



## February Calendar

- 3 & 18** Village Board Mtg.
- 11 & 25** Planning Bd. Mtg.
- 12** Zoning Board Mtg.
- 4** Bike/Ped Comm.
- 11** Rec. Advisory Bd.
- 12** Cons. Adv. Comm.
- 17** **Presidents' Day.**
- 18** **Tax Grievance Day**
- 19** Visual Envir. Board.
- 26** Trails Comm.

## In this issue

- Eaglefest 2
- Well Refurbishment 2
- Property Tax Components 2
- Fire Chiefs Installed 3
- Tax Grievance Day 3
- Prosecutor Appointed 3
- Art of Wine Pgm. 3
- 2014/2015 Tax Cap 3
- Winter in County Parks 3
- New Trustee 4
- Winter Break Pgms. 4
- Mobile Shredder 4
- Ski Discount Pgm. 4
- Got a Question? 4

## Budget Time Approaches

As the Village passes the midyear point of its Fiscal Year 2013/2014 budget, plans are underway to create a budget for 2014/2015. The Village's fiscal year runs from June 1 through May 31.

In late January, the mid-year budget report was provided to the Board. Mid-year reporting began in 2009 to help analyze trends in revenue and expenditures that may affect the following year's budget.

In addition to preparing the mid-year report, Village Treasurer Bullock has already asked department heads to provide preliminary budget figures for 2014/2015. Each department submits work sheets of back-up data both to support its current expenses and for all changes in its requests for the coming year.

Although the part of the budget process that receives the most attention is typically between the time the proposed budget is submitted by the Village Manager and the final budget adoption in late April, much of the work is done before that time. This year the Tentative Budget recommendation will be made on March 20 by Village Manager Zambrano in his capacity as Chief Financial Officer. Between then and its final adoption, the Board of Trustees will meet in multiple work sessions with each department to review their budgets.

Another step that must occur as part of the overall budget process is the establishment of the Final Tax Roll for the Village. Currently the Village Assessor is creating a 2014/2015 Tentative Tax Roll for assessed valuations of all property in the Village. This reflects the total amount of assessments for all properties in the Village and includes amounts set by NYS for franchises and the railroad as well as residences and businesses. Ad-

any property owners successfully challenge their property tax assessment on Grievance Day (see page 3).

While each department provides their expected day-to-day operating expenses and revenues for inclusion in the proposed budget, budget preparation time is also when the staff looks at larger projects and proposes a Five-year Capital Plan.

Projects included in the Capital budget tend to be unique expenditures that are not part of day to day operations. They are usually paid for by issuing bonds or bond anticipation notes rather than out of the operating budget of each department. For instance, there is usually an allocation in the Capital budget for both

general road improvements and sidewalk and curb improvements at \$100,000 each. Large equipment purchases such as a sanitation truck or a fire truck are included in the Capital budget. While these are paid for by bonding, the

interest on the bonds is part of the General Fund and becomes part of the property tax calculation. Similarly, large Water infrastructure projects and Sewer projects are included in the Capital budgets for those funds, respectively. The interest owed for those projects is paid for through water and sewer bills.

During the budget preparation period, projections are made on expected non-property tax revenues such as sales and mortgage taxes, lease payments, parking lot permits, fees and fines. The difference between the total of these non-property tax income sources and the projected expenditures is the amount that must be made up by Village property taxes. The amount to be raised by taxes is divided by the total assessed valuation of properties to determine the tax rate.



## **Eaglefest Returns**

What can you do each day to have a positive impact on wildlife? Attending the 10th Annual Eaglefest event will help you find out. All the exhibits, tables and presentations will center around this theme.



Sponsored by the Teatown Lake Reservation, Eaglefest headquarters will be in heated tents at Croton Point Park on Saturday, February 8, 9am to 4pm.

Full information on the hourly shows in the Eaglet and Eagle theaters, walks, bus excursions, eagle viewing sites, and exhibitors can be found at [www.teatown.org](http://www.teatown.org). Tickets are available online at the website. This year the event tickets include all activities and entrance to the shows on a first come/first served basis (bus trip excluded).

The snow date is Sunday, February 9. Join the fun!

## **Property Tax Components?**

Property taxes are collected at different times of the year by a variety of taxing entities. If your tax money is held in an escrow account you may not know exactly when it is paid and to whom.

Village property owners pay property taxes to 4 entities - the School District, Village, Town and County. The amount of your School, Town and County tax bill is based on the Town of Cortlandt's assessment of your property value. Your Village tax bill is based on the Village's assessment of your property. Village taxes are the second largest component of your annual property taxes; school taxes are first and the County and Town taxes represent smaller portions of your total annual property taxes.

These taxes are also paid at different times. Village taxes are payable by June 30 each year and cover the period of June 1 to May 31. School taxes are paid twice/year with the first half payable by Sept. 30 and the second payable by January 31. Town and County Taxes are payable by April 30th and cover the period of April 1 to March 31. School, Town and County taxes are paid to the Town of Cortlandt Tax Receiver while Village taxes are paid to the Village of Croton-on-

## **Well Refurbishment Underway**

A project to refurbish the wells and pumps in the Village's well fields is currently under way. The Village currently has three active wells known as Wells 1, 3 and 4. (Well 3 is the oldest being drilled in 1968. Their age does not reflect their well number. Well 2 was previously abandoned.) Over time, the pumping capacity of the three active wells has declined. For example, Well 1, when installed in 1995, had a capacity of 600 gallons per minute (gpm) and now is between 350-400 gpm. A fifth well was drilled approximately two years ago in hopes of increasing the Village's overall supply capacity but has not yet been put online since additional development and testing is required.



**Motor removal**

During the summer months when the water demand is highest, Wells 1, 3 and 4 are in constant operation. The current work was planned for the months when demand is lower. The plans and specifications for the current well refurbishment work were developed by the Village Engineer's office.

Wear and tear on pumps and motors, infiltration of silt and build up of corrosion on the drop pipe all contribute to reducing a well's efficiency. The current project pulls the pumps out of the ground allowing them to be examined and cleaned and the pump motor itself can undergo maintenance to increase its longevity.

New wear rings and bearings will be installed in the pumps and rusty sections of drop pipe will be replaced. The entire well screen and gravel pack will be cleaned using a technique that employs carbon dioxide (CO2) being injected under high pressure into the well and aquifer. Each well will undergo this process, one by one, during the coming months. It is expected that newly refurbished wells and pumps will operate more efficiently and will pump water at a greater capacity than is currently possible.

When work on Well 1 refurbishment is completed, Wells 3 and 4 will undergo the same process. The well refurbishment work was approved as part of the Capital Budget for FY 2013/2014 for the Water Fund.



**Well pump with 6 pump stages being removed**



**Reminder!**

**Village Offices are closed Monday, February 17 for Presidents Day!**



## **Fire Chiefs Installation**

The Croton Fire Department installed its new chiefs at a ceremony on January 6 at Harmon Fire House. William Vlad was installed as the new Chief, with Matt Mansfield as 1st Ass't. Chief and Chris Colombo as 2nd Ass't. Chief.

Fire Chiefs usually serve for two years moving up the ranks from 2nd Ass't. Chief to 1st Ass't. Chief to Chief. The immediate past Chief, John Munson, became a Deputy Chief joining other past Chiefs.



**I to r, Matt Mansfield,  
William Vlad, Chris  
Colombo**

## **Village Prosecutor Appointed**

The Village Board concurred with Mayor Wiegman's appointment of Casey Raskob as Village Prosecutor on January 6. The Village Prosecutor represents the Village in cases that come before the Village Justice Court. The position is appointed annually by the Mayor and Board of Trustees. The majority of the cases in front of the Village Court are Vehicle and Traffic violations, an area where Mr. Raskob's expertise is recognized state-wide. Violations of the Village Code are also prosecuted in Village Court. Mr. Raskob previously served as Trustee and was re-elected in November 2013.

Village Justice Court meets in the Municipal Building Court Room every Wednesday. The Prosecutor position has an annual stipend of \$24,555.

## **2014/2015 Tax Cap**

The 2014/2015 Village Budget is the third one to be undertaken since the NYS Tax Cap was set in place. The Tax Cap law set the maximum tax levy at the lesser of 2% or the Cost of Living increase as established by the NYS Comptroller. Exceeding the Tax Cap can result in a penalty in future years for a municipality unless the local board takes the proactive step of passing legislation to allow it to be overridden which was done in Croton. Although a local Tax Override law was passed in Croton in each of these years, Village budgets have stayed under the mandated cap.

While the first two years of the NYS Tax Cap law set the rate at 2%, for the 2014/2015 year, NYS Comptroller DiNapoli has set the cap at 1.45%. Based on last year's tax levy, the Village would be allowed to increase its levy this year by \$157,695. (There are exemptions from this limit for the portion of some mandated con-

## **Tax Grievance Day - February 18**

Every year, as required by law, the Village Board of Trustees meets as the Board of Assessors. In this capacity they review property owner's requests for adjustments to their property assessments. This year Tax Grievance Day is set for Tuesday, February 18 from 4 pm to 8 pm at the Municipal Building. A finalized Tax Assessment Roll for Village properties must be in place prior to the budget adoption for the 2014/2015 Village Budget.

Village property owners, who believe their current assessment is not accurate, may submit documentation to support their request for an adjustment of their assessment to the Village's Tax Assessor and the Board. Information on what documentation is required can be obtained from the Assessor, Joe Sperber, located in the Engineering Office in the Municipal Building, or by calling 271-4783. Applications must be completed and filed with the Village Assessor by 4 pm on February 18.

Only Village assessments are considered. Requests for adjustments to the Town assessment (a separate taxing entity) must be handled by the Town of Cortlandt in a separate proceeding.

To understand what your residential property assessment means in terms of market value, divide the property's assessment value by the Residential Assessment Ratio (RAR). (The RAR is determined by the NYS Office of Real Property Tax Services.) This calculation will yield the market value. For example, a property assessed at \$15,000, with this year's RAR of .0423, will yield a market value of \$354,609. Performing this calculation may help you decide whether to file a grievance to change your assessment.

## **Art of Wine Program**

On Fri., February 28, 7:30 - 9:00 pm at the Municipal Building, you can taste, identify and enjoy different wines with wine expert Patrice Davidson. Explore the wine making process, growing regions and varietals. Sample wines will be paired with light snacks. Register by Feb. 21. Over 21 years only. \$32res./\$38 nonres.



## **Winter Sports in County Parks**

Weather permitting, you may want to take advantage of ice skating, sledding and cross-country skiing in Westchester County Parks. You must have your own equipment but admission and parking are free seven days a week during daylight hours only.

Parks and activities close to Croton include ice skating at Blue Mountain Reservation on Welcher Ave. in Peekskill; look for the 'Skating Today' sign to know it is okay. Cross country skiing is also at Blue Mtn. Reservation as well as Croton Gorge Park on Route 129, Croton Point Park, and Kitchawan Preserve in Yorktown. Sledding is also permitted at Croton Gorge Park.



## Published for the Residents of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson

Leo A. W. Wiegman, Mayor; Kevin Davis, Trustee; Ann H. Gallelli, Trustee; Andrew Levitt, Trustee; Maria Slippen, Trustee

Abraham J. Zambrano, Village Manager

Stanley H. Kellerhouse Municipal Building, One Van Wyck Street

(914) 271-4781-2, [www.crotononhudson-ny.gov](http://www.crotononhudson-ny.gov)

## Got a Question?



**Many local municipalities are starting to use social media to enable them to communicate more effectively with a larger number of their residents. Is Croton considering doing this?**

Yes, Croton is looking at using social media as another way of communicating. Recently the Village established a Facebook page. You can check it out by going to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and searching Crotongov. Comments are being posted to the page by Village departments and committees. Crotongov is just getting under way so check it out and "Like" us.

facebook 

### Mobile Shredder Day

The County's Mobile Shredder will be at Yorktown Town Hall, 363 Underhill Ave., on Friday, Feb. 7 from 9am to 12 noon. Residents may bring up to four file-size boxes of confidential papers (clips and covers removed). No papers from businesses, institutions or schools will be accepted. No other recycling will occur at this site that day.

### Ski Discount Program

The Recreation Dept. offers discounted ski tickets in cooperation with the NYS Recreation & Park Society. No minimum purchase of tickets is required but tickets are nonrefundable.



Ski Area	Gate Price	Rec. Price
Bromley	\$49 - midweek	\$34
	\$68 - weekend	\$57
Hunter Mtn.	\$62 - midweek	\$43
	\$72 - weekend	\$54
Killington	\$89 - any day	\$72
Windham	\$58 - midweek	\$46
	\$75 - weekend	\$57

### Slippen Named Trustee

Maria Slippen was appointed as Village Trustee by Mayor Wiegman at the Village Board January 6 meeting. Trustee Slippen was named following the resignation of Casey Raskob who was appointed to the Village Prosecutor position at the same meeting.



l to r, Maria Slippen, Kevin Davis, Leo Wiegman, Andrew Levitt, Ann Gallelli

At the time of her appointment, Ms. Slippen was co-President of the CET PTSA, a member of the Arboretum Board, the Recreation Advisory Committee, Croton Caring Committee and a member of the Town of Cortlandt Comprehensive Plan Committee.

Trustee Slippen's term will extend through November 2014 when the position will be subject to election for a subsequent one-year term.

### Winter Break Recreation Programs

The Recreation Dept. is offering two exciting programs during the school winter break week. Both are appropriate for students in Grades 1 - 3. Each program runs from 9 am to 3 pm and the fees for each are \$90 res./\$110 nonres.

**Junior Explorers** provides an introduction to some of the most unique areas of science for students in grades 1 to 3. Participants will see how illusion and reality meet and test out the ideas that make your favorite toys and tricks work. A fun day filled with discovery! The program is on Tuesday, Feb. 18 and the registration deadline is Feb. 11.



**Phreaky Physics.** Is your energy potential or kinetic? Find out as you explore centrifugal force & gyroscopes. Junior engineers will experiment with axles, pulleys, levers, gears and more! The program is on Thursday, Feb. 20 and the registration deadline is February 13.



Participants should bring a non-perishable lunch as no one will be permitted to leave for lunch.