

## **Webster “Turns the Page” from 2015 to 2016**

The Webster Town Board is very optimistic looking at 2016 and beyond for the residents of Webster. We have continued to provide the services that Webster residents want and require at a stable and affordable tax rate. We have also maintained the equipment the man/women need to provide these services to the Webster community.

In these tough economic times the Town Board struggles constantly to provide quality services to the community at a reasonable tax rate. We try hard to balance how many police officers, Highway employees and other staff members are needed to do the proper job for you, the residents of Webster. We all would like to have more employees but we must balance that against the money available to provide the right mix for the residents paying the bills.

The Route 404 roadway repaving was completed in 2015 from Five Mile Line Road, through the Village of Webster, to Phillips Road. In 2017 the New York State Department of Transportation will be back doing intersection repairs at Route 404 and Five Mile Line Road and at Hard Road and Route 404. Right hand turn lanes will be put in and other improvements will be taking place to make those intersections friendlier for vehicular traffic. Design work should be completed by October, 2016 with the opening of construction bids in January, 2017. Construction should begin in the spring of 2017 and completed by late October, 2017. The acquisition of property required for the project has begun with the project cost to be around \$2.6 million.

New home construction continued in 2015 with 130 new homes being built in Webster compared to 91 that were built in 2014. Wendy's opened after many years of rumors along with Buffalo Wild Wings at Towne Center. The Webster Public Library construction started and should be done in 2016 with the main entrance and parking moving to the back of the plaza. This change should free up parking for patrons of the business in the front of the plaza. A Taco Bell restaurant is slated for construction next to Dairy Queen this coming year and other businesses are slated to open in Towne Center with Five Below being the first in half of the building space that Jo Ann Fabrics use to occupy.

The Town of Webster also received a grant for \$118,000 from New York State for design and engineering of waterfront improvements at Sandbar Park. The town, along with Matt Chatfield, Executive Director of the Webster Economic Development Alliance, will be starting on this project in the spring with resident's input to follow.

The 2016 Town and Village tax rate did go up around thirty five cents per thousand and the Town Board did break the imposed New York State Tax cap for 2016. This was not done without a lot of anguish on the part of the Town Board. We really wanted to stay under the tax cap but it was not 2% as advertised by New York State – it was .73%. This percentage only allowed the town to increase its levy by \$254,000. With healthcare going up 10% (final number) or more than the allowed levy increase by New York State and with the desire of the Town Board to maintain staffing at our police department and Highway department to continue to

provide security and highway maintenance for our residents, we decided to break the cap for 2016.

Long after we passed the 2016 budget I continued to second guess myself on breaking the tax cap on behalf of Webster residents. However, as I talk with other Supervisors at the other towns in the county, they are in the same position in 2016 for 2017 that Webster was just in. You can only cut so many employees and cut back on so much equipment before it starts to impact the quality of services. I now firmly believe that the Town Board absolutely did the right thing and we set up the Town of Webster to be in a better financial position going forward in to the future.

As we move forward in 2016, the town is getting ready to put forth a bond for security and maintenance of our buildings that are very old and need repairs. The Webster bond called SSAFE (Safety Sustainability And Facility Enhancements) will deal with needed the repairs and upgrades to outdated buildings and equipment.

The Town Hall building was built in 1958 with an addition put on in 1997. The building needs new windows and improvements to the Police Department. We also want to move the Town Hall Board Room to the Justice courts to provide more restrooms in Town Hall and the addition of more working space for our employees.

The Justice Court building needs a new roof at a cost \$350,000 plus new bathrooms for a building that was originally built 42 years ago in 1974. These restrooms do not meet today's handicap accessible laws and they really need new fixtures installed. The building of a new Town Board Room there for will be for the Town Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings to take place each week.

At the Highway Department, with the tax cap imposed on us by the state, it has made it impossible to set aside any money for any new equipment above and beyond the \$350,000 that we presently budget each year. The 33 year old grader has seen better days and we just cannot fix it every day just to get it on the road. The replacement of this 33 year old grader will cost \$325,000. The other piece of equipment that we desperately need to replace is one of our three sweepers that are 25 years old. The sweepers are out every day of the year from the first day snow allows us out to the first day of winter. The cost of this new sweeper is \$250,000; both of these equipment purchases are critical to the operation of the Highway Department.

Soon the Town Board will be making a presentation to the Webster residents on the other needs of the SSAFE as we progress forward with this bond issue. We will be presenting the scope of the work at a Town Board meeting with follow up presentations on Cable 12.

The Library is presently under construction with the owner of the plaza paying for the majority of the improvements. Soon the library entrance and all of the parking for the library patrons will be at the back of the present plaza. This will free up parking up front for the business there, and it is my understanding that Pet Savers will be opening in the plaza soon. The Library is also

gaining an additional 4,000 square feet of space for a senior lounge and other exciting outstanding additions to our beloved Library. We look forward to another grand opening in late spring or early summer.

The Webster Police Department was very busy in 2015, and I expect that 2016 will be as busy as crime just continues to soar with drugs as a big part of the crimes in Webster. In the 2016 budget the Town Board allowed for more officers to attend the Police Academy and two officers are there now for nine months of training. We took one transfer officer from the Monroe County Sheriff's Department and we are still looking for one more transfers to round out our department. Chief Rieger has done a great job in controlling overtime especially with a rash of injuries battering the department. Public safety has been, and continues to be, top priority for your Town Board to provide safety to all of our residents.

I must conclude by telling the Webster residents that you and I have one of the most dedicated and hard working groups of employees within Monroe County. Everyone with the town strives to do the best for the Webster residents even at times when Webster residents can become out of sorts over any number of projects. Our goal is to provide great services to you whether it is from the Police, Highway, Town Clerk, Library, Assessment Office, Parks and Recreation, Justice Courts, Building Department, Public Works Department, or the Supervisor's Office.

If you have any questions or concerns about what is happening in the Town of Webster, please email me at [supervisor@ci.webster.ny.us](mailto:supervisor@ci.webster.ny.us) , or call the office at 872-7068.