

Mayor Runfeldt's Message

May 2010

Over the previous three months, the Borough Council, I and administration have been examining the 2010 municipal budget, making cuts and adjustments. We are keenly aware of the current economic times we in Lincoln Park and indeed throughout New Jersey and the nation are experiencing. In addition, cuts made by Governor Christie in terms of reducing state aid had a major impact upon the Borough of Lincoln Park.

When I last wrote about the budget in the March issue of the Beavertown Journal, I mentioned that we had a long road before the budget would be complete. In late March we were presented with a reduction of over 20% of our yearly municipal aid for a total additional reduction of \$226,262.00. Immediately upon receipt of the reduction of our aid and the accompanying budget deficit the Borough found itself in, a department head meeting was called for. I am pleased to give credit to all of our department heads of the Borough as well as the members of the PBA and the USW. Both unions felt that the Borough operates as a team and voluntarily accepted furlough days and other concessions in order to assist closing the budget gap. Every department underwent even further major cuts from the initial budget cuts enacted over the winter. The administration and several department heads have accepted furloughs as well in conjunction with the unions.

Together the personnel of Lincoln Park truly banded together to ensure that Borough operations remain intact and continue to provide services to our residents.

The budget as it stands currently shows a reduction in spending in the 2010 budget of \$228,813.77. Within the 2010 budget is a line item indicating \$250,000.00 grant we received for the repaving of Ryerson Rd. When this grant, which must be shown as an expenditure even though it does not come out of the residents property taxes, is taken into account the Borough of Lincoln Park this year has reduced spending by just under a half a million dollars!!

Contributing heavily to this effective result has been initiatives launched in 2009 such as the recycling program. The reduction in tipping fees the Borough pays combined with the revenue received, allowed us to reduce anticipated spending in this area by approximately \$200,000.00. This is a credit to our residents who have had a direct impact on municipal spending through their participation in this program.

The 2010 budget was introduced at the regular meeting of the Borough council on April 19, 2010. It will be posted online and I encourage all residents to please read through and familiarize themselves with the budget. Once passed, the budget will be found online by following the links at www.lincolnpark.org. As always we welcome your input and comments.

During the budget hearings over the winter there were present several citizens who came to every meeting and observed the budget process as it unfolded and our attempts to

ensure fiscal accountability. I would like to thank those residents who took the time to observe the process and encourage more to do so in the future.

Going forward, in light of the fiscal realities, there continues to be a hiring freeze at the Borough level. Shared service talks continue with other municipalities in seeking not just services but shared purchases to ensure we operate in a more efficient manner. Our personnel costs are lower. In fact, the Borough's total workforce for full time employees has been reduced by nearly 15% in just three short years since I was elected Mayor. This number includes all of our DPW, police, borough hall personnel and all departments employing full time personnel.

Spending to fund state mandated programs and unavoidable cost increases such as insurance, pension contributions and costs to our sewerage waste treatment, combined with a year that saw our revenues drop tremendously as a result of the nationwide recession, have challenged this budget process. The Borough Council, I and administration have worked to set a budget that is both fiscally responsible and provides for the services that you have come to expect from us. This year's budget will amount to a \$129.00 annual increase in taxes on the average home in Lincoln Park.

On a lighter note, I hope that the nicer weather that comes along with Spring finds you and your family healthy and happy. There will be much going on in and around town in the coming months. I look forward to your participation and that you have the opportunity to enjoy what is offered.