

**The Regular Town Board Meeting for the Town of Brighton, Franklin County, New York, was held on Thursday, December 8, 2005, at 7 p.m. at the Brighton Town Hall, 12 County Route 31, Paul Smiths, NY, with the following:**

**PRESENT:** Supervisor Robert Tebbutt

Council Members: David Knapp, John Quenell, Steve Tucker, and Lydia Wright

**ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Amber McKernan - Tax Collector, Nik Santagate - Justice, and Elaine Sater - Town Clerk

**RESIDENTS:** There were seven residents present

**CALLED TO ORDER** by Supervisor Robert Tebbutt at 7:00 p.m.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES :** Motion made by John Quenell, **Second** by Steve Tucker, **to adopt the minutes of the Regular Town Board meeting held on November 10, 2005 as written.**

**Roll Call Vote: Aye 5** (Supervisor Robert Tebbutt, David Knapp, John Quenell, Steve Tucker, Lydia Wright), **Nay 0**

**TOWN CLERK REPORT: Total Revenue to Supervisor as of November 30, 2005 was \$660.48 from:**

2 Sport Licenses

5 Certified Copies

18 Dog License Renewals

3 Building Permit (#05-50 to 52)

1. Received notification from the New York Town Clerk's Association and the Association of Towns, Re: Teleconference to be held for newly elected officials on January 12 from 6:30 to 8:45 p.m. at county offices. Registration fee is \$15.00.
2. December 1, Received notification from the Franklin County Board of Elections, RE: Official Tally of General Election results for Town of Brighton as follows from 350 voters:
  - a. SUPERVISOR: Peter Martin 192, John Quenell 140, blanks 18
  - b. TOWN COUNCIL: Sheila Delarm-Eckert 196, Willie Sheridan 175, Steve Tucker 180, Robert Tebbutt 128, blanks 19, voids 2
  - c. SUPERINTENDENT OF HIGHWAYS: Donald Oliver 221, blanks 129
3. REQUESTS FOR TOWN BUILDING USE:
  - a. TOWN HALL: Saturday, December 10 - Brighton Conspiracy Coop, all day
  - b. TOWN PARK: None
4. RECORDS MANAGEMENT: Town records for 1998 and earlier have been destroyed as per the MU-1 and the documentation is on file.

#### **SUPERVISOR REPORT**

1. **FINANCIAL REPORT:** Monthly Budget Report as of November 30, 2005 was distributed to the board members
2. **BUDGET AMENDMENTS:** General and Highway Fund Amendments

#### **RESOLUTION #111**

##### **GENERAL FUND 2005 BUDGET AMENDMENT #7-2005 RELATING TO THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS**

Motion made by Supervisor Robert Tebbutt, **second** by John Quenell, **To Wit:**

##### **GENERAL FUND 2005 BUDGET AMENDMENT #7-2005 RELATING TO THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS**

**RESOLVED**, that the following amounts be and the same hereby are appropriated/transferred: \$131.24 from Account No. A1990 Contingency as follows: \$32.10 to Account No. A1355.4 Assessor - Contractual (phone bill), \$20.19 to Account No, A1410.4 Town Clerk - Contractual (for mileage and postage), \$78.95 to Account No. A1220.4 Supervisor - Contractual (for newspaper ads); **Total \$131.24.**

**Roll Call Vote: Aye 5** (Supervisor Robert Tebbutt, David Knapp, John Quenell, Steve Tucker, Lydia Wright), **Nay 0**  
**Resolution #111 declared duly adopted.**

#### **RESOLUTION #112**

##### **HIGHWAY FUND 2005 BUDGET AMENDMENT #3-2005 RELATING TO THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS**

Motion made by Supervisor Robert Tebbutt, **second** by John Quenell, **To Wit:**

##### **HIGHWAY FUND 2005 BUDGET AMENDMENT #3-2005 RELATING TO THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS**

**RESOLVED**, that the following amounts be and the same hereby are appropriated/transferred: \$4,100.00 from

**Account No. DA5110.1 Repairs - Personal Services as follows: \$4,100.00 to Account DA5142.1 Snow removal - Personal Services (to pay salaries), Total of \$4,100.00**

**Roll Call Vote: Aye 5 (Supervisor Robert Tebbutt, David Knapp, John Quenell, Steve Tucker, Lydia Wright), Nay 0 Resolution #112 declared duly adopted.**

3. **HIGHWAY GARAGE PROJECT: Highway Garage Project Cost Status** as of November 25 was distributed to board members at the meeting.
4. **TOWN HALL LAND APA PERMIT STATUS:** Received notice that the APA permit #2005-186 for the land under the Town Hall and construction of the addition has been approved and mailed to the town. He will notify the lawyers to get the necessary paperwork together for the transfer of the land as soon as the permit is received.
5. **CSEA CONTRACT:** Notice has been received that the CSEA Contract for 2006 has been accepted. A contract should be received for the new Town Board to approve.
6. **LETTER TO TOWN BOARD:** Wrote a letter to the Town Board, dated December 8, 2005, concerning the projects he has been working on and the point of contracts. Would like it attached to the minutes, but will not read it since it is lengthy.
7. **THANK YOU TO COUNCIL MEMBER JOHN QUENELL:** Recognized and thanked John Quenell for his 8 years of service to the Town as a Council Member.
8. **NOTICE OF BEING OUT-OF-TOWN:** Will not be available from Friday, December 16 through Thursday, December 29; John Quenell will be acting as Deputy Supervisor during this time.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **HIGHWAY GARAGE PROJECT: Lydia Wright** asked what was still outstanding on the Highway Garage Project. **John Quenell** said the amount of the salt shed is still to be spent, the amount left in the checking account is not enough to cover the estimated future expenses until the grant funds are received. The loan to the General Fund will have to be repaid from the grant money. **David Knapp** asked about the air vents on the furnace room. **Supervisor Robert Tebbutt** said the work is completed on the air vents. Discussion was held concerning the payment. The amount of \$1,741 is being paid to J Hogan for completing the project, the balance of \$1,059 is being paid to LH LaPlante as a final payment for his contract. Vouchers are submitted for payment at this meeting.
2. **HIGHWAY PAVING PLAN FOR 2005: Lydia Wright** asked if the question from "Citizens Comments" at the last meeting was answered concerning the paving of the Wardner Road according to the 2005 Agreement for the Expenditure of Highway Moneys. **John Quenell** said he asked Don Oliver why the road was not paved and his reply was that he did not feel the road required attention this year.
3. **MAINTENANCE OF TOWN HALL STEPS:** David Knapp said the steps did not get repaired before the onset of cold weather, he will contact Eldridge Construction to determine when the work will be accomplished.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. DONATIONS TO TOWN HIGHWAY GARAGE (John Quenell):**

**RESOLUTION #113**

**AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT DONATIONS FOR TOWN HIGHWAY GARAGE**

**Motion made** by John Quenell, **Second** by Supervisor Robert Tebbutt, **To Wit:**

**WHEREAS**, the budget for the new highway garage constructed in 2004-2005 could not include provisions for certain interior finishing due to funding constrains, and

**WHEREAS**, a donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, has provided certain items to the garage during 2005, and

**WHEREAS**, the Office of the State Comptroller has advised that the Town should formally recognize receipt and acceptance of said donations,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town of Brighton accepts certain items anonymously donated during 2005 to the Town's Highway Department in connection with the new highway garage as follows:

a Table for the break room

seven Guest Chairs for the break room and Superintendent's office

Paint for the Superintendent's desk

a new Chair for the Superintendent's desk

**a Couch for the break room**  
**an Easy Chair and Stool for the break room**  
**five Kitchen Cabinets for the break room**  
**a Counter Top for the kitchen area of the break room**  
**Carpeting in the break room**  
**Carpeting in the Superintendent's Office**

**All having a total value of \$1,898.81**

**Roll Call Vote: Aye 3** (Supervisor Robert Tebbutt, John Quenell, Steve Tucker) **Abstain 2** (David Knapp, Lydia Wright), **Nay 0**

**Resolution #113 declared duly adopted.**

**2. TRANSITION TO NEW SUPERVISOR: Lydia Wright** asked if Supervisor Robert Tebbutt had made any arrangements to have information or town records exchanged with the new incoming Supervisor. **Supervisor Robert Tebbutt** said that was what the eight page letter he had passed out earlier addressed. If the new supervisor had any questions he can call him.

### **REPORTS**

- 1. JUSTICE (Santagate):** Disposed of 46 cases and gave a check of \$4,450 to the Supervisor for November 2005. Met with the State Comptroller's officials on Thursday, December 8, to provide information for the Risk Assessment being conducted in the Town.
- 2. HIGHWAY (Quenell, Tucker, Oliver):**
  - a. Plowed and sanded roads nearly every day during November
  - b. Removed trees from roadways from heavy winds
  - c. Maintained the vehicles
  - d. Cleaned the garage
  - e. Will be attending the County Highway Meeting on Wednesday, December 14, in Malone.
- 3. INSURANCE AND INVESTMENTS (Quenell): Nothing to Report**
- 4. ASSESSOR (Tichenor): No Report**
- 5. TAX COLLECTOR (McKernan):**
  - a. Received 9 phone calls regarding tax matters
  - b. Received most of the requests for tax bills from mortgaging companies and banks
  - c. Ordered supplies for the coming tax year and submitted vouchers for stamps and petty cash
  - d. Received bank statement Thursday, December 8, and account stands at \$0
  - e. Submitted books and records for the 2005 tax season to the auditors from the NY State Comptroller's Office Thursday, December 8
- 6. CODE ENFORCEMENT (Lagree):** As of November 30 there were 52 building permits issued for 2005, 10 are completed; 13 of the 28 open permits from 2004 are completed, 9 have been renewed, and 6 are still open, additional fees of \$25 from permit #04-28 were received; 2 of the 10 open permits from 2003 have been completed, 5 have been renewed twice, 2 have been renewed once, 1 has been closed; 2 of the 6 open permits from 2002 have been completed, 2 have been renewed twice, 1 has been renewed once, 2 have been closed; 2 of the 3 open permits from 2001 were completed and 1 was closed.
- 7. CEMETERY (Tucker):** Met with Stacy Allot of Geomatics to discuss the survey of the 4<sup>th</sup> section of the Mt. View Cemetery. Also met with Brendan Keough from Fortune-Keough Funeral Home. The amount of lots can be increased from 10 to 18 across if the size of the lots are reduced.
- 8. PARKS AND RECREATION (Tucker):** Obtained lumber to build an 8-inch wall around the ice rink; will purchase re-rod to keep it in place.

**9. MAINTENANCE(Knapp): (See Old Business, Para 3)**

***CITIZENS' COMMENTS***

**Tom Willis - Garondah Road:** The Town Hall Restoration Fund is now at \$19,155.00. Sent out 100 letters to Town of Brighton property owners, received some responses already. Has a pledge for \$1000 for the spring of 2006. Will not be getting any funding from the Pearsall or Underhill foundations. Still working with the Adirondack Community Fund. Will continue to work with this fund for another year.

Would like to know how much money is still in the Contingency Fund for 2005. It started at \$25,000.

**John Quenell** said there was about \$23,000 still left.

**Tom Willis:** Thanked Bob and John for their efforts on behalf of the Town and for their accomplishments.

**Kevan Moss - McColloms:** Received Mylar copies of the plans for the Town Hall Project from Crawford and Stearns and would like to file them with the Town.

**Supervisor Robert Tebbutt** told her to give them to the Town Clerk.

**Amber McKernan - Rainbow Lake Road:** Asked about the amount of insurance coverage she has as Tax Collector. Was the coverage of lost documents ever looked into, and what is the premium for increasing the amount of the coverage for the Tax Collector.

**John Quenell** said she was covered for \$450,000. To increase this by \$50,000 he was quoted a premium of \$88.00. He did not address the lost document coverage with the insurance agent at Utica Insurance Company. He did not think the Town could get coverage for larger amounts.

**Amber McKernan** said other tax collectors are covered for over \$1 million.

**Amber McKernan** asked how the CHIPS funding worked; was it a Federal or State Program.

**John Quenell** said the State awards a certain amount to each municipality, the State reimburses the Town for the amount spent. If the amount is not all spent it will roll over into the next year.

**David Knapp** asked what the amount to be given is based on.

**Supervisor Robert Tebbutt** said it is an amount set by the State and not based on any input from the Town.

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**There were no further Citizens Comments**

***AUDIT OF VOUCHERS***

**RESOLUTION #114**

**AUTHORIZATION TO PAY THE AUDITED VOUCHERS**

**Motion made by John Quenell, second by David Knapp, To Wit:**

**RESOLVED, that the Supervisor be authorized to pay all vouchers audited by the Town Board and listed on the abstracts as follows:**

**PRE-PAID: Abstract #10 for Voucher #10A through and including #10C for General Funds in the amount of \$643.44 and Street Lighting Funds in the amount of \$57.99**

**GENERAL FUND: Abstract #12 for Voucher #271 through and including #286 for General Funds in the amount of \$7,454.69**

**HIGHWAY FUND: Abstract #12 for Voucher #109 through and including #120 for funds in the amount of \$6,204.94**

**CAPITAL PROJECT (HIGHWAY GARAGE) FUND: Abstract #21 for Voucher #s 73 and 74 in the amount of \$2,800.00**

**Roll Call Vote: Aye 5 (Supervisor Robert Tebbutt, David Knapp, John Quenell, Steve Tucker, Lydia Wright), Nay 0**

**Resolution #114 declared duly adopted.**

**ADJOURNMENT: Motion to Adjourn made at 7:50 p.m by John Quenell, Second by David Knapp, Aye 5**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Elaine Sater, Brighton Town Clerk**



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# TOWN OF BRIGHTON

P.O. Box 260, Paul Smiths, New York 12970-0260 • (518) 327-3202

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December 8, 2005

A Message from Robert G. Tebbutt to the Brighton Town Board

These are my last few weeks as Brighton supervisor. As the outgoing supervisor, I feel a responsibility to offer some remarks concerning matters of ongoing town business which might help the incoming town board provide for a smooth transition. I have asked John Quenell to help me compile these comments and I would like to thank him for his tireless work on many of these issues.

Highway Department CSEA contract

The current bargaining agreement expires on December 31, 2005. The CSEA has made a proposal concerning terms and conditions for renewal. The town board authorized a response, sent on October 19, which in essence proposes a 4.1% increase in wages (52 cents per hour) and a one-year term rather than the customary two-year term. The town has just received a letter dated November 28 from CSEA agreeing to the town proposals. We confirmed receipt of the letter via fax on December 2. I believe the next step will be for CSEA to send copies of the new contract to the town for signature. This may not happen until after January 1.

We are in receipt of a notice from Excellus that the "Indemnity" health insurance product which presently covers Highway Department employees and the Highway superintendent will be withdrawn from the market as of the end of 2006. Excellus has suggested alternative PPO and EPO products, which they believe should provide equivalent or better coverage, without increasing costs. However, they also advise that the 5/15/30 drug card will not be available under the EPO or PPO, although a 10/25/40 card will be.

International Plow Truck BAN — 3/1/06 maturity

A \$40,000 Bond Anticipation Note held by Tupper Lake National Bank expires on March 1, 2006. The price of the truck, purchased in 2002, was \$129,703. The town paid \$29,703 cash from the Highway fund and financed the \$100,000 balance with a BAN. For the past four years, we have been redeeming the BANs each year with a \$20,000 cash payment and a new BAN for \$20,000 less. Our 2006 budget assumes that this will continue, i.e., in redeeming the existing BAN on March 1, 2006 we will make a cash payment and sell a new BAN for \$20,000, which presumably would be

redeemed with a \$20,000 cash payment on March 1, 2007. However the new board wishes to proceed, action will be required to redeem the present \$40,000 BAN with TLNB on March 1, 2006.

#### New Highway Garage BAN — 3/15/06 maturity

NBT Bank currently holds a six-month BAN for \$470,000 which matures on March 15, 2006 and which relates to the financed portion of the cost of the new highway garage. I suggest that this BAN could be redeemed with a 20-year serial bond. Although it is technically permissible to continue with BAN financing for a total of five years on the project, short-term interest rates continue to rise against long-term rates. I believe that March would be the appropriate time to lock in long-term financing.

When we were considering financing alternatives that led to the decision to sell the current six-month BAN on September 15, 2005, we sought quotes on long-term financing and the most attractive offer was a 20-year serial bond from NBT at an interest rate of 4.5% per annum.

#### Garage Project Activities — 2006

The garage project includes construction of a salt shed, removal of the old building, landscaping and tree planting. The salt shed will be financed by a grant from the DEC, which will cover half the cost up to a maximum of \$30,000. The town's half consists of \$5,000 in cash and \$25,000 in town forces labor and equipment. The plan for the salt shed includes concrete footers and walls, topped by a steel roof and rear wall. The town has purchased the steel for \$8,000 and it is on site, but so far we have not received a satisfactory bid for the foundation work. In any event, since we are past the time in 2005 to economically construct a foundation, it appears the work will have to wait until the spring of 2006.

The capital project plan assumes that town forces will be able to construct the new salt shed once the foundation and walls are in place.

The DEC grant has been approved and the town has submitted a signed contract and a voucher to receive an initial \$15,000 payment. In the meantime, to ensure that the Highway Garage Capital Fund has sufficient funds, the board has approved a \$15,000 loan from the General Fund to the Capital Fund. Once the \$15,000 payment arrives from the DEC, I recommend that the \$15,000 loan from the General Fund be repaid promptly.

The project plan assumes that the old garage building will be removed by town forces. Partial removal of the old garage has already taken place. The project development permit from the Adirondack Park Agency specifies that the old garage building must be removed. It is our understanding that there will not be an objection to keeping the building in place during the winter of 2005-2006, but that it must be

removed during 2006. (In view of the fact that the salt shed construction has been delayed, the Highway Department has stored road salt for use this winter in the old building. This is preferable to storing the salt outside.)

There exists an ongoing dispute with one of the contractors for the new highway garage building, L.H. LaPlante Co., Inc. According to project engineer Joe Garso, LaPlante, who had the project's HVAC contract, failed to install proper ventilation of the furnace room. As part of all construction contracts, there is a 5% retention provision. In the case of LaPlante, the amount of retention is \$2,800. The town received a bid from J. Hogan to install the vent, at a cost of \$1,741. The work has been completed and board approval will be sought to pay the Hogan bill of \$1,741. By prior board decision, the balance of the retention amount claimed by LaPlante, \$1,059 (\$2,800 - \$1,741) should be remitted to LaPlante and board approval will be sought accordingly.

Finally, although not a part of the defined garage project, I recommend that the town consider installing a stationary standby electric generator at the garage. We applied for and have received Emergency Shelter status from the American Red Cross, so standby generation capability would be an important asset if the building needs to be used as a shelter. The nearest alternative Emergency Shelter is in Saranac Lake. New generators of adequate capacity are costly, but now and then low-priced, pre-owned generators become available, or possibly a grant which would help the town fill this need might be found.

### Town Hall Project

It has taken far too long, but the deed transfer for the land under the town hall from Paul Smith's College to the town should happen shortly. The Paul Smith's Hotel Company granted the land to the town in 1914, but title was never actually transferred. The college has indicated a willingness to proceed with the transfer, at no cost. Under the APA Act it has been necessary to apply for a two-lot subdivision permit. The application had to include plans for the restoration of and addition to the building. Because of its historic preservation status, the APA requested the town to get a letter from the state's Historic Preservation office stating that they have no objection to the plans. We relayed the request to OPRHP and they have responded to the APA that there is no objection. The APA has just granted the permit. Now the seller-buyer lawyer-to-lawyer process can be restarted and hopefully the transfer will happen very soon.

The APA project contact is Mr. Thomas Saehrig, 891-4050.

As soon as the title passes to the town, I recommend that a new leach field be constructed for the town hall's septic system. The existing system failed last winter. Our highway department excavated enough material to determine that the leach field is plugged. The tank was pumped, but it is only a matter of time before the system backs up once again.

I believe a new leach field can be constructed in front of the town hall. Although there is not a large available area there, I believe that it is sufficient if infiltrators are used rather than gravel.

#### Use of fund balances

As a required part of the 2006 budgeting process, we estimated year-end fund balances for each of the town's four funds, General, Highway, Fire and Street Lighting. The total year-end fund balance across all funds was approximately \$350,000. There are no hard and fast rules concerning what the size of a year-end fund balance should be, but it seems that somewhere in the range of 15% to 30% of annual appropriations is generally considered adequate. The total appropriations for 2006 are \$737,000. A 15-30% range on that would be \$110,000 to \$221,000. Therefore one could conclude that at the end of 2005 the town has "excess" funds of between \$129,000 and \$240,000.

As the present town board has discussed, such excess funds are really town taxpayers' money, and although the town board is not statutorily required to disburse the funds, it is clear that there is a shared sentiment on the board to put the funds to work. In my mind, potential uses could include the following:

- 1) Application of the funds against future tax levies, having the effect of reducing town property taxes
- 2) Application of funds to capital costs of the Town Hall Project
- 3) Application of funds to capital costs of the Garage Project

With reference to 1) Application to tax levies, there is good reason to give this consideration as a tax-control measure because of an impending shock in Rescue Service costs to the town. The Village of Saranac Lake has decided to revise how they apportion departmental costs from a call-based system to a property assessment-based system. The change would take effect January 1, 2007.

The village receives 62% of the SLVFD fire and rescue calls and presently pays 52% of the expenses. The client towns served by the village's rescue service, Brighton, Franklin, Harrietstown, Santa Clara, North Elba and St. Armand, receive 38% of the calls and pay 48% of the costs. Under the new billing system, the village share of the costs will fall from 52% to 15%, and the client towns' share will rise from 48% to 85%. Although the village has not yet published exactly what the new apportionment figures will be, it is apparent that Brighton, which presently pays the village about \$19,000 a year, will be increased by somewhere between \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year. This would be equivalent to a town tax increase of about 5%. Hopefully something can be done to stop the village from implementing the new billing plan, but if not, a reserve fund balance could be used to ease the shock to Brighton taxpayers. I recommend that a committee be appointed promptly to work with other affected towns toward a solution to this problem.

With reference to 2) Town Hall Project, \$25,000 of the General fund balance has already been pledged to the town hall project, and I feel that a further contribution



would be appropriate. As I understand it, there is still quite a way to go in raising the total estimated \$200,000 funding for the project. I urge the new town board to apply for a Historic Preservation Office grant, which could cover up to one-half the cost of the project. It may be a long shot, and it may mean waiting up to a year longer, but I believe it would be in the best interests of the town taxpayers to try for the grant.

With reference to 3) Garage Project, as you know we presently have a \$470,000 BAN that has to be redeemed on March 15, and as suggested above this may be the time to change to long-term financing via sale of a serial bond. In the 2006 budget we included a principal-reduction payment of \$25,000, and if this is applied as intended, the balance to be financed by the bond issue would be  $\$470,000 - \$25,000 = \$445,000$ . I suggest that consideration be given to applying some of the General Fund balance toward further reduction of the principal to be financed, perhaps another \$50,000 to \$100,000. The consequence of this would be lower debt service expense in future years for Brighton taxpayers. For example, if a 20-year bond at 4.5% can be arranged, the annual cost would be \$34,200 for a financed principal of \$445,000, versus \$26,900 for a financed principal of \$350,000. This represents a \$7,300 annual reduction in debt service costs, accumulating to \$146,000 over the 20-year life of the bonds.

#### Workers' Compensation Insurance

The town participates in the Franklin County Self-Insurance Plan for workers' compensation coverage. The plan includes 23 participating towns and villages and the county. Fees assessed to the participants depend on 1) actual claims experience and 2) assessed property values. Claims experience determines 25% of the fee and assessment valuation determines 75%.

There is no logical, causative relationship between assessment valuation and the purpose of the insurance. The state legislature, which passed the enabling legislation for self-insurance plans decades ago, apparently believed otherwise, and the fact is, back when workers' compensation constituted a comparatively small expense, it did not matter very much. But now, with ballooning fees for medical attention and drugs, workers' compensation is indeed an expensive business, and the inequity of apportioning self-insurance plan fees on the basis of property assessments is manifestly unfair to those municipalities, such as Brighton, which have extensive waterfront property and therefore high average assessments.

The 2006 fee charged to Brighton for workers' compensation, \$30,466, is almost a \$5,000 jump over the 2005 cost of \$25,648, and the increase is due to a rise in the assessed value of Brighton properties relative to the other participants. This is a large increase, for no good reason, and the absolute amount of dollars we are paying, \$30,466, is far too high. And it will get worse in the future, as the prices of waterfront property continue to escalate. Interestingly, Harriestown and Santa Clara, both of which have extensive waterfront property, do not participate in the Plan.

In response to this situation, we have made contact with the New York State Municipal Workers Compensation Alliance. This is a not-for-profit Group

Self-Insurance Plan sponsored by the Association of Towns. The Plan regularly advertises in the Association's "Talk of the Towns and Topics" bimonthly magazine. At our request, the Alliance provided us with a rough quote of our costs under their plan. Note that we are statutorily required to provide workers' compensation coverage to the PSGVFD volunteers as well as town employees. The quote is on the order of \$20,000 a year, thus representing a \$10,000 savings over the Franklin County self-insurance plan.

I suggest that the option of leaving the Franklin County plan and joining the Alliance should be given serious study. It is not a quick or a simple matter to leave the Franklin County plan. Notice must be given by July 1 of the year preceding the final year of participation. In other words, if Brighton wanted to leave the soonest they could get out would be the end of 2007, and that would require notice to the county by July 1, 2006. Also, upon leaving the plan, the town would have to pay the county its pro-rata share of outstanding liabilities. Nevertheless, for the sake of protecting the town taxpayers, the fact that changing workers' compensation carriers would take time, and involve some up-front expense, should not prevent the town from seriously pursuing the matter.

#### NYMIR Insurance

NYMIR, our property and liability insurer, has sent the town schedules relating to renewed coverage and premiums for 2006. All looks satisfactory. However, a letter sent from NYMIR detailing a number of safety concerns compiled from a recent visit to the town from a NYMIR representative should be responded to as soon as possible. They request our "thoughts or plan of action with regard to the recommendations." I will see that this is provided to NYMIR by the end of the year, but it is possible that a follow-up will be needed in 2006, such as boiler inspections at the town hall and garage heating plants, to reach closure on the recommendations.

#### Fidelity Bond

The present coverage provided by our employee dishonesty bond with Utica Insurance Company, through the Mang Insurance Agency, is a blanket for all town employees of \$50,000 plus an excess of \$400,000 for both the town supervisor and the tax collector. I believe the town should consider increasing the excess limit for the tax collector and supervisor to \$450,000, for a total of \$500,000, since the maximum amount of funds held at one time by the tax collector and remitted to the town through the supervisor reaches the \$500,000 mark. The additional premium would be about \$88 per year.

#### Town Park Lease

The town park consists of two parcels, one owned by the town and one leased by the town from Paul Smith's College. The latter is the ball field area. The 30-year lease on this parcel expires July 4, 2006. If the town wishes to continue the use of this parcel as part of the park facility, I recommend that contact with PSC be initiated shortly to see if arrangements can be made for a renewal of the lease.

### Assistance from Camp Gabriels

The town has an opportunity to receive an increased level of assistance from Camp Gabriels. They have been advised, in view of fuel prices, to try to limit the geographic scope of their assistance programs. I have met several times with Mr. Behrle, the new camp superintendent, and suggested that the camp could help the town with an ongoing roadside cleanup program and with the supply, planting and care of flowers at the town park and the entrance to Mountain View Cemetery. Mr. Behrle has shown an enthusiastic willingness to help the town with these projects. I hope the town will pursue this opportunity in the spring of 2006.

### Public Information programs

Finally, I wish to comment on the two principal public information programs presently offered by the town. I believe that the Brighton Bulletin is a useful communications tool. It contains a summary of the business conducted by the town board at its monthly meetings, i.e., a condensed report of motions and resolutions, together with reports and old and new business items. Editing and publication was taken over by a board member, on a voluntary basis, in March 2000. The Bulletin is distributed to local post office bulletin boards and to a few local business establishments. I recommend that the new town board find someone to take over responsibility for the Bulletin. I know many people appreciate this news service.

In a similar vein, for several years the town has maintained a town website. As in the case of the Bulletin, maintenance of the website has been voluntary and, thanks to the generosity of Adelpia Cable, costs the taxpayers nothing. When the website first began, Adelpia provided a record of "hits," and the numbers were impressive. Although Adelpia has discontinued this report, I believe a significant number of citizens make use of the website, and I hope the new board will find someone to maintain and expand this valuable resource.

I have enjoyed my three years as supervisor of the town of Brighton and I have learned much about political life and the way governments work. I wish the new town board the best of success in helping Brighton continue to be such a fine place to live and raise a family.

Happy Holidays.



Robert G. Tebbutt