

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

To the Citizens and Taxpayers of Newton:

The Board of Selectmen has been very busy this year dealing with all aspects of business within the town government. Though we are trying to preserve Newton's small town character that makes it special, we are also striving to meet the needs of residents and enhance the quality of life in the community.

Preserving a sense of community is vital. In this fast-paced world with great demands of families, it is more critical than ever to preserve a sense of community while facing the fiscal demands of preserving the town's infrastructure. The Board of Selectmen understand that our decisions today will have a lasting impact on tomorrow and so each decision that impacts the community must be carefully considered. The Selectmen, town staff, commissions, boards and committees are working diligently to provide residents and future generations an outstanding quality of life. Included in the quality of life is the maintenance of our Town Buildings and development and adherence to policies. Major projects completed in 2007 include replacing the Town Hall roof, the cupola was painted and restored and Dugway Road was widened and resurfaced. Planned projects for 2008 include insulation, replacement of the windows and a telephone upgrade at the Town Hall. Projects to be researched in 2008 include relocating the storage of the winter sand/salt storage to town owned land.

In early 2007, the Town of Newton received a report of the Internal Control Assessment conducted by Municipal Resources, Inc. as part of the town's contract with Local Government Center. The Board of Selectmen used information from the Municipal Resources assessment of our controls to update, change, and create new policies dealing with the handling of the towns' revenues. Included in the public report is:

Issue: The Town Clerk submits payment requests to the Town for payment of fees collected for Town Clerk activity. The requests are not supported by adequate documentation.

Recommendation: The Town should require adequate and appropriate supporting documentation for any disbursements, in this case supporting documentation should include proof of the collection of fees.

Results: The Board with consultation of the interim Tax Collector is recommending changing the way the position is paid from fees and salary, to salary.

Issue: Transfer Station Collections, tickets for bulky/waste items sold and collected by the same individual at the Transfer Station.

Recommendation: Bulky and special waste fee tickets should not be sold by the individual inspecting trash loads and receiving the tickets. Tickets should be sold at the Town Hall and/or by a cashier at the Transfer Station other than by the inspector.

Results: The ticket system has been replaced with a receipt issued by the cashier. A copy is given to the customer and another copy accompanies the method of payment that is accompanies the deposit to the Town Hall.

Based upon the reports recommendation, the Board has adopted Resident Sticker Policy, Transfer Station/Recycling Policy, and Schedule of Fees for the reproduction and distribution of data. The Board also began updating and when needed creating job descriptions for Town Employees.

For more information on the Municipal Resources Report, please contact the Selectmen's office.

Thank you to all who were patient during our Resident Sticker changeover and the enactment of the town's resident sticker policy and for your feedback. Your feedback will allow us to keep the policy updated to better regulate the activity at the Transfer Station. The Board is currently working on a new entrance way and a new layout to ease the flow of traffic and starting January 2008 we added additional hours open to the public on Sundays from 9am to 3:45pm. Many of the improvement and changes came about from both citizen input and a study conducted by the State of New Hampshire Department of Environment Services.

Congratulations for a job well done to Police Chief Lawrence and the whole Police Department for accomplishing a voluntary Certificate of Accreditation from the NH Police Standards and Training Council. In cooperation with the NH Chiefs of Police, NH Municipal Association and Northern New England Police Accreditation Coalition recognized the NEWTON POLICE DEPARTMENT whose voluntary commitment to the highest standards of law enforcement excellence through the satisfactory completion of agency self-examination and outside review by a team of independent assessors. Congratulations on a job well done!

The staff in the Selectmen's Office has been accepted into a program held by the Local Government Center named "Foundations of Local Government Leadership (Level 1)" which will enhance their leadership skills dealing with diverse issues, conflict resolution, and employment law and managing multiple generations. Education has been impressed upon our employees as a vital part to revitalize the Town Hall to stay on top of ongoing changes happening all around us.

The Board has worked with the Cemetery Trustees William Landry and Andrew Morse to improve the condition and appearance of the Town's four cemeteries. In 2008 our Road Agent and Road Crew will be maintaining the town's cemeteries. We applaud the Trustee's for their due diligence relating to the condition and appearance of these properties.

Thank you to all department heads, office staff, volunteers, fellow Selectmen Robert Donovan Jr., and Trisha McCarthy who have worked so hard for the Town. This includes implementation of policies and preparing a fiscally responsible budget for the ensuing year. Please vote on March 11th, 2008. The Board of Selectmen meets the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month starting at 6:00 pm. The Board can also be reached at 603 382 4405. The Town's official website is www.newton-nh.gov.

Respectfully submitted,
John P. Ulcickas, Chairman
Board of Selectmen