

Happy Holidays!

Easements, Budgets and Taxes

They are all related and interdependent. Easements drive the budget which drives our taxes. Indian Lake will have the highest tax rates in Somerset County for 2012. The sole cause is the dam work and the budget line-item to pay off the anticipated debt. Due to some hard work, creativity and vigilance by Council, the budget and taxes are not as bad as we thought or that they could have been. Part of that is due to the concept of raising the breast of the dam instead of building a new secondary spillway. That, however, requires easements from every lakefront property owner, including park lots. It isn't happening smoothly or easily...

We only have 80% of the easements signed. We are beginning to see sales and transfers of properties, and other less fortunate changes in ownership, that are occurring more rapidly than new easements are being signed and returned; the point of diminishing returns has been passed. It isn't happening smoothly or easily...

We have only 2 options; 1) Take the easements by eminent domain, or 2) Regroup, pass a new debt referendum, borrow more money for a secondary spillway, increase the budgets to pay for it, and raise taxes even further. We keep appealing to the hold-outs but it isn't happening smoothly or easily...

Because eminent domain can also be costly to the Borough, though we expect a positive outcome, we are conducting one last-ditch appeal. Please act and/or encourage your neighbors?!?!?

If you have lost your copy and would like another, please [Click Here](#) to send an e-mail to easement@indianlakepa.us and we will send you another copy.

Water Quality; Buckstown Tank Service Area

It's a long, sad saga but we finally have a second, hopefully acceptable, solution to the chlorine issues in DEP's hands and should have their approval by February. The boil-water notice remains in effect. If we get approval in February we should have the work done in March, April at the latest, and definitely before the next boating season.

The Buckstown Tank serves about 15% of our customers as currently configured. The service area is shown on a marked-up map

No action on your part is required; this is just information for those following our progress.

Recycling - No more...

You likely haven't noticed, but our attempt at a recycling program at the Lake has withered and died. Reese's Sanitation put a nice new multi-compartment recycle bin roll-off at the office for 3 months. It was almost never used and was removed the end of November, moved to a more worthy location.

Police Coverage

Beginning in January we will be shifting to a part-time police force. The impetus was to reduce costs and limit the tax increase amount, which it does rather substantially. Our goal was to minimize the impact. Part time officers actually will provide us the flexibility to have less than full-time coverage during the week in winter months and to schedule multiple officers during peak times such as holiday weekends during the summer months. Nothing changes on your end; you still call 9-1-1 for emergencies and 814-267-3776 for non-emergencies.

We wish to thank Denise and Shawn for their dedicated service and hope to see them around part-time.

Water and Sewer

First, when it comes to budgets and expenses, water and sewer are completely separate pots/funds and are not at all related to taxes. Fact is, our sewage fund applies to less than 10% of our residences and businesses; those on the Lakewood Treatment Plant. The Borough is not permitted to comingle those funds with other revenue, nor pay those expenses with tax dollars. Same goes for water; only water charges can be used for water expenses.

That said, we need to upgrade our ancient water and sewer controls and instrumentation. Calling what we have 'controls and instrumentation' is actually funny, almost hilarious. Currently they consist of Dean driving around and checking levels, starting and stopping pumps manually, looking for broken things, and making an adjustment or repair if needed. Worse, a customer notices a mini-disaster in progress and calls it in. Perhaps fortunately, new DEP regulations and requirements mandate more proactive monitoring and controls, particularly on water.

For the past 2 years we have worked on the upgrade, called SCADA or Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition. We watched the estimates grow from a \$15-20,000 'simple' upgrade to \$150,000 custom system before we pulled the plug and regrouped. Recently we found that several neighboring communities were using a cell-phone-technology-based company out of Atlanta who provides a simple solution (easy to use and understand) that is incredibly powerful and robust, yet cost effective. We're back at \$25,000 estimates for both water and sewer. There is money in those pots already to cover that amount... We're back on track, or so it seems.

Shanksville Fire Department Sub and Pizza Fundraiser

The Shanksville Fire Department serves us well. We should support them when we can. The Shanksville Fire Department is selling Subs and Pizzas as a fundraiser this winter, once each in January, February and March. [Click Here](#) for their flyer. Subs can be ordered at Ida's or by e-mailing Mike Miscoe at Mayor@indianlakepa.us.

New Year's Eve at the Lodge

Indian Lake Resort is taking Reservations for New Year's Eve. They are offering a special limited menu which includes some of the favorites from the regular menu and some mouth-watering new ones as well.

[Click Here](#) for the 4-page menu.

There will be a DJ from 9 p.m. to Midnight.

Call 814-754-4975 to reserve your dinner seating.

Happy New Year!!

Dick Stern

CouncilPresident@indianlakepa.us