

# Village board passes budget

From the Hamilton mayor

By SUE McVAUGH

HAMILTON — The Hamilton Village Board has wrestled with such interesting issues recently that we attracted an almost Standing Room Only crowd for our last board meeting! For those of you unable to attend, here's a synopsis.

First of all we have crafted and passed a budget [\$7,521,760] for the next fiscal year. It includes a modest increase of 1 percent [tax rate of \$12.77 per \$1,000], made necessary by a reduction in the taxable real estate in the village and a huge increase in our required contribution to the NY State Retirement Fund. The village board is proud of the services that our employees provide to the residents and were determined not to reduce these, so it is a tribute to the trustees that they were able to spend the time to find ways to save money and keep the tax rate as low as possible.

Following a public hearing a few weeks ago, the board voted to amend the current zoning law for hotels and inns in the downtown (B1) district. This will allow the Colgate Inn to make some renovations. The plan calls for more onsite parking, a reduction in the number of rooms, and a reconfiguration of the downstairs area. We all look forward to enjoying the new space. No date for commencement of the work has been announced.

After much angst and many discussions of our ad hoc Village of Earlville, Town of Hamilton, Village of Hamilton Court Committee, the Hamilton Village Board decided not to disband court at this time. Had we done otherwise, the town would have no choice but to take over the court operations. It is interesting because as I have been walking around the village since then, the public sentiment is 100 percent disappointment over our decision. The best that I can do in the way of explanation is to say that there were too many unanswered questions from Albany to jump into this at this time. The tri-municipality committee will continue to work, and I am certain that at the next opportunity, the Village of Hamilton will look at this again. Earlville might also choose to do so. One good piece of news for village (Earlville and Hamilton) residents is that, during this process, town council members took a closer look at their own budget and discovered that the village residents were being taxed for the town court. Since the villages do support their own courts, this should be an "outside" expense. I will attend the next town board meeting to ask them to enact a budget amendment.

I am writing this on Friday morning, April 16 and as I look out my window over the park every thing looks spectacular. I commend the Department of Public Works for their extraordinary care in overseeing our public spaces. On another positive note, I hope that everyone remembered to pick up his/her Shape — a great town-wide art event by Allan McCollum. If you were unable to do so, please contact DeWitt Godfrey at [dgodfrey@colgate.edu](mailto:dgodfrey@colgate.edu). Ours is the first municipality that the artist has ever done, and we thank DeWitt for bringing Mr. McCollum here and also for attending our Board meeting to explain the project to us last winter.

I hope that you all have a chance to enjoy the warmer weather.

*Sue McVaugh, mayor of Hamilton*