

# Town Manager's Report Monday, July 23, 2012

**To: Board of Selectmen**  
**From Christopher Whelan, Town Manager**

**Following are some of the matters reported on this week by various Town Departments:**

## **FINANCE**

**Snow Account Expenditures Just 57% of Budget for Winter of 2011-12:** As we close the books on fiscal 2012 (the year ended June 30, 2012), one of the more notable results of operations is that just 57% of the \$513,000 snow and ice account was expended and \$221,000 was returned unspent. The dry and snowless winter of 2011-12 followed record-setting costs in three of the preceding four years. The cost of snow and ice removal and road treatment was the lowest since the winter of 2001-02 and this is just the second year in the past ten when costs were under the original budget allocation.

What does this forecast for the future? Nothing reliable. Winter storm-related expenses are subject to dramatic variation from year to year. The Town seeks to budget based on a ten-year average. The \$525,000 budget for this upcoming winter is actually short of the ten-year average expense by about \$44,000. Using this formula, the next budget target (FY14) is \$570,000.

**Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Revenue Rises 2.5%:** For the year ended June 30, motor vehicle excise tax revenue increased 2.5% over the prior year, reaching \$2,338,000. This is up about 6% from the FY10 amount which was the apparent bottoming of a four-year downward trend. Due to the rapid depreciation schedule in state law upon which the annual (calendar year) tax is based, this revenue source falls when new vehicle sales slow down and rises when new vehicle sales pick up. Each municipality taxes the vehicles garaged in its boundaries, according to registration data and taxable value provided by the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

FY2012 revenue was still 5% under the peak year FY2006 collection of \$2,458,000. It was \$188,000 above the FY2012 budget estimate, however, which had not anticipated the pickup in vehicle sales. From July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012, the Town issued 16,414 motor vehicle excise tax bills.

Owners of vehicles registered as of January 1 of each calendar year can expect to receive the calendar year bill by late January or early February. Vehicles newly registered during the year are issued a partial year bill, in whole month pro-rata and usually within 30 to 60 days of the registration. Owners of vehicles for which the registration is cancelled during the year should contact the local Board of Assessors office – or visit the Assessors website at [concordma.gov](http://concordma.gov) - to inquire about the requirements for a partial abatement of the excise bill.

**Absentee Ballots Now Available for State Primary:** Absentee ballots for the September 6<sup>th</sup> State Primary are now available in the Town Clerk's Office. If you will be away from Concord or are unable to get to the polls in person on Election Day, you are eligible to vote by absentee ballot. Please note that Election Day is a THURSDAY this year, and polls are open from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm. Absentee voters may vote in person at the Town Clerk's Office during normal office hours (8:30 am to 5:00 pm Mondays through Thursdays, or 8:30 am to Noon on Fridays through the end of August), or may request that a ballot be mailed to the voter. Requests for ballots must be in writing and may be made in person, by mail (Town Clerk, P.O. Box 535, Concord, MA 01742), by e-mail ([townclerk@concordma.gov](mailto:townclerk@concordma.gov)) or via Fax (978-318-3093). Please include the voter's Concord address in addition to where you wish the ballot to be mailed.

If you have a student in the household who is leaving for college, be sure to urge him or her to vote before leaving. If you are registered in a political party, then that is the ballot you will be given. If you are Unenrolled in a party (formerly called "Independent"), then you must choose a party for the Primary – Democratic, Republican or Green-Rainbow. The Democrats and Republicans have several active primary races, so you are urged to participate in the Primary – see the Web Site for sample ballots. More information about the Primary is available on the Town's Web Site – [www.concordma.gov](http://www.concordma.gov).

## **FIRE**

**Unusual Emergency Responses:** At 3:00 pm on July 18, CFD was called to Hayward Mill Road for a tree on someone. On arrival, firefighters had an elderly male, conscious and alert, with his foot under a heavy oak tree. The tree had fallen the previous night and he was cutting it up when it shifted onto his foot. Firefighters used the airbag system to lift the tree off his foot. He was transported with a seemingly minor injury. The call went well and the Department cut up the rest of the tree so as to remove the fall hazard.

At 7:49 pm on July 19, Engine 3 responded to 90 River Road (Monument Street in Carlisle) for a house fire. On arrival, they found a 2-story home with a heavily involved attic. CFD performed roof ventilation and fire attack. There were no injuries and all went well.

## **LIGHT DEPARTMENT**

**Retirement of Lead Lineworker Tom Murphy:** After twenty-four years of dedicated service, Lead Lineworker Tom Murphy retired on July 20. Tom has made countless contributions to Concord Light since arriving in 1988 and he will be greatly missed.

Tom joined our organization as an apprentice Lineworker and quickly advanced through the ranks becoming a Lead Lineworker in 1996. He played a key role in so many projects and was instrumental in storm restoration. Tom's dedication to line work and customer service was exceptional. When other communities would call Concord for mutual aid assistance Tom was always willing to respond and help restore that community's power. As a Lead

Lineworker, Tom taught valuable tactics and knowledgeable points of the trade to all the upcoming Lineworkers.

Though we all will miss Tom heartily, we congratulate him on a successful career and wish him a long and fruitful retirement.

**CMLP CAP Google Group - Peak Electric Demand:** Hot weather arrived last week with temperatures hitting the mid to high 90's. Concord Light expected a peak in electrical demand on Tuesday July 17, and put an action plan in place to respond to the higher demand in Town.

The wholesale rate that Concord Light pays for the Town's electricity is determined in part by the usage during the one hour with the highest demand of the year which happens in June, July, or August after several consecutive hot days. Based on the weather forecast for this week and the electric demand forecast from ISO (Independent System Operator), we expected a peak demand on Tuesday between 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm.

On Monday afternoon, Concord Light issued the second call of the 2012 summer season through their CAP (Concordians Addressing the Peak) Google Group email alerts, signs were posted throughout Town and notices were posted to the Town's website asking residents to voluntarily curtail electrical use on Tuesday to help reduce electricity costs to all Concord Light customers.

Suggestions for citizens to conserve electricity include: turning up air conditioning thermostat a few degrees, curtailing the use of electricity on things such as pool pumps, dryers, and washing machines. Maybe plan a cold picnic supper or cooking dinner on the grill. Another way to save is to reschedule use of these appliances to either before or after the anticipated peak hours.

Anyone interested in becoming a member of Concord Light's Google Group to receive an email alert when peak electricity demand is expected can join the Google Group by simply sending an email with the Subject and Body blank to: [Cmlp-cap+subscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:Cmlp-cap+subscribe@googlegroups.com). Google Groups will reply requesting verification of your request. This is a one-way email system so members can only receive emails from this site.

**Energy Efficient Appliance and Lighting Rebates:** So far this year, Concord Light has provided a total of \$6,600 in rebates to eighty-two Concord residents who purchased energy efficient lighting or appliances such as window air conditioners, dehumidifiers, refrigerators, dishwashers and washing machines for their homes. Rebate applications are available at <http://www.concordma.gov>. Click on "Lighting and Appliance Rebates" under "Opportunities."

## **PLANNING & LAND MANAGEMENT**

### **Health Division**

**Health Status Indicators:** Public Health intern Kyle Bogaert presented the results of her research on Concord's health status indicators to the Board of Health at their July 17 meeting. In general, Concord is among the healthiest communities in Massachusetts, although there is room for improvement in meeting the Healthy People 2020 goals. The prevalence of tick-borne illnesses was also noted. These results will be shared with the Healthy Concord Steering Committee.

**Weekly Mosquito Update:** To date, no mosquitos testing positive for West Nile Virus or Eastern Equine Encephalitis have been found in Concord or surrounding towns.

### **Planning Division**

**Community Preservation Committee:** Last Monday, the CPC held their annual public hearing to review proposed changes to the Community Preservation Plan. In addition, the Committee welcomed new member Peter Hunter to the CPC and elected Board of Selectmen representative Paul Mahoney to serve as Clerk for the upcoming year. The Committee also reviewed the project review schedule and has set the submittal date for new applications for Monday, September 24, at 3:00 PM. This year's CPA funding application will be available on the website on Friday, July 20, along with the updated Community Preservation Plan.

**Historic Districts Commission:** On Thursday, the HDC reviewed one continued and four new applications for changes within the Historic Districts. Certificates of Appropriateness were approved for new signage at Lyn Evan's Potpourri Designs at 29 Main Street; to alter the driveway at 648 Lowell Road; and to construct a new garage at 597 Lowell Road. The Commission also opened the discussion of a new pool and pool house at 495 Monument Street and scheduled a site visit to review the proposed project area on Wednesday, August 1. Lastly, the HDC met with representatives of the Concord Scout House to discuss their restoration work and possible solutions for meeting ADA requirements on accessibility.

**Bruce Freeman Rail Trail:** With assistance of the Finance Dept. and CPW-Engineering Division, Director Rasmussen completed required forms for submittal to MassDOT seeking an updated right-of-entry to the future BFRT right-of-way. These forms will be forwarded to Acton Planning Director Roland Bartl for submittal later this month.

**Historical Commission:** Archeologist Dr. Shirley Blancke met with the Historical Commission on Thursday night to discuss the early mapping of Native American sites in Concord and consider ways/means to protect these areas. The Commission also discussed the status of work toward revision of the Demolition Delay bylaw and the update of information on their web-page.

## **Natural Resources Division**

**Water Chestnut Harvesting:** After years of mechanical harvesting in the Sudbury River and Fairhaven Bay, the water chestnut population is now at a level that can be managed by hand harvesting. Instead of the usual two weeks of harvesting with a machine harvester, the Concord Land Conservation Trust (CLCT) and Division of Natural Resources (DNR) staff were able to hand harvest the water chestnuts over several days in June and July. DNR and CLCT will continue to monitor the population over the next month and continue hand harvesting efforts as needed. This is a rewarding accomplishment and a great benefit to this river system. The Conservation Crew has also hand-harvested water chestnut from Warner's Pond, Hutchins Pond, and Macone's Pond.

**Crosby's Corner Pre-Construction Meeting:** Natural Resources staff met with representatives from MassDOT, contractor DH White, the Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Environmental Protection, Lincoln Conservation, and the design consultant to review the upcoming flyover project of Route 2 at Crosby's Corner. The contractor hopes to begin building demolition and staging this season but has not yet provided a schedule for the project. They are anticipating construction will occur through 2016. Another pre-construction meeting will be held once a schedule is available and MassDOT has hired an Environmental Monitor for the project.

## **POLICE**

**Operational Services:** On Thursday, a subject was placed under arrest by Off. Soll for OUI liquor and other motor vehicle offences after he was stopped on ORNAC at Williams Road. Also on this day a female operator was summoned for OUI drugs and other motor vehicle violations after she left the scene of an accident in Concord. She was eventually stopped in Sudbury by Concord officers where she was transported to Emerson Hospital for evaluation.

On Saturday, July 21 while investigating a motor vehicle crash in the area of #363 ORNAC, officers placed a male subject under arrest for OUI drugs. A light pole and guardrail were damaged in the crash.

Also on Saturday, units responded to #34 Bruce Rd for a construction worker who had fallen off scaffolding. The victim had fallen approx. 8 ft. and lost consciousness. He was transported to the Lahey Clinic for observation. OSHA was contacted and is conducting its own investigation.

**Community Services:** Sgt. Jack Kennedy continued to meet with the Domestic Violence Service Network (DVSN) in collaboration with area towns, including the Hanscom Air Force Base in setting up CMAST (Central Middlesex Assessment for Safety Team). This is a team that was established to deal with "High Risk" domestic violence situations.