

ADMINISTRATION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Members of the Board of Selectmen are collectively the chief executive officer of the Town. As such, we are responsible for setting priorities and managing numerous administrative tasks. On the fiscal side, we work closely with the Town Administrator to ensure that our annual operating budget provides needed services in a cost-effective manner. Finally, we represent the Town's interests in various legislative and regulatory affairs.

The Board of Selectmen featured new faces in 2010. Kathleen Farrell and Ellen Sturgis completed their terms in May, and we thank them for their time and service. Jim Salvie and Charlie Kern were elected to the Board at that time. Long-time Selectman Tom Ruggiero resigned in July, and Tom Ryan joined the board in November after a special election. We thank Tom Ruggiero for his many years of leadership and service to Stow.

Throughout this year of change, the Selectmen focused on the following priorities, initially set in 2009 and supported throughout 2010:

- Obtain water for the Lower Village and Town center (highest priority)
- Increase the Town's affordable housing stock
- Implement the elementary school building project
- Implement the Minuteman Career and Technical High School building project
- Support economic development
- Determine the future use of the Pompositticut School building
- Develop a plan for a senior/community center
- Protect the Assabet River

We regularly tracked the Town's progress against these priorities. To that end, we completed many activities, including the following highlights:

- At a Special Town Meeting, the Town voted to proceed with amending a conservation restriction on a parcel of open space, owned by the Town and located off Deerfield Lane, in order to support a well. After four years of analysis, this parcel appears to be the most likely source of a public water supply for the Lower Village. The Town would not operate a well, but would lease the parcel to a well operator.
- The Selectmen and the Planning Board approved a Housing Production Plan, required under Massachusetts General Law 40B regulations to encourage affordable housing. In December, we submitted the plan to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for review and approval, and we look forward to having additional control over our affordable housing position.
- Ground breaking for the new elementary school building project occurred in June 2010. The year ended with construction at about 15% completion.
- Town Meeting supported a feasibility study for the Minuteman school building.
- Although moving toward a public water supply in the Lower Village was a big step in support of the Town's economic development, we also approved business and alcohol

licenses, retained a consistent tax rate for business and residential properties, welcomed new businesses in Town, and gave financial support to an existing conditions study for the Lower Village, which will serve as the underpinning for a Lower Village Master Plan being sponsored by the Planning Board.

- We created a Pompositticut Use Study Committee, which identified key potential uses for the building when it becomes available, including a senior/community center.
- We successfully appealed a decision by the Department of Environmental Protection and the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency for a NPDES permit modification to allow Marlborough to increase its discharge level of phosphorus into the Assabet River. Although the Phase 2 permits from DEP and Mass EPA were due in fall 2010, no requests for comments or permits have been issued.

Towards the end of the year, the senior/community center plan was identified as one of the key potential uses for the Pompositticut school building, so we combined those priorities into one. We also added as a new priority the provision of additional parking for the Town Building. As we enter 2011, we look forward to reviewing the recently adopted Master Plan and reassessing our priorities in light of the Master Plan recommendations.

We also spent considerable time addressing the following issues that were either emergent situations to which we had to react or unexpected opportunities to advance Town goals:

- The private water company for the Harvard Acres neighborhood, Assabet Water, filed for bankruptcy, and we worked with the Town Administrator and Representative Kate Hogan, Senator Jamie Eldridge, and various state agencies to develop a transition program for homeowners to private wells. Town Meeting supported the adoption of a low-cost loan program, which was authorized by emergency legislation passed in August and enacted by Town Meeting in November. The Town Administrator did a superb job managing implementation of the program. By the end of 2010, the majority of Harvard Acres homeowners had drilled private wells and disconnected from the Assabet Water system.
- We declared the “Blacksmith Shop” located on the Pompositticut School property to be municipal surplus property, and we accepted a bid to relocate it to Shelburne Farm.
- We supported proposed conditions for a superceding order, issued by the Massachusetts DEP, for drawing down Lake Boon as part of a comprehensive weed control program.
- We were actively involved in a variety of transportation activities, including the expansion of a shuttle service to the West Acton train station, obtaining funding and soliciting public input for the design of a portion of the Assabet River Rail Trail on Track Road, and planning for walkways along Route 117.
- We endorsed a hazard mitigation plan for the Town.
- We reviewed a Chapter 61 notification process and sponsored a test run for a Chapter 61 parcel that is going through foreclosure.
- We regretfully accepted the retirement of our police chief, Mark Trefry, and began the process of hiring a new police chief.
- We continued to act upon our goals transparently through our priorities chart.
- We strengthened our relationships with other Town Boards and departments through our Selectmen liaison assignments.

Although the Selectmen have taken on numerous activities to better the lives of Stow residents, we know we cannot act alone. Stow is blessed with an experienced and committed Town Administrator, Bill Wrigley, a dedicated group of Town employees, and many talented residents who step forward to volunteer for numerous boards and task forces, which perform much of the Town's work. The Selectmen appointed members to approximately 20 committees, and we recognize and thank all who volunteered their time and skills to the Town in 2010. We continue to post all available volunteer opportunities on the Town website, and we encourage residents to review it regularly to see how they can participate.

We would like to conclude by offering our most sincere appreciation to all of the residents who contributed their time and effort during the year. The Selectmen and Town employees could not do it without your help. Thanks to you, Stow is a great place to live.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Y. Spear, Chair
James H. Salvie, Clerk
Stephen M. Dungan
Charles Kern

Thomas E. Ryan III
Susan McLaughlin, Administrative Assistant
Phoebe Haberkorn, Office Assistant

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

The Stow Town Administrator, by Charter, serves as the Town's chief administrative officer. In this capacity, the Town Administrator manages the day-to-day operations of the Town, functions as its chief fiscal officer, chief procurement officer, chief personnel officer and chief contract negotiator. In addition, this position serves the Town as chairman of the dispatch communications administrative body, as the labor union grievance hearing appeal officer, the sexual harassment officer and the public records management officer. Throughout the year 2010, functioning in these various administrative positions, the Town Administrator managed several significant matters.

At the Annual Town Meeting in May 2010, as has been the case for several years, the Town Administrator recommended a balanced FY 2011 budget that contained expenditure amounts totaling considerably less than the upper limit prescribed by proposition two and one-half.

The FY 2011 municipal budget is a level services budget. More important, the FY 2011 municipal budget of 21,543,118 represents an actual decrease in total spending of 3.2% in comparison to FY 2010. It is important to note that the FY 2011 budget will produce a significant amount of unused levy capacity (i.e. excess taxing capacity). This is very good news for the taxpayer. Essentially, the Town's total tax appropriation for FY 2011 is approximately \$900,000 below the amount it is authorized to appropriate pursuant to the provisions of proposition two and one-half.