

## ***A MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR***



Before you know it, fall will turn into budget season. Next year's budget continues to hold many challenges. The Town Council has appointed a special adhoc committee to look at the next 3-5 years and try and predict the town's fiscal plight. The committee plans to hold public hearings and ask for citizens' input into the age-old question of services versus taxes. While we have been blessed with very generous amounts of state aid over the last 15 years, (thank you Representative Vallee) we cannot rely on the State for the same commitment in the future. Our choices are: ask the legislature to allow for local option taxes, change the tax laws to escape the over reliance on the property tax, or ask the citizens to increase their commitment above the Proposition 2 ½ limits allowed by law. I can already hear folk's saying, "What about living within your means?" "Why can't the town live within the revenue available?" "Why do you always ask us for more money?" Well, we can live within our means if you want a lot less "local government". I have pointed out many times that we don't control the cost of energy, health insurance premiums, or pensions. Collective bargaining, public bid, prevailing wage laws, and unfunded mandates all drive up the cost and size of

government and make it difficult to control costs. There is little support for regionalization of services or consolidation of governments. Federal and State education mandates drive up the cost of education. Also, we can't ignore our aging infrastructure. We have to update the nearly 40-year-old high school and some of the other schools, the Library needs repairs, and our roads and sidewalks constantly need repairing and updating.

There are no easy answers. We hope for citizens' input. As we struggle to define the balance between taxes and services, we reach out to the citizens to give us their opinions and help us to decide what is best for all. This is your government. We need your participation at public meetings and hearings and on every Election Day. Your quality of life, protection of property values, and commitment to the next generation is in your hands. Please don't sit on the sidelines. Watching on TV, reading newspapers, commenting on blogs & websites is fine, but your local government is a "contact sport" and we need to see you and hear you. We ask for your participation in defining what kind of community that you wish to belong to. Please call, write, visit or email me with questions and comments.

Sincerely,

Jeff Nutting  
Town Administrator

***"As we must account for every idle word, so must we account for every idle silence" – Benjamin Franklin.***