

TOWN OF HULL
Office of the Town Manager

I respectfully submit to the Board of Selectmen and the citizens of Hull the 1997 Annual Report of the Town Manager's Office. My fourth year as Hull's Town Manager has been challenging and productive. It would be impossible to say the following accomplishments and projects are mine alone. Every accomplishment has had input from a variety of individuals who share a common goal; to take those actions and make those decisions that are in the best interest of the community.

The members of the Board of Selectmen have provided support, guidance and knowledge that has made my job easier. Every Department Head and employee has contributed to the advances we have made.

I believe if you review my tenure, you will find that I have been an agent for change, systems approach to problem resolution and improvement of stability in our affairs. We are now beginning to see the outcomes of our work together. I firmly believe that we have some exciting opportunities ahead, no doubt we still face great challenges. However, we are stronger and better positioned for those challenges than we have been for several years.

What follows is a summary of the major activities that have been worked on in the previous year.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- Over the past several years an emphasis has been placed on improving the day-today operations of all departments so that we are a more proactive organization. These efforts have included streamlining our financial reporting system. Our finance departments are now fully computerized and linked. As a result reports are timely and meaningful. Tax bills are sent on time, collection rates are up and back taxes owed are down. Budgeting has become more accurate. This is now the fourth year that we have not had a Special Town Meeting to revisit the budget to make adjustments. Additionally, each of the last four years we have spent less than was budgeted.
- In other areas we have more communication and coordination on public safety issues. Our Police and Fire department command staffs did a fantastic job developing and implementing the Dispatch Operation.
- The Park and Recreation function has been redefined to be more programs oriented. They ran a series of very successful trips and events and our field maintenance program is improving.
- We have hired our first Conservation Agent; the impact of the position is being felt in several ways. The public has access to professional staff to assist in filings. Detection of violations and enforcement is timelier.
- We hired a new Harbormaster who is re-invigorating the position and positioning the department for a more meaningful role.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

- The major accomplishments in this area in 1997 have been the results of the last four years of conservative budgeting and the emphasis on stabilizing the Town's finances. The FY98 Budget reflected the fact that we are pro-actively budgeting and addressing the general finance issues that face our Town.
- The FY98 budget totaled \$18,662,578. A 1.50% or a \$275,213 dollar increase from the Fiscal Year 1997 Budget. The FY98 Budget passed Town meeting unanimously.
- A \$300,000 dollar increase to the School Department budget. This increase coupled with similar increases in FY94, FY95, FY97 and FY98 brought the School Department budget to 8.44 million dollars. A \$1.52 dollar increase in 5 years.
- A \$25,000 dollar line item to fund legal costs to appeal the recent increase in water rates
- At the request of the Council on Aging Directors, in particular Brian McCarthy, a \$6,000 dollar line item was established to fund a senior tax abatement program. The program allows eligible senior citizens to perform public service jobs in exchange for a tax-abatement.
- The FY98 Budget includes a new department, Public Safety Dispatch. This is a combined Fire and Police Emergency Dispatch Center. \$150,000 dollars of the funding for the new Department is derived from the Police and Fire Department_s budgets. The balance is additional funding. However, in exchange for the additional funding four firefighters who currently dispatch will now be available to answer calls.
- There was funding included to complete the automation of the gate structure at Straits Pond. This project received a \$10,000 dollars state grant and the Town of Cohasset will share equally in the construction costs
- There was funding to add an additional position in the Highway Department to assist in the Town_s continuing efforts to improve infrastructure. There were also additional funds for general maintenance improvements.
- For the first time in many years the Tree Department was funded at \$8,000 dollars. This funding allows for the trimming and planting of new trees in selected areas.
- The Enjoy Hull Committee was funded at \$5,000 dollars to continue their promotional efforts on behalf of the Town, in particular, to begin planning for the Centennial Celebration of Nantasket Beach in 1999.
- Funding \$23,000 to continue expansion of the data processing capabilities of Town Hall functions.
- Funding \$5,000 window repairs at the Village Fire station.

Capital Improvement Program:

- The FY98 Budget continued the Capital Improvements that were presented in FY97 Some of plan_s FY98 highlights were:
- Installation of central air conditioning at the Council on Aging
- Financing a new street sweeper for the Highway Department
- Nantasket Pier Dredging funds.
- General roadway improvements
- Seawall repairs
- School accessibility and technology funding
- Funds for general handicap accessibility improvements
- Perhaps the most significant element of this budget is the re-establishment of the Town's Stabilization Fund. It has been many years since we could fund this account.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Worked with the Permanent Sewer Commission to implement the sewer project in the Straits Pond Area. The project was completed on time and under budget. We are also completing the design for the Rock-away sewer project that will begin in the spring of 1998.
- Received preliminary approval for state funded Pemberton area improvements. The plan includes defining the roadway and parking areas, drainage improvements, landscaping and beautification of the area. This is a \$730,000 dollar program that would be funded by the state.
- Worked with the Community Development Director and School Superintendent to begin addressing handicap accessibility in the Schools. Under the Small Cities grant received a \$70,000 dollar grant for a limited use elevator for Jacobs School. There was also \$100,000 dollars budgeted in the Town Capital Plan for school access projects.
- Worked with our state legislative delegation, Division of Waterways to ensure that the Point Allerton Seawall at the Point was repaired. Continuing dialogue on remainder of Point Allerton Seawall, as well as, others
- Continued to work with state's Division of Waterways on the engineering services for dredging in the Nantasket Pier area.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Worked with Harbor Planning Committee on the Harbor Management Plan
- Worked with Selectmen and Harbor Island Ad-Hoc Committee to ensure Hull's participation in the National Harbor Island Park
- Worked with Selectmen to effectuate a land exchange with the MDC and HRA.
- Assisted Town Counsel with the Atlantic Bar & Grill project

OTHER

- Serve on Carousel Board of Directors as one of the Town's representatives
- Serve on the Retirement Board as Town representative
- Continue the practice of an open door policy and frequent meeting attendance on a wide variety of issues. This policy is well received and a necessary component of doing the job well.

There are a variety of issues that we are no longer re-acting to but rather managing or have eliminated. Those issues include beach openings, handicap compliance, midge infestations, recreation issues and the light plant.

I believe the trend of the community is positive and that we are all contributing a great deal towards improving the day-today quality of life. We are not managing by crisis but rather we are planning and executing. I would like to thank all the Town Employees and in particular, Nancy Allen, Janet Bennett and Carolyn McNeil in the Town Manager's/Board of Selectmen Office for their tireless assistance throughout the year. I thank you for the opportunity to serve you and the residents of Hull.

Sincerely,

Philip E. Lemnios
Town Manager