

Adirondack Underground

Town of Long Lake
Clark J. Seaman, Supervisor
Jan. 2012

I guess I'm going to have to begin this newsletter with an apology. I had every intention of getting a newsletter out before the close of last year but just kept running out of time. So, please accept this as an apology for being so tardy with my newsletter. With that said, here is the latest news that is fit to print.

This past year we saw a change in our local justice system. After many years of service to our community, Justice Eugene Darling decided to retire and did not run for reelection. He meticulously and diligently served the community for over 20 years and we wish him all the best in his retirement. We also want to welcome our newest Town Justice, Mitch Edelstein, who ran for the vacant Justice seat. Justice Edelstein hit the ground running and is already displaying his commitment to his new position.

Over the past year the Town Board enacted four local laws. They were:

Local Law No. 1 of 2011 To Provide for Cold War Veterans Exemption as Authorized by Chapter 655 of the Laws of New York for 2007. This law authorizes the Assessor to grant exemptions to qualified veterans of the Cold War era.
Local Law No. 2 of the year 2011 - Dog Licensing and Control Law of the Town of Long Lake, Hamilton County. This law transfers all dog licensing control from the Dept. of Agriculture and Markets to the Town Clerk.
Local Law No. 3 of the year 2011 - Override of the Tax Levy Limit Established in General Municipal Law 3-c for the Town of Long Lake, Hamilton County for Fiscal Year 2012. This law provides a mechanism for the Town Board to exceed the 2% property tax cap (see my comments below regarding the budget for more information).
Local Law No. 4 of the year 2011 - Wellhead and Public Water Supply Protection and Conservation Law of the Town of Long Lake. This law establishes an area of protection around municipal wells and other measures to protect our water supply system.

In my last letter I told you that we were anticipating reimbursement from FEMA for the expenses we incurred during the spring flooding. We worked with FEMA staff to complete the required paperwork and established that we had three projects for which we should be eligible for reimbursement. We have since been reimbursed for two of the three projects with the total to date being \$35,159.40. We anticipate additional funding for the third project which has yet to be completed.

Also in my previous letter I reported that the water department was going to concentrate on getting the Bissell Pit pump station operational and online. The good news is that our guys got all of their installation work done and we had a scheduled startup date for Nov. 16th. The bad news is some of the new equipment failed so we were unable to complete testing which was postponed until replacement parts could be installed. After several weeks of discussion between myself, our water superintendent, our engineers and the contractor and sub contractor supplying this equipment we met on Jan. 19th to develop a plan to rectify the problem and a course of action to prevent future failures of the same equipment. I am guardedly optimistic that we'll be starting up Bissell Pit pump station sometime in early Feb. Stay tuned. . . .

As I noted above, last year we passed a local law to override the 2% property tax cap. Our budget for 2012 DID NOT exceed the 2% cap, but was very close. The Board elected to pass the override law for two reasons. First, because we were so close to the limit, and second, quite frankly anytime we called the Comptroller's office with questions regarding the cap were told "our understanding of the interpretation of the law is . . ."; we were not confident that our budget would remain within the cap once Albany figured out how to implement it. Consequently we elected to be safe rather than sorry.

Again this year the Board elected to give no COLA to our employees or elected officials. Our combined Parks and Rec. budgets are down this year by \$20K. We were able to reduce Public Health by \$5K and Refuse Handling by \$20K, and our snowmobile trail lease for the Newcomb trail is now free saving us \$14K. However, on the flip side, we've started an earmarked fund for replacement of the Little Bus, we budgeted to repair the pavilion floor this summer, we increased all our budget lines for fuel and we have payments on bridge loans for our water project until our long term funding is available. And perhaps most significant, this year we had a 16% increase in health insurance, a 31% increase in retirement contributions and an 18% increase in workers compensation insurance, all of which worked to erode the savings we made elsewhere.

These last three appropriations are unfunded state mandates that must be addressed. As I told the Board and public during the budget process, a property tax cap without meaningful mandate relief is nothing more than

smoke and mirrors. If this trend continues, and we choose to stay within the cap, we'll have no choice but to consider reducing services.

Last fall the director of CAP-21 contacted Alex and me asking if we had anyone in the community that we would like to nominate for the "Good Neighbor – Tip of the Cap Award". We both immediately thought of Sam Bateman as the perfect nominee for this award. Alex submitted the following to nominate Sam and I'm pleased to report that Sam received the Tip of the Cap Award.

"The Town of Long Lake respectfully and with honor nominates Sam Bateman of Long Lake, NY for the Good Neighbor - Tip of the Cap Award.

Sam Bateman has been a pro-active member of the recently rejuvenated Long Lake Beautification Committee. In 2011 Sam worked tirelessly raising funds for a revitalization gardening project for the Doc and Janet Hosley Medical Building part of the Marylou Whitney Medical Complex in the Town of Long Lake. She received over \$1000 in donations and used the money to fund a complete overhaul of the garden. Sam started working before Memorial Day digging and planting to have the Medical Center Complex ready for the busy summer months. Sam redesigned the garden, digging up overgrown plants, and weeds. Sam purchased the plants, supervised town employees during the excavation process, hand placed the mulch, dug the holes for the new plants and overall re-tooled and reinvigorated the garden. Her efforts have made the garden a relaxing place for patients and can be considered a peaceful outdoor waiting room. Her care and attention to detail is evident. Sam created a rock garden, installed a donated hand crafted bench and finished off the project with a friendly iconic bear figurine to watch over the area.

Sam worked hours and hours on this project. Her tireless efforts and dedication are to be commended. Her drive to spearhead the project through design concept, fundraising finally to implementation is to be commended.

The Town of Long Lake wishes to thank Sam for setting the bar for excellence in volunteering and beautifying the community of Long Lake."

The Town Board recognized Sam at our Dec. 28th meeting for winning this award and for her dedication to our community.

Until my next newsletter, feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about our community.

And remember "Always do right - this will gratify some and astonish the rest."

Mark Twain

Sincerely,



Clark J. Seaman,
Town Supervisor

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