

Clarence Town Board gives taxpayers an early Christmas present.

The Clarence Town Board, led by Councilmen Peter DiCostanzo and Pat Casilio, have agreed on a tentative budget for 2014 that not only lowers the general fund tax rate, but adds extra help for the Parks and Summer Recreation programs. Councilmen Kolber and Geiger, armed with their calculators and well prepared with copious notes that they had taken over the past several meetings, were also key players in the battle to keep costs down while adding additional services for the Town of Clarence taxpayers. The budget is not final, as the all fire departments have yet to meet in an open forum. This will happen at the next Town Board meeting on Wednesday, October 23rd at 7:30 PM, and a public hearing on their budget requests will be the first item on the agenda. This is an open meeting, and all residents are urged to attend. The budget process starts in June and ends in November. While this may seem lengthy, it gives all the parties that may be affected by the budget a chance to speak out either in favor or against the proposed budget.

I started working on the budget during the months of August and September with the Director of Finance, Pam Cuvillo. We met with the various department heads to get an idea of where they would need additional help with their budgets in 2014. My budget was submitted to the Councilmen on September 30th, and they will have until October 31st to either add or delete as they see fit. On November 6th, 2013 at 7:30 PM there will be a public hearing on the budget in the Town Hall Auditorium. Residents will have a chance to comment on the budget, and after an open discussion, the Town Board will vote on the final budget. The budget, then complete, will go downtown on November 20th for filing with Erie County.

Residents of the Town of Clarence should be proud that they have a Town Board that constantly works to keep taxes low while adding extra services as needed. Over the next several years additional pressure will be placed on these elected officials to raise taxes in an effort to counter the rising cost of both pension and healthcare costs. You can rest easily, as I know they will rise to the challenge, cutting costs and seeking additional revenue streams in an effort to keep the tax rate in the Town of Clarence one of the lowest in Erie County.

Should you have any questions or positive comments, feel free to call, email dhartzell@clarence.ny.us or stop by. My door is always open!