proposal, described by many as "smaller, neater, cleaner," responds to the concerns expressed by the community and is significantly more modest than the original plan proposed last April.

### **Select changes from the original proposal include:**

- A reduction of 4,500 square feet in size
- A reduction of 1,500 square feet in site footprint
- A reduction of 7+ feet in building height
- Removal of the basement
- Removal of the tower
- Elimination of 65 ft. deep pilings (in favor of a cheaper, less invasive and equally effective foundation of spread footings at an estimated depth of 4-5 ft.)
- Elimination of the air horn (so not to disrupt the neighborhood on a regular basis)
- Elimination of customized windows (in favor of standard, double-hung casement windows)
- Elimination of bi-fold apparatus bay doors (in favor of standard 14 ft overhead doors)
- Greater efficiency in interior layout and use of space
- Replacement of real stone and wood clapboarding on the façade with equally attractive and durable but less expensive manufactured materials

Additional details are available at [www.bedfordvillage-fireristrict.com](http://www.bedfordvillage-fireristrict.com) or by contacting [Hfeldman@bedfordfireristrict.com](mailto:Hfeldman@bedfordfireristrict.com).

The expense of this revised project will also be significantly lower than what was proposed in April – with budget and financing details to be discussed at a public meeting on **Wednesday, October 2nd at 7:00pm** at the Firehouse (34 Village Green in Bedford).

Within the next several days, the BVFD will distribute a list of other opportunities for the community to learn more and contribute to the conversation about the project. The BVFD hopes to see many of you there to learn more about this important community resource.

Bedford is not a single thing, we are neighbors, we are history, we are nature, we are horses. We all belong and we all matter. We are...

The Bedford Village Fire District is comprised of 64 volunteer firefighters and EMTs, almost all of whom live locally and respond to approximately 775 calls annually.

## Traffic Safety Working Group

### **The Traffic Safety Working Group met on September 19 (meetings are open to the public).**

I chair the committee. The following committee members were present: Chief Melvin Padilla & Lt. Drew Bellantone-Police Dept.; Jeff Osterman-Planning Director; Kevin Winn-Public Works Commissioner; Resident Members: Mary Cassidy; Whitney Hill; Drew Marchiano; Michael Weisburger; and Geraldine Zikely.

Also attending the meeting: Town Board member Don Scott and Town of Bedford Staff Maria Arena-Police Dept also attended. My thanks to her for taking minutes of the meeting.

### **Lieutenant Bellantone provide the following updates from the Police Department:**

#### **A. Speed Studies**

**Pending Speed Study:** Babbitt Rd/Buxton Rd.

#### **Results of Speed Studies Concluded:**

- Seminary Rd./Court Rd.:
- 85th percentile speed exceeds enforcement limit
- Only 1 mph difference between pre and post construction
- Old Post Rd./Tarleton Rd.: North of Playhouse
- 85th percentile is 36 mph
- Concerns of pedestrians crossing street from Arcade Building /not using cross walk

#### **Possible action: the three Es:**

##### **1. Education**

- Educate Pedestrians
- Mary Cassidy to speak with Playhouse manager
- Possible Crossing instructions/sandwich board/posters directing pedestrians to crosswalks

##### **2. Enforcement**

- Pedestrians have right of way in cross walk
- Cars have right of way outside of cross walk

##### **3. Engineering**

- Cross walk made more visible
- Check adequate lighting by cross walk

#### **B. Speed Boards**

##### **• Hardwired speed boards in place:**

Bedford Center Rd.; Cherry St. (2), Pound Ridge Rd.

##### **• Permanent solar speed board:** McLain St.

- Constantly recording data
- Volume and speeds

#### **C. Public Works Commissioner Kevin Winn updated the committee on the status of the request by the Bedford Hills Fire Department regarding the crossing from the sidewalk leading from the station house:**

- Cross hash pattern to be done
- Two parking spaces eliminated
- Blinking stop sign to be installed this fall
- Rapid flash beacon (activated with fire alarm) to be installed this fall
- LED road running lights (activated with fire alarm) to be installed next year

#### **REQUESTS/CONCERNS:**

##### **A. Seminary Road**

- Resident petition - Speed Humps requested
- No public hearing necessary
- DPW Commissioner Winn, Police Chief Padilla and Planning Director Osterman believe that the Town should take the next steps regarding the request:

- Consider siting of the speed humps, which may be one hump in shorter stretch from Court Road to Route 121 and two humps along the longer stretch from Court Road to Route 172.
- Confirm placement with residents,

##### **B. Haines Rd/117**

- Rapid Flash Beacon w/Pedestrian activated button now in contract; to be done next year by NYS DOT
- Traffic patterns confusing coming out of Dunkin Donuts
- PD to look into large trucks parking on Rte. 117 to make deliveries
- Speak to DD owner re: delivery times on off hours
- Site visit to be done

## Update on I-684 Paving

The 684 paving project is going well. Some are puzzled that the paving itself hasn't started. Think of it like painting a room in your house with so much of the project devoted to preparation work. The paving project entails considerable work on the concrete slabs, some of which have been replaced, drainage, guide rails and other preparatory work.

I spoke last Friday with the NYS Department of Transportation engineer in charge of the project. She confirmed that the project remains on schedule. As before, subject to weather and any unforeseen developments, the paving itself should be complete by late November/early December.

We continue to monitor the project very frequently. I will provide regular updates.

Of course, we ask that you be patient with the unavoidable disruptions you may encounter in using 684 as off and on ramps are temporarily closed for work on them – there always will be a single lane of the highway itself open. Also, as mentioned previously, the work is being conducted at night between 9 PM and 6 AM, to reduce disruption.

## Update on Possible Acquisition of Buxton Gorge

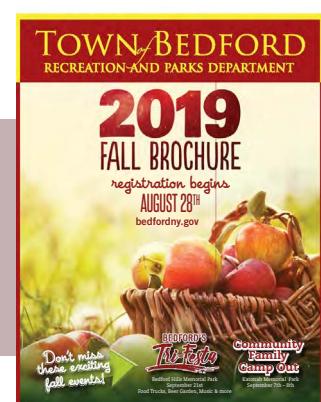
The Town is continuing its discussions with the Lakeover Development, the owner of Buxton Gorge, an approximately 80 acre parcel off of Buxton Road and Bedford Center Road in Bedford Hills. It is well known to the Town and the Open Space Committee as one of the Town's highest priority parcels for preservation as open space and passive recreation.

Lakeover has presented the Town with a proposal to sell approximately 56 acres of the site retaining land for three residential building parcels. Under state law, the Town may not purchase property for any greater than fair market value. We have engaged an appraisal firm to prepare an appraisal of the land which would be acquired.

I am hopeful that we will receive the appraisal report in the near future. If the seller agrees to sell the property for the appraised value, we would be able to proceed, with the next step being a Phase I Environmental Assessment of the property, which as best we know, always has been undeveloped and undisturbed.

We continue to monitor the project very frequently. I will provide regular updates.

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## Update from Reusable Bag Task Force

**My thanks to Reusable Bag Task Force Vice Chair Ellen Calves for providing the following update** (which follows a conference call last week with representatives of the grocery stores in Bedford):

### **Paper and Plastic Bag Use Down 80%+ in large grocery stores**

The Bedford Reusable Bag Task Force continues to promote the use of reusable bags and monitor the impact of the law (effective April 1, 2019) requiring large retail stores to charge customers 10 cents for paper or plastic carry out bags. The Task Force checks in regularly with the store and corporate managers to ensure compliance and to support customer education efforts. The more customers who refuse to use disposable paper and plastic, the more we reduce waste and pollution associated with these items.

### **The law is working to encourage customers choose less paper and plastic:**

- The Food Industry Alliance of NYS reported that for the town's three large grocery stores in the second quarter of 2019, **plastic bag purchases were reduced by 93.1% and paper bag purchases by 87.5% as compared to the same quarter one year ago.**
- Key Foods in Bedford Village confirmed that this fall they are using around 3 cases of plastic bags a week as compared to an average of 20 cases a week last year (an 85% change).
- ask Force members recently counted customer bag choice at DeCiccos in Katonah and saw 82% of customers carrying reusable bags as compared to 15% of customers last October.
- Disposable bag use is also down in the big box stores CVS, Pier One and Kohl's.

These results are meaningful and show that customers have responded by doing the right thing and refusing to take a bag, using many less bags, and using reusable bags.

The Task Force will make new signs for the stores to display in the coming weeks and will have a reusable bag education table at the John Jay Farmers' Market on Saturday, October 26th.

If anyone would like to volunteer with the Task Force, please contact Ellen Calves at [ezcalves@gmail.com](mailto:ezcalves@gmail.com).

## ARTICLES OF INTEREST FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

**Below are links to articles from previous issues that may have particular relevance to current issues:**

[Westchester County Sales Tax increase](#)

[2018 Audited Statements](#)

[NYSEG Project and Company Update](#)

[Septic System Repair and Replacement Program Reinstated](#)

[Update on Wireless Communications - Moving ahead in 2019](#)

[Town of Bedford's AAA Bond Rating and \\$1 Million Sewer Grant](#)

*I welcome suggestions and comments to my monthly reports,  
my weekly newsletter and my news to the community.*

Best regards,

  
Chris