

**Town of Van Buren**  
**Notes To Financial Statements**  
**For Year Ended December 31, 2019**

**I. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The financial statements of the Town of Van Buren, New York have been prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) as applied to government units. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is the accepted standard setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial reporting principles. The more significant of the government's accounting policies are:

**A. Financial Reporting Entity**

Town law, and other general laws of the State of New York and various local laws govern the Town of Van Buren. The Town Board is the legislative body, responsible for overall operations. The Supervisor serves as Treasurer and the Comptroller serves as chief accounting and auditing officer.

The following basic services are provided: public safety, culture and recreation, economic assistance, community services, general government support, highway administration and maintenance, sewer, water, sanitation, fire protection, and lighting services.

All governmental activities and functions performed for the Town of Van Buren are its direct responsibility. No other governmental organizations have been included or excluded from the reporting entity.

The financial reporting consists of (a) the primary government which is the Town of Van Buren, (b) organizations for which the primary government is financially accountable, and (c) other organizations for which the nature and significance of their relationship with the primary government are such that exclusion would cause the reporting entity's financial statements to be misleading or incomplete as set forth in GASB Statement 14.

The decision to include a potential component unit in the Town's reporting entity is based upon several criteria set forth in GASB 14 including legal standing, fiscal dependency, and financial accountability. Based on the application of these criteria, there are no component units included in the Town's reporting entity.

**B. Fund Accounting**

The Town uses funds and account groups to report on its financial position and the results of its operations. Fund accounting is designed to demonstrate legal compliance and to aid financial management by segregating transactions related to certain government functions or activities.

A fund is a separate accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts. An account

**Town of Van Buren**  
**Notes To Financial Statements**  
**For Year Ended December 31, 2019**

group, on the other hand, is a financial reporting device designed to provide accountability assets and liabilities that are not recorded in the funds because they do not directly affect net expendable available financial resources.

The Town records its transactions in the fund types and account groups described below.

**1. Fund Categories**

**a. Governmental Funds** - Governmental funds are those through which most governmental functions are financed. The acquisition, use and balances of expendable financial resources, and the related liabilities are accounted for through governmental funds. The measurement focus of the governmental funds is upon determination of financial position and changes in financial position. The following are the Town's governmental fund types:

**General Fund** - The principal operating fund, which includes all operations not required to be recorded in other funds.

**Special Revenue Funds** - Funds used to account for proceeds of specific revenue sources that are legally restricted to expenditures for specified purposes. The following Special Revenue Funds are utilized: Community Development Grants, Lighting, Water, Fire Protection, Sewer, Drainage, and Highway.

**Debt Service Fund** - Fund used to account for current payments of principal and interest on general obligation long-term debt, and for financial resources accumulated in a reserve for payment of future principal and interest on long-term indebtedness.

**Capital Projects Fund** - Fund used to account for financial resources to be used for the acquisition or construction of major capital facilities.

**Trust and Agency Funds** - Funds used to account for money (and/or property) received and held in the capacity of trustee, custodian, or agent. These include expendable trusts, non-expendable trusts, and agency funds.

**2. Account Groups**

Account groups are used to establish accounting control and accountability for general long-term debt. The account groups are not "funds." They are concerned with measurement of financial position and not results of operations.

**The General Fixed Assets Account Group** - Account group used to account for land, buildings, improvements other than buildings, and equipment utilized for general government purposes.

**Town of Van Buren**  
**Notes To Financial Statements**  
**For Year Ended December 31, 2019**

The General Long-Term Debt Account Group - Account group used to account for all long-term debt and retirement expense liability.

**C. Basis of Accounting/Measurement Focus**

Basis of Accounting refers to when revenues and expenditures and the related assets and liabilities are recognized in the accounts and reported in the financial statements. Basis of accounting relates to the timing of the measurements made, regardless of the measurement focus. Measurement focus is the determination of what is measured, i.e., expenditures or expenses.

Modified Accrual Basis - All Governmental Funds and Expendable Trusts are accounted for using the modified accrual basis of accounting. Under this basis of accounting, revenues are recorded when measurable and available. Available means collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to be used to pay liabilities of the current period. Material revenues that are accrued include real property taxes, state and federal aid, and certain user charges.

Expenditures are recorded when incurred except that:

- a. Expenditures for prepaid expenses and inventory-type items are recognized at the time of purchase except for NYS Retirement and Workmen's Compensation Insurance that are deferred and expensed in the period the benefit is recognized.
- b. Principal and interest on indebtedness are not recognized as expenditure until due.
- c. Compensated absences for compensatory time are recognized as expenditure when incurred.

**D. Property Taxes**

County real property taxes are levied annually no later than December 15 and become a lien on January 1. Taxes are collected during the period January 1 to March 31. Taxes for county purposes are levied together with taxes for town and special district purposes as a single bill. The towns and special districts receive the full amount of their levies annually out of the first amounts collected on the combined bills. The county assumes enforcement responsibility for all taxes levied in the towns.

**E. Budgetary Data**

**1. Budget Policies - The budget policies are as follows:**

- a. No later than September 30, the budget officer submits a tentative budget to

**Town of Van Buren**  
**Notes To Financial Statements**  
**For Year Ended December 31, 2019**

the Town Clerk, who submits it to the Town Board no later than October 5, for the fiscal year commencing the following January 1. The tentative budget includes proposed expenditures and the proposed means of financing for all funds.

b. After public hearings are conducted to obtain taxpayer comments, no later than November 20, the governing board adopts the budget.

c. The governing board must approve all modifications of the budget.

2. Encumbrances - Encumbrance accounting, under which purchase orders, contracts, and other commitments for the expenditure of monies are recorded for budgetary control purposes to reserve that portion of the applicable appropriations, is employed in the Governmental Type Funds. Encumbrances are reported as reservations of fund balances since they do not constitute expenditures or liabilities. Expenditures for such commitments are recorded in the period in which the liability is incurred.

3. Budget Basis of Accounting - Budgets are adopted annually on a basis consistent with generally accepted accounting principles. Appropriations authorized for the current year are increased by the amount of encumbrances carried forward from the prior year.

**F. Compensatory Absences**

Town employees are granted vacation, sick leave, and compensatory time in varying amounts. A maximum of five vacations days can be carried over into the next year. Sick leave may accumulate. Upon retirement, employees can receive payment for unused sick days at \$10.00 per hour or use them in accordance with Section 41-J of New York State Retirement to gain additional service credit. The liability to the Town for unused sick time is \$42,566

**G. Post-Retirement Benefits**

In addition to providing pension benefits, the Town provides health insurance coverage and survivor benefits for retired employees and their survivors. Non-union employees become eligible for these benefits if they reach normal retirement age and have ten (10) years of continual service with the Town. Union employees are eligible for continuing health insurance benefits in accordance with their contracts. Health care benefits and survivor's benefits are provided through insurance companies whose premiums are based on the benefits paid during the year. The Town recognizes the cost of providing benefits by recording its share of insurance premiums as expenditure in the year paid. Survivors pay for these premiums, if coverage is elected.

During the year, approximately \$272,330 was paid on behalf of twelve (12) retirees and all other active employees and was recorded as expenditure in the general and highway funds. The cost of

**Town of Van Buren**  
**Notes To Financial Statements**  
**For Year Ended December 31, 2019**

providing benefits for the retirees was approximately \$99,695.

The Town has elected not to conform to the reporting requirements of GASB 45, which would be effective for fiscal year 2009 and thereafter. Therefore, there is no determination of the present values of future payments of health insurance for retirees.

**H. Departures from Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)**

General Fixed Assets Group of Accounts -The Town does not maintain a group of accounts for general fixed assets based on historical costs as required by generally accepted accounting principles. Fixed assets consisting of certain infrastructure type improvements other than buildings, including roads, bridges, curbs and gutters, streets and sidewalks, drainage and lighting systems have not been capitalized prior to fiscal year 2005. Such assets normally are immovable and of value only to the Town. Therefore, the purpose of stewardship for capital expenditures can be satisfied without recording these assets.

Deferred Expenses - Deferred expenses reflect unpaid amounts for pump station operational and maintenance charges due the County of Onondaga. These charges are billed by Onondaga County in the year subsequent to the year incurred and are payable in the following year. The Town records these costs for budgetary purposes in the year payable rather than in the year incurred. If the sewer costs were accrued in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, the fund balance of the Special Revenue Funds (Special Districts) would be reduced by approximately \$61,800:

GASB34- the Town has elected not to prepare financial statements in accordance with GASB 34. Instead, the Annual Update Document (AUD) submitted to New York State serves as the Financial Statements of the Town.

GASB 45- The Town has elected not to conform to the reporting requirements of GASB 45, which would be effective for fiscal year 2009 and thereafter. Therefore, there is no determination of the present values of future payments of health insurance for retirees

**I Property, Plant and Equipment-General**

Fixed assets purchased for general governmental purposes are recorded as expenditures in the governmental funds.

**J. Insurance**

**Town of Van Buren**  
**Notes To Financial Statements**  
**For Year Ended December 31, 2019**

The Town's liability for most risk including, but not limited to, property damage and personal injury liability are covered under various insurance policies. Judgment's and claims are recorded when it is probable that an asset has been impaired or a liability has been incurred and the amount of loss can be reasonably estimated.

**Use of Estimates**

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles require management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

**II. DETAIL NOTES ON ALL FUNDS AND ACCOUNT GROUPS**

**1. Cash and Investments**

Deposits at year-end were substantially covered by federal depository insurance of \$500,000 collateral held by the Town custodial bank in the Town's name, amounting to \$5,532,687.

Cash - Deposits at year-end consisted of the following:

**Town of Van Buren**  
**Notes To Financial Statements**  
**For Year Ended December 31, 2019**

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Balance Sheet</u>	<u>Total</u>
General Fund-Petty Cash	\$ 750	\$ 750
		\$ -
Multi-Fund Check		
General	\$ 301,944	
Total Multi-Fund		\$ 301,944
Multi-Fund Savings		
General	\$ 2,052,671	
Highway	\$ 2,524,010	
Grants	\$ -	
Special Revenue	\$ 729,586	
Trust and Agency	\$ 145,055	
Total Multi-Fund Savings		\$ 5,451,322
Total cash		\$ 5,754,016

**2. Pension Plan**

Plan Description - The Town of Van Buren participates in the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System. This is a cost sharing multiple public employer retirement system. The System provides retirement benefits as well as death and disability benefits. Obligations of employers and employees to contribute and benefits to employees are governed by the New York State Retirement and Social Security Law (NYSRSSL). As set forth in the NYSRSSL, the Comptroller of the State of New York (Comptroller) serves as sole trustee and administrative head of the Systems. The Comptroller shall adopt and may amend rules and regulations for the administration and transaction of the business of the Systems and for the custody and control of their funds. The Systems issue a publicly available financial report that includes financial statements and required supplementary information. That report may be obtained by writing to the New York State and Local Retirement Systems, Gov. Alfred E. Smith State Office Building, Albany NY 12244.

Funding Policy - The System is noncontributory except for employees who joined the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System after July 27, 1976 who contribute 3% of their salary. As of October 1, 2000, employees who were in the systems for ten years are no longer required to contribute 3%. Under the authority of the NYSRSSL, the Comptroller shall certify annually the rates expressed as proportions of payroll of members, which shall be used in computing the contributions, required to be made by employers to the pension accumulation fund.

**Town of Van Buren**  
**Notes To Financial Statements**  
**For Year Ended December 31, 2019**

The Town of Van Buren is required to contribute at an actuarially determined rate. The required contributions for the current year and two preceding years were:

2017	\$	206,752
2018	\$	202,376
2019	\$	199,210

The Town's contributions made to the Systems were equal to 100 percent of the contributions required for each year. There was no unpaid liability at the end of the fiscal year.

Chapter 49 of the Laws of 2003 amended the retirement and social Security Law and the Local finance Law. The amendments empowered the State Comptroller to implement a comprehensive structural reform program for the Retirement System. The reform program established a minimum contribution level for any local government equal to 4.5% of pensionable salaries for bills that were due December 15, 2003 and for all fiscal years thereafter, as a minimum annual contribution where the actual rate would otherwise be 4.5% or less due to investment performance of the fund. In addition, the reform program instituted a billing system to match the budget cycle of municipalities and school districts that will advise such employers over one year in advance concerning the actual pension contribution rates for the next annual billing cycle. Under the previous method, the requisite Retirement System contributions for a fiscal year could not be determined until after the local budget adoption process was complete. Under the new system, a contribution for a given fiscal year will be based on the valuation of the pension fund on the prior April 1 of the calendar year preceding the contribution due date instead of the following April 1 in the year of contribution so that the exact amount may now be included in the budget.

On July 20, 2004 Chapter 260 of the Laws of 2004 (“Chapter 260”) was enacted amending the New York State General Municipal law, Local finance Law and retirement and Social Security law. Chapter 260 changes the annual payment date for Retirement System Contribution from December 15<sup>th</sup> to February 1<sup>st</sup>. Chapter 260 also sets the maximum Retirement System payment that municipalities and school districts must make at 7% of payroll in 2004-05, 9.5% of payroll in 2005-06, and 10.5% of payroll in 2006-07. Under Chapter 260, municipalities and school districts will be allowed to amortize any contributions above those levels over 10 years at a rate established by the State Comptroller or by the direct issuance of serial bonds, the interest on which would be taxable for federal income tax purposes. Certain costs of early retirement incentive programs authorized in and prior to 2002 are also permitted to be amortized as part of this reform program. Should the Town choose to finance through the Office of the State Comptroller, the Comptroller has until September 1 of each year, 2004, 2005 and 2006 to determine whether the System’s amortization rate will be a fixed rate of 8% or a fixed market rate based on comparable taxable fixed rate securities for the 2004-2005, 2005-2006, and

**Town of Van Buren**  
**Notes To Financial Statements**  
**For Year Ended December 31, 2019**

2006-2008 fiscal years respectively.

The Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has issued Technical Bulletin No. 2004-2 stating that municipalities who prepare financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) will be required to recognize expenditure for required contributions to the retirement system to the accounting period to which they relate to. For the amount due in February 2018, 9 months of the total was attributable to 2016.

The Town elected to pay the entire amount of the Retirement System amount due in February 2020 to take advantage of a reduced cost. The payment was allocated between expense and prepaid.

	<u>Amount Paid</u>		<u>Prepaid Amount</u>	
12/31/2016	\$ 226,097	\$	51,470	
12/31/2017	\$ 206,248	\$	51,972	
12/31/2018	\$ 201,107	\$	50,704	
12/31/2019	\$ 198,570	\$	50,064	

**3. Short-Term Debt**

Liabilities for bond anticipation notes (BAN'S) are generally accounted for in the capital projects funds. Principal payments must be made annually. State law requires the BAN's issued for capital purposes are converted to long-term obligations within five years after the original issue date. However, BAN's issued for assessable improvement projects may be renewed for periods equivalent to the maximum life of the permanent financing, provided that stipulated annual reductions of principal are made.

The Town has \$2,554,600 of short term BAN's outstanding in the Capital Fund as of December 31, 2019.

**4. Long-Term Debt**

At December 31, 2019, the total outstanding indebtedness of the Town aggregated \$145,000.

Serial Bonds (and Capital Notes) - The Town borrows money in order to acquire land or equipment or construct buildings and improvements, and to repay tax certiorari judgment's. This enables the cost of these capital assets to be borne by the present and future taxpayers receiving the benefit of the capital assets. These long-term liabilities which are full faith and credit debt of the local government are recorded in the General Long-Term Debt Account Group. The provision to be made in future budgets for capital indebtedness represents the amount exclusive of interest, authorized to be

**Town of Van Buren**  
**Notes To Financial Statements**  
**For Year Ended December 31, 2019**

collected in future years from taxpayers and others for liquidation of the long-term liabilities.

General Long-Term Debt - The changes in the Town's General Long-Term Debt Group of Accounts for the year ended December 31, 2019 is summarized as follows:

	<u>Balance</u> <u>12/31/2018</u>	<u>Additions</u>	<u>Payments on</u> <u>Principal</u>	<u>Balance</u> <u>12/31/2019</u>
Bonds Payable	\$ 225,000	\$ -	\$ 80,000	\$ 145,000
Total	<u>\$ 250,541</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 105,541</u>	<u>\$ 145,000</u>

<u>Serial Bonds</u>	<u>Year issued</u>	<u>Maturity</u> <u>date</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>	<u>Balance at</u> <u>12/31/2018</u>
Village Green #4	2003	12/15/2023	5.0%	\$ 145,000
Total				<u>\$ 145,000</u>

The following table summarizes the Town's future long-term debt service requirements as of December 31, 2019:

**Town of Van Buren  
Notes To Financial Statements  
For Year Ended December 31, 2019**

<u>BONDS</u>		
<u>Year Ending</u>		
<u>Date</u>	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Interest</u>
2020	\$ 35,000	\$ 7,250
2021	\$ 35,000	\$ 5,500
2022	\$ 35,000	\$ 3,750
2023	\$ 40,000	\$ 2,000
5 Year Total	\$ 145,000	\$ 18,500

**6. Fund Equity**

Allocation of Fund Balance - Certain funds of the Governmental Fund Type apply to areas less than the entire Town. The fund equity at balance sheet date is allocated as follows:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Non- spendable/R estricted</u>	<u>Appropriated in 2020 Budget</u>
<b>General Funds</b>			
Government Wide	\$ 567,557	\$ 153,425	\$ 210,000
Part Town	\$ 931,254	\$ 47,974	\$ 48,097
Highway	\$ 2,669,955	\$ 130,704	\$ 240,000
Capital Projects	\$(2,721,520)	\$(2,721,520)	
<b>Special Revenues</b>			
Special Districts	\$ 728,616	\$ 83,095	

D.W.I. Reserve - The Town has a D.W.I. reserve of \$3,841 for future equipment purchases for the Justice Court.

Capital Equipment- the Town has an equipment reserve of \$96,978 in the General Fund(Whole-Town), \$43,826 in the General fund (Part-Town) and \$98,859 in the Special Revenue Fund for future equipment acquisitions.

**Town of Van Buren**  
**Notes To Financial Statements**  
**For Year Ended December 31, 2019**

**8. Contingencies**

The Town has been named in various lawsuits. The Town has sufficient insurance coverage to pay any claims that could be awarded. In addition, the Town has several tax certiorari proceedings pending and, in the opinion of legal counsel, it is too early to determine the outcome.

The Town has received grants, which are subject to audit by agencies of the state and federal governments. Such audits may result in disallowances and a request for a return of funds to the federal and state governments.