

A VIEW OF THE FALLS

Office of the Mayor - Richard B. Milne

April 4, 2011

As we end our 2010/2011 fiscal year and begin 2011/2012, we take some time to conduct our annual business and complete the mundane tasks that every municipality and most businesses must complete. Yet, this business is important and does indeed help guide the way we do business in the months ahead.

What is not mundane, are the appointments I, along with my fellow trustees, get to make. The fact that there are many people in this community that will step forward tonight and in the coming year to volunteer their time and talents for the betterment of this incredible village is one of the things that drive me to serve this community. Whether it is for our Zoning Board, Planning Board, Parks Committee, Conservation Board, Board of Ethics or any other committee that arises; we have many talented people that will step forward. To all of those people, I thank you.

Some 173 years ago this Village was incorporated (March 13, 1838) five men were elected Trustees, there were three Assessors, a Clerk Treasurer and a Collector. For these 173 years residents of this community have come together as volunteers and employed to continue the work started long ago.

Certainly the Village community has changed in some ways, where once the community had to be more self-sufficient with many grocers, various shops, a hotel, grist mills and saw mills, farms and more. People lived here, worked here and stayed here. Today, we tend to have more of a commuting community. The vast majority, work outside of the Village and travel outside much more often for everyday needs. This is the same in most small communities today.

However, I believe many of us want to be "home" in the Village more often and I believe we'll see more growth in business and development here in the coming years and there is some of this occurring now with the new businesses that have opened or are opening in the near future. Honeoye Falls will most likely never be a booming metropolis, but I would be willing to bet our main struggle will continue to be our effort to keep our historic atmosphere and that small village feel as we do indeed grow. Let's not be afraid of that growth though, we are moving forward, we are creating a new history and as we do so, let us be sure to preserve as much of our old history as possible. Let us be good stewards in preserving our past so that our children will have an even richer history to learn about and to be part of. As we move into our new fiscal year, we enter the year strong and in a good financial situation. We have worked hard to provide our various departments the tools they need to support you, our residents, with the services you have come to expect. Together, the Village Trustees and staff, have made decisions over the past six years to aggressively address what we believe was a dangerously low tax rate. We were in a situation that would not allow us to appropriately provide financial support to our capital reserves, provide for street repairs, and provide for equipment repairs or the purchase of new equipment without financing the vast majority of these needs. Today, we are in a much better situation and I thank my fellow Trustees, our Village Administrator, Village Clerk and all of our staff for making the difficult decisions necessary together to get to this point.

Certainly, we can not take the stance that we don't have anything to worry about. The dire financial situation that the State of New York has been in will not go away for some time. There are difficult times ahead but I believe that there are many people working hard to correct the ills of the state, and I do believe many of the problems can be remedied. While that happens, we must continue to be vigilant in how we conduct our business, be prepared for emergencies and keep our financials in order. At the same time, we must continue to move forward, think progressively and set ourselves up for success today and tomorrow.

I have had the honor of serving this community as Mayor for six years and as trustee about five years prior. When I look around this room and also think of those that are not here tonight, I know I am blessed to work with a team of people that I truly value, a group of people whose thoughts, ideas and values are appreciated and a group of people I am honored to call friends. This is indeed a TEAM and this team is unbeatable. I thank each and every one of you for your support and efforts this past year and I know that the effort will be continued as we move forward.

The future is bright but we have much to do, our efforts to complete our village's master plan has made some progress but not nearly enough, to that effort I am speaking with local universities to help with some of the specific needs of the project. The marketing and branding of the Village is important to our future and our efforts to show businesses, developers and potential residents why they should come to Honeoye Falls; to that end, Rochester Institute of Technology is assisting in the development of this program and we're excited to have their support.

Continuing to provide the services we do today is important and a key reason for people to want to live in Honeoye Falls.

Our emergency services departments must continue to be first class so that our residents and businesses know they are safe and have the support needed. To continue this we will be moving to purchase a new first class fire truck pumper in the next year or two and our older ambulance will be refurbished. Training for all our volunteers will be our first concern, along with making sure these firefighters and EMS personnel are safe by providing the proper equipment they need without spending tax-payer dollars on frivolous items that are not necessary for completing their jobs.

Our various boards (Conservation, Planning and Zoning) will work with the Village Trustees and staff to ensure our planning and development continues in a positive manor. Working to make sure codes, rules and requirements are followed while working with developers and residents that want to improve their property and thus our community will continue. I believe we have made good strides in this area and we will continue to move forward in this manor.

Our highway department and Department of Public Works like our emergency services departments must have the equipment and training necessary to complete the many tasks that they tackle on a daily basis. Our waste water treatment plant has undergone many changes/upgrades and this project continues. While this may not be a facility that is in everyone's thoughts each day, it certainly would be if your toilet didn't flush or if your tubor shower or kitchen sink didn't drain. This facility and infrastructure is one of the most important components in a village like Honeoye Falls and we must keep it in first class condition as well. You will also hear of a major project that we do need to tackle in the near future which will include new sewer lines on Main Street (North and West). This will be a very costly project and will be difficult to complete. Planning is underway and we hope to get support through state and/or federal funding to make this project become a reality. This is a key need for our community and for the support of future development.

Communication with our residents and community members will continue to be a key component of what we do. It has been my goal to be as transparent as possible, to get information out to our community and to welcome feedback. I try to answer all emails, letters or calls to the best of my ability. This will continue to be a focus and I do ask that that you continue to communicate with your Village Board and my office. Your input is very important and appreciated.

We live in an incredible community with a great future; together we will continue to build on a rich history and continue to develop a bright future for those that follow. I thank you for your support and for the opportunity to serve in the capacity that I do.

Rick Milne
Mayor, Village of Honeoye Falls