

Hear Ye, Hear Ye... Homer Township Taxes Are Going DOWN!

From Township Supervisor Steve Balich

Everyone deserves a Christmas present, and December 13, 2021, the Homer Township Board just voted to give every property owner an early gift! On Monday, December 13th, your Township Board voted to reduce the Township tax levy and save all Township Property Taxpayers \$268,487.50 in 2022. On that same day, the Township Board also voted to approve the proposed Township Highway Department budget which will cut that tax levy by 66%, from \$5 million to \$1.7 million, saving taxpayers \$3.3 million.

When your property tax bills arrive in March of 2022, you will find a pleasant surprise... a tax REDUCTION in both the "HOMER TWP TOWN FUNDS" and "HOMER TWP ROAD FUNDS" Taxing District Line items. Hooray!

If this bit of news is good enough for you, then that's just great. For those who like the details, please find a run-down of how these tax reductions were achieved below.

HOMER TWP TOWN FUNDS REDUCTION

Your Homer Township representatives are committed to lowering your taxes. I, along with Township Board members, Clerk Vicki Bozen, Trustees Mike Bonomo, Matt Connelly, Rob Rivera, and Angela Adolf, Collector Mark Gawron, and Assessor Carmen Maurella all rolled up our sleeves to find cost savings in our Township Budget... and we did!

The Homer Township budget has four major categories, and with a focus to carefully cut costs, government spending in all four categories has been reduced. Here is the detail:

- Category 1 - Township Fund
 - Cut from \$1,130,000 to \$1,080,500, a reduction of \$49,500.
 - This was driven by general office efficiencies and a reduction in capital outlays.

Category 2 – General Assistance Fund

- Cut from \$3,500 to \$3,000, a reduction \$500.
 - This was realized by changing to a more efficient technology support company who implemented ongoing cost savings measures and improved and extended the viability of the Township Office technologies.
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- Category 3 – Park Fund
 - Cut from \$315,000 to \$100,000, a reduction of \$215,000.
 - This was a result of transferring 6 parks that are located in Homer Glen subdivisions to the Village. These parks will be in good hands as the Village has a mature park maintenance team that already cares for a dozen Homer Glen neighborhood parks along with the 100+ acre Heritage Park.
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- Category 4 – Debt Services
 - Cut from \$187,100 to \$183,612.50, a reduction of \$3,487.50.
 - This was a result of the refinancing of Township Bonds to a lower interest rate.

So in total, \$268,487.50 less will be asked of the Township Taxpayers in 2022!

HOMER TWP ROAD FUNDS REDUCTION

As many of you know, the Village of Homer Glen unilaterally took-over most of the Township Highway Department assets, land and personnel to form a new Village of Homer Glen Public Works Department. What remained in the aftermath was a mess and it took our new Highway Department Commissioner, Brent Porfilio, and I to bring order to this unfortunate chaos. With a newly negotiated Inter Governmental Agreement (IGA) now in place, Commissioner Porfilio focused on properly maintaining the remaining 20+ miles of unincorporated roads, bridges, and related infrastructure in Homer Township.

With the transfer of a bulk of the assets, land, and personnel to the Village of Homer Glen, and a series of cost cutting measures and efficiencies implemented by Commissioner Porfilio, the HOMER TWP ROAD FUND Tax Levy will be reduced by 66% from \$5M to \$1.7M, a reduction of \$3.3M.

Here is a run-down of cost cutting measures implemented by Commissioner Porfilio:

- Let's start with the fact that Commissioner Porfilio is a certified construction engineer. He has already saved the Township several thousands of dollars by performing general engineering tasks that in the past would have required the hiring of a 3rd party engineering firm. One example is the street and sidewalk improvements to the Senior Housing complex at Founders Crossing. Porfilio performed all engineering for this project. This benefit will be in-play for the next 3 ½ years while Mr. Porfilio holds the office of Highway Commissioner.
- Highway Department Insurance Policies were renegotiated, lowering the premiums.
- The standard staffing formula to maintain 20 miles of roads called for a staff of 3 Highway Department employees. Porfilio will get the job done with 2 employees.
- All unnecessary Inter Governmental Agreements have been eliminated.

- All Highway Department lighting will be converted to LED lighting reducing the Department's ongoing electric bill.
- Building a comprehensive 20-year plan to upgrade and maintain all unincorporated Township roads, bridges, culverts, and parkways will spread the tax burden over future years.
- Extending the life of Highway Department vehicles by treating their under-carriages with corrosive protection. These vehicles cost upward of \$150,000!

The current Township Officeholders and I are all fiscally conservative and believe in the basic tenants of Lower Taxes, Less Government, and Less Regulation. We are all committed to "Fix Where We Live"! And believe me, we have just gotten started!!!

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Safe and Prosperous New Year to you all!

Steve Balich

Homer Township Supervisor