

Come up with money for street sweeping

The Smithtown Town Board should hold a special meeting to allocate money for overtime to complete the street sweeping operation in residential neighborhoods around town.

During the Smithtown Town Board meeting Tuesday, June 9 Smithtown Highway Superintendent Daniel Ryan admitted that the highway department is well behind in its street sweeping operation, a condition he characterized as “dreadful,” and a situation for which he offered an apology to the people of Smithtown. Mr. Ryan went on, however, to blame the problem on the Smithtown Town Board, which he said has woefully underfunded the highway budget.

According to Mr. Ryan, over the past 20 years the highway work force has been cut from 166 to 146 and the number of operational street sweepers have been cut from 10 to five, and the problem is compounded by a lack of overtime funding. Smithtown Supervisor

Patrick Vecchio countered that economic times are tough, town revenues are down, there are three vacant positions in the highway budget, and that Mr. Ryan has to do a better to prioritize his obligations and get more done with less.

These has all the makings of a classic political fight—a Democratic highway superintendent against a Republican town board locked in a budgetary battle. For homeowners living in a Smithtown neighborhood, however, politics as usual isn’t doing anything to get the job done.

Rather than engage in anymore political rhetoric with Mr. Ryan, the town board should meet as soon as possible and allocate a reasonable amount of overtime to be used to catch up with the street sweeping operating. If this money is spent wisely and the operation begins to move in the right direction, the town board can then allocate additional overtime at its next regular meeting.