



Dear Neighbors,

I wish there were a way for me to communicate face to face with each and every one of you, instead of by mail. I want to update you on our progress with the Town's 2021 Budget.

A major focus of the 2021 budget is to stabilize the Town's finances and *future*. The Town Board has faced some daunting challenges in the wake of what we inherited this past January, but we have addressed our inherited financial problems with honesty and common sense. My proposed budget takes us back to your Town tax of 2019, the year before the budget switch. I then ask all of us you to reach just a little deeper than 2019 so we can return to financial stability while saving for emergencies and capital needs.

- The 2021 proposed budget reverses the aberrant, unauthorized 2020 tax revenue loss and returns to your **2019** tax levels with a \$11.70 increase per \$100,000 of your home value.
- My budget **cuts \$61,878**, over 2%, from the **2020** Budget, trimming line items that were inflated in the past, **which resulted in your taxes being artificially raised**. I set revenue lines by comparing **actual** past revenues and factoring in the impact of COVID-reduced revenue streams.
- All town jobs were saved and no town services are lost.
- The Budget utilizes \$200,000 of fund balance instead of \$950,000 that was used for 2020.
- Please remember that only **8%** of your property tax goes to the Town. The greatest share, **67%**, goes to the School District, and **21%** goes to the County. The previous administration is trying to make the story about the tax raise. The story is really about what they did to make it inevitable. They own this.
- We have created a roadmap that allows us to look ahead to the next five years. It is flexible and we will work with it on a regular basis. It allows us to evaluate the factors that will impact tax levies, revenues, assets, capital needs and evolving trends. This has never been done before.

Please also remember that a **bank statement does not accurately reflect the long term financial health of the town**. Much of it is already spoken for, either for this year's budget or encumbered for specific purposes. I promised transparency and we have delivered it. You can see all budget related information posted on the Town website, and I make monthly reports that are available to the public on our bank reconciliations, balances and expenditures.

I am very proud of the many ways in which our Community has come together during the past ten months, and of the things we have been able to achieve, without cost to our taxpayers.

When COVID arrived, we were able to set up a hotline in one day. We recruited 80 volunteers who were motivated to deliver food and prescriptions, run errands, deliver masks and do whatever else was needed.

A group of citizens formed a mask making brigade, and hand sewed well over 500 masks that were distributed to our Community.

A beautiful new Town Website was created by Jason Woodcock, who grew up here in Stanfordville. He did this work for free. It has greatly enhanced our ability to communicate with our citizens.

We are regularly sending out Town Newsletters, to stay in touch with as many people in the community as we can. Please sign up on the Town Website if you have not already done so.

The Town of Stanford Fire Company mounted an extraordinary display honoring our 9/11 fallen heroes, and our own Dennis Gilhooly. They are remarkable men and women.

The Town received a 5-acre gift of land that will become the Dot Burdick Memorial Park. I hope to build this park as a community, the way SPARC Park was created years ago.

The Town received a generous donation of a pickle ball court from the Everett and Helen Cook Foundation.

Community Day was transformed but was nonetheless celebrated. The energy and commitment of the Stanford Grange #808 is remarkable. The Little Food Pantry is a tremendous success.

The Stanford Business Association and the Town Rec put on a fabulous concert by The Saints of Swing.

The Town Rec was able to remain open and COVID-free this summer, a tremendous accomplishment.

So even with the tremendous hardships that the pandemic has brought, we stand united as a Community and for that I am profoundly grateful.

My best,

Wendy

Supervisor, Town of Stanford