



VILLAGE OF STEWART MANOR

120 COVERT AVENUE, STEWART MANOR, NEW YORK 11530

516-354-1800 FAX: 516-354-1825

MAYOR

MICHAEL ONORATO

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK-TREASURER

ROSEMARIE A. BIEHAYN

TRUSTEES

BARBARA ARCIERE

JOHN R. EGAN

WILLIAM GROGAN

M. CAROLE SCHAFENBERG

March 2019

Dear Resident,

I am writing to you to communicate several important issues as related to our Village.

Annual Budget

First and foremost, the Village Board will be holding a public hearing on Tuesday, April 9th, 2019 at 7 pm at Village Hall to discuss the proposed budget for the 2019 / 2020 fiscal year. The Village Board, along with the Village Clerk /Treasurer, have worked diligently to prepare this proposed budget. The State's tax cap this year was maintained at the 2% level. As in the past, it was the Board's goal and priority to fall under this year's cap and keep the tax levy as low as possible. Overall operating costs such as energy, labor, benefits and continuing service-related costs in general continue to present our greatest expense challenges.

Our Board has worked extremely hard this year to keep all expenses at a minimum while at the same time to continue to provide the many services to our Village that our residents expect.

A major highlight of this past year's work included a revitalized parking lot, replacement of sidewalk pavers and an enhanced seating area with an information kiosk on Covert Avenue. Going forward, we plan to focus on the aesthetics of our Village, where signs will be upgraded and a renovation to Angel Gardens is planned.

It is also important to note that as of this writing, the proposed New York State Budget does NOT include the normally expected state aid entitled: AIM or *Aid and Incentives to Municipalities*. This loss of \$43,260 in revenue to our Village presented a significant challenge to the budget process as we strove to hold our taxes as low as possible.

The financial status of our Village is one of the strongest on Long Island with another favorable audit. Our Moody's Investment Rating remains at Aa3. In addition, the Village's unrestricted fund balance is well above the recommended benchmark indicated by our auditors.

As such, the Board will present a budget with only a 1.18 percent tax levy increase for the fiscal year 2019 / 2020. The average tax increase for homes not in the special Library District is \$25.22. The budget for the 2019 / 2020 will be a total of \$2,486,053.84, a 1.24% decrease from last year.

Small Children's Pool

Despite some minimal masonry work and a new pool liner which were completed prior to the 2015 pool season, the concrete walls that support the small pool, due to wearing and age-related conditions, continue to exhibit deterioration. Engineering firms were consulted to assess the condition of the pool and it was determined that the pool needed to be replaced to protect the structural integrity. The pool has been in service since 1927, with no major structural renovations. With that said, an Engineering RFP was awarded to Cameron Engineering in July of 2018 to complete a feasibility study to assess the options related to the pool replacement. After the analysis of their findings, it was decided by the Board to proceed with a *like and kind* pool as that provided the most cost efficient alternative. As an additional enhancement, a small splash-pad for young children will also be installed adjacent to the small pool. At this point, the Board has ONLY initiated the normal legal process to authorize the issuance of a bond to finance this project. No money has been borrowed and no bonds have been issued to date. I wish to note that at this time we cannot estimate the effect on our tax levy, since the bidding process, which will detail the project costs, has not commenced yet. However, any anticipated tax increase due to this project is estimated to be extremely modest and would not be reflected until the 2020-21 Village Budget. It is anticipated that the construction bidding process will be completed in the early summer, with the actual renovation work to begin directly after this year's pool season. We do plan to convene a meeting to review the overall bond process and the pool design sometime in the summer.

LIRR 3rd Track Project

It has become apparent that the 3rd track project is now upon us. Although we are not geographically in the center of the construction, we will be exposed to various changes in traffic conditions. We have been communicating with the MTA on a regular basis, and have now been informed that the closing of the Covert Avenue crossing will take place on April 15th, with construction lasting approximately 6 months. The significant concern to our Village is the anticipated increased traffic through east-west cross streets between Covert Avenue and New Hyde Park Road (Salisbury and Chester Avenues), and the additional traffic on Covert Avenue. This is due to the detour route as defined by Tulip to Covert to Stewart Ave.

We have requested that signage at both Covert Avenue and New Hyde Park Road indicate that No Through Commercial Traffic will be allowed to flow through our Stewart Manor cross streets.

To this extent, any major road project that was in the planning stages by the Village's Capital Projects Committee will not be considered until the construction has been completed at both the Covert and New Hyde Park crossings. However, we do plan to initiate minor road repairs such as crack sealing and pot hole repair where conditions require. This funding will be expended from our existing Village fund balance. All Village services should not be affected and will remain in full effect throughout the project.

We will keep residents informed as events warrant.



Michael Onorato,
Mayor