



LINDA D. PUGLISI
TOWN SUPERVISOR

TOWN OF CORTLANDT

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TOWN BOARD

RICHARD H. BECKER
FRANCIS X. FARRELL
ANN LINDAU-MARTIN
JOHN E. SLOAN

Twenty-Three Years of Tax Control and Tax Caps

From the beginning of my administration that began twenty-two years ago I pledged to our taxpayers that I would make it my priority to deliver town tax controls, tax relief and very low town tax increases every year.

I am proud to announce that for 23 years our total town tax increase has been below 1%. Ten years were zero (0%) increases, one year was a -4% reduction and we **never** went over a 2.8% increase for two decades and three years. We have met the recent New York State mandate to cap the tax levy by 1.66% or lower for 2014.

Over the years, we have had a voluntary and real tax cap in the Town of Cortlandt that has benefited all of our property owners both residential and business owners. At the same time we have tripled our town savings (fund balance) and every year produced a surplus.

We have **never** had one year of a deficit and we've always had a balanced budget. Once again each year generated a surplus that we used for tax control and relief and maintained our savings account. These monies were also utilized for capital projects from a town hall renovation, new recreational areas, road improvements, water projects and for acquisition of land for open space purposes. Cortlandt has completed over 125 million dollars of projects and still did not impact our taxpayers with tax increases, during these 23 years.

Also, Moody's had upgraded Cortlandt to an Aa2 (double A) bond rating and kept us there based on our excellent financial practices and achievements. Even during this recent recession we kept this excellent bond rating status.

Our local economy is doing well. New businesses have come to Cortlandt throughout these twenty-three years and thousands of new jobs have been created from this economic growth. This is a remarkable statistic considering what has occurred in our Country during the recent recession that began in 2008.

To achieve this record we began early on to share services and consolidate in order to have a more efficient government. This was accomplished way before the recent state 2% tax cap became mandatory and a New York State law.

Cortlandt is a large Town with 40 square miles and 42,000 people. It is a wonderful community in a lovely setting adjacent to the Hudson River. We have excellent schools, a state of the art recently expanded hospital center, dedicated emergency service providers, a Cortlandt train station and a Veterans medical facility that has served our Veterans for 60 years. One third of our land is parkland and open space and we have excellent recreation programs for every age group.

In summary, Cortlandt is a wonderful and affordable community to reside and to raise your children.

“I am very proud to have served as Town Supervisor in Cortlandt for twenty-three years. I have worked very hard along with our entire team in our government (town board members, department heads and all of our 200 employees) to deliver and maintain a very close to zero percent town tax increase for our taxpayers while at the same time always seeking new ways to improve our services and community.”

Linda D. Puglisi, Supervisor Town of Cortlandt
October 30, 2013



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If you have resided in Cortlandt or operated a business in our Town, your Town Taxes have only been raised this amount for the entire 23 years of this administration. (1992 - 2014)

Town Taxes (only 11% of your total annual tax bill):

- 1. If you are in the Town of Cortlandt the total dollar amount increase for the average assessed property for the entire 23 years has been \$366.08.**
- 2. If you are in the Village of Croton-on-Hudson the total dollar amount increase for the average assessed property for the entire 23 years has been \$ 43.00.**
- 3. If you are in the Village of Buchanan the total dollar amount increase for the average assessed property for the entire 23 years has been \$37.15.**

From Supervisor Linda D. Puglisi

October 30, 2013

Note: 11% of the annual Tax Bill is Town Taxes
15% of the annual Tax Bill is County taxes
69% of the annual Tax Bill is School Taxes
5% of the annual Tax Bill is Special District Taxes
(Library, Fire Districts, sidewalk or street lighting districts,
etc.)



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2014 Budget Key Points

1. For Unincorporated Cortlandt taxpayers:
For the total of 23 years a dollar amount increase of **\$366** or **\$15.90** per year increase.

Note: Ten of those years were a 0% increase and one year a -.4% increase.

2. For the Village of Buchanan town taxpayers:
For the total of 23 years a dollar amount increase of **\$37.15** or a **\$1.61** per year increase.

Note: Sixteen of those years were a 0% increase.

3. For the Village of Croton-on-Hudson town taxpayers:
For the total of 23 years a dollar amount increase of **\$43.00** or a **\$1.87** per year increase.

Note: Sixteen of those years were a 0% increase.

“The lowest tax increase for over two decades for the town, region, state and perhaps for the nation”.

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Current Budget Challenges for 2013/2014

1. Tax Collection is down by an additional 1% which equates to one million dollars in less revenue this year.

Note: The Town of Cortlandt by New York State Law must continue to collect and pay the School Districts their full tax warrant amounts, as well as, to Westchester County for their taxes, even if taxpayers do not pay their taxes.

It takes two to four years to recover this revenue loss through a tax lien and then an In Rem Sale of property process. Sometimes properties go into foreclosure by the banking institutions and it can take many more years to recoup our losses.

2. The Town of Cortlandt receives Seventy five (75%) percent less in mortgage tax revenue then we received in years prior to the 2008 national/regional RECESSION. Current (2012) MTR was only one million versus the \$4million we received each year in past years.
3. Lower tax assessment rolls than in past years. Typically each year produced in the past an additional \$200,000. and now the tax rolls are down by \$200,000. (2012). Therefore, a difference of \$400,000. This challenge is attributed to an increase in commercial certioraris that are decided by the courts. We have been fortunate over the past years that certioraris have not been on the rise, but stable. However, since the 2008 RECESSION there has been an increase in certioraris.
4. Lower interest rates on all of our town accounts. In 2012 we only generated \$90,000. versus in the 1990's, \$400,000. to \$600,000. each year in interest on our accounts. A loss of interest revenue of approximately \$500,000. each year since 2009 equals \$2.5 million.
5. Since 2008 the Town of Cortlandt and all local municipalities has been mandated to pay an additional \$3 million in New York State pension

contributions for all of our town employees. Approximately a \$500,000. increase each year for six years.

6. Also, since 2008 the Town of Cortlandt has had to pay in health coverage increases for our town employees an additional \$1.7 million, even though over 60% of our employees do contribute to their health benefits. This is due to a new policy that was adopted in the first year in Supervisor Puglisi's administration (1992). All new hires after 1992 had to contribute or else this \$1.7 million figure would have been tripled.
7. Cost increases for vehicles, equipment, electricity, fuel, supplies have all gone up by \$200,000. in 2013 over 2012. We purchased a total of one million dollars in vehicles in 2013. All were necessary for maintaining the quality of our fleet. During the recession peak years we purchased less vehicles to be fiscally conservative.
8. Unfunded Mandates expenses:
 - a. The MTA tax - \$50,000. each year since 2009 = \$250,000. in additional costs.
 - b. Increased water rates from the New York City DEP (an increase of 37 cents per 1000 for just 2014).
 - c. Federal and State fees are increased on various permits, etc. to local governments.
9. Additional legal fees in 2013/2014 to fight unwanted private energy plans that would impact our residential neighborhoods. An additional \$30,000. has been spent in 2013 Y.T.D. to oppose these projects in Cortlandt.

In Summary:

In 2013/2014 the Town of Cortlandt has faced and will face a total of less revenue and additional costs of \$9,500,600.

Even with these financial challenges and obstacles the Town of Cortlandt is able to present a very low town tax increase and dollar amount increase for 2014.

Unincorporated Cortlandt (75% of the Town) = \$31.95 for the entire year.

Village of Buchanan for town taxes \$12.70 for the entire year.

Village of Croton-on-Hudson for town taxes \$19.25 for the entire year.

(Note: based on the average assessed properties in our town.)

Linda Puglisi
Town Supervisor