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**TOWN OF TONAWANDA  
2023  
TENTATIVE BUDGET MESSAGE**

**JOSEPH H. EMMINGER, SUPERVISOR**

**As I have stated many times before during my tenure as your Town Supervisor, the budget process is a 12-month process and actually there are parts of this budget that have been years in the making, so I want to I want to start out my message tonight by saying thank you to all of our employees and our department heads, as well as my colleagues on the Town Board, Councilwoman and Deputy Supervisor Shannon Patch and Council members, Carl Szarek, Jill O'Malley and Gina Santa Maria for their assistance in making this budget one that reflects our continuing goal of being a sound, responsible and fiscally conservative government.**

**As Supervisor and Chief Fiscal Officer of the Town, it is my responsibility, under state law to obtain the budget requests from the various department heads and to compile those requests into a Tentative Town Budget for the upcoming fiscal year. In my opinion, while I wear many hats and have numerous responsibilities as your Town Supervisor, there is no bigger or greater responsibility that I have, than presenting a fiscally sound and responsible budget.**

**With that prelude being said, the 2023 Tentative Town Budget has been filed with the Town Clerk’s office and has been distributed to members of the Town Board for their review and comments and I am pleased to report that for the 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, the Town of Tonawanda will once again be under the New York State Tax Cap. Furthermore, the proposed 2023 Tentative Town Budget provides the department heads with the resources they need to continue to offer high quality services that are unmatched anywhere else in Western New York, at the lowest possible, responsible cost as we continue to look for additional ways to become more efficient and cost effective.**

**I’m also very proud to report, once again tonight, that through the hard work and cooperation of many, that, to quote Moodys Financial Services, the Town’s bond rating agency, that the Town “maintains a strong financial position which is expected to remain stable.”**

**Our town continues to face many challenges going forward, due in part, to the retirement of the NRG Huntley Power Station in 2016 and the subsequent reduction in State Aid as we transition out of being a coal power plant community. Next year, will mark the 7<sup>th</sup> and final year the Town will “tap” into the State Mitigation Fund to assist us in the transition from the loss of over \$2,000,000 in revenue from the NRG Huntley site. I’m sure all of you can remember back to the 2016/2017 timeframe when everyone was concerned about what would happen to their taxes when Huntley shut down. I’m proud to say, we have “weathered” the storm better than most would have anticipated but we still are continuing to press NRG to do the right thing and sell the**

property to a qualified developer who will clean up the site and then turn our waterfront into something we can all be proud of.

As in past years, ongoing Federal and State regulations as well as unfunded and underfunded mandates and replacing aging infrastructure and recreational facilities also prove to be difficult challenges. Even with these challenges, the Town of Tonawanda, will continue to provide more services to its residents than any other municipality in Erie County, and I believe this budget not only addresses the needs and concerns of our residents and business owners, but it also takes into consideration the many challenges we face together.

Our challenge and responsibility, as elected officials, remains in finding the balance between cost of the service provided and the service, while continuing to provide the highest quality services at the lowest possible cost. We take this responsibility seriously, and it remains the goal of this Town Board!

As a reminder, in 2011, the New York State legislature approved a property tax cap of the lesser of the Consumer Price Index rate of inflation (better known as the CPI) or 2%, allowing for certain exclusions and adjustments. Based upon the current rate of inflation, which is over 6%, the New York State property tax cap for 2023 has been established at 2% by the State and for the 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, as I stated earlier, the Town will be under the Tax Cap Mandate. The challenge that all of us are facing at home with our own family budgets due to the rising costs for fuel, food, energy and other items, also applies to the town as well.

**Chemical costs alone for our water and water treatment plants have risen 300% in the past year alone and we've all seen what they are predicting for rising utility costs this winter.**

**Typically, the budget process begins in January with the start of the fiscal year, and then in July, I review the budget issues and constraints with Town Board members, the Town Comptroller and Deputy Comptroller. Department heads are then requested to submit their initial budget requests. Changes were made to the initial department requests in subsequent meetings held by myself with Town Board members, department heads, Town Comptroller and the Deputy Comptroller.**

**Due to the planning and work performed by the individuals I just mentioned, the 2023 cost of town government for the typical homeowner will be \$3.83 per day, up only \$0.04 per day or 1.16% from last year or less than \$20 for the year.**

**Last month, the Town "went" to market on \$42M in Bond Anticipation Notes. Those are short term notes that municipalities regularly take out to finance or fund projects until the capital projects are further along or completed. I am very happy to report, that the New York City Rating Agency, Moody's, after reviewing our audited financial reports retained our high Aa2 Rating which they stated reflects the Town's strong reserves, liquidity and financial operations. Our very good Bond Rating enables the Town to do more with your tax dollars**

**and it's another clear indication that your elected officials are doing their jobs when it comes to keeping the Town finances in order!**

**The 2023 tax levy, the amount of money needed to be raised by property taxes, stands at \$51,520,150 which is an increase of 3.6% from 2022. This figure is just below the adjusted New York State property tax cap of 3.618% which is arrived at by taking the 2% tax cap for 2023 and adding the carryover from last year that we were under by, or 1.618%.**

**The budget appropriations for 2023, excluding special assessments which only affect specific property owners, totals \$111,655,654, an increase of 3.4% over 2022.**

**The Town continues to invest in public infrastructure and other important projects that affect the quality of life in the Town. In 2023, the Town will be making over \$8.75 million in debt payments on various town projects, including the Parker/Fries Sewer Interceptor Project and other sewer projects as required by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; our sidewalk replacement project, our Townwide Street Lighting Project; our Bio Clarifer Project at our Waste Water Plant and over \$5 million dollars on street repaving throughout the Town. These significant improvements are crucial in order for the Town to adequately provide these services and to attract young families and businesses to our community.**

The 2023 estimated non-property tax revenues total \$50,135,504 compared with \$48,339,835 for 2022, an increase of \$1,795,669. The increase in non-property tax revenues is primarily due to my anticipation to the return of pre-Covid19 revenues in most departments and an increase in sales tax.

The 2023 Town Budget that I am presenting to the Town Board tonight is indicative of our strong conservative fiscal policies that we have adopted. The budget represents our guiding principal philosophy of providing the highest quality services at the lowest possible, responsible cost. Those strong conservative fiscal policies that we adopted in years past will continue to put us in good financial shape moving forward. I want to again take this opportunity to give special thanks to all of our department heads, our employees and my fellow Town Board members for their outstanding efforts and for a job well done throughout the difficult times we have all faced together the last 30 months as well as the inflationary times we find ourselves in today. In my opinion, the Town is very fortunate to have all of these people working on their behalf.

As our independent auditors informed us just last month, we have “adequate” fund balances in all of our accounts.

Once again, in the spirit of transparency I have included pay raises for all town employees in 2023, including all of the elected officials. I have budgeted 2.5% raises for the elected officials. Further, I want to mention, as I do every year, that the 4 councilmembers **DO NOT**

receive, as part of their compensation, paid health insurance from the Town. The elimination of health insurance for councilmembers, which occurred in 2006, has saved the town well over \$1,000,000 and over the same 16 year period, each board member has received pay increases totaling less than \$400. That's not \$400 a year, that's a total of \$400 increase in pay over the past 16-years for each board member.

The overall town budget is actually comprised of nine separate budgets: the General Fund-Townwide, General Fund-Town Outside Village, Highway Fund-Town Outside Village, Lighting Districts, Water Acquisition and Storage District, Fire Protection Districts, Sewer Consolidated District, Drainage Consolidated District and Refuse and Garbage Consolidated District. The cost to taxpayers for each of these functions is based upon assessed valuation, road frontage, land area, water and sewer usage or a combination of these factors.

The Town of Tonawanda has long been known as a premier full-service residential community by offering quality services that are unmatched and by running government in an efficient manner. I believe that this budget continues to provide the department heads with the resources they need to continue with this tradition without impacting the quality of service. With the cooperation of our department heads and employees, the town will continue to provide the highest quality of services at the lowest possible cost as we continue to look for additional ways to become more efficient and cost effective.

**The 2023 Tentative Budget has been given to the Town Board for their consideration and review. Two budget workshops have been scheduled for October 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:00PM , right here in the Board Chambers for the Town Board to review and to bring any new information that was not available earlier and to refine the budget further.**

**Once again, I wish to extend my thanks to the Town Board, our Town Comptroller and Deputy Comptroller, and all of our Department Heads for their input on this budget which will serve to maintain the town's fiscal condition and our tradition as the finest full-service residential community in Western New York.**

**TOWN OF TONAWANDA**  
**2023 TENTATIVE BUDGET FACT SHEET**  
**Joseph H. Emminger, Supervisor**

- **The 2022 cost of town government for the average homeowner will be \$3.83 per day, up \$0.04 a day or 1.16% from last year. When looking at an 9-year window the cost of the average homeowner is up \$0.49 from the \$3.34 per day cost in 2013; or an increase of only 14.67% over 9 years or 1.63% annually. The total 2023 town tax for all funds for the average homeowner living in a home assessed at \$50,000 will be \$1,399.14 compared with \$1,383.04 for 2022, an increase of \$16.10 or approximately \$.04 per day.**
- **The 2023 tax levy, the amount of money needed to be raised by property taxes, is \$51,520,150 as compared to \$49,690,684 for 2022 which is an increase of 3.6%.**
- **The 2023 tentative budget appropriations total \$111,655,654 as compared to \$108,030,519 for 2022, an increase of 3.4%. The increase is attributable to various items including payroll, rising costs for utilities, fuel, chemicals and our debt service increases.**
- **Estimated revenues for 2023 is \$50,135,504 as compared to the 2022 budget figure of \$48,339,835; an increase of \$1,795,669 or 3.7%.**
- **The proposed 2023 town budget provides the department heads with the resources they need to continue to offer high quality services that are unmatched at the lowest possible, responsible cost as we continue to look for additional ways to become more efficient and cost effective.**