

Proposed Pittsford Budget Keeps Town Taxes Stable

On October 19, the Town Board will hold its annual budget hearing to adopt a budget for the 2011 fiscal year. I believe the 2011 proposed town budget, which I filed at the end of September, is responsible and keeps spending and resources in check. Residents can view it (and all the proposed special district budgets) online at www.townofpittsford.org.

While preparing the budget, I worked hard to protect residents from additional tax burdens. I am proud to offer to Town Board, and Pittsford residents, a \$14.4 million budget that includes a flat town tax rate of approximately \$2.73 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Pittsford's property tax rate remains among one of the lowest in Monroe County and is one of only seven towns, out of 19 in the county, with a tax rate below \$3.00 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The Town of Pittsford receives roughly eight cents (\$0.08) of each property tax dollar, which will result in approximately \$739 annually for the average Pittsford taxpayer in 2011.

While I always find that preparing the budget is no easy task, this year I found it exceptionally challenging. This is primarily due to the increased mandates and costs passed on to the town by the state. As an example, mandates for NYS Retirement increased by approximately \$200,000. To adjust for this unexpected increase without increasing taxes or cutting services, we are implementing staff modifications and other changes.

In addition to increased mandates, the rising and rapid health insurance costs are also another factor which has negatively impacted the Town of Pittsford's budget (and all other municipalities) over the last several years. Specifically, Pittsford alone has faced a rate increase of 42% since 2008. I am proud to announce that I have spearheaded a health care consortium with several other communities. By purchasing health care collectively through this consortium, the Town of Pittsford is projecting to save approximately \$50,000 in 2011 alone. This savings will also help the town absorb the additional costs from the state.

Through responsible budgeting, we were able to keep the tax rate flat and maintain high quality services. Unfortunately, each year it seems that every effort the Town of Pittsford makes to reduce costs is countered by the NYS government and their out of control spending and grossly inflated budgets. In the future, the fiscal instability of New York State will continue to hinder the efforts of towns to operate efficiently if not addressed by our Legislature. Therefore, I would like to encourage state and federal leadership to follow Pittsford's lead of adopting budgets that are fair and reduce the burden on our already overburdened taxpayers.

I am fortunate to have great working partners on Town Board. Sandy Zutes, John Higgins, Karen Green and Jared Lusk are equally as committed as I am to keep Pittsford fiscally sound. As always, I urge you to contact me at bcarpenter@townofpittsford.org if you have any questions.