

1998 Annual Report Office of the Town Manager

I respectfully submit to the Board of Selectmen and the citizens of Hull the 1998 Annual Report of the Town Manager's Office. 1998 proved to be a challenging and productive year. 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 fifth year that we have not had a Special Town Meeting to revisit the budget to make adjustments. Additionally, each of the last five years we have spent less than was budgeted.

Financial Issues

The major accomplishments in this area in 1998 have been the results of the last five years of conservative budgeting and the emphasis on stabilizing the Town's finances. The FY99 Budget reflected the fact that we are pro-actively budgeting and addressing the general finance issues that face our Town.

- The FY99 School Department budget was funded at \$9,005,339 dollars, a \$557,203 dollar increase over the FY98 appropriation. The School Committee Recommended Budget and the Town Manager Recommended budget were in agreement. This is the first time in many years that agreement had been reached so early in the budget process. I wish to thank the School Committee and Superintendent for their efforts to work with Town Officials to provide for a smooth and coordinated budget process.
- At the request of the Council on Aging Directors, in particular Brian McCarthy, a \$6,000 dollar line item was funded to continue funding the senior tax abatement program. The program allows eligible senior citizens to perform public service jobs in exchange for a tax abatement.
- A \$20,000 dollar line item to purchase computerized voting machines per the directive of the Massachusetts Secretary of State. The new machines will aid in the speed and accuracy of election tabulations and analysis.

- Funding \$6,500 roof repairs at the Village Fire station.
- In conjunction with the Enjoy Hull Committee and to help promote our efforts with the Boston Harbor Islands National Park there was \$15,000 dollars budgeted to fund weekend trolley service from 10:00 am to 5:00 p.m. The trolleys were similar to the nostalgic trolleys operating in Boston and ran a tour the length of the peninsular. They were enthusiastically received.
- Funds were set aside, \$14,000 dollars; to continue the installation of radio transmitted emergency situation boxes at remote location around town.
- \$20,000 dollars was allocated to begin plans for the expansion of the cemetery. At our current rate of burials and new purchases there is estimated to be no more than four years of available new grave space.
- 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.
- Additional part-time staffing was added for the maintenance of recreational facilities to continue enhancing our playing fields.

- **Capital Improvement Program:**

- The FY99 Budget continued implementing the Capital Improvements that were presented in the FY97 Five Year Capital Plan. Some of plan's FY99 highlights are:
 - School building repair funds
 - Funding to formulate a rehabilitation program for the towns playing fields
 - Funding to repair the Library cupola
 - Funding to replace docks and floats
 - Funding to install playground equipment
 - Funding to begin replacing old and faded traffic control signage and signals
 - Funding for one police cruiser
 - Nantasket Pier Dredging funds.
 - General roadway improvements
 - Seawall repairs
 - 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 Rockaway and Rockaway Annex Area. By the close of 1998 the project was substantially complete and under budget.

Design hearings were held for the state funded Village/Pemberton area improvements. The plan includes defining the roadway and parking areas, drainage improvements, landscaping and beautification of the area. This is a \$2.5 million dollar program that would be funded by the state.

Bids for the state sponsored repairs for the entire length of Point Allerton seawall were opened. The \$1.6 million dollars of repairs will begin in February 1999.

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 to complete 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.

Other

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.

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 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