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VAN DESTROYED — Williamsville firefighters were called to North Forest Road near Brookdale Drive at about 5 last Friday afternoon to extinguish a van fire. Fuel leaking from the full gas tank continued to reignite as it floated on top of water used to douse the flames, forcing crews to eventually resort to foam in order to extinguish the fire.

Photo by David F. Sherman
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Town of Amherst

Audit shows 'positive performance' for 2006

by JESSICA L. FINCH
 Associate Editor

Throughout 2006, Supervisor Satish Mohan had great concerns about a budget deficit, but when all was said and done, the Town of Amherst came out of last year in good standing.

Tom Malecki of Drescher and Malecki, LLP, presented the firm's findings from the performance review of the town's handling of its finances.

"The town had a positive performance," Malecki said. "There were more operating revenues than operating expenditures."

The general fund was short about \$767,000, less than 1 percent of the total budget.

"That is not a big number; budgets are going to be off from time to time, and this is better than expected," he said.

The town also had \$1.98 million left from operations, leaving the overall budget in the positive.

Council Member Bill Kindel, who claimed throughout 2006 the budget was not in a deficit, was pleased with the audit report.

"There was no shortfall. A \$2 million surplus is a far cry from a

\$4 million deficit," he said. "It's like one pocket is full of the money (and) the other isn't, but they are both your pockets."

Malecki also addressed material weaknesses that he discovered, although, he said many of those issues have apparently been addressed by Comptroller Frank Belliotti since Malecki began his review.

Those include, bank reconciliation, segregation of duties, outstanding checks, and transfers that are untimely.

"Having three comptrollers in a year is two too many," Belliotti said. "I have addressed most of the issues with the staff."

The two main issues that concerned Mohan during 2006 were utilities and health insurance. Health insurance cost \$9.1 million, with \$7.5 million budgeted, and utilities, \$5.2 million, with \$3.4 million budgeted.

Malecki added that when doing a review, his firm looks at the overall picture of the town.

"Some funds need money one year, some another year. In 2006 it was a pretty successful year with \$1.9 million plus," he said.

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Village garden walk, sidewalk sale set

The fourth annual Village of Williamsville Garden Walk will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, July 14. Walkers and bikers are asked to register at Village Hall 5565 Main St.

The starting point for the walk is in front of Village Hall and maps will be available.

The event will feature more than 30 gardens throughout the village, with many participants who are new to the event this year.

The Garden Walk Committee has garden vendors, garden book sales and prize baskets to raffle off. A donation to the Garden Walk will buy a ticket on baskets with retail value of more than \$600 each.

Also featured will be the Village's sidewalk sale. Items for sale will include patio dining furniture, antiques, unusual gifts, jewelry, baked goods and ice cream.

The Village Farmers' Market will also be open in front of the Williamsville Mill on East Spring Street.

Free parking will be located behind Village Hall. For more information on the event, call Village Mayor Mary Lowther at 632-4120, ext. 3006 or e-mail the Garden Walk Committee at gardenwalkvow@aol.com.