

SELECTBOARD REPORT FOR 2011

This past year of 2011 has been an eventful one for the Town of Lyndon. Some projects were planned and executed on schedule while others, most notably the heavy storm event of late May, came upon us by surprise. Throughout the year our staff of salaried and volunteer workers has done their part in a thoroughly competent manner. We are grateful for their service.

Although the May 26-28 storm caused havoc with many of our roads, we were fortunate that we did not suffer as severe damage as some neighboring towns. Part of our good fortune was due to the diligent routine work in the past in keeping roadways, bridges, culverts in good condition. Nevertheless, the damage that did occur required approximately \$100,000 in labor, equipment, and materials to repair. Since this \$100,000 in expenses had not been anticipated, we were pleased to have all our claims reimbursed by FEMA in a relatively prompt manner. This allowed our highway budget to operate as expected, including the acquisition of a new grader to replace our 1986 model. We will make additional road improvements in 2012, however we have decided to postpone the purchase of a new dump truck in order to keep the tax rate in line.

The reconstruction of our waste water treatment plant officially began in summer, 2011 and will be complete by fall, 2012. This upgrade will position us for efficient, more reliable service for the next several years. Unfortunately, the debt load required by this upgrade has caused us to increase the user rates. During 2012 the Selectboard will consider methods of restructuring the rate schedule so as to more equitably distribute the cost of service.

Our solid waste programs did well this year, showing a decrease in tonnage going to the landfill (presumably due to more recycling by our citizens) and a steady patronage of our twice yearly Bulky Days. These recycling efforts reduce our landfill costs and help us keep the curbside collections costs stable.

Last year we reported that the Town and Village would consider a joint garage facility for the future. A committee led by Russ Blake reviewed several sites and recommended three to the boards for consideration. We are currently waiting for a study on remediation of possible contamination at one of the locations to assist us in making a site choice. Considerations of building/site features, costs, and funding possibilities will be the next step in this process.

Our police department was at its full complement of three officers during most of the year. Consequently we have seen an increase in number of calls received, but fortunately there has not been a negative shift in types of instances investigated. A Neighborhood Watch program has been working for a few months and a Restorative Justice program has just recently been instituted. We thank the volunteers involved in both these efforts. By March we hope to replace Officer James Hemond who recently left us after five years of service. The taxes needed to fund the Police Department are contributed evenly by Village and non-Village tax payers.

Establishing guidelines for growth, confirming that current development meets our approved guidelines, and encouraging future development are topics of concern to all of us. Our Planning Commission and

Development Review Board have been active this year with numerous topics of discussion and applications for development. The Planning Commission will propose a bylaw soon which will establish guidelines for signs. The Selectboard is proposing the establishment of a tax stabilization system as a possible aid in attracting new commercial, industrial, or agricultural development. Additional information on this topic will be available before Town Meeting.

Although the recreational opportunities in Lyndon depend heavily on volunteer efforts, the physical facilities used in two major areas are owned by the Town. In 2011 the Town completed a formal management agreement regarding the Fenton Chester Ice Arena and hopes to complete a similar agreement for Shonyo Memorial Park in early 2012. In both cases the responsibilities and prerogatives of the managing entities (Lyndon Area Sports Association and Lyndon Outing Club) are reconfirmed as they have operated in the past, while at the same time the integrity of the assets are preserved for the Town's benefit. We think this is a prudent approach in handling these valuable properties. A skatepark was opened this year on the grounds of Shonyo Park and has been well received. Volunteer support in many capacities is needed by both these organizations and we encourage you to participate.

Most town services are paid for by your tax dollars. In order to more equitably assess those taxes we completed a full reappraisal of properties in town in 2011. The new Grand List was announced in June and completed with some adjustments by late summer. The overall increase in value was approximately 22%. With new software and training our own elected Listers will be able to handle our next reappraisal, thus saving several thousand dollars on future efforts. The value of our Grand List was also affected by the decision last year to eliminate the value Business Personal Property. We anticipate these two changes, coupled with a diligent effort to minimize increases in required tax revenues to support budgets, will result in an unchanged tax rate for 2012.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to serve the Town of Lyndon as elected members of the Selectboard, while also acknowledging the critical efforts of many other elected and appointed officials as noted in the beginning of the Town Report. Please contact any of us with concerns or ideas regarding the operation of our Town.

Respectfully submitted,

Marty Feltus

Kermit Fisher

David Dill