

**Citizens Budget Review & Advisory Committee**  
**Draft Recommendations with Direct Cost Savings**  
**For the 2013/14 Budget**  
**Presented to Finance Committee on March 7, 2013**

Over the past few years the Village has faced a challenging budget environment and has been forced to make many difficult decisions. One of prevailing themes that the Citizens Budget Review & Advisory Committee ("CBRAC") noticed during its review was that many of these difficult decisions have come at the expense of the Village's capital/infrastructure budget (e.g. building repairs and maintenance being deferred, aging equipment with higher maintenance costs, and, in the case of the Library, a steady decline in the purchase of books). With a budget that consists of 72% of labor-related costs, much of the "low hanging fruit" has been picked.

Without a meaningful increase in revenues (taxes, fines, etc), the Village should take a closer look at the services that are currently being provided as well as the cost of providing these services. It has become evident at the budget sessions that personnel costs are beginning to impact the Village's ability to sustain facilities and services and the proposed budget should begin the process of addressing these issues. Otherwise, the Village may have to face more difficult decisions down the road.

**Overall**

1. It is imperative that the Village look to lower the labor-related costs, which have been increasing as percentage of the overall budget, through a combination of attrition, more favorable labor negotiation and, if needed, headcount reduction.
  2. Village residents should have a clear understanding of the costs associated with the services being provided by the Village. As such, the CBRAC proposes that a detailed breakout of the capital and labor costs by department be made available to residents on an annual basis. As part of this increased transparency with Village residents, a final version of budget book, including salaries, should be posted on the village website.
  3. In addition, to assist the CBRAC in their analysis next year, we would like to have a job description associated with each job title as civil servant titles have not kept up with the actual task being performed.
  4. Similar to Fire, bring in industry consultants to evaluate quality of service, staffing, etc – focus on one department per year.
  5. Village vehicles used by non-uniformed employees to be replaced with mileage reimbursement to be monitored by village administration and presented to Board of Trustees on a periodic basis, but no less than quarterly .
  6. Offer a combination of cash incentives/public recognition to employees for proposing ideas cost-saving ideas. Proposals will be selected by Board of Trustees on a monthly basis. Amount of award will be determined by the Board.
-

7. Install transfer switches to various facilities seeking generators (Village Hall, Fire Houses, Water Works) and either contract with 3<sup>rd</sup> party providers to provide generators as needed or purchase one/two generators that can be rotated, as needed
8. Each department should look to utilize grant writing consultants.
9. Similar to school district, look at upgrading village-wide HVAC, energy efficiency through energy savings performance contracts.

#### Police

10. Recommend maintaining approved staffing levels at 52. Currently there are 50 officers in active duty with several nearing retirement. As such, we recommend that the police look to recruit and hire only from the academy vs. hiring from neighboring communities to fill any vacancies recognizing that with the decline in academy classes, it may take a few years to find replacement.
11. Look to increase contribution to healthcare and retirement cost for upcoming contract negotiations given the success of the recent Suffolk County contract where new officers are expected to contribute to 15% of their healthcare premiums.
12. Given the risk of lost revenue and less enforcement, we recommend the purchase of new scales for truck enforcement and provide training to additional officers in order to keep the equipment in use as much as possible.
13. With the apparent increase of vehicles speeding Village roads, we recommend that the Village increase the number of officers eligible for speed enforcement.
14. Given the increasing occurrences of individuals parking in dedicated "Handicap" parking spaces without the required permits, we recommend an increase in the fines or the introduction of a tiered approach for fines based on the number of violations.

#### Fire

15. While we are sympathetic to the families impacted by the Board of Trustees decision to terminate the 6 GCFD employees, we are supportive of the conclusions reached by consultant hired by the Village in light of the rising labor costs and deferral of capital and equipment spending.
16. CBRAC recommends making the necessary capital improvements to the fire houses including the repair of the roof, brick damage and staircase in the West firehouse; expanding the doors and size of the main firehouse truck bays to allow for a normal-sized fire truck. We also recommend repairing the kitchen facilities in the main firehouse. We view the condition of the buildings as liability issues for the Village given that some of these buildings are used by outside organizations.
17. Defer the purchase of Ladder Truck for another year given its limited use; other potential options include looking at the cost of service life extension overhauls or purchasing a used Ladder Truck.
18. With the growing senior population in the Village, we recommend that GCFD, GCPD and the Board of Trustees work together to consider a proposed village ambulance service including a full cost/benefit analysis using actual medical assist data from the past few years.

## DPW

19. Similar to last year, the CBRAC recommends a village-wide review of sanitation/recycling collection schedules. The current sanitation schedule is based on a legacy requirement from Covanta to separate rubbish (collected 2x a week) from bulk garbage (collected 1x a week on Wednesday). Since this is no longer the case, we believe that the sanitation schedule should be analyzed to determine if 1 pick-up per week can be eliminated, Village-wide. Similarly, we ask to evaluate the tonnage of recycling being collected to see if pick-ups can be reduced to every other week
20. As a result of the decline in funding for road paving, the quality of the roads in the Village has noticeably deteriorated. The CBRAC recommends that the funds available for road paving be restored to previous levels.
21. We recommend that the Village issue an RFP for the cleaning and/or maintenance of Village Hall. In 2012 the total personnel cost to clean/maintain Village Hall was more than \$360k excluding one-time costs. This consisted of two daytime employees and a night cleaner.
22. CBRAC recommends that the Village perform a cost/benefit analysis on borrowing money to expand the installation of LED lighting in the Village relative with the anticipating lower electricity charges from LIPA.
23. Given the costs associated with collecting e-cycling, we recommend that the program be modified from a collection/drop-off program to purely a drop-off program.
24. In an effort to reduce the Village's waste disposal costs, we recommend that the Village continue to explore opportunities to expand its recycling program. Potential areas include all plastic food, soap and beverage containers as well as expanded paper recycling such as office paper, envelopes and junk mail. In addition, we recommend that any changes be better communicated to Village residents.
25. DPW has requested several new pieces of equipment as part of their capital budget for 2013/2014. CBRAC recommends that the Village look to purchase slightly used equipment vs. new equipment.

## Library

26. With labor and labor-related costs consuming 82% of the proposed Library budget, we recommend that the Library Board work to identify opportunities to leverage services that are being provided by the Village, such as integrating payroll staff and systems, put out an RFP for providing cleaning/maintenance services to the library and look addressing provisions in the upcoming contract negotiations that are restrictive with regards to personnel costs in an effort to free up resources to expand the collection of new material.
27. The CBRAC recommends that the Library consider the installation of an automated check out system, such as Express Lane offered by Innovative Interfaces, which requires minimal equipment to install. A number of libraries on Long Island use the system including Elmont, Farmingdale, Roslyn, Centereach, and East Hampton. The system

only requires a computer, bar code reader and printer and is relatively inexpensive to install.

28. We ask that the Library publish annually its key metrics, or "business analytics", providing greater transparency, and allowing a greater understanding of the Library operations and staffing levels. This report should include a list of the library's peer group, based on activities level. Specifically:
  - Number of programs offered (children, young adults, Adults) and attendance at each,
  - Number of new materials added to collection annually,
  - Number of inter-library loans (borrowed and lent),
  - Number of items circulated,
  - Number of visits/individual patrons checking materials out,
  - Number of reference questions (in person, email, phone) by each department,
  - Number of staff on duty throughout the day
29. Cap the number of Librarian II to a set number to reduce personnel costs, given that there is some discretion in promoting a Librarian I to a II.
30. Determine and quantify appropriate incentives for reduction through attrition (i.e. buy-outs).
31. We also recommend that the needed brick work be completed to avoid further damage to the interior and potentially the books and equipment of the Library.
32. Look to bring in an outside vendor to operate the library coffee shop.
33. Eliminate the offering of free printout from the lab or place an annual cap on the number of prints per library member.
34. We recommend that the Library hold focus groups, similar to what the Recreation and Parks Department did recently, to hear directly from library members on services, materials, programs and hour that they want or need.

#### **Recreation and Parks**

35. Put Phase II of pool on hold to see if the year-over-year increase in membership is sustainable.
  36. Revisit cost/benefit of outsourcing field maintenance, factoring in retirement and healthcare costs as well as the reduction in equipment use and maintenance.
  37. Revisit the merger of parts of DPW with the Recreation and Parks Department and identify tangible cost reductions
  38. The CBRAC recommends that the Recreation and Parks Department look to increase participation in the programs that it offers through better communication in a variety of
-

formats (online, email, ads, mailers) with Village residents. The Committee also recommends that the Recreation and Parks website be enhanced to allow for resident sign-up for email alerts on deadlines, programs available by age group, etc

39. In an effort to increase the membership at the pool, the CBRAC recommends looking at other options such as offering fun passes to or 30 day trial passes to new members and potentially opening the pool closer to Memorial Day weekend and increasing lounge seating at the adult pool.
40. Enhance tennis offerings (ball server; list serve; birthday parties; expanded class offerings that focus on serves, volley; starting the kids programs in September; offering more mid-level and advanced classes).
41. Increase program offerings in line with other communities, such as Rockville Centre, which are used by Garden City residents because of lack of programming in the Village.

#### **Water Enterprise**

42. In light of the current budgetary environment, CBRAC recommends that a third party be brought in to evaluate the repair/overhaul of the pumps as opposed to spending \$320k over the next four years on new pumps.
43. The current repair initiative for the water tank is anticipated allow operation for the next 5 years, at which point the decision to repair or replace the tank will be revisited. An analysis should be developed, comparing the long term costs of this repair strategy to a total replacement strategy, including the location of the new water tower.
44. The current 2013/2014 electrical cost estimate is based on a current year forecast that is based on fewer months of actual electrical bills due to late or missing bills in the current fiscal year. The committee recommends a resubmission of this line item for 2013/2014, at a lower cost, based on the actual bills received.