

# VILLAGE VOICES

Number 100

Editor, Teri Barown, Village Clerk

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## News from the Mayor's Office Tentative Budget

The 2016-17 tentative budget has been completed. Overall, next year's budget is lower, \$5,265,863 v \$5,498,729. Some highlights: \$400,000 in paid parking revenue, major maintenance on the porch of 22 Main St., six new garage doors for our Fire Hall and new rail fences for Westridge, Chestnut and Walnut. Look for improvements at Fairy Spring and Doubleday Field.

Paving this year will occur on Chestnut (from Susquehanna to W. Beaver), Glen (from Grove to Chestnut), Grove (from Spring to Glen) and Pioneer from Beaver to Church. Pioneer from Church to Lake is our next major overhaul. We're saving money in reserves for new water, sewer and street infrastructure. In addition, the next phase of our Main St. project should go out to bid in the first part of 2017.

While revenue production gets nearly all the attention, the Board of Trustees and I are always looking for savings and have consistently analyzed the efficiency and cost of the village government, resulting in fewer full time employees and smaller village government. We take our responsibility for taxpayer dollars very seriously.

While this seems like a lot of information, there's so much more. The full budget is online at the [www.cooperstownny.org](http://www.cooperstownny.org).

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I'm always amazed at the volunteer ethos in our village. We have 13 village committees and boards (fewer than in recent years) and nearly all of them are full. However, we are in need of a handful of volunteers – one member for Parks Board, 2 alternate members for Planning Board and one alternate member for the ZBA. If interested, please call the office at 547-2411. Thank you all for your service to our wonderful village. – Jeff Katz, Mayor

## Incentives for Commercial Projects

The Village of Cooperstown is pleased to announce two property tax abatement programs for commercial and mixed-use buildings. These programs do not affect current tax assessments, but they do allow for the gradual phase-in of increased value when improvements are made. As a result, increases in property taxes are incurred

more slowly, allowing building owners to better prepare and recoup some of their costs without a dramatic spike in assessed value.

The first program provides an incentive to make improvements to existing commercial buildings or for new commercial construction. Approved renovations or new construction by businesses may be eligible for a 50 percent exemption of real property taxes on all improvements for the first year. After the first year, assessed value would be increased by 5 percent per year until the eleventh year, when the property becomes fully taxed.

The second program is for the conversion of nonresidential real property to mixed-use property, when the cost exceeds \$10,000. Often this means the conversion of underutilized commercial upper floors to apartments. For the first eight years, increased assessed tax value as a result of an approved conversion would be 100 percent abated. In years 9 to 12, the new assessed value would be phased in, increasing 20 percent per year.

To take advantage of either of these programs, contact Village assessor Al Keck at 547-6057.

Additionally, businesses can qualify for both state and federal historic preservation income tax credits. Owners of income-producing real properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including those contributing in our Glimmerglass Historic District, may be eligible for a 20% federal income tax credit. The work performed (both interior and exterior) must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and be approved by the National Park Service. Owners who qualify for the federal credit can also take advantage of a 20% state income tax credit. For more information, contact the State Historic Preservation Office at (518) 237-8643 or Otsego 2000 at 547-8881.

## Want Money for Repairing your Historic Home

If you live in the Village of Cooperstown and your house was built before 1949, you might qualify for a state income tax credit for work on your home. New York State offers income tax credits for homeowners in qualifying census tracts (of which ours is one) who do more than \$5,000 of approved work on their historic house. At least 5% must be spent on the exterior of the home, and all work must

be approved by the State Historic Preservation Office before it begins. The tax credit is equal to 20% of approved qualifying expenses up to \$50,000. For more information, contact the State Historic Preservation Office at (518) 237-8643 or Otsego 2000 at 547-8881.

### ***Taking it to the Street***

In 2013 the Village of Cooperstown first began permitting outdoor eating areas. We are happy to see that so many local eateries have been able to take advantage of outdoor dining. It provides the perfect opportunity for locals and tourists to enjoy great food and a beautiful streetscape in an increasingly accessible environment.

This summer we are adding to the mix by promoting sidewalk vending in the business district on Tuesday evenings. Businesses that wish to participate should contact the Village Clerk Teri Barown at 547-2411 or [vcooperstown@stny.rr.com](mailto:vcooperstown@stny.rr.com) for a permit application. Fees will be waived this inaugural year.

In a joint effort of the Village of Cooperstown and the Cooperstown Area Chamber of Commerce, this summer will also initiate "Music on Main" with musicians performing in Pioneer Park. Those interested in performing should contact the Chamber of Commerce at 547-9983 or [hanna@cooperstownchamber.org](mailto:hanna@cooperstownchamber.org) to reserve dates and times.

### ***Rain Gardens***

From 2013 to 2015, the Village of Cooperstown installed 37 rain gardens with 12 varieties of trees on Main Street, as well as permeable pavers adjacent to the concrete sidewalk and porous asphalt along the curb to improve water quality in Otsego Lake and throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Rainwater and snowmelt can carry sediment and pollutants from Village streets and sidewalks into Otsego Lake, the Susquehanna River, and eventually the Chesapeake Bay. To curb this process, permeable pavers, porous asphalt, and rain gardens capture rainwater, allowing it to slowly soak into the ground. The soil naturally filters the water, ridding it of contaminants before it reaches the water table.

As a result of their function, rain gardens also collect trash. You can improve the appearance of Main Street by making sure all trash is deposited in a trash can and recyclable materials are placed in the blue recycling containers. If you want to do more, contact Streets Committee chair Cindy Falk at [cynthia.g.falk@gmail.com](mailto:cynthia.g.falk@gmail.com) to learn more about volunteer opportunities.

We encourage everyone to check out our rain gardens on Main Street and enjoy the new sign explaining how they work in front of the General Store, just across the street from Hoffman Lane. Our project was funded in part of the Environmental Facilities Corporation of New York State because of its storm water benefits.

### ***Medical Drop Box at Cooperstown Police Dept.***

Your home medicine cabinet may contain unused prescriptions. These drugs can pose health hazards if they get into the wrong hands or are improperly disposed of in the garbage or by flushing down the toilet. The Cooperstown Police Dept. now has a medical drop box for proper disposal of unused prescriptions. Please contact the PD at 547-2500 to make an appointment to bring in your unused, unwanted prescriptions.

### ***Downtown Parking Permits***

Downtown parking permits provide an alternative to using Pay and Display machines for parking in the paid parking area on Main, Pioneer, Chestnut, and Fair Streets. Anyone—locals and tourists—can buy a permit. By law, permits are not limited to village residents. Permit holders can park for up to two hours daily in an on-street paid parking space without purchasing a ticket from a Pay and Display machine. After the first two hours, additional time can be purchased at a machine.

The same permit can be used to park in the permit-only Fowler Way parking lot (located behind the batting cages, formerly the Chestnut Street lot) if an all-day option is needed. Please remember that the purchase and display of a parking permit does not guarantee a parking space.

This year parking permits can be purchased in person from the Village Clerk's office at 22 Main Street or by mail. Applications can be accessed on the village website [www.cooperstownny.org](http://www.cooperstownny.org) or at the Clerk's office. A completed application must be accompanied by a copy of the vehicle's registration and appropriate fee, payable by cash or check. Credit cards can be accepted at the Village office. The cost is \$25.00 for the first permit, \$15 for additional permits at the same address.

### ***Annual Drinking Water Quality Report***

The Village of Cooperstown has prepared its annual Drinking Water Quality Report to comply with State regulations. The purpose of the report is to raise your understanding of drinking water and awareness of the need to protect our drinking water sources.

Last year, your tap water met all State drinking water health standards. You may access a complete report at the Village website [www.cooperstownny.org](http://www.cooperstownny.org), pick up a copy at the

Village Office, 22 Main Street, or call 607-547-2411 to request a copy be mailed to you. The report will provide you with an overview of last year's water quality. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to State standards.

### Dog Park Update

On last year's Village Parks survey compiled by the Parks Board, there were a few responses in support of creating a dog park. So in order to access just how much interest actually exists for such a project Village residents were asked in the February issue of Village Voices to shoot us an email indicating their interest.

Seven emails were received. One email did not express an interest in a dog park but wanted to provide some information on one. One email felt a dog park should not be a Village priority, and instead we should focus on sidewalks. The remaining five emails expressed varying degrees of support for a dog park.

The responses were discussed at the April Parks Board meeting and it was the consensus of the board that spending time and money to develop a dog park which did not have widespread support, would not be a Parks Board focus at the present time. So we will table the project for this year but if there is additional interest and funding it may be considered in the future.

### Village Parks

Looking for an inexpensive family outing? Fairy Spring and Three Mile Point parks are free for Village residents. Both parks will open for weekends beginning Saturday, May 28<sup>th</sup>. On Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> the weekend prior to high school graduation, the parks will be open seven days a week. Three Mile Point Park opens at 10 AM and Fairy Spring Park opens at 11 AM both remain open until dusk with swimming as staffing permits. *(The staff works diligently to ensure lifeguards are on duty at both parks whenever possible however there are times when one or both parks shut down the swimming areas due to lack of staff.)*

Village residents may get their free park pass at either park or at the Village Office with just their identification which includes their village address. This pass will allow you and your immediate family (i.e. 2 adults and their children, living within the same household), access to either Fairy Spring or Three Mile Point Park ***(If your family chooses to bring guests they will either need to purchase their own pass or pay \$5.00 per person admission price at the park.)***

To ensure a family friendly environment and the safety of all patrons we remind you:

- Alcoholic beverages are not permitted;

- Charcoal grills and picnic tables are available for your enjoyment;
- Pavilions are available on a first come first serve basis unless rented to a group or organization;
- To carry out whatever you bring in (i.e. food, garbage, bottles, cans, etc.);
- Parking is limited, please car pool if possible

### Sign Law Info for Businesses

With Spring's arrival, many businesses — both existing and new — have expressed an interest in erecting a new, or changing a current, outdoor sign. The Village's Sign Law is designed to protect the Village's historic structures, streetscapes, neighborhoods and scenic views; support merchants in their communications and advertising; and assure that signs do not create a hazard to pedestrians and motorists.

As a reminder, signs may not be erected, moved, or altered (with some exceptions for exempt and temporary signs as specified in the Sign Law) unless the Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) has issued a permit following the Planning Board's approval.

A sign permit application, which can be obtained at the Village Office at 22 Main Street, asks for basic information (name, address, etc.) about the applicant and property owner (if different than the applicant), the property's current use (such as a retail store, home occupation, or tourist accommodation, etc.), and a description of the proposed sign and location. So that the Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO) and Planning Board can review the proposed sign for compatibility and safety, an application must also include drawings of the proposed sign, color photos of the property, as well as some additional information described in the application.

Some types of signs, such as A-frames and sandwich boards, are not permitted in the business or commercial districts because they can be easily moved or blown by the wind and create a hazardous condition.

Anyone wishing to apply for a sign permit is encouraged to contact Sheila Serbay, the Village's ZEO, at her 22 Main Street office. Sheila will explain the application process and assist in the preparation of applications.

### Adopt a Hydrant and Grate Keepers

This winter Village residents and business owners had the opportunity to adopt a fire hydrant, keeping it free of snow to ensure quick access in the event

of an emergency. We are happy to report that more than 50 hydrants have been adopted to date.

On March 20, the first day of spring, we announcement the second phase of the project: "Grate Keepers." Adopters assume the task of keeping storm drain grates free of debris, especially when rain or snow is forecast, and notifying the Village of any more serious problems.

To join the team and adopt a fire hydrant or storm drain contact Rich McCaffery by email at [ctownadoptahydrantdrain@gmail.com](mailto:ctownadoptahydrantdrain@gmail.com) or call 547-5256. Maps with numbered hydrants and drains to adopt is available on the Village website at <http://cooperstownny.org/volunteers/>. Your time and energy has the potential to benefit you and your neighbors in an emergency.

### **Trolley Passes**

The trolley season will soon be underway. Season trolley passes are a bargain and great way for local residents and employees to find transportation around Cooperstown.

The trolleys run daily, from 8:30 AM – 9 PM beginning Saturday, May 28th. Season passes are \$35 for a family; \$20 for an adult; \$15 for a senior citizen and \$10 for students under 18 years old. You can purchase season passes at the Village Office, or on the trolleys.

### **Advertising Opportunities**

The Village of Cooperstown provides advertising opportunities at Doubleday Field, on its trolleys, and on the new trolley app. For more information, contact Village Clerk Teri Barown at 547-2411 or [vcooperstown@stny.rr.com](mailto:vcooperstown@stny.rr.com).

### **Repairs to Village Hall Front Entrance**

You may remember a photo in the press several years ago of Senator Seward handing over a giant check for \$100,000 for repairs of the Village Hall. Well, thanks to diligent follow-up by Village Clerk, Teri Barown, the real money finally arrived in the Village bank account this March. The money will be used for long needed repairs to the front porch, including replacing several column bases, wooden steps, and other woodwork, as well as scraping and repainting all of the woodwork.

This will require temporary closure of the front entrance. The building will remain open via the Fair Street entrance and all usual activities other than gatherings on the porch will continue. Signs will be posted when the front entrance is not available. – Lou Allstadt, Chair, Buildings Committee

### **What You Need to Know About the Pickup Procedures for Compostable Waste & Brush**

- Compostable yard waste and brush will be picked up separately during the growing season, on the last Thursday of each month, starting at 7 AM.
  - Be sure your compostable waste is at curb side no later than 7 AM, on the last Thursday of each month. We will travel each street once per month but should we not be able to reach the entire village in one day we will continue pickup on the following day.
  - There will be two pickups, one for soft green waste and a second for brush.
- Place all soft compost-able green waste (lawn clippings, leaves, etc.) into easily dumped hard containers (garbage cans, large buckets, etc) or biodegradable bags.
  - Do not use plastic bags or other non-compostable one time use containers.
  - Do not assume we can lift containers that you cannot lift. If a container is too heavy to be lifted it will be left full at the curb.
- Keep all limbs and tree wood separate from the smaller compost-able items.
  - Do not place brush in containers just place them on the tree lawn.
  - Root balls, stumps and large tree limbs will not be picked up, only materials which can be chipped in our small chipper.
- Place materials to be picked up by the Village crew in the grass header between the curb and sidewalk.
  - Keep brush and soft green waste separate and in the appropriate containers.
  - Do not block sidewalks or fire hydrants.
- Dispose of construction debris including processed wood through your garbage hauler or the transfer station.
- Keep litter and other garbage out of composting materials.
- For the final clean up in the fall and initial clean up in the spring, leaves and other soft green waste does not need to be bagged or placed in dump-able containers.
  - Leave soft green waste on the tree lawn and they will be picked up with the leaf vacuum.
  - Make sure there are no stone, bricks, tree branches, or other hard objects mixed into the soft green waste.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the pickup and disposal of yard debris please contact Mitchell Hotaling, Street Superintendent at 547-5521.

### **Upcoming Events**

May 21—Village-wide Yard Sale Day  
May 21—Spring Fling on Railroad Avenue  
May 28—Hall of Fame Classic  
May 30—Canoe Regatta