



**Town of Barkhamsted
First Selectman's Newsletter
Nº. 5, January 2010**



Even though it's a little late, I'd like to wish everyone a Happy New Year. We've all been through a great deal of economic and financial hardship during the past months and can only hope that in 2010 the economy will improve throughout the country. However, all indications are that the town and state budgets will be very challenging for the next couple of years.

Since my last newsletter in the spring of 2009, there have been a number of positive occurrences in Barkhamsted. At the end of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, the town's expenditures came in under the budgets by \$35,000, thanks to the fiscal care exercised by the town's departments and the elementary school. We also received grants from the State and from Federal ARRA stimulus funds for a number of projects. This funding enhances our ability to undertake needed work we could otherwise not afford. You will hear more about these in the future.

The town's economic development study was completed and the Board of Selectmen will be appointing an Economic Development Commission to implement the consultants' recommendations. This past summer and fall were busy in Riverton with a number of new events and, of course, the "Riverton Fair" and "Christmas in Riverton". The town is very fortunate to have residents willing to share their talents and energy with the community, and we had some very high class musical performances by non-residents who have an interest in the town. We depend heavily on these volunteers who dedicate their free time to the town – without them, most of the town's activities and our boards and commissions would not be possible.

We've made a significant effort using the town website, e-mail and the newspapers to keep everyone informed news in town, whether town business or community events. Our website has a great deal of information about the boards and commissions; notices are regularly posted on the homepage; and there is a place at the bottom of the homepage (www.barkhamsted.us), where you can sign up for e-mail notices of town news. To-date, about 250 people have taken advantage of this service.

Registrars of Voters – Susan L. Day; Karen A. Martin

The Municipal Election, which took place on November 3, 2009, was an exciting one! While we didn't have a record number of voters show up to vote, 33% of the eligible voters did turn out. A recount was held on November 10, 2009 on all offices that were less than a twenty-vote margin. A tie vote resulted for the final seat on the Board of Education, which required the town to hold an Adjourned Municipal Election, which was held on November 24, 2009. Twenty two percent of all eligible voters turned out to vote at the Adjourned Election, including a substantial number of voters who did not vote in the original Municipal Election. The Registrars of Voters hope that the recent interest in the results of the municipal races will result in greater voter participation in ALL upcoming elections and referendums, as it is clear that **EVERY VOTE COUNTS!!!**

Assessor – Francine Beland

The filing period for Tax Relief for elderly or disabled residents opens February 1, 2010, and has a closing date of May 15, 2010. To qualify for the state portion, a homeowner must live in the home for which the credit is being sought and have owned the home as of October 1, 2009. To qualify for the local option relief program, the homeowner must have been a resident for at least the past 5 years and reside in the home for which the credit is being sought. The homeowner must be over 65 years of age, and if disabled, must be over 18 years old. There are certain income limits for this program (less than \$32,300 for individuals and less than \$39,500 for married couples). There is also tax relief for Veterans whose income is below the same limits as above. For more information about these programs, please contact the Assessor's office at 860-379-3600.

Building and Zoning – Debbie Brydon

Recently, we have seen a number of residents or builders who have not been complying with town and/or state regulations. These regulations require building or zoning permits for certain home repairs or construction, and require a wetlands permit if there is any disturbance within 100 feet of wetlands. The town is taking these issues very seriously and the penalties for non-compliance include fines and increased permit fees. Please contact the office at 860-379-1314 if you have any questions regarding the need for permits.

Department of Public Works – Rich Novak

This past summer and fall, the Highway department completed the following paving projects: Swanson Road, Diane Drive, Robin Drive, and sections of Slade Road and Old Town Hall Road. Other work was the replacement of a pair of large culvert pipes on West Hill Road, and 4 miles of chip seal on Hayes Road and Legeyt Road. We are building our priority list for the coming year, but have not yet finalized which roads will be repaired in the coming year.

Town Clerk – Maria Mullady

The Town Clerk's office experienced its first ever adjourned election which occurred after the tie vote canvass of two Board of Education seats after the November 3, 2009 municipal election. We worked very closely with the Registrars of Voters and the Secretary of the State's Office to ensure a smooth and accurate outcome. It was quite a learning experience, since it was a first for the town.

If you need them, water testing kits are available from the Town Clerk's Office. The kits are free, but there is a laboratory charge to have the water tested. Call the Town Clerk's Office at 860 379-8665 for more information.

Don



THE TAX COLLECTOR, TERRI COLLINS, WOULD LIKE TO REMIND TAXPAYERS THAT THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF THEIR REAL ESTATE AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXES CAME DUE ON JANUARY 1, 2010. IN ADDITION, SUPPLEMENTAL TAX BILLS FOR MOTOR VEHICLES REGISTERED AFTER OCTOBER 1, 2008 HAVE BEEN MAILED AND ALSO BECAME DUE JANUARY 1. ALL OF THESE TAXES WILL BECOME DELINQUENT IF NOT PAID ON OR BEFORE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2010. ANY TAXPAYER HAVING TROUBLE PAYING THE FULL AMOUNT OF THE TAX THAT IS DUE IS ENCOURAGED TO PAY IN INSTALLMENTS, SO THAT THE ACCOUNTS ARE PAID IN FULL ON OR BEFORE JUNE 30, 2010.

WINTER IS HERE, AND THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT WANTS TO REMIND ALL RESIDENTS TO ALLOW EXTRA TIME FOR TRAVELING ON THE ROADS DURING AND AFTER STORMS. IN ADDITION, TOWN ORDINANCES DO NOT ALLOW PARKING ON STREETS DURING SNOW STORMS AND, ALSO, DO NOT PERMIT ANY SNOW TO BE PLOWED, BLOWN OR SHOVELED ONTO THE TOWN ROADS.