

# A VIEW OF THE FALLS

## Office of the Mayor - Richard B. Milne

Monroe County Association of Village Mayors

Village of Brockport

Village of Churchville

Village of East Rochester

Village of Fairport

Village of Hilton

Village of Honeoye Falls

Village of Pittsford

Village of Scottsville

Village of Spencerport

Village of Webster

Re: NYS Executive Budget – Tax Freeze Proposal

The Governor's proposed 2014-15 Executive Budget contains a proposed property tax freeze. This two year municipal tax freeze will grant individuals (outside NYC) with an adjusted gross income of \$500,000 or less for primary residences only, a small tax credit. It is not applicable to businesses.

The tax credit would be equal to the taxpayer's year-to-year increase in property taxes – resulting in a two-year freeze.

Since all residents live in multiple jurisdictions (e.g., you are a resident of the village, town and county), the credit will only be based on those jurisdictions that meet the eligibility requirements as proposed by the executive budget.

The state had previously promised meaningful mandate relief following the implementation of the property tax cap. This promise has not been kept and there has been no additional state aid to local municipalities.

Municipalities across the state continue their efforts to consolidate and share services. The proposed tax freeze does not take into account the great efforts made already to save taxpayers money and keep our municipal tax rates flat. In Monroe County alone there are many examples of efforts to share services; here are a few local municipalities have already implemented:

- ~ The Village of Brockport has reduced staffing by leaving vacant the positions of Village Manager, part time Economic Development Coordinator, DPW (Water) Foreman, and part time Police Clerk. They have reduced Village Hall-Clerk Treasurer staff from 4 full time to 3 full time and 1 part time (Treasurer)
- ~ The Village of Brockport DPW shares a sewer camera with the Village of Hilton and Village of Spencerport. The cost of the equipment and maintenance is split three ways by the participating villages.
- ~ The Village of Brockport shares equipment with Brockport Central School District (BCSD) and the district uses the Brockport salt storage facility.
- ~ The Village of Churchville has not replaced two full time positions since 2010 when vacancies occurred.
- ~ The Village of Churchville entered into a three year intermunicipal agreement with the local school district in 2012 for sweeping and maintaining the district parking lots, lawn work and snow removal.
- ~ The Village of East Rochester is a charter member of a self-funded health care consortium and with a self-funded workers compensation program with several other western NY municipalities.
- ~ The Village of East Rochester is in the process of consolidating services for cable access T.V. with the towns of Pittsford and Perinton, and the Village of Fairport.
- ~ The Village of East Rochester has reduced staffing in both the Clerk's Office and Department of Public Works.
- ~ The Village of Fairport retains a Fire Emergency joint training facility with Bushnell's Basin and the Egypt Fire Districts.
- ~ The Village of Fairport is a founder and participator in the Finger Lakes Municipal Health Insurance Trust – with 12 participating members to help control the rising cost of health care.
- ~ The Village of Fairport participates in a county shared energy (natural gas) agreement. This has been a long term effort and as buildings are converted from electric to gas they are incorporated into the agreement.
- ~ The Village of Hilton along with the Hilton Central School District, Hilton Parma Fire District and Town of Parma constructed and share a new salt barn. This was constructed without state aid and was constructed at a \$317,000 savings from the original cost estimate. This savings was achieved by local employees completing the demolition work of the old structure, mitigating hazardous materials and conducting site work before and during construction. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of dollars will be saved through this inter-municipal agreement for use of the new salt barn.
- ~ The Village of Hilton, under an inter-municipal agreement with the Town of Parma, Hilton Central School District and Hilton Parma Fire District is currently constructing a joint fueling station to be utilized by the four entities saving all residents in total fuel costs and maintenance upkeep.
- ~ The Village of Hilton has absorbed the workload and thus the costs of three management positions upon their separation from Village employment.
- ~ The Village of Honeoye Falls entered into a shared services agreement with the Honeoye Falls-Lima Central School District for use of their fueling station for our Highway, Sewer, Fire and Ambulance Departments. The school district has a state of the art fueling station and the Village did not have a sufficient fueling station. Entering into this agreement saved the village an estimated \$350,000

in long term debt and annual budget savings are approximately 1.5% over 20 years.

- ~ The Village of Honeoye Falls entered into a shared services agreement with the Town and Village of Lima to share their building inspector. By sharing the building inspector position, the Villages budgeted cost for this position has been reduced by \$30,000/annually.
- ~ The Village of Honeoye Falls is a charter member of the Upstate New York Municipal Workers Compensation Program. Forming this group and becoming self insured has saved the village over \$45,000/annually in our Workers Compensation cost. This is a 3% annual savings to the budget.
- ~ The Village of Pittsford currently shares several services with the Town of Pittsford. These include the Town Assessor, Town Justice and Court, animal control and historian positions.
- ~ The Village of Pittsford has inter-municipal agreements with the Town of Pittsford for sharing equipment, labor and code enforcement services as needed for both entities. These agreements save the residents of the village and town the cost of duplicating equipment as well as sharing in specific labor costs when utilized.
- ~ The Village of Pittsford along with the Town of Pittsford and Pittsford Central School District formed a Leadership Team in 2005. This group meets every other month where they will seek each others input on projects and find opportunities to work together toward their common vision.
- ~ The Village of Scottsville through an inter-municipal agreement with the Town of Wheatland and Monroe County has eliminated its Waste-Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) and a pump station will be utilized to pump all waste from the town and village to the Monroe County system. This effort takes a projected \$8.5 million WWTP upgrade that was needed for the Scottsville plant to a pump station and infrastructure that is estimated at \$4.5 million resulting in \$4 million in cost savings.
- ~ The Village of Scottsville also has inter-municipal agreements with the Town of Wheatland to share services for the local justice court system, assessment needs and code enforcement duties via contract.
- ~ The Village of Spencerport has an inter-municipal agreement with the Spencerport Central School District (SCSD) to allow the Department of Public Works performs repair services for the school districts fleet equipment.
- ~ The Village of Spencerport has an inter-municipal agreement to sell fuel to the Spencerport Fire District and Spencerport Ambulance via use of its fueling station.
- ~ The Village of Spencerport has an inter-municipal agreement with the Town of Ogden to share assessing services as well as building department services.
- ~ The Village of Webster recently signed a Retail Lease Agreement with Monroe County Water Authority which has resulted in improved water conditions for the Village residents and also is projected to save an estimated \$3,000,000. in maintenance savings to the Village as it will not be responsible for re-lining the Ridge Road water trunk line or the painting and relining of the water towers on South Avenue.
- ~ The Village of Webster maintains an inter-municipal agreement with the Town of Webster to share equipment when performing road maintenance projects. This estimated savings is 50% on trucking costs alone. In 2011 this equated to a cost of at least \$6000 or 1% of the villages tax levy for the year.
- ~ The Village of Webster also cooperates with the Webster Central school District (WCSD) and the Northeast Joint Fire Districts to utilize one fueling station saving in general costs for all involved for the both the cost of the fuel and the maintenance of the underground tanks that are utilized.

This proposed tax freeze is yet another example of an unfunded mandate that will force municipalities across the state to consider cutting essential services that their residents expect and often demand. The state must recognize that there are different types of local governments with very different structures that don't always lend themselves to sharing services or consolidating. These types of arrangements do not always make sense and may not always be in the best interest of the community.

As a unified coalition of The Monroe County Association of Village Mayors, we urge our state representatives NOT to support the Property Tax Freeze proposed in the Governor's Executive Budget and to work with the state's municipalities to enhance state aid as well as positively continue to strive to consolidate and share services where it makes sense and without mandates. Rather than attempting to freeze property taxes with a convoluted and administratively burdensome income tax rebate program, an infusion of state aid to local governments, with the proviso that it must be used for freezing a municipality's property tax levy would be the most effective way to produce a property tax freeze for residents and businesses alike.

With unified concern and in cooperative effort,  
Association of Monroe County Village Mayors

Village of Brockport, Mayor Margaret B. Blackman  
Village of Churchville, Mayor Nancy L. Steedman  
Village of East Rochester, Mayor Fred Ricci  
Village of Fairport, Mayor Frederick H. May  
Village of Hilton, Mayor Joseph Lee  
Village of Honeoye Falls, Mayor Richard B. Milne  
Village of Pittsford, Mayor Robert C. Corby  
Village of Scottsville, Mayor Paul F. Gee  
Village of Spencerport, Mayor Joyce Lobene  
Village of Webster, Mayor John Cahill