

Conversation with the Mayor March 17, 2008

Vicky Daly

Another Budget Passed

With a great sigh of relief, the 2008-2009 budget is passed and the parameters for Village Government activity and subsequent spending is set for the coming fiscal year. I think we did a good job. The tax increase was minimal- \$.03 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation. That amounts to \$3.00 on a \$100,000.00 structure. It wasn't easy and compromises had to be struck as we worked for literally months to formulate the budget. An additional police officer would have been an asset to the Village. We could have planned to plant more shade trees. It would have been very nice to be more generous with those organizations that enhance quality of life in the Village - the library, Community Center and Historic Palmyra. But that's only one side of the balance sheet. The reality of rising costs in every household in the Village is the other side of the equation. It is a very fine line we walk, trying to maintain services and, at the same time, be cognizant of our residents' tax burdens. That we were able to do as well as we did is thanks to the cooperation, diligence, and good planning of our staff and crews.

That's the good news. What follows is not so good but necessary. Our water bills are going up. The quarterly base charge which has been at \$20.00 for the first 500 cubic feet or part thereof is going to \$30.00. The overage charge is being upped to \$2.50 from \$2.00 for every additional one hundred cubic feet of water, or part thereof, used. Why? To meet costs - the cost of chemicals needed for treatment has gone up; delivery charges have been added (gas prices); additional testing has been mandated by New York State and the cost of testing has increased. The alternative to raising the rate is balancing the books from the Water Reserve Fund, which is not a good idea and can go on only so long. The new rates will be in effect with the June billing. Please do as the Dalys have done and consider how you might use water more efficiently. Two years ago we had as a Rotary house guest a man from Australia who earned his livelihood in water management. He made us aware of how fortunate we are to have the quantity and quality of water we have. In Australia, which is in the midst of a multi-year drought, water is a precious commodity to be treated with respect and reserve. Think about that both from ecological and financial aspect. We tend to take too much for granted.

And as you plan your outings, for shopping or pleasure, consider 'Can I do it here?' As gas prices continue to rise, shopping locally has multiple benefits. You save on gas and therefore money; you save time; you get to know your local merchants and restaurant owners, AND you keep the money you do spend here.

A plea for the food pantries: When you shop, pick up some extra can goods or paper products for your local food pantry. The need is great and, if we all give just a little, together we can make life better for someone. That's a good thing to do.