Town of Penfield Supervisor's Column
July 13, 2017

The Town of Penfield was represented at the 27th annual JP Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge this week as one of 305 participating companies and agencies. This annual event raises funds for not-for-profit organizations in the Rochester-Monroe County Area. This year, the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council supported two projects: the Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection and Catholic Family Center Adult Mentoring Program. I would like to recognize our team captain Lisa Grosser of the Town Clerk’s Office; Sarah Bowers – Penfield Public Library; Ken Kashman – DPW (Highway); and Amy Steklof – Town Clerk. Great job team and congratulations on your participation in the name of “wellness” for yourselves personally and for representing our town government!

If you have been by Rothfuss Park over the last few days you are starting to see the JACK Foundation Playground taking shape as BEAR Playgrounds has started installation of the swing set. Over the next several weeks construction will continue on this wonderful new asset in the Penfield Community that will serve our youngest residents for many years to come. Please go to www.jack-foundation.org to learn more about The JACK Foundation and to follow the progress of the construction and playground dedication later this summer.

Over the last six to eight weeks there have been a number of retirements in the town’s Building and Zoning Department. It has been challenging to fill the positions, hence we have gotten behind in building permits and code enforcement. We were able to bring back some retirees part-time to assist and have recently extended employment offers to several new people who we hope can start in the next few weeks. I want to apologize for delays in turnaround time for permits and for following up on code enforcement issues. Full staffing should be in place on or before month’s end so we can get back to a normal processing time for permits and code enforcement violations. Thank you for your patience and understanding on this matter.

All counties, towns, and villages are working on the most recent “original” directive issued from the governor’s office entitled “shared services,” which is to be completed by August 1. A few years ago the same initiative was called the “local government tax freeze efficiency plan” intended to make local government more efficient in the eyes of the governor! Those plans, submitted two years ago, were never accepted or utilized. I question if they were ever even reviewed by Albany—and now here we are developing a new plan—really!

For decades, local governments in our area have done an outstanding job of sharing services with one another countywide. We regularly share equipment, personnel, materials, and more. As I have said many times before in this column, the real problem is in Albany with their ongoing lay-ons, unfunded mandates, inefficiencies, and outdated policies and practices. I might suggest the governor, working with the legislature, clean up their house before they come in to try and clean up ours. In fact, we would be better served, and the governor would be further ahead, to assemble a cross-section of local government officials from across the state to identify “shared services” that could be implemented in
Albany that would yield greater savings for the rest of the state. However, we will never see this happen as it would expose state government for what is really is...bloated and inefficient!

We have started the town’s 2018 budget cycle. Between now and September 6, when the Finance Director and I are to share the “tentative budget” with the town board, I will cover milestones of the process in my column to share how plans are shaping up for next year.

Until next week, be well and be safe. Remember to take in one of the great shows in the Penfield Amphitheater & Kiwanis Stage summer concert series!

Tony

supervisor@penfield.org