



VILLAGE OF SCARSDALE

Mayor Marc Samwick's Comments

Village Board Meeting held March 24, 2020

Scarsdale always comes together in times of adversity, and this is no exception. We are a strong and tight knit community, united in our dedication to supporting each other and in our recognition that we are better when we work together. Every day I hear examples of how we continue to be the caring and generous community that we all cherish. Let's take care of each other, as we always do - reach out through phone calls and emails to our neighbors and friends, especially seniors and those directly impacted by the Coronavirus. Although we cannot be together physically, we can do our part to keep our community strong and connected.

I would like to highlight one of the recent shining examples of our community's generosity. On Friday, the Scarsdale Chinese Association secured and donated 3,000 surgical masks to Scarsdale's first responders and to the Scarsdale Volunteer Ambulance Corps. As you know, many first responders and health care providers are having a difficult time getting medical and protective supplies, so please follow the lead of the Scarsdale Chinese Association and donate personal protective equipment, medical supplies, food and other essential items to the Village, the Scarsdale Volunteer Ambulance Corps (SVAC), White Plains Hospital and other worthy causes that are helping to protect our community.

For the foreseeable future, the Village and the Board have three priorities: (i) the health, safety and welfare of our residents, Village employees, and local merchants, (ii) delivery of essential Village services, and (iii) fiscally responsible and prudent management of the Village budget.

Meeting Structure and Public Comment

This is the first Village Board meeting being held via videoconference, so please bear with us as we move through various segments of the meeting, including public comment. The Village Board is committed to open and transparent communication and to seeking extensive public input, so we will ensure that the public has ways to share its views with us – even if we encounter technical issues. Also, given the potential number of participants in this teleconference, speakers during public comment will be limited to three minutes. A second public comment period will be held at the end of the meeting provided that the second public comment period is able to start before 10:00pm and the second public comment period will conclude no later than 10:30pm. In the event there are technical issues or time does not permit you to conclude your public comment, you are welcome to email me with the remainder of your thoughts and your email will become part of the public record. We expect future meetings and work sessions of the Village Board to be held via videoconference for the foreseeable future.

Village COVID-19 Update

The Village receives daily updates of positive COVID-19 cases from the County Department of Health, which receives the information from the State Department of Health. This information lags, but we would like to share it with you so you are as well informed as we are. As of today's report, there are 38 positive cases of COVID-19 in Scarsdale. This virus is indiscriminately impacting every segment of our population. Please be compassionate and caring to those of us that have tested positively.

Communication

Communication is always a priority for our Village, but of the utmost importance at this difficult time. The most urgent messages to convey at present are:

Stay Home, Save Lives;

When outside of your home, be sure to practice social distancing; and

Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

I also ask that Scarsdale residents recognize that there are many of us out walking, running and cycling - especially on nicer days. Please exercise restraint and caution while driving on our roadways. Please slow down. I would also like to encourage the use of social distancing in environments that we are not accustomed to using such distances, such as on line in grocery stores or at restaurants when picking up food and when meeting our neighbors while on a walk. These actions can help to flatten the curve and save lives.

With regard to Scarsdale communication, I am very pleased to report that the Deputy Village Manager, Rob Cole, has been designated as the Public Information Officer and he has done an outstanding job keeping the community updated on the rapidly evolving events that impact the Village and its residents. The communication strategies being deployed to help keep you informed include:

1. Our Twitter presence - [@ScarsdaleGov](https://twitter.com/ScarsdaleGov) – which can be accessed via the Twitter app or at <https://twitter.com/ScarsdaleGov>. This has been an active source of community announcements and I encourage all residents to follow us on Twitter;
2. [Notify Me](#) - sign up on the Village website to receive Press Releases by subscription. Press releases are also available online at www.Scarsdale.com; and
3. Weekly Updates to our [COVID-19 Webpage](#) on the Village website.

I will also send weekly updates to the community. These updates will be tweeted and will be sent out to those who sign up for Notify Me as well as being posted on the Village website.

Current Year and FY 2020-21 Village Budgets

The Village has statutory deadlines to file and adopt its annual budgets. The first of such deadlines with the filing of the draft Village budget, which occurred on March 20. As is done every year, the filed draft Village budget is available on the Village website. New York State requires that we hold a public hearing on the [proposed FY20-21 budget](#) and vote to adopt a budget no later than May 1. This evening's agenda includes the calling of a public hearing for the fiscal 20-21 budget on April 14 with a vote to adopt the budget expected on April 28.

Village staff and the Board spent an enormous amount of time on the fiscal 2020-21 budget. The originally crafted budget was conservative and was based on assumptions that may no longer be accurate given the pace of change of the economic impact of COVID-19. We have addressed these changes in a few ways.

First, as a result of the virus-related changes to Village operations, last week the Village Manager and I requested that the Village Treasurer review the current fiscal year budget. At this juncture, we believe that the budgetary impacts of COVID-19, while overall negative to the Village, will not cause a deficit in the current fiscal year budget. The Village's current year fiscal position benefits from thorough and conservative fiscal planning coupled with quick and decisive action by the Village Manager as well as last year's change in the County sales tax rate. There are over two months remaining in the current fiscal year and the economic impacts of COVID-19 are rapidly evolving and severe. Accordingly, there will be ongoing revisions to the current fiscal year projections and the coming fiscal year budget – commencing well before the start of the Village fiscal year on June 1. Our approach to the budget will remain to be: (i) be fiscally responsible, (ii) base budget adjustments, if any, on facts and on our best available information, and (iii) utilize the flexibility inherent in the Village's budget authority to adjust the budget after it is adopted, as is likely to be required.

Second, the Village Manager and I asked the Village Treasurer to review the 2020-21 Village budget with the intent of reallocating certain funds totaling \$300,000 to create a COVID-19 contingency account to address a portion of the revenue and expense impacts that may occur as a result of the pandemic.

Third, with the potential for material future fiscal impacts resulting from COVID-19, the Village Manager has directed Department Heads to restrict spending to essential items required for the operation of our Village and for our response to the current pandemic. You will see a resolution this evening that freezes certain line items in the current fiscal year and establishes the COVID-19 contingency account I just mentioned. The amount reallocated into the reserve account is over \$1.55 million, including over \$1.25 million from the current fiscal year plus the previously mentioned \$300,000 from the coming fiscal year. These two actions are first of what we fully expect to be a sequence of Board and staff actions that are designed to fiscally adjust to the rapidly changing economic environment we find ourselves in. As with all budget matters,

these discussions will be open to the public and will include ample opportunity for public comment.

Our overall long-term operating goal is consistent with what it has always been – to provide the residents with the essential services they expect from the Village at a cost residents are willing and able to pay. Of course, it is impossible to plan for an unprecedented event – in our life time -- such as the pandemic crisis we are all now experiencing, but with the Board’s and the Village staff’s focus on the operational demands of the moment, we will make every effort to budget Village funds to meet the operational challenges we are all facing.

Lastly, these are unprecedented times and there are likely to be a wide range of implications, some which are visible to us today and some that are not. We will continue to diligently and responsibly act to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Trustees may have some comments about the budget as well and the Trustees may make their comments before we vote on Calling for Public Hearing on the Fiscal 2020-21 Village Budget.

Mayor’s General Comments

Scarsdale resident, Julie Zhu, sent me the following quote from Vice Admiral Sean Buck, Superintendent of the United States Naval Academy, “We are in uncharted waters right now, but with your trust and support, we will navigate and get through this together.” Fear only lasts so long, but hope never dies.

Please be safe and stay well. Although things will get more difficult before they improve, I know that we will come through this, and I look forward to sharing much happier times with you in the not too distant future.

Village Staff Acknowledgment

I will ask the Village Manager to provide us with an update of Village operations. Before I hand it over to Steve, I would be remiss if I do not acknowledge the Herculean effort put forth by the Village Manager, Deputy Village Manager, Department Heads and staff over the past weeks in addition to the work of our first responders. Thank you all for your extraordinary efforts during this crisis. Scarsdale’s residents are fortunate to have such a hardworking and dedicated staff. Residents, feel free to thank Village staff as they protect us, pick-up our trash and do all the things that permit our Village to continue to operate during this pandemic.

The Village started planning for the Coronavirus on February 2 – well ahead of any regional impacts from the virus. We are grateful for your foresight. Since that time, much has been and will continue to be asked of staff. Village staff always rise to the occasion to keep us safe and to provide essential services such as police and fire protection, waste removal and continuous water service among many other things.

I would also like to acknowledge the Scarsdale Volunteer Ambulance Corps, one of our most treasured volunteer organizations. Never have we needed their services more.

Steve and all of those I mentioned, on behalf of Village residents, we thank you. One of the reasons that Scarsdale is a great place to live and to raise a family is because of the care, dedication and professionalism you bring to the Village each and every day.