



INCORPORATED VILLAGE OF
Plandome Heights

37 Orchard Street, Manhasset, New York 11030
Tel: (516) 627-1136 Fax: (516) 627 1393
www.plandomeheights-ny.gov

Kenneth C. Riscica
Mayor

Daniel Cataldo
Mary Hauck
Kristina Lobosco
Florence Musalo
Gus Panopoulos
Norman Taylor
Trustees

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Prosecutor

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Emergency Mgmt.
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Zoning and Appeals
Board, Chair

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Technology Advisory
Board, Chair

Mary Gabriel
Historian

January 10, 2024

RE: Village Update

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

We live in interesting times. I write to give you an update on the Village mid-way through our current, 2024, fiscal year.

Over the last two years we identified *inflation* and *human resources* as challenges we face in addition to *occupancy*. These are the three issues driving our "Planning Beyond One Year." So, where do we stand?

On inflation, virtually all of our costs are trending higher. For example, the substantial savings we experienced by installing our LED street lights have been largely consumed by higher energy costs. Human resources are in short supply in general. To keep up, our costs are higher and increased building activities increases our need for staff hours. To be competitive, we have added to our benefits and the costs of those benefits are up significantly. Further, we have fees and costs associated with personnel transitions. Our limited size is a factor in recruitment and retention; however, the Village offers a unique opportunity and a flexible, collegial workplace. The cooperation and respect that residents show our staff is also helpful; we all appreciate them.

Another important activity is our Digital Records initiative, starting with *your* Property Files. That project is critical. For 95 years, these critical paper records documenting your property have been vulnerable to loss. Now, they are (a) digitized and (b) safely stored in the cloud in a data management system that is backed-up. This involves costs beyond the grants.

So, inflation and human resources and other costs are having their effect, as we anticipated.

The *good news* is that three things are mitigating these increases including:

- Long-term contracts – including occupancy (2025), snow removal (2026) and sanitation (2027) which have increases that are likely less than current inflation,
- Increases in 2023 to building user fees – to cover increasing costs and
- Interest income – on our reserve funds associated with our goal of a new Village Hall.

While we budgeted *use of surplus* for 2024 to blunt expected cost increases, I expect that the factors above will likely result in a *surplus* in fiscal 2024 that would keep us on a *steady path*.

So, our *active management* and Planning Beyond One Year process is working to maintain our low and stable taxes. And I expect that our taxes will continue to be the lowest Village taxes in Nassau County* as we face the challenges of the future in a thoughtful way. As always, questions, comments and complaints are cheerfully accepted.

Sincerely,

INCORPORATED VILLAGE OF PLANDOME HEIGHTS

Kenneth C. Riscica, Mayor

Mayor@PlandomeHeights-NY.Gov

* Excludes two villages with half our population and one that operates on endowment, not taxes.