

Pittsford's Budget: Looking Ahead to 2010

Last week, the Pittsford Town Board passed the Town's operating budget for 2010. The total adopted budget was \$14,242,189 representing a 0.5% decrease in overall spending. The tax rate also decreased (a detailed budget can be found on www.townofpittsford.org).

At the Town level, I have worked to the best of my ability to shield residents from additional tax burdens. The Town collects only .08 cents on each tax dollar, totaling about \$719 per year for the average Pittsford resident. This money pays for all your town services – sewers; road maintenance; library and recreation programs; leaf, ice and yard debris pick up; and community events. As Supervisor, I have worked hard to try and lower your tax burden while also making sure that you receive quality services for your dollar. My hope is to continue on this path every year that I remain in office.

Unfortunately, economic forces out of the Town's control will continue to put pressure on our community. State and federal whirlwind spending and mandates will continue to take its toll. Similar to other municipalities, Pittsford faced a difficult budget year; and, if the environment does not change - next year's budget will be even more challenging. We will be forced to make very difficult decisions.

At a time when your government should be doing everything possible to help you, Albany has made it more difficult for families to make ends meet. Despite the worst economy that I have witnessed in my lifetime, the State of New York increased spending by almost ten percent in 2009-2010. While spending increased, resources allocated to localities were cut and many costs were passed down (i.e. the town's retirement costs increased by 50%). The State also imposed new taxes and fees on things like licenses; insurance; hospital visits; car rentals; and SUNY tuition. New York State is also now requiring that residents replace their license plates in 2010 (costing \$25 per set). The amount of taxes and spending included in this year's State budget is outrageous to me and should be to every other New Yorker.

Many of our state elected officials, like Senator Alesi, Senator Robach and Assemblyman Errigo, tried to stop this damaging budget. Despite this, it was enacted and towns, counties and families are feeling the impact.

For the Town of Pittsford to continue its trend of lowering taxes in the future, the State and Federal government must stop over spending and over taxing. I urge our State elected representatives to keep fiscal prudence in mind as they return to our capitol for budget negotiations in the coming months. Towns, residents and resources are stretched out as far as they can go.