

TOWN OF GREENBURGH  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISOR  
TOWN HALL  
ELMSFORD, NEW YORK

October 30, 2002

To the Town Board and Residents  
of the Town of Greenburgh, New York:

In accordance with New York State Law §106, I herewith submit the Tentative Budget for the Town of Greenburgh for the fiscal year 2003. The Tentative Budget will be presented to the Town Board prior to November 10, 2002 as required by law. The Town-Wide budget totals \$9,780,438 and the Town Outside Villages budget totals \$44,655,307. I have made every attempt to keep the tax rate increase needed to fund this budget at a minimum.

**GREENBURGH COMPARES FAVORABLY  
TO WESTCHESTER COUNTY WHICH IS FACING 31% TAX HIKE,  
MANY SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE  
EXPERIENCING DOUBLE DIGIT INCREASES.  
GREENBURGH TAX INCREASE 4.89%**

These are difficult economic times for the entire region. The State is facing severe economic difficulties. County Executive Andrew Spano has proposed a tax hike of over 31%. Many school districts and local governments are facing double digit tax hikes. The average tax increase for the ten school districts within the Town of Greenburgh for the 2002-2003 school year is 9.2% and the average tax rate increase for the three independent fire departments within the Town is 7%. No tax hike is a good tax hike, I am pleased to report that Greenburgh is weathering the economic storm and we are comparing favorably to surrounding communities.

The Town Outside Villages (Unincorporated Greenburgh) budget reflects an appropriation increase of 5.5% and a tax rate increase of 4.9%. The Town Outside Villages, as a result of voter approval, must add .5% to the tax rate for the Greenways Fund bringing the total tax increase to 4.9%. For residents of the villages, the tax rate increase is 6.7%. These increases represent an average tax

increase (\$15,000 average assessment used) of \$3.69 for the Town-Wide residents and \$69.22 for the Town Outside Villages residents. Homeowners within the villages of the Town will pay approximately \$59 in Town tax. The homeowners in areas outside of the villages will pay a total Town tax of approximately \$1,544 which pays for all services including police protection, refuse collection, library services, recreation, snow removal, leaf collection, etc.

**Some Reasons for Tax Increases:**

?? Insurance premiums for liability, property, automobile and workers' compensation

2001 payments - \$ 694,648

2002 projection - \$ 920,333 increase of 32.5%

2003 budget - \$1,246,670 increase of 35.5%, and \$552,022 over 2 years

?? Health Insurance costs

2001 payments - \$4,404,784

2002 projection - \$5,154,386 increase of 17.0%

2003 budget - \$6,325,380 increase of 22.7%, and \$1,920,596 over 2 years

?? The New York State Pension Fund

2001 payment - \$ 133,434

2002 projection - \$ 289,868 increase of 117.2%

2003 budget - \$1,266,000 increase of 336.8%, and \$1,132,566 over 2 years

The Town must also contend with the contractually required wage increases for many of its employees. All three of the Town's bargaining units have settled contracts with the Town for 2003.

**Expenditure Highlights**

Although there aren't many changes in the 2003 budget, there are a few programs which I would like to highlight:

**Creation of a Police Department Canine Program**

The 2003 budget includes appropriations to support the creation of a canine program within the Police Department. The Police Department has noted an ever-increasing need for the services of a dog to track suspects, conduct searches and help find lost persons. They have been relying on the benevolence of nearby police departments that have canine programs to assist them when a need for these services has arisen. Because of demands within these agencies, a response cannot always be

expected. Moreover, because the canine would be coming from a jurisdiction outside of the Town, response times may be somewhat delayed. Since time is of the essence in these situations, the Town will begin its own program. Of the \$17,175 first-year costs of the canine program, \$9,015 will be funded by amounts reserved for law enforcement; therefore, the overall cost to the Town will be \$8,160.

#### **Establishment of the Greenburgh Drug Treatment Court**

Included in the 2003 Town-Wide budget is funding in the amount of \$27,000 to support the establishment of the Greenburgh Drug Treatment Court. The purpose of this program is to channel non-violent defendants arrested on specified drug charges into a comprehensive program of drug treatment and rehabilitation services. The goal of the program is to break the cycle of drugs and crime by substituting an effective treatment alternative that is strictly enforced by the Court. The Town is currently pursuing grant revenues to assist in the funding of this program.

#### **Developmentally Disabled Program**

The Town-Wide budget is now providing services for special recreation programs for Greenburgh residents and residents of the six villages who are developmentally disabled. The budget for this department is \$197,649. These costs are partially offset by State Aid in the amount of \$82,789. I am very committed to this program for the much needed services it provides.

#### **New York State Promised Funding for Civil Defense Cascade Truck Still Hasn't Arrived Two Years After Money Promised**

In 2000, the Town of Greenburgh, in cooperation with the various Town and Village fire departments, purchased a Civil Defense cascade truck to primarily provide for the refilling of air bottles of firefighters and rescue workers at emergency scenes. Grant funds were also to be provided from New York State. On May 23, 2000, Assemblyman Richard Brodsky promised a \$30,000 grant to the Greenburgh Uniformed Firefighters Association for remittance to the Town to purchase and install the necessary equipment for this vehicle. Although the Town relied on these funds, more than two years has passed and the grant has not yet been received. I have contacted Assemblyman Brodsky's Office on several occasions. Because of the delay, Assemblyman Brodsky has increased the grant amount to \$50,000. If the funds are not received within the next three months, I will be forced to add the necessary funding to the 2003 Capital Budget so that this vehicle may finally be equipped.

### **Performance-Based Salary for Town Supervisor**

As the Town Supervisor and chief executive and financial officer, I began taking the lead role in 1999 in demonstrating performance based pay on a personal level. While a wage increase was budgeted consistent with other Town management and personnel, the Supervisor will actually be receiving less salary than budgeted. In 2003, I will again have \$5,000 of my salary placed in an escrow account with the Town. Disbursements will be made based on an evaluation of my performance as Supervisor over the coming year. I expect that the Town Board will be reviewing my 2002 performance and goals by the end of the year. Through example, I will set the standard for performance-based pay for all management staff.

### **Management Salary Increases**

Management and elected officials will receive a 3% salary increase in 2003. Several management salaries have been adjusted to reflect their appropriate position on the Town's management salary schedule. I will continue to review the performance and pay scale of all management staff to properly compensate these employees for their levels of responsibility.

### **Data Processing Staff Increase**

In 2001, the Town engaged the services of ACS, a computer technology company, to perform a needs assessment study for the various computerized systems within Town departments. This report was submitted in December, 2001 after the Town 2002 budget had been adopted. The report recommended the addition of 3 technology positions to the Town's Data Processing Department to properly accommodate the increased programs and services now provided by this department. I am recommending one additional position at this time and am encouraged by the increased computer training that is occurring in-house that will help to reduce the demands placed on the Town's Data Processing Department. I am committed to increase staffing in this area in future budgets if the need arises.

### **Police/Federal COPS Program**

The Police Department budget increased by 6.0% over the 2002 adopted budget. Expenditures increased primarily as a result of union contractual increases. Two officers remain partially funded under the Federal COPS program and an additional police officer is partially funded as a result of the COPS in Schools Program. This brings the Town's police force to a total of 113 officers.

**Parks and Recreation Requested Projects Will be Funded In the Capital Budget**

I received a budget request from the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation in the amount of \$68,700 to fund requested projects in the Parks Maintenance and Anthony F. Veteran Park departments. Since these items require a significant amount of funding and are capital in nature, I recommend that they be included in the Department's 2003 Capital Budget submission. The majority of the Town's capital improvements is handled in the Town's three-year Capital Budget Plan, which each year is adopted separately from the operating budget.

**Cable Television**

Earlier this year, I formed a Cable TV Advisory Board to work with the Town to enhance public access cable TV programming. We intend to move towards creating an independent Cable TV Board. The 2003 budget includes funding for the transition. As recommended by the Cable Advisory Board, there will be one access manager whose salary will be \$45,000 and a chief technician whose salary will be \$30,000. The new access studio, located at 297 Knollwood Road (directly across the street from the current Town Hall) will enable more residents to produce informative cable TV programs. Creating an independent board will remove the illusion of political interference in programming.

**Parking Enforcement Officers**

The Town Code requires that the Town provide parking enforcement officers to the Hartsdale Public Parking District for the purpose of issuing parking ticket violations. Therefore the Town-Wide budget reflects an increase of \$48,550 for this purpose.

**Westchester County Sales Tax Increase**

The County of Westchester is proposing a 1% sales tax increase through the Property Tax Relief Act. This proposal shares 25% of the increased sales tax collection with local governments and school districts. The County estimates that the Town of Greenburgh would receive nearly \$1.5 million more each year in sales tax revenues if this new legislation were passed. This new revenue source could be used to fund the additional debt service in the Town Outside Villages Fund that will be required for the reconstruction and addition to the Town Library and to help lower property taxes. The 2003 budget does

not reflect any revenue increases based on this proposal but the budget can be amended at a later date if the new sales tax is levied.

### **Unpaid Taxes**

The Town is responsible for the billing and collection of over \$267 million in property taxes annually, about 87% of it for other governments and districts (the County, 10 school districts, 3 fire districts). The Town must pay these entities the full warrant amount, covering shortfalls in current tax collection with its own funds. In April 2002, the Town paid \$3,996,570 in uncollected current tax monies to the schools. As a result of the downturn in the economy, there may be a decrease in payment of current taxes. We will monitor this trend carefully as we prepare for a new round of foreclosures.

From 1993 to 1995, the Town initiated its first phase of in-rem foreclosure proceedings. In 1996, the sale of properties acquired by tax foreclosure resulted in the generation of almost \$1.2 million in revenue. The Town began a new round of foreclosures in 1997 and held an auction of these properties in 1999. These proceedings have provided an incentive for delinquent taxpayers to bring their payments up to date. Another property auction was held in September 2001 and the next property auction is scheduled for early 2003.

### **The Process**

The tentative 2003 budget was arrived at after a thorough examination of all items within the context of the Town's long-range financial planning. Department requests were scrutinized and reduced in order to have a workable budget that did not place an undue burden on the taxpayers. The public hearing on the budget will be held on Tuesday, November 26, 2002 at Town Hall at 7:30 PM. It will be preceded by a question and answer period at 7:00 PM on the same day. The Town Board will consider adoption of the budget at that meeting, or a subsequent meeting, but prior to December 20, 2002, as required by State Law.

Members of my staff and I would be pleased to meet with any community member or civic group to discuss the budget on an informal basis. I can be reached at my office (telephone: 993-1540) or at my home (telephone: 478-1219). I look forward to hearing from you and discussing your comments or ideas.

### **Budget on the Internet**

We again placed the budget on the internet in an effort to make it more accessible to our citizens. We believe that we were the first government in New York to publish its budget in this manner and in its

entirety. We will publish the entire 2003 budget on the internet. Please visit our web site at [www.GreenburghNY.com](http://www.GreenburghNY.com). As I say each year, this is open government at its best and we look forward to your participation.

### **Financial Outlook**

The financial stability evidenced by this tentative budget would not have been possible without prudent long-range financial planning. Vigorous collection of tax arrears and other measures have made it possible to maintain fund balance and to pay certiorari refunds without borrowing. The Town's excellent fiscal management was recognized by Moody's Investors Service, which awarded an Aa rating to the Town in 1996, the highest ever in the Town's history. In 1998, Moody's rated the Town's bonds Aa2, and in 2002, Moody's again rewarded the Town for its sound fiscal management with an increased rating to Aa1. There is only one more possible increase to Aaa. This rating reduces interest rates the Town pays on its bonds and notes. In making this upgrade, Moody's recognized the strong financial reserves of the Town and sound financial management. The Town believes this budget continues that tradition. In addition, the Town continues to move toward even higher levels of financial excellence with improved banking services and cash management, and enhancements to its health, workers' compensation, general liability and vehicle insurance programs. I wish to commend our Comptroller, Norah C. McAvoy, and Deputy Comptroller, Doreen Muentener, for pursuing these efforts and in bringing these initiatives forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul J. Feiner, Town Supervisor