

Report of the Board of Selectmen



The 2010-year in review...

*"Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.
Nothing can be done without hope or confidence."*
~ Helen Keller

The Board of Selectmen began the year 2010 with optimism and hope, but mindful of the difficult economy. Beginning in March, Selectman Don Gates left the Board after many years of exemplary service and the community is thankful for his commitment and many years of hard work. With his departure, we welcomed a new Selectman to the Board, Annmarie Scribner, who brings considerable experience and the eagerness to work with the current board to move forward in all endeavors.

In 2010, there were no major storms to speak of, but late February through March will be remembered for unusually high wind and snow storm; and in March we experienced high water incidents along the Exeter River. The Town and Board of Selectmen are grateful for the dedication and hard work of the many volunteers from all the safety services and all those involved in serving and protecting the residents of Fremont.

Every year, Fremont is thankful to the many organizations and committees that sponsor events that involve the community. The Memorial Day Parade was a great success with guest speaker SGM Conrad Watson who was present to share his thoughts and the many individuals that contributed and participated in a community's remembrance of those who fought and died to protect our freedoms. The Veterans Day celebration is attended by many who honor those who have served in past and current conflicts, and enjoy in sharing in their stories of sacrifice and hope. The success of these major events and many other events, are intended to involve the community in celebration and awareness and because of volunteers, these events continue to draw positive responses. Thank you to all involved.

The Board, along with recommendations of the Budget Committee, organized a Highway Study Committee to look at the Town's highway costs associated with current and future needs related to maintenance, improvements and repairs of the roadway infrastructure. The Committee was also tasked with gathering information related to the Town's ownership of highway equipment. This information will be weighed against current expenditures relative to future fiscal operating practices in hopes of greater efficiency within the Highway Department.

The Selectmen, with passage of an authorizing warrant article, are now agents of the Capital Reserve Fund to allow the revaluation process or statistical update to move forward, as required by law, every five years. RFP's were sent out and the lowest bid received was from our current provider, Vision Appraisal. Vision Appraisal winning the bid allowed for seamless progress in the revaluation/recertification process. The 2010 recertification process has been completed and the results have shown a reduction in overall assessed valuation to \$358,837,557 compared to \$429,321,292 from the 2009 tax year. The fluctuating real estate markets are one of the prime reasons why NH Law requires that the recertification/valuation process and updates to property values be done every five years. In retrospect, we nearly doubled the Town's total assessment when we did the town-wide revaluation in 2005; which had not been completed previously since 1988.

The decision by the Board of Selectmen to proceed with implementing bi-annual tax billing in 2010 was the born from the outcome of many discussions that presented many great arguments for and against the topic. Clearly the larger majority believed the implementation of bi-annual tax collection would save the taxpayers money due to the increasing costs of borrowing money to supplement the budget during lean times. Too date, in 2010, the Town had only to borrow money once, and only for about one month. We spent \$2,000 in interest on tax anticipation notes, compared to over \$40,000 spent in the Town's 2009 budget year. This was significant compared to the added costs of billing taxes twice per year.

The Board has continued the work in adopting policies that are needed in place to provide, protect and to add to transparency of the fiscal responsibilities required of the Board and the Town overall. In conjunction with developing new policies, the Board has revisited the current Selectmen's Ordinances and has made modifications and corrections to reflect present day needs and will continue to evaluate the need for additional ordinances that are of a benefit to the Town.

In this day and age of technological advancements and a greater need to provide security for information, the Board took on the task of making improvements to the current computer needs of the Town. The Town now has networking capabilities with secure backup of data on-site and off-site with additional and redundant security methods in place protecting vital information to the Town. The Town accounting procedures are now being revised with a new software package to provide greater detail and to streamline the information needed to make fiscally responsible decisions.

In closing, the Board would like to point out two additional important events in 2010 that are of great admiration and importance to the community.

First, the Boston Cane, which is a most prestigious New England tradition, was bestowed upon Mrs Lillian Pratt, who at 94 years of age, becomes the 23rd recipient in Fremont, since 1909, to receive the honor. Congratulations to Mrs. Lillian Pratt.

Second, with the 250th celebration of Fremont being granted township on the horizon, recently a committee has been formed to plan for this special milestone in the history of Fremont. Anyone interested in being involved or has suggestion should contact the Town Historian Matthew Thomas.

It has been a pleasure serving you and we look forward to the challenges in 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Brett A Hunter, Chair
Greta St Germain
Annmarie Scribner



Fremont Board of Selectmen
Spring 2010
Greta St Germain, Brett Hunter, Annmarie Scribner