



Peter B. Webster
Town Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: Peter B. Webster, Town Manager

DATE: June 30, 2011

SUBJECT: Information for the Selectboard

- The past two weeks we've had a number of meetings of the DPW Review Committee and the Capital Facilities Planning and Budgeting Committee. Both committees seem to be making good progress on their self-imposed schedules to get reports to you this fall. They've got some great minds serving on both, and I expect some useful feedback. The DPW survey (40 questions) should provide some helpful information, and that just went out in yesterday's mail. I met with both Margo Doscher and Jim Gold, co-chairs of the DPW Committee, who were looking into just how decisions are actually reached in Norwich and what information goes into the decision-making process. Steve Flanders has developed a more fact-based form for evaluating the acquisition and replacement decisions for capital equipment, which should help in making the most cost-effective decision going forward. A recent example of this is the decision at your last meeting to go with a new grader versus a used one, which may be counter-intuitive, but in the long run is the least expensive choice based on his spreadsheets.
- Andy has just heard from the State that Norwich has been awarded a bridge grant in the amount of \$175,000. You may recall we budgeted \$35,000 for the 20% match for this possibility, but we were not optimistic about receiving one of these. In fact, Norwich is the only

town in Windsor County to get one. Kudos to Andy! We need to focus more on the condition of some of our bridges, and this is a great start.

- The new windshield sticker policy, which goes into effect July 1, has been generally well received. I've spent a few hours at the Transfer Station on Wednesdays and last Saturday, to help Judy out and gauge the response, which has been generally favorable. To date, over 425 stickers have been sold in advance of the July 1 date. This should help in several ways: controlling where garbage and recyclables are coming from and keeping out of town waste out of town, helping us more accurately determine just how many residents are using the Transfer Station for garbage and recycling, and finally helping to close the gap in revenues versus expenses as the costs of MSW disposal increase.**
- By the time of your next meeting Ed and I will have met with George Lovell, the AFSCME union representative, and Officer Michael Scruggs, representing our eight person union, to hear the specific union concerns over the proposed health insurance changes. Present also will be Dave Sichel, head of the VLCT Health Trust, and our Health Trust representative Tanya Chambers. Tanya was the person who conducted the two hour educational forum on the 15th, and I felt she did a thorough job in addressing and answering all questions and concerns from employees and spouses. I am hopeful we will have a productive dialogue and be able to overcome whatever uncertainties and concerns the union members appear to have.**
- Dispatch coverage—we have been having continuing conversations with Hartford Dispatch and Hanover Dispatch regarding improving police and fire radio communications coverage. We will need to make significant changes to our radio communications systems by January 1, 2013 because of mandated Federal Communications Commission requirements that we use less bandwidth which reduces the area covered by radio signals. This change will make the existing marginal radio coverage worse. We have reached agreement with Hartford Dispatch that they will keep a wide band channel available for Norwich Police until January 1, 2013 or an earlier date if we are able to make changes to our radio systems. They were planning to change to narrow band channels on or about July 1, 2011. We have also reached agreement with Hartford Dispatch and Hanover Dispatch that Fire and EMS dispatch will move to Hanover Dispatch as soon as operationally and technically feasible. One of their prime transmitter sites is on Hayes Hill in Etna which should improve Fire and EMS radio coverage.**

- **The Grand List has been lodged, with substantial help from a former Lister. Kudos to the new Board of Listers for their first successful lodging of this list. They have just completed hearing their first 30 grievances the past two weeks.**
- **New carpeting will be installed Friday and Saturday, July 15/16, and should make a big improvement in that much-used multipurpose room and the hallway leading to it by the Town Clerk's Office.**
- **The three Adirondack chairs are installed and anchored at Foley Park, as of yesterday, and I've seen them already in great use by hikers and pedestrians alike. They look so inviting, the way they've been arrayed on that point at Foley Park, with a beautiful view downstream.**
- **I look forward to a busy summer of events, not the least of which is the Lions Club fair next week, the summer concert series on the bandstand, and the continuing 250th celebration events organized by the Historical Society.**