

Town Manager's Report **Monday, November 22, 2010**

To: Board of Selectmen
From Christopher Whelan, Town Manager

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

FINANCE

Tax Rate Certified: Following the Tax Classification Public Hearing conducted by the Board of Selectmen on November 15, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services has approved the Town's paperwork and the FY11 tax rate of \$13.19.

Assessor Search: The selection process for the new Town Assessor to replace the retiring Lynn Masson is well underway, and it is likely that a finalist will be selected some time in December.

FIRE

Station 1 renovation: Renovation work is ongoing in all phases; items of note include some pre-demolition shoring work begun last week, with the arrival of the steel support structure expected November 29.

Apparatus: On November 18 the Fire Chief opened bids (one bid, in fact) for a new ambulance. The one bid received was in the amount of \$186,000 minus a trade-in value of \$12,000 for a net purchase price of \$174,000 (within budget). Staff are in the process of reviewing the bid.

HUMAN SERVICES

Youth Services Coordinator Recruitment: The Deputy Town Manager reports that 9 applications were received as of last Thursday's application deadline. Following the screening process this week, it is anticipated that first-round interviews for this position may be scheduled for the next week or the first week in December.

Concord Cares: The Deputy Town Manager, Community Chest Director and front line Town staff reconvened last week in preparation for the 2010-11 heating season, and to ensure coordination regarding the emergency fuel distribution process this winter. This group includes representation from our Police, Fire, COA, Veterans' Services and Community Services staff who work together in order to provide up to 75 gallons (or equivalent) of heating fuel to residents in need while they are waiting for aid from outside agencies to kick in. This group agreed to meet quarterly to check in and continue to ensure

coordination of efforts. This effort is funded through the generosity of Concord residents, with the funds being set aside in a specific sub-account under the Hugh Cargill umbrella.

LIBRARY

New Kindles for Loan: Beginning the week of November 22, the Library will begin circulating 5 new Kindle eBook readers. Each reader will feature approximately 50 high demand fiction and non-fiction titles with the longest reserve queues. Also included are a handful of local favorites such as Thoreau's *Walden* and Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, as well as several regional travel guides. Each Kindle will circulate for a two week period and can be requested by performing a title search for "Kindle Concord Free Public Library" in the Library's online catalog.



The Police Chief examines one of the Library's new Kindle eBook Readers

Radio Frequency ID: Last Friday, the Library Director, Finance Director and Deputy Town Manager visited the Brookline Public Library to meet with Brookline Library Director and see a demonstration of the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology in use at that library. Some of the benefits of RFID include greater efficiency in processing materials, inventory control, and security of the collection. The ability to expedite the checkout and return of items to the collection and increase the use of self-checkout machines allows staff members to keep up with service demands as well as allocate greater time for reader's advisory, collection maintenance, and outreach.



Review of the RFID System at the Brookline Public Library

LIGHT DEPARTMENT

Power Supply: The Light Plant successfully completed this RFP process with a purchase from Constellation Energy, which outbid competitors with an offer of \$53.45 for 5 MW of

7x24, around the clock, power for delivery in 2013, 2014, and 2015. Constellation's price was very aggressive in the end and provides excellent cost to Concord.

Constellation only offered a single price for the 2013-2015 strip, and was not able/willing to break out the prices by year. Again, Concord purchased 5 MWs of 7x24 power for delivery in 2013, 2014, and 2015, a total of 131,400 MWhrs, from Constellation at \$53.45/MW hr.

Willard School Solar Open House: Last week, an open house was held at the Willard School to celebrate the installation of the new photo voltaic system. About 100 people attended, and the feedback from attendees was very positive. The open house featured: several screenings of the video about the Willard solar PV project; hands-on demonstration of the website that provides "real time" performance information on the system; tours of the Willard School's green features; and various other displays and forms of information.

Smart Grid/ Fiber: As this project continues its progression, NextGen/ElecComm has now completed the installation of 37,277 feet of aerial cable, 8,409 feet of inner duct, 6,980 feet of underground fiber and 3 splitter cabinets.

New Aerial Lift: Bids were received for the replacement of the aerial lift for CMLP's Truck #9. Replacement of a Bucket Truck is a 2 year process. Last year the chassis was ordered at a total cost of \$65,000. For the aerial lift, the apparent low bidder submitted a price of \$111,219. This price was below the Light Plant's original estimate by approximately \$9,000. The overall cost of the new bucket truck (with aerial lift) will be under the total previous estimate by \$19,000.

Emerson Hospital: Staff recently met with Emerson Hospital's VP of Clinical & Administrative Service to discuss the replacement of the existing switchgear for the facility to improve reliability. Staff is currently working on specifications and associated costs. It is expected that CMLP will provide a design and cost estimate in mid December.

PLANNING & LAND MANAGEMENT

Health Division

- **Employee Influenza Clinic:** The Town's Employee Flu Clinic was held on Friday, November 19. 58 employees participated in the clinic, with Emerson Hospital Home Care nurses administering.
- **Board of Health Meeting:** Last Tuesday, the Board of Health met with a resident to discuss whether the Board should be the enforcement agent for that resident's proposed ban on the sale of drinking water in plastic bottles 12 ounces or smaller. The Board members expressed concern that the enforcement efforts would have very little impact on the problem and take away valuable resources from other efforts, noting that there were 150 sites/facilities that would need to be monitored four times a year by Health Division staff, per the proposed bylaw.

Building and Inspections Division

- **Nashoba Brook School expansion:** Inspections and Planning staff met this week with Nashoba Brooks School representatives to discuss their plan to construct a new two-story classroom addition to the east side of the existing school complex. This new addition will serve to expand the size of the existing classrooms to better meet the national standard for classroom size. The expansion will not result in any increase in students or teaching staff. The applicant will be requesting that the site plan review

process be waived based on the fact that they just received site plan approval in 2008 and that the new addition will not change the site plan nor require additional parking.

- **Nashoba Brook Bakery seating:** On November 5, the Building Division received a letter from Nashoba Brook Bakery's attorney arguing that 42 seats in their café should be considered an allowed accessory to the "principal" wholesale bakery use. The attorney stated that the cafe retail sales were minor in relation to the expanded wholesale bakery business; illustrated that the retail café area uses only 13.7% of the leased space and generated only 18.7% of the business income. The Building Commissioner agrees with this analysis, and will allow Nashoba Brook Bakery to re-install 42 seats in the café area if they first perform several related tasks (which were outlined to them) related to parking, payment of relevant sewer user fees, code compliance, and licensing.
- **Concord Academy/Arena Farm land:** The Building Commissioner met with Concord Academy's Facilities Manager to discuss CA's desire to go-ahead with their proposal to develop the former Arena Farm property on the corner of Route 2 and Fairhaven Road into athletic fields for the school. The new athletic facility will incorporate 8 tennis courts, 2 large playing fields and a baseball field. Approvals will be sought from the Natural Resources Commission and Planning Board this winter, with construction beginning next spring and through the summer.

Natural Resources Division

- **Natural Resource Commission:** At the NRC Meeting on November 17, the Commission closed and issued various Orders and issued a Denial for insufficient information to repave the parking lot at Millbrook Tarry on Lowell Road. Hearings of note that were continued to December 1 were the relocation of the Caesar Robbins house to 34B Monument Street, and the Lowell Road sidewalk project for Public Works.

Planning Division

- **Community Preservation Committee:** The CPC held their annual public hearing on Tuesday; the Chair presented each application for funding, which was followed by questions from the audience. The CPC will begin their deliberations on Nov. 29 and Dec. 6. Project recommendations are anticipated to be complete by mid-December in order to be ready for this year's Town Meeting Warrant.
- **Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Committee (CSEC):** Among its activity, the Committee also met with the aforementioned resident (potential Town Meeting petitioner) on her PET Bottle petition article, initially opining that education may be a better strategy than imposing a policy.
- **Bike Rack Update:** Planning staff are finalizing the details of this year's MAPC bike rack grant application and order, and there is significant interest in adding and/or upgrading bike racks at various locations around Town, such as at Emerson Umbrella, at Sanborn and Peabody School buildings, at the Ripley building to serve the summer programs and ball fields, and at various Housing Authority properties.
- **Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Designer Selection:** The PLM Director participated in the qualification review and designer selection for Phase 2A and 2C of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, and the review committee recommended Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. to the Acton Town Manager. A contract is expected to be in place by early December.

- **West Concord Task Force Zoning Forum:** Last Tuesday, the WCTF held its zoning forum at the Thoreau School. The forum included a presentation of the proposed redevelopment for 50 Beharrell Street. There were many questions about the proposed redevelopment and concerns expressed about traffic/circulation, affordable housing, parking availability and impact to other businesses and industrial uses. The WCTF determined at its follow up meeting on Wednesday that an article should be written for the Concord Journal, among other work that remained to be done.

POLICE

Community Services: Last week, the Department assisted CCHS with their yearly school safety student lock-down drill. The drill was successful and areas of improvement were identified. The Department also participated in a tabletop school safety exercise at the Fenn School, as Department staff continue to collaborate with both the public and private schools on school safety issues and procedures.

The Police Chief reports that the Department is experiencing an increase in calls for service for assistance with psychiatric patients at Emerson Hospital. Hospital administrators believe the increase in psychiatric care is due to the recent closures of psychiatric units in both Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire Hospitals, and also recent media articles focused on this issue.

Fraudulent Chimney Sweep Companies: As the winter season approaches, the Police Department has been investigating more incidents of fraudulent chimney sweep companies. Last Tuesday, several residents reported suspicious activity involving a chimney sweep company. A community notification was issued on the incident, asking that residents continue to be vigilant and report any suspicious activity.

Professional Development: The police lieutenant first round interviews were held last Tuesday and Wednesday. Eight (8) candidates were interviewed and the Police Chief will make recommendations for second round interviews shortly.

Administrative Services: Last Friday, both the Police and Fire Chief attended a meeting in Sudbury for the dispatch regionalization grant study. Representatives from Acton, Boxborough, Lincoln, Maynard, Sudbury, Wayland and Weston, were also present and timelines for the grant compliance were established. A research subcommittee was established to identify each Town's infrastructure, equipment and staffing needs, and the larger group will reconvene later on November 29 for further discussion.

PUBLIC WORKS

Turf Fields Update: Public Works staff completed a walk-through of both fields last week with the contractor who was interested in a determination of substantial completion for both fields. The Public Works Director reports that a punch list remains to be completed, but both fields are now in playable condition.