

Mayor's Message for July 2018

I want to start by wishing everyone a happy and safe Fourth of July holiday. Every year while firing up the barbeque and watching fireworks, we all join together in celebrating the Declaration of Independence and the founding of our great nation.

Congratulations to the Class of 2018 Rhinebeck High School Grads!. We will look to you for inspiration as you continue to advance your skills and knowledge. Many of you will leave this area for jobs, college or adventure. Just remember Rhinebeck will always welcome you back.

As anyone in the workforce knows, benefits are important, whether you work part or full-time. Until now, our part-time employees did not receive paid holidays, vacation or sick leave.

This changed after the Village Board voted to provide our hardworking permanent part-time employees with:

- vacation time prorated on the UPSEU contract
- 6 holidays (New Years Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas)
- .25 days of sick time per period, up to 13 days

John Fenton, DPW, Building Inspector and Zoning Enforcement Officer, recently did double duty, filling in for the Red Hook Building Inspector who needed emergency surgery. It is great to have such great relations with our neighbors, and thanks to John for stepping in.

Big congratulations to Darren Forbes, Assistant Chief of the Rhinebeck Fire Department. Darren has been appointed Deputy Coordinator for Battalion One. The Battalion One Commander coordinates the Rhinebeck, Rhinecliff, Hillside, Red Hook, Staatsburg and Tivoli fire departments. He is replacing Sandy Williams, a member of the Rhinebeck Fire Department since 1958, who served at the helm for 47 years. We are deeply thankful for his many years of service.

On July 10th, look for the paving project to get underway on Crosmour Drive, Crosmour Road, North Park (North) and Violet Place. Our Village Highway Department, Supervisor Mike Wolff will be teaming with the Town Highway Department, run by Superintendent Barry Sherrod. Town officials forged an agreement with 3 other municipalities to buy a road paver, and we are saving money by using it for this project. Thanks to Supervisor Elizabeth Spinzia, the Highway Departments and Deputy Mayor Ric Lewit!

The Grant Committee, headed by Trustee John Rossi, is also working hard to allow us to make improvements while saving money. Inspired by early successes, such as the NYSERDA Grant for EV charging stations, and the NYS Grant for digitizing our records, the committee is now going after new larger scale grants. The Village is applying

for funding from Federal and New York State grant programs. The applications currently underway could provide crucial money for:

- Sidewalks to improve pedestrian and bicyclists safety, crosswalks and biking paths to schools.
- NY DEC grant that will allow us to improve the health and safety of trees in the Village and the Town of Rhinebeck Cemetery
- A NY Regional Economic Development Grant(REDG) to cover much needed upgrades to our water system.
- Another REDG grant to advance existing projects at Legion Park and Crystal Lake.

For more information or questions about any of these projects, please contact me or Trustee Rossi and we will provide more details. Meanwhile, we are happy to report, now that we have funding, we are seeking bids for procuring and installing two dual port level 2 EV charging stations. The convenient new stations will be in the parking lot behind Village Hall.

And, this month, anyone who is interested in the Town Wide Reassessment Project, is invited to join us on July 10(5:30) the and/or July 14th(10 am) at the Town Hall to learn what it will mean for the village and for you.

On July 9th, we will be hosting a workshop orchestrated by Trustee Brant Neuneker on Short Term Rentals at 7pm at Village Hall. We are hard at work on how to find a healthy balance of economic growth and tourism, while also protecting our neighborhoods. Being a complicated issue, it's taking some time but soon we will have the new regulations in place.

The Village of Rhinebeck got a high grade on the New York State Fiscal Stress Monitoring System for 2017! It's actually a low grade, as we got a "zero" in fiscal stress. The rating gives an objective assessment of fiscal challenges facing local governments, while looking for areas where corrective action might be needed. You can read more about it here:

http://www1.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/fmnotification1/satfiles/2017/Village/Rhinebeck_2017.pdf

We have adjusted some of our building and planning fees after a comprehensive review. The adjustments are modest, and bring Village of Rhinebeck fees in line with the cost of administration. On our website, you can find the current fees.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me, I can always be reached at 845-876-7015 or MayorBassett@VillageofRhinebeckny.gov or come to see me during open hours from 1pm to 2pm daily