

## Conversation with the Mayor March 3, 2008

Vicky Daly

### Conversation with a Resident

With permission of the writer, I share with you an exchange of emails dealing with taxes in the Village. The email was prompted by an article in the Sunday, March 24th issue of the *Democrat & Chronicle*. The emails were sent before the Village concluded work on the 2008-2009 budget. It pleases me to tell you that it appears that the Village tax rate will increase only \$.03 per thousand. That is a 2/1000 of a per cent increase. Put another way, property owners with a home assessed at \$100,000.00 will pay an increase of \$3.00 total. How did that happen - a close scrutiny of revenues and expenses, good management by office staff and crews and a willingness to work together for the good of all.

If what follows doesn't answer your questions, or if this exchange prompts additional ones, please get in touch. If you ask, I will answer. I do, however, want to know to whom I am speaking, so please be sure to include your name and contact information.

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> Dear Mayor Daly,

> I was wondering if you could address the tax information printed in the Sunday D&C that  
> has Palmyra Village as one of the top 25 localities with the highest tax rates. This is in  
> NYS that already has one of >the highest tax rates already.

**I was in Albany at the NY Conference of Mayors and did not know about the article until you asked. I will try to answer your questions and will use the column to explain where we are and why. Your suggestion was a good one. I suspect many people are wondering about this, especially with the activity in Macedon.**

> I know that you and the village trustees work diligently to keep our taxes as low as  
> possible. I also know that I love living in this village, but I'm concerned about the future.  
> I'd like to know where the problem(s) really are. Is it because the town charges us too  
> much for its services?

**No. We work closely with the Town and have consolidated many services - assessment, code, website, purchase of fuel (along with school district), and services of the Highway Supt. We have a contract with the Town to provide fire and ambulance protection. We cannot do similarly with the Police unless the residents of the Town request and are willing to pay for that service. Combining of crews is virtually impossible because the village crews are unionized, the town's are not.**

>Is it because we offer services that we really can't afford?

**I believe people, if they can, make a choice as to where to live. If you want space and animals away from neighbors, you live in the country. If you want sidewalks, street lights, police and fire coverage, water & sewer, front porches where you can sit and visit with neighbors walking down the street, you live in the village and pay for the services and amenities you receive. (My earliest memories are of living in a Manhattan apartment. I am not a country girl.) A note: if you live in a hamlet, like Marion and Williamson, you pay for those services through the creation of a district. If a village becomes a hamlet, those costs remain with the residents of what is now a hamlet. The same is true of debts which the village might have. The costs are not spread out to be shared by residents outside the hamlet.**

>Is it duplication of any services that are not being consolidated due to politics?

**Fortunately, politics has nothing to do with it. Palmyra has the reputation of working well together, Village and Town.**

>Why is it cheaper to live outside the village?

**All the services cited above. Note: the tax numbers given in the D&C are the base rate. They do not include the costs to residents of hamlets within the town that are mentioned above.**

> I'm clearly not understanding what I get. Wouldn't my street still be plowed?

**Yes, but perhaps not as quickly or at a greatly reduced cost. If the village crew were to cease to exist, there would be more work for the town crew. If the village crew were to be hired by the town, there would be little if any savings. Remember that the village crews are unionized and that the towns are not. That is a major stumbling block to consolidation for services.**

>Would I have police services from the sheriff instead of the village?

**My understanding is that currently a sheriff's deputy is responsible for covering 4 townships. If we did not have a local force, the degree and quality, as they would not know the community, of police coverage would be reduced.**

> So you can see I'm not as well informed as perhaps I should be. My thought is that I'm  
> probably not alone with these concerns and perhaps you can use the paper to help inform  
> us. Also thanks for all your efforts in the promotion of our village. I'm sure that without  
> your efforts we would be in much worse shape.

**A final piece of information: The tax rate rests most heavily on the long term residents, particularly those on a fixed income, of which I am one. We recognize that fact and try to do the best we can, but it is those same people who want/need the services. We are seeing, however, young families move in from surrounding**

counties, especially Monroe and especially from suburban developments because they want village life for the children. Our housing stock is comparatively very low priced, even with the reassessment. Your house and ours would be assessed at 2 - 3 times what it is here in Pittsford or Fairport. The new arrivals see the price/tax equation as a wash. Thanks for getting in touch.

Vicky