

# STATE of the TOWN

2013-14

Fiscal Year 2013-14 was a productive one for the Town. Bloomberg Business Week named the Town one of the best places in the country to raise a family; We witnessed the ongoing recovery in the real estate market as plans for new subdivisions took shape or started, housing prices improved, and inventories of existing homes tightened.

We continued to make progress addressing deferred maintenance. The gym floor was refinished, our pool was re-plastered and its deck repaired. We also installed a salt-water chlorination system, reducing the amount of chemicals necessary to maintain water quality. We tackled the design for the resurfacing of James Boulevard through public meetings. We completed plans for the Town's new maintenance facility, and pending TDEC approval, construction should begin this fiscal year.

But most importantly, in December of 2013, the final draft of the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan was released and our road up the mountain was approved for \$13 million in much needed improvements. These improvements are scheduled to be completed by 2020 and include erosion control, stabilization and rock fall mitigation.

And finally... we welcomed a new Town Manager, former Police Chief Boyd Veal, and under his leadership our town continues to flourish.

Across the board, our town departments have fared well thanks to the dedication of our department heads:

## **Finance Department**

Carol White

- We reduced the principal on the Town's school-related loan from \$1.9 million to \$1.2 million by making scheduled and additional payments. The loan is now on track to be paid off by 2016 at which time we anticipate a tax reduction for our citizens.

- We began the 2013-14 fiscal year with an unassigned General Fund balance of \$4,480,892 and ended with a preliminary and unaudited unassigned fund balance of \$5,352,341.
- Both savings and solid revenues contributed to the continued strength of our fund balance and they include:
  - State Revenues: State income tax receipts exceeded budget by \$270,000.
  - Building permits exceeded budget by \$23,400.
  - Administration/Finance: \$41,000 savings in salaries and operations
  - Public Works: \$46,000 savings in operations and architectural and engineering services.
  - MACC Revenue: \$62,000 due to increased class sizes, new programs and rental fees and donations that exceeded the budget.
  - Operating Transfers to Sanitation and State Street Aid: \$160,000 reduction in transfers from the general fund.
- Moody's Investment Service awarded the Town a Aa3 bond rating that will reduce the Town's current as well as future borrowing costs.

**Police Department**  
**Acting Police Chief Scott Ogrodowczyk**

- Responded to 2,050 incidents. Of those, 109 resulted in arrests and 163 charges.
- The Department has continued its commitment to training by exceeding state requirements for new officer training and by increasing in-house training in several areas including:
  1. DUI enforcement
  2. Domestic Violence
  3. Defensive Tactics

4. Active Shooter Response
  5. Firearms
  6. Traffic Stops
  7. RADAR Operations
  8. Leadership
- Served those touched by serious crimes or traumatic events by continuing the department's 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 continued our commitment to the School Resource Officer program even though personnel turnover prevented us from keeping a dedicated full-time officer on duty at the school.
  - Partnered with the Humane Educational Society to create an effective and affordable animal control program.
  - Began the process to establish the "Take Me Home Program" a free voluntary database to help police officers return lost individuals with developmental or cognitive disabilities to their homes.

## **Fire Department**

### **Chief Eric Mitchell**

- The Fire Department responded to 607 calls for service during the year, 62% of which were rescue and or medically related.
- Fire personnel spent over 6500 hours in training in:
  - Emergency Medical
  - Drivers/Apparatus Operation

- Rescue (vehicle, rope)
  - Hazardous Materials
  - Structural Firefighting
- Participated in a Public Protection Class Rating program by the Insurance Service Office (ISO) earning a rating improvement from Class 5 to Class 3. Out of more than 49,000 departments in the nation, we are one of only 2,740 to have a Class 3 rating. As a result, many residents could see a drop in their fire protection insurance premiums.
- Department personnel completed 132 pre-fire plans and familiarization visits on commercial buildings; 126 fire safety inspections; and flushed 260 fire hydrants.

**Building Codes Department**  
**Chief Eric Mitchell**

- The Building Codes department issued a significant number of permits and conducted a number of reviews and inspections to protect the health, safety and welfare of the community.
  - 24 commercial/multifamily permits were issued.
  - 213 residential permits were issued
  - 56 plan reviews were conducted
  - 2480 inspections were conducted
    - 1500 residential
    - 980 Commercial

**The Public Works Department**  
**Loretta Hopper**

- Collected 3,259 tons of garbage at curbside.
- Supported 13,292 visits to our transfer station.
- Diverted approximately 956 tons of recyclable material from the landfill through our recycling center.
- Chipped 880 tons of brush, which was made available to the public, keeping it out of the landfill.
- Offered mulch loading with our backhoe for \$5 per load on the first Saturday of each month during the summer. Over 290 people took advantage of this program.
- Spent 9,533 hours collecting brush and leaves from the roadside and over 700 loads of leaves were picked up.
- We used approximately 180 tons of salt and spent nearly 400 man hours on snow removal.
- Performed pavement cuts, crack sealing, and pothole filling to prepare streets for repaving.
- Paved over 3 miles of road.
- Continued work on the James Boulevard Rehabilitation Project that is now ready to enter the design phase.
- 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**

### **Loretta Hopper**

- Hired a full-time Stormwater Manager to further our commitment and efforts to improve the water quality in our streams.
- 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.
- Sponsored clean water camps in the Town as part of our stormwater educational program.

## **Water Department**

### **William Sanders**

- Responded to 990 work orders.
- Read 14,987 water meters and repaired 17 major water line breaks in the Town`s distribution system.
- Responded to 673 Tennessee One-Calls.
- Replaced two (2) old 4 1/2” fire hydrants with new 5 1/4” fire hydrants.
- Contracted for a study to identify improvements in the water system that will increase flow in areas with lower pressures or flow rates.
- Performed extensive leak detection within the Town.
- Ensured the quality of our supply through preventive maintenance, our tank maintenance program, and maintained operational efficiencies at the lowest cost possible.

## **Karen Glendenning Library**

- Added almost 1,200 new books to the collection, which now contains 33,200 items including books, books on CD and movies.
- Added 231 new members during the fiscal year, giving the Town's library a patron base of 5,362 with a monthly circulation averaging 5,916 items, resulting in more than 71,000 items being checked out during the year.
- Hosted almost 1200 children and parents who attended nine sessions of the Library's Summer Reading Program.
- Other special programs included book reviews, book signings, informational programs and travelogues. "Storytime" sessions were held each Tuesday during the school year with a total of more than 500 attending.
- The Library hosted language classes in French, and a children's Spanish class. The Chess Club for young people continues to meet at the Library.
- The Library continues to offer access to eBooks.

## **MACC Barb Storm**

- The MACC continued to grow as a vital part of our community offering meeting space and a variety of classes and summer camps and other events.
- Accomplished major repairs and improvements for compliance with fire and life safety codes.
- Offered almost 90 classes for young and old, not including private music instruction classes.
- Hosted meetings for numerous civic organizations and clubs including, Lion's Club, Signal Mountain Social Services, MACC Board, Parks Board, 3 Garden Clubs and the Iris Society, and sponsored 10 music events and 5 art exhibits.

- “Gallery 5” at the MACC opened its doors for its first exhibit in May. The gallery was made possible through donations from several citizens and will present an ongoing and ever-changing art exhibit experience for years to come.
- Sponsored the Town Tree Lighting Festival, which broke all attendance records with more than 700 attending.
- Generated revenue of approximately \$62,000.

## **RECREATION**

### **Jarred Thompson**

- Experienced an average 5% increase in participation in all sports over the prior fiscal year.
- Served approximately 1,800 youth in organized programs.
- Refinished the gym floor and maintained organized and free play programs for both adults and youth.
- Experienced record numbers in attendance and revenue for the Town swimming pool due to pool renovations and the new salt generating system, which is projected to pay for itself in 8 years.
- Installed a new playground at the Town Hall Complex.

As we look ahead in this fiscal year, we expect to begin the design phase of a new fire substation on Shackelford Ridge Road, the rehabilitation of James Boulevard along with the sidewalks in Old Town and the construction of our new public works facility and other improvements at the Transfer Station.

Meanwhile, we continue to enjoy the volunteerism of 86 citizens who, as members on the Town’s 15 boards and commissions, provide us with broad-based community involvement and support.

We are particularly proud of Tree Board Vice Chairman Barbara Womack, for her proactive response to the plight of our native hemlock trees, which are under attack by the wooly adelgid. She and her Hemlock Task Force have and are working to save hemlocks in Town neighborhoods as well as in our parks.

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