Heads-up: the Pen-Rec Fall 2016 brochure will be hitting your mailbox any day. This brochure is filled with hundreds of programs offered from now until year-end. You can also view the brochure online right now at www.penfieldrec.org. Registration begins Tuesday, September 6. Popular programs fill up quickly, so early register early!

Registering online is quick and easy. If you are new to the town or have not registered online in the past go to www.penfieldrec.org to create an account in WebTrac. Click “registration” then “need an account.” After the form is submitted to the Recreation Office a user name and password will be issued to your household. You will use that information to select classes, place them in your shopping cart, and check out on our secure site using Visa, MasterCard or Discover. You will receive a printable receipt for your records.

We look forward to supporting you and your family with our vast array of program offerings. If you would like to suggest a program you do not see offered, please contact our Recreation Department at 340-8655 to speak with one of our team members. All requests are reviewed for consideration — it is how we keep our programs fresh and current.

I had the honor of presenting a certificate of recognition last week to Edward Barton who celebrated his 100th birthday on August 6th. Ed resides at Legacy at Willow Pond. Born in Salinas, Colorado he taught himself electronics from a book titled The Boy Mechanic and earned money fixing everything from radios to washing machines, including setting up and maintaining sound systems for a large traveling circus. Ed served in the US Navy in the South Pacific and achieved the rank of chief petty officer. After the war he traveled the world working at Trans World Airlines.

Starting in the 1950s Ed worked as an electrical engineer for Delco and Xerox, earning several patents for his inventions. He enjoyed ham radio as a hobby and after retirement volunteered on Habitat homes, did taxes for free for seniors, performed all of his own car and HVAC maintenance, and helped fine-tune the loudspeakers for the Hill Cumorah pageant. Happy Birthday Ed!

As I indicated last week, I will provide a snapshot update of the 2017 budget process in the coming weeks leading up to the release of the Tentative Budget on September 7, 2016. As you can imagine, shrinking revenue and increasing costs continue to challenge us in the preparation of the annual budget. Ever-increasing costs and mandates from New York State put the squeeze on local governments and their ability to provide services to residents. It will be no different this year.

Let’s get started. As most of you are aware based on your own family budgets, the cost of health care continues to be a challenge with rates estimated to be up 10 to 12 percent again this year. We continue our membership with a 15-community health care consortium which has helped to keep these costs from rising even higher.

Each year we are faced with updating and replacing various pieces of equipment to help keep our fleet of snowplows reasonably current and reliable. Our DPW fleet includes 20 heavy-duty trucks which are used every day for hauling materials; in winter months they take on the added role of plowing roads and spreading salt. We typically plan to get a minimum 12 to 15 years of service from these trucks. Half our fleet is now ten-plus years old and a few vehicles are less than three years old.

Here’s an example to give you a sense of the magnitude of budgeting to replace just one heavy-duty snow plow at a current cost of $250,000. Penfield’s current town tax rate is $2.69 per $1,000 of assessed valuation. Every $25,000 of a roughly $18 M budget equates to one-cent of the $2.69 rate. Therefore, from a simple math standpoint, purchasing one new plow truck would represent ten cents of the tax rate. Obviously, every time we need to replace heavy equipment we can’t “just go buy a truck” and hike the tax rate up by ten cents — that would be irresponsible and costly. Instead, we have to plan appropriately to offset the cost of a truck and other major equipment against other operational and service needs.
This is just one example of the give and take we explore while balancing public safety, reliability, and costs. Line items within the budget change from year-to-year while we work to maintain services and a steady tax structure.

Next week I will provide an overview of the current debt we carry from improvements to buildings and facilities. Debt has an impact on both tax rate and credit rating.

Important Dates and Events in History: August 14, 1945 – Japan surrenders “unofficially” ending World War II; August 15, 1914 – The Panama Canal opens for business; and August 24, 1814 – The British set fire to Washington, D.C.

Until next...the rain was a welcome visitor last weekend, here is hoping we receive a bit more!

Tony

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