

From the Mayor's Desk...April 15, 2015

Water Conservation

Pretty soon, many of you that have lawns will be running your sprinkler to keep them looking lush and green. But, did you know that there is a high price to pay for excessive use of water? Before I was elected to the Board of Trustees, I was not aware of how the pricing of water worked in Irvington. In case you were as naïve as I was, here is a brief explanation:

The Village buys its water from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, the owner of the upstate reservoirs and aqueducts that supply New York City and surrounding areas with water. As one of the "upstate customers", the Village is allotted a specific amount of water each month that we can purchase at a wholesale rate. We then pump that water through our water system to you, our customers. However, if we exceed our monthly allotment, NYC sells us the excess water at a full retail rate which is approximately 3 times the wholesale rate. Because of excessive use of water by our customers, especially in the summer, we routinely exceed our monthly allotment.

In order to compensate for this excessive usage, we have structured our water rates to impose an "excess rate" on our customers that use the most water. When a customer uses more than 100 units of water (74,800 gallons) in a quarterly billing period, the amount over 100 units is billed at a rate that is approximately 3 times the regular rate.

I have a simple way for you to avoid or minimize these excess charges: Conserve Water! For some, this may be easier said than done, but as I mentioned before, there is a large financial benefit if you keep your usage below 100 units each quarter. We have published some water conservation tips on our web site and I'll pass along more as the summer approaches. Visit www.irvingtonny.gov/savewater.

Government Efficiency Plan

Last year, the Governor signed into law the so called "Tax Freeze." The legislation is designed to provide rebate checks equal to the increase in your local property taxes provided that the local government meets certain requirements. In order to qualify for a rebate associated with your Village taxes, we are required to stay within the Tax Levy Cap, which we have done each year it's been in effect. We expect to stay within the Cap this year, as well. Additionally, we must create and file a Government Efficiency Plan (GEP) by June 1, 2015. The GEP must show efficiencies or savings that total at least 1% of our tax levy each year in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

In order to achieve this level of efficiency, we teamed up with our sister Greenburgh villages and the Village of Sleepy Hollow (which is in the Town of Mount Pleasant). I am pleased to report that the combined seven villages have identified over \$1,000,000 in shared efficiencies and savings, far exceeding the \$778,000 (1%) required by the Tax Freeze. The benefits don't stop at the rebate check. Your local government, and our neighbors, will be operating with greater efficiency, allowing for Village services to be delivered while keeping property taxes as low as possible.

I would add that the mayors and administrators of the Greenburgh villages have been meeting for years in an effort to share ideas, calling ourselves the "Village Officials Committee." In fact, these meetings date back to long before I became Mayor. There have been many times we have worked together to aid efficiencies; this has often resulted in saving money for residents. So, while Albany may be pushing some communities to work together, this has been a reality in Greenburgh's villages for years. Hopefully, Albany will soon have time to work on some of the "mandate relief" they promised would coincide with the implementation of the Tax Levy Cap legislation.

Inauguration of Tim Hall, Mercy College's 12th President

This Friday, Tim Hall will be inaugurated as the twelfth President of Mercy College. Deputy Mayor Connie Kehoe will be representing the Village of Irvington at the event. I would like to extend my personal congratulations and well wishes to President Hall as he assumes an important leadership role at an outstanding institution.

I hope to see you around the Village. Please never hesitate to contact me with thoughts and concerns.

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