

## **SELECTBOARD'S REPORT FOR 2006**

Lyndon completed the year 2006 in very sound financial shape. We completed major initiatives in the Highway Department, the Wastewater Department, and Planning and Zoning reorganization. The Selectboard thanks all of our dedicated employees and the many citizens who hold public office in Lyndon, making Lyndon a wonderful place to live. These individuals truly contribute to the success of the Town and its operation.

There are so many people, businesses and organizations that contribute to the wonderful lifestyle we have in Lyndon, and the Selectboard thanks them all for their contributions this past year.

Among the highlights of events that occurred during 2006 in Lyndon and received selectboard participation were:

### **Town/Village Merger**

At last year's town meeting, citizens asked the town to put a plan of merger together to bring the last remaining village back into the town, as was originally designed in 1781.

A citizen-based committee was appointed to consider all aspects of a merger and a plan on how it would be accomplished, taking into consideration the complexities of Lyndonville Electric Department, the two separate highway departments, the separate water and wastewater departments and separate clerk and treasurer duties. Following months of work by the committee, the Board of Selectmen approved the Plan of Merger in its final form. The issue was put on the November general election ballot, asking Town citizens if they would accept the Village of Lyndonville back into the Town; and asking Village citizens if they would want to join the Town. The voter turnout was among the largest in the town's history and the issue was affirmatively passed.

Within the bounds of state law, a citizens group petitioned the Town for a revote of the question. In January the balloting took place and this time the vote by the Town was to not merge. The Board of Selectmen would like to thank everyone who participated in the process. Future consideration of this topic will be, as always, determined by direction of the voters.

### **Town Personnel**

Many members of the staff participated in a wellness program offered by our health insurance provider. The wellness program is a preventative action to help reduce future medical conditions for the employees enrolled in our health care system. Their successful efforts resulted in refunds of over \$7,000 to the town's

health insurance costs. We compliment the effort led by assistant town clerk Laurie Willey and encourage all town employees to participate next year.

Our police department hired a new officer in the fourth quarter. James Hemond was appointed by Chief Jack Harris, following the resignation of Officer Bridget Tweedie, who left to further her career in a specialized area of law enforcement. Officer Hemond comes to the department with four years of experience with the Caledonia County Sheriff's Department. James Hemond has Lyndon roots as his grandparents lived here and operated an auto repair shop and gas station for many years.

Robert Nutting, a twenty-four year veteran of the town's Highway Department, continues to serve very capably as the foreman of the highway crew. The Highway Department welcomed Norman LaCross to its crew, replacing an existing crew member.

After serving two years on the board of selectmen, Rob Elmes resigned and A. Richard Boera was appointed to fill Rob's term until town meeting.

Dr. John Elliott did not seek reappointment as Deputy Health Officer during the year and was thanked with a certificate for his combined 19 years of service to the Town as Health Officer and Deputy Health Officer.

Kim Hill has completed her first full-year as assistant town clerk in the Town Clerk's office.

### **Bridges and Highways**

In 2006 we completed a bridge inventory and repair schedule to prioritize the routine maintenance recommended by VTRANS (The Agency of Transportation), which inspects our bridges annually. The Lily Pond Road Bridge at the intersection of Rt. 114 will be the first project addressed in 2007, as the deck of the bridge is replaced and foundation and abutment work is shored up.

The June 2002 flood damage done to the Burrington Bridge and Randall Covered Bridge was repaired and new reinforcement was added to the abutments. These repairs were 90 % funded by FEMA and VTRANS funds.

Two bridges on Rt 114 were replaced this year. The bridge near Winterset Construction and the Riverside Senior Enrichment Center is complete and the bridge at the foot of Darling Hill Road will be fully completed this summer. These state projects are tremendous improvements for the motorists of Vermont and the Lyndon area. Thank you VTRANS!

The Highway crew, with contracted assistance from Pike Industries, rebuilt and repaved a section of Red Village Road from Severance Hill Road to Sheldon Brook Road. Back Center Road received a final layer of top pavement and new shoulder materials.

Adjacent to the Millers Run Covered Bridge, the Town constructed a Park and Ride facility using a combination of state and local funds. The Park-and-Ride facility not only encourages car-pooling, but also acts as a parking area for recreationalists wanting to take advantage of the canoe and kayaking possibilities in Lyndon, plus walkers and cyclists wishing to connect with the many recreation paths and trails in the area. This project was completed in June.

In 2006 we did not purchase any new highway equipment. The Town of Lyndon's fleet is in reasonably good shape, due to the preventative maintenance performed by our staff. Most of our dump/plow trucks are 1990's vintage with the exception of a new addition last year. Repair expenses will be tracked carefully to determine if a new truck will be required in 2008.

The proposed 2007 highway budget reflects the resources and hard work it takes to maintain existing roads and reconstruct streets. We have experienced two successive warm winters with a great deal of winter erosion. Combined with Lyndon's growing traffic volume, the demands placed on our roads will necessitate modest increases in the tax rate to provide the essential, high quality product that our residents want and expect.

As always, we take pride in the quality winter care our highway crew performs, and compliment them for it.

### **Community & Economic Development**

Tourism in northeastern Vermont is the largest economic driver and the selectboard believes the local economy benefits from the Town's efforts.

The Town actively worked to bring large tour groups to Lyndon during this past year. Many townspeople were active in helping these events succeed and we thank them for their support and efforts. During February, The Vermont Association of Snow Travelers held their annual winter fundraiser in Lyndon, which brought approximately a thousand snowmobilers to town.

In the summer, the Vélo Québec bicycle tour brought over 2000 cyclists to Lyndon for a weekend while they stayed at local motels, ate at area restaurants and purchased many items of interest from local retailers. The Caledonia County Fair Association also hosted the cyclists at their facility, contributing to the success of the event and its resulting positive economic impact to Lyndon. The selectboard and town offices actively support bringing events like these to our community.

The St. Johnsbury-Lyndon Industrial Park has experienced a busy year. The Charles Carter Center, NVDA's incubator building and training center, is fully occupied. A local heating manufacturing company, RadianTec, Inc., is completing a beautiful new facility and will be moving into it in the spring. Wholesaler and retailer, Fastenal, has a new store located in the Industrial Park across from the NVDA building. Fred's Propane is constructing a vehicle maintenance facility in the Park, and the Little Dipsy Doodle Day Care is completing a new daycare center which will accommodate 150 children. A new wireless broadband service has been installed in the Carter Building, making high speed wireless internet available for use throughout the Industrial Park. Our thanks to Dick Lawrence, Dick Boera and Doug Wheeler for their service as Lyndon's representatives on the the park board of directors. Dick now chairs this board, succeeding the late Bill Costa of St. Johnsbury.

New Sidewalks were completed on the north and south ends of Center Street using VTRANS enhancements funding. The new sidewalk is designed to blend into the historic attributes of Lyndon Center, while keeping the many residents and school children, who walk there, as safe from vehicle traffic as possible. This sidewalk completes a critical section of the Path Around Lyndon vision, led by Cathy Boykin. In continuing this initiative, PAL organizers were also successful at securing another \$28,000 planning grant for the town from VTRANS. This will be used to determine the best way to complete the path from Miller's Run Covered Bridge to U.S. Route 5.

The Pedestrian Bridge project over the Passumpsic River, connecting the village to Lyndon Center and the Lyndon Institute athletic fields has received historical and archeological clearances. The bridge, which has been in place for the past four years, will be designed to reflect the covered bridge heritage in Lyndon. Final designs for the bridge and walkways will be completed this spring. Environmental permitting and construction bidding will be done this summer.

A grant to study the establishment of a Model Early Childhood Professional Development Center in town is being completed by its organizers. The cooperative involves area educators and Lyndon State College and will provide training in best practices for child care providers and preschool educators.

Gilman Housing Trust continues to manage and administer a rehabilitation loan-pool in excess of \$1,000,000 for the town. Gilman is also in the process of purchasing the Maple Ridge Mobile Home Park with the assistance of \$275,000 in grant funds secured by the town. This will assure affordable housing for more than 60 residents of Lyndon.

## **Town Planning / Growth / Permits**

Residential and business growth continues in Lyndon and is expected to grow by leaps and bounds as the area around us becomes developed by corporations experienced in resort development. The planning and zoning department processed a large number of permits, 168 during this past year. This represents more than \$5,000,000 in private and public construction and equipment investments here in Lyndon.

The selectboard would like to thank Zoning Administrator Justin Smith and assistant Ellie Cornell for the friendly way they help applicants through the permit process. Residents are reminded that permits are required for any new construction on your property before you build or construct. Oftentimes, permits are handled and approved quickly by the Zoning Administrator. The office is there to help, and protect you and your neighbors.

A formal five-year update of our Town Plan, as required under Act 200, is in process. To assist in this effort, the planning department secured a \$15,000 grant to hire professional planning assistance. Effective September 1, 2006 the Planning and Zoning Board was split into two separate boards to focus on projected new growth and the planning necessary for it. The town is fortunate to have seven residents with expertise in several areas of growth and development accept appointments to the Planning Commission, which is working on the new town plan. Additionally, the town is equally fortunate to have nine residents serving as members and alternates on the Development Review Board which processes all building applications.

The application form for Highway Access was redesigned during 2006 to make it easier for applicants to understand and make the process more user-friendly.

## **Wastewater**

Our facilities are nearing the end of their 30-year life cycle, and therefore the Town is in the process of submitting plans to the State Environmental Agency for upgrades that need to be done.

The sludge processing (ATAD) technology has been carefully monitored and modified to control the odor problems experienced in 2005 and early 2006. The ATAD is producing Class A sludge, as designed, and the odor problems have not recurred for 8 months. As upgrades are made to satisfy State standards, we can expect some higher operational costs. Class A sludge is the result of the process that converts wastewater and sewer sludge to fertilizer which can be safely used for landscaping projects, lawns and hay crops.

## **Solid Waste**

Curbside pickup service has been extended with Waste Systems International, Inc. (WSI) for another year. We have been able to maintain the residential sanitation fee at \$150 again this year. This fee covers all curbside pickup and tipping fee costs for trash plus curbside recycling pickup, as well as providing for residents with two annual Bulky Days and all the programs offered by the Northeast Kingdom Waste District, meeting all State requirements for the Town while meeting the needs of Lyndon's citizens. In 2006 the Town landfilled nearly 4,200 tons of trash. About half of that was residential waste picked up at your door. We encourage every household to recycle; reducing dumping costs and assuring that our fees can remain at the current level. Additional towns are joining the regional waste district, which results in the surcharge on residential waste going down from \$19.50 per ton to \$19.25, allowing us to maintain our local rates even though we have increased the tonnage.

## **During the coming year**

The Selectboard's priorities will include:

1. Planning for the required upgrades to the wastewater treatment facility to meet the highest levels of state discharge standards.
2. Construction and paving of York Street.
3. Keeping our roads and highways in good, safe conditions for our residents and those visiting our town.
4. Attracting businesses and tourists to our community, enhancing our economic and lifestyle opportunities.
5. Develop a Town website with notices, forms, meeting minutes, etc. on line.

## **Thank you**

The board wishes to thank you and all who helped make Lyndon a better place to work and live during this past year. We are here to serve you and look forward to hearing from you when we can help.

Selectboard, Town of Lyndon  
Bruce James, Chair  
Martha Feltus  
Dick Boera