

2022 Budget has the lowest Tax Rate in modern times

The 2022 budget per current Town records show this year's rate is at the lowest per thousand the Town has ever had. The Town 2022 rate has been lowered to 74 cents per thousand. Suffering through another year of COVID restrictions the Town will finish 2021 with an expected surplus which is partially carried over in the new budget.

The federal government claims that inflation is running just above 4 percent. I believe inflation is way above that figure – especially in certain industries. Just at the gas pump you are paying as high as 50 percent more for gas this year compared to last year. If you have two cars that equates to \$3,000 a year in additional cost to operate your car.

The 2022 budget is below the tax cap of two percent set by the state once again. Certainly, that is a challenge due to the fact the Town is facing increases in everything from salt on our roads to insurance for our employees.

In the budget filed with the Town Clerk last week, I tried to do everything possible to control expenses and keep the cost of running our Town at a reasonable level. The decrease in the tax levy reflects the increase in property assessment. The 2022 budget keeps all the programs that were in place before the pandemic hit our country. There was also a tax rate decrease in the Towns Special Districts. The Town has been recognizing savings from switching over to LED streetlights. Changes to the Town fire company LOSAP and the continuation of cancer insurance for our volunteer fire departments are included in the 2022 budget.

Thank you again to our Town Department Heads and the Fire Companies for keeping their budget requests below the tax cap. Thank you to my Finance Director, Kim Ignatowski, for keeping the Town finances strong through another year of the pandemic. Under her guidance, the Town received a financial rating of AA1 once again. This very high rating helps the Town keep borrowing costs low, which carries over to our low tax rate. Additionally, special thanks to Town Attorney Larry Meckler, my assistants, Carolyn Delgato and Karen Jurek on this year's budget.

I have often said how lucky we are to have Highway Superintendent Jamie Dussing working hard for the residents of Clarence every day. Our Town is truly a better Town because of his leadership at the Highway Department. Jamie has been recognized on a state level for all of his achievements. Cornell's Local Technical Assistance Program awarded Jamie Dussing, Road Master IV honors which is the highest level for his experience as a Highway Superintendent. This is from his demonstration of professional and superior skills in management and training. Congratulations Jamie.

Lastly, our town lost another legend this past week. Casey Andrzejewski passed away and leaves behind incredible achievements and service to our town. Casey was a Clarence Rotarian for 40 years and was a Past President and Paul Harris Fellow honoree. He was a Veteran that was active with our American Legion Post 838, and he helped raise thousands of dollars for local organization, especially for the Brother's of Mercy. There are not many people of his caliber around anymore. He will be certainly missed as a wonderful member of our community, and also as a dear friend.

