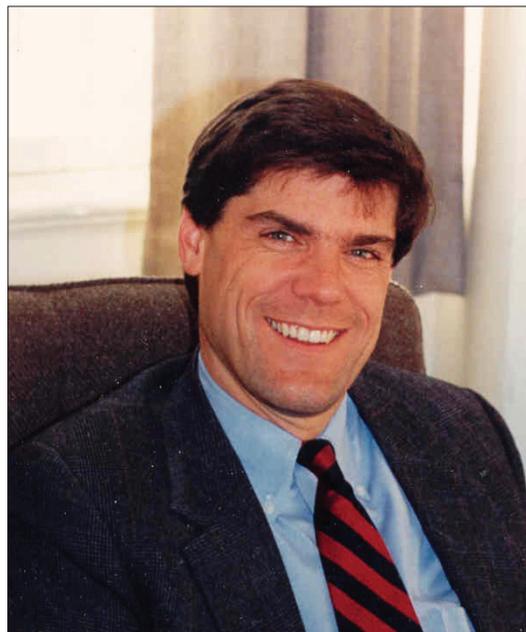


TOWN MANAGER



Town Manager Christopher Whelan

2009 began and ended with a sense of financial contraction and uncertainty. In January, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts reduced its promised fiscal aid to cities and towns in the middle of the fiscal year by 10%, as well as implemented cuts in a wide variety of local programs such as Community Policing and Recycling grants. Town departments responded to the cuts by freezing 2% of operating budgets and turning back to the General Fund more than \$350,000 in unspent appropriations as a result. While the Town was able to avoid staff lay-offs and a freeze on hiring in 2009, 2 full-time positions were eliminated and several more positions were left unfilled indefinitely. As the year drew to a close, the Finance Committee established a spending guideline assuming a further 10% cut in State aid, and the Selectmen requested that Town operating budgets be level-funded at the FY2010 level.

Despite the fiscal retrenchment that characterized 2009, many Town departments saw sustained or only slightly diminished demand for services. Notably, circulation and other use of Library services saw a spike in demand, presumably the result of residents buying fewer books and using the library computers for assistance in job searches and retraining. Also, the Inspectional Services department noticed only a slight fall-off in construction activity, although several major projects were put on hold until the economy improves.

Finance Director Anthony Logalbo skillfully managed the Town's finances during this period of uncertainty and reduced income. Investment earnings on the Town's available cash dropped to almost 0%, and there were contractions in most other local sources of revenue for the Town. Nevertheless, the Town's Aaa bond rating from Moody's Investor Services was confirmed, and the Town continued to access capital markets to make important facilities and infrastructure investments.

For the fifth consecutive year, the Town Budget document prepared by the Finance Department

General Business

ment was awarded the Government Finance Officers Association “Distinguished Budget Award” in recognition of the comprehensive and detailed budget document prepared for Fiscal Year 2010. The document is posted on-line and provides a wealth of information about Town operations for the public. The efforts of Town departments to conduct business in a transparent manner was recognized again by the public interest group Common Cause, when the Town received the organization’s “E-Government Award- With Distinction” for the 3rd consecutive year. This year, streaming video of Selectmen’s meeting was added to the Town’s website in conjunction with CCTV community television

Public Works

Despite the challenging economic milieu, considerable work was accomplished in 2009 to maintain and enhance the Town’s infrastructure. Phase 2 of the Route 62 rehabilitation project finally got underway. This long-overdue State-funded project represents a \$3.5 million enhancement of Main Street from the Assabet River west to the Acton town-line. It includes an extension of the existing sidewalk about one-half mile to the Town line. Other State-funded projects that were completed this year include the opening of the new Pine Street Bridge in August and the opening of the Flint Bridge on Monument Street in December, about four months ahead of schedule. Also in December, the Commonwealth also filed for permits necessary to construct the long-awaited Crosby’s Corner Improvements on Route 2 in Concord and Lincoln, expected to cost in excess of \$80 million.

Town crews were busy this year, with major reconstruction of the Thoreau Street and Sudbury Road intersection, to improve the traffic pattern and signalization, and to make the intersection safer for both pedestrians and motorists. Town Meeting authorized the expenditure of \$250,000 for new sidewalk construction, and a new sidewalk was installed on Plainfield Road in conjunction with the complete resurfacing of that road. The Nashawtuc Bridge was closed for repairs and re-opened in less than 90 days, after a stonemason had secured the granite parapet walls of that historic structure. The traffic pattern in Monument Square was altered to make the “flagpole rotary” a full-rotary, in order to improve safety and reduce the number of minor accidents.

Planning

Finally, Town Meeting authorized under Article 41 a study of the Town’s wastewater needs, in recognition that the Town’s wastewater treatment plant is essentially at full-capacity, and the lack of sewer capacity could create an impediment to the development and enhancement of housing, commercial properties, and municipal facilities.

The Concord Housing Authority completed construction of four units of senior housing on Old Bedford Road, with considerable community support. And the Concord Housing Trust completed its final project, a five-unit affordable housing project on Walden Street. The Alexan Concord development, a 350-unit CH. 40B affordable housing project, did not begin construction in the fall as expected, due to the poor economic climate. The proponents expressed an intent to continue trying to pull the financing together to get the construction underway in the spring of 2010. This project, if completed, would put the Town above the State-mandated goal of having ten percent of its housing stock deemed “affordable”. Achieving this goal enables the Town to resist “hostile” CH. 40B housing proposals and to better control its own destiny regarding the density and location of housing within the community.

Town Meeting approved an Interim Planning Overlay District or IPOD for West Concord for a period of two years, to allow officials to develop a Master Plan for the village area.

Using funds appropriated at the April Town Meeting, the consulting firm Stantec was retained to assist in the development of a Master Plan for West Concord. That plan will be available in draft form in the spring of 2010.

Light Plant

The Town's very favorable "all requirements" contract with Constellation energy expired in September after seven years. As a result, rates have increased gradually to reflect market conditions, and the Light Plant is for the first time since its inception developing a diverse portfolio of energy contracts with various providers and differing terms. Town Meeting supported the Light Plant's request to implement a "Smart Grid" by authorizing \$4.5 million to be spent on smart meters and a fiber optic network that will allow customers to better control their energy consumption, conserve electricity and lower demand for power.

Mark Cotreau was appointed in April as the Town's new Fire Chief, following the retirement of Ken Willette. Mark had served as a Captain for 10 years, and has more than twenty seven years of service with the department overall. We are also pleased to welcome Kerry Cronin as the new Library Director in August. She comes to us after 3 years as Director in Rye, New Hampshire and nearly ten years at the Boston Public Library. Police Chief Len Wetherbee and Detective Paul Macone announced their plans to retire in early 2010, both having dedicated 30 years or more of service to Concord. And Light Plant Director Dan Sack announced his plans to retire in 2010 after 20 years of service.

Staff Changes

The new position of Energy Conservation Coordinator was created in the summer and Jan Aceti was selected as the first person to fill that post, bringing with her considerable skills developed working for the City of Cambridge and operating her own resource conservation consulting firm.

As 2009 draws to a close, the economic picture remains uncertain. There is no recovery on the immediate horizon that reassures us of brighter days in the near future. Town departments will continue to creatively respond to these difficult circumstances by preserving core services, conserving energy and resources wherever possible, and focusing on providing the taxpayer excellent value for the dollar and providing exceptional customer service.



This hardy band of volunteers are responsible to pull together the many aspects of the Town's celebration of its 375th Birthday in 2010.

Pictured from left standing: Marie Foley, Jennifer Clarke, Pam D'Ambrosio, Frank Cannon, Bill Dolan. Front from left: Paula Doyle, Meg Gaudet (Chair), Carol Bowen.

Not pictured: Nancy Haynes, Bob Lawson, Rick Frese, and Rien Beuwkes