

Letter to the Editor:

I had the opportunity to tour the Saugerties Animal Shelter with Councilman Paul Andreassen on Saturday April 13th. We were accompanied by several staff members. The conditions there are abhorrent. The building is clearly in need of significant upgrading and/or repairs or complete replacement.

The septic system, which serves both the animal shelter and transfer station bathrooms, apparently backs up during heavy rains and enters the facility through the floor drain inside the shelter. This presents absolutely unsanitary and unhealthy conditions for both the animals residing there and the staff working there. In addition, the shelter size and configuration obviously appears too small for their needs and is lacking general maintenance.

The Town Board needs to re-prioritize its basic needs and its purpose. If we have facilities in the town, they **MUST** all be maintained (with equal enthusiasm). Funds, which are scarce everywhere, should not be lopsidedly provided to other already oversized departments. Recent news articles mentioning an overworked understaffed police force attributed to some incident in Catskill but somehow has origins in Saugerties is an example of using fear to justify the

need for more manpower. There's nothing new in that. But, and the Town should be mindful of this, if those statements made in public are not true how does that affect our overall credibility or if they are true, could they impede the investigation being conducted by the state police?

About two years ago the Town of Saugerties was cited as being financially distressed by the State Comptroller's office and it was determined that the town should be increasing its fund balance to remain fiscally healthy. How is that working out and does anyone know?

For health and safety reasons alone dollars should be allocated to the Saugerties Animal Shelter. I call upon the current town board members to visit the shelter in order to see for themselves the unhealthy situation. When I'm elected to the Town board I pledge to improve the resources available for the Saugerties Animal Shelter and to look out for the welfare of the staff as well as the animals housed there.

Respectfully submitted,
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