

## **THE TAX ATTACK**

### **Chapter XIX**

Among the many hot topics in this very hot summer, taxes (of all kinds) are a front-runner. At the Federal and State levels, the uncertainty of the continuation, modification or expiration of the tax reductions of the early 90s will likely plague us until at least year-end. Compounded by the economic malaise, the debate over the right and fair course of action will be amplified during the current election cycle. While those decisions will affect all of us, most of us can do little to influence the outcome.

But the same is not true closer to home. The local media is filled with stories of local government under fiscal pressure. In addition to optimistic budgeting and committing anticipated but unpredictable revenues such as Ohio estate taxes, almost all communities find revenues for real estate taxes (declining property values), income taxes (layoffs, wage and hour reductions and elimination of bonuses) and the local share of State sales taxes (reduced purchasing by consumers) trending in the wrong direction.

So far this year, local efforts to increase taxes in various categories generally have met with rejection. Clearly the electorate is viewing government spending in a harsh light. Frequent news stories of waste and excess in our County do little to engender confidence in government. The local economy is weak and unemployment is high.

Fortunately, our Village has avoided these challenges. Only this month, the Auditor of the State of Ohio issued their audit report for 2008 and 2009 in which they found no issues. This continues a many year pattern of “clean” audits. And beyond proper accounting, Village employees, Finance Committee, and the Mayor and Council Members review monthly all disbursement of Village funds. Rarely is an exception taken to any expenditure and all are within the approved budgets. At this midpoint of the year, it appears that as a result of conservative income estimates and good expense control, the Village will operate in the black for 2010.

So, you may ask, “Why is all that important to me?” The reason is simple. On November 2, 2010 Villagers will be asked to approve a five-year renewal of our 3.5 mill levy originally voted in 2005. The levy produces approximately \$729,000 annually for Village operations and constitutes about 15% of all operating expenses exclusive of capital expenditures for roads, culverts and other items. Since the Village operates annually at slightly better than breakeven (\$259,950 in 2009), those funds are critical to maintaining current Village services.

Because of that, it is important that all registered voters express themselves on the levy issue. Currently, the levy costs each homeowner about \$107 for each \$100,000 of market value. Approval of the levy will generate no new taxes. But regardless of your opinion on the levy, everyone should vote on November 2, 2010 or do so by absentee ballot beforehand. Absentee ballot forms are available at Village Hall, by calling the County Board of Elections at 216-443-3200 or on line at [www.boe.cuyahogacounty.us](http://www.boe.cuyahogacounty.us) under the “Vote by Mail” tab. I hope to see you at the polls.

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Treasurer and Tax Administrator