

**Willowbrook / Burr Ridge
Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

WILLOWBROOK STATE OF THE VILLAGE ADDRESS
Mayor Robert A. Napoli
January 9, 2013

Unlike the uniformly bad news lately emanating from our national and state capitols, I have some good news to share with you: the state of the Village of Willowbrook today is sound! I would like to now tell you why that is the case and also tell you something of a plan I have to ease the burden of taxes and fees imposed upon our people by other governments.

In 2009, during the depth of the current recession, we undertook a careful examination of the Village's governance for the specific purpose of identifying ways and means of reducing both the size and the cost of its government. Such reductions seemed to me at the time an entirely reasonable and appropriate action for the Village to take as it corresponded to the "belt-tightening" measures already then and, frankly, still underway in the households of so many of our residents. I believed then, and still do, that Village government must also "live within its means" during difficult economic times even though neither the state nor the national governments observe this principle.

To that end, over the course of the past 3 fiscal years, we have shrunk the size and the cost of Willowbrook's government by means of various economies, efficiencies and other cost cutting measures. As a result, the size of today's Village government, measured by its staffing, has been reduced by 27%. Additionally, the cost of today's Village government has also been lessened resulting in substantial savings which presently total in excess of \$2,000,000, a cost savings equivalent to about 28% of all our next fiscal year's anticipated expenditures of \$7,000,000. However, the best news in all this is that these savings have been achieved without any reduction in the level of services needed by our people. This proposition is supported by the results of the 2012 Willowbrook Citizen Survey in which 86.9% of our people responding stated they felt they had received a fair level of service by the Village for their tax dollars paid.

As Willowbrook's Mayor, my goal for the Village in the years ahead will be to continue along the same path of fiscal solvency that we have traveled in the last 3 years. I continue to believe that the present form of governance with a hands-on Mayor, an involved and informed Village Board, along with a dedicated, knowledgeable and experienced administrative and public safety staff has produced the aforementioned results. I still believe that further improvements can be achieved at the Village Hall in the years ahead without adversely affecting the level of services needed by our people.

Lest some now suggest that I suffer from a spending phobia, let me say this: I support the expenditure of public monies when it best serves the public interest. In that regard, I have for some time been considering how to best spend a portion of the substantial savings we have achieved these last 3 years in shrinking the size and cost of Willowbrook's government. After careful consideration of this matter, I have determined to do something that, without doubt, will result in tangible and appreciable economic relief to all the homeowners of Willowbrook who today are beleaguered by ever rising taxes and fees of other governments. For those Village homeowners still working, their taxes are going up thanks to Washington and Springfield. For those Village homeowners who live on modest pensions or social security, their cost of living will soon rise again as a consequence of the water use fee increases lately imposed by the City of Chicago / DuPage Water Commission.

What I have in mind is this: a plan to share with all Willowbrook homeowners a significant portion of the savings we have thus far achieved in shrinking the size and cost of their Village's government. The sharing of these savings with our citizens could be done by the Village assuming, either in whole or in substantial part, the expense of refuse removal and recyclables collection for all Willowbrook homeowners of single family homes, duplexes, townhomes and multifamily condominium dwelling units.

Now, for those who might say all such savings should, instead, be stashed away in a "rainy day fund," I say this: our people are already being drenched by a rainstorm of other governments' taxes and fees. Given this state of affairs, I believe we can and ought to now do something as a government to help relieve this ever-increasing burden of other governments' impositions on our people. To this end, I intend in the weeks ahead to meet and share the details of my plan of relief with our people. Once I have secured their support for this plan I will then bring it before the Village Board for its consideration and action.

At this point, it was originally my intention to close these remarks. However, recently something has occurred which enables me to bring you one more piece of good news, namely: that the Village has just completed an agreement to build out the Town Center Development. Per that agreement, by August of this year, the center's lone remaining outlot will be fully improved with a new Chick-Fil-A family restaurant. Additionally, an iconic Willowbrook Town Center identification sign will be constructed at the site's Route 83 and Plainfield Road intersection along with landscaping, lighting and a flag pole. The Town Center's completion is very good news for the Village of Willowbrook, a government that does not impose a conventional municipal property tax on its people. The significant increase in sales tax that will result from the Town Center's build out will provide a welcome infusion of additional fiscal lifeblood into Willowbrook's body politic. I once again refer to Willowbrook's desire to be identified as a business friendly community so as to attract additional tax revenue and job opportunities for all of our citizens.

This concludes my brief remarks. Please accept my sincere thanks to all for your kind and patient attention.