

## **From the Mayor's Desk...December 23, 2011**

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah to everyone!

Apologies for not having sent a new e-mail for the last few weeks, as you can probably relate, it has been a very busy time.

I would like to thank Chabad of the Rivertowns for inviting me to the Menorah lighting at the Fire Department last night, it was a fun night and we were blessed with wonderful weather.

The Irvington Recreation Department, under the direction of Superintendent Joe Archino and Deputy Superintendent Maureen DePaoli, will be providing over 45 baskets of food and 40 bags of toys for the less fortunate seniors and families in Irvington and the Irvington School District. Even more remarkable is that the Holiday Basket program was funded by the generous donations from the community and packed by tireless volunteers. Truly a wonderful example of holiday spirit! I could not be more proud of the Recreation Department and all the talented people who work there, for their continued efforts to make Irvington a special place to live.

### **Water rates to increase**

The Village Board voted last Monday to increase water rates 8.5%, effective December 20, 2011. My colleagues and I on the Board did not take the decision to raise rates this much without a lot of thought.

The largest cost of the Water Department, namely the water we buy from New York City, saw a rate increase of 5.5% for "regular water" and 7.5% for any excess charges. So, our decision to increase the price we charge for water was largely made for us by the NYC Water Board. Additionally, 2011 was a very bad year for water main breaks, with three major breaks that lost millions of gallons of water (that the Village has to pay for). Lastly, as has been discussed for the last several years, the Water Fund faces a large deficit that was the result of no water rate increase for an extended period from the early-1990's to the mid 2000's, even when costs had been rising considerably. Since I have been on the Board of Trustees, under the leadership of Mayor Siegel, we targeted paying down approximately \$100,000 per year of what had been a \$1.9 million deficit back in 2009. While I am happy to say that the deficit has been reduced to about \$1.3 million in three years, this year, due to the water main breaks and the increased cost of water from NYC, absent a rate increase, we were facing a loss of approximately \$50,000. So, I felt it was prudent to increase the rates more than just the minimum amount to cover costs (approximately 6.5%) and that is how we came up with the 8.5% increase. Based on the average resident's annual water bill of approximately \$700, the additional 2% increase equates to about \$14 while total increase will cost residents another \$60 a year.

### **Chief Cerone Honored by the New York State Shields**

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, Irvington Police Chief Michael Cerone was honored by the New York State Shields as their "Boss of the Year." I am very proud of Chief Cerone for winning this award. As he said that night, he could not have won the award without the talented and dedicated officers he leads in the Irvington Police Department. I wholeheartedly agree!

Have a safe, fun and wonderful holiday season.

Brian Smith, Mayor  
bsmith@irvingtonny.gov  
(646) 265-3950 (Cell)