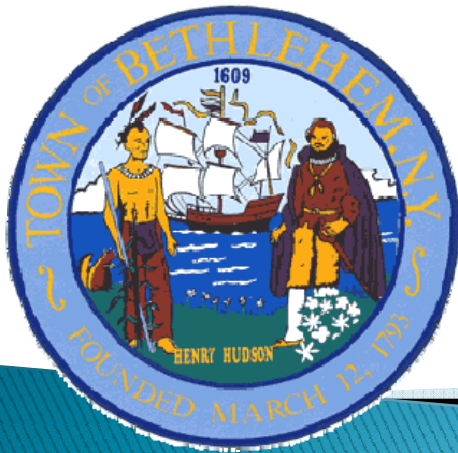


FINAL REPORT OF THE 20/20 ADVISORY COMMITTEE



20/20 Advisory Committee

Terri Egan, Co-Chair

Ken Ringler, Co-Chair

Presented to:

Bethlehem Town Board

June 24, 2009

THE 20/20 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- ▶ Formed by Town Board in January 2008
- ▶ Consider strategic direction of Town government, its programs and services and its fiscal sustainability (not land use)
- ▶ Cultivate community leadership
- ▶ Identify issues and opportunities
- ▶ Build consensus, focus efforts, guide decision making



THE 20/20 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Terri Egan and Ken Ringler, Co-Chairs		
Steve Baboulis	Lisa Evans	Pam Robbins
Keith Bennett	Cathy Griffin	Patty Salkin
James Blendell	Susan Hager	Brian Stenson
Mort Borzykowski	Terry Hannigan	Suzanne Traylor
John Clarkson	Dick Kotlow	Bob Verstandig, Jr.
Steve Coffey	Jim Lytle	Bob Ward
Peter Conway	John Piechnik	Ann Wendth
Joanne Cunningham	Ted Putney	Christo Zemerling



20/20 SUB-COMMITTEES

- ▶ Three sub-committees were formed to create more in-depth focus:
 - Communications Sub-Committee, chaired by John Piechnik (Baboulis, Hannigan, Cunningham, Leveille)
 - Community Survey Sub-Committee, chaired by Pam Robbins (Egan, Griffin, Hager, Leveille, Salkin, Stenson)
 - Financial Modeling Sub-Committee, chaired by George Leveille (Borzykowski, Clarkson, Kotlow, Stenson, Cunningham)



THE 20/20 MISSION STATEMENT

“The establishment of the 20/20 Committee will provide the Town with a **vehicle to involve key community stakeholders** and to stimulate a community-wide conversation focused on **the long-term strategic direction of the Town**. The mission of the 20/20 Committee will be to **provide the Town Board with recommendations** on key policy decisions to ensure that it maximizes the potential to achieve the Comprehensive Plan community vision for the year 2020. Among other things, this initiative is designed to **cultivate leadership, identify issues and opportunities, focus efforts, build consensus, guide decision-making, and help the Town Board establish priorities.**”



THE 20/20 VISION STATEMENT

“In the year 2020, the Town of Bethlehem is **a model municipality and a dynamic organization** that has evolved to meet the changing needs of the community. It **maximizes the utility of its resources and is an efficient, effective and responsive organization** serving its residents and businesses. The Town **utilizes sustainable practices, cutting edge technology and green design** to continuously improve its high quality, modern facilities. The Town operates under a **sound financial plan** and utilizes asset-based management practices. It builds and maintains **infrastructure that supports a diverse and modern commercial and industrial base**. The Town workforce is a highly trained, motivated, accountable and productive resource for the community. **The Town government conducts its business in an open and participatory manner** fostering collaborative relationships, welcoming diversity and cultivating an informed and involved citizenry.”



20/20 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ▶ Recognition of level of detail and understanding necessary to make recommendations
- ▶ Key “values” to consider when making decisions
- ▶ The committee produced guiding principles regarding:
 - Adaptability
 - Sustainability
 - Cooperation among taxing jurisdictions
 - Communications and citizen involvement
 - Fiscal responsibility
 - Diversity



20/20 GUIDING PRINCIPLE EXAMPLE

► **Adaptability:**

“The Town government is a fluid and flexible organization that adapts to changing needs, practices and technologies. It continuously identifies “opportunity areas” for increased efficiency and productivity including both inter- and intra-governmental opportunities for sharing or consolidation of services, and capacity building. It also understands the changing demographics of the community and adjusts programs and services to best meet the evolving needs of the community”



20/20 COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND TOPICS

- ▶ The committee held 18 monthly committee meetings as well as more than a dozen sub-committee meetings
- ▶ The committee was provided with an overview of Town programs, services, infrastructure, facilities and major operating departments
- ▶ All meeting agendas and meeting records are published on the Town's web site

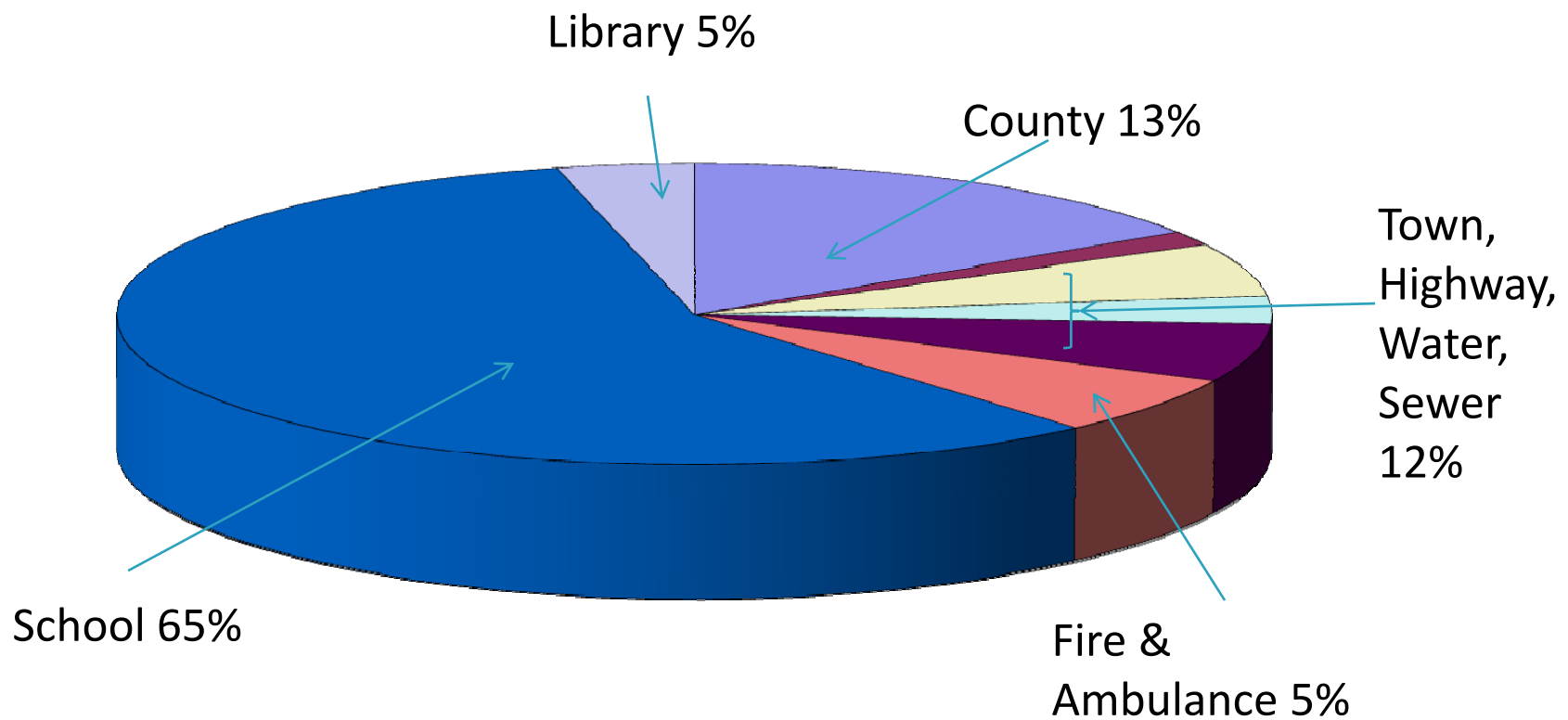


FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

- ▶ A tax base analysis was prepared by Camoin Associates
- ▶ Alternative growth (development) scenarios were considered
- ▶ Key findings:
 - Town's tax base is primarily residential (@ 80%)
 - Town revenues are growing at a much lower rate than expenses, causing a structural imbalance
 - The Town's share of the tax dollar (@ 12%) is relatively modest given the key services the Town provides (see pie chart slide 11)



WHERE YOUR OVERALL TAX \$ GOES



COMMUNITY SURVEY

- ▶ Supported by Pam Robbins and Policy Research Associates
- ▶ Sampled 1,500 residents who had voted in recent local elections
- ▶ Acceptable response rate of 22%
- ▶ Profile of respondents:
 - 74% older than 50
 - 57% lived in Elsmere or Delmar
 - 92% owned their home and have lived in Town an average of 26 years



COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

- ▶ Programs and services are appropriate and should be maintained at current levels
- ▶ New outside funding and economic development is preferred over tax increases
- ▶ Town water and sewer systems are priorities for new investment
- ▶ Consolidation and sharing of services is supported where there is clear benefit



20/20 RECOMMENDATIONS

▶ **FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY**

- Responsible non-residential growth
- Comprehensive financial strategy and capital plan
- Maintain sound fiscal controls and set performance goals

▶ **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- Comprehensive Town-wide strategy
- Support Vista and SYID initiatives



20/20 RECOMMENDATIONS

▶ **MODERNIZING TOWN GOVERNMENT**

- Conduct a non-partisan evaluation of opportunities to modernize the Town's organization and operations
- Develop a plan to improve the Town's basic infrastructure
- Invest in technology and "green" practices and provide modern and safe facilities and buildings



20/20 RECOMMENDATIONS

▶ **COOPERATION AMONG TAXING JURISDICTIONS**

- Establish a mechanism (inter-governmental working group) for ongoing interaction and cooperation
- Look for new opportunities to consolidate or share services
- Strengthen intergovernmental relations to attract resources
- Consider joint participation in the burdens and benefits of economic development



CONCLUSION: CITIZEN RESPONSIBILITY

- ▶ Engaged and informed citizens provide tremendous value
- ▶ Clear need to strengthen volunteerism
- ▶ Other taxing jurisdictions are encouraged to involve citizens like the Town has through 20/20



IMPLEMENTATION MESSAGE FROM 20/20

- ▶ A three point approach to implementation:
 - Develop and implement a Town-wide economic development strategy
 - Work together with other taxing jurisdictions to improve productivity and to integrate financial and capital planning and economic development efforts
 - Assess opportunities for improving the Town's organization and operations

