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Marc

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On Apr 20, 2020, at 11:05 AM, Mayra Rodriguez Valladares, MRV Associates <[mrvassoc@yahoo.com](mailto:mrvassoc@yahoo.com)> wrote:

**CAUTION:** External sender.

Good morning,

I trust that you had a good weekend and that your loved ones and you are well.

I remain very concerned that there is a significant lack of data and documentation missing to justify many proposed appropriations in the Tentative Village Budget for 2020-2021. No appropriate stress test with relevant macroeconomic data has been conducted on the budget. I wrote last week about relevant unemployment, GDP, and real estate scenarios that should be included. On March 31<sup>st</sup>, I urged you to make relevant data publicly available to Scarsdale residents.

Additionally, the Voters Choice Party candidates, Bob Berg, Sean Cohen, Bob Selvaggio, and I find it very worrisome that as Scarsdale residents are losing their jobs and income, you are still planning to raise taxes without all appropriations being fully justified. Our [working paper](#) and [budget analysis](#) had many recommendations to which you have not responded. Hence, last night we launched a [petition](#) asking you respectfully to lower Village taxes. In less than 12 hours of being launched, the petition garnered over 110 signatures. And that figure keeps growing.

I urge you to have an emergency meeting on the budget before April 28<sup>th</sup>, that is well publicized via Facebook, as well as traditional media, in order to get a broad cross section of residents' views. Barely any residents are on Twitter, so news through that social media are not reaching the necessary audience. Very few residents have participated in the last two budget hearings.

The petition is below.

Best regards,  
Mayra Kirkendall-Rodriguez

19 April 2020

Dear Scarsdale Village Mayor and Board of Trustees,

We, the undersigned, are Scarsdale Village residents. **We respectfully request that you revise the Village Budget for Fiscal 2020/2021 downward, that you do**

**not raise Village property taxes as currently planned, and instead, you lower them.**

It is **unconscionable** that during the current pandemic and economic crisis, the Scarsdale Village Board would raise our property taxes. In New York State alone, the **unemployment rate** is already at 13% and rising, while **business activity** has plummeted. Scarsdale residents are not immune, especially since half of the households **make less than \$250k** annually. No doubt, when updated data are released the figure will be far worse, because many of us have lost our jobs or have had our salaries decreased just in the last four weeks. Many of our businesses and those in Scarsdale have been forced to shut down.

To address the issues above, the Voters Choice Party undertook a **budget analysis** and proposed at least \$2 million in possible cuts from the **Village Budget**. These cuts can be undertaken *without* cutting back on services, furloughing staff, or negatively impacting our Village. During the **public hearing** on the Village Budget on April 14, 2020, the Village Manager, Mayor and the Trustees were unwilling to address these \$2 million in proposed cuts, saying “it’s more complicated than that.” The Board *cannot justify* the proposed expenses below, for which we will be taxed in July 2020:

- \$1 million in overtime and excess pay for career firefighters. As in other towns, our 58 volunteer firefighters can cover overtime shifts in order to avoid the over \$1 million excess pay.
- \$200k in “Supplemental Services Freightway” for lawyers and consultants for a project we’re told is on ‘pause.’ The Village has already **spent \$300,000** on these same Freightway lawyers and consultants.
  - During Tuesday's **Budget Hearing**, when questioned about the unnecessary \$200k appropriation for Freightway lawyers and consultants, the **response** was “For example, Freightway, *I don’t anticipate there being any money expended on those Freightway uses, but what are we going to do with them? Where are they going to go? We could put them immediately, I guess, into the contingent account.*” It is improper knowingly to appropriate tax dollars for a designated purpose, when the Trustees have no intention of spending those tax dollars on the designated purpose.
- \$370k in Supplemental Services in the Village Attorney category, a 64% rise from last year? What is the reason for this appropriation?

- \$500k in raises for police retroactive to 2019 and another \$500k in raises for 2020. Why is it anathema to ask Village employees to skip salary increases this year?
- \$60k overtime at Water Department for a \$100k salaried pump operator; why not hire an additional part-time operator?
- \$29k for books/periodicals for the Village Attorney. We do not have one anymore; we have an outside law firm.
- \$15K in capital funds for the Boniface Circle Park design project. Are these expenditures vital now?

We urge the Mayor and Board of Trustees to reduce budgeted expenditures by \$2 million, and thereby lower the tax levy by \$2 million (4.8%), and revise the Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Village Budget accordingly before the April 28<sup>th</sup> budget vote.

Best regards,  
Residents of Scarsdale Village

\*All words in this [petition](#) that are underlined, have a link embedded to the relevant source of information.

Managing Principal

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