

THE TAX ATTACK

Chapter VII

Participation in the March Primary Election was above average for our Village, likely reflective of the intense Presidential Primary campaign. Beyond partisan contests, voters turned down the proposed Village 2.9 Mill Roads and Culverts Levy by a 10% margin. The Mayfield School Levy also failed.

The burden of dealing with the disappointing Roads and Culverts election result now reverts to Council, which can bring the issue before the voters again in August or November of this year in its original or modified form or commence a series of cost cuts to compensate for the anticipated revenue shortfall in 2009 and beyond.

Regrettably, the tax revenue issue is even more complex, because this is the last year of a Village Operating Levy that was originally voted in 1968 and most recently renewed at 3 mills in 2003. Council now must decide the format for seeking a continuation of those operating funds for another five years.

Complicating the entire process will be proposed levies by other governmental entities that provide no revenue to Gates Mills, but will be seen by some voters as competition for their tax dollars. Responsible Villagers owe it to themselves and the community to study and understand all these issues, for they surely will have a significant impact on our lives and property values. Watch for more on these issues following Councilmatic decisions in the next few months.

On a related subject, I suspect you recall that Julius Caesar was warned about the “Ides of March”. For us it’s the “Ides of April” for on the 15th of this month we all will be filing our Federal, State and Gates Mills Village income tax returns. The Gates Mills Village tax ordinance requires (among other things) all residents over 17 years of age to file a return for income taxable under our ordinance or, if they have none, to file an exemption certificate so indicating. Taxable income includes wages, salaries, commissions and other earned compensation, certain business net profits attributable to the Village and certain gambling winnings. Your tax preparer can offer a more comprehensive description of your obligation, and if that person does not have the appropriate forms, you can get them at Village Hall or from CCA by calling 216-664-2070 or online (www.ccatax.ci.cleveland.oh.us/forms.asp).

In recent years the Village has become more diligent in confirming that all residents comply with the income tax ordinance. Failure to comply may give rise to penalties and/or interest. I’m pleased to report that the vast majority of residents do file as provided in the ordinance. Given the strain on operating revenue, it is in our best interests for the Village to enforce that compliance and for residents to file timely and pay their tax obligation.

Information about many Village issues, including finances and taxes, can be found on the website (www.gatesmillsvillage.com). If you don’t find answers there to your fiscal questions, feel free to call Village Hall (440-423-4405) or me (440-423-0792).

Bob Reitman
Village Tax Administrator