

## Special Thanks to our First Responders

January is usually filled with installations of new government officials, board members, committee members, and one of my favorites – firemen installation dinners.

As a 40+ year veteran of the Clarence Volunteer Fire Company, I always looked forward to the event, as we celebrated the dedication, accomplishments and new beginnings every year.

We have hundreds of volunteer firemen and women in our town, and I can't emphasize enough how grateful we are for your service. Just this last week, there was a big reminder of just how difficult their job can be. After a tragic, fatal car accident on Main and Goodrich last week, it was our volunteer fireman that helped the victims, secured the scene, helped with road clean-up, and be the heroes we needed in a horrible situation. Every single day there are calls for help from our residents. While some days are easier than others – no matter what the incident – our firemen are there for us.

With that, I also heartedly share thanks to our New York State Troopers and Erie County Sheriffs in our town, that also help our citizens stay safe, and are the first to help in a time of need. The police blotter in the Bee is just a small glimpse of the constant activity our first responders see. I wish we could celebrate and honor you in person this year, and I look forward to hopefully being together again in 2022.

As we look ahead in 2021, we have some great projects in the works that will continue my goal of improving safety and infrastructure in our town.

Erie County has notified the Town that we will be receiving a Community Development Block Grant for recreation improvements. The project is included in the 2020 CARES Act Action Plan Amendment. The Grant is for pedestrian access to the West Shore Line by extending it to Connection Drive and on to Sunset Park. Our trail system is always active, especially this past year, with residents taking advantage of 11 miles of trails. The extension will open up our trails to everyone in and around the Harris Hill area. Wehrle drive, which has almost no shoulders, is very dangerous for our biking and walking public to use to get the West Shore Trail. In near the future the new trail extension will allow trail access from Sunset Park.

There is also a new trail extension planned from Greiner Road through the Northwoods Development to Roll Road. The Town received a state grant for this project plus received additional funding from the project developer. Besides giving the residents of Northwood trail access, this extension will also make it easier for residents of the Shimerville neighborhoods to access the Peanut Line trail.

These new projects, as well as our previous pedestrian projects, such as the sidewalks on Main Street, wouldn't have been possible without the dedicated work of our Town's Director of Community Development, Jonathan Bluer, especially with his work in securing grants. For

these upcoming projects, the Town was competing with 18 other grants requests and was one of only 8 awarded. Thank you, Jonathan Bluer. Spring can't come soon enough!