

## **Pittsford Town Budget for 2016**

At our meeting on November 4, following a public budget hearing on October 20, the Town Board and I approved a budget for Town operations for the year to come.

I'm pleased to report that the budget for 2016 holds Town taxes, for yet another year, at less than 8 cents out of every dollar that Pittsford residents pay in property tax. It abides by the tax cap. For the ninth consecutive year it keeps the Town tax rate substantially below what it would be had it followed the rate of inflation during that time.

The 2016 budget honors my policy of maintaining the quality of public services, keeping intact all services currently provided to Pittsford residents. These include our Community Library. They include the 250 recreation programs we offer each year, our public events such as Paddle and Pour, the canalside summer concerts and the outdoor movie nights. They include leaf pickup, removing yard debris, snow plowing, maintaining more than 100 miles of town roads, maintaining more than 1,300 acres of parkland, open space and recreational trails, operating our Senior Citizens Center and carrying forward with all of the other Town services we depend upon.

The budget provides also for continued improvements to Town facilities, including the upgrade of our athletic fields, sidewalk projects, the planned rehabilitation of our Community Center, improvement of our trails and the proposed canalside nature preserve.

You should be aware that external pressures continue to make it a challenge to budget within the tax cap while maintaining all services and their quality. For example:

- State-imposed Workers' Compensation premiums are up by 14%
- Medical coverage for employees has increased by 16%
- The State's increase to the minimum wage has driven up personnel costs materially.
- Franchise fees from cable television have decreased by \$40,000 since 2013, principally due to more people canceling cable TV service.

As we have in the past, we will continue to pay close attention to these trends and to plan accordingly.

Preparing the annual budget represents a months-long process. It involves Town Board members, staff members and the public. Town department heads begin in the summer to evaluate what's needed in the year ahead, in order to maintain and improve the services for which they're responsible. The Town Board then meets with each department head in succession, in a series of public workshops. This work culminates in the proposed budget that our Finance Director and I prepare for final consideration by the public and the Town Board.

I appreciate the careful work of our department heads, particularly Finance Director Greg Duane, in helping me to present you with a budget that maintains our public services and that lives within our means.

As always, you may contact me any time at [bsmith@townofpittsford.org](mailto:bsmith@townofpittsford.org) or by phone at 248-6220.