



Peter B. Webster
Town Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: Peter B. Webster, Town Manager

DATE: Nov. 5, 2010

SUBJECT: Information for the Selectboard

FY Municipal 2012 Budget

Most of the past week or two has been devoted to budget efforts to prepare for your two upcoming budget sessions with Department Heads. We will have two budgets for you to review, as last year, one providing a current level of services and a second budget attempting a 5% reduction in expenditures. We will have brief narratives for each department, highlighting the significant expense items, significant increase/decreases, and the ramifications of each budget. This will not be an easy or pleasant budget season due to the cost cutting that we have undergone the past five budgets. We will again be following last year's format, with the following schedule of meetings:

Nov. 10	1 st budget session w/ Dept. Heads
Nov. 23	2 nd budget session w/ Dept. Heads
Nov. 30	3 rd budget session w/ Outside Agencies
Dec. 8	4 th budget session
Dec. 15	Regular meeting of the Select Board
Jan. 12	1 st Public Hearing of the FY 12 budget
Jan. 19	2 nd Public Hearing of the FY 12 budget and final approval of FY 12 budget to Town Meeting

In an effort to dispel some of the misperceptions that the Town (municipal) budget is growing out of control, I will include some five-year historical data that will cover the four years from the FY07 budget to the current FY11 budget. During those four years, five budgets, the actual dollar increase (prior to Voted Appropriations), after grant expenses have been backed out, has been only 2.22% for the entire period (or .55% per year increase). During that same period, the CPI for the Northeast increased at a rate of 2.3% per year, significantly higher than our rate of spending.

You should have your FY12 budget books several days before Wednesday's Selectboard meeting. At that first budget session, we will hear from the following departments: Public Works, Solid Waste, Listers, Town Administration/General Administration/Tracy Hall.

Norwich Energy Committee

The Energy Committee has been meeting regularly since the Master Site Plan for the DPW is drawing to a conclusion. The final report will identify a site for the proposed solar project on DPW land that is best suited for the project. The RFB is finalized, and in your packets. Much thought has gone into this, and we hope you will approve it for distribution, with responses and bids due back by December 30th. This will provide sufficient time for Selectboard and Finance Committee input and warning for the Town Meeting on March 1st.

Recreation—Huntley Field

The Recreation Council has met to discuss the misinformation and premature conjecture concerning a possible mountain bike path around the perimeter of Huntley Field. This is a wonderful proposal, and will be a great addition to the park. I would hope all residents will become informed of the details, help formulate the final plans, so everyone's enjoyment of this jewel of a recreational facility will be enhanced, whether they be walkers, joggers, dog owners or cyclists. All too frequently we jump to conclusions based on little information or misinformation, which is the case with my mention in my last report of this proposal. All it requires is one person's ill-informed posting on the Norwich listserve, and it triggers an avalanche of other uninformed postings. The listserve can be a wonderful medium, and it can also be a great disseminator of misinformation.

Department Head Meeting—Tracy Hall Holiday Closing

At a recent meeting of all Department Heads to go over the upcoming budget sessions and a number of other issues, I mentioned my intention to close Tracy Hall between Christmas and New Year's Day. The holidays both fall on Fridays, so we'd be closing down the Town Hall for just 4 normal business days (Monday the 27th through Thursday the 30th) at a time of the year when there is very little Town Hall business. Employees would be cashing in personal time, so these are not proposed to be paid days off. Thursday, December 30th we will have certain offices open, including mine, to help with any end of the year recordings, tax payments, etc. Both Roberta in Finance and Bonnie in the Town Clerk's Office will work out their schedules to accommodate the end of the year needs, so no residents should be inconvenienced. This will help in our ongoing efforts to trim expenses and overhead in our current budget.