

## **REPORT OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

To the Citizens of Fremont:

The annual Town Elections brought some notable changes to the Town, as we said farewell to Gene Cordes, our dedicated Selectman of 18 years. Gene provided exemplary service to our community. Brett Hunter was elected to a three-year term, and in addition, the voters elected Greta St Germain to replace Cordes as it's first ever elected woman to serve on the Board. Continuing his long standing and excellent service to the Town, Donald Gates Jr completes the three member Board and together they have worked hard for the best interest of the Town of Fremont.

In hopes of prosperity, a safe and healthy community and with forward progress, we march into a new decade with great resolve to meet our challenges as a community. The Board and the entire Nation were faced with some tough choices in 2009. The Nation enduring difficult economic times, with double-digit unemployment and unprecedented number of home foreclosures, set the tone for many communities across the country. The Board was cognizant of the difficult times and our fiscal issues dominated the agenda for much of the year. The contributing factors were many; the State government's worsening condition resulted in a decrease in aid to the communities over previous levels and the generally poor economies resulting in reduced municipal revenues.

With rising costs and stricter lending practices of our bank, the Board of Selectmen voted to adopt the bi-annual tax billing system, which will go into effect for the 2010 tax year. The first issue bill will be due July 1, 2010 and a final bill due in December of 2010. In our efforts to adjust and think forwardly we anticipate a substantial savings to our residents with the bi-annual tax billing system, and level incoming cash flow and abate some of the Town's costs of borrowing money in anticipation of taxes.

The following report will highlight several focus areas that the Board of Selectmen devoted time and resources to during the past year.

We spent additional time into the New Year recovering from the December 2008 ice storm, a storm of larger magnitude than New England has ever seen. The Town recovered FEMA and State funds totaling approximately 75% of the storm costs. The Highway Department did the balance of spring cleanup once all of the winter snows had melted.



We had our first Deliberative Session on Saturday January 29, 2009. The attendance at Deliberative Session was approximately 100 people. Overall, the process went well, as the community learned the intricacies of the newly formatted Town Meeting.

Town Clerk Lori Holmes, Moderator Bob Rydeen, and Asst Moderator Michael Rydeen at Deliberative Session. Photo Courtesy of Kathleen Bailey.

Voters discussed articles and made decisions on the final wording of questions for the March ballot.



On May 30<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated the notable career of retiring Fire Chief Richard Heselton with a well-attended Open House at the Fremont Safety Complex. Dick's career spanned more than 50 years as a member of the Fremont Fire Department. The Town and the Department have many remarkable accomplishments that can be credited to Dick. We thank him for his dedicated service to the Town and wish him well in a well-earned retirement. The cover photograph of this Annual Report was taken at the Open House.

Also in May, Trudie Butler retired as the Town's Health Officer, but agreed to remain active as the Deputy Health Officer. Trudie accepted the vacant position of Health Officer in May 1993 simply because she was asked to fill it. Trudie is a well-traveled registered nurse who has had many amazing life experiences acquired while traveling with her military husband. She continues to deliver the Ellis School Newsletter on a regular basis. Thank you Trudie for all of your valued assistance to Fremont.



Our Memorial Day Observance was again a special tribute to our War dead and all Veterans and Service Personnel. Lieutenant Commander Douglas Munz, Commanding Officer of the Navy Operational Support Center in Londonderry NH, joined us as our guest speaker. We also commemorated the 40-year anniversary of the loss of Fremont Soldier Philip A Pratt who died May 31, 1969. With the help of Philip's family, Jeanne Nygren put together a tribute to him.

The Board has adopted a few new accounting procedures and policies and will focus in 2010 with updating and writing several more for the Town. We have worked on formalizing many of our practices as well. Our meetings are busy with the day-to-day events of overseeing the many facets of Town Government administration.

The Board is cognizant that our many efforts to save tax dollars will at some point, have some consequence. We will have some deferred maintenance on buildings and roadways, and at some point will need to address them. In 2010 there is a Warrant Article to replace an aging police cruiser, which would be funded from money already saved in a Capital Reserve Fund. The Town will also be considering a replacement fire truck in the near future, and will need to plan for this, as well as make the delicate balance of day-to-day expenses.

The Board struggled with many difficult budget decisions in the past several months. The Board asked Departments to come in with budget requests at or below the 2009 funding level, and the Departments worked hard to stay within those constraints. The 2010 budget is approximately \$100,000 less than the 2009 default budget and includes no wage increases and very few capital projects and purchases. We do, however, know that we need to keep all of the Town's needs in mind as we work toward the future. We feel that we will need to begin to look at taking care of some of the deferred items, and need to remain aware of the Town's overall infrastructure needs.

The Selectmen have a representative on the Planning Board (Brett Hunter); and the Budget Committee (Greta St Germain). This year they participated in a variety of meetings for both committees. The Planning Board worked on many planning items, including updating chapters of the Master Plan, annual review of the Capital Improvements Plan, and received a block grant for drafting of a Wetland Ordinance. They also received a CTAP grant for working on the proposed 2010 Wetland Ordinance Zoning update. Additionally, an Open Space Plan is currently underway with grant funding from CTAP. The slowed building climate allows the Board time to plan, which is its primary duty.

The Budget Committee meets weekly from September through February, and also worked hard this year to bring responsible numbers to the public. We would encourage people to attend these meetings, review the minutes, and also check for updates on the Town's website so that you can be aware of what is happening in your community.

Working with the Town's Energy Committee, the Town received offset funding for retrofitting of the lights at the Town Hall, Safety Complex, and ball field maintenance building. These retrofits replaced all lighting fixtures with more energy-efficient ones, and are projected to save energy and money over time. The Board has also supported the efforts of the Committee to obtain grants for installation of a solar panel array at the Fremont Safety Complex. That project will begin in the new year.

At year-end, Thom Roy announced his retirement as an Assistant Chief from the Fremont Fire Department after 25 years of service. Thom is the Town's Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Officer and Health Officer, so Thom will remain involved in Town activities. We thank him for his service to the Fire Department.

We meet weekly on Thursday evenings in the basement meeting room at the Town Hall. We did go to bi-weekly meetings this past summer and anticipate the same this coming summer. Our meetings are open to the public, and our minutes, once approved, are available on the Town's website at [www.Fremont.nh.gov](http://www.Fremont.nh.gov). Please contact us to ask questions or share your concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

The Fremont Board of Selectmen

Donald W Gates Jr

Brett A Hunter

Greta St Germain