

Town of Johnsburg Newsletter

Supervisor's Report

Short Takes

Energy Efficiency Study

Town Board members Frank Morehouse, Ron Vanselow and Arnold Stevens are in the early stages of analyzing energy efficiency in all town buildings.

New Computers at Town Hall

Through an agreement with Adirondack Community College, 8 Dell computers have been donated to the town for use at the town hall.

Ski Bowl Park Grant

Preliminary work is underway on a grant awarded to the town for park improvements at the ski bowl. Resident Joel Beaudin is coordinating the grant in conjunction with town officials and members of the Ski Bowl Park Committee.

Vanselow Chairs Zoning Committee

A committee working on affordable housing, inclusionary zoning and zoning review is now meeting regularly and is being chaired by councilman Ron Vanselow

Main Street Parking

Please remember winter parking rules as indicated on the Main Street signs in North Creek.

Board Makes Insurance Changes

The Town Board has authorized a change in health insurance coverage for retired qualified former employees moving from Empire Blue Cross to Traditional Blue Medicare PPO.

The new program involves a number of counties participating in a government sponsored program. Insureds will see immediate cost savings with comparable coverage; for example, co-pays will be reduced on a per office visit basis from \$25 to \$5.

The new program likewise offers significant savings to the Town. If the changeover can be completed by March 1, it is anticipated that the town savings will be \$30,000 in 2008 alone.

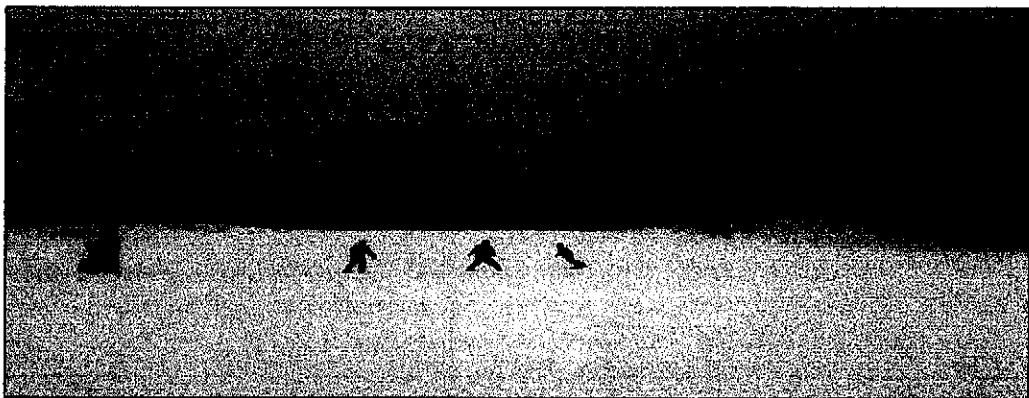
Budget Reform, So Far....

In the town hall, every day is budget day. We are constantly looking at steps that may be taken to reduce the amount of dollars raised by taxes. Here are a few items so far identified that we are in the process of implementing:

* Readjustment between the North Creek Water District and the Town's general fund so that town employees working on water district matters are paid from the water district budget, not the general fund. Anticipated savings - \$7,000 to \$15,000.

* Hot and Cold Legal Advise Concept. Rather than requiring town lawyer Tony Jordan to attend all town meetings, Tony will now alternate meetings with legal issues of a complex nature being moved to alternating agendas. In addition, the number of persons who are authorized to contact Tony for counsel has been drastically limited. Anticipated savings—\$5000.00 to \$10,000.00.

* The Town is aggressively enforcing local laws that force developers to pay town engineering and legal fees. Anticipated savings—significant but unknown. *(continued on next page)*



Johnsburg students Clayton Smith, Andrew Sponable and Irek Malikowski enjoy a day on the slopes of Little Gore

Budget Advisory Committee Tackles Town Finance

More than a dozen community members with a broad spectrum of life experience are analyzing the town budget in an effort to inject new ideas into the town's fiscal affairs.

At the initial meeting the group was presented with information that detailed town expenditures on such items as fuel, utilities and insurance. Information was also provided regarding tax base trends, budget structure and preliminary steps being taken to control costs and reduce spending. A related article in this week's newsletter discusses several of these measures.

The members of the group will now have several weeks to digest and review the materials provided. Town Account Clerk Candace Lomax is also available to members of the group to answer specific questions on items in the budget.

While a municipal budget is vastly different from a private sector budget, our hope is that injection of, diverse private sector financial knowledge into the budget process may lead to ideas that otherwise may be missed.

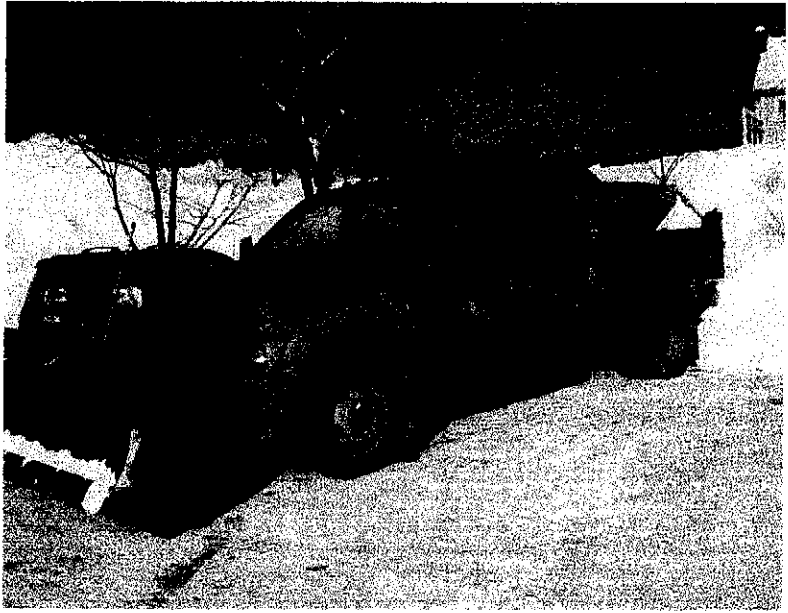
Skating at Ski Bowl Park

Thanks to the work of a dedicated group of volunteers led by Bob Nettle there is good ice for skating in the large pavilion at Ski Bowl Park. This creates a great opportunity for families to get together and enjoy a fun winter sport.

(Budget So Far, cont.)

- * The Town is moving qualified retired employees to a new health insurance program. Anticipated savings—\$30,000.00
- * Energy audits of town buildings will hopefully offer insight into fuel savings.
- * Exploring potential revenue streams in conjunction with Warren County officials that will provide more funding without tax impact.
- * Closing and demolition of red barn. Anticipated savings—\$4000.00.
- * Converting the town highway garage heat source to an outdoor wood furnace and using discarded private sector wood presently disposed of at the landfill for fuel.
- * Increased employee contribution for health insurance.
- * Replace water superintendent position with contract services. Eliminate assistant and eliminate superintendent's benefit package. Estimated savings—\$10,000.00 to \$15,000.00

Highway Department Adds Second New Truck



This 2008 Ford F550 Crew Cab was added to the town fleet with CHIPS money obtained by the town. Its capabilities include a 9 ft heavy duty plow, dump body and sander.

Ask Annie

By Ann Deppa, Town Assessor

With all the new construction, why aren't my taxes going down?

This is a complicated question that is on the minds of many people. Our town's assessment roll can be thought of in the same terms as an individual's check book. When new houses are built, adding more value to the tax rolls, this is the equivalent of making deposits in the checking account.

To understand a checking account balance you must also consider withdrawals and checks paid out. When it comes to the tax roll, the entire tax roll is reduced by exemptions and other losses. Last year, a significant loss occurred when New York State devalued its land holdings in Johnsbury. This means the State pays less tax for the same amount of land. Budget spending drives the amount of funds raised by taxes but the pool of funds available is first affected by losses such as the State's devaluation.

In fact, physical value with new construction increased the tax rolls by \$9.4 million or \$22,608 in additional tax revenue. But weighing against this are exemptions and the state devaluation. The State devaluation of \$15 million in value was mitigated by a temporary return of dollars to the town. In this regard, just over \$8000.00 in additional tax revenue was created, providing a modest offset to everyone's tax bill.

For more information, please give me a call at my town hall office at 251-5559 or feel free to stop by and ask me in person.