

# Town of Oswego Long Range Plan

## Elements and Progress

- ❖ Initiated review of the Town of Oswego Comprehensive Plan
  - Where do we want the town to be in 10 years?
  - Secured outside funding to defray some of the costs.
  - Are we doing enough to protect the integrity of our residential neighborhoods?
  - Are our current regulations reasonable, enforceable and effective for preventing neighborhood decline?
- ❖ Initiated involvement in Clean Energy Community.
  - Lead to review of **all** of Town's energy programs and costs
  - Lead to switching Highway Dept from propane to natural gas, saving about \$5,000.00 annually
  - Could lead to grant monies for the Town
  - Town exploring Solar energy participation
- ❖ Completed Cornell Roads Asset Management Program
  - Received and independent and objective review of the conditions of Town roads which will enable better and prioritized highway maintenance and repair programs
  - Completed an inventory of Towns highways, bridges and culverts
    - Lead to claiming an additional (.6) miles of roads previously claimed by others
    - Will increase the amount of NYS funds (CHIPS) available to Town
  - Will provide a framework for the future maintenance decisions
- ❖ Completed review of past decade's budget and expenditure patterns
  - Ascertained trends and needs for corrective actions
  - Will be instrumental in developing long range budgets
  - Will be vital to limiting unplanned spending and maintaining minimal tax rates
- ❖ Established a tentative long-term Vehicle and equipment replacement schedule
  - Will be vital for predicting future needs and costs
  - Included analysis of repair and scheduled maintenance costs
  - Reviewed use and needs of current equipment and resulted in retiring some vehicles and equipment
    - Placed items in auction and stopped practice of disposal of obsolete equipment

- Received more from sale and auction of scrap/equipment than total of last 5 years
- Reduced vehicle and equipment inventory has resulted in cutting insurance and repair costs
- Reviewed service records and changed fuel use; savings to date about \$1,600.00
- Applied for US Rural Development Community Facility Program to secure funding for a snowplow and fuel station acquisitions
  - Town is not eligible for grant funds
  - Town was advised it is eligible for a low interest federal loan
  - Loan request currently on hold as federally required bonding resolution was petitioned to be rescinded
- ❖ Reviewed Town's past indebtedness history and projection of needs
  - Understanding debt limits and expenditures is necessary to limit Town spending and tax rates
  - Review identified potential ways to reduce current interest rates and payments
- ❖ Worked to encourage commercial growth and investment in community
  - New businesses and enterprises will expand the tax base and lead to lower homeowner tax rates
  - New businesses will increase services available to Town residents
  - Received \$25,000.00 grant to study feasibility of a sewer extension to service the commercial corridor
- ❖ Completed review of long term legacy and health care costs
  - Change of insurance providers will result in first year saving of about \$70,000.00
  - Ongoing reviews could result in future cost reductions
  - Review will form basis for extended future contract discussions
- ❖ Completed review of Town's investment policies and practices
  - Invested cemetery funds in better interest-bearing account
  - Received more interest than total of last 5 years in all accounts
- ❖ Basis has been developed for establishment of 5-year budget plans, breaking the limitations on yearly budgets while maintaining yearly review of expenditures and revenues

## Recommended Future actions and considerations

- ❖ Develop a Fund Balance Policy as recommended by NYS Comptroller's Office
  - Will help prevent large fluctuations in reserve funds
  - Might have prevented current Fund Balance below recommended guidelines
  - Might have lead to a reasonable reduction of previous high reserve levels
  - Would have prevented the negative Fund Balance in the Highway Funds
  - Would eliminate some potential audit exceptions
- ❖ Recommended Budget reforms
  - By Policy, Resolution or Statute enact the following:
    - Implement a goal of long term planning as recommended by NYS Comptroller's Office
    - Move away from current practice of producing a budget for only one year and examining only one year of history
      - Require all budgets examine, at minimum, a five year history of fiscal performance and review and the approved budget
      - Require all budgets to be a budget for the coming fiscal year PLUS projections or at least four years
    - Require that all budgets include a separate accounting for all PILOTs
    - Require that all budgets include a detailed listing and analysis of indebtedness
    - Require that all budgets include all mandated contractual personnel costs and legacy personnel costs as separate budget worksheets
- ❖ Require that prior to approval of all labor contracts worksheets are prepared and presented projecting all future personnel and fringe benefits costs
- ❖ Develop Highway and road standards
- ❖ Develop a policy of seeking a defined rate of reimbursement for any and all services provided to individual homeowners
- ❖ Formally adopt a Town of Oswego Multi-year plan