

# Supervisor Romaine Issues 2015 Tentative Budget

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## ***\$274.7 Million Budget Freezes Whole Town Tax Levy, Right-Sizes Government with No Cuts in Services;***

### ***Capital Spending reduced by 13.8% from last year***

**Farmingville, NY** - Supervisor Ed Romaine today issued his 2015 Tentative Budget, which includes no increase in the Whole Town Tax Levy, right-sizes Town government through the elimination of 35 positions without layoffs or cuts to services, and continues his commitment to the environment with \$5 million dedicated to open space purchases and \$2 million for environmental programs. The \$274.7 million spending plan builds upon the foundation established in Supervisor Romaine's first budget, which was unanimously adopted in November of last year, and continues to move Brookhaven forward towards fiscal structural balance.

Supervisor Romaine said, "Fiscal reform has been my first priority since taking office in 2012 and this budget keeps the Town on the right track by freezing the tax levy and further eliminating the wasteful spending practices of the past. We are moving forward with a more cost-effective, fiscally responsible government instead of relying on layoffs, cuts in service and surplus to get our budget in line."

#### **Key elements of the 2015 Tentative Operating Budget include:**

- No increase in the tax levy for the Full Town Tax Districts (General & Highway Whole Town);
- Combined tax levy for the Outside Village Tax Districts, inclusive of special districts, remains flat;
- Compliance with the New York State Tax Levy Cap; the Town's Tax Rate and Spending Caps; and the Town's Debt Management Policy;
- Maintain compliance with the Town's Fund Balance Policy;
- Reduces the application of available surplus, in the six major funds, by more than \$2.6 million, or 23% (\$3.2 million, or 26% across all funds), as compared to the 2014 Adopted Budget;
- Cuts the cost of debt service through application of debt reserve created through capital project closeouts;
- Fully funds the New York State Retirement Contributions without any borrowing from the state;
- Maintains existing programs and the delivery of constituent services despite rising fixed costs such as employee pensions, health care and energy; and
- Increased funding for Highway Snow Removal to reflect more recent snow trends, an increase of over \$1 million, or 40%.

"Despite a slow economic recovery, the Town has made significant strides in getting our fiscal house in order," said Supervisor Romaine. "I will continue to work with the Town Council, my staff and commissioners to find additional ways that will help Brookhaven government run more efficiently and reduce the financial burden on our taxpayers."

The 2015 Tentative Budget continues the strong fiscal practices that have been recognized by Wall Street rating agencies that resulted in Standard & Poor's revising its outlook to Positive from Stable on Brookhaven's outstanding general obligation debt and assigning the Town an 'AA +' rating to its long-term bonds

#### **At the same time, the 2015 Budget furthers the Supervisor's commitment to improving the quality of life for the residents of Brookhaven. This budget:**

- Increases funding for an additional Investigator in Code Enforcement to continue the crackdown on illegal rooming houses;
- Continues a Waste Management initiative, started in 2014, which funds additional staff to address litter, property clean ups and lawn maintenance of abandoned structures;
- Continues funding to support and enhance the Vacant Building Registry;
- Allows for the improvements to our on-line Building Department Permit Renewal system; and
- Increases spending for Senior Citizen programs and maintains spending levels for Women's Services and Youth.

The Tentative Budget also recognizes that we must continue to right-size our government. The proposed budget reduces staff by 21 full-time positions and 14 part-time positions through natural attrition and the exit incentive offered earlier this fall. This right-sizing effort will produce an annual savings in excess of \$1.5 million.

## **CAPITAL BUDGET**

The \$80.1 million 2015 Tentative Capital Budget reduces capital spending in the Town by \$12.9 million, or 13.8 percent, from last year. This budget includes \$47.8 million in new initiatives and \$32.3 million for ongoing projects throughout the Town.

### **Key elements of the 2015 Tentative Capital Budget include:**

- \$21.6 million for road improvements, drainage projects and other Highway improvements and equipment;
- \$5.1 million for Parks improvements and equipment;
- \$5 million for Open Space acquisition; and
- \$2 million for environmental projects

"I remain committed to my three-point plan of ending deficit spending, rebuilding our surpluses and putting Brookhaven on solid financial ground for the long run. I believe this budget continues to streamline government while making it more responsive to the needs of residents," said Romaine.

The Supervisor's 2015 Tentative Budget will be presented to the Town Council at this evening's Town Board meeting. Should the budget be accepted by the board, it will become the 2015 Preliminary Budget, and be available for view on the Town's website ([www.Brookhaven.org](http://www.Brookhaven.org)). A public hearing on the Preliminary Budget is scheduled for November 6, with a final vote scheduled for November 13. By law, a Town Budget must be in place by November 20, 2015.

### **Division of Public Information \* Office of the Supervisor**

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