



City of Beacon, New York

Office of the Mayor
Lee Kyriacou, Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAYOR KYRIACOU PROPOSES 2021 BUDGET WITH NO TAX INCREASE OR LAYOFFS; ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC SAFETY AND RECREATION

BEACON, NY – Mayor Lee Kyriacou proposed his first budget as Mayor to the City Council on Monday. The proposal – which comes amidst a shortfall of between \$700,000 and \$2 million in sales tax and state aid due to the coronavirus pandemic – keeps taxes flat for residents, has no layoffs, and adds an additional \$90,000 for alternative public safety resources and for recreation. The only increase to the tax levy is from “new” properties coming online in the past year, which is the direct benefit of new construction in Beacon.

The mayor’s proposed 2021 general fund budget totals \$22 million (excluding water and sewer services that are covered by user fees). In 2020, \$1.5 million in state aid was reduced by \$300,000, and expected county sales tax revenue was down by at least \$300,000. In 2021, the same two sources of funding could leave a gap of \$700,000 to \$2 million; the mayor’s budget proposes to cover the shortfall in its entirety in 2021 from the city’s general fund balance. The only additional property tax revenue in the budget is from new construction, which added almost two percent to the city’s tax base.

Data from the NYS Comptroller demonstrates that Beacon has the lowest per capita spend on police of any city in the Mid-Hudson region. The police patrol has a required minimum size shift, so that any staff reduction simply results in a 150% increase in overtime. Accordingly, the 2021 police budget in the Mayor’s budget does not reflect significant change. Instead, the Mayor has added up to \$90,000 for alternative public safety resources and recreation.

Mayor Kyriacou is also proposing that the City of Beacon work with the Town of Fishkill on potentially sharing police and recreation resources, to find safe and affordable ways of reducing expense and increasing community services. “The City will proceed cautiously to ensure that any budget changes do not reduce safety,” Mayor Kyriacou said.

Mayor Kyriacou said, “In this incredibly difficult economic time, we must do our best not to contribute to the economic hardship faced by so many of our residents. Preparing a budget with no tax increase and no layoffs was no easy task – as you can see, many other local governments are being faced with tax increases, layoffs or both. To accomplish this, the “hole” in the general fund budget – due to sales tax and state aid shortfalls – totaling at least \$700,000 and up to almost \$2 million – will be covered this year by the general fund balance. The City cannot cover this size of a gap indefinitely, but we will do so in 2021.”

About the City of Beacon:

Beacon, New York is located on the eastern shore of the Hudson River 60 miles north of New York City, with a population of 15,000. Originally a Native American settlement, the area was purchased from the Wappinger Tribe in 1683 and settled by Dutch and other Europeans, leading to the riverfront community of Fishkill Landing on the Hudson, and the mill community of Matteawan on Fishkill Creek. The two communities were

incorporated together as the City of Beacon in 1913, named for the Revolutionary War signal fires on Mount Beacon. Beacon thrived as a 19th and 20th Century factory city, but as factories closed after WWII and the local economy declined, the city went through a period of hard times. Today, Beacon has successfully reinvented itself as a 21st Century river community centered around tourism, the arts and access to the scenic Hudson River heritage area. A diverse and thriving small city, it is now home to DIA:Beacon (one of the largest exhibition spaces in the country for modern and contemporary art), a network of Hudson River parks connecting to Fishkill Creek and Mount Beacon trails, and a vibrant historic Main Street of art galleries, shops, cultural venues and restaurants.

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