

TOWN MANAGER



Town Manager Christopher Whelan

2010 was a very eventful year for the Town of Concord. The Board of Selectmen recognized the serious economic downturn the community and the regional was experiencing and directed the Town Manager to present a budget proposal for FY2011 that provided a 0% increase in spending and an overall 0% increase in property taxes. In order to accomplish this, while allowing for a modest increase in employee wages and in health care costs, it was necessary to eliminate \$550,000 from the budget of the prior year. This was accomplished by eliminating some services and vacant staff positions in all Town departments, and the budget was unanimously approved by Town Meeting in April. This conservative spending approach allowed the Town to begin fiscal year 2011 with a healthy cash reserve position, and more than \$1 million in unused levy capacity, without detrimentally impacting any of the Town's core services.

While the budget discussions were taking place, our area experienced some of the worst spring flooding seen in many years and sustained significant damage to Westford Road and drainage systems throughout the community. An application for federal assistance to pay the cost to repair the damaged infrastructure was prepared and is awaiting final action.

The spring season also saw the retirement of long-time Police Department Chief Leonard Wetherbee and Deputy Chief Paul Macone. Deputy Chief Barry Neal was permanently appointed to the position of Chief of Police, and Sergeant Roy Mulcahy has been promoted to Lieutenant. In June, Light Plant Director Dan Sack retired after 20 years, and Operations Manager David Wood was promoted to replace him. Town Assessor Lynn Masson announced her plans to retire, and former Hingham Assessor Lane Partridge was hired to replace Lynn. Information Technology Administrator Dave Mickey retired at the end of the year after 13 years of service, and Public Health Director Brent Reagor left for a warmer climate; and Council on Aging Director Mary Anne Mortenson announced her plans to retire in March. These three key staff positions will be filled in the early part of 2011.

During the summer, Concord Public Works was extremely busy with a variety of infrastructure improvement projects, including the successful long-awaited completion of the

General Business

Staff Changes

Public Works

reconstruction of West Main Street (Rt 62), the realignment and improvement of the intersection and traffic lights at Sudbury Road and Thoreau Street; and initial work on the construction of a new sidewalk extension on Lowell Road, from Hugh Cargill Road to Bartkus Farm Road. The Department also completed successful negotiations with the Mass. Department of Transportation concerning the Crosby's Corner Improvement Project, including a \$7.5 million commitment from the Commonwealth to reconstruct Cambridge Turnpike to mitigate the impact the work on Route 2 will have on Cambridge Turnpike's drainage network. Public Works also coordinated the replacement of the artificial turf fields at the High School, at no cost to the Town, because the materials did not meet our construction specifications. CPW also created a temporary skating rink at Emerson Field in 2009 and added a rink at Rideout Playground in 2010, much to the delight of youth and adults looking for an outdoor activity during the winter months.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Mark Cotreau successfully coordinated the Town's participation in a regional Advanced Life Support (ALS) service, sharing highly skilled paramedics on a regional basis with eight other neighboring communities in collaboration with Emerson Hospital. The Fire Department also embarked on the renovation of the headquarters station on Walden Street, displacing firefighters to temporary quarters at the rear of the site, until the renovations are completed in mid-2011.

In August, the Selectmen completed the acquisition of the Marshall Farm property on Harrington Avenue, authorized by Town Meeting in April, ensuring that 17+ acres along the Assabet River in West Concord will remain in active agriculture for many years to come. In September, Concord marked the 375th anniversary of the Town's incorporation, during a beautiful fall weekend, highlighted by a parade, evening ball, and concluding fireworks display that will long be remembered.

Light Plant

The Municipal Light Plant was very busy throughout the year, coordinating the lease of Town land on Bedford Street for the installation of photovoltaic panel covering about five acres near the wastewater treatment plant. This will reduce the Town's dependency on energy derived from burning fossil fuels. The Light Plant also initiated the installation of the Town's "Smart Grid" to enhance the management of energy resources through a fiber-optic telecommunications network. Solar panels were installed and put into service at the new Willard School, through collaboration between CMLP, the Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Committee and the School Department. And CMLP doubled its use of energy from renewable sources to ten percent by adding hydropower and wind power from Maine to Concord's energy portfolio.

Development

Toward the end of 2010, Trammel Crow Residential received permits to begin construction of 350 units of affordable housing near Forest Ridge, with occupancy expected by late summer of 2011. Completion of this project will bring Concord to a level of 10% of housing being categorized as affordable, in conformance with Mass General Laws Chapter 40B. Complying with this law will protect the Town from unwanted developments that do not comply with local zoning laws. Also, a High School Building Construction Committee was appointed by the Regional School Committee and will work during the spring and summer of 2011 to bring a High School reconstruction proposal to an expected fall Special Town Meeting and Special Election. Finally, the Concord Free Public Library Committee began work on an exciting renovation of the Fowler branch library which will expand the

building footprint slightly but dramatically expand the space available for public use. An opening in the spring of 2011 is expected.

Town departments and committees have weathered the storm of a depressed local economy in reasonably good condition. We are beginning to see faint signs of recovery coming in the form of increased building activity in the residential, commercial, and non-profit sectors. The workload for municipal employees and volunteers does not diminish in a poor economy, but rather increases in many areas, such as library usage and domestic violence calls. Concord is fortunate to have so many capable staff members and citizen volunteers to perform the work necessary to maintain our sense of community and common purpose even during challenging times.



In December Concord Firefighters volunteered their time to provide a fitting salute to a fallen soldier enroute from Hanscom Air Force Base to his final resting place in Sudbury.