

Town Manager - 2003 Annual Report

I would like to thank all of our residents for the tremendous support I've received since I accepted this position 18 months ago. One of the most rewarding aspects of this job is listening to and acting upon the comments and recommendations of our citizens. I've worked with many of you on a variety of matters, including tax rates, property valuation issues, water-billing proposals, road repairs, and bears foraging in dumpsters. These collaborative efforts are an important part of our decision-making process at Town Hall.

This has been a year of significant accomplishment, thanks in large measure to the hard work of Town employees, our Selectmen, and the volunteers who serve on various municipal committees and boards. Many of the projects we've initiated or completed have been in the planning stages for years. Some highlights:

Water & Sewer Upgrade- In 2003 voters appropriated \$3.3 million to improve our water and sewer systems. Bonds issued last August will fund both projects.

The Town's water system upgrade, estimated to cost \$2.1 million, will occur primarily in the vicinity of the Mansion Hill neighborhood and along Route 3. The project involves replacement of water mains, repair or replacement of water and sewer lines, installation of a pressure relief valve, upgrades to the drainage system, and some other critical enhancements to Lincoln's aging infrastructure. Preliminary engineering work is ongoing, and construction work will begin this summer.

The sewer lagoon cleanup involves removal of sludge that has accumulated for the past 30 years on the bottom of the Town's two sewer lagoons. The first phase of the project, involving dredging of Lagoon No. 2, was completed late last year. It involved not only removal of the sludge, but also repairs to the electrical system at the lagoons. As I write this, we are reviewing bids from contractors for the cleanup of Lagoon No. 1. While the cost to clean both lagoons was originally projected at \$1.2 million, I now expect that figure to be significantly lower for two reasons: I negotiated a plan with the contractors who worked on Lagoon No. 2 that allowed our Highway Department crew to assist in the project. This resulted in a substantial reduction in costs. Also, additional savings will be realized because bids have come in lower than originally projected for the cleanup of Lagoon No. 1.

Fire Department Equipment- The Town received a \$25,000 FEMA grant to fund the Department's Cascades system. This allows our firefighters to replenish their oxygen supplies here, rather than traveling 30 miles to a neighboring town as they have done previously.

At last year's Town Meeting voters appropriated \$40,000 to refurbish our tower truck. The project – which included a new paint job and a structural overhaul – was completed in early summer for a cost of \$36,000.

Our Fire Chief, Nate Haynes, deserves recognition for his commitment to this community. The Chief worked tirelessly last October -- along with so

many others, during the search for young Patric McCarthy. Earlier in the year he was one of the key members of a crew that rescued some teenagers in the main stem of the Pemigewasset River in North Woodstock. The Woodstock Board of Selectmen presented the Chief with a citation honoring him for his role in that rescue effort. In December he received additional accolades when the Lincoln Selectmen presented him with the Town's 2003 Volunteer of the Year Award.

Highway Department- The Department replaced a one-ton truck and an 18-year old tractor front-end loader. We funded these items with dollars that had been set aside as part of our Capital Improvement program. Our Public Works crew saved the Town a significant amount of money by refurbishing the body of a large truck 2-1/2 ton International Dump Truck.

Wild Animal Ordinance- In 2003 our Health Officer, Marti Talbot, and I received many calls from frustrated residents and business owners who were confronted with bears roaming through town in search of food. In an effort to curtail the problem, we enacted a Wild Animal Ordinance that encourages people to use wildlife resistant containers for refuse and to avoid feeding wild animals.

Pollard Road Drainage- In 2003 we began to investigate the drainage problems on Pollard Road that seem to be particularly acute near the childcare center. Engineering work is underway and I look forward to a resolution in 2004.

E-911 System- Thanks largely to the efforts of Police Chief Ted Smith, the

long-awaited Enhanced 911 street numbering system is now in place. The major benefit of this program is that emergency personnel will find it easier to locate properties in town when responding to calls. In order for the system to work, it is important that all residents and business owners replace their old street numbers with the newly assigned ones. Please change your number if you have not already done so. If you need help, don't hesitate to call me.

Web site- Our Town Web site is now up and running. Please visit us on the Web at <http://www.lincolnh.org/>.

Cost Savings- One of my primary responsibilities is to manage our Town as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. I am pleased to report that we have succeeded in achieving annual reductions in expenditures in a number of areas. These include telephone service; the Wastewater Treatment Plant contract; employees' health insurance rates; legal and consulting fees; and Town Hall custodial services. The cumulative combined savings in these and other areas is in excess of \$100,000.

As we approach Town Meeting Day, I look forward to another productive and challenging twelve months. Please remember my door is always open. Don't hesitate to call or stop in.

Respectfully submitted,
Ted Sutton, Town Manager

