

2018 Town of Caroline Budget Summary

The tax levy for town tax items (General Fund, Highway Fund, Caroline Fire Protection, and Streetlights) increased over 2017 by 1.24%, \$32,963 below the Tax Cap. This is well below the current 12-month rate of inflation of about 2%.

A 3.53% increase for the Highway Fund levy was primarily due to additional costs for health care coverage for two new highway employees.

Wages

We kept wages up with inflation with a 2% cost-of-living adjustment.

We increased the Code Officer's salary by 8.9%, acknowledging increased responsibilities from code changes.

At October's business meeting the town board recommitted the Town of Caroline as a Living Wage Employer. Accordingly, the hourly wage rate for part-time employees was set to the new Tompkins County Living Wage of \$15.11/hr. This applied to the Supervisor's Assistant.

Capital Improvements and Long-term Fiscal Planning

Old Town Hall - \$30,000 was budgeted for the Town Hall Capital Reserve for painting the exterior, gutting, and a new heating/cooling system, bringing the total for the Town Hall Reserve Fund to \$73,583.

Highway Barn - \$65,000 was budgeted for the Town Highway Barn Reserve Fund for improvements to the Highway Barn, bringing the total for the Town Barn Reserve Fund to \$255,172.

Highway Equipment - \$115,000 was budgeted for future highway equipment.

Caroline Fire Protection

The contracts for fire protection services for the Caroline Fire Protection District increased 2% for Speedsville Volunteer Fire Co. and 7.5% for Brooktondale Fire District.

Other

We added an honorarium of \$700 for the Deputy Historian.

Salaries of Caroline elected officials for 2018 are:

Town Supervisor	\$18,580
Town Councilperson	\$2,296
Town Clerk	\$33,137
Highway Superintendent	\$63,461
Justices	\$11,408

We are budgeting and planning for future capital expenses, with attention to maintaining a responsible amount of town reserve funds (Unassigned Fund Balance). A rule of thumb is to maintain a Fund Balance of about 20% of budgeted expenditures, enough to finance town operations for about two months, for instance, in the interval between January 1st and the deposit of tax revenues. My projection for this budget, after applying \$50,000 of Fund Balance to reduce the tax levy, is that the Town's Unreserved Fund Balance for General and Highway Funds will be a healthy 25% of 2018 budgeted expenses (\$561,000).