

TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

January 2006
Vol. 2, No. 5

www.townofchapelhill.org



A Short Report

By Cal Horton,
Town Manager

It's that time again: the budget development process has started. The first public forum will be held on Jan. 25.

Our experience so far this year is good. Revenues are a little ahead of what we had projected and expenditures generally are on track except for fuel costs. Maintaining good control of costs will help us end 2005-06 positively.

For next year, 2006-07, we are encouraged by the preliminary forecasts. There will be some significant help from one-time revenue caused by a change in accounting rules that will allow us to use some funds reserved in previous years.

As we work with the Council, advisory boards, citizens, department heads and other Town employees to consider budget challenges, we will particularly focus on:

- Improving efficiency of operations
- Providing the best possible services with the resources available
- Protecting citizen investment in public facilities through proper maintenance
- Strengthening our ability to recruit and retain excellent employees through competitive compensation, continuing education, training and development
- Supporting sustainable development and environmental sensitivity in all policies, programs and practices.

As always, we will appreciate your best help as we work through the development of the Town's budget for the coming year.

Maggie Burnett

Office Manager

Joined Town: June 1976
Department: Public Works

Duties: Supervises customer service, accounts payable and receivable, payroll and benefits, policy interpretation, and "whatever it takes to keep the boat afloat!"

Burnett, who remembers five different town managers over her employment, began as a Records Clerk in Personnel when Howard Lee was outgoing mayor. At this time, the Public Works facility was brand new, as was the transit system. She witnessed the transition from key-punched payroll to computerized processes. One of her proudest accomplishments is being among a group of employees that petitioned the Council in 1983 to observe the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. as a paid holiday.

Personal: The native of Chatham County has a daughter, Georgette, and a granddaughter, Aiyana. She enjoys singing with her church choir and co-chairing the culinary ministry at her church. A former softball player, she remains an ardent sports fan (tennis, football and college basketball). She may be one of few licensed cosmetologists to also serve as a referee, officiating over adult and high school softball and basketball games.

Quote: "My greatest satisfaction is when I can look over a day's work and know that I

In the Spotlight



Maggie Burnett was honored "For Outstanding Dedication in Keeping the Dream and Hope Alive" in connection to planning the eighth annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration (page 4).

have helped someone in some way, or helped to make a difference."

Philosophy: Not to stress over things beyond my control.

Chili Cook Off - January 27

Our next Employee Appreciation Event is a Chili Cook-Off & Talent Show on Jan. 27. The cook-off begins at 12:30 p.m. at Hargraves Center with a talent show at 1:15 p.m. All attendees taste and vote for their favorite chili. Free chili lunch provided by Scurlock's Catering. Win prizes, including UNC basketball tickets!

COMING UP: Budget Hearings & Forums
The following meetings on the Town Budget are scheduled at 7 p.m. in the Council Chamber of Town Hall: **January 25, March 22 and May 10.**



In Brief

Barry Dunn (Transportation) helped police apprehend suspected car burglars when he reported suspicious activity on Dec. 15 at the Eubanks Road Park and Ride Lot. He immediately called 911 and the transit dispatcher. Within a few minutes, police responded and captured three suspects.

Art Englehardt of the Police Department's Community Service Unit will spearhead an effort to donate toys to children at the pediatric wing of UNC Children's Hospital. The toys will be delivered on Jan. 25, first to the hospital and then to the Ronald McDonald House. The toys were collected from several community churches.

Chelsea Laws (Inspections) gave birth to a beautiful baby daughter, Addison Symone Laws, who weighed 8 lbs. 3 oz. and was 20.5 inches long. She was born at 3:03 a.m. Jan. 13. Addison is welcomed by father Reco and brothers Niel and Julian.

Robert Ruley was recognized for outstanding performance when he was selected for the Public Works Department Employee of the Month Award for December 2005. Congratulations, Robert!



Jeannette Taylor

(Engineering) played the role of "Mrs. Claus" at the Town Holiday Breakfast last month. She brought holiday cheer with bells and laughter as

she distributed gifts for employees participating in the gift exchange.



Thinking about Carpooling? Town Hall has its first "Employee Carpool" parking space on the second-level parking area near the Council Member space. The flip-sign is applied as needed, so when no employees are carpooling, the space may be used by anyone. The rules are simple. If you are traveling to work with another employee, remember to flip the sign to its message side the night before so the space is available in the morning. When the space is not being used by carpoolers, the sign should be flipped to its blank side.



The Council on Jan. 9 approved a petition requesting that **Chapel Hill Transit** buses honor Rosa Parks with small memorial plaques on their front seats. The Council went a step further and directed that the plaques honor Rosa Parks, Claudette Colvin and Mary Louise Smith. These were three women who were arrested, jailed, charged, and fined for refusing to give up their seats on a city bus and stand so white riders could sit. Although Colvin and Ware aren't as widely known as Parks, they were the plaintiffs in the court case that ended segregation on buses in Montgomery, Ala. The case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

NEW EMPLOYEES

Travis Alston (Public Works), Solid Waste Collector
Jonnie Armstrong (Transportation), Transit Operator
Joseph Craven (Public Works), Groundskeeper
Rodolfo Crooks (Transportation), Transit Operator
Ureza Evans (Transportation), Transit Operator
Hampton Cheek (Transportation), Transit Operator
Aaron Gallagher (Finance), Budget Analyst
Jose Lopez Gonzalez (Transportation), Transit Operator
Shade Green (Transportation), Transit Operator
Denny Hanshaw (Public Works), Construction Worker
Ta'Nesha Mcauley (Police), Alternative Sentencing Assistant
Jose Palacios (Transportation), Transit Operator
Scott Phillips (Public Works), Construction Worker
Tina Overby (Transportation), Transit Operator
William Rider (Transportation), Transit Operator
Matthew Rowles (Engineering), Engineering Technician
Adam Schaefer (Mayor), Mayoral Aide
Laronda Shipmon (Transportation), Transit Operator
Thomas Simmons (Fire), Master Firefighter
Michelle Turner (Police), Crisis Counselor
Julie Waller (Human Resources), Occupational Health & Safety Officer
Renee Zimmerman (Planning), Administrative Clerk

RETIREES

Steve Riddle retired effective Jan. 1
Lois J. Houpe retired effective Jan. 1



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

Published by:
 Town of Chapel Hill
 405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
 Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Compliments

Praise
from
Citizens



Van Bennett (Inspections) was recognized for conducting an electrical inspection in the evening and in freezing rain conditions. "This type of dedication and team work exemplifies the working relationship between (our company) and the Town to better serve the community," wrote Carl Schimmling of Resolute Building Company.

William Rider (Transportation) was complimented for his cordiality while driving a bus on Route HU by rider Tina Forbes. "His positive attitude was very refreshing," she wrote. "Thank you for adding such a good driver to your staff."

Luther Nash (Inspections) received high praise from Terry Sparrow of Sparrow and Sons Plumbing for showing an attitude "that could only be described as cooperative, professional, courteous and helpful."

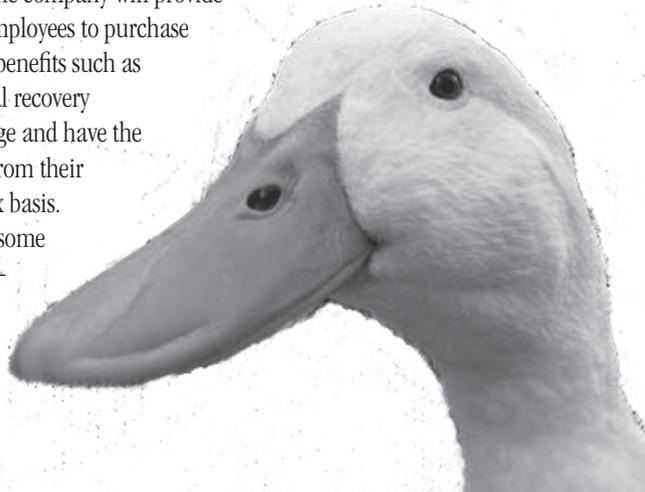
Kumar Neppalli (Engineering) exhibited the best traits of Town personnel when he took the time to assist residents desiring information about traffic calming procedures, a citizen wrote in a Jan. 13 letter. "He carefully explained the petition process and the procedure and has been incredibly supportive and helpful throughout the process, including promptly answering phone messages, emails, and has spoken to a group in our neighborhood," said John F. Poteat II. "The process was very transparent and fair."

Leanne Mikels and **Rodney Newcomer** (Police) were complimented in a Dec. 20 letter that described them as "exceptionally polite, helpful and efficient" while assisting a resident reporting a car theft. "I am quite impressed with the quality of the Chapel Hill Police Force, whom, though I have lived here 27 years, I have never had to deal with personally," wrote Martin Ionescu-Pioggia. "You guys are great."

Fire personnel, including **Keith Alston, Bill Blankenship, Mary Blevins, Gerald Boone, Robert Bosworth, Jeff Cabe, Ryan Depew, Ray Enoch, Kevin Ferrero, John Joseph, Caprice Mellon, Tony Roof, David Sykes, Bill Poole, John White, Dennis Puckett, Johnny Ward, Brian Parker** and **Rodney Watson**, were complimented by Carl Wilkins on Jan. 10 for their response to a fire at the Cedars of Chapel Hill. "Their rapid response, quick action and professional knowledge minimized the damage that could have occurred," Wilkins wrote.

AFLAC

AFLAC representatives will meet with employees during their regular staff meetings starting on Jan. 30. The company will provide the opportunity for employees to purchase additional voluntary benefits such as accident, life, personal recovery and/or cancer coverage and have the premiums deducted from their paycheck on a pre-tax basis. The plans assist with some uncovered and out-of-pocket expenses. Attend the meetings to learn more.



Employee Forum



Budget Underway

This is the time of year that departments are reviewing their current budgets and considering changes for the next budget year. The Council will hold forums and hearings starting on Jan. 25 and through the early part of June. Contact your Employee Forum representative with ideas or suggestions.

AFLAC

Some employees desired to add supplemental benefits that meet their personal family situations. The Employee Forum is pleased to announce that after much research and cooperation with the Human Resources Department and the Town Manager, AFLAC has been selected as the provider of these additional benefits. Watch for Human Resources announcements about upcoming meetings to explain this new benefit option.

—Chelsea Laws (Employee Forum)

Recycling

Kudos to the Police Department for improving its recycling. During its initial audit conducted in 2002, auditors found that much of the material tossed in trash bins could have been recycled. The trash bins contained about 40 percent recyclable material. In 2004, another audit found that thrown-away recyclables amounted to 23 percent of the trash. In December 2004, auditors found that only 19 percent of the trash carried recyclables. Blair Pollock of the Solid Waste Department reports that the Police Department is the only local government agency in Orange County that has ever requested a follow-up waste audit to track improvement. **Valerie Foushee** invited the recycling auditors to return.

Lifting Every Voice in Honor of Dr. King



Public Works employees hosted the Eighth Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration on Jan. 13.

Entertainment was provided by the Ebony Dancers of Hargraves Center and the Public Works Ensemble. An award was presented by Fred Battle, Steve

England and the employee celebration committee to Maggie Burnett (page 1) for her planning and organization of the annual event. The award is inscribed: "For Outstanding Dedication in Keeping the Dream and Hope Alive." The event ended with the singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

Council Member Bill Thorpe, the featured speaker, highlighted that Chapel Hill was the first community in North Carolina to declare Martin Luther King Jr. Day a municipal holiday in 1983. The law creating the national holiday was passed in 1983 but did not go into effect until 1986. Atlanta was the first city in the country to designate his birthday as a paid holiday for all city employees in 1971.



*"Lift every voice and sing, till earth and Heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won."
— James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938),
who referred to his song as the "Negro National Hymn"*