



## City of Beacon, New York

Office of the Mayor  
Lee Kyriacou, Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### CITY COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTS BUDGET;

### ALLOCATES FUNDING FOR THOSE HARDEST HIT BY PANDEMIC

**Beacon, NY:** The City of Beacon City Council unanimously adopted the city's 2021 budget on December 7<sup>th</sup>. The budget stays under the state tax cap – a first for Beacon — limiting the overall tax levy increase to taxes from new construction and a 1% increase. This permitted strategic investments in some of the areas hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as community and social justice programs. Funding was allocated for a food distribution program, alternative policing, a comprehensive recreation needs study, a municipal broadband study, income-based recreation fee reductions, additional trash and recycling in city parks, et al.

Beacon benefits from the additional property tax revenue from new construction adding to the tax base, contributing more than half the increase in the overall tax levy this year, without raising taxes for existing properties. The adopted budget also increased the total tax levy by 1%, spread across all properties. The tax increase for a home with a \$300,000 assessment was kept to under \$40. A substantial portion of the budget will be covered this year by city reserves that have been built up for use on a “rainy day” such as a difficult economic environment.

The revised mayor's budget included \$25,000 for emergency supplemental grants to strengthen Beacon's food distribution programs and provide groceries to hundreds of families. Another \$70,000 were earmarked for alternative policing – which can be used for community mental health services. The Council dedicated \$30,000 for a study of municipal broadband. The Recreation Department will issue income-based fee waivers for programs thanks to a budget dedication of \$20,000. There will be \$14,000 for trash and recycling collection from parks on Saturdays and Sundays. Park bathrooms will be open, maintained and cleaned regularly from March to November thanks to \$25,000 in new funding. And the budget set aside \$10,000 for a potential taxi voucher program to help seniors and others with needed transportation.

Mayor Kyriacou said, “This year's budget involved greater scrutiny and community participation than any in past memory. I'd like to thank all those involved – city staff, the council and many residents who came and voiced their views. I believe this budget properly uses city reserves to keep any tax increase to a minimum, while funding needed one-time programs for these difficult times, as well as continued improvements in quality of life community programs.”

#### **About the City of Beacon:**

Beacon, New York is located on the eastern shore of the Hudson River 60 miles north of New York City, with a population of 15,000. Originally a Native American settlement, the area was purchased from the Wappinger Tribe in 1683 and settled by Dutch and other Europeans, leading to the riverfront community of Fishkill Landing on the Hudson, and the mill community of Matteawan on Fishkill Creek. The two communities were

incorporated together as the City of Beacon in 1913, named for the Revolutionary War signal fires on Mount Beacon. Beacon thrived as a 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century factory city, but as factories closed after WWII and the local economy declined, the city went through a period of hard times. Today, Beacon has successfully reinvented itself as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century river community centered around tourism, the arts and access to the scenic Hudson River heritage area. A diverse and thriving small city, it is now home to DIA:Beacon (one of the largest exhibition spaces in the country for modern and contemporary art), a network of Hudson River parks connecting to Fishkill Creek and Mount Beacon trails, and a vibrant historic Main Street of art galleries, shops, cultural venues and restaurants.

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