



Town Of Milford **OFFICE OF THE SELECTMEN** **2014 Annual Report**

The Board of Selectmen opened 2014 continuing its work on the South Street widening project, anticipating that work would start in late fall 2014.

In February the Board received word that the Milford Fire Department, working in conjunction with the Milford Water Department and Milford Area Communications Center (MACC Base), had been working with the Insurance Services Office (ISO) since 2011 to improve the town's public protection classification rating. Effective April 1, 2014, the rating that was used by most Homeowner's and Commercial Fire insurance carriers was improved multifold. The ISO's ratings are a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being the highest rating. Out of over 44,000 departments audited across the nation, there are approximately 60 fire departments that are rated a 1 - none in NH. For the hydrant district, Milford is now rated as 'Class 3' (formerly a 4), placing the Milford Fire Department in the top 10 in the state parallel to full-time career departments. In the non-hydrant area of town, Milford is now rated 'Class 4' (formerly a 9), a very significant improvement. This rating placed Milford at potentially the best rated community in the state for a non-hydrant district. While no one can guarantee that anyone's individual fire insurance prices will decrease, this information should be a topic of conversation between everyone and their home insurance carrier after April 1, 2014.

At the Annual Meeting in March, Selectmen Kathy Bauer and Mike Putnam were re-elected to their positions. Gary Daniels and Mark Fougere were elected as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board respectively.

With spring came a land swap where the town swapped land with St. Joseph Hospital/Milford Medical Center, who was building an Urgent Care facility at its location on Nashua Street. The swap was a win-win for both parties, the trade making contiguous parcels from parcels that were separated, enhancing the Urgent Care project, while also enhancing the town's access to Kaley Field.

In April, the Board of Selectmen started its deliberations about purchasing 127 Elm Street, the site of the former Permatlach building, adjacent to Keyes Field. Facing the prospect of Keyes Drive being closed for up to two years while the Fletcher EPA Superfund Site was cleaned, the purchase of 127 Elm Street would provide an alternate access route to Keyes Field. Selectmen scheduled a special meeting for August 11, 2014, ensuring residents that even if authorized to purchase this property, Selectmen would only follow through with the purchase if the property received a clean bill of health from the NH Department of Environmental Services.

The Board also continued its study on whether or not to remove the Goldman and McLane dams. Studies would continue until November, when the Board would vote on this issue.

In an effort to enhance the budget process, the Board of Selectmen met with the Town Budget Committee to discuss ways to enhance the process and increase effective communication.

On June 10, 2014, we witnessed the ribbon-cutting ceremony and opening of Pine Valley Lofts, formerly Hillsborough Mills, which opened its doors and is providing a source of affordable housing on the west side of town.

The Board recognized early in the year that town infrastructure, particularly bridges, needed to be one of the primary focuses of the Board. In June, the DPW Director reported to the Board the conditions and status of the bridges in town, enabling the Board to start prioritizing future bridge maintenance that would be needed.

In July, the state notified the town that the Jones Crossing Bridge, also known as the Green Bridge (by Market Basket) was in such a serious state of disrepair that the bridge needed to be closed entirely. Vehicular traffic had long been prohibited on the bridge. Now foot traffic would also be prohibited.

The pergola project was completed at Keyes Field, adding yet another element of beauty and usefulness to the park.

In August, Board members met with EPA officials and received notification that GE would start the cleanup of the Fletcher site in 2015.

Also in August, Town Administrator Guy Scaife announced that he had accepted a Town Manager position in Connecticut and would be leaving his current position in September 2014. The Board immediately started the search for a new Town Administrator.

The town rededicated the World War II Memorial in September. Renovation of the park included replacement of 13 arborvitaes representing the Milford soldiers killed in action in World War II, enhanced lighting of the memorial wall and identification on the wall of those soldiers killed in action. A debt of gratitude is owed the various individuals and groups that revitalized this park, which was rededicated with a ceremony the Sunday after Labor Day.

In September the Board entertained a proposal by the Water Commissioners and started discussing the installation of a west Elm St. water main, which would run along Route 101 from a location near the Jones Crossing Bridge westward to a location near TD Bank, providing a water source to Milford businesses in that area.

Having been approved to have the Town Special Meeting regarding the purchase of 127 Elm Street coincide with the State Primary Election, on September 9 the town voted to authorize Selectmen to purchase the 127 Elm Street property, conditional upon receiving documentation from the state that the property was free from environmental pollution.

In mid-September Town Administrator Guy Scaife left his position for a new position out of state. As Board members and other staff fill in the duties of the Town Administrator while the search for a new Administrator continues, the Board of Selectmen starts to meet weekly to keep better informed of the daily operations of the town and to further develop the 2015 budget.

Also in September, the Milford Ambulance Department swapped ambulances with the Wilton Ambulance Department. Wilton was getting a new ambulance and the ambulance they were replacing had lower mileage than Milford's oldest ambulance. The trade enabled Milford's oldest ambulance to have fewer miles on it.

The Board voted to establish boundaries of the Pumpkin Festival for the purpose of designating which sidewalk locations were encompassed in the Pumpkin Festival. This enabled the Milford Improvement Team, which had been authorized by Selectmen to organize the Pumpkin Festival, to better control businesses and organizations that previously were setting up booths on the sidewalks without registering to be part of the Pumpkin Festival.

A contract for dredging up to two acres of Osgood Pond was awarded, with completion of this limited project estimated to be February 2015.

As part of the process in discussing with the state the final disposition of the Jones Crossing Bridge, Selectmen held three input forums soliciting public comment on the proposal to remove and recycle the bridge.

The Town Assessor brought to the Board's attention that the town had a solar energy system ordinance that provided exemptions in perpetuity for those who had purchased solar systems since 1975. Selectmen would place a warrant on the 2015 ballot to discontinue this exemption.

November brought to Milford a discussion of a natural gas pipeline that was proposed to run through 17 towns in southern New Hampshire, including parts of Milford. This was the beginning of what Selectmen were told would be a year-long process in finalizing a route for the pipeline.

The Transfer Station Mobile Office project was completed with the removal of the temporary office used during the transition from the old office to the new one.

Selectmen voted in November to not remove the Goldman and McLane dams, feeling that the removal of these dams would negatively affect the downtown area aesthetically.

In early December, the Board of Selectmen hired Mark Bender of Amherst as the new Town Administrator.

While the aforementioned summary reflects gains in many areas, 2014 also presented many financial challenges, a number of which will continue into 2015. Capital improvement needs, along with the need to address road, stormwater and bridge infrastructure remain high priorities for the Board of Selectmen.

The Board wishes to extend its thanks to the Department Heads, particularly in the absence of a Town Administrator, for their assistance in working with the Board to develop the 2015 budget, as well as all town employees for their efforts to control expenses, maximize efficiencies, and to do whatever it took to help the town navigate through these challenges.

As it begins 2015, the Board continues to face the challenges of balancing the need for capital items and infrastructure improvements with the ability of taxpayers to cover the expense. Be assured that the Board will do its best in weighing its options and making its decisions. Thank you for the opportunity you have given us to serve you and the citizens of Milford.

Respectfully submitted,

The Milford Board of Selectmen,

Gary Daniels, Chairman
Mark Fougere, Vice Chairman
Kathy Bauer
Kevin Federico
Mike Putnam