



**From the Desk of**

**Jack Conway**

**East Greenbush Town Supervisor**

Supervisor's Report January 22, 2016

By now you've probably heard that we're planning a significant increase in the sewer rates. This is news that nobody wants to hear but it's unavoidable in light of the August 2016 closing on the permanent financing for the upgrade to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. At that point we'll be responsible for debt service payments of \$650,000 - \$700,000 per year for the next thirty years. In 2012 a bipartisan decision was made to upgrade the plant in the wake of years of DEC consent orders that cited the Town for dumping waste into the Hudson River. Financing for the \$14 million project was obtained from a low interest loan from the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation but in August that financing must be rolled over into long term permanent financing. After the closing we'll be responsible for the debt service payments.

We haven't had a sewer rate increase since March 2011. Our sewer rates are currently low compared to other municipalities. We're still crunching the numbers to determine how much the rates need to be raised but the increase is necessary and can't be delayed. At the February Town Board meeting a public hearing will be scheduled so that you have a chance to express your views on the subject. That public hearing will take place before the March 16<sup>th</sup> Town Board meeting. In the interim, please feel free to contact my office with questions or to suggest alternative methods for handling the debt service.

The good news is that the upgraded Wastewater Treatment plant is an important asset for the Town that will serve our wastewater treatment needs for decades to come. The enhanced capacity will facilitate growth and allow us to proceed with a vigorous plan to revitalize Columbia Turnpike and other important projects. We're no longer dumping waste into the Hudson River and the air quality in the vicinity of the plant is improved. There is no easy remedy for financing infrastructural projects of this magnitude but we will continue to be open and transparent about how we arrive at decisions like this and the calculations used to determine the increase.