

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Russell R. Marcoux, Town Manager

I am pleased to report that 2010 was a very busy year for the Town of Bedford. I will highlight many of the projects and endeavors taken on by our staff during the year.

Our fourth Town Budget was completed on schedule and reviewed by the Town Council. The Council will be holding public hearings on the budget in January in advance of our Budgetary Town Meeting on March 2, 2011. A copy of our entire Budget message can be seen on our town website. As it currently is amended, the Manager's budget and Council's actions resulted in an increase of 1.2% in the Municipal rate or \$.05 per thousand. As a result of action by the New Hampshire Legislature in 2010, the Town has lost again this year \$155,590 in Revenue Sharing, and has had to increase its retirement contributions yet another 5% (to 10%) or \$ 130,000 that the State has eliminated from its contribution to the Retirement system. The additional effect on our rate is an additional 2 cents on our 2011 budget.

One of our Town's major road projects this year was the completion of the realignment of Gault Road, a project that was started last year. This also included the sale of remaining land that was purchased for this project, which today has a house under construction. With the completion of the road reconstruction project at the intersection of Route 101 and Nashua Road, which includes a new traffic signal, traffic moving in and out of Nashua Road is much safer. This project was completed with the cooperation of our State Department of Transportation and ARRA funding. Although we were successful in getting the Rt. 101 project (from Wallace Road to the Route 114 intersection) back on the NH 10-Year Highway Plan, the biggest hurdle now is keeping that project on the plan, and having the funds appropriated for the construction. While discussing major road improvements, we were also able to continue with our normal local road maintenance and upkeep projects through our operating budget.

As you may recall, we were also faced with the closure of a southern portion of Wallace Road from North Amherst Road to Briar Road. Although not in our plans for 2010, faced with the road closure notice by NH Department of Transportation, the Town acted quickly and responsibly by re-appropriating local funds designated for roads to deal with the culvert replacement that should be completed by early spring, 2011.

This year was spent with one of the more major internal projects: the installation of entirely new and completely integrated municipal financial software with all implementation services. This major upgrade includes all aspects of our financial services and reporting, budgeting, tax collection and payroll. Yet to be completed is the reporting module and the integration of planning, permitting and code enforcement which should be completed in early 2011.

A major project undertaken this year was the first ever codification of all the Town Ordinances. With funds set aside, our Town Clerk has overseen this major undertaking. We are anticipating final delivery in the spring of 2011.

The Bedford Economic Development Commission presented its final report to the Council on December 16, 2009. This year saw the formation of the Business Resource Group (BRG) to help guide the Town with the development of economic development strategies. This was one of the recommendations of the BEDC. Six of the seven members of this Group, who were appointed by the Council, represent various aspects of the business community. The second major recommendation was an economic development position. Although this was not included in the Manager's budget, the Council has been discussing this recommendation and is expected to make a decision before the 2011 budget is presented to the Budgetary Town Meeting on March 2, 2011. In addition, the Steering Committee comprised of local residents completed their work along with a consultant group in updating of our Master Plan. That ten year updated plan was approved by the Planning Board in October.

A major economic development project was undertaken this year: the formation of a Tax Increment Financing (or TIF) district along South River Road. This is the first such district in Bedford and allows the Town to undertake much needed infrastructure improvements with funds paid to the Town through the incremental assessment increases from new development. This project was unanimously approved by the Town Council in December.

2010 was the first full year of our new website (www.bedfordnh.org). This new site is updated daily and has given us the opportunity to provide the most up to date information and announcements to our residents. In November, we launched our Video Tour Book on our website, which highlights five major strengths of Bedford: the Quality of Life, Education, Recreation, Economic Development as well as Real Estate and Relocation opportunities. This project was completed through the generosity of businesses in Bedford whose advertisements made this opportunity possible.

I would also like to *congratulate* our Town staff for again being the recipients of a “Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 2009” Our Town and Crystal Dionne, our Finance Director were recognized by the GFOA organization for the sixth consecutive year. Emile Lacerte, Jr. of our Public Works Department was named a “Master Roads Scholar” by the UNH Technology Center. Our BCTV Station and staff received three awards from the “Alliance for Community Media – NE Region: Two first places and one third place for community programming. These awards speak volumes to the dedication and commitment of our employees. Many of our employees continue to be recertified in their respective fields.

Overall, this has been an exciting year and at the same time, a year of many challenges. I appreciate the opportunity to serve the Town of Bedford as your Town Manager. Our Department Managers and all our employees strive to provide a positive experience for the citizens of Bedford when they come in contact with any aspect of Bedford’s Town government. Our employees continue to demonstrate a willingness to deliver services and work as a team to complete those goals. Through their efforts, we have also been the recipients of many grants that have enabled us to better serve our community. We would not have been able to accomplish what we did this year without the support and encouragement of our Town Council. We thank them as well for their support.

Please take a moment to surf our website, www.bedfordnh.org. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve your town government please feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail at rmarcoux@bedfordnh.org. Also, if you have the desire to serve your community, please feel free to contact our office with your areas of interest. Good government is made up of interested and involved citizens, and there are a myriad of boards, committees and commissions that welcome new ideas.