

## **REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER**

***Mark A. Pearson, Town Manager***



I want to thank the Board of Selectmen for selecting me as the Interim Town Manager in February and the permanent Town Manager in July. I also want to thank the staff, elected and appointed officials, residents and others who have welcomed me to Plaistow. I have found Plaistow to be in good financial standing and I look forward to moving the town ahead with sound management. I also look forward to future projects and challenges.

I am pleased to report that the \$8.5M Public Safety Complex project is nearing completion and will be on budget. In fact, with the excellent project and budget management by Trident Project Management Company, the project will finish with a better product than expected. We applied for and were successful in receiving a Homeland Security Grant for \$148,679 to upgrade the Emergency Operations Center during the construction to add improvements. We also upgraded the communications center with new dispatch consoles and radios within the construction budget. We hope that you will attend the Open House on March 10, 2018.

We are scheduled to move ahead with the replacement of the Westville Road Bridge and the Safe Routes to School projects in the summer of 2018. We purchased a “used” sidewalk plow with a snow blower attachment to be compliant with the Safe Routes to School project requirement going forward. We also hope to construct a new Public Works Facility in 2018 and to finally move the Highway Department off the former unsafe landfill site.

Another major project we are working on making potable water available, which has been a need in the community. There have been more than 45 meetings concerning this topic over the last nine (9) months. We sent out a town wide survey with a public outreach meeting in November where we are working with the state and other communities in the planning of importing drinking water to Plaistow. This could use our existing 11.9 miles of fire suppression system water pipes to offer relief to the properties affected by MtBE contamination, and collaterally offer potable water to other properties along the existing pipe routes. Having a “drinking water” source in Plaistow has been a goal for decades and provides a public health benefit!

We have developed an Elder Affairs Committee budget and increased ride assistance in the 2018 budgets. We recognize our obligation to help those in need of general assistance. Our Recreation budget is also increasing and improving activities for all ages.

On the financial side, we have improved on the daily operations by implementing WEX fuel cards for all town vehicles, issued town credit cards to department heads, consolidated cell phones and usage plans, reconciled impact fees collected, increased a part-time payroll/accounts payable position to full-time, updated our purchasing policy, obtained purchase order software and updated our investment policy to name a few. We formulated and implemented a financial plan to use the Outside Detail Revolving Fund to fund outside detail cruisers, fuel, repairs and expenses resulting in savings to the operational budget annually. We held the Sale of Town Owned Land Auction in December. The auction realized a substantial return to the Town's General Fund Balance. However, the final actual dollar amount was not yet available at the time of this report.

On the administration side, I named our Finance Director, Greg Colby, as the Assistant Town Manager and moved his office closer to the Town Manager's office for functionality. This will provide continuity of operations while I am otherwise out of the building or away at meetings. We adopted a new "Emergency Operations Plan," a "Media Management Policy," and issued town identification cards to all employees and sub-contractors. We changed Town Hall hours by opening at 7am, Monday – Friday. The closing time is still 4:30pm, Monday – Thursday and 11am on Fridays. We upgraded the Town Hall computer system by adding servers, licensing and firewalls which increased speed, capacity and efficiency. We continue to update our website and SCTV informational postings to inform the public.

On the personnel side, we adopted a new "Personnel Plan," conducted our four (4) required annual "Joint Loss Prevention Committee" meetings, and provided several global training sessions for staff, elected and appointed officials. We also provided training for "Security & Awareness" with the Emergency Management team, "ICS-402 Incident Command for Elected and Appointed Officials," "Civility, Decorum & Respect" for elected, appointment and staff and "Harassment & Discrimination" training for all staff including the Library. Additionally, we encouraged staff to take advantage of on-line, on-site and off-site educational opportunities for little or no cost. Many staff members attended their association annual conferences and some attended the annual NH Municipal Association Annual Conference. The Highway staff successfully completed the "Road Salt Application Training," the "Chain Saw Safety Training" and the Health Officer attended the "Healthy Homes Conference." We hosted state and regional training here in Plaistow and reduced our costs for training.

The town has dedicated personnel illustrated by the long-term commitment of five (5) employees who have more than 30 years of experience and were recognized by the Board of Selectmen in May. Many personnel have multiple job titles and positions. We hired replacement positions; Executive Assistant in March, Finance Director in August, Interim Planning Coordinator in August and Interim Building Administrative Assistant in October.

We look forward to 2018 as a year when the Westville Road Bridge is replaced, the Safe Routes to School constructed and the Public Works Facility built. If the Public Works

Facility is approved, we would “design build” with in-house personnel and fund the project from General Fund Balance with no impact on the tax rate. This would be a two (2) year phased project, the first year to perform the site work, utilities, foundation, metal fabricated building with office space, and the second year to finish the building interior, construct a salt shed and finalize the site work.

