



## TOWN OF RYE

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Dear Mayor Marino,

Thank you for your invitation to appear before your village board on August 5th, 2024, I respectfully decline.

It seems that your letter of invitation has two objectives:

First, you claim to have questions regarding budgeting and taxation and correctly point out “anyone can attend a Town of Rye meeting.”

As you know, the Town budget process is open, transparent, highly publicized, and welcoming to anyone who wishes to attend. We hold about five work sessions in preparation for our budget, each open to the public.

We also conduct at least two Public Hearings culminating in an adopted budget by December 31st. At those hearings, residents are encouraged and have the “opportunity to pose questions” during such time. As a result, neither I, nor any other members of Rye Town Council, deem it necessary or advisable to appear before your Board to be questioned on these matters. I also find some of the language in your invitation off-putting, to wit:

*“Our curiosity stems from a sense that the public struggles to see how the increased rate of taxation benefits our residents.”*

To which “public” do you refer? Possibly those members of your Board who unsuccessfully raised this issue last November and wish to keep raising it for their own partisan political purposes? Members who believe that the Town provides no useful benefits to Port Chester and should be dissolved? That was a failed policy of the prior Town Administration after the expenditure of considerable resources, which the then Port Chester Board of Trustees declined to endorse. Frankly, I am disappointed that you would write such a letter, unless you also hold these points of view.

Second, you write that:

*“...the Port Chester Trustees are interested in learning more about the town's operations, initiatives, and understanding how tax dollars are being reinvested into our community.”*

I am surprised that neither you, nor apparently your Trustees, including the former Rye Town Supervisor are aware that the Town, among other things:

- operates the Town Court, following your dissolution of the Village Court for financial reasons, at a net cost to the Town of nearly \$1,000,000;
- collects your Village tax levy and guarantees it as well, making up for any shortfall between levy and payments, usually in the hundreds of thousands;



- assesses the real property in the Village and defends those values in court proceedings. I note that the Town assessor recently gave a presentation to your Board, for which effort he was grilled mercilessly on his hours and salary and those of his staff;
- provides clerk services to the Village, including marriage and death certificates;
- operates and sponsors numerous programs at Crawford and Rye Town Parks -- both of which serve the residents of the Village;

Finally, allow me this opportunity to remind you and the Trustees of the relative tax burden placed upon our residents by the Town and Village. The median assessed value of a home in Port Chester is \$609,300 and the Town tax for such a home is \$255 for 2024. The Village tax for the same home is \$4,325. The Town tax rate per \$1000 of assessed value is the lowest in Westchester while the Port Chester village tax rate is one of the highest.

Best regards,



Gary J. Zuckerman, Supervisor  
On behalf of the Rye Town Council