



**From the Desk of**

**Jack Conway**

**East Greenbush Town Supervisor**

Supervisor's Report January 15, 2016

The Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade is an ongoing concern for the Town. We are anticipating that Phase II will be completed sometime in February and planning has already begun for the third and final phase. It has been a long process marked by several significant problems but the end is now in sight. When completed, it will be a state-of-the-art treatment plant that can last thirty years or more with proper operation and maintenance.

While the final result will be a plant we can all be proud of, the time has come to pay for what will ultimately be an approximately \$16 million project. Although we have been attending to the upgrade for nearly four years, no steps were taken by previous Town Boards to anticipate and offset the cost of the onerous debt service payments that will come due after the August 2016 closing on the long-term permanent financing. Depending on the final project accounting, nearly \$700,000 per year will have to be paid for the next 25-30 years. At the moment we have no way to pay this cost.

Next month we'll be announcing a significant increase in sewer rates. Despite repeated warnings from consultants and fiscal experts about the massive bill coming, the rates have not been raised for more than four years. There will be a public hearing and at least two Town Board meetings for residents to comment and ask questions about the proposed increase. We'll carefully review the method used to determine the new rates and explain when the rate increase will take effect. Commercial users make up 53% of the revenue generated by the sewer rates and they will continue to pay their fair share.

I wish the new Board could start with better news but we pledged to engage in responsible government and the Town's finances are untenable without a significant increase in the sewer rates.