



"Where Life Keeps Getting Better"

Village of Webster

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Mayor:
John J. Cahill

Superintendent of Public Works:
James (Jake) Swingly

Village Clerk:
Josette Amalfi

Trustees: Darrell Byerts ~ Jude Lancy ~ Gerard Ippolito Jr. ~ Al Balcaen

Dear Village Taxpayer,

April 8, 2016

One community service that is mostly kept underground is our sewer system, not a popular topic perhaps, but an essential one. Historically, the cost of operating our Sewage Treatment Plant has been included in the Village's general budget, the basis of your property taxes. Now your Village Board is considering doing what every other municipality in Monroe County does – separating the sewage operation budget from the general budget and implementing a "Sewage Rental Fee."

Background – In the budget year 2014-15 the cost of the Treatment Plant was approximately \$720,000 or about 25% of our annual budget. In an effort to offset this expense and still keep the Village tax rate at \$2.22 per \$1,000 valuation, the Village has utilized significant amounts from its Unassigned Fund Balance averaging about \$253,000 a year since 2012. Following New York State regulations, the Village has returned to taxpayers any Fund Balance moneys exceeding State limits. Additionally, State Tax Cap requirements restrict the ability of municipalities to increase revenue to meet mounting expenses such as workers' compensation and a recent double digit increase in health care.

Why Now? – Besides the increased restraints and cost just mentioned, your Village faces an immediate need of \$230,000 to purchase badly needed new work vehicles. Some of our present Public Works equipment is 14 years old. Delaying purchase would affect efficiency and worker safety. Bonding the amount needed would add interest payments to an already strained budget, and using Unassigned Funds would only be an irresponsible delay with unforeseen costs and consequences.

Why a Separate Budget and What Exactly Is a "Sewage Rental Fee"? – All the other Monroe County municipalities have separate sewage treatment budgets in order to provide a dedicated revenue flow for an extensive and essential municipal service. A Sewage Rental Fee is an annual per unit fee based on an average household use of 60,000 gallons per year. There are separate adjustments for rental, industrial and commercial properties. The purpose of all this has been to provide for accountability, transparency, long term planning and reliable funding.

What Would It Cost? – The fee currently under discussion by your Village Board is a per unit household fee, with rental, commercial and industrial properties charged according to an established fee schedule. Including projected revenue from these properties, it is estimated that an annual household per unit fee of \$98 would fully cover the projected costs of operating our Treatment Plant with no need for any reserve funding.

What Happens Now? – Your Village Board has appropriated \$35,000 for a comprehensive study of the Sewage Treatment Plant during this budget year so that you, as taxpayers, will know what short and long term upgrades and associated costs will be. When this study is completed, the results, projected costs and at least two alternative plans will be shared with you.

A Public Hearing on this proposal will be held at the Village Board Meeting on Thursday, April 14, 2016 at 7:30pm in the Community Meeting Hall, 29 South Avenue.
We welcome your attendance and participation.

Sincerely,

John Cahill, Mayor