



TOWN OF BERGEN NEWSLETTER

December 2021, January and February 2022



Michele M. Smith, Editor

TOWN NEWS ... FROM THE DESK OF TOWN SUPERVISOR *Ernest Haywood*

At the time this newsletter went to press, we had just received NYS Comptroller approval of our new water district financial plan. The Board is holding a special meeting on November 30th at 7:00 pm, to discuss and act on resolutions to move the project forward. There are still several actions required before actual work begins, but we are encouraged.

For those property owners in the water district, you will see a water district charge on your town and county tax bill in January. The charge on the 2022 tax bill will be \$398.59 per EDU. This is still a partial charge as we have not entered into the permanent financing with Rural Development. The funds collected in 2021 and 2022 will be used to lower the principal amount of the Rural Development 38-year loan.

The Town Board adopted the 2022 Town Budget on October 26. The budget results in a tax rate of \$2.3449 for all properties, both in the village and in the town outside the village. If you recall, last year there were two different tax rates due to the change in the County's method of allocating sales tax revenue. That method has been returned to its original form, allowing the Town to return to one tax rate. For Village property owners, it is an increase in the tax rate; for outside the Village property owners, the result is a decrease in the tax rate.

More importantly, the County's significant reduction in the sharing of sales tax with towns and villages has a major impact on local budgets. In 2019, the Town of Bergen received \$710,415 in sales tax revenues; we have budgeted \$475,000 for 2022.

In other 2022 budget information, Water District No. 2's debt service was paid off in 2021, those property owners will no longer have a \$316 water district tax. The fire district budget increased by \$3,228. Additional changes include the elimination of transfer station.

The Town is closing the transfer station at the end of 2021 (last day to use it is Sunday, December 26th 10-2). We would like to clean up that area of the park and make it useable recreation space. We are consulting with a landscape architect to install plantings, bocce balls courts and benches.

Thank you to Kevin Finnell who is leaving us as Town Prosecutor at the end of 2021 after many years of dedicated service. A special thank you to Ann Sapienza who is leaving the Town Board at the end of the year. Ann worked tirelessly on improvements to town buildings and researching funding sources for town cemeteries.

Finally, I want to encourage everyone to remain vigilant regarding COVID. If you haven't received a vaccine yet, there are many opportunities available by calling (585) 344-2580 or visiting gohealthny.org. All adults are now eligible for a booster vaccine six months after their original vaccine. Wishing you a safe and Happy Holiday Season.



**FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE:
What you need to know about STAR
or "School Tax Relief"**

The School Tax Relief (STAR) program offers property tax relief to eligible New York State homeowners.

If you are eligible and enrolled in the STAR program, you'll receive your benefit each year in one of two ways, based on when you took ownership of your primary residence:

Ownership after March 1st, 2015:

- **STAR credit check.** If you are registered for the STAR credit, the Tax Department will send you a STAR check in the mail each year. You can use the check to pay a portion of your school taxes. You can receive the STAR credit if you own your home and it's your primary residence **and** the combined income of the owners and the owners' spouses is \$500,000 or less.

Ownership on or before March 1st, 2015:

- **STAR exemption: a reduction on your school tax bill.** If you've been receiving the STAR exemption since 2015, you can continue to receive it for the same primary residence. As long as you remain eligible, you'll see a reduction on your school tax bill for the amount of your STAR exemption. **Note:** The STAR *exemption* is no longer available to new homeowners.

For more information on both programs, or to sign up for the Star Credit visit:

NYS STAR resource center: [STAR resource https://www.tax.ny.gov/star/enter \(ny.gov\)](https://www.tax.ny.gov/star/enter (ny.gov))

Village Tree Lighting

Monday, November 29th

Santa's Fire Truck Parade will start at the Fire Hall at 6:30pm traveling through the Village. His elves will pass out gift bags along the way.

There will be a brief stop at Ward Park to light the trees. They will end at Hickory Park with a brief ceremony at the Veteran's Memorial.



Happy Holidays!! During your holiday rush of activities don't forget to enjoy the many holiday books and movies available at your Library! We have cookbooks for meals on the go as well as baking cookbooks for the perfect Christmas cookie! Stop by when the children are on vacation for boredom buster books and craft books to inspire their imaginations. Don't forget your audio books for the long car rides to Grandma's house! Search our website at www.byron-bergenpubliclibrary.org and check out Library happenings as well as our on-line catalog and like us on Facebook and Twitter too!

The Holiday Library hours will be:

Friday December 24th 10am-3pm

Merry Christmas!

Tuesday Dec. 28th 10am-1pm and 2pm-7pm

Wednesday Dec. 29th -10am-1pm and 2pm-7pm

Thursday Dec. 30th 10am-1pm and 2pm-7pm

Friday Dec. 31st – 10am- 3pm

Happy New Year!

Holiday Happenings-



Craft night December 16th at 6pm- Come make a snowflake ornament and enjoy some refreshments too! Register by Dec. 15th

Author visit and signing with Dewey Lovett's book Scary Stories: but not too scary December 21st at 6pm. Join us as she shares her story and how she wrote her first book! Makes a great Christmas gift! Refreshments to follow.

Join us on December 28th at 6pm for Cookie Decorating with Spoonful of Sugar Sweets. Bring your creativity and have some fun learning new decorating techniques with Trish. Registration is required by Dec. 24th and space is limited.

Movie Day at the Library – Thursday Dec. 30th at 3pm. Join us for the movie “Ron's Gone Wrong”- rated PG - a fun event for the whole family to enjoy! Popcorn and drinks provided- Registration is appreciated by calling 494-1120.

Did you get a new Gadget for Christmas? Do you need help getting Library books, movies and music on you gadget? Set up an appointment any Wednesday during regular Library hours to get the help you need. There are more free materials for our patrons that have E-readers, smart phones, laptops and tablets using your Library card. Call 494-1120 or stop in.

Pre-school/Toddler story time will run Fridays at 10:30am starting on January 14th. Join us for a story, craft and a treat! This is recommended for ages 2-5 but younger children are welcome with their parents/guardian. Registration is appreciated.

Book Club meets the 2nd Thursday of every month at 6:30pm! Join us as we explore new and different books and meet new people! No registration required- call the Library for more information.

Winter Fun Story time January 18th at 6:00 pm. Join us for a story or two – wintery craft and a snack – registration necessary by calling 494-1120. Fun for all ages!

February Break Happenings! Look upcoming activities during winter break– check us out on the web at www.Byron-BergenPublicLibrary.org.

Getting a new E-Reader for Christmas or have one now.....Check out our catalog for downloadable e-books free with a valid Nioga Library card. We have Digital movies- magazines-music- eBooks- and audio books through HOOPLA and OverDrive/Libby apps! All you have to do is go to the website www.byron-bergenpubliclibrary.org to download the app & sign up with your Library Card!



If you don't find what you are looking for at the Library, we can order it for you from the NIOGA Library System. The website is www.byron-bergenpubliclibrary.org and click on catalog to see if our system has the book you are looking for. You then can order online, call the Library at 494-1120 or stop in with your request.

The Library has copy /fax service for a small cost, Spectrum Internet on three computers, Wi-Fi and interlibrary loans from any Library in the NIOGA Library system. You can also like us on Facebook and follow on Twitter to keep up with the latest events. For more information on our services or programs, please call the Library at 494-1120.

Happy Holiday Reading -

Nancy Bailey, Library Manager

Town Highway by *Mike Johnson*



Please be reminded that during a “normal” snow event, it will take plow trucks 2 ½ to 3 hours to complete one pass on all roads. As such, it is very possible that everyone will encounter less than pleasant driving conditions at times. Late evenings and early mornings, with very light traffic volumes, will receive lower levels of service. Every attempt will be made to maintain open and passable roadways, both for normal and emergency traffic. At times, lanes may narrow and accumulate snow. The Town is responsible for snow and ice removal on all Town and County roadways in Bergen as well as State routes. This winter, as in the past, we will strive to provide the same level of the safest possible roadways at all times, within reason and budget constraints.

Also remember to use caution on snow covered roads. Here are a few safety tips: Slow Down, make safe lane changes, pump your brakes on slick roads, and lastly don't tailgate, especially the plow truck. If you can't see him in his side mirror there is a good chance, he can't see you! For a First Aid rule: Carbon Monoxide is called “the silent Killer” if you go off the road keep your exhaust clear of snow.

Two additional reminders: Mailboxes, if damaged by our plows will be repaired or replaced, within Town Board adopted limits, as soon as weather, time permit. PLEASE, when installing or repairing your mailbox, remember that our trucks require a minimum 17 ½ feet from center of the roadway. Also, take into account the excessive force of the exhausted snow as it strikes your mailbox assembly.

Please don't hesitate to call me at 494-1362 if I may be of service. Highway Department hours are 7:00 am – 3:30 pm Monday thru Friday. However, you may leave a message 24 hours a day on our answering machine, and I will return your call as soon as possible. In closing, the entire highway department would like to wish everyone a healthy and happy holiday season, and a safe winter.



Town & County Taxes

For your safety in person tax payments will be limited, to avoid this please use the drop box at the main door or please mail payments to P.O. Box 249, sorry for any inconvenience. Please call the office 494-1121 x21 for more information.

If you pay your own taxes, you will receive your tax bill shortly after January 1, 2022. If you should receive a tax bill that an escrow company or someone else is supposed to pay, please call me right away. Don't put it aside and assume that it will be paid. Also, if you have paid off your mortgage and did not receive a tax bill, you should call me. No matter what the situation is, you are responsible for your taxes and penalties, if it is not paid. If you are leaving town for the winter, please leave your "winter" address with me so late fees can be avoided. Credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express) are accepted for payment with a convenience fee.

Tax payments cannot be received before January 1, 2022 per the County Treasurers office, all payments will be stamped after that date. Taxes are due penalty free by January 31st, all taxes have to be paid to me by March 31st. After **March 31st**, the unpaid taxes are returned to the County Treasurer. If you are going to pay them to the County Treasurer by mail, you will need to call his office in Batavia at 344-2550, ext. 2211 as there will be additional penalties.



Dog License News:

I hate to "hound" you, but if your dog's license renewal is due or past due, please take care of it so we don't have to send you a reminder notice or eventually a court appearance ticket. All dogs, four months of age need to be licensed even those in apartments. Proof of a rabies vaccination and proof of neutering or spaying must be presented at the time of licensing. If you receive an appearance ticket, you will have to pay a fee of \$25.00 plus also pay for your dog's renewal. If there is a problem getting an appointment for a rabies vaccination, etc., please call me. I have an answering machine so you can call anytime day or night.

New Town Clerk Office Hours: With the Transfer Station closing at the end of the year (December 26th) the office will no longer be open on Saturdays but there will be extended hours on Monday – Wednesday until 5:00 pm effective January 1, 2022. I am always available by appointment, if necessary, on Saturdays call 494-1121 x21 for an appointment. Any payments can be left in the drop box outside the main door during off hours.

OFFICE CLOSINGS

- December 24th & 25th – Christmas Holiday
- January 17, 2022 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- February 21, 2022 – Presidents Day

NEW OFFICE HOURS

- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
8:00 - 12:00 & 1:00 - 5:00
- Friday
8:00 - 12:00 & 1:00 - 4:00
- Closed on Thursdays & Saturdays



ATTENTION SNOW BIRDS

If you are leaving town for the winter, please leave your winter address with the Town Clerk/Tax Collector to mail your Town & County Tax Bill to avoid any late fees. All Tax Bills are mailed on December 31st and are due by January 31st without penalty.

Michele Smith, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
494-1121 Ext. 21



THE TRANSFER STATION WILL BE OPEN ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26TH 10:00 am – 2:00 pm FOR FINAL TRASH DISPOSAL. NO REFUNDS FOR LEFT OVER BAGS AND TAGS (tags can be punched for garbage)

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE TOWN OF BERGEN



**TOWN of BERGEN
10 HUNTER STREET
BERGEN, NY 14416
bergenny.org**

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html or at any USDA office, or call (866)632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S.D.A., Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202)690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov"