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# Allendale



**BUDGET UPDATE SPRING 2014**

## *From the Mayor's Desk*

### **ZERO TAX INCREASE 4 YEARS IN A ROW!**



I am pleased to announce that on April 24th the Council will be voting to approve a budget with a ZERO municipal tax increase for the FOURTH year in a row! This is truly unprecedented in Bergen County. After several years of putting together a fiscal model, our financial team has established criteria to keep our municipal taxes in check. Many thanks go out to the Finance Committee chair, Council President Liz White and co-chair Councilman Ari Bernstein, as well as our CFO Lissa Mayer. The fiscal model that we initiated in 2007 when I came into office continues to reap the benefits we envisioned.

This process has not been easy. We inaugurated a long range plan for fiscal responsibility. The financial model the Council put in place has consistently brought under control property taxes that seemed to be spiraling out of control. Below is a list of tax increases since 2004.

Upon being sworn in I was greeted with the news that S&P had downgraded Allendale's bond rating due to our fiscal condition. Once the plan took effect and we proved fiscal austerity, our efforts were rewarded when S&P not only restored our AA rating but Allendale was upgraded to AAA! Allendale was reevaluated by S&P recently and again awarded AAA because of our fiscal oversight.

Many have asked how did we do it? First we restructured Borough functions.

Efficiency and doing more with less became our mantra. If positions were superfluous, they were phased out or eliminated. The Borough Administrator's position was eliminated in 2008. Those functions were absorbed by our Director of Operations, Municipal Clerk and CFO. Since elimination of the Borough Administrator's position the Borough has saved over \$1 Million in salary and benefits! Raises were brought under control. Our debt had doubled in 5 years from 2002-2006. We were spending annually \$1.7 million on capital of which \$1 million a year was being added to debt. The decision was made: no more deficit spending. Not only have we stopped deficit spending, but we have reduced municipal debt by over \$2.5 Million.

One of the issues that has plagued us over the years was the expense paid to the NW Bergen Sewer Authority. After police, sewer expenses have been our second largest expenditure. It has been a long, hard battle. We insisted on greater oversight of the Sewer Authority's budgets, tightening up on reporting, repairing infiltration of our sewer lines and illegal dumping of sump water from residents' homes into sewer lines. This effort, which continued over the last 4 years, has resulted in reducing our sewer charges from \$1,850,000 to \$1,450,000, a savings of approximately \$400,000!

Additionally, we prioritized our capital expenditures. No more tearing out perfectly good curbing at the expense of repaving our streets. Since 2007, we will have repaved approximately 80 streets of the Borough's total of 144 streets. In the 6 years prior to 2007, a total of only 13 streets were repaved. Still, we were able to purchase two new fire trucks which had outlived their useful life; support our sports fields and recreation facilities and maintain our infrastructure in every respect.

Many towns drained their surplus funds in an attempt to appear to keep increases low. Our Council refused to employ this tactic and, in fact, our surplus has grown. Allendale's surplus has grown in the past 8 years to the highest level it has ever been. This will now enable us to draw on surplus when needed and continue to improve

<b>2004</b>	<b>11.16% increase</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>7.43% increase</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>11.21% increase</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>4.37% increase</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>4.83% increase</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>2.45% increase</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>2.84% increase</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>ZERO increase</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>ZERO increase</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>ZERO increase</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>ZERO increase</b>

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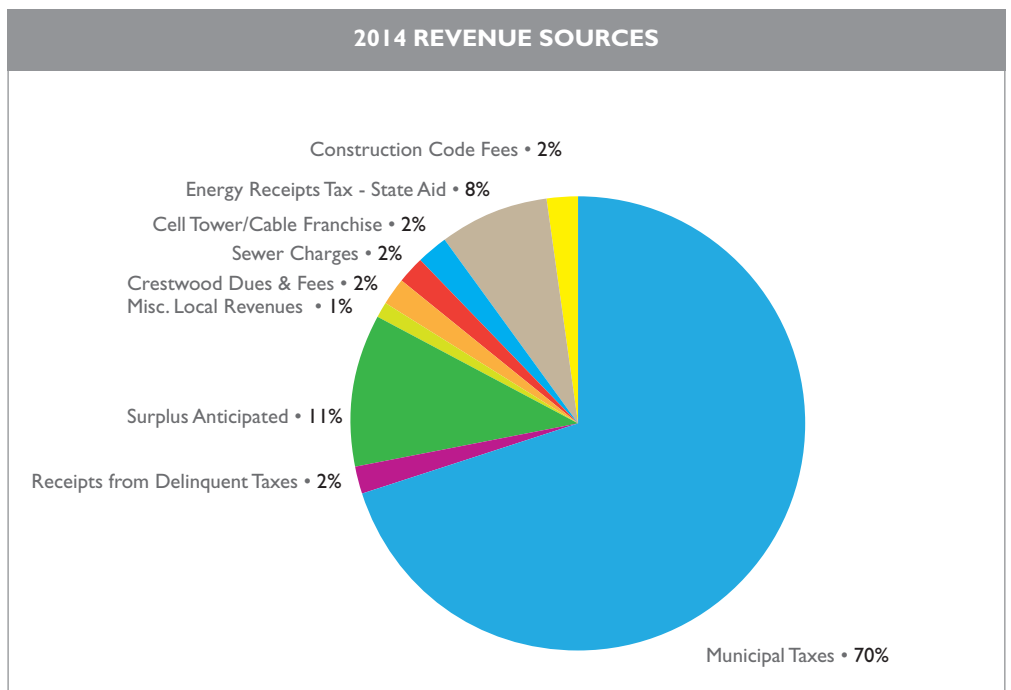
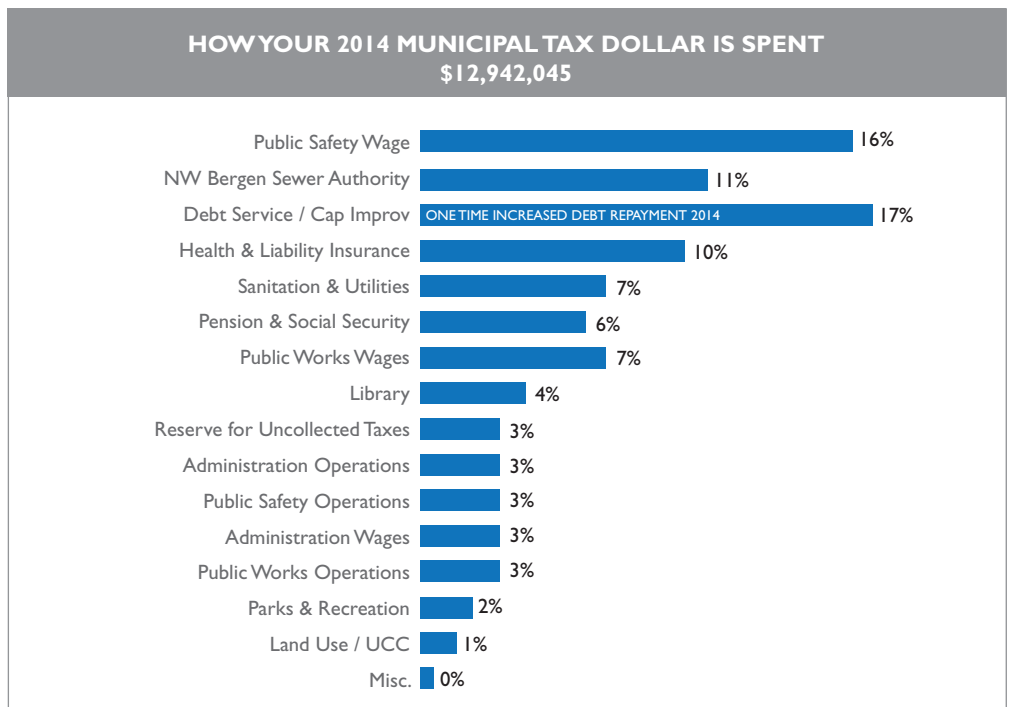
## MAYOR'S LETTER

(continued from front)

our image with the rating agencies. Also, we restructured part of our debt which saved us additional debt service expenses each year. Further, grants were aggressively sought. Over the past 7 years the Borough has received more than \$11 million in funding from federal, state and county sources. These grants exceed the amounts received in the prior 25 years combined. As a consequence, this year we were again able to keep the overall expense portion of the budget flat.

We could not have done it alone. The Governor and the State Legislature passed laws that require municipal employees to contribute to their health insurance. It will be phased in over a 4 year period when most employees will be contributing 35% of their premiums toward health insurance. Further, all employees will be required to contribute more into the pension system. Some measures need to come from the top down and others from the bottom up. We have succeeded in doing both. The 2% cap on taxes is now sun setting this month. Local governments are pleading with legislators in Trenton to extend the 2% cap. Unions are arguing that the cap has outlived its usefulness. Nothing could be further from the truth. Without the 2% cap law, local governments cannot continue to keep property taxes in check.

The good news is that the Council has done it again. However, everyone must remember that municipal taxes makeup only 25-30 % of each residents total tax bill. Our schools account for 60-65% and the County about 10%. We must all work toward keeping a lid on the highest tax burden in the country. Your Town Council is doing its part. Going forward the chal-



lenges will continue. Next year will be equally difficult.

This is my last budget as your Mayor. I have had the privilege of ZERO tax increases for my entire second 4 year term. I know that the Council will continue with the fiscal responsibility that has been its hallmark. As I have always said, I

am blessed to have such a talented, hardworking and dedicated Council. I truly thank each and every one of my Council members for all they have done for the residents of Allendale.

Vince Barra

# TOWN NEWS TO NOTE

## NEW ~ EVENING HOURS AT BOROUGH HALL!!

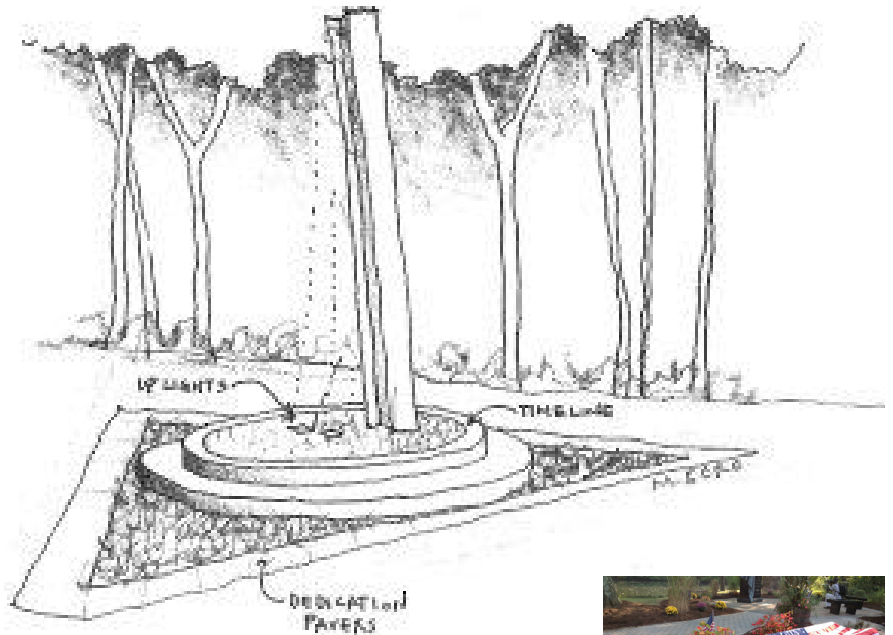
The Borough of Allendale will be experimenting with evening hours at Borough Hall. Starting in May the Administrative offices at borough hall will be open two evenings a month on the second and fourth Thursdays from 4:30pm - 7pm. Not all departments will be staffed but there will be personnel available to assist residents with issues. The dates for the evening hours in May will be May 8th & May 22nd, the dates for June will be June 12th & June 26th. Please check the Borough website at [www.allendalenj.gov](http://www.allendalenj.gov) for additional dates.

**FREE NOTARY SERVICES  
FOR BOROUGH RESIDENTS**  
Office of the Borough Clerk  
500 West Crescent Avenue  
Allendale, NJ 07401

## DEER MANAGEMENT

The Fyke Nature Association is pleased to announce that Carole Stanko, Bureau of Wildlife Management, northern region representative of the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife, will give a presentation at our meeting on Thursday, May 29th at 7:30pm in Borough Hall. Carole has been asked to come give a presentation on Deer Management. All are invited to come hear about Carole's work on this state wide issue and the impact the growing deer population is having financially, environmentally, and on the safety of citizens.

## 9-11 Memorial



As many know, Allendale was privileged to receive a steel artifact from the attack on September 11, 2001. Our committee has come up with a beautiful, respectful and educational design. The Memorial will serve as a lasting tribute to all who were lost that day. It will be located up at Crestwood Lake near our existing 9/11 Memorial and will provide a place of quiet reflection. Future generations will be reminded of the impact of that day from this crucial part of history. We are also etching the timeline of events into the surround of the design to provide the public with a greater appreciation of what transpired on that day and so no one will ever forget. Please help us make this a reality. We are accepting donations at this time. The unveiling will be September 11, 2014.

Below are some options for donations, sheets for engraving are located at Boro hall.

- Granite Bench (2 more available) \$2500 each
- 18 x 18 Bluestone \$500 and up
- Paver \$250

## Swiftreach

Allendale has been using SwiftReach's emergency notification system to alert residents via voice, text and email about important emergency notifications and town events. Residents have been very pleased with this system and we will continue to update you with new features and updates. You now have the opportunity to update your information and add multiple phone numbers. Just go to Allendale's website, click on the swiftreach link and log in with your user name (email address) and password. If you are NOT signed up please go to the Boro Website also and do so. [www.allendalenj.gov](http://www.allendalenj.gov). If you need help please contact: [amywilczynski@allendalenj.gov](mailto:amywilczynski@allendalenj.gov)

# MUNICIPAL NEWS

## SPRING CLEANUP!

• Wondering what to do with old paint, fluorescent light bulbs, propane gas cylinders (11lb & 20 lbs only), rechargeable batteries? Bergen County Utilities Authority will host Household Hazardous Waste Collection dates, May 17<sup>th</sup> at Campgaw. Check their website for more information at [www.bcua.org](http://www.bcua.org)

• Updating your computer and/or televisions? Cleaning out your confidential papers? Bergen County Utilities Authority will host E-Waste and Paper Shredding events, April 27<sup>th</sup> at Bergen Community College & June 7<sup>th</sup> at Campgaw. Don't put it at the curb – check the county website for more information on these events at [www.bcua.org](http://www.bcua.org)

\*E-Waste is all electronics: computers, televisions, stereos, microwave ovens, fax machines, printers, gaming stations.

## CURBSIDE COLLECTIONS

• **A reminder that all curbside collections must be at the curb before 7:00am the day of collection to avoid missed collections.** Please place it in a safe and visible location. All cans must be removed from the curb by 9:00pm the day of collection. Bulk trash, cardboard and metal items must be placed at the curb **no earlier than 6:00pm the night before collection.**

• **Twice a week collection starts the week of May 19.** West side collection will be Monday/Thursday and East side collection will be Tuesday/Friday, unless there is a holiday during the week. Please check the 2014 mailer for the complete collection schedule or the website at [www.allendalenj.gov](http://www.allendalenj.gov)

Allendale Borough Hall  
500 West Crescent Avenue  
Allendale, NJ 07401

### MAYOR

VINCE BARRA

### BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ari Bernstein

Jackie McSwiggan

Steve Sasso

Jim Strauch

Liz White

Amy Wilczynski

### NEWSLETTER DESIGN

Heidi Gross

## COMPOST SITE

• **Opening Day:** Saturday, April 5 from 9:00am – 5:00pm and Sunday, April 6 from 1:00pm – 5:00pm. Closed on Easter Sunday, April 20.

• **Residential Compost Permits** are required to use the compost site. Permits can be purchased at Borough Hall, Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 4:30pm for \$30.00 Material must be in brown biodegradable bags or loose – only!

No plastic bags allowed.

• **Interested in composting at home?** The county offers an “Earth Machine” that turns yard waste and kitchen scraps into rich garden soil. The cost is \$59.00. Call the BCUA at 201 807-5825 or visit [www.bcua.org](http://www.bcua.org) for more information.

## RECYCLING

Remember to RECYCLE! All plastics (1-7), glass and aluminum/tin cans can be placed in one container. Packing material – Styrofoam – can be recycled with these items. Rinse all containers free of contaminants before placing in your recycling container. All CARDBOARD is recyclable (third Wednesday). Cereal, pasta, tissue boxes, brown paper bags, are considered cardboard.

Help Allendale reduce our Carbon Footprint!

Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Allendale, NJ  
Permit No.14

Borough Resident  
Allendale, NJ 07401