

## OYSTER BAY TOWN

# Union workers to get 'lag pay'

BY TED PHILLIPS  
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Oyster Bay town employees will receive some deferred income next year under a resolution adopted by the town board to partially restore "lag pay."

The board, at its Dec. 11 meeting, voted to fund half of the deferred pay that the Civil Service Employee Association Local 881 agreed to in 2012 to avert layoffs. Under that agreement, union workers deferred one paycheck in 2013 and another in 2014.

Since then, employees have received their deferred pay when they left town employment.

The resolution to restore the lag pay was "walked on" to the town board meeting without prior notice and without taking public comment.

After Town Supervisor Joseph Saladino called for a vote, Town Clerk James Altadonna Jr. ques-

tioned the lack of public comment. Town Attorney Joseph Nocella said public comment wasn't necessary. Board members unanimously approved restoring the lag pay.

Under the resolution, town employees are to be paid for the 2013 lag at their current salary by March 31.

The 2019 adopted budget includes \$83.3 million for salaries, slightly less than \$83.4 million in the amended 2018 budget. Councilman Anthony Macagnone cast the lone vote against the 2019 budget on Oct. 30, citing the lag pay owed to town employees.

It's unclear how the town will fund the payments, but a recent borrowing prospectus shows the town expects to have an extra \$8 million that was not included in the budget.

Oyster Bay's public information office issued a statement on Monday saying, "There is no impact on the 2019 Budget (no amendments)." The statement pegged the

cost of restoring the lag pay at \$3.5 million but did not provide additional details. Town financial records put the value of each payroll lag at "nearly \$4 million."

This month the town borrowed \$10 million to bridge a cash-flow deficit. Without the borrowing, the town's general fund would not have had enough money to cover its payroll on Dec. 21, according to a projected cash flow included in the borrowing prospectus.

The town's general fund — its main fund for town operations — ended 2017 with a cumulative operating deficit of \$22 million, according to audited financial statements.

The town told investors in its borrowing prospectus that it had deliberately underestimated its revenue for mortgage recording taxes and other state and federal aid by \$8 million in the 2019 budget. The money is expected to be used to reduce the operating deficit, according to the prospectus.

## PORT JEFFERSON STATION

# Town board OKs new affordable apartments

BY DEON J. HAMPTON  
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A Port Jefferson Station developer can move forward with his plans to construct a \$25 million affordable housing complex in the hamlet, the Brookhaven Town Planning Board ruled Monday.

Developer Ralph Fasano, who wants to build 77 apartment units near the intersection of Route 112 and East Grove Street, said he's ready to get the project started. Construction is expected to begin next month and take 18 months to complete, he said.

"I'm looking forward to building the housing," he said at the meeting.

Some of the units are to be specifically for veterans, although how many has not been determined. Fasano is the executive director of Concern for Independent Living, a Medford-based nonprofit that has developed veterans housing projects in Amityville and Ronkonkoma.

Port Jefferson Station residents at the board's Monday meeting raised safety concerns and complained the complex would put more vehicles in a high-traffic area.

"With the addition of the project, I would like to see a traffic signal," hamlet resident Larry Bernstein, 68, said, noting the complex is being built across the street from his home. "I have some serious

safety concerns."

Even with a new sign, drivers tend to disregard signals, he said.

Fasano said he intends to ask for state approval for a traffic signal near the entrance to the structure.

Port Jefferson resident Joseph Santangelo, 44, told board members he was in favor of the project but wanted it farther north to maintain the forest land in front of his home.

"I don't have a problem with building housing for veterans," he said.

The Port Jefferson project is to include a community building and recreation amenities.

Fasano has said the \$25 million includes acquisition of land, building costs and consulting fees.

## HEMPSTEAD TOWN

# Residents can now auto-pay property taxes online

BY JESSE COBURN  
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Hempstead Town residents can now automatically pay their property taxes through a new online payment system established by town tax receiver Donald Clavin.

The new program should make paying school and general tax bills easier for residents, Clavin said at a news conference Tuesday.

"That's what we should be doing

in government, making it more convenient," he said.

Officials said the program is the first of its kind offered by a town or city on Long Island.

Residents interested in the program can set up automatic payments from a credit card or a checking account. The fees for using the service are 2.35 percent for credit card payments and 90 cents for checking account payments, Clavin spokesman Mike Deery said.

The billed amounts are charged about 10 days before the taxes are due, ensuring participants will avoid late fees, Clavin said.

Clavin noted that private companies commonly offer auto-payment options.

"Government should function more like the private sector," he said.

Residents interested in participating can sign up on the Hempstead Town website, hempsteadny.gov.



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NEWSDAY WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 19, 2018