

State of the Town for 2013

by Ronald W. Nesbitt, Supervisor

With the tragedy of Christmas Eve still fresh in everyone's mind it is difficult for me right now to concentrate for a long period of time on a document without my thoughts going back to Chip and Tomasz. As hard as it might be for all of us to move on, we must, but we will never forget the dedication and devotion these two men gave to our community.

As the community moves into 2013 we still have basically the same challenges that have plagued government the last few years. Higher health care costs, higher pension costs for our employees, cost of goods continuing to increase at double digits, and services we want to provide to our residents at a fair tax rate.

Health care again will be up in the double digit range and could be higher when they completely figure out what ObamaCare is going to cost in extra expenses and taxes. Pension costs will be up higher in 2013; in the 20% of payroll range for non-police employees and 28% of payroll for police officers. The State has done virtually nothing in regards to pension reform of current employees. The addition of tier six does nothing to help the town now because we are not hiring new employees at the current time. This will only become helpful after a ten year period when current employees start to retire.

The 2013 tax rate for residents living in the town (outside of the village) did increase sixteen cents per thousand. This is the first town tax increase in six years. The village tax rate also increased by thirty one cents per thousand also the first increase in six years where the village rate also had decreased in the previous five years. Also, please remember that the town has not done a town-wide reassessment since 2004 which means your tax assessment stayed the same unless you made improvements to your home or land.

This Town Board does not believe in borrowing money and putting it on a charge card for our future children and grandchildren to pay for. The town has very little debt which is manageable within the town budget right now. We believe in paying for what we can afford and that is why when you see a town truck, police vehicle, or other equipment or buildings they are paid for by your tax dollars. Standard & Poor's continues to give the town a credit rating of Double AA because of our fiscal responsibility in controlling taxpayer's monies.

The Webster Police Department continues to serve and protect our community every single day. Since the senseless shooting of Lieutenant Chiapperini, the department continues to grieve but also continues to respond to the needs of the Webster community. Chief Gerald Pickering and Lt. Joseph Rieger have been busy interviewing for promotions within the ranks for a new Lieutenant, a promotion to Sergeant, and a new Investigator (replacing Inv. Charles Sciortino who is retiring). The hiring of two new officers is also required and supported by the Town Board and a search process will begin soon.

The new Webster Recreation Center continues to grow and prosper as more and more residents learn of the outstanding programs available to all age groups with activities for everyone. The fitness center is full of residents working out each day along with personal fitness trainers to get themselves in shape. This is good for their health but also controls health care cost for all. Our first Webster Day celebration took place on the grounds last June and was a huge success along with fireworks. We look forward to a bigger turnout this coming June and hope all Webster residents will join in the fun, games, and music for the day.

The Webster Public Library has resumed Sunday hours from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for this year. The Board of Trustee's were able to find some additional revenue in the personnel line and then transferred that into opening the library on Sundays again. With over 300,000 patrons using the library each year, the Webster Public Library usually runs second in all of Monroe County when data is collected county-wide from all libraries. We are very proud of our Webster library since the library moved into the plaza and residents wishing to help out should inquire at the resource desk about joining the "Friends of the Library."

The Highway Department continues to do many different tasks during the four seasons we have each year here in Webster. Winter is spent working trick work to make sure we have employees working around the clock to plow roads whenever the snow might fall. During times when the snow is not falling during the night, they work on rebuilding and maintaining the fleet and equipment used at other times of the year. During the spring and summer months you will find the Highway Department working on gutter and road maintenance plus the always popular re-stoning of our roads which is the most cost effective way to maintain our infrastructure. They also do some of Monroe County's road repair road thus bringing in revenue to the town offsetting some off their costs of doing business.

The Sewer Department continues to provide outstanding service to the Webster community making sure that our waste is treated and environmentally displaced back into Lake Ontario. They also continue to maintain the countless miles of underground sewer lines and pump stations throughout the town.

The Justice Court clerks work very hard at providing service to all residents who just happen to have to attend court for a trail or a traffic ticket. We understand that this experience might not be one that you would look forward to but our court clerks try hard to make it friendly atmosphere.

The Webster Town Clerk and her staff are always ready to serve you for a variety of services including paying town, county, and school taxes. You can get a handicap parking permit here along with dog licenses, fishing and hunting licenses. FOIL requests must be filed with the Town Clerk and any other record of the town can be requested from the Town Clerk.

As I look to 2013 I continue to see some of the same old problems confronting town government. At the local level the Town Board is responsible to our local residents to provide services to you at a fair tax rate that we all can afford and live with. We balance our budget each and every year and live within the means to which the taxpayers have instructed us to. This Town Board will

continue this philosophy and we want to enhance the services we provide to you under the tax rate you already pay.

Our problems are not governing Webster, New York but having New York State and the Federal government continuing to mandate and send down laws and policies without the funding required to administrator the programs. The Federal government is \$16 trillion in debt and New York State is \$63 billion in debt. However, New York State imposes a 2% tax cap on local governments while New York State continues to spend taxpayer's money without confronting the state's debt. Each resident of New York owes \$3,253.00 to New York State just to pay back the debt it has run up. You owe nothing to the Town of Webster for debt because it is all payable within our budget. We, at the local level, could sure as heck show Albany that the way they are doing business is not working for us today.

As citizens we need to tell our representatives at other levels of government to stop spending money that we do not have. This tax and spend mentality is only going to bankrupt the future for our children and grandchildren and we certainly owe them better than what is happening now with government spending.

I am confident that your current Town Board, who is dedicated to the well being of Webster and its residents, will continue to face all the challenges that are put upon us in 2013.