

Town Manager's Report Monday, December 5, 2011

To: Board of Selectmen
From: Christopher Whelan, Town Manager

Following are some of the matters reported on this week by various Town Departments:

FINANCE

FY2013 Budget Development: The Finance Committee has issued its Budget Guidelines for FY2013 (the budget year that will start July 1, 2012). The Guidelines are issued to the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, School Superintendent and Town Manager as required by a Town bylaw. They call for an overall 3% increase in next year's operating budgets and a corresponding 3% projected property tax increase. The full document is available on the Finance Committee's page on the Town website at www.concordma.gov.

School and Town proposed budgets will be submitted to the Finance Committee in January, with Public Hearings set for February 27 (Town budget) and February 29 (education budgets).

FY2012 Property Tax Rate Approved: The Massachusetts Department of Revenue on November 30 gave final certification and approval of the Town's proposed FY2012 property tax rate of \$13.58 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation. Third quarter tax bills will be mailed on or before December 30 and will be payable without penalty no later than Wednesday February 1. Property valuations on which the FY2012 tax bills will be based are available ahead of receipt of the bill by referring to the assessing data on the Town website.

The tax bill mailing will include information about tax exemption eligibility and tax abatement application procedures and deadlines. Information will also be provided about eligibility requirements for the State "circuit breaker" program in which certain property taxpayers may be eligible for State income tax credits even if they would not otherwise owe any State income tax for calendar year 2011. Information about valuations and exemptions can be obtained from the Assessing Division, 978-318-3070. Information about the third quarter bills and the State income tax "circuit breaker" provisions can be obtained on or after December 21 from the Treasurer's Office, 978-318-3050.

Statewide Initiative Petitions: The Town Clerk's Office has been busy certifying signatures for Initiative Petitions that are under consideration as Ballot Questions on the November 2012 State Election ballot. Over 400 residents signed petitions in the past few weeks, with the highest interest going to the "Death With Dignity" (Question G), which 212 residents signed. Others that were circulated in Concord were Question L ("Small Businesses Repairing Motor Vehicles"), Question R ("Presentation of Identification to Vote"), Question B

("Promoting Excellence in Public Schools"), Question A ("Medical Use of Marijuana") and Question E ("Do Not Call List to Regulate Certain Charitable Solicitations"). These were among the 16 ballot questions that were circulated around the Commonwealth. Further information about all of the questions is available at the Attorney General's Web Site (www.mass.gov/ag).

If the required 68,911 signatures were gathered statewide by the November 23 local filing deadline, certified and filed with the Secretary of State's Office, then the measure is sent to the Legislature in January. The Legislature has the option of approving, disapproving, proposing a substitute, or taking no action. If the measure is not enacted by early May 2012, the proponents have the option of gathering additional signatures in order for the question to be placed on the November ballot. It's a long process, and not all 16 questions will either be enacted or make it through to November. But at least six of them have supporters in Concord.

FIRE

Apparatus: Dealer-authorized orientation training on the new Ladder 1 is underway, and the new apparatus should be in service within the next few weeks.

Fire Prevention: During the upcoming week, Deputy Kelley will be conducting the usual holiday walkthroughs of our retail establishments.

Personnel: The application deadline for the CFD firefighter/EMT recruitment passed last week with 153 applications received. The assessment process will begin in earnest this week.

Other: As noted last week, on November 29, 30 and December 1 and 2 the CFD conducted Rapid Intervention Training. This training was conducted in a house at the former Arena farms property. The CFD appreciates Concord Academy allowing us to use the property for this important purpose. The training was conducted with Bedford and Lincoln fire personnel in zero visibility conditions. Mayday procedures, firefighter accountability and Incident Command and Control were the main emphasis of the training.

LIBRARY

Holiday Book Sale: The Library Director reports the holiday book sale over the past weekend was very successful, grossing over \$8,000.

LIGHT DEPARTMENT

Longview Meadow Underground Electrical System: Concord Light crews have been working on the Longview Meadow primary underground electrical distribution system. The crews are moving through the project at a rapid pace and have installed many of the high voltage power cables and transformers. The clubhouse was expected to be energized on 12/2 followed by buildings 2, 18, 19, 20 and the treatment plants on 12/3.

Forest Ridge Capacity Study: Concord Light continues to work closely with Woodard & Curran on the feasibility study for upgrading the electrical capacity at the Forest Ridge Substation. This substation provides electricity to the entire Town and is nearing firm capacity. Woodard & Curran presented their initial findings including preliminary cost estimates to the Light Board on 11/21 and are working on finalizing the first section of their work.

Street Lights: Concord Light has completed this installation of approximately 500 street lights per the April 2011 Town Meeting vote.

Double Poles: Light Plant staff has completed a field inventory of “double” utility poles. Staff identified 87 locations where double poles exist in Concord. In order for the old pole to be removed, all utilities must be disconnected from the old pole and attached to the new pole. It should be noted that CMLP has completed all of the electrical transfer work. The same cannot be said for Verizon and Comcast. Bearing that in mind, Light Plant Engineers are currently working on preparing the proper notifications to Verizon and Comcast so that the utilities will transfer their facilities to the new poles and the old pole can be removed.

POLICE

Holiday Events: The Police Department reports assisting with the December 4 holiday parade and tree lighting in Concord Center, which went forward without incident.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

“Green” Buses:

On December 8, Concord Public Schools and CCRSD Transportation Department, in conjunction with Blue Bird School Bus Corporation, will display and demonstrate the new propane powered bus.



The Transportation Department in 2010-2011, along with MassCleanDiesel, retrofitted the entire school bus fleet with pollution controls to improve air quality for our children, drivers and community. The Transportation Department continues to look at and test efficient alternative fuel, clean energy buses. Their mission is to provide the safest and most energy efficient transportation for our students.

December 8 Schedule

8:00AM - 8:45AM - Willard School (Green Energy School) Demonstration and participation with the Earth Care Club

9:15 AM - 11:00AM - Demonstration with Drivers, Administration Staff and Mechanics. Bus rides will also be available. (Coffee and Donuts)

The Transportation Department asks that attendees RSVP by calling 978-318-1433.