
OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

TO: SELECTBOARD
FROM: PETE WEBSTER
SUBJECT: TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT
DATE: 11/8/2008

I first want to thank you all for having the confidence in hiring me for this Town Manager position. I've been pretty busy these past three days learning my way around this computer, this office, this building, and this town. I've tried to sit down and hammer out some kind of Town Manager's report for the past six hours, and each time I'm interrupted by one thing or another. I've met with many residents already, and look forward to meeting many more. Let me just give you a brief summary of these past three days:

Both Wednesday and Thursday I met with each of the department heads to learn more about their departments, about them, and to let them get to know me a bit more. My first impression of these key employees, back when I first met with you all during that all day interview process on Sept. 3rd, has been borne out. You have some very strong, capable department heads in all the key spots, and that can only help to make my job easier. I have been quite impressed with each (Bonnie is still recovering from the election excitement, so I have not yet sat with her), and look forward eagerly to working with them all.

Neil has spent some time with me on various transitional issues, and I have to tell you what a phenomenal job he did in turning this office over to me. I've got files on top of files relating to every issue facing this town, and am slowly familiarizing myself with them. Just today I've met at some length with Dennis Kaufman, as he is home from the hospital and really wanted to discuss the pending litigation. I also spent some time driving around Bragg Hill with Richard Blacklow yesterday, as I had never been up there before. I've been in touch with Charlie Merriman, and have sent the letter that Neil drafted to him, reviewed by you, with some of the questions we need addressed as we move forward with this case. I plan on meeting with both Dennis and Steve Wheelock Monday morning at 9 to further discuss this case. Gerard has asked, and I agree, that all communications with the public/press concerning this case go through me as the point person for the town.

Last evening I met with the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District in No. Hartland to learn more about our MSW issues and their plans for a new landfill. I spent some time with Fred Moody after that meeting getting some of the background history on that project.

Today I continued meetings with department heads, sat in on the meeting this morning of the Safe Routes sidewalk group, including concerned residents and the engineers from TYLIN International. Also in attendance were Andy Hodgdon and Chief Robinson, and we walked the proposed area along Church Street. We hope to coordinate that sidewalk project with the AOT repaving of Rt. 5, hopefully next summer when school is not in session.

We had the bid openings for snow removal, snow plowing and sanding of the downtown area, and I plan on meeting with Andy again next week to drive all the roads in town to become more familiar with our infrastructure. On my way in this morning I did tour the Kendall Station railroad crossing, and also wanted to drive up to see my old residence on Farrell Farm, and to see the new affordable housing complex at Starlake Lane. That brought back a lot of 35 year old memories. . .

I will be taking Neil's draft budget home with me this evening and spending some time over the weekend to become more involved with it. He has done a terrific job, as far as I can tell, on crafting a responsible budget, one that our department heads can also live with. I do think he has under budgeted medical insurance, as I was using a figure of 20% increases for the Dorset budget. I have heard from my friends at the League that it may even be higher for some of the plans, but we won't know for sure until the annual Health Trust meeting on the 14th. We have adequate budget meetings scheduled over the coming weeks to address the budget.

If any of you need to reach me over the weekend, I will be back in Manchester helping my wife pack up a household full of 'stuff'. We have found a temporary six month rental in Lyme, where I have been camping out the past couple of nights, and we hope to be moved over next week. My home phone is (802) 362-9989, and my cell is (802) 345-5570. I very much look forward to working with you and your board, and getting to know you all better. Thanks again for the confidence you've placed in me.

Sincerely,

Pete Webster