



# TOWN OF TOLLAND

## REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

*Steven R. Werbner*  
Town Manager

September 13, 2011

### Town Manager's Office

#### Hurricane Irene

The Town of Tolland began storm preparation efforts days before the hurricane was scheduled to arrive in Connecticut. Our pre-planning efforts which included deployment of Highway equipment to different sections of Town and the equipping and staffing of the EOC at the Fire Training Center was instrumental in our ability to address the aftermath of the storm.

Tolland was one of the hardest hit communities in the area with a 100 percent loss of power at the peak of the storm. Our recovery efforts were made even more difficult by the complete loss of power at the Town Hall which took down our computer system and literally cut us off from all communication with the State EOC for a significant period of time. We are investigating back-up systems to our current email system or a change in provider to lessen the chance of this ever happening again. The Capital Budget you recall included funds for a generator which some in the public felt was an unnecessary expense.

We need to do an assessment of our generator needs which include at least a generator at the Fire Training Center, Senior Center and our well house.

In terms of person power there are so many individuals who did a yeoman's effort in assisting in recovery efforts. Certainly the EOC staff and Public Works did what they do in every emergency, which is to go above and beyond to provide those resources necessary to address ongoing concerns. Other unsung heroes are the Explorers who put in countless hours assisting at the EOC, members of the volunteer and paid Fire staff, Betsy Tanner who was at the EOC throughout the recovery efforts, Staff in Human Services who helped man the shower operation, in particular Fran and Bev. All those who helped out did so at a time when their families were in need and they gave of themselves for the betterment of others. I know that it is part of the democratic process that citizens are able to stress all that government does not do well, but the response to this storm by Town personnel was just another example of everything we do well and that should be acknowledged. This Town was as prepared for this storm as well or better than any town in the state and our ability to go from over 100% without power and over 50 roads closed to almost fully operational by Friday is evidence of outstanding preparation and execution. As I said this winter, I am proud to be Manager of such a dedicated core of paid and volunteer staff who have nothing but the best interests of Town residents at heart.

Over the next several weeks we will debrief all that took place and I am sure have other recommendations to our emergency preparedness efforts. In closing I want to thank Town

residents for their patience and support they have shown Town staff during this event. If nothing else, this storm has reinforced the need to get more residents signed up for our E-blast, Facebook and Twitter systems for they along with the outstanding efforts of Tolland Patch are the only ways we have of communicating with the public during incidents of this nature.

The entire state will be putting together cost estimates for storm related activities and hopefully there will be reimbursement through FEMA.

#### Old Post Road/Mountain Spring Road Intersection Improvements

The intersection of Old Post Road and Mountain Spring Road has been a concern for some time. As you are aware, this is a two-way stop with stop signs on Mountain Spring Road. Accidents have occurred at that location periodically primarily due to high speeds and drivers ignoring the stop signs on the cross street. According to a study performed by VHB Engineering, the road is posted for 25 miles per hour and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is between 37 mph and 45 mph with several cars exceeding 55 mph. In addition there are sight distance concerns which when combined with the high speeds makes this intersection problematic.

Recommendations for improvements are as follows:

- Clear overgrown brush on the north side of Old Post Road.
- Install stop bars on Mountain Spring approaches.
- Install stop ahead pavement markings on Mountain Spring approaches.
- Replace existing stop signs with retro reflective stop signs.
- Replace cross road warning signs with retro reflective signs.
- Relocate Bus Stop Ahead signs.
- Consider optical speed bars on Old Post Road.
- Consider a zero tolerance policy for speed and increase enforcement in the area by increased use of the speed wagon and other methods.

It should be noted that a four-way stop sign at this intersection is not recommended since drivers tend to ignore the Stop control on the main road because the side street traffic volume does not warrant the installation of a sign.

I will be meeting with Public Works and the State Police about implementing the recommendations. A diagram of the suggested improvements is attached to this report.

#### Recreation Department Move to Parker School

It is anticipated that the Recreation Department will be moving to Parker School in September. Attached to this report are the Use Policy, Conditions and Use Application for use by outside groups who may want to use space within the building. Reservations for such use are made directly to the Recreation Department at (860) 871-3610.

### Employee Wellness Kickoffs

On September 8<sup>th</sup> there was a kickoff luncheon for employees related to our Be Well Wellness program through EHHD. The free luncheon provided information to attendees about the wellness programs that will be occurring throughout this year. Also, we are having an additional kickoff on September 22<sup>nd</sup> relating to additional wellness seminars we are doing with CIGNA, our health insurance provider.

### Position Vacancies

On August 22<sup>nd</sup> we held testing for the position of Assistant Revenue Collector at the Fire Training Center. We tested approximately half of the approximately 70 applications we received. We held oral interviews on September 1<sup>st</sup> for the top ten applicants who had the highest scores in the testing phase. We have narrowed the search down and hope to have an employment offer out to the top applicant choice soon.

We received 19 applicants for the vacant position Director of Library Services. We held panel interviews on September 8<sup>th</sup> for 6 applicants which included a panel consisting of a member from the Library Board, Foundation and Friends of Tolland Library as well as two outside Library professionals.

We received no proposals for the Engineering Technician Subcontractor which had a deadline of September 6<sup>th</sup>. We had advertized in the Journal Inquirer and distributed the information to various outside engineering professionals and firms.

There is a vacancy in the Parks and Facilities Department. We will be advertising this Laborer position in the near future.

### **Engineering**

#### Hicks Memorial Municipal Center & Library Parking Lot Expansion & Associated Site Improvements

- The Town Engineer has begun reviewing shop drawings/submittals for this project and will be providing inspection services for civil/site elements.
- The Town Engineer will also assist Beverly Bellody in regards to construction and contract administration.

#### Surface Transportation Program (STP) – Route 195 Corridor Study

- The Town Engineer and Town Planner have been compiling information and drafting the STP application that will be submitted to CRCOG mid-September. The application will request \$2.5 M in funding for:

- Design and construction of the Route 74 approach to Tolland Green, including the intersection of Route 74 and the southern portion of North Tolland Green, including the addition of a median and textured crosswalk.
- Design and construction of the portion of Route 195 that approaches Tolland Green, north of Cider Mill Road up to Old Post Road.

#### Miscellaneous

- A resident of Robbie Road contacted the Town Engineer to inquire about extending the public water to their neighborhood due to water quality issues. The resident said that his well, as well as his neighbors' wells are experiencing elevated salt levels. Staff members including the Town Engineer, Public Works Director, Town Manager and representatives from the Eastern Health District have been researching this issue. EHHD is reviewing this issue and has begun testing and analyzing this area. The resident will be discussing a water main extension with the Tolland Water Commission at their September 7, 2011 meeting.

#### Tolland Water Commission

- The Chair, Vice Chair and Town Engineer met with CT DEEP to discuss the diversion permit application. Several issues were discussed and the TWC's consultant will be working to make recommendations to CT DEEP in hopes of finding a diversion that will be agreed to by all parties.
- The Chair, Vice Chair and the Town Engineer have been working to finalize the Water Supply Plan and address CT DPH's concerns.
- The next regular Tolland Water Commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Monday, October 3, 2011 at 6:30 pm in Council Chambers.

#### Water Pollution Control Authority

- The WPCA has been working to finalize the FOG regulation.
- The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 18, 2011 at 6:00 pm in the Council Chambers.
- The next workshop meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2011 at 6:00 pm in Conference Room C.

#### Finance & Records

##### Refunding of 12/01/2003 Bonds (12/1/2012-2023)

In October, 2011 the Town of Tolland will issue Bonds in the amount of \$2,250,000 for an advance refunding of its Series 2003 General Obligation Bonds in order to take advantage of all-time low interest rates to save money for the Town.

Based on the bid projection, the Town will save approximately \$218,000 net present value in interest. After consulting with the Town's Financial Advisor, the Town first considered a refunding in May 2010. The Town Manager has set proper procedures in place in the anticipation of market changes.

Concurrent to issuing the advance refunding, the Town is in the process of bonding for projects authorized for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. This will save on issuance cost related to refunding.

### **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

### **Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)**

Human Services will begin taking applications for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program on Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, for households heating with a deliverable fuel (oil, propane, kerosene, coal and wood/pellets) only; the program will open for deliveries on November 15, 2011. At this time, it is estimated that applications for households heating with gas or electric will be scheduled in December, 2011. Homeowners and renters may apply.

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 information about this season's eligibility requirements and income guidelines, or to schedule an appointment to apply for Energy assistance: seniors, contact Rebecca Ellert, 860-870-3726; all others contact Nancy Dunn, 860-871-3612; 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, or you do not have all of the required documentation, please contact the provider to reschedule your appointment. We are unable to process walk-in applications.

Operation Fuel Emergency Utility (Gas or Electric Only) Assistance Program

(August 1 – October 31, 2011) An Operation Fuel energy grant (a one-time grant, up to \$200 per household) is *not* an entitlement to all Connecticut residents who fall within the income guidelines.

Households which fall within the income guidelines below *must also* be faced with a *financial crisis and demonstrate need*.

- *Financial crisis* is defined as the inability of a family to pay for an outstanding gas or electric bill. -- household is faced with the decision to choose between paying for their energy needs, buying food, paying the rent or mortgage, or paying medical bills as a result of unemployment, limited or fixed income, illness, death or other emergencies.
- Some examples of *need* can include but are not limited to the following:
  - Client health is threatened (i.e. needs utility to refrigerate medications or baby formula)
  - Client needs utility to keep medical equipment operational
  - Client needs grant to prevent shut off or reinstate service

<b>Operation Fuel Household Size – Gross Income 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.

Renters' Rebate Program

The Town of Tolland Human Services Office will accept applications for the Renters' Rebate Program through the program closing date, September 15, 2011. To be eligible, the applicant must have resided in Connecticut for one year prior to filing. Who is eligible:

- Applicant and/or spouse age 65 years or over by the end of December 2010, or
- Age 50 years old or over and the surviving spouse of a renter, who at the time of their death had qualified and was entitled to tax relief, or
- Persons under 65 years of age who are receiving Social Security disability benefits determined comparable by the Office of Policy and Management.

Applicants' 2010 gross income must not exceed \$32,300 if single or \$39,500 if married/civil union. Gross income must include all sources of income, including Social Security. Applicants must provide proof of all gross income (including Social Security received), and rent and utility receipts for 2010.

Tolland residents may call the following Human Services staff for information or to schedule an appointment to apply for the Renters' Rebate Program: Nancy Dunn, 860-871-3612, located in Town Hall; Rebecca Ellert, 860-870-3726, located at the Senior Center. If for any reason you



- Tuesday: September 20<sup>th</sup> - **Mother Goose RhymeTime**. Lapsit program for babies ages 6-24 months with parent or caregiver at 11:15 a.m.
- Wednesday: September 14<sup>th</sup> - **Preschool Storytime** for ages 2-5 at 10:15 a.m.
- Wednesday: September 7<sup>th</sup> - **Mother Goose RhymeTime**. Lapsit program for babies ages 6-24 months with parent or caregiver at 11:15 a.m.
- Thursday: September 15<sup>th</sup> & September 22<sup>nd</sup> - **Afternoon Storytime** for ages 2-5 at 1:30 p.m.
- Thursday: September 8<sup>th</sup> - **R.E.A.D. Dog Smokey** will be at the library with his handler to provide a chance for children to read aloud to improve their reading confidence. Children in grades 1 and up may sign up for a 15 - minute block of time. From 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
- Thursday: September 15<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> - **PJ Storytime** - Join Mrs. B for a story, for ages 2 to 8. Children are welcome to come in PJs and to bring a favorite stuffed animal. No sign up required; drop in as your schedule permits. From 6:30 to 7:00 p.m.

*Friends of the Tolland Public Library News*

The Friends will have two tables at Celebrate Tolland on September 17, 2011 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. They will be selling hardcover and trade paperbacks for \$1.00. In addition, they will have their popular bags in a variety of colors for sale for \$10.00. A representative from the library will be on hand to fill out library card applications and provide information on the services that the library has to offer.

*Tolland Public Library Foundation News*

Mystery Writer, Jane Haddam visits the Tolland Public Library on Tuesday, September 13, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Program Room. Jane has written more than 25 thrillers featuring Gregor Demarkian, a former FBI agent. She grew up in Bethel and still lives in Litchfield County. Her books have been very popular, and the most recent one is *Wanting Sheila Dead*. Mostly, her books are set in Philadelphia, where Gregor lives with his wife Bennis Hannaford, but sometimes, Jane has the couple travel to Connecticut for a change of pace. Sponsored by the library and the Tolland Public Library Foundation, and made possible through the Phoebe Dimock King and Elizabeth C. King Eaton Endowment.

*Upcoming Career Workshop: 5 Keys to Building Trust Fast*

Wednesday, September 21, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.

Let's face it; building trust is crucial to your success. People do business with people they trust, and building trust is the primary challenge of every sales person and consultant. Wouldn't it be incredibly valuable if you were able to detect early on in the conversation (telephone & face to face) the behavioral style of the person you are dealing with, and deliver your brilliance to them in exactly the manner they need it? Imagine how many more prospects you could turn into clients with that uncanny ability.

In this insightful and empowering seminar you will learn how to significantly modify your approach to selling and experience amazing results. Marge Piccini, Success Coach, will present this workshop in the Library Program Room. This workshop is free and open to the public. To reserve your space, please call the library at 860-871-3620. Workshop funded by a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

## **Planning & Community Development Department**

### **Planning & Zoning Commission**

- The PZC is beginning to work on new Zoning Regulations for a Technology & Office Zone in the Route 195 corridor up to Baxter and Anthony Roads.
- At the request of a resident, the PZC will be discussing permitting hens on property over 0.5 acres in size.
- Planning staff continue to assemble several copies of the official record for the appeal of the Tolland Village Area regulations.
- Current applications, actions and agenda items:
  - A Site Plan request to operate a storage business for landscape materials and construct a fabric building at 39 Kingsbury Avenue was approved with conditions at the meeting of August 22, 2011.
  - An application has been received for a small zone change from commercial (NCZ ) to residential (RDD) associated with the Multi-family Conceptual Plan on land of Arthur Gottier – proposed 100± multi-family units off of Route 195 and Anthony Road. A Public Hearing will be held on September 26, 2011.
  - The PZC will hold a joint discussion with the WPCA at the PZC meeting of September 26, 2011.

### **Planning Office**

- Staff continue to work with the other communities in CRCOG to implement the new Planning and Zoning module of the View Permit program that will track land use applications. Additionally, efforts continue to finalize on-line permitting.
- Staff finalized work with the Town Attorney and DEP Property Management Bureau to receive the \$270,000 grant funds for the 83-acre Luce property.
- The Planning Director is working with the Town Engineer to complete a \$2.5 million STP-Urban grant for Tolland Green Improvements. The grant is due September 19, 2011.
- Staff continue to work with the Tolland Agricultural Center and their farmland and agricultural consultants regarding a potential expansion of the site on Hartford Turnpike in Tolland and Vernon.

- Staff are working with the Town Attorney and ZBA on an appeal to Superior Court of a ZBA decision.
- Staff are completing research, working with abutting property owners and coordinating with Rick Conti on the discontinuance of a small roadway stub off of Laurel Ridge.
- Staff are working with the new owner of the Moose Lodge at 31 Kingsbury Avenue in preparation for the opening of the Adult Day Care Center, "Senior Moments".
- Steve Lowrey, Zoning/Wetlands Agent, has been busy creating and modifying maps and data layers for the town's computer based GIS mapping to meet the needs of emergency services and staff:
  - Continues to attend monthly meetings of the Connecticut GIS Council as the representative of towns with populations of less than 30,000.
  - Steve continues to work on developing a GIS layer of all Town Drainage Easements, which will be able to show the easements on maps, reference the document (and filed map where possible) that transferred the easement to the Town and help the Public Works Department quickly find the location and dimensions of the Town's drainage easements.
  - Continued updating GIS layers based upon new aerial photography.
  - Aiding residents with Zoning questions, resolutions to problems and helping with variance applications.
  - Continued to pursue Zoning compliance at 148 Mile Hill Road and 12 Cedar Swamp Road.
  - Met with the former owner of Pamela Court to have the deed signed and filed; Pamela Court is now a Town Road.

#### Inland Wetlands Commission

- The Inland Wetlands Commission has begun discussions with the Town Engineer and Town Planner to develop a protocol for more streamlined permitting for Town projects around wetlands.
- The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations were updated to reflect recent changes in the State Statutes.
- The Wetlands Commission continues to pursue clean up of Gages Brook; they have walked the Brook through the Industrial Park and have identified some areas of potential problems.

#### Conservation Commission

- The following hikes has been planned for Tolland Open Space –
  - October 16, 2011 (raindate Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>) at 1:00 pm - Walktober - King Conservation Area – Walk the entire Property with Charlie King.
  - October 23, 2011 at 1:00 pm - Palmer Kendall Mountain Conservation Area Grand Opening.

### Building Department

Work on the structure of the Town's Pavilion is now complete and the electrical work is in progress. Work on the elevator at the Tolland Intermediate School is near completion.

The Building Department has seen an increase in electrical service repair permits due to Irene.

### Recreation

The Summer programs have finished up and the Fall schedule of programs and activities is at the printer and will be mailed to residents the week of September 12th. The summer play camp program running for the first time at the old Parker School went pretty well. Having the indoor space available when the weather didn't cooperate was nice. We intend to use the space to run camps during the school vacations. We also had a good year at the beach. We sold a record number of season passes to residents this year.

The State has new regulations in place which will allow us to move the pre-school to a new building without going through a complete relicensing. We have moved all the equipment for the pre-school program down to their new room and are waiting for the final state inspection so they can get started. Hurricane Irene delayed the move of the Recreation Office down there but we have been using the time to clean, sort and pack.

Several weeks ago I was approached by Jeannette Dellarippa, our Zumba/Fitness instructor. She informed me that she had an opportunity to open her own business just over the town line in Willington. I tried to persuade her to stay or at least teach some classes in Town but she brought up issues with the tile floor in the gym at Parker School being unsuitable for fitness classes. I told her if the flooring was an issue we could set aside funds from the class revenue to replace the floor, but she declined; I think mainly due to the chance for her to go it on her own. It is common knowledge that exercising on hard surfaces puts more strain on the joints but I can't find anything that says Zumba can't be run on a tile floor. Due to the short time available to find a new instructor and knowing that since Jeannette is a good teacher and well liked, most of her current students would follow her, we decided to run our fall Zumba and fitness classes at her new location which is being referred to as the Tolland Fitness Center, while we look for a new instructor. This does not affect any of our other classes and we will be offering our regular pilates, yoga, and kickboxing fitness classes in the old Parker School. People interested in participating in Zumba will still be able to register through the Recreation Office. The cost of the classes will increase from \$4 per class to \$6.50 per class but the price was scheduled to be increased anyway and will still be the cheapest Zumba classes in Tolland County. The number of classes and times offered will also increase. The Town will take 30% of the cost to cover registration fees and overhead. The rest will go to the instructor who will now be responsible for all other expenses associated with running a building that were formerly our responsibility. By going this route we avoid losing money and ensured that the Zumba enthusiasts will have classes this fall. We have begun searching for another instructor and should by the winter session, or earlier if possible, be offering Zumba and more fitness classes in Tolland as well. We wish Jeannette well on her new endeavor, she has some good ideas for regional programs that will provide more fitness opportunities to area residents.

The Pavilion reconstruction is coming along. The structure itself is complete but all the electrical work, lighting installation and replacement of the base pavers still needs to be done.

Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup> is the date for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Celebrate Tolland Festival. It will run from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm behind the Tolland High School. We have had a good response so far with over 30 non-profit groups setting up booths, 25 crafters participating, food by Monet's Table, and the Lions Club, 40+ entries in the Art Show, a plant sale, a book sale, kid games, clown entertainment, ice cream sundaes, snow cones, the dessert baking contest, door prizes and some good musical entertainment.

### **Resident Trooper Update**

*Statistical Report* – Sgt. Smith has provided the attached Tolland Resident Trooper's Statistical Report for August, 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: Animal Control Report for July, Highway Department Report for July and Senior Happenings for September, 2011.

**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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