

Borough Manager's Message

"We must love them both, those whose opinions we share and those whose opinions we reject. For both have labored in the search for truth, and both have helped us in the finding of it." - Thomas Aquinas



George Zbojovsky, PE

I am going to be seeking a lot of different opinions as I begin the 2014 Budget Process as well as the Strategic Planning process for next year's Council retreat. Some of those opinions will come from borough staff and department heads and some will come from the mayor and members of council. I will distribute surveys and ask that they complete them with their ideas, goals, agendas, and "wish lists" for particular areas of the Borough.

I am one who appreciates an active role in any process. Back in my engineering days, no project was ever accomplished by one person. We always had a "project team" and everyone's ideas were welcomed. It is usually through this process that ideas are developed, molded, adjusted, and tweaked until you have the plans or goals that are the best design. The most vital component in this exercise is YOU, the RESIDENTS of the Borough! Why shouldn't you have some say in what is planned and budgeted for your Borough? Sure, you have an opportunity to review the final budget prior to passage (10 days according to State Law), however you should be given the opportunity to send in your ideas or areas of concern. So now is your chance!! I would like to invite you to serve on the "Brentwood Borough 2014 Budget Team." Below is a sample of what I gave to the members of council and Borough department heads. If you like, you can complete the brief survey and return it to me. You can also simply email me your thoughts or ideas regarding the Borough and areas that should be given more priority than others in any format you wish.

1. Rank the top three (3) areas that you believe should be a priority in 2014.

(Mark first with a "1," second priority with "2," and third with "3.")

- ___ New or Renovated Municipal Building
- ___ Phase III of the Park Renovations (Bleachers and Press Box)
- ___ Streets and Infrastructure Improvements
- ___ Recreation Programming
- ___ Library
- ___ Attracting Younger Families
- ___ Attracting New Business
- ___ Brentwood Pool Improvements
- ___ Crime Prevention/Police Department
- ___ Code Enforcement
- ___ Improving Borough Services (make them more efficient)
- ___ RT 51 Corridor
- ___ Improving the Image of Brentwood to Outside Individuals
- ___ Lowering Taxes
- ___ Marketing of Brentwood Borough
- ___ Other (_____)

2. How much per month, total, would you be willing to pay for the following services?

Police protection, streets plowed in the winter, roads paved and maintained, adequate stormwater system, fire protection, park ball fields, football stadium/track, street lights, code enforcement to ensure properties are maintained in the Borough, delinquent tax collections to ensure everyone is paying their fair share, ambulance service, school crossing guards, and to have a community pool. These are only 13 generalized services that the Borough provides each year. There are many more services not listed as well as those intangible items that the Borough

provides. I would just like to know what you feel is an acceptable monthly fee to have the above amenities. (Think of what your last cable bill was or your cell phone bill was last month.)

- ___ \$300/month would be fair based on all that we receive. (I know homeowner associations that charge more per month.)
- ___ \$200/month would be a steal based on the quality of services we receive.
- ___ \$100/month (Cable and internet is a lot more than this per month.)
- ___ \$65/month but I would not know how they would be able to do it. (My cell phone costs me more each month.)
- ___ \$20/month (I spend more in coffee each month.)
- ___ Other (_____)

Remember, this is only a survey to try and feel the pulse of the community. The "comments" by each selection is just my way to trying to put things in perspective when we think of some other "luxuries" we pay for each month. For example, what is more important, having HBO to catch the next episode of Boardwalk Empire or a good DPW Department with equipment to ensure my roads are plowed so that I can get to work in the morning or take my sick kids to the hospital?

3. Understanding that half of the above services are provided through the Borough's collection of property taxes each year, and the fact it has been 7 years since the last time the Borough raised property taxes, would you rather the Borough raise property taxes incrementally each year to keep up with inflation and cost of living or would you rather they wait until it is absolutely necessary and raise them 3 or 4 mils all at once? Or, would you rather the Borough begin cutting the services mentioned in item 2 above?

- ___ Raise them incrementally each year to maintain our current level of service as well as plan for current and future capital projects.
- ___ Only increase taxes as a last resort even if it amounts to 3 or 4 mils to pay for current services as well as capital projects required to keep Brentwood sustainable.
- ___ Cut as many of the above services as it takes to keep taxes at current levels.
- ___ Other (_____)

If you want to be involved in the 2014 Budget Process just complete all (or part) of the above and send me the results either by email (gzbojovsky@brentwoodboro.com) or regular mail to the Brentwood Borough Offices, 3624 Brownsville Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15227. I just ask that you mark the email subject heading or envelope with "2014 Brentwood Budget Survey." I will put the above on the Borough's website as well. I will respect everyone's opinions and plans as I am sure they are as important to you as mine are to me. Just to make sure that we are getting legitimate surveys returned, only those with a valid name and address will be considered.

On behalf of my wife Michelle and I, we would like to thank everyone for their continued support and wish everyone a blessed Holiday Season!