



From the Desk of

Jack Conway

East Greenbush Town Supervisor

Supervisor's Report – April 1, 2016

On April 13, 2016 the East Greenbush Town Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed sewer user rate increase at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall. Comprehensive information on the proposed rate increase is available on the Town's website, www.eastgreenbush.org. We hope residents will come to the hearing and share their views.

The rate increase follows a series of irresponsible Town Board decisions made by several administrations. In 2008 the Town entered into a service agreement with the Rensselaer County Water and Sewer Authority (RCWSA) to borrow \$6.55 million for sewers at 5.1% interest requiring an annual debt service payment of \$400,000/year until 2048. Efforts to refinance that debt are failing because the Town doesn't have adequate documentation of how the money was used. In 2013 we undertook a \$15.6 million upgrade to our Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). After closing on long term financing in August 2016, the town will owe another \$700,000/year for 30 years. **No arrangements were made to pay these bills.** The sewer user rates haven't been increased since 2011 even though we knew the WWTP bill would come due this year.

The approval and lack of oversight for the RCWSA service agreement, and the inaction of previous Town Board members to adequately address the WWTP financing has led to the unavoidable and unpleasant necessity to increase revenue. It has been suggested that we should generate the revenue solely from the tax levy, which would result in an 8% tax increase in the 2017 budget, a cost that would also be borne by non-users of the sewer system. An 8% tax increase would depress property values and further discourage commercial investment in our Town. We ask that you review the proposed increases, and note that the General District, which serves more than half the residents in Town, will still have rates that are among the lowest in the Capital District after the increase has been implemented.

We have to stop the profligate spending habits and irresponsible fiscal planning of the past. Come to the public hearing and share your views with us.