



Peter B. Webster
Town Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: Peter B. Webster, Town Manager

DATE: July 22, 2011

SUBJECT: Information for the Selectboard

Health Insurance

We have moved forward on implementing a new health insurance carrier come Aug. 1st, coverage through MVP, with all 19 employees having filled out the enrollment forms. I anticipate no major hurdles as we transition, and I know the new plan for the employees is richer and more comprehensive than our old plan, with significant savings to taxpayers. The Town of Woodstock made their change July 1, and in speaking with Town Manager Phil Swanson, they are generally satisfied with their transition and coverage. You have more detail about the plan specifics in your packets, but suffice it to say that this should result in almost a 15% savings (\$50,000) to the health insurance line item in our municipal budget.

Transfer/Recycling Station

The new windshield sticker policy has gone well. To date, about 1,180 residential permit stickers have been distributed, with about \$14,300 in revenues, very close to what we had budgeted. I believe the original goal has been validated, with some 30 or so out of town vehicles now being turned away.

Miscellaneous

Tax bills went out on July 8th, in record time after the tax rate was set the evening of July 6th. All hands pitched in to help Roberta in this annual effort, and it went extremely well this year. Total billed was \$14, 557,680, up just about 3% from last year, \$1,708,376 has already come in, of which \$1,139,619 was from the State for income sensitivity payments, the balance of \$568,757 coming from residents who pay early.

The new trail work on the Gile Mt. Trail has begun, through a \$19,756 grant that the Norwich Trails Committee from our Conservation Commission applied for back in January. Total project cost is \$27,112 (with a 20% in-kind matching grant of \$7,356). This project is an effort to address erosion, trail widening, and drainage issues on a very popular trail, and should be completed by spring of 2012.

The DPW has planted five beautiful new flowering crabapples near the "Welcome to Norwich" sign, with trees being donated by the NWC.

New carpeting has been installed in the multipurpose room, and looks fine. We are airing out the room as much as possible to reduce the 'new carpet' odor, but this will take time; it's certainly a better condition than existed with the previous carpeting and the odors emanating from that.

The Capital Facilities Committee had an informative tour of the Police/Fire property, the Public Works facility, Huntley Field and the Norwich Pool.

The Public Works Committee has received over 300 surveys that Gerry Tolman is now reviewing, and we should gain some valuable feedback from those very thoughtful forty questions.

At the Annual Town Meeting in 2008, it was voted to extend for three years (until June 30, 2011) the appropriation of \$45,000, originally approved at the March 1 2005 Town Meeting for an affordable housing revolving fund. I'm moving those funds (as of May 30, 2011 now totaling \$49,082) to the General Fund, per the vote.

BlakTop was the sole bidder for our paving this summer. We will soon see new asphalt going down on Carpenter Street, Lower Loveland, Brigham Hill and Elm Street, per the paving schedules you have already seen. Asphalt prices are now at \$81/ton in place, versus \$67/ton this time last year. The \$260,000 allocated for this year's paving budget is again below the recommended level of support from the MARCON Report.

Norwich Night at the Montshire—I have been discussing this concept with David Goudy for two years now, and we've settled on Sunday, Sept. 18th from 3:30 pm on. The museum grounds and exhibits will be open, free of charge, to all Norwich residents. In addition, there will also be a free cookout (starting around 5:30 pm or so) that I am working on getting sponsorship to cover the estimated \$1,000 cost. The goal is to entice our residents, some of whom may not have visited the museum in a while, to see all that's happening, with new trails, exhibits and the outside pavilion. Hopefully this will become an annual event.