



# TOWN OF TOLLAND

## REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Steven R. Werbner  
Town Manager

December 13, 2011

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### Town Manager's Office

#### Human Resources

We received 19 applicants for the vacant position, Director of Library Services. We held panel interviews on September 8<sup>th</sup> for six 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 and the Director of Administrative Services. On September 22, 2011 three finalists were interviewed by the Town Manager, Director of Administrative Services and members of the three library groups. Finalist Barbara Pettijohn was chosen as the new Director of Library Services and she started November 14, 2011.

The vacant Public Works Laborer search closed and applications were reviewed after that date and interviews scheduled. We received more than 150 applications and 10 were chosen for initial interviews with 2 finalists interviewed on December 5<sup>th</sup>.

Recruitments have begun for the Director of Finance and Records, Assistant Public Safety Director, Utilities Admin./Town Engineer and Engineering Technician.

#### Library Circulation Desk

Due to the installation of the new Library skylight the wooden circulation desk that had been in place for over twenty years, had to be relocated. It has also been determined that the circulation desk was an inefficient use of space and did not meet ADA requirements or ergonomics standards. Over the summer the Library staff worked with an interior designer from Tecton Architects to help create a design that was user friendly for Library patrons and staff and is cost effective. It was a group process that took several months to determine work patterns, needs of the patrons, materials and finishes. All of the items will be purchased off the State Bid List and installation is included in the price. The estimated cost is between \$55,000 - \$60,000. Staff is still finalizing the materials with the interior designer. Funding for this project will be paid through the Library Donation Account which has received donations for infrastructural improvements.

## **Finance & Records**

### **Intergovernmental Grants**

The Town of Tolland, similar to other towns, relies on grants to supplement its revenue. The estimated allocations to Tolland are based on the State's publications Estimates of State Formula Aid to Municipalities. Also, the Town of Tolland aggressively pursues competitive grants which unlike formula grants are discretionary grant awards funds. The award process involves reviewing and selecting from the list of proposals, one which best conforms to the guidelines as proposed by the State or Federal Government. Following this process grant funds are then awarded and appropriated as revenue for the Town. Please see the attached list of the grants awarded to the Town of Tolland for the last four years.

## **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 and 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 3. 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. We are hopeful that the installation will be complete by late April 2012.

### **Geothermal HVAC Replacement, Library Roof and Skylight Replacement**

W.J. Mountford Co, of South Windsor, the General Contractor, has completed the drilling of the 39 geothermal wells. The lines have been brought into the building. The restoration of the parking lot should be completed by December 14<sup>th</sup>. There will be temporary lighting until the islands are formed and permanent parking lot lights installed.

The next phase of the project will be the installation of the geothermal heat pump units, duct work and lighting replacement. The Contractor will be working in the Library for the next several weeks. The Library patrons and staff have been extremely accommodating to the daily changes.

Northeast Utilities Post-Storm Fund

Northeast Utilities has announced that any residential customer without power after noon on Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup> as a result of Storm Alfred, is eligible to receive a credit applied to their CL&P bill (min. \$100/ max \$200, depending on how many eligible customers apply for the credit). Qualified residential customers will be contacted by CL&P beginning Wednesday, Dec. 7, to inform them of their eligibility to apply for the credit. Qualified customers may also apply at [www.cl-p.com](http://www.cl-p.com) or by calling 1-888-566-9257. All applications must be received by 5 p.m. on January 31, 2012. Those customers who filed information through 2-1-1 will receive a credit without further application if they are eligible. NU will also make donations to Connecticut Food Bank, Foodshare and Operation Fuel to help them address community needs for the approaching winter season.

Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)

Human Services is taking applications for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program, which opened on November 15, 2011. 25% of the 88 applications taken to date have been from households who are applying for energy assistance for the first time. 65 of these applications have been processed by the ACCESS Agency, with awards for deliverable fuels totaling \$18,790 through December 1<sup>st</sup>. Utility heated households will be processed in December. 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>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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.

2011 Holiday Care and Share Program

Human Services, with support from local organizations, businesses, individuals, families and neighbors is again sponsoring the annual 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! With the overwhelming support of the community Human Services distributed 110 Food Baskets (60 to families, 50 to elderly households) for the Thanksgiving holiday.

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. Residents may contact Nancy Dunn at (860) 871-3612 for more information about becoming a sponsor or to request an application.

Youth Programming

- LT2 Mentoring Program - Nine Tolland Intermediate School students have been matched with six high school students & one college intern during this 8-week program that focuses on academic and social skills development. The fall session runs through December 15<sup>th</sup>. Winter and spring sessions are also scheduled.
- The TYSCT Coffee House performance was held on Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at THS café. The event featured vocal selections performed by 16 high school youth and a special a cappella performance by the THS Madrigals. They performed for an audience of approximately 200 community adults and youth.

- Bullying Awareness & Prevention Program was held on December 1<sup>st</sup> at THS. This was the first phase of the VOICES program, a collaborative effort of Tolland Youth Services and Tolland High School to address issues of concern identified by our high school youth. The bullying segment, *Names Can Really Hurt Us*, was facilitated by the Anti-Defamation League. The next phase of the VOICES program will address underage drinking and will be funded by the OPM Police/Youth Grant awarded to Youth Services.

### 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

#### Highlights of the Coming Year for Young People at Tolland Public Library

2012 will bring a special focus on the "The Year of the Young Adult" at Tolland Public Library. Developed by the Board of Directors of the Tolland Public Library Foundation and Children's/Young Adult Librarian Ginny Brousseau, planned programs will include:

- Book Voyagers Book Club discussions for middle and high school students.
- More information sessions geared to high school students.
- Young author's nights for Tolland students.
- A computer literacy station geared to middle schoolers.
- Special visits by authors of popular young adult books.

"The Year of the Young Adult" is being funded by the Foundation through the Phoebe Dimock King and Elizabeth C. King Eaton Endowment.

## **Planning & Community Development Department**

### *Planning & Zoning Commission*

- Planning staff continue to work with Town Attorney Rick Conti on the appeal of the Tolland Village Area regulations to superior Court.
  
- Current applications, actions and agenda items.
  - The PZC held a Public Forum in October to discuss the proposed Technology and Office Zone along Route 195. The commission shared the vision for the Tech Zone that has developed over the years and business and property owners voiced their concerns and asked questions.
  - The PZC approved a Zoning Regulation revision to allow up to 6 chickens (no roosters) as an “as-of-right” use on residential lots as small as 0.5 acres subject to certain conditions.
  - An application to construct 90± multi-family dwelling units on land on Anthony Road and Route 195 is pending.
    - The commission reviewed several concept Plans for this development.
    - The Tolland Water Commission and Water Pollution Control Authority will also be reviewing applications for extensions to the utility infrastructure.
    - The proposed development plan calls for access off Route 195 via a road extension next to Headliners that would also serve the future Tech zone and access off of Anthony Road via a private drive.
  - An application was received to add multi-family dwellings as a permitted use in the Neighborhood Commercial Zone (NCZ). There are currently 3 NCZ Zones in town (one of which will become the Tech Zone). New residential development is not permitted in the NCZ Zones.
    - The PZC has decided to move forward with separately designating these zones.
    - Draft regulations are being developed that would allow single-family, mixed uses and multi-family in the Route 30/74 NCZ Zone.
    - The application was withdrawn by the developer pending new regulations being crafted by the PZC.
  - Staff drafted proposed revision to the Zoning & Subdivision Regulations concerning Maintenance Bonds to reflect wording in Public Act 11-79. This new Public Act prohibits holding Maintenance Bonds for roads and other public improvements and requires towns to accept Surety bonds, which we currently do not due to difficulty in “calling the bond” for the funds.

### *Planning Office*

- Staffs 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. Online permitting using Pay Pal has been activated

- The Planning Director and Town Engineer submitted the \$2.5 million STP-Urban grant for Tolland Green Improvements in September.
  - Linda Farmer attended the CRCOG Transportation Cost Subcommittee meeting in November where the Tolland grant request was approved for funding.
  - The full CRCOG Transportation Committee will vote on the subcommittee's recommendations at their meeting on Monday December 12<sup>th</sup>. Linda Farmer will attend as a voting member.
- The Zoning Board of Appeals voted to approve a Settlement Agreement of an appeal concerning an outdoor wood burning furnace. Tolland has prohibited these outdoor furnaces since 2006. The Superior Court is expected to approve the Settlement Agreement shortly.
- Replacement trees of removed dead ones were planted in the median and side of the town road at Fieldstone Commons. The remainder of the Maintenance Bond held by the Town has been released.
- Planning staff worked with Norwegian Woods to replace their existing sign at the road. A variance was needed for setback. The new sign is lighted in conformance with our Outdoor Lighting Regulations and will improve safety along Route 195 by identifying the entrance drive for motorists.
- Linda Farmer is working with CRCOG and 11 other towns on a Sustainable Land Use Code. This is being funded as part of the HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative Grant.
- GIS - 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:
  - Continued to attend monthly meetings of the Connecticut GIS Council as the representative of towns with populations of less than 30,000.
  - Created GIS mapping that will allow Clem Langlois to track road obstructions caused by the recent snow storm and any future weather events. Loaded and set up map on his laptop computer and provided him with a quick class in using the new data layers.
  - Created GIS mapping for the Town's volunteer storm clean up – "Neighbor Helping Neighbor."
  - Continued updating GIS layers based upon new aerial photography.
  - Attended State Legislature Hearing on use of GIS data during storms and access to CL&P GIS data.
  - Performed analysis of some properties for suitability for Elderly Housing and new Fire Complex.
  - Printed large scale maps for Public Works to be used for logging the location of branches hanging over the road. This is required for FEMA reimbursement.
- Zoning Enforcement
  - Aided residents with zoning questions, resolutions to problems and helping with variance applications.

- Continued to pursue zoning compliance at 148 Mile Hill Road: the required horse barn has been constructed.
- Continued to pursue zoning compliance at 12 Cedar Swamp Road: this will be a lengthy process because of the magnitude of the violation.

#### Inland Wetlands Commission

- Worked with the Inland Wetlands Commission, with considerable input from the Public Works Manager and Town Planner to develop a draft protocol for more streamlined permitting for Town projects around wetlands. This protocol should be in place by the end of January.

#### Conservation Commission

- The following hikes were recently sponsored by the Conservation Commission on Tolland Open Space and were very well attended.
  - October 16, 2011 – “Walktober” on the King Riverside Conservation Area – Walked the entire Property with Charlie King. Access to 140 acres of the conservation Easement is restricted to guided hikes up to 4 times per year. Public access to the 30 acres and trail system along the Willimantic River is not restricted.
  - October 23, 2011 - Palmer Kendall Mountain Conservation Area Grand Opening was held.
- The Conservation Commission plans to hold an Organic Lawn Care seminar in March.
- The Commission is working on the Management Plan for the 140 acre Luce properties on the east and west sides of Charter Road. This is the last large plan to complete. The Commission will then work on the Becker, Hovland and Eimrath plans.
- The Conservation Commission being updated.
- The Commission is working with the Tolland Conservation Corps to assess and repair storm damage to trails on open space parcels.

#### Building Department

- See Summary Building Report for September

#### Resident Trooper Update

*Statistical Report* – Sgt. Smith has provided the attached Tolland Resident Trooper’s Statistical Report for November, 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 October and Senior Happenings for December, 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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