

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Stanley M. Wysocki, Chairman2006
Kenneth F. Troup2007
Anne Gerken2008

In 2005 we lost a number of people who have contributed immeasurably to the town of Bolton for many years. Lois Alex, the selectmen's long time secretary and "fourth selectmen" died in June and we miss her very much. Former selectman, school committee member, and Bolton Fair head Larry Mostoller; former selectman, Appeals Board, and local business owner Donald Smith; former police chief Warren Wilson; former Planning Board and Board of Appeals member, Commissioner of Trust Funds and Bolton Fair director Robert Estabrook; former assessor and Council on Aging member Al Weston, and former Board of Health member and Bolton Fair volunteer Terry Miskell all died. We acknowledge and appreciate their many contributions to the town.

Town Finances. It was a good financial year, one in which we avoided an override through careful planning and management under the direction of our town administrator Jodi Ross, her financial team, and members of the Advisory Committee. We enter 2006 in strong shape with free cash balances. Part of our financial strength is the careful way that most of our department heads manage their departments. Working with Jodi, they have increased the level of professionalism in municipal services and we thank them for Bolton's improved service to the public as well as their frugal management. A special thank you also to David Bosselait who left the Advisory Committee in late 2005. David made a tremendous contribution to the annual budgeting process for the town, and he improved everyone's understanding of the revenue side of the budget.

Nashoba Regional School District. We were pleased that during 2005, the Finance Advisory Board (FAB) that had been formed during the Nashoba financial crisis completed its work. The FAB dissolved itself and declared the school district fiscally fit. Special credit for the financial stability goes to John Antonucci, the former assistant superintendent for finance, and Michael Wood, superintendent, for their enlightened leadership these past several years.

Town Administrator. Jodi Ross completed her second successful year as Town Administrator. She has significantly increased the level of professionalism and improved inter-board communications as well as interactions with the public. Among Jodi's many accomplishments of 2005 were orchestrating a return to a regional approach to providing veterans' services to the town, significantly reducing town legal expenses, and completing the sale of the 2-acre Moen building lot on Vaughn Hill Road. She also increased her level of involvement in the workings of other boards and departments, improving both the communications and the performance of those departments. The board is very pleased with the job that Jodi has done and we look forward to her continued efforts on behalf of the town.

Police Matters. At the end of the summer, Police Chief Celia Hyde resigned from the Police Department. The board thanks Chief Hyde for her long service to Bolton and wishes her well. In the fall, we hired an interim police chief, William George, and embarked on a search process that we hope will result in a new chief in early 2006. We are optimistic about the future of the department and will work with the new chief on increasing retention of officers and improving working relationships within the police department.

New Salary Schedule. In an effort to achieve municipal pay comparability, the town accepted in late 2005 a New Classification system and pay scale that will apply to the non-union administrative employees in the town beginning with the next fiscal year. We have found it increasingly hard to keep good employees, whether union or non-union, and we believe that the town is best served by dedicated employees who are paid fair wages for the hours they work. While there are budget impacts of such increases, we think that retaining existing employees rather than training new employees is well worth the expense.

Emerson/Florence Sawyer Septic Project. After spending 2004 gathering soil information and potential designs and working with the DEP, the town decided to pursue a wastewater treatment plant to service the two schools. The septic systems, although operating satisfactorily, have a limitation of 10,000 gallons per day, which provides no room for expansion at either school and prevents the town from using any other adjoining town land for a police station or any other use. Therefore, the town entered into a consent order with DEP that will result in an operational wastewater treatment plant in 2008. We formed a committee to oversee the project and hired an engineering firm to do the design work and create the construction drawings for the project. At the end of the year, the engineer and the committee recommended that the leaching bed for the wastewater treatment plant be located on the former sheep show field, across the stream from Mechanic Street. Data collected in the previous study was useful in making that decision and will help keep costs under control. After additional detailed analysis of the selected site, we will bring a proposal to the May 2006 town meeting for approval.

Planning. We had many activities during 2005 that relate to planning for the future of the town. The Master Planning effort continued with two public forums and progress in defining strategies for controlling future population growth in the town. An important part of future planning involves municipal facilities, and the selectmen continued to work on requirements for such facilities. In conjunction with the Nashoba Regional School District, we investigated the possibility of using the Future Electronics facility as school classrooms and offices. We concluded that much too costly renovations would be needed to appropriately use the facility, so a purchase was not pursued.

Population growth inevitably means more school children, so the selectmen and the planning groups looked at population projections and school space needs for the future. We appointed a School Needs Assessment Committee to look into alternative ways of meeting our school space requirements 15 years from now. We expect their results during the first half of 2006. In anticipation of building a new school someday, the town

pursued purchase of the 43-acre Taggart property on Forbush Mill Road. The proposal was narrowly defeated at the November town meeting. Depending on the alternatives identified by the new committee, we may still need to consider at some time in the future a land purchase for a new school.

The selectmen also worked with the library building committee and offered our congratulations for a job well done when Bolton was selected as one of only seven towns to be identified for a state library grant. Nevertheless, the November town meeting rejected the library expansion proposal. During 2006 the library proponents will decide what kind of library expansion to pursue and what renovations will be required at the existing building. Also considered at the November town meeting was purchase of the Smith Motors property. The town conducted environmental studies during the year and the Master Planning Committee considered possible mixed use development scenarios. Concerned about the town liability and the cost of the property, the town meeting resoundingly defeated the proposal.

The town's efforts on affordable housing continued during 2005 with the establishment of a Trust Fund that will be used for buying or developing affordable housing in Bolton. The Affordable Housing Partnership and the Zoning Board of Appeals are to be congratulated for maintaining our state certification by increasing our affordable housing stock, while promoting ways to increase the percentage of affordable homes in 40B housing projects.

Prior to the Annual Town Meeting, we conducted a State of the Town review of capital proposals and shared the town government's planning visions with townspeople. We want to find ways to continue to disseminate information and involve the public so that voters will be informed at the time of votes. Similar meetings will be held in the future.

A long planning chapter was finally concluded when the new senior housing project, Bolton Country Manor, opened. With our Senior Center relocated to the well-appointed community room, the new residents have been integrated into the community.

Cable Television. Another way to potentially inform the public is through telecast on Channel 10, Bolton's cable access channel. The selectmen worked with a group of volunteers call Bolton Access Television Corporation (BatCo) and negotiated an agreement by which BatCo would operate Channel 10 and initiate town government programming including televising of selectmen and other board meetings. We look forward to considerable progress in 2006 toward a fully functional local access channel.

Board Changes. Panny Gerken was elected to the board in May after many years of service on the Advisory and School Committees. We thank Dick Heaton for his service as a selectman and for his leadership, ideas, and guidance in town planning.

**Board of Selectmen
Financial Statement**

July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005

Salary

Appropriated		\$900.00
Expended		<u>\$300.00</u>
Unexpended balance returned to general fund		\$600.00

Expenses

Appropriated		\$15,211.00
Transfer		<u>\$ 6,950.00</u>
		\$22,161.00

Expended	Miscellaneous	\$1,677.17	
	Engineering Services	9,670.00	
	Supplies	686.10	
			<u>\$12,033.27</u>
Unexpended balance returned to general fund			\$ 2,327.73

EMT Coordinator

Appropriated		\$4,800.00
Expended		\$4,800.00

WHEAT

Appropriated		\$3,000.00
Expended		\$3,000.00