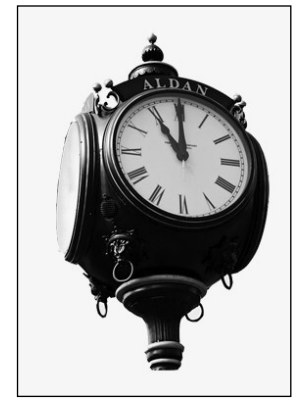


THE ALDAN CHRONICLE

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BOROUGH COUNCIL INCREASES PROPERTY TAX RATE, 4TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

A unanimous vote by Aldan Borough Council at the December 2012 meeting increased the borough's 2013 Property Tax rate by 4.9% to 6.4104 mills. That equates to a property tax of \$641.04 for the average home assessed at \$100,000.

This latest tax hike when added to increases for 2010, 2011, and 2012 equals a 21.8% rise in the tax rate since 2008. For the average home assessed at \$100,000, this increase equals an extra \$114.84 over 2008 rates.

In addition to raising the property tax rate, trash fees were increased by 7.5% to \$150.94 per unit. The sewer fee will remain unchanged at \$329.00 per unit. Including both of these fees, the average homeowner (home assessed at \$100,000) will pay a 3.7% increase in 2013 over 2012 for a total of \$1,120.98 for all municipal taxes and fees.

This means that, since 2008, the

average Aldan resident (home assessed at \$100,000) has seen a \$195.19 (21.1%) rise in taxes and fees paid to the Borough.

In the 2013 Budget Notes, Council states, "Real estate tax revenues for 2012 have run behind historic levels."

At the time of the December Council meeting, the public was not aware of the alleged misappropriation of funds by Aldan Tax Collector Robert Park. Reports have estimated the borough's current loss to be \$200,000.

In addition to the annual revenues, Aldan Borough has "reserve funds" (i.e., savings accounts) which total \$540,000, as of the budget passage date of December 12, 2012. This amount is approximately \$243,000 less than the reserve funds at the end of 2011. Those reserves equal 22% of the total 2013 budget and are not included in 2013 revenues or expenditures.

For the full budget, please go to www.aldanonline.info.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Aldan Curbside Recycling to Expand*
- *Christmas Festivities in Aldan*
- *Aldan Trends Democrat*
- *2013 Municipal Races: Why They Matter*
- *School District Tax Rates Likely to Rise*
- *Aldan Democrats' Fourth Annual MLK Service Project*
- *Aldan Gains a Real Community Asset*

FUND MISSING, ALDAN TAX COLLECTOR INVESTIGATED

On December 12, 2012, Council President Harry Short announced at the Aldan Borough Council Meeting that Aldan Borough Tax Collector Robert Park had resigned on November 16, 2012. No explanation for the resignation was given. At that same meeting, Aldan Borough Council appointed Thomas J. Morse of Hazelwood Road as Tax Collector to fill the unexpired term until December 31, 2013.

Eleven days later, the reason for the resignation became clear. The Delaware County Daily Times reported that Mr. Park was being investigated by the Delaware County District Attorney's office

for the misappropriation of funds that could total more than \$1.1 million.

According to Joseph Otto, Chief Operations Officer of William Penn School District, at least \$900,000 is missing from the school district. An additional \$200,000 is suspected missing from Aldan Borough.

Mr. Park, a registered Republican, was the borough's elected Tax Collector for more than 22 years.

Although no charges have been filed as of the writing of this article, a forensic audit is being conducted by the Economic Crimes Unit of the Criminal Investigation Division of the District Attorney's office.

Mr. Park was bonded with the premiums paid by the borough and the school district. As a result, the missing sums will eventually be paid. In the short term, however, the alleged misappropriation has created cash flow problems for the borough and the school district.

Representatives of the William Penn School District and Aldan Borough have answered that they have no idea as to when the investigation will conclude or when the reimbursements will occur.

The office of Tax Collector will be up for election on November 5, 2013.

ALDAN CURBSIDE RECYCLING TO EXPAND

In 2012, Aldan Borough's voluntary curbside recycling program captured 384 tons of material during its first year. Thanks to widespread participation by Aldan residents 316 additional tons were diverted from the trash stream compared to 2011.

Starting in 2013, plastic containers marked "3" to "7" can now be added to the blue buckets. (Previously, only plastic containers marked "1" or "2" had been allowed.) Plastic bags are still prohibited.

Other materials allowed for

recycling in the borough's blue cans include:

- Newspapers, office paper, magazines, junk mail, and cardboard (*not wax coated cartons or boxes.*)
- Glass bottles (*clear, amber, and green, but not plate glass or light bulbs or mirrors or pottery.*)
- Aluminum or metal cans (*not aluminum trays or pie tins or ice cube trays or aluminum siding, doors gutters or windows.*)



Curbside recycling will be picked up each Wednesday throughout 2013. The recycling is in addition to the twice-weekly trash collections.

Residents can still utilize the paper bin on Woodlawn Avenue behind Aldan Elementary School and the glass/plastic igloos behind the Giant Supermarket on Oak Avenue.

If you have any questions, please call the Borough offices at 610-626-3554.

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES IN ALDAN

The Aldan Boosters Civic Association's annual Christmas activities began on Thanksgiving eve with the placement of mailboxes for Letters to Santa and Letters to the Troops in front of the Aldan Borough Municipal Building on Providence Road at Clifton Avenue.

Almost 200 Santa letters were answered, and over 33 pounds of cards and letters were packaged and sent to servicemen and women for the holiday season. This year, the children of Aldan Elementary School adopted a platoon of U.S. Army soldiers from a road clearance crew that included several Delaware County residents who recently served in eastern Afghanistan.

The 7th Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony was held on Saturday evening, December 1, 2012 with Aldan resident and local artist William Ressler throwing the switch. Carols were lead by members of the Aldan Union Church Choir, and the invocation was given by the new Pastor of St. Joseph Church in Collingdale, Reverend Thomas Sodano. Santa was present at the gazebo during the night for children to have their wishes heard and their pictures taken. Hot cider and cookies were served by the Aldan Historical Commission at the Trolley Stop Museum on Woodlawn Avenue at Providence Road.

A special video recording was made of Aldan residents and visitors giving their well wishes to U.S. troops serving at home and overseas. The video can be viewed on YouTube by searching "Aldan Christmas 2012."

On Christmas morning, Santa with the help of the Aldan Boosters was able to visit more than 350 Aldan youngsters in 200 homes to verify that all gifts had been properly delivered on Christmas Eve.

The final event of the Aldan Boosters Civic Association's 2012 Christmas program was the awarding of Best Decorated House prizes. The prize winners were: 1st Place – the Lupica Family of 55 Stratford Avenue; 2nd

ALDAN TRENDS DEMOCRAT

Aldan history was made in 2012 when for the first time Democratic registration exceeded Republican registration. As of November, there were 1,406 registered Democrats and only 1,354 registered Republicans.

Also in November, Aldan once again voted overwhelming for Democratic state and federal candidates with two exceptions.

President Obama won 62% of

the local vote with 1,384, while Governor Romney received only 836. Senator Bob Casey was re-elected and received 1,399 votes in Aldan compared to Tom Smith's 779.

Kathleen Kane, the first woman and first Democrat to win the office of Pennsylvania Attorney General, also won 62% of the Aldan vote to defeat her opponent, David Freed.

Both Eugene DePasquale for

Auditor General and Rob McCord for State Treasurer were elected to office and received more than 57% of the Aldan vote.

The only two Republican candidates to win in Aldan in 2012 were both incumbents. State Representative Nick Micozzie won by 124 votes, and Congressman Pat Meehan won by 20 votes.

2013 MUNICIPAL RACES: WHY THEY MATTER

In Pennsylvania, our odd-year elections—2009, 2011, 2013—provide us the opportunity to elect the local officials who determine our property taxes and shape the borough ordinances.

While some residents—particularly Democrats—mistakenly dismiss local elected positions as insignificant, “dog-catcher” offices, these posts actually matter very much. In fact, the decisions made by these officials often can have a greater impact on our daily lives than those made by our Congressman, Governor, or even President.

If you have ever been cited for your grass being a little too high or a crack in your sidewalk or if you have ever felt a little sick as you put that property tax check in the mail, you have your local elected officials to thank for the experience.

In addition, whether Republican or Democrat, Tea Party or Green Party, most people agree that monopolies—including single-party governments—are protective of their interests and are not representative. In Aldan, every borough office is filled by a member of the Republican Party.

This year, in Aldan Borough, the offices of Mayor, Tax Collector, and three of the seven Council Members are scheduled for election. Also, our local election boards—a judge and two inspectors in each of Aldan’s two precincts—are being chosen.

The Mayor’s primary responsibility is the oversight of the police department.

The Tax Collector is obligated to collect property taxes along with trash and sewer fees for Aldan Borough and to collect property taxes for the William

Penn School District.

The Council Members serve on a seven-member board, which is responsible for the operation of the borough including enforcement of ordinances, budget passage and oversight, the collection of trash, and snow removal.

The election boards are charged with running the twice-yearly elections, in 2013 set for May 21st and November 5th.

The Aldan Democratic Organization is seeking interested individuals who might wish to serve the community in one of these nine positions that will be on the May 21, 2013 primary ballot. Any interested Democrat, please contact Chairman Michael Ceci at 610-299-7246 or email him at AldanDemocrats@gmail.com.

SCHOOL DISTRICT TAX RATES LIKELY TO RISE

After two years in which personnel and service cuts along with salary concessions from administrators, teachers and others were used to balance the William Penn School District Budget, 2013 appears to be a year in which a property tax increase is likely.

On Monday, January 28th, the School Board voted to present a preliminary budget, which would allow for only a 2.5% rate increase.

A variety of negative factors are pressing on the budget:

- Assessments for the tax base continue to erode (down almost \$24 mil-

lion in five years);

- Pension payments are increasing dramatically (by almost 40%) in 2013 due to a 2001 pension revision passed under Republican Governor Tom Ridge;
- State funding for education has been cut for the last two years (\$4 million less per year) under Republican Governor Tom Corbett;
- Medical costs continue to increase; and
- Additional payments are required to go to charter schools.

Given this “perfect storm” of negative factors, the school board is left with few options to meet their fiscal obligations.

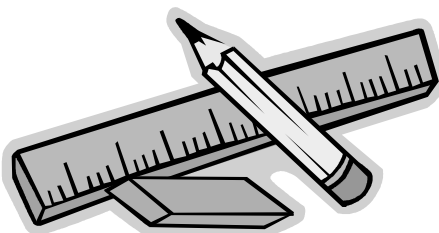
The tax rate has remained the same for the last three school years despite the June 2012 votes of Republican Aldan School Board Director Robert Reardon to increase the rate by 1.8% (vote failed

5-to-4) and then a second attempt to increase the rate by 1.0% (vote failed 5-to-4).

Because of the 2006 Casino Revenue Act (Act 1 of 2006) passed under Democratic Governor Ed Rendell, homeowners in Aldan with an assessed value of \$100,000 or less have actually seen either no increase or a reduction in actual payments for school taxes for the last five years.

Once Governor Corbett presents his budget in mid-February, meetings will be held by the School Board to discuss its budget.

Final passage of the budget is due in June 2013. To find the dates, times and locations of any meetings, which are not yet set, go to <http://www.wpsd.k12.pa.us/board.html> and check under “Meeting Notices.”



ALDAN DEMOCRATS' FOURTH ANNUAL MLK SERVICE

On Saturday, January 19, 2013, the Aldan Democratic Organization (ADO) participated in its fourth annual Martin Luther King Day Project—this year at the Aldan Elementary School. The project, sponsored by the Aldan Home and School Association and Principal Janet Braker, involved painting a mural for the school library. The mural was drawn by 1997 Penn Wood High School Graduate Brad Carney who works with the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program.

More than 30 students, parents,

Aldan residents, and ADO members worked for over three hours to bring the mural to life. Supervised by Mr. Carney, well over 100 person-hours were spent on the project.

On Tuesday, January 22, Mr. Carney and volunteers hung the mural from the library rafters. Several of the student painters were present, and Mr. Carney answered questions from a library class after the mural was hung.

Each year, the Aldan Democratic Organization organizes and/or participates in local community

projects to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a day of service.

In 2010, the ADO helped create more storage space at the St. Vincent de Paul Society in BVM Church in Darby. In 2011, they helped clear office space at the Clifton Heights United Methodist Church, and in 2012 they helped start a project at Mothers' Home in Darby to convert a basement room into useable space.



ALDAN GAINS COMMUNITY ASSET

The next time you are on Oak Avenue, take a moment to look at the classical railroad station that has replaced the old trailer that was the Primos Station. This new building provides an enhanced entrance to Aldan, and more importantly it provides residents with greater transportation options.

It is handicapped accessible and provides more parking, as well as an expanded portico to protect riders from the elements. This improved station will make it easier for Aldan commuters to get to work and to take advantage of the rich cultural offerings of Philadelphia.

The physical footprint of the station has been expanded

to about twice its original size. The station building has an impressive design that is highlighted by two bay windows that define its exterior shape. It has a very functional interior, which includes an enlarged seating area with benches that line the walls and conveniences such as restrooms and water fountains.

The number of parking spaces has been increased with additional parking on both the outbound and inbound platforms. Bicycle parking will also be available.

Both platforms are extended and elevated to accommodate wheelchairs and other non-ambulatory needs as well as bicycles.

