



# TOWN OF TOLLAND

## REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

*Steven R. Werbner*  
Town Manager

**November 22, 2011**

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### Town Manager's Office

I had an opportunity along with eight other municipal leaders to testify yesterday before the Governor's Two Storm Review Committee at the State Capitol. I provided the committee with a summary of our experience in both Tropical Storm Irene and the October snowstorm. I also provided them with the suggestions below which if implemented, I believe would help prevent the type of mismanagement that we witnessed over the last two months from the Utility Company. I am also providing this list to our State Legislators for their consideration. In the discussion I also learned a few interesting things from other communities which we need to follow up on and see if they can work for our community:

- South Windsor has a contract with the VNA for shelter assistance.
- West Hartford had the school administration at the school they use for a shelter administer the operation. School administrators, teachers, etc. helped staff the shelter for a ten day period. BOE food services provide food for those staying at the shelter. South Windsor as well fed people at the shelter through their school system.
- The need for CERT teams now that the Red Cross is not staffing shelters or providing any real assistance.
- The need to expand the Everbridge system to get cell phone coverage.
- The establishment of neighborhood captains who are willing to take our written communications and make sure all residents in their area are aware of the message. These people could also be used to encourage people to sign up for our E-blast, Facebook and Twitter account. Some communities had thousands of hits on their Facebook page since that was the only way for them to communicate. We need to get more people to "like us" in that mode of communication.

### Possible State Legislation

- Each year the Utility Company must perform tree clearing over wires to a certain percentage of the Town of Tolland.
- Within 24 hours of restoration efforts, the Utility Company shall provide each town with at least one line crew and one tree crew to address blocked roads. These crews shall work under the direction of the designated town official. Fines shall be issued to the Utility Company for roads that remain blocked after two days of restoration efforts.
- Consider the possibility of shutting down the grid for 24 hours with a major outage to allow Towns to address road closures.

- Make public facilities, town halls, fire stations, shelters, dispatch centers, elderly housing, nursing homes and public utilities automatic priorities for the Utility Company.
- Within 24 hours of restoration efforts the Utility Company shall provide the Town with an assessment team that shall work in conjunction with Town officials to document damage.
- The utility shall maintain a data base of Town priorities for immediate restoration including location of priorities and shall on a yearly basis review the priority list with the Town.
- The Town shall have an assigned liaison appointed on a yearly basis that shall meet with Town officials at least twice a year and become familiar with town facilities and issues.
- The Towns shall be required to review the Utilities Emergency Response Plan for the community at least yearly.
- The Utility Company should, after an assessment of damage in each town, provide an estimate of time for restoring power and there shall be fines for failure to meet stated estimates.
- Each day of restoration efforts the Utility Company shall provide the Towns with a GIS map showing power remaining out, pole issues, transformer issues, power restored and the work plan for that day including where crews shall be initially assigned for the day.
- The Utility Company should be required to the extent possible allowed by law and contract to hold crews over as they did on day nine and ten of the storm as well as be required to rotate crews so as to provide 24/7 coverage during the course of the event.
- Towns shall be provided copies of statements given out by the 1-800 number as it pertains to their town. Residents in both storms were provided inaccurate information on restoration times as well as number of crews working in Town.
- The real time power outage map shall either be real time or removed and posted only in the evening after all the crews return to the home base. I am told that out of state crews can not report progress on an automated basis so their information does not come in until 8:00 or 9:00 pm.

Please see the attached Town of Tolland Open Litigation Report for November, 2011 and the Capital Project Status Report for FY12.

### **Human Services**

Residents may call any of the following Tolland Human Services personnel for more information about state programs and local initiatives:

Beverly Bellody, M.S., Human Services Director (860) 871-3611  
 Nancy Taylor Dunn, L.P.C., Youth Services Coordinator (860) 871-3612  
 Jennifer Therian, L.M.F.T., Counseling Services (860) 871-3615  
 Rebecca Ellert, Elderly Outreach Case Worker/Food Pantry (860) 870-3726  
 Fran Weigand, Senior Center Director (860) 870-3725  
 Donna Francis, Human Services Secretary (860) 871-3648

*Elevator ADA & Improvements Grant \$480,000*

The Town received grant funding from the Department of Economic and Community Development Small Cities Grant Program to install a second elevator in the Town Hall and add an exterior vestibule on the entrance of level three. The elevator will allow access from level 2, (Probate Court/former Recreation Department) to level 3 (Development Office) and level 5 (Town Clerk/Records). The contract was awarded to Millennium Builders of Rocky Hill, CT. They began work at the end of October. During the week of November 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> they will be saw cutting the concrete slab for the elevator. This work is not visible as it is taking place in a section of the Public Works Director's Office. We are hopeful that the installation will be complete by late April, 2012.

*Geothermal HVAC Replacement, Library Roof & Skylight Replacement*

W.J. Mountford Co. of South Windsor, the General Contractor, in spite of the challenges with the weather, continues to be on schedule. The drilling of the thirty-nine wells should be completed by the end of next week. Once the trenches are completed for the wells the contractor will work on restoring the parking lot. When the new sidewalks are set in place (closer to the building), the existing sidewalks will be removed.

The Library skylight has been removed (pictures of the removal are on Patch.com); the replacement skylight has begun and should be completed by mid-December. The Library patrons and staff have been extremely accommodating to the daily changes.

*Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)*

Human Services is taking applications for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program, which opened on November 15, 2011. Tolland residents may contact Human Services with questions about this season's eligibility requirements and income guidelines or to schedule an appointment to process an application. On behalf of eligible households, the winter heating assistance helps residents to pay for such heating sources as oil, natural gas, electricity, propane, kerosene, coal and wood. Homeowners and renters may apply. The following income guidelines apply:

<b>Energy Assistance Household Size – Gross Income Guidelines for homeowners and renters who pay for their heat:</b>						
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Under \$31,864	Under \$41,668	Under \$51,472	Under \$61,276	Under \$71,080	Under \$80,884	Under \$82,773

<b>Energy Assistance Household Size – Gross Income Guidelines for renters that do not pay for their heat separately and whose rent is more than 30% of their gross income:</b>						
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Under \$16,335	Under \$22,065	Under \$27,795	Under \$33,525	Under \$39,255	Under \$44,985	Under \$50,715

Households eligible for the winter heating program may also be eligible to receive weatherization assistance. This can help conserve energy and lower heating bills.

The Connecticut Energy Assistance Program and the Contingency Heating Assistance Program are administered by the Department of Social Services and coordinated by regional Community Action Agencies, in cooperation with municipal and other non-profit human service agencies. Tolland residents may contact any of the following for an appointment to apply for Energy assistance: families contact Nancy Dunn, (860) 871-3612; seniors contact Rebecca Ellert, (860) 870-3726; residents may also contact the ACCESS Agency in Willimantic, (860) 450-7423. When scheduling an appointment, residents will be provided with a list of documentation that will be needed. If for any reason you cannot make a scheduled appointment, please contact the provider to reschedule your appointment. We are unable to process walk-in applications.

#### Operation Fuel Emergency Utility Assistance Program

Human Services is taking applications for the OpFuel Program, which opened on November 14, 2011. An Operation Fuel energy grant (a one-time grant, up to \$500 per household) is *not* an entitlement to all Connecticut residents who fall within the income guidelines as funding is limited. Households which fall within the income guidelines below must have exhausted all Connecticut Energy Assistance Program benefits.

<b>Operation Fuel Household Size – Gross Income Guidelines 200% Federal Poverty Guidelines)</b>						
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Under \$21,780	Under \$29,420	Under \$37,060	Under \$44,700	Under \$52,340	Under \$59,980	Under \$67,670

Tolland residents may call Nancy Dunn, (860) 871-3612 for information or to schedule an appointment to apply for an Operation Fuel Utility Assistance Grant.

#### Coffee House

Tolland Youth Services Community Theater (TYSCT) will host the second TYSCT Coffee House of the season on Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm at the Tolland High School Café. Admission is \$5 at the door and a non-perishable food item for the Tolland Food Bank; free refreshments and an outstanding evening of entertainment provided by area high school youth! The THS Madrigals will be making a special appearance at this performance. For information contact Nancy Dunn, Tolland Youth Services, (860) 871-3612 or [nancydunn@tolland.org](mailto:nancydunn@tolland.org).

### 2011 Holiday Care & Share Program

Human Services seeks organizations and businesses, and individuals and their families and neighbors, who would like to participate as sponsors of this year's Care and Share Program. The program provides Thanksgiving and December Holiday Food Baskets, and Children's Gifts for Tolland residents and families that may need a little help to make their holidays bright this year! Applications will still be accepted for Tolland residents and families to receive holiday food basket(s) and/or children's gifts in the 2011 Care and Share Program. Although the application deadline has passed, households facing economic hardship may continue to apply throughout the holidays. Human Services will ensure that all such households receive the services that are needed. Applications are available in the Human Services Office in Town Hall. Residents may contact Nancy Dunn at (860) 871-3612 for more information about becoming a sponsor or to request an application.

### Counseling Services Available

The Human Services Department provides counseling services and clinical assessments to town residents. Common concerns are school issues, depression, anxiety, job loss, divorce, adjustment issues, family conflict, medical illness and chronic mental illness. Human Services staff collaborates closely with the schools and other providers, and provides referrals as needed. Services are offered to residents of all ages on a sliding fee scale. For more information residents may contact Jennifer Therian, L.M.F.T., at (860) 871-3615.

### Food Bank

Tolland residents may contact the following Human Services personnel for more information about the Food Bank or to schedule an appointment to complete an application: seniors, contact Rebecca Ellert, (860) 870-3726; all others individuals and households, contact Nancy Dunn, (860) 871-3612. The Food Bank gratefully appreciates donations received from individuals, schools, organizations and businesses. Anyone wishing to donate is asked to contact Rebecca or Nancy; these individuals will let donors know if there are specific items that the Food Bank needs.

### Library

#### Children's Programs — November 2011

Thursday, Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> – Mother/Daughter Embroidery Class grades 4 and up at 1:00 pm  
Read Dog from 5:30 to 7:00 pm  
Tuesday, Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> – Preschool Story time at 10:15 am  
Tuesday, Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> – Mother Goose Rhyme Time  
Wednesday, Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> – Preschool Story time

### *Friends of Tolland Library News*

The Friends have generously donated \$500 toward the purchase of hardcover large print books for the adult section.

The annual holiday cookie sale is in the planning stages. This is one of the Friends biggest fundraisers of the year and is always very popular.

### *Tolland Public Library Foundation News*

The Foundation kicked-off their "Year of the Young Adult" initiative with a panel discussion of the student athlete and college. The program, which was held at Tolland High School was very successful with about 75 participants. The group has also developed a Year of the Young Adult logo to use on materials promoting their activities.

As part of the Dimock-King Author Series, Denis Horgan will be the guest speaker at the next author program on Tuesday, Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. The event will be held at the Senior Center.

### *Tolland Library News*

Renovations to the roof and geothermal work have disrupted the physical appearance of the library but staff continues to adapt so we can remain open to the public with as little disruption in service as possible. Our patrons have been understanding and supportive.

A new Library Director has been selected and she will begin on November 14<sup>th</sup>. We all look forward to meeting her and introducing her new position at Tolland Library.

## **Planning & Community Development Department**

### *Building Department*

See attached Summary Building Report for October, 2011.

## **Recreation**

We were lucky that the parks and the Lodge did not sustain any major damage from the storm. We do have some cleanup to do but this is minor compared to some areas in Town.

Our office has moved to the Tolland Recreation Center in the old Parker School. We are excited to make use of the space. We still are running with temporary heat and all the rooms are not finished but we have gotten a lot of positive feedback from people who have visited. The pre-school program absolutely loves their new room.

Registration is on-going for the fall programs and activities. The numbers are down slightly from normal. We set up and offered new morning and evening Zumba classes but did not get

enough sign ups to run them. We will try them again in the winter program flyer which will be mailed to residents in January.

Due to the condemnation of our haunted house and the construction at Town Hall instead of the Haunted Walk and Town Hall Trick or Treat, we ran a Halloween party here in the Recreation Center. It went pretty well but we were not able to accommodate everyone who wanted to attend. We have already made changes to rectify this for next year.

The Pavilion reconstruction is still on-going. The structure itself is complete and the pavers have been replaced but all the electrical work and lighting installation still needs to be completed.

The Watershed Grant project for Crandall Pond is finishing up. We expect to have a draft final report finished by early December. Preliminary indications are that the intermittent bacteria spikes are due to natural causes.

### **Resident Trooper Update**

*Statistical Report* – Sgt. Smith has provided the attached Tolland Resident Trooper’s Statistical Report for October, 2011. The report represents statistics on criminal investigations, accident investigations, motor vehicle enforcement and miscellaneous services.

### **Other Business**

- (a) Meetings Calendar: Attached is a calendar of upcoming town meetings and events.
- (b) Monthly Reports: Highway Department Report for September, Senior Happenings for November and Town Clerk’s Quarterly Report.

**OTHER BUSINESS TO BE ANNOUNCED AS WARRANTED**

SRW/hms  
Attachments

*Attachments to this report may be found on the Town of Tolland website at  
[www.tolland.org/government/town-manager/town-manager-reports](http://www.tolland.org/government/town-manager/town-manager-reports)  
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[www.tolland.org](http://www.tolland.org)*