The Cornell School District has never held a referendum to exceed the state imposed revenue cap. While this has been good for our taxpayers, it has at times caused struggles financially for the district. We have always found a way to make things work while still providing a high quality education. However, we have no idea how much longer we can continue to do this.

It really concerns me that in the biennial budget passed last year, school districts were given no new state funds for 2021-2022 or for 2022-23. As all of you have seen, inflation is jumping at record rates, yet we can’t raise additional revenue to cover the additional expenses. On top of this, we have had to hire additional staff as we have more classes that are “tweeners” meaning they’re in between having one teacher or two. We try to keep most classes, especially in the elementary, no larger than 30 students. Since we have had some classes gain a few students, we have had to hire more teachers, but the few extra students don’t bring in near enough revenue to cover the additional costs.

We will keep managing the district’s funds in a responsible manner, and I believe most of you know we have done a good job of this in the past, but please keep in mind this may change someday due to no fault on our part. Unless something major changes over the next seven months, you can anticipate a larger property tax increase on the school portion of your property taxes. Our state aid will likely be reduced next year, which means to meet the revenue cap, more money will need to be levied locally. With the large state surplus and skyrocketing inflation, you would think our legislators would provide more financial support, but the spring legislative session is complete and nothing was done to help us. If you talk to your legislators, please mention that the schools could use some help in dealing with the inflation we are all facing.