



Peter B. Webster  
Town Manager

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Board of Selectmen

**FROM:** Peter B. Webster, Town Manager

**DATE:** March 18, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Information for the Selectboard

### Safe Routes to School Sidewalk Project

The State, through VTrans, is currently surveying and doing the deed work to turn over to the Town the two state roads (Rt. 10A up from Ledyard Bridge, and Church Street) that we approved last year. As part of this easement work, the right-of-way work that needs to be done for the new sidewalk from the Congregational Church down to Carpenter Street is being done by the State, rather than at our expense. I will be convening a public hearing for the abutting property owners when this right-of-way work has been completed in late April, as we absolutely need to get this project completed this construction season. We need to meet over the removal of certain trees and shrubs, with a public hearing for those property owners affected.

### Board of Listers

I have met informally with the Chair of the Listers, Jonathan Vincent, to discuss their plans leading up to the filing of the April 1<sup>st</sup> Grand List. I am concerned that this Board needs to hire a consultant to help them get up to speed on that office's operations. They will be coming before your Board to share their thoughts in an upcoming meeting of the Selectboard. There are possibly up to as many as 130 properties that need to be reviewed due to additions and improvements, and this work needs to be completed in early June for that Grand List filing deadline.

## **Budget Issues**

As we come into the home stretch for our last quarter, I will be closely monitoring all the departmental budgets for any savings we can achieve. This will be a tighter budget year than last, for certain, and tighter than most recent budgets according to Roberta. Revenues are on track, slightly above last year, so our focus will be on limiting approved expenses to the bare minimum. I am still confident we will be returning funds to the Undesignated Fund, but not in the same quantities as in recent years. I will be meeting with each Department Head during the next few weeks, meeting individually to go over his/her remaining budget to see where we can cut. Roberta will continue generating her thorough end-of-the-month expenditure reports for your review as well.

## **Miscellaneous**

As you may remember, one of the benefits of our health insurance plan through VLCT is that our Health Trust provides monetary incentives for leading healthier lifestyles. This is called the Leader Program and Nancy Kramer has been doing a great job of coordinating and hounding us all. Currently, we are 8 weeks into a 12 week weight reduction program with a weekly group weigh-in, with 10 out of 18 of Town employees on CIGNA insurance involved. We have a 'friendly' competition ongoing between Tracy Hall and the Police Department with our total weight loss efforts, and currently the Tracy Hall crew has lost an average of 2.83% since the program began, versus 2.25% for the Police Department. We have been supplying Chief Robinson and his troops with unlimited donuts every morning, courtesy of Tracy Hall. . .

Dispatch services—I continue to work with our Fire and Police Chief, Neil Fulton and Public Works Director on our dispatch needs, as we are coming to the end of our contract (June 30<sup>th</sup>) with Hartford. There have been some issues involving quality of service with our present situation, and we are looking at our options, also considering the expense. I will have more for you on this topic in the coming weeks, but we will also be pursuing an Act 250 permit to build, eventually, a tower on Town-owned property at the Public Works facility. I have contacted VTel engineers to see if there is an opportunity to improve their wireless communications build-out utilizing a Town-owned tower, possibly as high as 180', at an elevation of 745' at the base of the tower at our location.

Tracy Hall floor covering—the 15-year old covering we use frequently to protect the gym floor is on its last legs, and Ben has provided me with two quotes to replace with a similar, possibly slightly heavier, covering. This expense will run about \$3,800 (including a new power winch), and with some help from the Women's Club and a better than expected surplus at the end of this budget, I may request monies from the Tracy Hall Designated Fund to make the purchase.

Our Risk Control Officer from VLCT has suggested about 20 safety improvements around Tracy Hall, all of which Ben has addressed. I will be meeting with Wade Masure from the League to go over his thoughts and

recommendations and our response, but things generally are in good shape. We did experience a snow/ice slide off the west side (Parsonage side) of our slate roof last week, damaging two vehicles. Both were parked right in front of the prominent "Beware of Falling Ice" signs, and I'm not aware of anything more we can do to prevent these periodic slides during a winter such as this, unless it's to rope off these valuable parking spaces during the winter months. I'm open to your suggestions, but this has been a problem for the seventy years that this stately building has been here.

Jill's increasingly popular annual "Touch-A-Truck" day for the kids will be held on the Green Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to noon.

The John Deere Grader has been inspected, thoroughly gone over by a knowledgeable grader mechanic from Caterpillar over a day and a half, at no expense to the Town. I will have that detailed analysis for your meeting next week.