

# 2011 Annual Report

## Office of the Town Manager

I respectfully submit to the citizens of Hull the Year 2011 Annual Report of the Town Manager's Office. The economic conditions that have been battering our shores continued in 2011, although there were signs that the storms ferocity began to diminish. Our ability to maintain our core set of services was still under considerable stress. Additionally we were unable to make any significant headway on a lengthy backlog of capital projects. In spite of these challenges our employees continued to function with a level of resolve that was admirable and a testimony to their spirit of public service.

In January, the presentation of the proposed fiscal year 2012 Budget was made to the Board of Selectmen. The budget presentation kicked off the first stage of the Annual Town Meeting process that culminates in May each year.

The incredibly harsh winter of 2010-2011 began to abate in late February. The cost of snow removal and plowing was considerably high than in the previous year. In addition heating costs for Town buildings were extraordinarily high due to the harsh and prolonged winter season.

The months of March and April were consumed with budget meetings and Town Meeting preparation. The Town Manager and staff met frequently with Advisory Board to review Town Meeting articles and to discuss the implications of various financial and non-financial articles.

In May, Town Meeting approved the FY12 Budget. The FY12 Budget key elements included the following:

### **EXPENDITURE SUMMARY:**

- The FY12 Operational Budget was level funded for the majority of departments. The single and largest exception was the School Department budget that was increased by 2.4% to \$12,800,000. The Operational Budget funds daily activity and does not include elements such as retirement funds, health and property insurance, debt and other non-operational expenditures. There are some increases in various departments to account for negotiated wage increases. On the General Government side of the budget, non- union personnel will receive a wage increase after two years of no increases consistent with the Town's Personnel By-law.
- The General Reserve Fund was level funded at \$50,000.
- The employee health insurance portion of the budget increased by 12% or \$471,383. This cost center continues to increase at a difficult pace to maintain. It should be noted that cost containment measures have been instituted, including increasing the employee share of premiums, higher co-pays for employees, and requiring all retirees, regardless of age to pay the same percentage share of premium costs consistent with State law.
- Pension costs increased 4% from \$3.02 million dollars to \$3.14 million dollars. This reflects the extent of our obligation in this area as required by state law.

- Capital Spending: The FY12 budget allocated \$248,572 for capital spending. The plan provided for replacement of two police cruisers, the third year payment for the newly purchased ambulance, funds for a new Fire Department Engine, funds to rehabilitate public works vehicles to extend service longevity, funds for limited seawall repairs.
- The snow removal supplement was funded at \$232,651 for the winter's snow removal activity; an increase \$144,954 over FY11's costs.

In late May, Aquarion Water Company filed for another rate increase, requesting a 23% increase. The residents of Hull already pay some of the highest water charges in the country. Hull agreed to collaborate with Hingham and Cohasset to formulate a focused opposition to the rate case to be held before the State's Department of Public Utilities. Town Counsel James Lampke coordinated Hull's response. The case was scheduled to conclude in April 2012.

As summer began in Hull, residents and visitors all enjoyed our beaches, restaurants and waterfront. The Police and Fire Department helped to ensure the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend was safe and enjoyable. Throughout the summer many of Hull's local charitable organizations held variety of charity road races and events. These events were an opportunity for the community to come together to assist worthwhile causes.

Our Public Works employees and summer labor force did a great job cleaning our beaches and maintaining ball fields. Our Board of Health monitored the beaches with weekly water testing to ensure that all swimmers had a great environment to enjoy. They all did a great job.

As fall approached our employees began to prepare for the winter months by making equipment ready and restocking supplies. Additionally, the early stages of the Town's budget and FY13 planning process began to take shape. Additionally, plans were being made for the first "State of the Town" presentation in January 2012.

In December the Town was concluding the final preparations to migrate to the Regional Dispatch Center. The Center involves the Towns of Hingham, Hull, Cohasset and Norwell. Collectively we have received 5.1 million dollars in state grants to build out the center and procure the necessary technology. The Center is the first of its kind in Massachusetts, and will provide for enhanced emergency medical dispatch. Our public safety and IT personnel put forward a tremendous amount of effort to make the new Center a success.

I would like to thank all Town Employees and in particular, Nancy Allen, Janet Bennett and Terry Finneran in the Board of Selectmen/ Town Manager's Office for their tireless assistance throughout the year. It is an honor to serve the residents of Hull. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Philip E. Lemnios  
Town Manager