

## **Report of the Town Administrator**

We just got our Deliberative Session in on Tuesday February 5, 2013 before the worst Nor'easter since 1978 barreled through New England! Many towns and school districts scrambled to reschedule those meetings that had been planned for Friday February 8 and Saturday February 9<sup>th</sup>! Fremont saw nearly two feet of snow with absolute blizzard conditions. We were lucky to have very few power outages. States south of NH were again hit very hard!

Deliberative Session was relatively quiet, with about 65 people in attendance, and completed in just under two hours. Voters moved forward a proposed 2013 budget of \$2,509,590 which was amended slightly at the floor of Deliberative Session.

Christine Goudin resigned her position as Tax Collector February 20, 2013. Deputy Kathy St Germain assumed the position until the March elections. We are thankful for Kathy, and former Tax Collector Kathy Arsenault, who were able to step in and help during this difficult time period.

Ballot voting took place on Tuesday March 12, 2013 at Ellis School. Voters supported the proposed budget, which was less than the default budget. Voters only supported Warrant Articles to fund the Bridge Capital Reserve fund (\$15,000); Mosquito Control (\$49,550); and the Fire Rescue Department SCBA replacements (\$47,088). The lack of support for funding Capital Reserve Articles makes it more and more difficult for the Town to fund our long-term capital purchases, and creates more of an adverse tax rate impact. Saving ahead for future capital purchases creates a more balanced effect on the tax rate.

Anmarie Scribner's three year term on the Board of Selectmen ended in March. Anmarie had been instrumental in much of our policy and internal controls development work in the past couple of years. We thank her, and wish her well in all of her endeavors. After elections, Leon Holmes Sr rejoined the Board, after about 22 years away.

Jeanne Nygren resigned from her position as Trustee of Trust Funds to take on the role of Deputy Tax Collector in April. This was helpful to taxpayers during change in the office of Tax Collector, allowing residents to leave off their tax payments during Selectmen's Office hours. Once the Town Clerk/Tax Collector combination is complete, all payments will need to be made through that office, which will be different after the March 2014 election. More information on the combination will be available once a combined Town Clerk/Tax Collector is elected in March of 2014. It is anticipated there could again be changes as the incumbent is not running for office.

Reese Bassett left the Town's employ in April, after an extended leave of absence from 2012. He had been part of the Fremont Police Department for 18 years, after starting off in the role of Animal Control Officer. We wish him good health and the best in all his endeavors.

We encourage residents to sign up for the items available by email subscription from the website. You can receive an email notification of the posting of the monthly Town Newsletter, Emergency News, and other minutes and information. Consider going to the website, signing up for email alerts, confirm your information, and you will then be sent an email notifying you of postings of these items. This can be done from the left hand navigation bar at [www.Fremont.nh.gov](http://www.Fremont.nh.gov) in the "Subscribe to E-Alerts" section.



The Town advertised for a new Police Chief in May, to replace our long-time Chief Neal Janvrin. The process was delegated by the Board of Selectmen to a Police Chief Search Committee consisting of residents and two local area Police Chiefs. The Search Committee process resulted in two finalists being presented to the Board of Selectmen. After additional interviews, Selectmen offered the position to Jon Twiss, a 28 year veteran of the Derry NH Police Department. An open house was held in October to welcome and introduce Chief Twiss to the community, and he has worked hard to integrate himself into Fremont. Many positive activities continue to take place at the Fremont Police Department.

I would like to offer thanks to H D Wood IV for his service to the Town as Interim Police Chief through last summer. Denny assisted the Department in the interim time period and we appreciate his help.

One of the founders of the Fremont Garden Club, Aja Mahoney, left us in June for the greenest pasture and eternal flowers. Aja fought a difficult illness and managed with grace until the end. She was an instrumental part of the Garden Club we know and love today, and the many improvements we have seen to the Town's landscaping over the years. The Garden Club is a hardworking and dedicated group who make the Town blossom all year!

New construction and other property improvements increased the Town's overall assessed valuation from \$365,787,834 to \$373,723,497 for the September 2013 tax rate setting process. We are still seeing slight improvements in growth, with many improvements (residential and commercial) taking place at the former Cooperage site. Reports of overall 2013 market activity are still somewhat improved from prior years. An auction of some Town-owned (tax deeded) properties is planned for the Spring of 2014. This should return those properties to the tax rolls.

We continued to spend time in 2013 completing the needed improvements and updates to our Safety Program and other regulations which began in the fall of 2012 after our visits from the NH Department of Labor. The Safety Committee meets quarterly in different town buildings such that regular safety inspections can also be completed. We received a "clean" bill of health this summer from earlier violations, and are pleased to have completed the needed

improvements and upgrades. Again, Town employees have been very helpful in this endeavor, and the safety of our employees and visiting public is a priority.



Money was encumbered from the 2012 budget after a bid process, to complete repainting of the Historic 1800 Meetinghouse. Dzioba Construction undertook the work this summer, along with painting of the windows at the Town Hall. We thank them for their professional work on these historic buildings.

2011 Photo Courtesy of Bob Meade

We continued to see changes within the Town Clerk's Office. Shannon Bryant resigned in July from the position to accept employment elsewhere. She had been elected in March for the one year term until the combination position of Town Clerk/Tax Collector would be elected in March 2014. We again were so thankful for the assistance of the Newfields Town Clerk Sue McKinnon, Hill Town Clerk Desiree Mahurin, and Chichester Town Clerk Evelyn Pike to help us through yet another transition period. In light of the pending combination of positions, Tax Collector Sharon Girardi decided to accept the appointment as Town Clerk through the coming March election.

We began the process of intense training for Sharon, who attended the NH DMV training seminar (four days in Concord) in September and came back with many of the tools she needed to assist residents with motor vehicle registrations. A search was conducted for a Deputy Town Clerk in the Fall, resulting in appointment of Nicole Cloutier to the position. Nicole and Sharon continue to learn the many functions of the Town Clerk's Office. Thank you once again to all of you for your patience during this transition.



1914 Photo Courtesy of Matthew Thomas Collection

In September, Selectman Greta St Germain stepped down from the Board due to her family relocating. Greta was also an important part of our policy development in recent years, as well as instrumental in the activities of the Highway Study Committee and resultant progress to our infrastructure plans.

We bid a fond farewell to retired Deputy Fire Chief Dick Johnson in September, who passed away suddenly. Dick was a member of the Fremont Fire Department for many years, and was our Police Chief from 1980 to 1987. He was a US Marine Corps Veteran and recipient of a Purple Heart. He was our Memorial Day Parade Grand Marshal in 2011.

Thank you to the others not already mentioned, who left their service to Fremont in 2013, including Griffin Cordes and Joe Miccile from the Budget Committee; Sarah Lamirande and Nicole Cloutier from the Parks & Recreation Commission; Police Officers Shawn Carlson and Scott Cole; and Firefighter/EMT Matt Dustin. Last March Yvonne Ouellette completed a term as Deputy Treasurer and Human Services Coordinator Dawn Jarrell relocated with her family.



We continue to mourn the loss of our dear friend and co-worker Dick Rand on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Dick courageously fought cancer, and once again taught us the meaning of truly living. His spark and quick wit lit up every room he entered. Dick had been the Town's Maintenance Man since he retired from Fremont Motors in 2000. He was most recently a Cemetery Trustee, and had been the Town's Cemetery Sexton for over 50 years. He brought song and smiles to the workplace every day and is a bright light that I will forever miss. Dick was handy at everything he touched, willing to help anyone who needed it, and as much a part of this community as anyone I've known. As we search for his replacement, we realize every day just how much he did for the Town.

We thank everyone who gives so freely of their time to volunteer service in Fremont. Our dedicated employees, and all of the Town's many talented volunteers are invaluable to the day to day function of Town Government. As with all change, people moving on to other endeavors opens doors for new volunteers and employees to join our ranks. If you have some time and the desire to be involved in a role within the community, please come forward. There are unfilled positions on the Zoning Board of Adjustment, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Energy Committee. We do need your help! Thank you to all who serve Fremont in so many ways!



Town Departments worked hard all year, despite bad winter months on both ends of the calendar year, to work within their budgets. We found at year end that tight monitoring of the Town's spending had left some unexpended funds, and the Town Hall was re-roofed. A competitive bid process resulted in KTM Properties being awarded the work which was done efficiently

during the long weekend after Thanksgiving. Additionally, long-awaited updates to the highway maintenance building were contracted for completion. To that end, both of those projects were then removed from the 2014 budget request. (Photo courtesy of Bob Meade)

The Selectmen were given authority as agents of the Highway Building Capital Reserve Fund in 2012 and continued to work with the Road Agent on plans to complete the renovations to the highway shed to a maintenance garage. The plans have been scaled down since the project was put out to bid in 2011, and with some funds left at calendar year end, a contract was entered between the Town and Wayne Copp, Builder, working on the revised specifications. These funds, along with approximately \$64,000 saved in Capital Reserve, will close in the existing building and make it a place where our Highway Department can work, out of the weather, have water, and a bathroom. This is one of our last infrastructure updates, and we are excited to see it come to fruition.

The 250<sup>th</sup> Committee worked diligently all year to continue planning for the 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration of Fremont to be held in June 2014. They are working hard to fundraise in an effort to defray the many expenses involved in making this a memorable and special community-wide event. There is a link from the Town's website (Community Page) to the 250<sup>th</sup> Committee site or visit it directly at: [www.fremontnh250thcelebration.org](http://www.fremontnh250thcelebration.org). There is also a new section of this page entitled "Memories." Please share your memories of Fremont as we embark on this historic birthday celebration of our Town. The Committee meets the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm at the Fremont Safety Complex and welcomes your input and attendance.

All of our volunteers and employees are to be commended for their vigilance and dedication to Fremont and its residents. The Town is well served by these community members, whose experience has helped to see Fremont through many projects, in good times and in bad. If you have never been involved in local government, it is difficult to understand the depth of dedication required to serve in these roles. I encourage all residents to find something in the community to get involved with. From youth athletics to PTA to the many Boards and Committees that are needed within the Town and School District to function, there is a need for many interested folks to make our community work. The local volunteer is an ever-precious commodity, and one that helps to keep costs down, and preserve the small-town character that Fremont is known and loved for.

We need your help, and community service is one of the most rewarding things you will ever do. You meet people you might not otherwise meet, cultivate friendships, and learn things you might not otherwise learn. There are so many opportunities to get involved in making Fremont the place you want to live and raise your family. Participate in the annual meetings and find a Committee that interests you. Come on out and see what is going on!

Thank you for your patience and support in these difficult economic times. We do understand the hardship families are facing, and continue to work hard to do as much as we can for all of our residents. The Board of Selectmen continues to meet weekly to address the Town's business, at 6:00 pm on Thursday evenings in the basement meeting room at the Town Hall. Please feel free to contact our office with any questions or for general information at 895 2226 x 10.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Carlson  
Town Administrator