



TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

May 2007
Vol. 3, No. 9

www.townofchapelhill.org

A Short Report

By Roger L. Stancil,
Town Manager

The Town Council has begun its review of the Manager's Recommended Budget. I have several observations after participating in my first budget in Chapel Hill:

- **Kudos:** The Finance staff and the many people in each department who work on the budget are talented, dedicated and professional in their efforts to form a new budget. They are good stewards of the public trust, maximizing taxpayer resources. I appreciate their often invisible work.
- **Pay Increase:** One of the attractions of working for Chapel Hill is the respect I have observed the Council and the community have for its employees. This was evident again as the Council's first action was to affirm our staff recommendation for a 4% pay increase for employees. They realize good service emanates from good employees.
- **Key Issues of Budget:** The Town's debt service has increased dramatically to pay for the new Town Operations Center and other new facilities. Just as with our own personal budgets, the more we owe for debt service, the less we have for operations unless we find new revenues or new ways to do things less expensively. Over the next year, we will work hard to find efficiencies in our operations.
- **Communications:** The payroll changes discussed elsewhere in this newsletter are one example of efficiencies that will free up resources for other priorities. We could have done a much better job involving employees in that decision. We have re-learned how critical up front, straightforward communication is in any decision that affects people's lives. I commit to make that my highest priority as we continue to look at our organization for opportunities to provide excellent service in ways that are more efficient.

Nate Davis

Hargraves Center Supervisor

Department: Parks and Recreation

Joined Town: 1973

Construction of Hargraves Center was completed in 1945 with funds from both the Works Progress Administration and Chapel Hill's Negro Civic Club.

Duties: As supervisor of Hargraves Community Center, Nate manages a busy place that hosts events nearly every day of the week.

Personal: Nate's history at Hargraves began when he was a youngster playing on its courts. When he began working there 34 years ago, he met the children of his friends; today he meets their grandchildren. It's a legacy for which he is proud and a benefit to the town, but of little interest to the children who surround him every day. They call him "Papa."

In April, Nate was inducted into the Chapel Hill-Lincoln High School Hall of Fame. A graduate from the Chapel Hill High's class of 1969, Nate played football, basketball and ran track (All-Conference and All-Region 1967-68-69). He was one of the first black students to attend Chapel Hill High School after desegregation. He was voted Most Outstanding Athlete in his senior year. The Davis name is synonymous with the Hall of Fame itself. His brothers Ollie and Bob also have been inducted.

Nate and wife Peggy have three sons: Nate

In the Spotlight



Catherine Lazorko photo

Jr., a pastor in Durham; Anthony, a teacher at McDougle Middle School; and Oliver, a recent graduate of UNC-Charlotte. All have played basketball and/or football for the Tigers. Grandchildren are Jarell, 12 (yes, he plays football); and Reagan, 5.

Quote: "You have got to love what you do. If you have a passion, you will make it."

COMING UP

May 13: Mother's Day

May 18: Employee Appreciation Scoop-It Day, Noon to 1:30 p.m., Hargraves Center (Door Prizes!)

May 20-26: National Public Works Week

May 28: Memorial Day (Town Holiday)

May 31: Lunch & Learn, "Healthy Cooking and Food Labels"

Budget Review Schedule

• **Public Hearing - May 16**

• **Consideration of budget adoption - June 11**



Let the summertime fun begin!

A young participant enjoys the bouncy house at Spring Fling, sponsored on April 21 at Hargraves Center by Northside Community Watch, the Parks and Recreation Department and the Police Department.

In Brief



Dwight Bassett has been selected as Chapel Hill's first economic development officer. He will work with the Town Manager

and Council to develop an economic development strategy and identify potential projects and begin conversations to forge redevelopment.



Ann Hobgood and her son, Manager's Office employee **Ted Hobgood**, are pictured above with her entry in April's Community Art Project. Ann is a frequent contributor to the art shows exhibited by the Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission, and both she and Ted plan on entering pieces in the upcoming Employee Art Exhibition. You can enter too! The Chapel Hill Public Arts Commission invites Town employees and their family members to exhibit artwork in the annual employee show which takes place in Town Hall from July 11 to August 23. All submissions are due in the Public Arts Commission office by the first week of July. For more information, call 968-2749 or email info@chapelhillarts.org.



TOWNtalk is produced by the Town Information Office with assistance from the Human Resources Department and Clerk's Office. Editorial/Graphics: Catherine Lazorko, Melanie Miller
Copying: Tanita Howard

Move to TOC Under Way

The Public Works Department is moving to the new Town Operations Center this month as construction of the largest-ever capital project for the Town nears completion on Millhouse Road just north of Eubanks Road.

The facility will become the new home to the Public Works and Transportation departments, which are currently located off Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Municipal Drive. Planning for the project began after the Town was required to vacate its current site that had been leased from UNC-Chapel Hill.

The move to Millhouse Road has occurred in stages. The Town is making every effort not to disrupt services to citizens during this transition.



Catherine Lazorko photo

National Public Works Week will be celebrated with a Public Works meal on May 25. Check with Maggie Burnett for details: 968-2796.

The Transportation Department is expected to move to the new site in June, after which time a ribbon cutting celebration, open house and public tours will be held for the entire facility.

The \$51.6 million Town Operations Center project includes four large buildings, new water and sewer lines, and extensive improvements to Millhouse and Eubanks roads. The project reflects the Council's key values of sustainability, environmental sensitivity and fiscal prudence. The project includes a radiant heating system, underground tanks to hold rainwater for flushing toilets and irrigation, and the passive solar design feature of daylighting.

Note the new address and phone numbers for the Public Works Department:

6850 Millhouse Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516-8175; 969-5100

Solid Waste: 969-5100

Fleet: 969-2800 ext. 112 or 968-2800 ext. 108

General Building Maintenance: 968-2800 ext. 112

Emergency and After Hours Building Maintenance: 932-2999

New Employees (March 27 - May 4)

Tasha Harrington (Transportation),
Transit Operator

Anthony Williams (Transportation),
Transit Operator

Catherine Wright (Library),
Library Assistant/Outreach Specialist

Retiring Employees

James Garrett (Public Works),
effective April 1

Retirement Planning Sessions

The Educational Retirement Group of the North Carolina Retirement Systems Division will be conducting retirement conferences for members of the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System.

- 1:30 p.m. July 18 at the Department of Transportation Highway Building Auditorium, 1 South Wilmington Street, Raleigh
- 1:30 p.m. July 26 at North Carolina Central University Criminal Justice Building Conference Room, corner of Lincoln and Nelson, Durham
- 1:30 p.m. Sept. 18 at Sanford Public Works Building Assembly Room, 601 North Fifth Street, Sanford

TOWNtalk, a publication for and about Town of Chapel Hill employees, is issued monthly September through June. It is copied in the Town Clerk's Office on recycled paper. Please recycle with white paper.



Published by:
Town of Chapel Hill
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
tio@townofchapelhill.org or (919) 969-5055

Employee Forum



Budget Time

This month the Council will continue to consider many budget items and will hold its final Budget Public Forum and Hearing on Wednesday, May 16. This meeting is designed for the Council to hear anyone's thoughts and concerns regarding the budget. We invite you to participate in this process. Agenda items, videos, and minutes are available on the Town's websites <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/> (click on Council meeting video on the left-hand navigation bar). Each year employees listen, participate and learn about the items being considered. The May 16 meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chamber.

Need a Computer?

Employees have the opportunity to bid on surplus Town computers at www.govdeals.com. Another opportunity for employees needing computers is a loan program run by the IT Department. Employees interested in borrowing a computer for one year may submit their names to their Employee Forum representative by June 8. The Forum will hold a lottery drawing at their June 14 meeting. Any names received after the meeting will be held until the next opportunity. The systems are: Dell Optiplex GX240 with Windows 2000 or XP installed, Pentium 4 1.8 Ghz, 256 MB RAM, 40 GB hard drive, CD-Rom drive, and monitor. No modems are provided. Ethernet cards are pre-installed and can be used for DSL and cable internet service but not dial-up.

The Employee Forum meets on the second Thursday of the month. If you have issues, concerns or questions that you would like addressed during these meetings, please bring them to your representative. We want to know what's on your mind.



Catherine Lazorko photo

The Police Department held its annual departmental recognition ceremony last month at Town Hall. The event brings together all employees of the department to share in the previous year's achievements, to recognize noteworthy accomplishments, and to share some time together over snacks and punch. Officers, who are always on call, are able to gather uninterrupted with help from Orange County Sheriff's Department, which covers calls for service in town limits during the event. Recent retirees also attend so they can be recognized.

Compliments



Dr. David Charles Nash wrote to express his appreciation for bus drivers **Paul Azzu, Tracy Little, Scott Blacknell, and Casey Miller** (Transportation). "Each are kind, courteous, helpful, gracious, and receptive to the needs of... all their passengers."

Catherine Lazorko (Manger's Office)

received appreciation for the "Chapel Hill eNews" updates during the wind storm last month. Scott Watkins was one of several citizens who wrote: "I wanted to thank you and everyone that made the updates a standard practice in our town. It is very, very helpful, I'm going to set-up my cell phone and Blackberry as well to receive these messages since my home connection can be tenuous in times like these."

Akalema Pheribo (Transportation) was complimented by J Bus rider Frank Harris, who said "he is always professional in his dress and attitude. He acknowledges passengers as they board the bus and takes care of them. He makes his ADA announcements and always checks his mirrors. Akalema has a great personality and is at the top of the list!"

Recycling



Local charities would love to get your used but useful clothing and household items such as the Club Nova Thrift Shop, 103 West Main St. in Carrboro, or the PTA Thrift Shop with drop off points at 103 Jones Ferry Rd. and the Village Plaza, Elliot Road location. The Habitat for Humanity Hand-Me-Up Store will pick up furniture and appliances that are in good condition. Appliances must work and be less than 10 years old. Get your neighbors together and call (919) 403-8668 to schedule a collection. Don't throw toxics into the local landfill! Bring paint, bug spray, cleaning chemicals, fluorescent lights (that includes compact fluorescents!) and anything else that might be hazardous from your home to the Household Hazardous Waste Collection, Orange County Landfill, Eubanks Road, Chapel Hill, Monday-Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to noon. Businesses can call 968-2788 for collection details.

— Blair Pollock (Orange Community Recycling)



Proposed Changes to Our Payroll System

We thank all employees for their ideas and feedback as the Town develops improvements to preparing payroll. Your comments, concerns and suggestions have proven to be valuable and useful in our deliberations, and ultimately our recommendations. Please contact us with questions and share your thoughts.

— Town Manager Roger L. Stancil and the Payroll Transition Committee (Anissa Graham-Davis, Interim Director of Human Resources, Lance Norris, Director of Inspections, Marcia Margotta, Administrative Analyst from Transit, Maggie Burnett, Office Manager from Public Works and Rhonda Sommer, Accounting Services Manager)

Biweekly Paychecks

What's this? We have some employees who are paid weekly (about 200), and others (about 600) who are paid biweekly. We propose to pay all employees on the same, biweekly schedule. We know this may be difficult for some employees. For this reason, we will assist employees with the following options: 1. help you save and deduct amounts that you tell us to set aside and place into a savings fund, 2. receive a portion or all of your longevity pay to ease with the transition, 3. receive a paycheck advance. The HR Department will have details on these options. The Town also will offer money management training classes for employees who are interested.

Why do this? The current system is difficult to administer and requires additional staff time to manage two different payroll cycles.

When will this happen?

February 15, 2008. (We would like you to volunteer to move from weekly to biweekly sooner. To encourage you, we will offer \$50 gasoline gift cards to employees who voluntarily switch from weekly to biweekly between April 1, 2007, and December 31, 2007.)

Contact Us

Anissa Graham-Davis

(Human Resources): 969-5033;
agdavis@townofchapelhill.org

Lance Norris (Inspections): 968-2723;
lnorris@townofchapelhill.org

Marcia Margotta (Transportation):
968-2755 ext. 129;

mmargotta@townofchapelhill.org

Maggie Burnett (Public Works):
968-2800 ext. 105;

mburnett@townofchapelhill.org

Rhonda Sommer (Finance):

969-5021; rsommer@townofchapelhill.org

Pay Periods

What's this? This proposal is to change all pay periods to a Thursday end date so that all employees are brought onto the same pay cycle. This change will require us initially to pay some employees for a full week of work – even when they have not worked that full week. To reimburse the Town for this advance, employees will be given the option to not accept the advance pay and receive the pay only for days worked in that first, abbreviated pay period. Others may decide to repay the advanced payment amount by requesting that the advance be deducted from their final paycheck when they leave the Town. Another option will allow employees to repay the advance through the use of leave (vacation, compensatory, holiday or sick).

Why do this? Payroll processors need more time. We also aim to improve reporting accuracy.

When will this happen?

August 17, 2007

Direct Deposit

What's this? With direct deposit, your paycheck is sent directly into your bank account, and you are issued a payroll stub only. About 20 percent of our employees continue to receive paper checks. If this proposal goes forward, the Town will require new employees only to use direct deposit. We will work with banks to assist Town employees who do not already have a bank account. Many cost-free banking options are available to Town employees.

Why do this? It will improve the efficiency of the payroll processing to have employees use direct deposit.

When will this happen? July 1, 2007

Payroll Deductions

What's this? We propose to take payroll deductions for insurance over 24 pay periods for biweekly employees and 48 pay periods for weekly employees. The total amount taken for employee deductions for insurance annually will remain as it is now. In the months that have three biweekly payrolls, no insurance deductions will be taken in the “extra” check.

Why do this? The current system is confusing to employees and causes the Town to have mismatches on amounts paid for insurance and owed for insurance when an employee leaves the Town.

When will this happen?

August 2007. August has three biweekly pay periods, so employees will receive the last check in August with no insurance deductions. The impact of the change in insurance deductions from 26 to 24 pay periods for biweekly employees and 52 to 48 for weekly employees per year would be initially reflected in the August 3, 2007, pay check. Therefore, the August 31, 2007, paycheck for all employees will not include insurance deductions.

