



TOWN OF TOLLAND

REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Steven R. Werbner
Town Manager

February 8, 2011

Town Manager's Office

Position Vacancy

Seven qualified Firefighter applicants will be interviewed based upon their scores on the written exam taken on January 6th at the Fire Training Center. Initial interviews with these candidates were scheduled for February 2nd, but were postponed due to inclement weather and rescheduled for the week of February 7th.

Snow Operations

The Town of Tolland Public Works Department has been combating this harsh winter with a quick response. Prior to a snow storm the roads are pretreated with salt during the daytime. During the storm 12 Tolland Highway crews and 4 contractors handle 16 routes or 141 miles of road averaging 8 to 10 miles per route. 9 Parks & Facilities employees handle town owned sidewalks, roofs, school parking lots and municipal parking lots. The average cost for a 3 to 6 inch snow storm is \$35,000 and approximately 175 tons of salt is used. After the storm clean-up includes replenishing the salt pile, repairing and cleaning the trucks, and during large storms moving snow to vacant areas such as Cross Farms and Parker School. Parked vehicles are the biggest obstacles to effective snow removal. Currently, we have one plow truck down with a broken front axel. Our loader was down but has since been repaired. Several small snow blowers are currently down. Salt is down to our last 100,000 yards. Our biggest equipment problem to date is the 1986 Skid Loader that is not repairable. To replace this piece of equipment it would cost approximately \$21,000. The large storm that occurred over the last week of January cost almost \$100,000. As of February 3rd, our overtime account in Parks and Facilities is approximately \$21,242 in deficit and Highway overtime has \$2,465 remaining. Our private contractor account is approximately \$11,725 in deficit. These figures do not include any reimbursements from FEMA. Currently, the overall Parks and Highway budgets are not in deficit, but once snow operations are complete and we know our final expenses and we have been notified of any FEMA reimbursements, we may need to make necessary transfers later in the fiscal year.

Assessor's Office

2010 Grand List

The Assessor's Office has completed the 2010 Grand List. A signed list was filed with the Town Clerk's Office on 1/27/11 as required by State Statute. The taxable net Grand List before the Board of Assessment Appeals is \$1,282,095,781. The increase in value is 1.01% or \$13,940,152. The additional revenue to be generated using the current mill rate of .02915 would be \$406,355.

Real estate assessments increased by \$10,313,530. The new net assessment figure is \$1,142,714,900 which is an increase of .91%. Two new homes were prorated during the past year. Real estate comprises 89.13% of the Grand List. Residential property comprises 82.23% of the list with 6.90% being commercial/industrial property. The major increase in real estate values was the partial completion of the Star Hill Sports Complex.

The total number of registered vehicles in Tolland as of October 1, 2010 is 15,886. The assessment is \$113,742,065 or 8.88% of the Grand List. The increase in assessment is 4.94% or \$5,345,661. The 2010 Grand List increased by an additional 22 vehicles.

Personal property accounts comprise 2.00% of the Grand List, decreased by 24 accounts. The majority of those were home business. The number of personal property accounts is 795, with assessments of \$25,638,816. The percentage of DECREASE is 6.28 or \$1,719,039. The decrease is due to the phasing out of personal property tax on manufacturing equipment. The 2010 list was the last of a 5 year state program. Portions of this exemption will be received as an M 65 grant from the State of Connecticut. Starting with the 2011 Grand List no new manufacturing equipment will be added. All future grants will be based on the figures that appeared on the 2010 list.

An additional decrease in personal property is due to the implementation of a new accelerated depreciation schedule for all computers located in Tolland. The Town Council approved this schedule after the 2004 revaluation. The implementation took effect at the time of the 2009 revaluation.

All figures are subject to adjustment made by the Board of Assessment Appeals which will be meeting in March.

Attached is a copy of the Net Top Ten Taxpayers for Town of Tolland 2010 Grand List.

Engineering

Elderly Housing Project

- Based on the results of the borings, a revised cost estimate was developed. Town staff has been working with the consultants and property owner to discuss design and funding options.

ConnDOT Grapevine Bridge Replacement Project

- Engineering continues to follow up with ConnDOT and AT&T regarding revised construction schedule and AT&T work; according to both entities, a revised schedule will be available shortly.

ConnDOT Route 74 Bridge over I-84

- This month Engineering met with ConnDOT to discuss one of their upcoming projects. ConnDOT is planning to rehabilitate the bridge that carries Route 74 over I-84, near Exit 69. The rehabilitation will consist of replacing the concrete deck, painting the structural steel and replacing the existing expansion bearings. Additionally, the existing concrete bearing pads will be reconstructed to accommodate the new bearings. A 6-foot high protective fence on the parapets will also be installed. The preliminary schedule anticipates an April 2012 start date and an approximate one year to complete. The Town Engineer raised the concern that currently there is one-way alternating traffic approximately 1,000 feet west of the proposed project due to another ConnDOT project currently under construction. ConnDOT ensured that this project would not begin until the current project reopened to two-way traffic. The Town Manager, Public Works, Public Safety and First Group also attended this meeting. ConnDOT will be holding a public presentation in the near future for Town residents and will coordinate the meeting through the Town Engineer.

Cross Farms – Concession Stand

- The Town Engineer has been working with Gardner & Peterson to develop a concept plan for a future concession stand at Cross Farms. The initial steps are to determine if CT DEP will allow for the new facility to utilize the existing septic system at Birch Grove Farms. Calculations and discussions with CT DEP are on-going. Additionally, the Town Engineer has noted that the existing wells on-site are permitted for irrigation only and a water service from Rhodes Road will have to be installed to supply the stand. A concept plan and associate cost estimate should be forthcoming soon.

Water Commission

- The production meter for well #2 and the interconnection meter were tested this month for accuracy; both meters were within the allotted tolerance.
- CT DEP has completed their preliminary review of the Diversion Permit application and has issued a letter requesting additional information. A final decision can not be made until these items are addressed and submitted to CT DEP for their review. The Town Engineer is working with the Water Commission and their consultant regarding compiling the requested information.
- The Town Engineer submitted the required year-end reports to CT DEP per our Diversion Permit requirements.
- The Commission held a public hearing on January 19th at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers to consider the adoption of a new rate schedule. The Commission closed the public hearing, but decided to delay the vote until their next regular meeting so that all public comment could be well considered prior to making a final decision.

- The Commission is planning to meet with the Town Attorney shortly to discuss the pipeline agreement that they are considering entering into with CT Water. The TWC and the Connecticut Water Company had planned on presenting the project concept and agreement conditions to town commissions and boards in February; however, due to the current developments regarding the Diversion Permit Application, this presentation will be postponed.
- The Water Commission has been focusing on completing their Capital Improvement Plan and will be submitting it to the Town Council within the next month.
- The next regular Tolland Water Commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Monday, March 7, 2011 at 6:30 pm in Council Chambers.

Water Pollution Control Authority

- The Phase II Wastewater Facilities Plan is being edited by Fuss & O'Neill per the WPCA's comments and direction. A workshop was scheduled to be held on February 3, 2011 to finalize the plan revisions.
- The WPCA, Town Engineer, Operator and Consultant continue to work to address odor concerns on Old Post Road. The Operator believes that the Bioxide pump has been malfunctioning causing the odor to become noticeable. The WPCA has motioned to have the pumps cleaned and repaired as necessary. The Operator and Town Engineer will coordinate the work with the contractor.
- One new connection to the sanitary sewer system was made in the month of January.
- The WPCA has been focusing on completing their Capital Improvement Plan and will be submitting it to the Town Council within the next month.
- The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 15, 2011 at 6:00 pm in the Council Chambers.
- The next workshop meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2011 at 6:00 pm in Conference Room C.

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

Youth Services

Coffee House

Tolland Youth Services Community Theater (TYSCT) Coffee House on Saturday, February 12th at 7:00 p.m. at 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! For information contact Nancy Dunn, Tolland Youth Services (860) 871-3612 or nancydunn@tolland.org.

Energy Assistance

Connecticut Energy Assistance Program - Human Services is accepting applications for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program; the program officially opened on November 1, 2010. Tolland residents may contact Human Services for this season's eligibility requirements, income guidelines and required documentation. On behalf of eligible households the winter heating assistance pays for such heating sources as oil, natural gas, electricity, propane, kerosene, coal and wood. 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 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.

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

The Food Bank will gratefully accept donations received from individuals, organizations and businesses on an on-going basis. Anyone wishing to donate or to sponsor an organization or neighborhood food drive is asked to contact Rebecca Ellert @ (860) 870-3726 or Nancy Dunn @

(860) 871-3612; these individuals will let donors know if there are specific items that the Food Pantry needs.

Library News

Children's Programs—February, 2011

- Tuesday: February 1st, 8th & 15th – **Preschool Storytime** for ages 3½-5 at 10:15 a.m.
- Tuesday: February 8th & 15th – **Mother Goose RhymeTime**. Lapsit program for babies ages 6-24 months with parent or caregiver at 11:15 a.m.
- Tuesday: February 15th – **Youth Advisory Council** – Students in grades 6 and up are invited to drop in to discuss what they are reading and what they would like to see in the library (and earn credit for one hour of volunteer time too!). Plus, a snack will be provided at 3:00 p.m.
- Wednesday: February 2nd, 9th & 16th – **Toddler Storytime** for ages 2-3½ at 10:15 a.m.
- Wednesday: February 9th – **Mother Goose RhymeTime**. Lapsit program for babies ages 6-24 months with parent or caregiver from at 11:15 a.m.
- Thursday: February 3rd, 10th, & 17th – **Afternoon Storytime** for ages 2-5 at 1:30 p.m.
- Thursday: February 3rd – **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: February 10th – **Valentine's Day PJ Storytime** – Join Mrs. B for Valentine's stories and card making, 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.
- Thursday: February 17th – **Chase the Chills Chili Storytime** – We'll chase the chills of February with some tropical stories, accompanied by real chili and cheese (mild, not too hot!). For ages 2 and up; children are welcome to come in PJs and to bring a favorite stuffed toy. No sign-up required; drop in as your schedule permits. From 6:30 to 7:00 p.m.
- Thursday: February 24th – **Book Voyagers Boos Discussion** – Book Voyagers presents *Maze of Bones*, a book program for middle grade readers and their parents, at Tolland Public Library from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Join discussion leader Linda Marchisio in this fun look at Rick Riordan's mystery from the *39 Clues* series. Multiple copies of the book are available at the library; to sign up for the discussion, call 860-871-3620 or contact Mrs. B at:

vbrousseau@tolland.org. This program is co-sponsored by the Connecticut Humanities Council.

- Friday: February 25th – **Young Volunteers Clean Sweep** – Students in grades 6 and up are invited to earn volunteer time by straightening and cleaning up in the library from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.
- Saturday: February 5th – Saturday morning storytime for ages 2 to 8; join Mrs. B for valentine's stories and a craft! No sign-up required.

Upcoming Career and Job Skills Workshops:

Finding a Job With Social Networking and Other Online & Offline Resources – Saturday, February 19, 2011, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Using social media sites to find people, Hoovers Business Directory, your online resume and how to write a cover letter, using job sites, Craigslist, Monster and others.

The thrust of this program allows participants an active role. We will not simply tell people to apply for a job. No, we show how to find companies, how to find names at those companies, how to use Google, your local Chamber of Commerce's online directory of member companies, how to use LinkedIn, Twitter and facebook to find people and companies. In addition, you will learn how to get a free business card, how to use thank you notes effectively, and how seeking an internship rather than a job may be productive.

Networking and Schmoozing for Professional Development – Monday, February 7, 2011, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Networking and schmoozing are critical career tools and life skills. In this workshop you will learn about networking and schmoozing as skills you can develop that will have immeasurable benefits. Explore different types of networking situations including online networking, get “hands-on” experience building a preliminary contact list, learn about schmoozing strategies and practice how to conduct an informational networking meeting.

Resume Writing & the Job Search from the HR Perspective – Saturday, February 12, 2011, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. The Tolland Public Library will host a workshop on resume writing and job searching from the Human Resources perspective. Matthew R. Kerzner is the founder and president of MRK Associates specializing in human capital. Kerzner has 15 years experience in business operations, training and development, organizational development, communications, labor relations, employee relations, recruiting and human resources.

The Eaton-Dimock-King Author Series – Lucy Anne Hurston, niece of noted Harlem Renaissance writer Zora Neale Hurston and an associate professor of sociology at Manchester Community College will speak about her aunt's life and career and her 2004 book, *Speak, So You can Speak Again: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston* on February 23, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

Planning & Community Development Department

Planning & Zoning Commission

- **Tolland Village Area:**
 - The results of the Visual Preference Survey conducted at the November 15th Public Workshop are attached in Booklet #3.
 - The PZC held a joint meeting with the Design Advisory Board on January 24th to discuss the development and implementation of design guidelines in the Village Area and other design considerations, such as signage.
 - The PZC will hold a workshop with Planimetrics on Feb. 7th to review draft amendments to the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), draft zoning regulations, and a 3-D computer model, which will include preferred building styles.
 - The Town Council will receive the proposed amendments to the Plan of Conservation and Development for a 65 day period of review and comment in accordance with State Statutes. It is anticipated these proposed amendments will be transmitted to the Town Council the beginning of March.
 - Updated information, when available can also be found on the PZC website at www.tolland.org/pzc.
- The PZC held Public Hearings on December 13, 2010 and January 10, 2011 on an application received to add a definition of “Hookah Lounge” to the Zoning Regulations and add “Hookah Lounge” as a Special Permit Use in the Gateway Design District. This request for zoning regulation revisions was denied.
- A joint meeting will be held with the Economic Development Commission on February 28th to discuss a variety of items including Implementation Schedule in the POCD, signage, the 2002 Economic Development Action Plan (also known as Stakeholders Report) and implementation and marketing of the Tolland Village Area.
- Steve Trinkaus, PE, the PZC’s Low Impact Development (LID) consultant has provided the PZC (free of charge) with revised LID Regulations based on his recent experience with DEP grants in the Farmington River Valley. Staff are currently reviewing proposed changes.

Planning Office

- Staff continues to work with the other communities in CRCOG to make modifications to the View Permit tracking system. Additional modules for Planning, Zoning and Wetlands are being reviewed by the towns and CRCOG - Tolland is staff participating in the Zoning Module subcommittee. Trouble-shooting of the system is slowly moving forward.
- Linda Farmer will be attending the national planning conference in Boston in April. This is an important conference to acquire the credits needed (32 credits every two years) to maintain her status as a certified planner by the American Institute of Certified Planners.

- Staff is working with a land surveyor, the Town Attorney and the state to finalize documents prior to closing on the 83.3 acre Luce property and receiving the DEP grant funds.
- Staff is working 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.
- 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:
 - Created four maps and data layers for the Fire Marshal, Dick Munichello, showing houses within ½ mile of each fire station.
 - Created maps for the Conservation Commission of the Luce and Palmer Conservation Areas:
 - Large scale map with topography, access points and surrounding roads
 - Small scale maps for commission members
 - Site and Location Maps for Management Plans
 - Created Voting District GIS layer by parcel.
 - Created maps for the Land Acquisition Advisory Committee and used GIS data to evaluate parcels.
 - 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.

Building Department

- Overall Building Department activity has increased for this year to date. The number of permits being reviewed has increased by approximately 30% over this time last year. Although the overall value of construction has seen a decrease when compared with this time last year (Star Hill Athletic Center was a large boost), the number of inspections has increased.
- The Star Hill Athletic Facility is building out its interior for future office space.
- Glen LeConche worked with Gerber to identify Building Permits that had not been closed out over the years and determine a satisfactory resolution.
- Glen recently attended a class in "accessibility". He needs to acquire 90 credits every three years to maintain his license as a Building Official.
- The Building Department has had many, many phone calls regarding snow on roofs, snow loads, roof clearing, building damages and other storm related issues.
- See attached Monthly Building Report.

Resident Trooper Update

Statistical Report – Sgt. Smith has provided the attached Tolland Resident Trooper’s Statistical Report for January 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 December, Highway Department Report for December, Senior Happenings for February.

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
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www.tolland.org*