



**Scott Shanley**  
General Manager

# *Town of Manchester*

## **General Manager's Report**

October 2007

### **Holiday Closing**

All municipal offices will be closed on Monday, October 8 for Columbus Day.

### **Customer Service and Information Center**

#### **Manchester Road Race**

The 71st running of the Manchester Road Race takes place Thanksgiving Day, November 22 at 10:00 a.m. Information and online registration is available now at [www.manchesterroadrace.com](http://www.manchesterroadrace.com). Registration forms are also available at the Customer Service and Information Center in Town Hall, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

### **Finance Department**

#### **Assessment and Collection**

Work continues on the Grand List of October 1, 2007. Due to a vacancy in one of the appraisal positions in the Office of Assessment and Collection, the Town has contracted with Steve Maciel to assist with valuations resulting from work performed under building permits. Steve is working for the Town on a contract basis to help the office while shorthanded. Steve has several years of fieldwork and valuation experience with a few revaluation companies.

In addition, Personal Property Declarations for 2007 were mailed in September to approximately 3,200 personal property accounts. These must be filed by November 1, 2007. In conjunction with the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, the Assessment staff is participating in a workshop on October 3 at 8:00 a.m. This workshop will assist taxpayers in learning how to fill out their personal property declarations. Anyone interested in attending may contact the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. In addition, those unable to attend the workshop may contact the Assessor's Office at 647-3015 with questions about personal property declarations.

The Town is also conducting several audits of personal property accounts for this year. This is an annual program designed to educate business owners as well as identify unreported business personal property.

**Manchester Fire-Rescue-EMS**

**Activity Report for August 2007**

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Medical/Rescue       | 511 |
| Fire Related         | 12  |
| Hazardous Conditions | 22  |
| Public Service       | 32  |
| Good Intent          | 62  |
| False                | 38  |
| Mutual Aid           | 4   |
| Total Calls          | 681 |

**History Lesson #9 – Manchester's Most Disastrous Fire**

(PART I) The most disastrous fire in the history of early Manchester occurred on October 23, 1913. The blaze destroyed a school where more than 1,000 students were in class; a library; a fire station; a boarding house and two single-family homes. Several other homes and businesses were also damaged yet no one was killed or seriously injured. The Ninth District School building was located on Main Street where the current Bennet School is located. Originally built in 1873 as a four-room schoolhouse, by Cheney Brothers, the building was expanded many times over the next forty years. The school, at the time of the fire, was all wood construction 360 feet in length and occupied half a city block. It housed a kindergarten, gymnasium, 40 classrooms and rooms for such activities as sewing and cooking. The school building was constructed of southern pine. Interior walls were pine boards finished with shellac. The building's construction was later described as "potential dynamite". The first report of a fire was to Miss Elizabeth Bennet, head teacher at the school. A boy ran up to Miss Bennet yelling that there was a fire in the book room. The room was used for book storage and was located under the stairs leading from the second floor to the gymnasium and cooking room on the third floor. Hurrying to the room, Miss Bennet saw the partitions smoldering behind a desk. She ran back to her office, broke the glass door on the alarm box and turned in the alarm. The alarm sounded at 2:17 p.m. Students and teachers began an orderly evacuation following the procedures they had practiced many times before (Superintendent Frederick A. Verplanck insisted on regular fire drills. At the beginning of every school year he required drills to be conducted daily to familiarize new students with the evacuation procedures). Once daily drills ended he continued to require frequent drills). Less than three minutes had elapsed since the initial alarm when Miss Bennet, followed by the school custodian, emerged from the building following a final check of the rooms. Miss Bennet later recalled that the time of the fire probably prevented a great loss of life. Just before the discovery of the fire, she had been lecturing a group of boys for bringing pea shooters to school. Upon dismissing them from her office, she glanced at the clock. It was 2:10 p.m. Recess would soon begin and the halls would be filled with children. Had the fire been reported five minutes later, the confusion produced in the crowded halls would have proved fatal.

### **Three Assigned To Shift**

Three probationary Firefighter-Paramedics have been assigned to shift following 26 weeks of training. Benjamin Dayton, Daniel Heald and Raymond Marconi graduated from Connecticut Fire Academy in May and then successfully completed eight weeks of Probationary Field Orientation and eight weeks of Paramedic Precepting. Assignment to shift of these personnel brings the department to a street level that has not been enjoyed since 2005.

### **Planning Department**

#### **Community Development Block Grant Program**

The Town of Manchester is entering its 17<sup>th</sup> program year (October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008) as an entitlement community in the Community Development Block Grant Program. The U.S. Department of Housing and Housing Development (HUD) provides an annual entitlement allocation, which is administered by the Manchester Planning Department. Program funds can be used to carry out a wide range of community development activities directed toward revitalizing neighborhoods, economic development, and providing improved community facilities and services, *primarily* for the benefit of low and moderate-income Manchester residents.

In August, the Planning Department submitted the Town's Annual Action Plan for the 17<sup>th</sup> Program Year to HUD for that agency's approval. The town's CDBG funding allocation for the 17<sup>th</sup> program year totals \$707,303.00. This consists of a HUD entitlement grant of \$672,203, \$2,450 is prior year loan repayments and \$32, 650 in reprogrammed funds from previous program years. Among the projects approved by the Board of Directors in the 17<sup>th</sup> Year Action Plan are the following:

- Housing Rehabilitation Program - \$300,000 (includes \$20,000 for house painting)
- Commercial Façade Renovation - \$50,000 (Spruce Street & town center commercial neighborhood)
- Manchester Historical Society - \$50,000 (HVAC system at Pine Street facility)
- Down-payment Assistance Program - \$40,000 (eligible first-time home buyers in targeted neighborhoods)

It is expected that HUD will approve the Plan by September 30, 2007. Further information on the CDBG program is available from the Planning Department at 647-3106.

#### **Economic Development Plan**

The Planning Department has released the proposed economic development element of the Town Plan of Conservation and Development. The plan is the result of months of work by the Department and the plan Steering Committee and includes an analysis of the Manchester economy within a regional and state-level context. Manchester's current industry strengths are compared to those targeted by the state and region and each of the Town's major industrial and commercial districts is analyzed according to available space, developable land and current and potential uses. The plan also looks at opportunities to incorporate emerging industries into our vibrant and diverse economy. The resulting goals

and objectives synthesize this research and analysis to provide a framework for Manchester's economic future. The plan is available for view and public comment at: <http://www.townofmanchester.org/Planning/EDPLan.cfm>.

A workshop on the plan for the Board of Directors, Planning and Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission, Redevelopment Agency and plan steering committee is scheduled for October 10<sup>th</sup>.

The PZC will be holding a public hearing on the plan in November with the goal of adopting a final version in December.

**Public Works Department**

**Building Inspection**

*Building Inspection Activity from August 1 – August 31, 2007*

| Building Permits            | August         | July 2007      |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total Applications received | 267            | 310            |
| Total Permits issued        | 251            | 318            |
| Total Revenue               | \$63,456.64    | \$68,543.44    |
| Construction Value*         | \$6,980,765.00 | \$4,745,821.08 |
| Inspections conducted       | 787            | 735            |

*Code Enforcement*

|                       |     |     |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|
| Cases opened          | 60  | 49  |
| Cases closed          | 99  | 45  |
| Inspections conducted | 176 | 110 |

*Comparison of fiscal years July 1 – August 31*

| Building Permits            | FY2008          | FY 2007         |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total Applications received | 577             | 625             |
| Total Permits issued        | 569             | 573             |
| Total Revenue               | \$132,000.08    | \$206,977.89    |
| Total Construction Value*   | \$11,726,586.08 | \$20,320,259.74 |
| Inspections conducted       | 1522            | 1470            |

*Code Enforcement*

|                       |     |     |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|
| Cases opened          | 109 | 171 |
| Cases closed          | 144 | 169 |
| Inspections conducted | 286 | 242 |

Notes:

\*Includes the value of Town projects where fees were waived

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

**Manchester Public Library**

**Pursue Personal Success@Your Public Library**

Pursue Personal Success@Your Public Library will begin on October 22 at 7:00 p.m. with a talk by Susan Salvo, CEO of Revenue Generators, who will be speaking about starting and growing a small business. This will be followed by other topics in subsequent months, such as Setting Goals, Time Management, and Motivation. The expectation is that residents who are interested in participating in this series of programs will be encouraged to listen to audio books (or read books) on each individual topic and then participate in discussing what they have listened to.

**Book Sale**

The Friends of the Library Book Sale will be held on Saturday, October 20 from 9:00 a.m. to noon in the Howroyd Room of the Mary Cheney Library.

**Storytelling**

Storyteller Len Cabral, who has been honored by the Smithsonian Institution for his folktale-telling abilities, will be at the Mary Cheney building on Saturday, October 13 at 10:30 a.m. to entertain families in the Howroyd Room with "Slightly Spooky Stories".

**Recreation**

The Community Y, Mahoney Recreation Center and the indoor pools open October 1<sup>st</sup>. All Fall programs begin the first week of October.

**Employee News**

**Recently Promoted**

Patrick Casey – Maintainer III, Public Works

**Recently Hired**

Rebecca Brown – part time Social Work Assistant, Senior Adult & Family Services