

State of Poestenkill 2018

by Supervisor Dominic J. Jacangelo

With 2018 comes my fifth term as Town Supervisor. It has been eight years since I was first elected and much has occurred. We completed a public water system. Endured a major disaster. Weathered a significant economic down turn. Various presidents and leadership in Congress and the State House. And the loss of an important town officials. While Pat Tomaselli had been ill in the past his passing was sudden and most unexpected. We all miss him dearly.

I will be the first to admit that not every idea has been universally embraced but many have. I have been willing to compromise and, in the end, accept an alternative that gets us to the same goal although maybe not the same way. I have always believed that if a town is not growing you are losing to the march of time.

I can comfortable saying things have never been better in the Town and with town government.

First and foremost we have a productive and constructive Town Board. It is a great pleasure to work with my fellow Town Board members and I most appreciate the support and assistance that I get from my Deputy Town Supervisor June Butler and the persistence and precision I get from Dave Hass. The three of us recently went through a reelection cycle and I am pleased that we are still together.

The entire Town Board's efforts, the Town Clerk and Highway Superintendent are most appreciated by me on a daily basis. We are truly a team and a team that pulls in a common direction. Together we are frugal and most deliberate in our decisions. We are pleased to have our newest member of the team, Jack Casey as Town Attorney.

Chief among my concerns are the fiscal health of the Town. I am pleased to report that our fiscal health is good, if not great. Between last year and this year we were able to grow our unappropriated fund balance by over \$100,000 while we have reduced our dependence on unappropriated fund balance from a high of \$250,000 to half that amount now. Simply stated we have not spent all the funds that have been appropriated and our revenues have exceeded our projections.

Currently we are in a good position to weather another Irene or other natural disaster without having to borrow money to support those emergency actions to protect life and property. This

year we will be managing our unallocated fund balance different than in past years. We should be able to turn a fiscal loss into a significant plus this year and next.

While our fiscal picture is very good this past year did result in one major disappointment. Natural gas will not be happening in Poestenkill's hamlet. Revenue from a constructed line could not support the debt service on the improvement. There is not enough costumers to support the project. Unfortunately, it took National Grid far too long to come to this conclusion and we all spent a lot of time on that which just could not be. To bring natural gas into the hamlet was in excess of \$5 million.

Internet expansion has been very successful. Cable is now operating on parts of Fifty – Six Road, North Road and Blue Factory Road. Winter has slowed homes actually being able to get hooked up, but progress has been continuing slow and steady. That expanded cable service is the result of a new cable TV franchise with Spectrum that June and I put considerable time into completing.

This year we have a new water operator Forest Crawford. He is working on his certification under the tutoring of Bob Brunet who I am pleased to say has made a remarkable recovery from his illness. Earlier this year we had an episode of cloudy water which was caused by a brief power outage where the pumps never kick back in and when they did run at too high a RMP. That situation has been resolved and should not reoccur.

Our surprise for late 2017 was that Waste Management resumed operations at the transfer station. The facility was establish by the town board in 1993 as a PDD. A Planned Development District. A PDD goes with the property, is transferable from owner to owner and has no sunset provision. The facility is operating at maybe one half its historical highs. Whether you like the facility or not, the legal reality is there are no grounds to force operations to cease. There is one person who has called me every name in the book relative to the facility, but he has not brought up any principle by which the Town could close the facility. So, in my view it is there to stay and I will not pour town funds down a bottomless pit to litigate the issue without a chance of success.

So, I may not like the facility, but I will put my energy into making an unattractive operation as tolerable as possible. In 1995 the town wrote, adopted and signed a host community agreement which included mitigation funds to the town. The agreement could have been written better, but it was not. It only lasted three years and despite requests it was never renewed.

Early this year I wrote to Waste Management suggesting that if they really wanted to be a good corporate resident of the town, then they should fulfill the intentions of the 1995 host agreement and execute a new agreement with the town. They recently responded and sent me a draft

agreement which very much mirrors the 1995 agreement. It includes a white goods drop off, bulk items and household solid waste drop off. It also includes a modest host fee similar to what the company is paying in other areas that host facilities.

My hope is that if the town board agrees to the agreement that they also have the discipline to dedicate that money to community projects which add to the quality of life in town. Projects should include support for the Post and our Memorial Day activities, our flags for Main Street, recognition of our veterans, and support for our parks and green spaces.

Most of you know that I have supported the idea of having the Nature Conservancy give the Town the Barberville Natural Resource property. Last month we did a review of what a transfer would mean in relation to the environment and issued a negative declaration on the transfer. Working with the Conservation Advisory Committee we have a good start on a draft park plan. The plan once approved by the Board will guide future management of the property consistent with Town Code.

Two major subdivisions are now being built out with multiple homes under construction. Soon we must consider taking over the maintenance of the associated roads.

Residents can now access the revised town code from their computer no matter where they are. And more importantly, that code is being kept current through E-Code 360 (<http://www.generalcode.com/ecode360/NY>) .

Communications with the public is of the greatest importance. Town Hall is now fully accessible to those with physical handicaps. This past year we installed a new lift at no small expense. But a well working left is not an option for town government not matter how infrequently it is used.

Electric demand at the town hall and highway garage has never been lower. Many bills for these facilities are under \$100.

I still would love to see photovoltaic panels on the Town Highway garage and reduce our carbon footprint substantially more. Working with the EPA we were able to get an assessment of what could be generate by photovoltaics not only at the Highway Garage but also at the old landfill on Denis Road. We will follow up with a few companies that do this type of work to see what the potential is for a power partner.

Everything we have accomplished we have done with a frugal approach to Government, keeping expenses down at every opportunity. The combined 2018 Town Tax Rate including the voter approved increase for the library was less than the prior year. We are managing our health insurance increases through creative programs and mortgage and sales tax revenues are now growing once more. Our reliance on the appropriation of fund balance continues to decrease.

Over the past two years we have invested heavily in new highway equipment. We have one brand new large dump truck delivered last summer and there will be a second one this spring along with a new pay loader. We did do a bond to pay for the two new trucks but that bond will be paid over just a few years unlike the 20 year bond that was used around 1995. Working with Toby we have implemented an equipment replacement program that is sustainable into the future and ensures that we will have equipment that is ready to roll when needed.

Over the past several years there has been much said about ambulance service. Mohawk has been able to respond to our community under most circumstances in a reasonable time. But there are occasions where response is delayed because of multiple calls and the inability of other agencies to respond or offer mutual aid. The work of the ambulance committee brought about an RFP last year and two proposals. Those proposals were rejected for a number of reasons.

The fire company has ensured that we are not where we were several years ago. The first responder corps has ensured that those who need emergency medical transport are seen much faster than has ever been the case in the past. Those first responders are frequently on scene within a few minutes to assess the patient, stabilize acute conditions and confirm their condition prior to transport arriving.

Over the past couple of months I have spoken with Supervisors in all the surrounding towns with the hope that we come up with a better shared services plan than that which was proposed last year. It is hard to say what plan would be successful but I would say that offering up that which was previously rejected would not be an efficient use of time and energy. I am somewhat optimistic that the ingredients for a successful plan can be found.

It has been my honor to serve the residents of Poestenkill for the past eight plus years and I look forward to this upcoming year with the same degree of enthusiasm as my first year in office.

Thank you.