

Report of the Board of Selectmen

“The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just.”

~ Abraham Lincoln

2013 was a busy year once again. The economy continues to create difficulties, but the Board worked hard to keep the 2014 budget at a reasonable level. The proposed budget adopted by voters in March was less than the default. Only three individual Warrant Articles were approved, to include mosquito control, the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund, and SCBA equipment for the Fire Department.

Leon Holmes Sr. was elected to the Board of Selectmen. Leon was formerly a Selectmen in the 1980's and 90's and brings a vast knowledge and dedication to the Board. We would like to thank Annmarie Scribner for her time and service over the past three years. Her time on the Board contributed to advancements in policies and procedures adopted by the Town, and her tireless efforts to keep taxes low.

The Memorial Day Service was held indoors at the Ellis School due to the weather, and was a well-attended service. Our Guest Speaker Mildred Emerson Frye a Fremont native, who served as a Navy WAVE during World War II (1941-1946) as one of only two women from Fremont who served in the military during WW II. She was wonderful, recounting many stories of bygone days in Fremont. Many military members of her family joined us for a special tribute. This event is more special when local residents are involved. We are thankful to the many organizations and committees that sponsor events that involve the community.

In 2013, the Board acknowledged the retirement of Neal Janvrin as Fremont's Police Chief. Neal led the Fremont Police Department during a critical time in its development, from a part-time and on-call Department to the Department it is currently, serving the community 24/7/365. His tireless leadership and collaborative style was instrumental in the planning and development of the Safety Complex in the mid-1990's. Over the years he continued to bring that same commitment and energy to the Department. We thank him for his 23 years of service as Chief.

The Board posted the Police Chief's position in the spring. A Committee of citizens and area Police Chiefs was recruited to assist in this process. The Committee undertook the review of resumes, interviewing process, and came to the Board with two finalists. The Selectmen then conducted an interview process, and was successful in hiring Jon Twiss, a 28 year veteran of the Derry Police Department. Chief Twiss joined our staff as of August 1, 2013 and has been a tremendous asset to the Town.

The Board would like to offer a special thank you to H D Wood IV who acted as Interim Police Chief from October 2012 to July 2013. Denny accepted the position at a difficult time for the Town and the Police Department, and we appreciate his service.

We again saw changes in the Town Clerk's Office. After nine months in office, Town Clerk Shannon Bryant resigned in July to pursue other employment. The newly appointed Deputy, Sharon Girardi immediately began the lengthy training process. We were very fortunate to have the assistance of Sue McKinnon, the Town Clerk in Newfield; Desiree Mahurin, the Town Clerk in Hill; and Evelyn Pike, the Town Clerk in Chichester during this transition. Once Sharon was trained, she initiated the hiring process for a Deputy and Clerical Assistant. Nicole Cloutier was hired to fill this position late in the fall, and she too, began training. We thank the residents for their patience as a more routine schedule is developed.

Voters in March of 2013 voted to combine the positions of Town Clerk and Tax Collector. The 2014 proposed budget is down approximately \$5,200 from the individual Town Clerk and Tax Collector budgets in 2013.

Greta St Germain resigned from the Board in September when she relocated to the NH Seacoast. Greta was a large part of the Highway Study Committee and the improvements resulting from their work. Former Selectman Gene Cordes returned to serve out the six months remaining on Greta's term and helped the Board during the budget season.

The balance of grant funding secured by Conservation Commission Member Pat deBeer was



received in the fall. In total, this was a \$19,000 total offset to the Smith Land Purchase which was completed in 2012. The final payment on a two year note was also made in 2013, closing out the financing of the project entirely. This purchase added 76 acres for conservation, abutting the Glen Oakes Conservation Lands.

Turtle assisted from a high traffic area of Main Street to the nearby Copp Drive pond on April 18, 2013 by Leon Holmes Jr. Photo Courtesy of Meredith Bolduc

Our Veteran's Open House was held on Monday November 11th and was once again well attended. Thank you to our many Veterans and all of the Men and Women of our Armed Forces, past and present. If you would like to help us organize or be part of the planning of this annual event, please contact the Selectmen's Office.

The People's United Methodist Church led the Town in the third annual "Wreath Across America" program on Saturday December 14th. This program places wreaths on Veteran's graves and Town monuments during the holiday season. This program was well attended, and a fitting tribute to all of our Veterans. We hope it will continue as an annual observance. A special thank you to Gerry Tilley, a Fremont volunteer who does an immense amount of work getting the event organized and the wreaths placed on Veteran graves.

The 250th Celebration of Fremont is upon us! The 250th Committee has worked hard again all year to ensure that our 250th Anniversary is a remarkable celebration! The events are primarily planned for Thursday June 19 through Sunday June 22, 2014 at Peterson's Farm on Martin Road. We hope the Town chooses to support this special event, including the \$5,000 Warrant Article # 17 for funding of the remaining events. Anyone interested in being involved should contact Matthew Thomas or attend a Committee meeting. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm at the Fremont Safety Complex.

At year end, with some unexpended budget funding we were able to secure a contract for completion of renovations to the Highway Shed. The funding will allow for converting it to a functioning maintenance building. An RFP had been developed and refined several times since 2011, and we went back to the lowest bidder with the current specifications. From there, the Board signed a contract and allocated \$34,000 from the 2013 budget. The balance of the funding will come from the existing Highway Building Capital Reserve Fund. Thus, we removed a planned 2014 Warrant Article for additional sums to the CRF. With this contract executed, we expect to have the building complete by summer 2014. This is a long-awaited improvement to the last of our major Town departments. The Highway Department will now have running water, a bathroom, and a building to work on equipment that is out of the weather.

The budget for 2014 includes some important capital purchases, including a fire truck (Warrant Article 5) and police cruiser lease (included in the operating budget). We have seen repair and maintenance costs skyrocket as we continue to try and maintain equipment and vehicles that are operated beyond their useful life. Fire Tank 5 was removed from service, as was the Police Department SUV due to repairs that are felt to be beyond the value of the vehicle to the Town. We have worked hard to finance these items, and will use existing Capital Reserve Funds to help offset the purchases. The items are not getting any less expensive, and we feel strongly that purchasing new equipment is important for our safety services.

Changes are also proposed to the Police Department OHRV Special Revenue Fund, to discontinue it in favor of a Revolving Fund. This change will allow funds already saved to be used to purchase equipment the Police Department needs. These funds do not involve any taxpayer dollars as they are all collected from "user fines" for OHRV violations and Town Ordinance violations. If you have any questions about these articles (Warrant Articles 18 and 19), please contact Town Administrator Heidi Carlson at 895 2226 x 10 or Police Chief Jon Twiss at 895 3425.

A Revolving Fund is also proposed (Warrant Article 20) to fund Police Special Details. The intended purpose is to fund the wages and costs associated with special details, removing this from the budget stream. Any extra monies that accrue in this fund would be used to purchase police cruisers, thus also reducing some of that as a taxpayer burden as well.

The Town's website continues to be the location where we keep our most up to date information on closures and current events, as well as postings of minutes, forms, and documents and many other Town resources. You must sign up for items such as the Newsletter, News Items, and Minutes. You can do this by clicking on the left hand navigation bar "Subscribe to E-Alerts." You will have to complete the information, submit it, and then reply to the confirmation email to have your name and email placed on these lists. Once enrolled, you will receive an email when news, minutes, or other information is posted, depending on what you sign up to receive. If you have any questions, please contact Heidi Carlson in our office at 895 2226 x 10.

It has been a pleasure serving you and we look forward to the challenges ahead for 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

The Fremont Board of Selectmen

Brett A Hunter, Chair

Leon F Holmes Sr

Gene Cordes

Welcome Chief Twiss

Fremont Police Department

Cake made by Yvonne Ouellette for Open House on Saturday October 26, 2013 at the Fremont Safety Complex

Photo Courtesy of Mary Wheaton-Pinder

