



**City of Geneva, New York**

**2013 Municipal Budget**

**Plan of Operations**



City of Geneva  
2013 Municipal Budget

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City of Geneva, New York  
2013 Municipal Budget

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### ***Mission Statement***

The City of Geneva: the model city for progressive economic and community development; investing public resources wisely, and delivering unique value to our residents, businesses, and visitors.

### ***Vision Statement***

Geneva: A City of diverse assets; a community of choice for an engaged, creative, and active citizenry; a premier destination for progressive households, businesses, and visitors.

### ***Strategic Imperatives***

The City of Geneva will achieve its vision through the effective execution of our mission. We recognize that progress toward our vision is most effectively achieved via the allocation of resources to the following strategic imperatives:

- ***Economic Development:*** Private investment and job creation contribute to community success through diversification of the tax base and enhancement of quality of life for our residents. City Council will continue to make investments in well thought out economic development efforts that attract high-quality commercial activity. Our efforts will be focused on those investments that enhance our posture as a regional tourism center, a haven for small, independent businesses, and promote an industrial sector that provides high-skilled, high paying jobs, while respecting our sensitive watershed environment.
- ***Talent Capitalization:*** Vast community resources exist in our active residents and engaged civic, business, and not-for profit partners. City Council will invest time, effort, and resources in cultivating relationships—with existing and potential partners, in an effort to leverage public resources, community effort, and expertise. Infrastructure will be developed and utilized to seek out, evaluate, cultivate, and implement innovative programs and services to increase value to residents, visitors, and businesses.
- ***Asset Promotion:*** Active promotion of regional and community assets are critical to the development of a sound economic and community development program. In order to maintain and advance our position as a community of choice for residents, businesses, and visitors, City Council will invest resources to elevate our visibility among target audiences through effective and efficient brand distribution strategies, leveraging the resources of economic development and other community partners.
- ***Pride of Place:*** Promoting our community as a destination for discerning households, visitors, and businesses begins with intrinsic pride of place. Council will invest resources in efforts that engender neighborhood and community pride through programs and services that enhance the aesthetics, functionality, and safety of public spaces, and that showcase Geneva as a model community.



September 26, 2012

Members, Geneva City Council  
City of Geneva  
47 Castle Street  
Geneva, New York 14456

Mayor and Council:

It is my great pleasure to present the 2013 General, Water, Sewer, and Workers' Compensation Fund budgets. This document represents my fifth budget proposal for Geneva, and I continue to be proud of the work we have done together to make Geneva a great place to live, work, play, and invest.

This budget represents the fifth consecutive budget for Geneva that requires no increase in the real property tax rate. This is nothing short of remarkable considering the national and New York economy. Additionally, we are pleased to bring the second consecutive budget with no increase in water or sewer rates.

These accomplishments come in the face of dramatically increasing costs associated with the New York State Retirement System, escalating rates for health care coverage for employees and retirees, and stagnant revenues attributed to state aid.

Organic growth in revenues like property and sales taxes, as well as cost shifts to those segments of our customer base who demand an inordinate level of service have contributed to our ability to deliver a balanced budget. Above all, a fiscally responsible set of managers and action-level staff are to be commended for their restraint and innovation in investing taxpayer and ratepayer resources.

The 2013 budget consists of four funds: General Fund, Water Fund, Sewer Fund, and Workers' Compensation Fund.

## **General Fund**

The General Fund consists of \$15.8 million in revenues invested in City operations. Notable investments for 2013 include:

- **Fellowship Program:** Staff is proposing a partnership with HWS to add two full-time fellows to the City's management team. One staffer will be charged with development of infrastructure to cultivate new and existing events. The second will be charged with operational audits across City operations.
- **Economic Development Investments:** The Economic Development Partners have proposed a range of investments targeted at boosting the City's downtown, industrial, cultural, and industrial sectors.
- **Park Improvements:** Staff is proposing a significant investment in facilities at Lakefront, McDonough, and Pulteney Parks.

As noted, these investments are proposed with no increase in real property taxes.

## **Water Fund**

The Water Fund is balanced at \$3.1 million. Staff is proposing the addition of penalty fees for those properties that require physical intervention (red tags, shut-offs, etc.) as part of the collection of rates. No significant capital investments are proposed for 2013.

## **Sewer Fund**

The Sewer Fund is balanced at \$4.4 million. Several small-scale capital projects, including the replacement of the roof at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and lining sections of the sanitary sewer collection system are proposed.

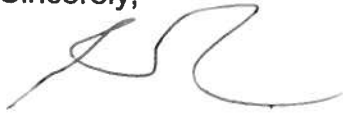
## **Workers' Compensation Fund**

This fund is new for 2013, and was created as a result of Ontario County's amended collection program. This budget is balanced at \$397,671.

As always, it has been my great pleasure to work with your departments in development of this budget. They are a hard-working, dedicated group of professionals; passionate about providing a high level of service to the community. Special thanks to Comptroller's staff Ed George, Adam Blowers, Pat Grimaldi, and Kari Wright; as well as Jennifer Slywka and Nancy Coluzzi in my office for their work on this document.

I am proud to continue my service to you and to Geneva. I hope you will look favorably on the enclosed proposals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MH' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Matt Horn  
City Manager

**The 2013 City Manager's Budget Proposal**  
**Creating Sustainable Success...**

**Budget Message**

*"You cannot do today's job with yesterday's methods and be in business tomorrow..."*  
*--Nelson Jackson*

**Introduction**

Success is fleeting. Organizations that rest on their laurels, rather than building tomorrow's successes are doomed to failure. The City of Geneva, through savvy investment of taxpayer resources, has emerged from years of economic recession as a better and brighter community. Storefronts are filling, tourists are flocking, and throughout the region, there is a perceptible buzz surrounding the community that Geneva has become.

Over the past several years, City Council has brokered remarkable partnerships with not-for-profit organizations and fostered growth in industrial and commercial sectors; all of which has resulted in the leveraging of resources to mitigate the cost to residential taxpayers of providing first-rate services, programs, and facilities.

In order to continue to achieve successes, and realize City Council's vision of becoming "a model community," continued investment and partnership development are required. Council and staff must continue to examine and evaluate the way we deliver services and invest taxpayer resources so that our success can be sustained.

Council must continue to evaluate policies associated with business recruitment and retention, tourism development, and neighborhood revitalization. Staff must continue to research and develop best practices for leveraging the resources provided by our citizen-investors. Above all, as the opening quote suggests, we must look to yesterday's methods and practices as a guideline, but must never allow rigidity and homage to yesterday's ways to stand in the way of tomorrow's successes.

What follows is a spending and revenue proposal that is respectful of the challenges facing our residents and businesses. For the fifth straight year, staff had held our spending proposals to such a level, and examined alternate revenue models in such a manner as to provide for no increase in real property taxes associated with City



operations. On the utility side, we were also able to hold the line on water and wastewater rates.

Our investment recommendations look to the future. We interpret City Council's vision not as "make Geneva the cheapest community in which to live in the Finger Lakes." Instead, we view Council's directive as a charge to deliver the highest level of value for the precious investments made by taxpayers and ratepayers.

*"It's always good to remember where you come from and celebrate it. To remember where you come from is part of where you're going..."*

*--Anthony Burgess*

## **2012 Successes**

While important not to dwell there, the past can serve as a great guide to where we're going. It is important for us to take a look at what has worked for us, and to model our future efforts after those that brought us successes.

In 2012, City Council set forth our 2012-2015 Strategic Imperatives for success. Those include:

- Economic Development
- Talent Capitalization
- Asset Promotion
- Pride of Place

Staff utilized these imperatives to guide us in our efforts to make Geneva a great community, and to develop a roadmap toward reaching City Council's vision of Geneva as "a City of diverse assets; a community of choice for an engaged, creative, and active citizenry; a premier destination for progressive households, businesses, and visitors."

To that end, it is relevant for us to review successes in these areas for 2012.

### **Economic Development**

The 2012 operating year was an incredible year for business recruitment and retention efforts in the City. As you are all aware, the previous five years have been challenging on a national level relative to fiscal uncertainty. Geneva, while not completely

unscathed, managed resources and efforts in such a way as to minimize the blow of a troubling national economy. In 2012, City Council restructured the City's economic development efforts to move from a staff-led development program to one engineered and supported by partners in the not-for-profit and governmental sectors.

The Geneva Economic Development Partnership was off and running in 2012, with representatives from the tourism, industrial development, downtown development, and cultural sectors all at the table evaluating investments and working toward a very healthy economy in the City.

Those efforts were marked by several major downtown redevelopment projects, including the occupancy of the Five Star Bank building by seventy-five professional employees of Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

Additionally, the team of David Linger and Wendy Marsh announced their intent to revitalize three vacant historical structures at Castle, Linden, and Genesee Streets. This project was recently endorsed by the Industrial Development Agency, and is moving toward construction commencement. What will result will be the development of dozens of high-end residential units and fully occupied storefronts in one of the last remaining concentrations of blight and underutilization in downtown.

The rest of downtown continues to flourish with the addition of many boutique-style restaurant, retail, and hospitality offerings. The Geneva Business Improvement District has continued its march to provide aggressive beautification efforts in the district.

On the other side of town, Finger Lakes Health has commenced with its \$50,000,000 expansion project on the campus of Geneva General Hospital. Modernization efforts for the Hospital's emergency room and operating facilities will result in the continued recognition of Finger Lakes Health as a premier health care provider.

Developers continue their work at the Town and Country Plaza, with new tenant spaces for several longstanding retail operations, and the addition of a new Tops Market on the site. The development team is also preparing for continued expansion at outparcels on the site.

From an industrial perspective, Guardian Glass and Zotos continue to be strongholds in the Geneva Industrial Park with over 1,000 full-time employees between the two industrial powerhouses. High-end furniture crafters CCN announced an expansion at their Geneva facility, which will enable them to continue their impressive growth in the region. Our industrial marketing partner GRE actively markets industrial parcels in the City, at both tenant parks and scattered industrial sites around the community.

In the cultural sector, Geneva landed a big win with the siting of Finger Lakes Community College's Viticulture Center at the Cornell Agriculture and Food Technology Park. This operation will be a showpiece for the College, and is the only facility of its kind in the United States. Graduates will move effortlessly into Cornell University's wine and grape programs through articulation agreements between the institutions. FLCC also commenced design and engineering work on its \$12,000,000 Geneva Campus Center on Milton Street in downtown.

The Smith Opera House has commenced its design and engineering efforts on HVAC and other facility upgrades at the historical landmark facility. In 2013, those efforts will come to fruition with the development of air conditioning; enabling the expansion of summer programming.

### Talent Capitalization

Leveraging resources of our residents and other partners has been a key focus for staff in 2012. City Council endorsed the City's first Innovation Strategy and its home, the Civic Innovation Hub. Dozens of concepts have been submitted, and are in various stages of development. Multiple ideas are currently in the implementation phase, at least one of which is specifically called out for funding later in this proposal.

Neighborhood associations have also been key in our efforts to capitalize on the talents of our community. Prior to 2012, Castle Heights and Hildreth Hill had been recognized as partners on the move with multiple projects in development around their neighborhoods. This year, The Arbors and Founders Square have surged with organizational and project development. Park and other infrastructure improvements and events such as the Pumpkin Roll, Neighborhood Yard Sale, and inaugural Garden Walk were tremendous successes, and are becoming the hallmark of sustainable neighborhood revitalization.

The Geneva Community Compact Steering Committee continued its focus on promoting mutual cultural understanding and diversifying City operations from an ethnic and cultural perspective. Programs like the Community Dialogues on Race, DiverseCity, and the Geneva Citizens' Police Academy are serving to further the goals of the Community Compact, adopted in 2011.

On the fiscal side, partnerships with Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Finger Lakes Health, and the Finger Lakes Municipal Health Insurance Trust have diversified City revenues and managed costs to ensure fiscal sustainability.

### Asset Promotion

One recommendation of a Market Analysis conducted in 2011 was the execution of a unified branding effort for the City and our partners. The Ad Council of Rochester was selected this year and completed an expansive brand development effort which is in

multiple stages of implementation today by City operations, residents, businesses, and the tourism community.

In addition to the vast efforts of our neighborhood associations, Geneva has embarked on a wayfinding signage program, designed to showcase our community's assets to those traveling from outside the community. Signage is in production now, and installation will commence this fall.

### Pride of Place

The City was recognized this year by multiple publications and other organizations, including our downtown, small business development, and Farmers' Market program in *Edible Finger Lakes Magazine*. Downtown Geneva received a score of 98% from *Walk Score*; an online forum promoting walkable communities. Our customer service efforts received a Top 20 rating out of 300 participating communities by *SeeClickFix*, our online issue resolution service.

*"Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellent, intelligent planning, and focused effort..."*

*--Paul Meyer*

### **The Way Ahead**

The 2013 General Fund proposal represents a commitment to innovation, leveraging community assets, and marketing Geneva as an incredible location to live, work, visit, and invest. City Council's directives relative to investing in community assets, providing a high level of customer service, and mitigating the impact of rising costs to the taxpayers have all been heeded.

The 2013 operating year will be marked by a renewed focus on sustainability of all operations. Staff will engage with community partners to conduct a bottom-up review of all City organizational units and determine what the long range impact of operational decisions mean to the community's bottom line.

Additionally, a renewed investment effort in community assets is proposed to continue cultivating pride of place. Parks, equipment, and other facilities will receive critical attention.

Perhaps most importantly, continued attention to property tax rates, and those fees that impact our community will be a significant focus.

## *Revenues*

The City has faced stagnation in significant revenue sources over the last half-decade. Investments and other strategies, along with an overall thaw in the national economy are contributing to a glimmer of sunlight through the clouds.

### Property Taxes

As noted, staff is proposing no change in the operational property tax rate for 2013. Thanks to increased development activity in the community, along with the expiration of outdated tax phase-in agreements contribute to an increased levy.

### Sales Tax

The regional economy hasn't been immune to the inhibition of expenditures in retail and other markets. Savvy policy and cooperative efforts with Ontario County set a solid baseline to weather the storm. Trends from 2011 to 2012, and apparent in early consideration of 2013, show a thaw in consumer spending in the region. This resulted in a forecasted increase in collections.

### Not-for-Profit Partnerships

The second year of our agreements with Hobart and William Smith Colleges and Finger Lakes Health results in a 3% increase over the base amount from 2012. This continues to enable the City to mitigate costs to taxpayers.

### Fines and Other Fees

Staff is implementing policy decisions from the 2012 budget proposal to foster increases in collections of code enforcement and inspection fees. Additionally, staff recommends increases in penalties associated with violations of parking regulations and failure to promptly pay utility charges. Staff proposes a ten dollar increase for parking tickets, the penalties for which have not been adjusted in fifteen years.

Additionally, we have seen a significant increase in effort required for collections of delinquent utility accounts. Approximately 11% of all accounts require some physical interaction (i.e. visit by staff to their home or business) in order to affect collection of outstanding bills. As such, we are proposing a "Red Tag fee" of \$50 for those facilities for which we must make a physical effort to collect. Staff also proposes an increase to \$150 in fees for those customers whose utility services require reconnection after failing to pay on time.

### Ratepayer Revenues

As noted, staff is proposing no increase in rates for water or sewer customers. Cost management efforts as well as appropriate allocation of cost burden to those customers requiring advanced efforts result in these funds being balanced without rate increases.

## *Investments*

As always, staff utilized City Council's Strategic Imperatives to develop investment proposals for 2013. In each proposed investment, departments were required to demonstrate the impact on the imperatives in order to be included in the budget proposal.

### Economic Development

The Executive Committee of the Geneva Economic Development Partnership developed an investment program that was submitted for review. Those programs that demonstrated the most significant potential impact are noted below and recommended for investment:

- **Greater Rochester Enterprise Partnership:** The City entered into a partnership in 2012 with GRE for marketing of industrial assets. This has resulted in an elevated profile amongst site selectors and increased prospect activity. Staff is proposing to continue this partnership.
- **Technology Farm Partnership:** The Technology Farm remains a significant player in regional economic development. The recent announcement of the FLCC Viticulture program, and renewed interest amongst potential development prospects will be cultivated by City investment.
- **Smith Opera House Partnership:** Continued investment in the Smith will ensure that cultural development remains strong in the City. In 2012, the Smith was host to multiple national recording acts and dozens of educational programs for students from around the region.
- **Business Improvement District Partnership:** The BID has demonstrated an incredible capacity for enhanced maintenance of the district and development of downtown events. The 2013 investment will continue this partnership.
- **Wine Symposium Support:** City Council's 2012 investment is supporting development of the 2013 event to be hosted at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. This will be a multi-day event showcasing Geneva as the center of the wine region. The 2013 investment will support the 2014 event.

### Talent Capitalization

The showpiece of the talent capitalization imperative is the development of the GenevaServes Fellowship Program. The program is a partnership between Geneva and Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

The City will select two students to serve as Fellows for 2013. A cash stipend is proposed to be provided to recent graduates of the Colleges. This will be augmented by no-cost room and board provided by Hobart and William Smith.

The Fellowship Program will provide recent graduates with real world experience in City operations to candidates. In addition, the City will have a low cost opportunity to evaluate potential management team positions for future implementation.

For 2013, the City is proposing two fellowship positions:

- **Manager, Geneva Events Factory:** A Civic Innovation Hub implementation team is currently developing a program for cultivation and management of events in the City of Geneva. The Events Factory will serve as a hub of resources and information for existing and prospective event promoters. The Manager will be charged with developing and maintaining an inventory of equipment for use by events, development and management of databases of venues, contractors, and volunteers, and promotion of Geneva as a premier destination for event promoters.
- **Operational Sustainability Analyst:** This position will be charged with operational audits of all City departments. The Analyst will work with department staff to review, update, and develop policies where needed, analyze department operations against best practices, and provide detailed reporting to department and City management on recommendations for improvements.

#### Asset Promotion

Utilizing final products from the City's branding program, staff will deploy a marketing program consisting of the following:

- **Chamber of Commerce Partnership:** The City will partner with the Geneva Chamber of Commerce to maintain a centralized tourism marketing website, currently under development. The Chamber will maintain a coordinated event calendar and maintain responsibility for the City's tourism-based social marketing program. Additionally, tourism outreach efforts related to targeted populations will be conducted in accordance with a Council-adopted tourism marketing plan.
- **Collateral Development:** Utilizing branding guidance, a set of printed collateral marketing material will be developed for use in marketing Geneva's commercial and tourism assets.

- Video Project: A marketing video, showcasing Geneva's tourism assets will be produced to be used on websites, at Smith events, and other appropriate venues.

### Pride of Place

Staff proposes execution of a facilities investment program for parks throughout the City. The following investments are proposed to be funded by a Parks Improvement Bond to be executed in 2013:

- Lakefront Pavilion: This project has also been proposed to the Civic Innovation Hub, and is recommended for implementation alongside the current Boat Museum Development. Museum and Visitors' Center development will result in the displacement of park public restrooms, summer recreation programming, and the Lake Trout Derby weigh station/administrative offices. Staff is proposing development of a facility that will house these uses and provide additional space to be rented out for events.
- McDonough Park Improvements: Council has discussed maintenance issues at McDonough Park. Funds are proposed for various upgrades to the park to provide for improved operations.
- Lakefront Dock Rehabilitation: Staff is proposing to improve aging dockage at the Boat Launch adjacent to the Visitors' Center.
- Lakefront Park Enhancements: A grant application has been submitted for the improvement of the seawall, boat launch, and pedestrian facilities adjacent to developing Museum and Visitors' Center. These funds will be used to match grant funds, if awarded.
- Pulteney Park Improvements: Staff is proposing rebuilding and repairs to the steps at Pulteney Park.



*"The object of all work is production or accomplishment, and to either of these ends there must be forethought, system, planning, intelligence, and honest purpose, as well as perspiration. Seeming to do is not doing."*

*--Thomas Edison*

## **Final Thoughts**

"Seeming to do is not doing..." We have to be "all in." Geneva is on the precipice of greatness. We are blessed with so many incredible assets. All that stands between us and ultimate success is...us...

The plan before you can result in amazing achievement. Your staff is prepared to do all that is necessary to affect the work (perspiration) needed to be successful. If we stand before them as leaders and behind them as supporters, Geneva's successes will be sustained and our "march toward greatness" will continue to progress.

It is our pleasure to serve you and the Geneva community.