



Scott Shanley
General Manager

Town of Manchester

General Manager's Report

January 2007

Town Hall Closings

Municipal offices will be closed on Monday, January 1, 2007 for New Year's Day and Monday, January 15, 2007, in observance of Martin Luther King Day.

General Manager's Office

Manchester Government Academy

The tenth session of Manchester Government Academy will begin Thursday, March 22 and end after ten sessions on Thursday, May 24, 2007. Citizens interested in learning more about local government may enroll in this program by contacting Tricia Catania in Human Resources at 647-3102.

Finance Department

Assessment and Collection

The tax bills for the Motor Vehicle Supplemental Grand List of October 1, 2005 were mailed in December. These bills apply to vehicles registered after October 1, 2005 and cover a time period through September 2006. 10,164 bills were mailed and payments are due by February 1, 2007.

This year's Supplemental Grand List data arrived roughly five weeks after the statutory deadline given to the CT Department of Motor Vehicles. The Assessment and Collection staff was able to make up most, if not all of this delay in order to get the supplemental bills out in December.

The Supplemental Grand List contained about 400 fewer vehicles than last year's Supplemental Grand List. The Assessment and Collection staff reviewed this drop in the vehicle count with the Department of Motor Vehicles and verified that virtually every other municipality in Connecticut experienced a similar decrease. The decrease is attributable to fewer newer cars being registered in the State of Connecticut in 2006 than in 2005. It is believed this could have a slight decreasing effect on the Motor Vehicle Regular Grand List of October 1, 2006, as well, as that Grand List will also contain fewer new vehicles than the prior year.

The Office of Assessment and Collection reminds residents that current tax payments for the second installment of Real Estate and Personal Property bills for the Grand List of October 1, 2005 are due by the February 1, 2007 deadline. Also, some residents will be receiving Motor Vehicle Supplemental Bills, which will also be due by February 1, 2007. The Tax Office will be open Monday – Friday, 8:20 a.m. - 4:40 p.m., with extended hours to 6:00 p.m. on February 1. The Manchester branches of New Alliance Bank are now accepting January payments only. Residents should bring their bill, as the bank has no tax information. There is a night drop box located behind Town Hall which can be used, and current tax payments (not delinquent) can be made to the Customer Service and Information Center in Town Hall.

Work on the Grand List of October 1, 2006 continues and should be on target for signing in late January 2007. The CT Department of Motor Vehicles until late in the day did not send out the motor vehicle registration data that is needed for this Grand List on December 11, 2006. This is 11 days after the statutorily mandated deadline of December 1, 2006. The Office of Assessment and Collection has expressed concern about the delays in obtaining this data with DMV.

Vision Appraisal Technologies completed the information hearing on 2006 revaluation values on December 4, 2006. Approximately 750 properties were appealed at the informal hearing level. This represents about 4.2% of the non-exempt properties in Manchester.

The original estimate was that 5% to 9% of the property owners would schedule an informal hearing. The actual number of informal hearings is lower than forecast. The forecasted percentage was based on the typical informal hearing percentages witnessed by Vision Appraisal Technologies and other towns in recent years.

It is believed that the number of informal hearings in Manchester was lower than expected for several reasons. First, the high amount of advance publicity and discussion gave ample warning of the anticipated assessment increases to property owners throughout Manchester. This publicity included almost 30 revaluation workshop presentations, significant levels of revaluation programming on Channel 16, a number of articles in local newspapers and other publications, and the recent decision to phase-in the revaluation over three years. It is believed that all these items combined to reduce the level of informal hearings and telephone and foot traffic in the Assessment and Collection Office. Although the office has been very busy, the revaluation issues have not been overwhelming which is a positive sign.

Vision Appraisal Technologies sent a second revaluation notice to the owners of all properties examined in the informal hearing process. Between now and the end of January 2007, the Assessment and Collection staff will continue to work on the revaluation Real Estate, Motor Vehicle and Personal Property Grand List of October 1, 2006. The combined Grand List should be completed and signed in late January 2007.

After the Grand List is signed, the Office of Assessment and Collection will send out final assessment notices to all real estate and personal property owners. After this notice is sent, owners who wish to appeal their assessments may file an application to appeal to the Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA). BAA application may be obtained from the Office of Assessment and Collection, and must be filed by February 20, 2007. This deadline is one set

by State Statute and cannot be extended by the Town. Anyone filing a BAA application after February 20, 2007 will not receive a BAA hearing for the 2006 Grand List. The BAA will begin their hearings in late February 2007 and conclude their hearings in March or April 2007, after which the final Grand List will be established. Traditionally, the number of appeals filed at the BAA level is less than at the informal hearing level, however, since the informal hearing level was lower than expected, it is believed that a minimum of 400 appeals to the BAA will be the norm.

Public Works Department

Building Department Activity for November 1 – November 30, 2006

Building Permits	November 2006	October 2006
Total applications received	289	351
Total permits issued	308	324
Total revenue	\$59,380.08	\$54,429.40
Construction value*	\$4,136,299	\$4,914,155
Inspections conducted	704	708

Code Enforcement

Cases opened	37	31
Cases closed	44	18
Inspections conducted	82	122

Comparison of the fiscal years July 1 – November 30

Building Permits	FY2007	FY2006
Total applications received	1547	1747
Total permits issued	1499	1548
Total revenue	\$376,367.63	\$366,077.80
Total construction value*	\$49,181,462.43**	\$25,875,777.36
Inspections conducted	3650	4365

Code Enforcement

Cases opened	303	254
Cases closed	284	303
Inspections conducted	563	757

Notes:

*Includes the value of Town projects where fees were waived

**This value has yet to be adjusted for value added due to cost affidavits at Certificate of Occupancy issuance.

Human Services Department

Youth Service Bureau

The YSB has been awarded a grant from Youth Service America for a program to be completed on National and Global Youth Service Day. The program was one of 16 selected from a pool of over 250 nationwide applicants.

Certified Nurse Aid Program

The Town's twelfth CNA training program concluded on December 8, 2006 with a graduation ceremony at Manchester Community College. Eleven students graduated, two with perfect attendance.

All graduates took and passed the State of Connecticut CNA exam on December 20; they are now fully-fledged CNAs and will begin their job search in earnest.

Interviews for the Spring 2007 CNA class will begin in early January 2007. The next program is scheduled to run from March 26 through May 18, 2007.

Planning Department

Former Dean Machine Property Environmental Assessment

The Manchester Redevelopment Agency obtained a Special Contaminated Properties Remediation Insurance Fund loan (SCRIF) from the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development and engaged HRP Associates, an environmental consulting firm, to conduct a Phase II environmental site assessment, and a Phase III site investigation, and develop a recommended remedial action plan for the vacant Dean Machine buildings at 102 Colonial Road and 372 Progress Drive. The property has been vacant for several years, is tax delinquent, and is contaminated. Although many prospective buyers were interested in this property, the uncertainties over the extent of contamination and cost of site remediation have kept the site vacant.

The Agency's contract with HRP further defined the extent and nature of the pollution on the site, identified recommended methods to remediate the pollution, and provided cost estimates for remediation. The report was presented to the Agency on December 7, 2006. HRP located soils contaminated with petroleum and solvents used as part of the manufacturing process. The levels of contaminants were found to be above the remedial standards established by the State of Connecticut DEP and must be treated or removed. Of particular concern is the threat the solvents pose to the groundwater supply.

HRP recommends on-site remediation methods to treat the conditions found here, including injecting a chemical compound to oxidize the contaminated materials. The total estimated remediation costs are between \$377,000 – \$562,000. Additional wells will need to be drilled and laboratory work conducted before the actual treatment can begin.

The HRP report has been provided to the mortgage holder. If the property is sold through an arms length transaction the entire delinquent tax bill (approximately \$300,000) would be paid to the Town, a portion of which will repay the SCRIF loan. If the property cannot be sold through an arms length transaction in the next few months we will request the Board to authorize the Town administration to negotiate the sale of the tax lien.

2006 Point in Time Count of the Homeless

The Manchester Continuum of Care Working Group recently completed and published its 2006 Point in Time Count of the Homeless. The Continuum is a group of representatives from local service agencies and Town Staff which distributes information on homelessness and homeless needs in Manchester, advocates for the development of housing and services to provide and maintain adequate affordable housing and supports for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness. Staff from the Human Services and Planning Departments presented the findings of the 2006 report to the Manchester Community Service Council and The Manchester Mental Health Network. This was the 5th year that the Continuum has completed a week long count. Notable survey results included:

117 surveys were completed representing 198 people who were considered to be homeless (117 adults and 81 children).

As in previous years, over 80% of respondents were from Manchester or surrounding towns. Most homeless surveyed were sleeping in a shelter or were doubled up with friends. 68% of respondents reported needing substance abuse or mental health treatment. 70% of respondents had had medical treatment in the past year and 47% reported using the emergency room as their primary source of healthcare.

Town and nonprofit agencies are, however, having significant impacts in ending homelessness in town. Three developments in particular are:

A new shelter outreach program sponsored by the Genesis Center and Manchester Conference of Churches connected 237 individuals with a health clinician in its first year. Of those, 151 received a mental health screening and of the 151 screened, 78 were connected or re-engaged into Community Health Resources services and 50 others were referred to alternative treatment programs.

Manchester Community Health services opened a clinic in October of 2005 providing primary and dental for adults and children. The clinic accepts most health plans including HUSKY, Medicare and Medicaid and has a sliding fee schedule.

A group called the Manchester Initiative for Supportive Housing is increasingly active in promoting supportive housing, a combination of independent, affordable living units and available services. Supportive housing has been shown to help end chronic homelessness while proving less expensive than operating emergency shelters and providing emergency room health care to homeless individuals and families.

With this information, the Manchester Continuum of Care continues to work towards its mission of information sharing and advocacy. Manchester will be participating in the 2007 statewide homeless count on January 30th.

Recreation Department

All Winter Session Recreation Department classes begin during the first three weeks of January. The adult organized sports program is in full swing with 47 teams competing in volleyball and 16 in basketball.

Indoor soccer for ages 5-8 begins January 21 at the Mahoney Recreation Center.

In person registration for winter/spring swim lessons will be held January 6 from 9:00 a.m. – noon at the Community Y. On-line registration will begin Sunday, January 7.

Center for Service Learning

Participants in the program will begin their first community service project in January. The Community Development Block Grant funds the Center for Service Learning. The program's goal is to provide middle school aged youth with opportunities for personal growth through empowerment by combining meaningful community service with academic learning, civic responsibility and reflective experience. It provides opportunities for leadership development and positive connections to the community. This year's program is being held at Illing Middle School and there are 30 students enrolled.

Christmas in April

Planning for Christmas in April (Rebuilding Together) 2007 is well underway and is scheduled for Saturday, April 28. Christmas in April is a volunteer organization that in partnership with the community rehabilitates the houses of low-income homeowners. The program utilizes volunteers and donated money and materials to rebuild the homes of Manchester residents. 2007 will mark the 15th year of service in Manchester.

The national office of the Christmas in April organization has changed its name to Rebuilding Together and has encouraged local affiliates to do the same. Manchester's organization has made the transition slowly using "Rebuilding Together with Christmas in April" for the past few years and calling it Rebuilding Together this year.

To date, 52 homeowners have applied for assistance. Applications will be accepted at the Recreation Office through March 1, 2007.

The fundraising committee is very pleased to announce a partnership with the SBM Charitable Foundation. The Foundation has committed to support Rebuilding Together with potential funding of \$35,000. The grant is payable in the amount of \$20,000 with an additional amount of matching funds. The foundation will match cash contributions from the community up to \$15,000.

For further information, please contact Scott Garman or Liz Tracy at the Recreation Office, 647-3084.

Manchester Public Library

Wintertime Sunday afternoon hours (1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.) begin at the Mary Cheney Library on January 7 and Wintertime Saturday hours (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) begin for the Whiton branch on January 6.

Programs

“Organizing for Tax Time” – Sandra Baranowski
Saturday, January 20 at 2:00 p.m.

Internet Searching Techniques computer class
Saturday, January 27 at 2:00 p.m.

Both of the above programs will be in the Howroyd Room at Mary Cheney and require pre-registration, 645-0821.

Monthly Book Discussion series, “Ethan Frome” by Edith Wharton – Jan. 22 at 7:00 p.m.

Children’s Story times begin January 8 with registrations for selected programs occurring during the entire previous week.

The Reading Education Assistance Dogs (READ) and their handlers return on Saturday, January 13 at 2:00 p.m. in the Howroyd Room and pre-registration is necessary for this chance for children to read to dogs.

Teen programs at the Howroyd Room will take place every Wednesday evening from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. and each Thursday afternoon from 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. Attendance at these programs during the fall and winter has routinely exceeded 50 teens per session.

Manchester Fire-Rescue-EMS

Activity Report for November 2006

Medical/rescue	487
Fire Related	9
Hazardous Conditions	24
Public Service	33
Good Intent	42
False	39
Mutual Aid	<u>2</u>
Total Calls	636

Fire Hydrant Maintenance

By ordinance, owners, agents of owners or occupants of any building or land bordering a fire hydrant are responsible for removing snow, sleet, and ice within 24 hours after a snowstorm. Hydrants should be cleared of snow and ice so as to create a four-foot clearance in all directions and a three-foot path from hydrant to street so the fire department can have unimpeded access in the event of a fire. With over 2,000 hydrants in town, the Fire Department desperately needs the cooperation of its customers in this matter and appreciates compliance of all.

Fire Department Anniversaries

In 1897, 13 Manchester businessmen initiated a petition to organize a fire district in South Manchester. At a meeting on April 21, 1897, a motion was passed to organize and equip such a fire department. The name selected was the “**South Manchester Fire District**”. In 2007, Manchester Fire-Rescue-EMS Department will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its birth.

On June 30, 1957 the South Manchester Fire District, including its equipment and buildings, was taken over by the Town of Manchester for the sum of \$1.00. The South Manchester Fire District officially became the South Manchester Fire Department and has since been renamed to Town of Manchester Fire Department and finally, the Town of Manchester Fire-Rescue-EMS Department. The 50th anniversary of the “Town” Fire Department occurs in 2007.

In July 2008, the Fire Department will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Advance Life Support (Paramedic) program in Manchester. During the first six months of the program, the department responded to approximately 500 medical incidents. Today the department averages 2,870 medical incident responses every six months.

Town Clerk's Office

On December 2nd, four members of the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council were at Town Hall for the “Genealogist Road Show”. Over forty people signed up for a free consultation session with one of the genealogists. During the past two years this event has become increasingly popular, and we will again do a “Road Show” along with Family History Day on June 2nd.

During the past six months we have helped Vest A Dog of CT raise over \$3000 to help purchase protective vests for K-9 patrol dogs. We recently learned that our efforts help to expedite the delivery of protective vests for MPD K- (patrol dogs “Boomer” and “Dibbs”).

Year to Date Statistics Jan. – Nov.

Land recordings 12,097
Vital record requests 12,442
Dog licenses issued 3,489
Game licenses issued 5,779
Passports 200

Vital Recordings YTD Jan.- Nov.

Births 978

Marriages 314

Civil Unions 19

Deaths 487

Employee News

Newly Hired

Brian Moule - Public Works

Michael Janangelo - Public Works

David Slossar - Public Works

Donna Giorgetti - Customer Service and Information Center

Sharon Edwards - Youth Service Bureau

Shy'ra Crawford - Youth Service Bureau

Recently Retired

John Depietro - Police Department

Paul Lombardo - Police Department