

TOWN OF MURRAY

Dear Fellow Resident:

The purpose of this letter is to address some of the concerns that have surfaced this past year about the manner in which Town Officials conduct business. We know there are always two sides to every issue, so we would like to present you the facts:

AUDIT:

Each year the town employs the services of the Accounting firm "The Bonadio Group" for the purpose of examining the financial affairs of the Town. While this is not required by the State, we feel this independent look at the financial activities of the Town is important to ensure that taxpayer dollars are used appropriately. At no time, has the audit ever reported any inappropriate financial dealings by the Town, and in fact, every dollar of taxpayer monies have been accounted for.

In 2014 The Comptroller's Office conducted a Capital Projects Audit in our Town. The purpose of that audit is to examine practices and procedures used by the Town in relation to their capital projects. The comptroller made nine recommendations that could improve some of the practices used by the Town. We assure you that all nine recommendations have been taken seriously and implemented since that audit. In addition, the Town now employs a different accounting firm and a new payroll firm to assist with our daily financial operations.

TAXES:

No one likes paying taxes, and yes, we pay them too. While years 2015 & 2016 saw the highest increases, a major cause of this change was the decrease in overall Town assessments of over \$1,000,000. Please note that the cost of living increase in our area from 2007-2017 was 17.39%*. Listed below is the tax rate and increase or decrease of taxes for the past ten years:

YEAR	INSIDE**	CHANGE INSIDE	OUTSIDE**	CHANGE OUTSIDE
2007	\$2.65	0.000%	\$4.17	0.000%
2008	\$2.44	-7.925%	\$3.85	-7.674
2009	\$2.33	-4.508%	\$3.92	1.818%
2010	\$2.34	0.429%	\$3.96	1.020%
2011	\$2.31	-1.282%	\$3.96	0.000%
2012	\$2.40	3.896%	\$4.11	3.788%
2013	\$2.45	2.083%	\$4.21	2.433%
2014	\$2.50	2.041%	\$4.26	1.188%
2015	\$2.79	11.600%	\$4.59	7.746%
2016	\$3.12	11.828%	\$4.92	7.190%
2017	\$3.06	-1.923%	\$4.83	-1.829%
TEN YEAR INCREASE		16.24%		15.68%

*Source: American Institute for Economic Research

** Inside Village/Outside Village

WATER:

Our Town currently operates 15 separate water districts totaling 289,350 feet, or 53.09 miles of water lines that service 900 water customers. In addition to servicing our own water districts, we contract with the Town of Kendall to operate and maintain a water district for them. We have over 30 dead end water mains that need regular flushing according to New York State Health Department guidelines. An examination of each water district's budget will show allocated funds (above revenues for water sales) that are used for unmetered water use. Examples of unmetered water uses would include the above-mentioned flushing, fire protection, and water main ruptures, which happen as a matter of course with any water system.

OTHER QUESTIONS BROUGHT TO THE TOWN BOARD'S ATTENTION:

* Section 810 of the Town Zoning Law states: *APPOINTMENT TO THE PLANNING BOARD: "At least one member shall be a person engaged in agricultural pursuits"*. At the January 10, 2017 Town Board meeting, an active member of the Town's agricultural community was appointed as a alternate member of the Planning Board. An alternate member has all the rights and responsibilities of a regular member (attends meetings, makes suggestion, applies law principles, etc.) but only votes on an application when there is a conflict of interest with a regular member.

* As some may have been erroneously informed, the town does not lease equipment! The Town, with the exception of our copy machines, owns all equipment.

* Farmers steal water! As many know, based on a picture turned into the Orleans County Health Department, the Town was charged by the Health Department for improper use of back flow meters. At the same time this picture caused residents to speculate that farmers steal water from the Town. In the case of the Health Department, the Town appealed the charges to an independent hearing officer and the case was dismissed due to the Health Department's improper investigation and error in citing any violation. The Town did institute new regulations and fees for farmers who will be using water meters on the hydrants. In the case of the farmer in question, contact him (Mr. Lloyd Christ) and he will gladly produce his paid receipt for the water he used.

As a group of professionals dedicated to providing the best quality of services to our residents, we encourage questions and comments that can help improve quality delivery of services. If you should have any questions, we encourage you to contact us so we can provide you with any and all the facts you desire (638-6570). Just ask, our books are always open for you. Sincerely,

John Morriss	Supervisor
Ed Bower	Councilman
Lloyd Christ	Councilman
Bob Miller	Councilman
Paul Hendel	Councilman

NOTE: The production and delivery of this letter was not paid by taxpayer's dollars.
This newsletter is also available on our website: Townofmurray.org