



TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

June 2008
Vol. 4, No. 10

www.townofchapelhill.org

A Short Report

By Roger L. Stancil,
Town Manager

This is a busy place. Sometimes in our world, it is too easy to choose to spend a little more time on the work we must do over the time we could spend with friends and family. While I appreciate your dedication and commitment, I encourage you to use the summer to spend that extra time with those who are most important to you.

The most effective members of any team are the ones with balance in their lives. Take the time to revisit those people and activities that have gotten ignored in the rush of life. Revitalize yourself and come back to work revived and renewed. Read the book you have put aside. Visit the place you have not gotten to visit yet. Brush up on a talent you have put aside. Make a new friend.

And when you come back, share your experiences with the rest of us so we can learn from you. Have fun!

Budget News

The 2008-2009 Town budget, adopted at the June 9 Council meeting, includes a three percent raise for Town employees.

For more information, see page 4.

Jeanne Tate

Duties: Jeanne Tate began working for the Town in December 2000. Before coming to Chapel Hill, Jeanne worked in financial reporting for Guilford Technical Community College in Greensboro and Rowan County in Salisbury. She has a bachelor's degree in accounting from Appalachian State University. She guides the Finance division of Business Management in all accounting functions including accounts payable, payroll and revenue collections, along with major financial reporting like the annual financial statement and other federal and state reports. She is proud that the Town has received the Government Finance Officers Association awards for excellence in both Financial Reporting and Budget Reporting each year that she has been with the Town.

Although many of us consider the budget completed after it is adopted by the Council (scheduled for June 9), the work is not nearly over for Jeanne and her coworkers in Business Management. After adoption, they have 90 days to prepare an official budget document for presentation to the government, bond rating agencies and others interested in the Town. This busy season also includes the year-end close, annual audit and preparation of annual financial statements at a time when most people would rather be on vacation!

Personal: Jeanne carpools from her home in Efland with Cam, her husband of 21 years. He works at a law firm only two blocks from Town Hall. She loves animals, evidenced by a few well-placed office adornments and how she pays attention to a chipmunk that scampers outside her window.

Value in the Spotlight

Professionalism

efficient • competent • accountable • effective
committed to excellence • responsive



Catherine Lazorko photo

Our Value: What does professionalism mean to Jeanne? Think of *Dune*, the science fiction novel by Frank Herbert about the desert planet whose inhabitants try to make it green—one small plant at a time. "They are dedicated to their long-range goals," Jeanne says. "They're planting a little at a time with the hope that for some future generation, it will be a better place."

Jeanne sees her work in a similar light, viewing each accomplishment as a small step toward the goal of making Chapel Hill a better place to live and work. Professionalism involves not being daunted by setbacks, but always working together toward the greater goal.

COMING UP

June 26: Lunch and Learn: Controlling My Cholesterol

June 27: Service Awards Reception

June 27: Locally Grown Market and Entertainment, James C. Wallace Plaza
www.townofchapelhill.org/locallygrown

July 4: Independence Day Celebration, Kenan Stadium



Enjoy spectacular fireworks, music, magic and fun for all ages at the Independence Day Celebration, 8 p.m. Friday, July 4.



ENJOY YOUR SUMMER!

TOWNtalk is on a break for the summer, and will resume in September.

Please continue to send news and photos to publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org. Vacation photos are always welcome!

In Brief

Congratulations to **Van Bennett** (Inspections) for passing the North Carolina State Mechanical Level I Board Test.



Mike Davis (above, Public Works) passed away unexpectedly of a heart attack on May 25. A memorial service was held at Ebenezer Baptist Church. Memorial gifts may be made to the American Diabetes Association, P.O. Box 11454, Alexandria, VA 22312.

Buck Johnson (Traffic Engineering) has received Level III Traffic Signal Technician Certification from the International Municipal Signs Association (IMSA) and has completed Traffic Signal Inspector training courses. Few signal technicians have achieved Level III Certification.

Jerry Neville (Traffic Engineering) has received IMSA Level II Signs and Markings Technician Certification.

Andrew Riel (Traffic Engineering), the newest member of the traffic signal technical team, has received IMSA Level I Traffic Signal Technician Certification.



(right) of the Parks and Recreation Department accept a \$500 donation for the youth baseball program from Performance Chevrolet, presented by Mark Hendrix (left).

Bernard Leach (center) and **Butch Kisiah**

Honoring Valued Employees

The Annual Employee Appreciation Luncheon was held June 13 at Chapel Hill High School. Town employees enjoyed a barbecue lunch, basketball, games and presentation of Employee of the Year awards. Lucky employees won door prizes, including gift certificates for local restaurants and a night at the Franklin Hotel.



Employees who have reached service milestones from January through June 2008 will be honored at a reception at 10 a.m. Friday, June 27, in the Town Hall First Floor Conference Room.

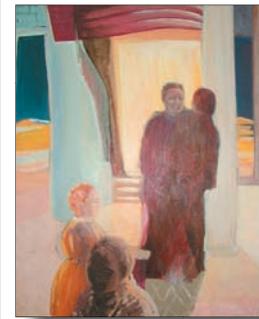


On April 21, **Debbie Timmons** (left, Police) and **Catherine Lazorko** (right, Communications and Public Affairs) ran the Boston Marathon. Considered the “grandfather of marathons” because it’s the world’s oldest—2008 was its 112th year—Boston also is regarded as the ultimate standard among many marathon runners because of the qualifying times required for registration. Both Debbie and Catherine achieved their qualifying times at the Outer Banks Marathon. Thanks are in order for those who supported them before, during and after the race: Catherine’s husband, David Brower, and Debbie’s phenomenal team of Traci Donley, Tracey Perry and Lori Patino-Sanchez from the Police Department, and Beth Brawley.

Don't Miss Internal Job Openings!

An enhanced online job application system was implemented in March. Job postings that are open to internal applicants only will no longer be posted on the main job openings page. To

view positions open to Town employees only, visit www.townofchapelhill.org/jobs and click on the Internal Opportunities link at the left.



The Annual Employee Art Show will be on display at Town Hall through mid-August. The exhibition features artwork created by Town employees and their families, ranging from woodcarving to photography. Pictured here is a painting by **Scott Simmons** (Planning) from a previous show. For more information, call 968-2749 or email swright@townofchapelhill.org.

Open enrollment is coming soon! The Human Resource Development Department will send out information and conduct enrollment meetings in June. This is your opportunity to add to or delete family members from existing health and dental insurance plans. Employees and their family members are invited to attend the enrollment meetings. Changes will be accepted through Friday, July 18, and new premium deductions will begin Friday, Aug. 1. Coverage will begin Sept. 1, 2008.

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Employee Forum

From a presentation by Kay McDaniel (Public Works) to the Chapel Hill Town Council, May 14.

Over the last year or more, the Town has accomplished a number of successes which reflect the hard work and commitment of the Town employees. Some of these include Finance's efforts to maintain the Town's AAA credit rating; IT's work to help implement wi-fi hotspots in the downtown business district; Parks and Rec's oversight of the completed renovations at the Chapel Hill Community Center; Public Works' record-breaking leaf collection season (853 loads); the combined efforts of the Police and Fire departments to implement the Code Red public information system; and Human Resource Development efforts to provide wellness programs for employees. These are just a few of the many examples of Town successes that hinge on the dedication of the Town employees.

No one in this room needs to be reminded of the difficulties surrounding rising fuel prices and other basic commodities; this is a new reality for all of us. One year ago this week the average price of a gallon of unleaded fuel was \$3.06; today the cost is \$3.78 and going up every day. That is 72 cents more per gallon. An average size 15 gallon tank will cost \$56.70 to fill up today compared to \$45.90 a year ago.

Based on the increase in family health coverage, an employee will go from paying \$82.41 per week to approximately \$90.65 per week. This will be an increase of approximately \$8.24 per week.

But like most folks, Town employees are not insulated from today's increasing economic pressures.

In light of this reality, the Manager is proposing a 3 percent salary increase for cost of living adjustments and a 10 percent increase to cover the rising cost of health insurance. We understand that these decisions are difficult and that next year could be even tougher, but we ask that you all commit to us, the way that we commit to this Town.

With that in mind, we kindly ask that you fully fund the Manager's request to maintain our compensation and health benefits in these trying and uncertain times. Thank you for your time this evening.

SMT Highlights

Cal Horton Award Committee: A committee has been formed to establish the criteria for this award for employees demonstrating outstanding service to the community.

Payroll Issues: Numerous inaccuracies are occurring in payroll information. Department directors will be notified when mistakes are made, and this problem will be addressed further.

Introductions: Frank Montes de Oca, the new Orange County Emergency Services Director, and Jason Damweber, the UNC-Chapel Hill intern in the Master of Public Administration program.

Fuel Costs: High gas prices are affecting numerous departments. Transit has expended \$350,000 more this year than budgeted because of higher costs. Ideas were discussed on ways the Town may assist employees, including orga-

nizing van pools, allowing work from home, and assisting with loans for hybrid vehicles.

Improving Traffic Safety: UNC-Chapel Hill has been contacted regarding a joint effort for public education about pedestrian safety. Transit has held meetings with drivers and received many suggestions to improve safety. Work will continue on this important effort.

Library Posters: The Library Foundation is raising funds through the sale of \$50 posters that promote reading. These posters will be displayed in Town facilities.

Parks and Recreation Updates: Updates include the opening of A.D. Clark Pool. Ball fields are in below par condition due to drought. Lights at Cedar Falls Park will be taken down due to poor condition.

New Human Resource Development Offices: Thanks to Public Works employees for assistance in coordinating new offices for this department.

Recycling

Don't forget to recycle on your summer vacation. If you're vacationing in North Carolina, you can find out more about recycling at your destination by visiting www.p2pays.org and clicking Recycling Information/Local Contacts. No computer? Call 800-763-0136 for more information.

In Emerald Isle, most homes have recycling every Wednesday and there is usually a bin at the house for cans, bottles, newspaper, magazines and cardboard. The same materials can be recycled in recycling dumpsters found at most condo style units. The town maintains a 24-hour drop-off site for cans and bottles at Merchant's Park—see www.emeraldisle-nc.org. Carteret County maintains a staffed drop off site on Highway 58 at Firetower Road.

Wrightsville Beach does not have curbside recycling, but the town maintains a 24-hour drop-off site for cans, bottles and paper of all types at 321 Causeway Drive, right in the center of the entrance to the town. For details, visit www.towb.org/recycling.htm.

If there is no recycling at your vacation destination, please bring your recyclables back home; we'll send them on their own vacation.

—Blair Pollock (Orange Community Recycling)

Compliments

Katina Capers (Transit) was complimented by G. W. Houston for "superb and very professional" service.

Mr. Lattie thanked **Ureza Evans** (Transit) for her service on May 28. He described her as a great driver and very pleasant.

Erin Malloy expressed her appreciation to **Annie Sharpe** (Transit), **Sherlita Bradford** (Transit) and **Deborah Davis** (Transit) for their assistance in finding a lost cellphone.

Rose Brannon complimented **Scott Blacknell** (Transit) for his good driving skills and positive attitude.

Vanessa Johnson (Transit) was commended by Barbara Barnes for being kind, informative, and helpful.

The Gregory family thanked the Fire Department, especially **Dan Roberts**, **Tommy Simmons** and **Jaime Palacios**, for providing a fire truck and honor guard for the burial service of retired New York Firefighter Roscoe Gregory.

Todd Brown of the NC Division of Emergency Management thanked members of the Fire Department, including **Paul Moss**, **Darryl Rimmer**, **Tommy Gregory**, **Ryan Warner**, **Robert Bosworth**, and **Gerry Boone**, for assisting in a Structural Collapse Technician course in October 2007.

Budget Adopted with Pay Increase for Employees

Manager Challenges Employees to Create Efficiencies

While we have succeeded in adopting a new budget for the Town of Chapel Hill, our work has really only just begun in managing our funds for the long-term and continuing our role as good stewards of public resources during the next fiscal year.

The Council adopted a budget for 2008-09 on June 9 that includes a 5.9 cent tax increase to fund the increasing debt service of the Town without diminishing the Town's service levels. The budget also funds competitive pay and benefits for Town employees and pay for rising fuel, energy and utility costs, although these costs are difficult to project in today's volatile environment. Nearly \$1 million has been appropriated for a 3 percent raise for employees and to cover medical insurance costs. This reflects the respect the Council and the community have for employees and the excellent service they provide.

The new budget reflects a sustainable balance between what the Town spends to provide services and meet debt obligations and the Town's available revenues under the existing tax structure. But tax increases are not available options every year. As public servants, I encourage us all to be responsible stewards of public resources

and to look for fresh and creative ideas that will help us to work more efficiently and cost effectively. For now, send your ideas to your department head or to me at rstancil@townofchapelhill.org. We will create additional ways to communicate your ideas in the future.

The final Town budget totals about \$83.6 million (\$50.2 million for the General Fund, \$16.3 million for the Chapel Hill Transit Fund, and the remainder for other funds). The proposed budget creates a new Debt Service Fund to isolate a portion of the property tax and dedicate it to the Town's debt service.

Increasing debt costs for new facilities has generated considerable pressures on the budget. With the renovation of the Community Center and the completion of the Town Operations Center (TOC), Aquatic Center, Southern Community Park and the soon to be constructed Library expansion project, the Town is making a major investment in public facilities. The tax increase is necessary to support the increased debt service associated with these facilities without diminishing the Town's ability to fund the current level of services and the operating costs of these new facilities.

-Roger L. Stancil, Town Manager

