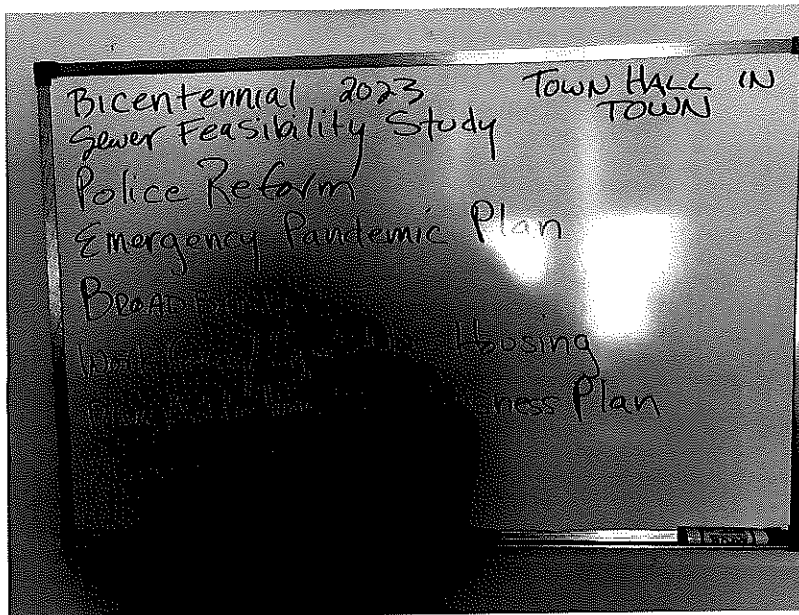


Darrah Cloud



12.11.2020

Dear Pine Plains,

For a good time, click on this:

<https://youtu.be/B2N8RUXLTpY>

Happy Holidays!

And now for the news: This week saw the second meeting of the **Police Reform Stakeholders Committee**, which began presentations to the group on sections of the County Plan which I have also been working on with other agencies as part of the County's effort to help us complete an updated and comprehensive Police Policy Manual. Our old one dated back to 1984. The new State Police Policy Manual we have acquired is a 750+ page document which Officer in Charge Sgt. John Hughes and I will be reading and correcting over the next 4 months using directives from our stakeholders committee. This work is mandated, and it's hard and it's a slog, but in the end, a very worthwhile use

of our time. In the County, the mission is to bring all policing agencies together under similar missions and policies. Right now, each agency has its own way of dealing with people, and that makes it very confusing for citizens, and sometimes it's not in keeping with our mission here. The discussion in our committee is vibrant and the opportunity to take a deep dive, as they say, into policing in the State and town is an education to us all on how complex it is to be an officer in these times especially, and how essential their work is here. I know I say this a lot, but we have a fantastic police department here, and we are fortunate to have them.

Ditto the **Fire Department/Rescue Squad**. I was on a call this week with numerous town officials from Northern Dutchess County, and heard what the bill will be for 2021 for ambulance service to each of 3 towns to the east, Dover, Amenia and Northeast. Amenia's bill for the coming year for ambulance service will be \$350,000. It is absolutely essential that we support our own Fire Department and recruit more volunteers so that we can keep this service free and local. If we got a bill like that here, we would be hard pressed to offer ambulance service in Pine Plains without significantly raising taxes or ending our Recreation and Library services. That said, I have to remind everyone that the County did a study on call responses in 2017 and the numbers then created such concern at the State level that they began working on how to create a paid system in all counties. Given the pandemic, this work has been put on hold. The Fire Department has seen renewed interest in the last few years from younger volunteers, and these people will really make a difference to life here in Pine Plains.

Town revenues for 2020 have exceeded our estimates due to new homes being built in the area, and many homes sold. The 2021 Budget is still bare-bones in the event of unforeseen consequences of the pandemic in the next few years. I expect that to continue for quite a while. In a way, our historic reliance on each other for help rather than the government has resulted in a very self-reliant town. I believe Pine Plains will be just fine, but of course **I wish**

for it numerous improvements and strong economic development.

We have just received the full **Sewer Feasibility Study** which we launched last spring. It is another 250+ page document which the Board will be examining in the winter months. Once we respond to the engineers on this, we will hold a community meeting to go over the results and have a broad discussion.

Also in are three bids for Planner help on our **Zoning Review**. I am anxious to get started with all the recommendations for small changes to our zoning that were made by our Comprehensive Plan Update. This will be more exciting work for the Board and Committee in the coming months.

December is **Re-Organization 2021** planning month, and we are searching for new members of the CAC in particular. If you love nature and our lakes and want to be a part of a dynamic committee to preserve them, please let me know.

The town always looks so beautiful at holiday time in particular. I wish we could keep the lights up all winter. That's an extravagance we will just have to keep in our hearts.

Stay merry and bright, Pine Plains!