

**Ken-Ton Bee Article**

**January, 2012**

**Anthony F. Caruana, Supervisor**

**Town of Tonawanda**

**LOOKING AHEAD AND MOVING ON IN 2012**

At the Town Board meeting held on December 5, the Tonawanda Town Board adopted resolutions that enabled the Youth, Parks and Recreation Department to self-operate the concessions at our two golf courses and in our parks. In order to accomplish this, the existing license agreement was revoked with the concession company. This action was not taken lightly; we knew there would be a reaction to the decision and expected some disagreement. The initial reporting of the decision presented a somewhat balanced representation of each viewpoint; however, since then, a column and letters to the editor in some publications have not, and we feel compelled to present some facts.

The Town has operated concessions at their arenas and at Kenney Field for years. In 2008 when the contract to operate the stands at the golf courses became available the Town considered both self- operation and license agreement options. At that time we felt it best to enter into a contract with a concessionaire. To protect our interests, we inserted a clause that would allow us to revoke the agreement if we decided to self-operate. During the contract negotiations in 2008, we made it clear that was a distinct possibility, and it was decided that, if and when the Town made that decision, we could do so only during the month of December. The concessionaire was well aware of this provision and signed a five year agreement, beginning on March 1, 2008.

In the spring of 2011 after New York State instituted a 2% property tax cap on municipalities, I met with department heads and informed them they would have to submit budgets for 2012 that reduced expenses or raised revenues by an amount equal to approximately 6%. To meet this mandate, the Youth, Parks and Recreation Committee met and discussed options to meet this mandate. One of those recommendations was assuming control of golf concessions in 2012. This was done prior to the concessionaire announcing his intent to run for office. The concessionaire paid the Town of Tonawanda \$12,000 per year for the rights at both courses, and the head of the Youth, Parks and Recreation Department and the committee project that we will generate more net revenue by operating the stands ourselves.

As the Chief Fiscal Officer of the Town of Tonawanda, I can assure all town residents that this action was taken to continue to provide the residents the highest quality of services in the most cost effective manner.

Because of decisions such as this, and our budget cut mandate, it has been possible for the Town Board to approve the lowest tax rate increase in the past 11 years at less than 1% for 2012.

As our holiday season comes to an end, and as we begin the 176<sup>th</sup> year in our Town's history, we continue to resolve to maintain the Town of Tonawanda as a great place to live, work, and play by providing the best possible services, facilities, programs and environment for our residents and businesses at the most reasonable, responsible, and affordable cost.

Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2012.