

Town Manager's Report  
Tuesday  
March 12, 2013

**Fiscal Report:** The fiscal year to date report for the month ending February 28<sup>th</sup> is beginning to show some signs that our departments and services are on track despite the recent spate of snow storms. Using the benchmark of 66.67% into this year our Revenues were ahead having received just under 72% to date. Our expenditures came in at 63.38% but this may be somewhat deceiving since we still will have several spring projects as well as taking delivery of the plow truck ordered last summer. Overall, our revenues and expenses are on target.

What is more concerning is the collection of property taxes which is now at 70% when it should be closer to 75%. Though a greater number of properties foreclosed, we have had an excellent response with those property owners working with Laurie to "redeem" or pay off what is due thereby allowing us to quit claim their properties back to them. We will report the number of properties still foreclosed after the month of March and as we have done in the past, seek the Select Board's approval to place these properties up for sale in a method that is deemed to produce the best of outcomes for the town. The other factors related to our fiscal condition would be the potential impacts of the Governor's proposed budget which includes the elimination of the revenue sharing funds due towns and cities for the next two years. While our preliminary estimates calculated some severe impacts what we are seeing now is that whatever you call it, it is a shifting of the burden to our local property tax payers to balance the state's fiscal books. Fortunately for the town we have some strengths coming from a strong history of good budgeting practices which includes maintaining our CIP reserves and avoiding debt as the primary tool to fund future investments in equipment, vehicles and infrastructure. My current calculations indicate that we will still face a tax rate increase however, it is in the 6% range. This does not account for the impacts to local residents who will also lose out on their housing circuit breaker rebates whether they own or rent.

All of this will lead to the need for our Select Board to develop a strategy in advance of your first meeting in May to determine how to best manage the warrant articles to be placed before the voters at the annual town meeting. For the first time that I can recall, our revenue numbers will rely on the last best and know levels with the possibilities of having to reduce expenditures at the last minute, if needed.

**Lower Level Meeting Room:** Public works has started the renovation of the meeting room with the goal of completing the work by early summer. We are working on the support columns and the portable dividers now. The walls will be repainted and the floor is to receive a coat of epoxy paint. Funds are approved in the CIP #856 budget.

**Report on Town Owned Property:** The Select Board had asked that we provide them with a summary report of the town owned properties in an effort to determine if some of the listed properties might be sold rather than be held. We are awaiting the list that the CDC compiled and will review that once received.

**Fire Inspector Update:** Fire Chief Glen Garland has confirmed that Corin Meehan, a current member of the Bridgton Fire Department has accepted the employment opportunity as Bridgton's Fire Inspector. Corin will begin work within the next two weeks. He is an NFPA Certified Inspector I. The office will be set up and coordination between our CEO and the Fire Inspector will begin as part of the set up.

**Tax Foreclosure Update:** Of the 31 properties that automatically foreclosures sixteen have resolved their outstanding taxes leaving 15 properties foreclosed on. We are encouraging these property tax payers to come in and discuss the options that still exist before the Town proceeds to sell the properties to recapture the outstanding taxes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mitchell A. Berkowitz  
Town Manager