

Report of the Town Administrator

As we close on another winter, I am counting the days to spring. The days are getting longer and I am ever hopeful that the renewed growth we will soon see with green grass and leafing trees will slide over to the economy. It has been a long winter and was another tough economic year in Fremont, felt by residents and town government alike. The Town's employees and volunteers have given another year of service as we all hope for brighter days in the months ahead.

After our second Deliberative Session on January 30th and voting on March 9th, voters supported the proposed budget, being less than the default budget. Voters also supported warrant articles to fund a police cruiser, the mosquito control program, and the town-wide assessment review.

Assessment review began shortly after Town Meeting and was completed in September for the setting of the tax rate. The Town's overall assessed valuation went down by approximately 16% to a grand total of \$358,837,557. Some new growth helped to offset the decrease; and we are beginning to see a slight improvement in sales in town.

Again we lost a long-serving Selectman from the Board when Don Gates "retired" in March. Don has served the Board of Selectmen for several years, coming back after others left office early; as well as serving a couple of full terms he was elected to. While Selectman, Don served as a representative to the Budget Committee for most of his years. Don continues to be an active Bulky Day volunteer.

The Board welcomed Annmarie Scribner when Don retired, as Fremont elected its second female Selectman. The Board 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.

Also in March, Fremont's long-time Road Agent Guerwood Holmes retired at the end of his 24th term. Guerwood has been an active and colorful part of Fremont's landscape for many years, and I miss the day to day interaction with him. As I noted in my report last year, Guerwood has been an important part of Fremont history during many years in the 1980's and 90's of the building and real estate booms, including road construction and many of our subdivisions. He has watched Fremont grow, literally, mile by mile. He has also donated his time and equipment over the years to make many community projects successful, including the bi-annual Bulky Day collections.

We welcomed our new Road Agent Mark Pitkin with one storm after another, and he was given a rude awakening of the many duties of public service! There were three notable storms (all FEMA declarations) from February 26 through March 30th which were a wild initiation for Mark; but at the end of it all, our highway and public safety workers and volunteers got the job done. The Town was able to recover nearly all costs through the FEMA declarations.

This summer, the Town's only full-time Highway Department employee, Leon Holmes Jr, was honored as a "Road Scholar III" or Senior Road Scholar, to include a plaque for his accomplishments. This denotes his dedication to training and education within the UNH

Technology Transfer Center. To reach this level, Leon has completed 75 hours of training through the UNH T2 Center. We congratulate Leon for this notable honor!

A Highway Study Committee was formed in the spring and spent a good deal of time all year working on a variety of Highway projects. This informal Committee met regularly through the summer and continues to meet on a monthly basis. It was interesting and informative to participate in their good work.

We welcomed Kathy Arsenault to the position of Tax Collector when Annmarie Scribner finished her term and ran for Selectman. Kathy has a wide range of knowledge of town services and has done well with the varied tasks of collecting the nearly ten million dollar tax warrant. This included the first ever bi-annual tax bill issuance in Fremont.

As with so many other Towns, with a challenged economy, we saw our friends and neighbors face difficult personal losses, with individuals under immense pressure to keep up. We unfortunately saw people lose jobs, relocate for financial reasons, and homes be foreclosed upon. The Town also had the difficult task of taking property for back taxes when all avenues to work out a suitable resolution with some property owners were unsuccessful.

I would like to thank those people who stepped down from their service to the Town in 2010. This includes Renee King, who retired after 12 years as the Chair of Fremont's Parks & Recreation Commission. Renee brought many great ideas and years of dedicated work to the Commission, and her contributions are missed. She remains active in her role as the Town's Animal Control Officer and is active in many other Town events.

We also bid farewell to Aaron Epstein as Emergency Management Director; Derek Downing from the Planning Board; and Peter Bolduc from the Energy Committee. Sue D'Eon relocated and left the Budget Committee over the summer and Andy Kohlhofer returned to fill that seat. Our Summer Camp Director Jen Jaquith did her fifth and final year in that role in 2010. Jen has run a terrific program and we will miss her in 2011!

At year end, when the Building Inspector position reverted to part-time, Thom Roy did not return to it. This was a loss to the Town. Thom was a large part of our energy grants and other town building projects as well as with building inspection and code enforcement. I wish him well in all of his endeavors. At the writing of this report, the Town is involved in a hiring process.

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 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. With the resignation of the Emergency Management Director, then-Assistant Joyce Booker-Janvrin stepped in to fill the role. Complimenting her is Laurie Allore, our Deputy EMD. Due to Joyce's new role as a Department Head, she left her seat on the Budget Committee. This seat remained vacant despite the posted opening, and will be filled by election in March. Thank you to all who serve Fremont in so many ways!

The experience we lose when a seasoned volunteer leaves community service is significant. It does, however, open the door for more people to step forward, and we hope you will consider doing so this year. We always need more volunteers on the Town's Boards and Committees! The Parks & Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment are each down in their membership.

The Energy Committee submitted grant applications in February for building energy audits at Ellis School and the Fremont Safety Complex. These were awarded over the summer; and at year end, both energy audits were underway. The report from these studies should be available in the spring of 2011. Additionally the Committee, with another grant, saw through to completion the installation of a solar panel at the Fremont Safety Complex. The open house to celebrate the grant work was held on Saturday May 15th. Photos are included with the Energy Committee report on page 132.

At year end, our Worker's Compensation Insurance carrier offered grant funding and we were approved for \$1,320 of safety equipment and gear. This was primarily used to purchase items for the Highway Department, but also included highway cones and safety markings for use by the Fire Rescue and Police Departments.

The Selectmen were able to turn back some funding from the Town's budget in 2010. The Selectmen again voted to use some of the unreserved fund balance to fund Capital Reserve Funds. It continues to be the Board's position that saving in Capital Reserve Funds is important in planning for the future needs of the Town. This helps budget annually for capital improvements and creates a more balanced effect on the tax rate.

Growth remains slow but the Town's requests for services remains constant. We have seen an increase in requests for abatements and human service assistance, much of which is due to the changed economy. The land use boards continue to spend some much-needed time focusing on planning for the future and continue work on important mapping and resource inventories.

Many of the Town Clerk's services, assessing records, and a greater depth of Town information are available on the web, through the Town's web site at www.Fremont.nh.gov. In addition, virtually all Town Board and Committee minutes are available on our website, and meetings are posted in a variety of Town buildings and on the web. We also continue to produce the monthly newsletter.

All of our volunteers and employees are to be commended for their vigilance and dedication to Fremont and its residents. The Town is served well by these community servants, 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 so 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.

Your feedback is helpful regarding what information you are looking for and where you obtain it. We continue to work on getting more forms and information to the website and the Comcast Channel 22, in an effort to reach the community. We hope that residents are able to get some value from these additional resources and information. If the Cable Revolving Fund is established, the Town would be able to move ahead with additional broadcasting and information being available on a local cable channel.

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 folks are facing, and continue to work hard to do as much as we can for all of our residents.

Please feel free to contact our office with any questions or for general information at 895 2226.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Carlson
Town Administrator



Selectmen presenting the
Boston Post Cane
to Lillian Pratt

September 10, 2010

Photo Courtesy of
Emelie Hunter