



TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

May 2008
Vol. 4, No. 9

www.townofchapelhill.org

A Short Report

By Roger L. Stancil,
Town Manager

Just as the Town Team works hard every day to provide excellent service to our community, we have put together a proposed budget for 2008-09 that continues to fund current service levels, addresses the Town's debt challenge and maintains competitive employee compensation. I presented this budget to the Town Council at its regular meeting Monday night, May 5. The recommendation includes a 5.9 cent tax increase to achieve these goals.

This is a significant tax increase, but the Town has completed many new facilities such as the Town Operations Center, the Aquatics Center, Southern Community Park, and the refurbished Community Center. We borrowed money to build those facilities and, just like buying a new house, we must pay the money back. The tax increase will provide the funds to do that without diminishing service levels or affecting our ability to retain and attract good employees.

The recommended budget continues to recognize that employees are our most valuable resource and includes the following:

- \$611,000 for a 3 percent pay raise for employees
- \$363,000 for a 10 percent increase in medical insurance
- \$400,000 for retiree medical benefits liability
- \$546,000 for retiree medical insurance
- \$295,000 for Police Separation allowance

Details of the Manager's Recommended Budget are available on the Town's website and through print copies at the Communications and Public Affairs Department and Library. Senior Management Team members also will be glad to provide information to anyone who is interested. The public will have an opportunity to review and comment as the Council considers the community's budget at a public hearing set for 7 p.m. May 14. The budget is scheduled for adoption on June 9.

Public Works

Town of Chapel Hill employees value teamwork because by working together, we improve the way we get things done, and ultimately we better serve the public. Although we have different jobs throughout our organization, we all share the common goal of serving the public to the best of our abilities.

This month, we feature our Public Works as one department that excels in teamwork. The Public Works Department will celebrate National Public Works Week, May 18-24. Instituted as a public education campaign by the American Public Works Association (APWA) in 1960, the weeklong observance calls attention to the importance of public works in community life.

The Public Works Department is located at 6850 Millhouse Road and comprises divisions of streets and construction services, sustainability and facilities management, solid waste services and fleet management, project management, and inspections.

Public Works employees provide and maintain the infrastructure and services that keep the town running. They work in trucks and on ladders — or behind telephones, shovels, brooms, and jackhammers. Their activities include collecting garbage, paving streets and sidewalks, patching potholes, and maintaining public buildings and Town vehicles.

The Public Works Department will celebrate Friday, May 23, with activities, including a proclamation by the Mayor, board games and bingo, horse shoe tournament and a rodeo with various equipment and timed events.

Value in the Spotlight

TEAMWORK

cooperative • supportive • shared decisions
relationships • strength • consequence awareness
mission-focused • enhancement of resources



Emily Cameron photo

Sidewalk Construction a Team Task — Public Works employees (left to right) Warren Edwards, Rod Roberts, Joe Farrington, Pete Parrish, Cary Degraffenreidt, Philander Logan, Basel Sellars and Charles Mitchell tooling sidewalk construction joints. Finishing a concrete sidewalk downtown requires teamwork, as well as skill, because the wet concrete can only be worked from one side while walls and buildings on the opposite side must be protected.

Public Works Director Lance Norris said: "Given overall budget constraints and high productivity demands in today's typical work environment, a work place fostering camaraderie among co-workers is all the more essential. Both management/supervisory staff and workers in the field benefit when they 'lighten up' occasionally and mix work with pleasantries, including laughter, light-hearted discussions and socially shared activities."

COMING UP

May 14: Public Forum on Town Budget, 7 p.m., Town Hall Council Chamber

May 22: Lunch and Learn: Taking My Medicine to Stay Healthy

May 26: Memorial Day (Town Holiday)

**May 27: Civil Rights Walking Tour
Information: 968-2060**

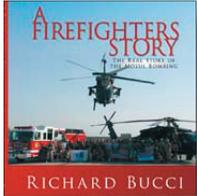
June 26: Lunch and Learn: Controlling My Cholesterol



Employees were inspired to be active by the Million Step March wellness event on May 5. To learn more about the Town's fitness program, call 968-2700.

In Brief

Willie Brooks (Public Works, retired) passed away on April 21. "Mr. Willie," as other Public Works employees fondly called him, was one of the Town's first street cleaning equipment operators.



Richard Bucci (Fire) has published "A Firefighters Story: The Real Story of the Mosul Bombing," a book about his year as a firefighter in

Iraq. He is donating 80 percent of the profits to help soldiers and Marines get the counseling they need when they return home. Information: www.52212.authorworld.com.

David Funk (Police) and MJ successfully completed the Chapel Hill Police Department's first in-house basic K-9 training course. The 10-week class, instructed by **Jim Orbich**, included training in agility, suspect and evidence search, tracking, and suspect apprehension.



Communications and Public Affairs staff have been working hard to support the American Cancer Society Relay for Life fundraiser. **Amy Harvey** (left) participated in the Relay for Life event at South Central High School on April 25. **Sandy Kline** (right) is making bracelets with donated supplies to raise funds for Relay for Life May 16 - 17 in Chatham County. Information: www.relayforlife.org/relay/about

A Celebration of Life Service for Retired Assistant Fire Chief **C. Matthew (Mac) Maynor**



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Firefighters Raise Funds for Burn Center

The Chapel Hill Firefighters Association hosted the First Annual Guns and Hoses Softball Tournament April 25 - 26 at Homestead Park. Seven teams from local fire and police departments participated. The event raised \$3,000 for the NC Jaycees Burn Center at UNC Hospital.

Children enjoyed a visit from Durham Fire Department's Patches the Robot (right). In addition to music, food, and an exciting softball tournament (below), attendees had the opportunity to see Chapel Hill Fire Department equipment, including fire trucks, a life safety trailer, and an urban search and rescue truck.



Special thanks to **Deborah Squires** (Engineering) and **Scott Simmons** (Planning) for generating the very large check that was presented to the Burn Center!

will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, May 17, at Duke Memorial United Methodist Church, 504 W. Chapel Hill St. in Durham.

Volunteers are needed for the Employee Appreciation Luncheon, to be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, June 13, at Chapel Hill High School. Assistance is needed for the sign in table, setting up and cleaning up, the games area and gym, and serving lunch. For more information, contact Johnny Pompey at 968-2787 ext. 211 or jpompey@townofchapelhill.org.

The **deadline for year-end purchases** is Friday, May 16. New purchase requisitions or requests for increases for existing purchase orders must be entered by that date. Purchase requisitions for the beginning of FY2008-2009 are due on Friday, June 13, for Transportation and Public Works and Friday, June 6, for all other departments.

Safety1st: Please remember to come to a complete stop at the Town Operations Center 4-way stop.

Take the Smart Commute Challenge!

Town employees are encouraged to help reduce traffic congestion and air pollution by exploring alternative methods of transportation.

Visit www.smartcommutechallenge.org to pledge that at least once before May 30 you will carpool, vanpool, bike, walk or ride the bus. You will be entered in a drawing to win prizes, including a vacation for two! If you need a paper sign-up form, please contact Len Cone at 969-5065.

To get around town during the work day, check out a Blue Urban Bike at Town Hall.

SmartCommute CHALLENGE

SUBMIT YOUR NEWS AND PHOTOS to TOWNtalk! The next deadline is May 27 for the June issue, distributed on June 6 with the biweekly payroll. Send submissions to publicaffairs@townofchapelhill.org or call 968-2743. The June issue is the last issue of the publication year as we take hiatus during July and August.

TOWNtalk, a publication for and about Town of Chapel Hill employees, is issued monthly September through June.
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Please recycle with white paper.



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Employee Forum

This year, your Employee Forum will focus on improving departmental communication, employee relations and policy change, and offering sensitivity training to all employees.

Here's an update on some issues that have been brought to representatives' attention.

Information from management: We've identified each department's most effective form(s) of communication. The Senior Management Team is considering releasing information to employees monthly. We may help facilitate distribution.

Concerns over frequency of drug/alcohol testing: We invited **Ron Aiken** (Human Resource Development) to explain. There are two types of tests: general (pre-employment screens or post-accident test) and random. Departments can use the Town's policy or adopt a stricter one. For details, consult your handbook and ask your department. General tests require a documented need or suspicion.

The NCDOT requires all CDL drivers to participate in random drug testing. Drivers are randomly selected by a DOT computer program (and not by name), and the contractor notifies the appropriate Town department.

You have the right to ask why you are being tested. If you feel you have been inappropriately tested, please see your HRD partner.

Bus concerns and repairs: We invited **Steve Spade** (Transit Director) to discuss. He said additional mechanics have allowed for more preventative maintenance. New buses have increased the number of spare buses available. Hopefully, we'll get another bus grant within the next couple of years. He's also willing to modify the current maintenance report system for increased efficiency and effectiveness.

The Employee Forum addresses the Town Council annually with a request from the employees. Following May's budget meeting, we will ask the council to maintain our healthcare coverage and other benefits. Unfortunately, with a slowing economy and rising prices, many employers are sharply raising the employee's cost share or decreasing other benefits to control costs. Human Resource Development is currently looking for cost effective ways to provide us equal or better services.

For more information on these topics or to bring an item to our attention, please see your Employee Forum representative.

SMT Highlights

The following is a brief update of some of the items discussed last month by the Senior Management Team. For more information, check back with TOWNtalk for details as these ideas, issues and stories further develop. To stay up to date on Town news, subscribe to Chapel Hill eNews by contacting pio@townofchapelhill.org

Mission Statement: "Learning, Serving and Working Together — Creating a Sustainable Community through Social Equity, Economic Vitality and Environmental Protection" was unanimously adopted at the mission statement of the Senior Management Team. The statement joins the previously unanimously adopted Values: Ethics, Social Equity, Professionalism, Respect, Innovation and Teamwork.

Cal Horton Service Award: Qualifications and process for this award have been developed, and departments have been asked to submit nominations for a 7-member committee to conduct the process. The committee is expected to complete the initial process and award by

September 2008. Although the award does not preclude single acts of heroism, it is expected that it will be given to an individual, or team, who has offered excellent customer service for more than five years.

Telephone Issues: An update was provided on the recent telephone service interruption. It was not known whether the problem was with AT&T/ BellSouth or with the Town's system. Several SMT members suggested that a back-up system is needed for certain departments in case this happens in the future because it created serious problems.

Website Redesign: An RFP for a new website has been issued, and 32 vendors have expressed an interest.

Joint Training Opportunities: Discussions are under way for possible employee training and development opportunities to be shared among Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough and OWASA.

Facilities Improvements Update: A new pottery studio is expected to open at Parks and Recreation in August. Turf will go down at the Southern Community Park beginning May 5. The filling of the Aquatic Center Pool is expected to begin on May 12.

Recycling

Plastics recycling can be confusing! Here are some things to remember when recycling plastics.

The plastics industry puts three chasing arrows that people recognize as the "recycling" symbol on most plastic, whether it is recyclable or not. The three chasing arrows, a series of letters and/or a number is the "resin identification code," which manufacturers use to identify one of the seven basic resin types. The resin identification code does not dictate whether a plastic item is recyclable—recycling markets do.

Local markets for residential recyclables want plastic **bottles** only (containers with a neck smaller than the base). Plastic tubs or cups may be picked up at the curb, but that does not mean they are getting recycled. Someone somewhere has to remove the non-bottle item and discard it. Recycling programs in Chapel Hill collect about 300 tons of plastic bottles every year, but over 800 tons (3 percent) of the garbage from Chapel Hill is still plastic bottles. Recycle all of your laundry detergent, soda, condiment, shampoo bottles, milk and water jugs!

Five percent of Chapel Hill's waste is plastic film, most of which is highly recyclable. Grocery stores provide locations for recycling plastic grocery bags and similar types of film, including newspaper and dry cleaning bags. Like all recycling, plastic bags should be clean and empty.

—*Muriel Williman (Orange Community Recycling)*

Compliments

Trish D'Arconte (Stormwater Management) was successful in securing a grant from the NC Division of Water Quality to continue work on and in the Bolin Creek watershed.

Barbara Gear (Transit) was complimented by James Marchese. Barbara picked him up after he rescheduled a ride from the Senior Center, and he described her as very nice and said that he is very satisfied with the service.

William Rider (Transit) was commended by Eleanor Saunders for his friendliness and courtesy to passengers, and for dealing professionally and kindly with a passenger with special needs.

Deborah Squires (Engineering) was thanked by Marsha Ackley for providing assistance with GIS mapping. Deborah was able to get her just what she needed.

Elizabeth Mount called to express her appreciation for **Will Worth** (Transit). She was pleased with the great service she received during her first trip on EZ Rider, and said that Worth is "polite, friendly and a credit to the organization."

Landscape Services Keeps Chapel Hill Blooming

Aaaah, springtime in Chapel Hill. The beauty of nature abounds. Thanks to the 25 employees of the landscape services division, recently incorporated into the parks and recreation department, our community's public facilities and parks are kept planted, weeded, pruned and mowed during this busy season.

Their responsibilities include maintaining the grounds in all Town owned properties; cemeteries, public housing, parks, trails, municipal operation facilities (Police Headquarters, Town Hall, etc.), park and ride lots, right of way areas, as well as public areas in downtown Chapel Hill. This also encompasses all tree maintenance, litter removal, playground maintenance, athletic field and irrigation maintenance.

The team of dedicated landscape professionals led by landscape superintendent Robert Minick are consistently challenged by nature (think heat, ice, high wind, flooding and drought) and creatively maintaining more with the same amount of resources.

"Even though we have an enormous responsibility, we manage to keep areas well maintained," says landscape supervisor Susie Whaley. "We feel that we have very rewarding jobs in that we are near nature and can see the direct result of our work.

"What could be better than being outside working on a 72 degree day in the spring or autumn in Chapel Hill?"



Landscapeers (left to right) Doug Atwater, Kenny Alston (kneeling), Steve Degraffenried, Roger Mills, Pete Holz, Adam Smith, Lorenzo Vanhook, Mike West, Kelvin Harris, Terry Battle, Don Hayes, Mike Shoffner, Jim Upchuch, Greg Roberts, Robert Minick, Patrick Hart, Sam Rone, Doug Fisk and Thomas Stroud. The division employees recently gathered for a lunchtime cookout with Parks and Recreation Director Butch Kisiah grilling up the burgers.

