

State of the Town FY 2012-13

Despite the continuation of a difficult economic climate for small towns, the 2012-13 fiscal year was a productive one for the town. The elections last fall maintained the current council. We welcomed the residents of Fox Run and Windtree into the town, increasing our population to 8,000 residents. We witnessed some recovery in the real estate market as plans for two new subdivisions took shape, housing prices improved and inventories of existing homes tightened

In addition, we have continued to make progress as we work to address deferred maintenance. The Town Hall has had a much-needed facelift as has the gym and the Police and Fire Stations. We have completed important water improvement projects at Palisades and Balmoral and on Kentucky Avenue with more to come as our Water Department works to upgrade fire hydrants. We finally have an emergency water connection with Walden Ridge Utility District. We also received the Tennessee Department of Transportation's Technical Report on highway 127/Signal Mountain Boulevard, which is now scheduled for frequent monitoring and ultimately repair.

Importantly, we continue to enjoy the volunteerism of 86 members who serve on the Town's 15 boards and commissions, which provide us with broad-based community involvement and support.

Our town boards made significant contributions during the year. The Planning Commission completed its review and revision of the Subdivision Regulations to include guidelines for Conservation Development and modified the Planned Unit Development section of the zoning ordinance. The Tree Board completed its Tree Care and Maintenance Guidelines and initiated a program to "Save our native Hemlocks" from devastation by the woolly adelgid. The Design Review Commission adopted a procedure to simplify its review process. Meanwhile, the MACC Board, the Library Board and the Recreation Board have continued to expand their programs and the number of citizens they serve.

Across the board, our town departments have fared well thanks to the dedication of our department heads: Finance Director Carol White; Police Chief Boyd Veal; Fire Chief Eric Mitchell; Public Works and Storm Water Director Loretta Hopper; Water Department Director William Sanders; Library Director Karin Glendenning; Mountain Arts Community Center Director Barb Storm; and Recreation Director

Jarred Thompson. We especially thank former town manager Honna Rogers, who served the town until just a few weeks ago.

Finance Department

- We reduced the principal on the Town's school-related loan from \$3.2 million to \$2.5 million by making scheduled and additional payments. Going forward, the additional principal payments already made are estimated to save \$187,000 in interest expenses as we continue to work on early retirement of the debt.
- Began the 2011-12 fiscal year with a total General Fund balance of \$4,366,000 and ended with a total fund balance of \$4,899,000.
- Both savings and solid revenues contributed to the continued strength of our fund balance. Items of significance include:
 - State Revenues: State income tax receipts exceeded budget by \$101,000.
 - Local Revenues: Cable TV franchise tax receipts exceeded budget by \$42,700.
 - Administration/Finance Revenues: \$61,200 savings in capital outlays for buildings.
 - Highway and Street Maintenance Revenues: \$75,000 savings in salaries and benefits.
 - MACC Revenue: \$46,900 due to increased class sizes, rental fees and donations that exceeded the budget, and a \$65,500 increase in revenue from AARA funding received in August for prior fiscal year expenditures.
 - Recreation/Pool Revenue: \$25,000 savings in capital outlay budgeted for the pool.

Police Department

- Responded to 2,185 incidents. Of those, 177 resulted in arrests and 244 charges.
- Exceeded state requirements by training new officers a total of 1,120 hours, continuing our dedication to having one of the best and most responsive departments in the region. New officers now spend eight weeks in a field-training program before working independently.
- Existing officers completed an additional 892 hours of training.
- The department has improved its capabilities to provide in-house training. Department personnel now possess instructor level certifications in numerous disciplines including:
 1. DUI enforcement
 2. Domestic Violence
 3. Defensive Tactics
 4. Active Shooter Response
 5. Firearms
 6. Traffic Stops
 7. RADAR Operations
 8. Leadership
- In an effort to better serve those touched by serious crimes or traumatic events, the department continued a victim assistance program and secured related training for the sergeant designated as our Victim Assistance Officer.
- Continued to dedicate man-hours to traffic enforcement and traffic safety efforts with funding from a traffic enforcement grant, received from the Governor's Highway Safety Office.
- Participated in traffic safety awareness programs at SMMHS, and we continued our commitment to the School Resource Officer program.
- The department has met the required benchmarks for the Tennessee Law Enforcement Accreditation Program and continues the three-year process designed to improve efficiency, effectiveness and professionalism.

Fire Department

- The Fire Department responded to 657 calls for service during the year, 61% of which were rescue/medically related.
- Fire personnel spent over 6340 hours in training in major areas:
 - Emergency Medical
 - Drivers/Apparatus Operation
 - Rescue (vehicle, rope)
 - Hazardous Materials
 - Structural Firefighting
- We welcomed a new chief, Eric Mitchell following the retirement of John Vlasis.
- Ensured the safety of our residents by maintaining an ISO rating of 5.
- Department personnel completed 132 pre-fire plans and familiarization visits on commercial buildings.
- 219 fire safety inspections were conducted on commercial buildings.
- Hired 3 fulltime firefighters and 4 part-time firefighters.
- Flushed and Inspected 260 fire hydrants.
- Completed specifications and placed order for new Class A rescue pumper.
- Upgraded EMS service provided by the department from First Responder to Basic Life Support.

The Public Works Department

- Collected 3,541 tons of garbage at curbside.

- Supported 12,096 visits to our transfer station.
- Diverted approximately 1033 tons of recyclable material from the landfill through our recycling center.
- Chipped 1,359 tons of brush, which was made available to the public, keeping it out of the landfill.
- Offered mulch loading with our backhoe for \$5/ load on the first Saturday of each month during the summer. Over 270 people took advantage of this program.
- Spent 9,300 hours collecting brush and leaves from the roadside and over 500 loads of leaves were picked up.
- Performed pavement cuts, crack sealing, and pothole filling to prepare streets for paving.
- Completed construction of over 4000 feet of sidewalk along James Boulevard using Transportation Enhancement Grant funds.
- Total re-construction of Primrose Way and Primrose Circle using a method called Full Depth Reclamation. The work was completed in less than 3 weeks.
- Advertised the Request for Qualifications for an architect and engineer for the new Public Works Building and began the selection process.
- Trained all Public Works employees in various job related areas such as Construction & Asphalt Inspection, Traffic Control, Chemical Spill Response and Fleet Management.
- 3 staff members achieved TDOT's Hot Mix Asphalt Roadway Certification.
- 2 staff members are Certified Solid Waste Professionals through the Solid Waste Association of North America.

Stormwater Department

- Received a Notice of Coverage from TDEC as required by the State to maintain compliance with our National Pollution and Discharge Elimination System permit.
- 4 staff members achieved certification in the Tennessee Erosion Prevention & Sediment Control Program.
- The Town sponsored Clean Water Camps on Signal Mountain as part of our Stormwater Educational Outreach Program.

Water Department

- Responded to 708 work orders.
- Read 14,985 water meters and repaired 26 major water line breaks in the Town`s distribution system.
- Responded to 525 Tennessee One-Calls.
- Replaced five (5) old 4 1/2” fire hydrants with new 5 1/4” fire hydrants in various locations throughout the Town.
- Contracted the replacement of 4,150 feet of 2” galvanized line with 6” ductile iron pipe and the addition five (5) 6” fire hydrants in the Palisades/Balmoral area.
- Installed 480 feet of 12” ductile iron pipe and two (2) fire hydrants in the 800 block of Kentucky Avenue, greatly improving the fire protection capabilities in this area with help from Walden Ridge Utility District Director Ron West and his crew..

- With assistance from the Hamilton Country GIS Department, completed the water distribution infrastructure system map.
- Ensured the quality of our supply through preventive maintenance, our tank maintenance program, and maintained operational efficiencies at the lowest cost possible.

Library

- Added 2,093 items to the collection, including books, books on CD and movies. Most of these new items were purchased with Town funds, but some were purchased with donations from citizens or provided by the Friends of the Library.
- Added 282 new members during the fiscal year, giving the Town's library a patron base of 5,027 by the end of June 2012. The monthly circulation averaged 6,300 items, resulting in more than 75,000 items being checked out during the year.
- The Library's Summer Reading program had more than 600 patrons attend sessions, which included programs by the Tennessee Aquarium and the GPS Terpsichord dancers, a visit to the Signal Mtn. Playhouse and a swimming party as our grand finale.
- Other special programs featured speakers Libby Robertson, Clay Bennett, Cathy Holton, Barry Moser, Jane Bradley, Jim Cummings, Bill Landry, Rob Inman, Michael Ringering, Cindy Harris, and Stuart Payne of READ 20.
- The Library hosted an internet safety program for older patrons, Safe Surfing for Seniors, began weekly Conversational French classes, and continued Chess Club for young people.
- The Library also added eBooks to our offerings, initially through a consortium with the Chattanooga Public Library, and later with East Ridge and Collegedale libraries.

MACC

- Over 3000 people came through the doors of the MACC this year attending meetings, a variety of classes and summer camps, concerts, art exhibits and other events. Many came from the greater Chattanooga area.
- The MACC accomplished major repairs and improvements for compliance with fire and life safety codes.
- Offered over 100 classes for young and old this year, more than ever. That count did not include all of the private music instruction classes held each day, for which we have added 3 new teachers for a total of 11.
- The MACC Board met and accomplished our annual check on the 5-year strategic plan. We updated and extended the plan.
- Hosted and sponsored 8 major concerts and 3 art exhibits.
- Other performances include: “Blue Bird” puppet show, “Best Christmas Pageant Ever”, “Red Velvet Cake Wars”, “How To Eat Like A Child”, and “Beastie’s Birthday Party” (twice).
- Sponsored the Town Tree Lighting Festival, which broke all attendance records at 450.
- Generated revenue of approximately \$58,000.

RECREATION

- The department experienced an average 10% increase in participation in all sports over the prior fiscal year.
- Served approximately 1,900 youth in organized programs.
- Installed new hardwood floor in the gymnasium.

- Maintained the gym for youth play and free play for - youth and adults.
- Experienced record numbers in attendance and revenue for the Town swimming pool.
- Renovated the swimming pool with money from a state grant. Renovations included re-plastering of main pool and wading pool, separated the filtration systems, added new lights, new lifeguard stands, painted the entire facility, and re-surfaced 3,000 sq ft of deck.
- Established a maintenance program for our Town's hiking trails.
- Assisted the Tree Board in planting of 10+ Honor -Trees.
- Established a new football program (Scenic City Football) on the mountain.

As we enter the new fiscal year, we look forward to the building of a new maintenance facility, repairing the sidewalks in Old Town , the resurfacing of James Boulevard and placing conservation easements on select parklands.

We also look forward to our new town manager. Chris Dorsey will take over from Interim Town Manager Boyd Veal on June 17th. We hope the community will join us in welcoming him.

In closing, on behalf of the council, I would like to thank our dedicated town employees and the many citizen volunteers who make this town such a wonderful place to call home.