

The Brookfield Monitor

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Volume 8, Issue 2

March Issue

The Real Facts on Brookfield's Finances

VIP spin doesn't match the REAL numbers

Brookfield, like every other community across the country, has faced some challenging economic times over the last few years. But if you bought into the VIP spin, you would think Brookfield is about to declare bankruptcy! The facts on Brookfield's finances, as documented in the required yearly, on-time financial audits filed with the State of Illinois, show the real picture.

Revenues are on a slight upswing, after having dropped over \$1 million since 2008. Sales tax, income tax, and utility taxes have all dropped in the last couple of years. In addition to this, the State of Illinois and Cook County have delayed reimbursement of these taxes to the village. In fact, in 2008 and 2009, the Village waited more than an additional 3 months for its fall installment of property tax revenue from the county...an amount over \$3 million each year! This required the village to take out a line of credit to make up for this delay. The line of credit was paid off and closed each of those two years, and currently holds a balance of ZERO dollars. VIP also claims the village "borrowed" another \$6 million. Actually in 2007, \$6 million of bonds were issued for the street work that has been done in the last few years. This is being paid off with the 1% sales increase the residents approved in 2007, with much of this sales tax being paid by out-of-town visitors to the Brookfield Zoo. VIP now wants to get rid of this voter approved sales tax...how will VIP pay off the street bonds? The VIP spin is financially dangerous.

There has also been a huge impact on employee pension fund balances due to the negative national economy. Required pension contributions for Brookfield's fire and police personnel have gone from \$560,328 in 2005 to over \$2 million this year, accounting for nearly 15% of the entire \$14 million operating budget of the village! Of the \$6 million the Village brings in for property taxes, more than \$2 million goes towards pensions! This is not something that can be avoided.

The Brookfield Board, along with administrative staff, has made many necessary changes in order to deal with these conditions. The recently passed balanced budget has general operating expenses nearly \$1 million less than the budget passed in 2005. When you combine this fact with the amount that pension contributions have gone up, Brookfield is operating more efficiently with \$2.5 million LESS than it was just 6 years ago under the VIP administration!

Staff has been reduced by more than 20 positions since that time, with decreases in every department, including management. This has accounted for nearly a 15% reduction in total staffing of the Village. In fact, the village manager's office, that had 5 full time positions in 2005 under VIP, has now been operating with only 2 1/2 full time positions. There have been wage freezes for all employees and mandatory unpaid days off for management. Certain expenditures have been delayed. Even during these tough times, Brookfield has been able to secure over \$11 million in grant money to continue work on capital improvement projects. Additionally, the PEP village Board created the first ever financial reserve fund with required yearly funding and strict rules for withdrawing from the fund. In just 2 short years, this important safety net has grown to over \$400,000.

Village Wins Financial Award

Recently, Village staff was informed that Brookfield has once again received A Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, award presented by the Government Finance Officers Association. This award is given out to government units whose comprehensive annual financial reports achieve the highest standards in government accounting and reporting. This is the fifth straight year that Brookfield has received this award while under the leadership of Mike Garvey and the PEP Party. The Village did not receive the award from 2003-2005 under the prior Brennan/Russ administration.

The facts on Brookfield's finances are simple...expenses have been kept in check, the General Operating fund has been balanced and has shown slight surpluses, and Brookfield is operating with a smaller governmental staff. As national economic conditions improve, Brookfield finds itself in good, stable financial shape and able to continue to provide essential governmental services and infrastructure improvements without property tax increases.

Evans, Hall, Ketchmark head up PEP's Slate for April Election

The People's Economy Party (PEP) is pleased and excited to announce its slate of candidates for April 2011 Village of Brookfield election. Up for election to the Village Board are three Village Trustee positions. The PEP Party candidates for the Village board positions are:

- Charles "C. P." Hall, for re-election as Village Trustee.
- Ryan Patrick Evans, for election as Village Trustee.
- Kit P. Ketchmark, for election as Village Trustee.

Hall is currently Village Trustee and Chairman of the Finance Committee, having been elected in 2007. He previously served as Village Trustee from 1991-1997. Hall is also a former Army officer, and decorated combat veteran. He has lived in Brookfield since 1976, and has been active as well in the Brookfield Kiwanis Club, Brookfield Rotary and Brookfield Chamber of Commerce.

Evans, a life-long resident of Brookfield, is the Chairman of the Village of Brookfield Beautification Commission. He is a teacher at S. E. Gross Middle School where he is also the Vice President of the local teacher's union.

Ketchmark served two terms on the Village Board as Village Trustee from 2001-2009. He is also a life-long resident of Brookfield and serves as Director of the Brookfield Historical Society. He has been a Brookfield business owner for more than 25 years.

For complete biographies of the PEP candidates, see the People's Economy Party website at www.pepparty.com.

Who are Russ, Brennan and VIP Kidding?

VIP talk doesn't match their record

When election time comes around, VIP seems like they will say just about anything. But when you take their past record into account, it's pretty easy to see thru there "campaign promises".

Russ, Brennan, and VIP now claim they want to improve the code department...yet they opposed attempts to do this when they were in office before. In fact, they hid a scathing report done of the building department by an independent consultant, and refused to address the problems that were found. Instead, they found ways around our code to help their buddies. Why did they stop performing health inspections for the villages' restaurants?

Russ, Brennan and VIP now claim they want to "make necessary improvements to our streets, parks"...yet they opposed discussion on long-term planning on this when they were in office before. PEP has done over \$20 million in infrastructure work since taking office, with another \$5.4 million planned. PEP in conjunction with the residents paved 17 alleys in that time period. VIP oversaw 6 alleys being improved in 4 years!

Russ, Brennan, and VIP now claim they want to focus on "a long-term economic development plan". Yet, when they had control of Brookfield government, they dropped out of Mainstreet, cut all funding for economic development, they even left the position of Building and Code Director unfilled for over two years. Why didn't they implement the TIF for Ogden Avenue 10 years ago? Their record on economic development is non-existent...aside from the village funds Russ used to pay his friends property taxes for CVS!

Russ, Brennan, and VIP now claim they are looking out for your tax dollars and want to "restore fiscal responsibility". Yet, when they had control of Brookfield government, residents saw the biggest tax increase in Brookfield history...garbage rates went up, water rates went up, property taxes went up 30%! Residents also saw 3 years of deficit budgets totaling over \$3 million, financial reports routinely filed late, **14** VIP campaign workers put on the Village payroll at residents expense, abuse of Village credit cards by VIP Board members and village checks used to pay back taxes for one of Russ' buddies. VIP says they are looking out for the residents and their money...who are they kidding?

Russ, Brennan and VIP had been a part of village government in Brookfield for a long time. Their out-of-date, old-time style of politics and negativity held Brookfield back for too long.

Paving the Way...

Street and infrastructure improvements continue

Over \$20 million in street work, water and sewer improvements, and park improvements have been completed in the past 6 years under Village President Mike Garvey and his PEP administration. In 2010, the village was able to obtain a \$1.4 million grant to resurface Prairie Avenue. Another \$3.4 million grant was obtained from the federal government for the rebuilding of Grand Blvd. In 2011-12, Grand Blvd will be replaced from the circle north to 31st and Monroe from the circle east to the creek. This project will include a new sewer line along Monroe, which will provide much needed storm relief in the area.

With this latest round of improvements, Brookfield has seen over 8 miles of streets improved under Village President Mike Garvey and his PEP administration. ..nearly 20% of the total village! These improvements have been done with no property tax increase for the village. Nearly \$10.5 million of these improvements have been funded by grants obtained by staff from the federal, state and county governments. That's like getting 50% off on street repairs!

Family Fun for Everyone

The past few years have brought big changes to the social scene in Brookfield! The dedicated professionals of the Brookfield Chamber of Commerce and the volunteers of the Special Events Committee have worked in cooperation with the Village to bring enjoyable family and adult friendly events to Brookfield. The Holiday Walk and Monsters on Main Street allow for families to walk the village getting to know the businesses and enjoy the company of their neighbors. The traditional Fourth of July celebration and free Movies/Concerts in the Park are always well attended. Events like the Pig Roast, Street Dance, and Pub Crawl allow adults to enjoy food and beverages throughout the Village and share a song and dance with friends and neighbors. These events foster good will and cooperation between the residents, businesses, and Village. By partnering with these groups the village is saving tax dollars that can now be spent on core governmental services.

Over \$11 million in Grants Under PEP!!!

When Village President Mike Garvey and his board were looking over resumes for a new village manager, one of the most important criteria was to find someone who had the knowledge and expertise to aggressively pursue available grant money. Garvey and the PEP Board found their man in Rick Ginex. Since coming on board in 2005, Ginex and his staff have been able to procure and administer over \$11 million in grant money. Some have been small but important grants, like the one for bullet-proof vests for the police department or the one for breathing apparatus for the fire department. Others have been large like the nearly \$9 million in federal money for street improvements. Other grants have been obtained for improvements to the Prairie Avenue and Congress Park train stations, the Village Hall commuter parking lot, improvements to Ehlert Park, the pedestrian bridge, and streetscape improvements along Broadway. Every dollar received in grant money is a dollar less that the Village Board needs to go to the residents for.

Some of the most recent grants have been \$3.4 million for the rebuilding of Grand Blvd., \$240,000 for additional street repairs, \$630,000 for improvements to Ehlert Park, \$1.4 million for last years resurfacing of Prairie, and \$88,000 for installation of energy efficient windows and doors at the Village Hall.

Ginex and his staff have been able to obtain these grants in-house at no additional cost to the Village. Prior to Ginex taking over, the previous administration had used an outside grant writer due to the VIP hired village manager's lack of experience with the grant process. The outside grant writer was paid \$400 per month, plus 5% commission on any grant received. If that contract had been in place now, over \$550,000 of the grant money would have been paid out in commissions! Congratulations to Ginex and his staff for not only bringing in nearly \$11 million in grant dollars, but also for saving us \$550,000 in the process!

Grant Makes Park Safer for Everyone

Brookfield has received grants for all different things, and in all different dollar amounts. Some have been for millions of dollars, and some for much less, though important nevertheless. Recently, Riverside Township gave the village \$6,500 to be used for a lightning detection system in Kiwanis Park. This was installed late last fall., and was put to work immediately, with its warning system going off during a little league baseball game. Everyone took cover, and waited for the danger to pass.

VIP CAMPAIGN STRATEGY? VOTER AMNESIA

Russ & Brennan hope residents have forgotten

Election time is near, and the VIP Party has announced it's slate of candidates. Two of the three candidates, Wil Brennan and Bill Russ, have ran unsuccessfully the last three elections, having been resoundingly voted out of office in 2005. In fact, Russ has ran unsuccessfully the last 3 elections for every position on the Village Board! After being trounced in the primary for Cook County Commissioner, Russ stated he would not run in 2011. After the 2009 defeat, Brennan said "never again". However, they are back with a third candidate who has never even been to a Village Board meeting!

So what's VIP campaign strategy this time? It seems to be throw mud as a distraction, and hope people don't remember when VIP was in office the last time. They're hoping to steal the election from people not paying enough attention.

Bill Russ and Wil Brennan have a past record they want the residents to forget. Their record is devoid of full discussion of the issues. Meaningful public comment was removed from Board meetings and critical decisions were discussed for the first time by the Board and voted on the same night with no chance for public input. The VIP Party talks about the "work, action and tangible progress" they will bring to the table. The VIP controlled Village Board routinely took the entire month of August off and went the entire month of December without meeting. They paved 4 alleys in 4 years. They ignored a scathing report on the condition of the Building Department and refused to address the problems. They cut all funding for economic development. Health inspections were stopped at Brookfield's food establishments. Their record on fiscal responsibility? It is atrocious! Three out four years of deficit spending drew reserves down 2.7 million dollars. The state required Village audit was filed late 3 out of 4 years.

The VIP Party must be hoping the entire village comes down with a severe case of amnesia. They want people to forget that Brennan was the Finance Chairman in the Russ administration, including the time period when Bill secretly used Village funds to pay his friend's property taxes. What did Brennan know about this? What does he think about it now? Brennan voted for each of the deficit budgets under Russ, never questioning the late audits, never questioning abuse of Village credit cards by Russ, never questioning Russ plastering his name all over village property. VIP says having Russ' name all over was a good thing and would do it again. What are they thinking? Brennan turned his back when water bills were improperly written off for friends and party members, including Russ' own water bill. And what about that report that was so critical of the code department? Brennan responded that he wanted to do something about it too, but his "hands were tied". By who? Russ? How can you trust someone who has repeatedly ignored his oath of office to protect the residents' tax dollars?

VIP says they want to cut the current "bloated" manager's office. When VIP was in power, the manager's office had 5 FULL TIME positions! It now operates with ONE manager, ONE administrative assistant, and ONE assistant manager who is also the head of the building department...that's half the positions now as when Russ, Brennan and VIP were in control! But they don't want the voter's to remember that.

But the residents will remember that Bill Russ and Wil Brennan had their chance when they ran the Village for 4 years. They will remember the 4 years and 14 VIP campaign workers hired as Village employees, 3 Village Managers in 4 years, 3 Village Attorney's in 4 years, numerous Village Board and Committee resignations, and late audits and deficit spending. The residents will remember that the national economy was pretty good when Russ, Brennan and VIP were in power the last time, and VIP failed. Brookfield cannot afford to repeat the Brennan/Russ mistakes during these challenging times.

That's the thing about the past...it can't be changed. But, the residents can avoid repeating it.

Village Board and Committee meetings are on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. Board meetings begin at 6:30, followed by the Committee meetings. Upcoming meetings:

Monday March 14, 6:30 pm

Monday March 28, 6:30 pm

Monday April 11, 6:30 pm

Russ' Secret CVS Loan Deal

Questions remain after almost 9 years

It has now been almost 9 years since it was discovered that Bill Russ secretly loaned \$14,754 of Village funds to his friend so his friend could pay off back taxes and sell his property for a large profit to CVS Pharmacy. Russ has never provided any documentation on this deal, or answered any questions. The loan of \$14,754 of taxpayer money was done with a handshake and a wink, and without Board authorization. VIP Trustee candidate Wil Brennan, who was Finance Chairman at the time, also never answered questions on his role in this, or why he looked the other way. Why did Russ take a village check to do this? Why did they not come to the Board with this? What did they get on the side for making it happen?

Russ, Brennan and VIP once again are asking you to trust them with your money, claiming they understand Accounting 101. The question is, have they ever completed Ethics 101?

Ogden Avenue TIF Update

Improving the appearance and economic viability of Ogden Avenue has been a campaign promise of nearly every Brookfield political party for decades. Mike Garvey and the PEP Party were the first to keep that promise. After nearly 2 years of planning, research, and legal work, the Village Board passed the required ordinances in September of 2008 to create the first ever Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) in Brookfield. The TIF District, by statute, is a twenty three year long economic tool that will allow the Village to provide financing and other incentives to attract new, desirable businesses and to assist existing business in improving their development. Most importantly, it does not involve any property tax increases for residents or business owners.

Successful TIF's have been used to create the exciting downtown improvements in LaGrange, the Quarry Mall in Hodgkins, and most of the improvements on Ogden in Lyons. The implementation and administration of the TIF District is a long-term process and not a quick fix. TIF's have been talked about for years in Brookfield and were even recommended in the Village's 2020 Master Plan, but no steps were ever taken to follow through on this strategy until Mike Garvey and the PEP Party took office in 2005.

Recently, the village has entered into an exclusive agreement with an experienced broker who is negotiating with a national franchise to redevelop the Village owned corner of Ogden and Eberly. Mike Garvey and the PEP Party believe that, due to its prominent location as an entryway into Brookfield, development of this site will quickly lead to continued redevelopment of Ogden Avenue. Stay tuned this spring for this exciting announcement.

Since its inception the TIF has already accumulated nearly \$462,000 which can be used to encourage and promote economic development of Ogden Avenue.

Call NOW
to get your tickets!!
PEP Party Reception
Monday, March 21
at The Sanctuary
6:00-8:00pm
9347 Grand Blvd
Tickets \$40 each
Call 708-387-0437

Coming Soon: Community Art!

The Brookfield Beautification Commission has been working hard on creating a master plan for community art in Brookfield. The Commission, which is composed of nine volunteer members including P.E.P. candidate for trustee, Chairman Ryan Evans, has coordinated such successful events to Brookfield as Project N.I.C.E., Plant Swap, and the Garden Contest! Now their attention has turned to improving the appearance of the Village through community art. The project has exited the planning stage and is working on acquiring community involvement and funding. The Commission will be reaching out to residents, local businesses, schools, and community groups looking for their input and suggestions in the furthering of proposed work areas. Some of the goals of the plan include: a new fountain for Veteran's Memorial Circle, murals at Congress Park train station, new banner signage throughout town, and the placement of art in business and residential areas.

The goal of the Community Art Project is to create a greater sense of pride in the Village, bring people together in a common mission, and help attract visitors who may otherwise not be interested in spending their time and money in Brookfield. For more information, visit <http://www.brookfieldil.gov/>

Volunteers Wanted!!!

How about stuffing envelopes, posting a lawn sign, or walking with literature? To help the PEP Party in our campaign to continue to keep Brookfield moving forward, please visit our website at www.pepparty.com or call 708-387-0437. Together, we can make a difference.



Leadership. Dedication. Trust.

**P.O. Box 93
Brookfield, IL 60513**

*For more information and news,
please see our website at www.pepparty.com*

Dear Residents:

On Tuesday, April 5th, you will once again have a very important decision to make about your village and its future direction. Up for election will be 3 Village Board Trustee positions.

It has been nearly 2 years since the last election when you again chose me and the PEP Party slate. A lot has happened since that time, and we have been able to make great strides in improving our Village, even during these challenging economic times.

We have eliminated the old fashioned, back room politics that was so prevalent under the previous administration. We have hired based on education and experience, not based on who knows who. We have made capital improvements our budgetary priority...over \$20 million in improvements to our villages' infrastructure. By constantly seeking federal, state and county grants we have been able to continue to make these necessary improvements without increasing local property taxes. Those grants have totaled over \$11 million!

We created Brookfield's first ever Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District to re-develop Ogden Avenue. This TIF is a 23 year commitment and is the key to making Ogden Avenue what we all want it to be. There is no quick fix.

We have worked diligently to limit the negative effects of the national economy on our Village and its finances. We've cut the budget by over 1 million dollars and reduced staff by nearly 15%. Despite the national economic downturn, we have created the first ever financial reserve fund in the Village with required funding and strict rules about drawing from the fund. We have funded this reserve account with nearly \$400,000 over the last 2 years. The financial reports that were constantly late under the Russ administration are now timely, and have won an award 5 straight years for their quality and presentation. Our budgets, audits, and lists of every check written by the Village are now available on the Village website for everyone to see. We believe that the public should have easy access to this important information, and know how their money is being spent.

But managing our Village, and continuing to move it forward, is a journey, not a destination. We have a lot more to do. There are more streets to fix, more parks to improve, additional ways to become more efficient at running Brookfield's government...the list seems endless. But I know that together we can keep Brookfield working towards these goals.

The People's Economy Party (PEP) has put together a slate of candidates for the upcoming election who are dedicated and committed to continuing this progress. Current Village Trustee C.P Hall is up for re-election. Kit Ketchmark is seeking election, after sitting out the last election due to term limits. Our third candidate, Ryan Evans is a newcomer to Village politics, but not to Village service. Ryan is already known for his intelligence, energy and accomplishments while serving as Chairman of the Beautification Commission. Please take the time to go to our website www.pepparty.com for all the details about these 3 exceptional candidates.

Now is not the time to go back to the failed management style and politics of Brookfield's past. We must choose the candidates that have the education, experience and proven records of public service to guide our Village. Brookfield's future depends on that. It's about leadership. It's about dedication. It's about trust.

I ask for your continued support, and the support of our candidates in the upcoming election on April 5th.

Leadership. Dedication. Trust.

Vote PEP on April 5th.

Evans • Hall • Ketchmark

*A copy of our report filed with the County Clerk is available for purchase from:
Cook County Clerk, 69 W. Washington, Chicago, IL 60601*