

**TOWN OF GILFORD  
SUMMER TOWN FORUM  
AUGUST 14, 2013  
6:00 P.M.**

The Summer Town Forum was held at the Gilford Town Hall, 47 Cherry Valley Road in Conference Rooms A & B. The Selectmen and persons in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

In attendance were Selectman Kevin Hayes, Selectman John O'Brien, Selectman Gus Benavides, Parks & Recreation Director Herb Greene, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Denise Gonyer, DPW Director Sheldon Morgan, Director of Planning and Land Use John Ayer, Fire Captain Rick Andrews, Executive Secretary Sandra Bailey, Town Administrator Scott Dunn, Finance Director Geoff Ruggles, Library Director Katherine Dormody, Police Chief Kevin Keenan, Assessing Agent Wil Corcoran and Superintendent of Schools Kent Hemingway.

Before beginning the Summer Town Forum, Chairman Hayes asked John Goodhue to come forward. He presented him with a plaque commemorating his many years of volunteer service to the Town of Gilford and naming him as the Honorary Mayor of Gilford Village. John Goodhue reminisced about his early days on the Gilford Fire Department and acknowledged Sandy McGonagle for inspiring him to be a volunteer.

Selectman Benavides presented John Goodhue with a commemorative chair, on behalf of the Conservation Commission. He praised him for his mission to always protect "Mother Earth". John Goodhue reiterated the importance of volunteerism and encouraged everyone to take the time to support the community.

Following some photographs with the members of the Conservation Commission, each member came forward and thanked John Goodhue for his years of service.

Commencing the Summer Town Forum, Chairman Kevin Hayes welcomed the persons in attendance and introduced the Department Managers. He stated that each of the Department Managers would make a brief presentation and be available for questions from the public.

Town Administrator Dunn stated that the amount of taxes to be raised for this year's budget is less than what was raised in 2009. Over the past five years, the Town has held the line on spending by reducing staff, cutting back on benefits and scaling back on services. These changes have affected a number of Town departments.

There are four components to the tax rate, and the only portion that Town has any control over is the municipal portion, which is approximately 27% of the total tax rate.

Town Administrator Dunn stated that changes to the Glendale Regulations have made the facility more accessible to those who are eligible to use it and less crowded by people who are not eligible to be there.

The Town will be shortly undergoing the renovation of the Town Hall building, including siding, windows, and roofing.

In closing, he stated that Town Reports are available in the lobby and also on the Town's website. In addition, the Channel 24 Bulletin Board has various Town events listed.

Library Director Katherine Dormody shared statistics on attendance and circulation. The Summer Reading Program has concluded, showing the most growth in the number of adult readers. The Library is looking forward to Old Home Day for their annual Book and Pie Sale. Sign-ups are currently underway for some fall events, as well.

Finance Director Ruggles stated that the Town continues to be in a good financial position, having weathered the recession quite well. Non-tax revenues have been averaging an increase of between 3-5% per month, with motor vehicle registrations, the largest portion of non-tax revenues, averaging between 5-10% per month. This has shown to be a consistent increase.

First issue tax collections are on par with last year, with approximately 95% collection. He thanked taxpayers for their diligence in paying their taxes on time. As far as expenditures, levels are slightly above last year, attributable to more frequent winter storms. He praised Department Managers and their staff for their due diligence in keeping costs down as much as possible. Director Ruggles anticipates expenditures will come in at 1-2% below budget.

In closing, he stated that financial records, including accounts payable manifests, are available on the Town's website under the Finance Department.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Denise Gonyer reported the success of the one-check system that was adopted last year and she anticipates being able to accept credit cards soon. The Department has also had ½ person staff reduction, made possible by the various efficiencies that have been put in place. Numerous elections were held in 2012 and there were no problems with the newly implemented voter identification laws. The financial reports of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector are available in the Town Report.

Assessing Agent Wil Corcoran stated that the State DRA has increased oversight into assessments and implemented many new laws. The number of real estate transactions has increased by 58% over last year's volume, although values remain stagnant. All of these statistics are also available in the Town Report and assessments are available on-line. In closing, he stated that his staff consistently states that Gilford is the friendliest town for them when going door to door, and he appreciates this.

DPW Director Sheldon Morgan began by stating that the Highway Department's activities have been largely governed by the weather, which indicates a 9% increase in rainfall over the same period last year. Roadside mowing and road striping have also been completed. Trash delivered to the Co-op Incinerator in Penacook is essentially the same tonnage as we delivered last year – just over 3,000 tons. In addition, recycling has increased by 16%.

The Household Hazardous Waste Day had participation from 235 households, once again making Gilford one of the highest participating communities. During the Selectmen's meeting that is being held later tonight, Director Morgan will be seeking approval to purchase a replacement plow truck.

Director of Planning and Land Use John Ayer provided statistics on building permit activity to date this year. The Wal-Mart expansion is due to begin soon, having completed all of their demolition work. They have been working closely with the City of Laconia, since the majority of the new construction is located in Laconia. With their recent expansion, Meadowbrook continues to work on reducing the noise level with the installation of foam insulation onto the steel beams.

The Planning Board has been working on their 2014 Zoning Amendments, which may include a wetlands buffer, ordinance for the filling of steep slopes and re-zoning on Lily Pond Road.

Police Chief Keenan stated that the Department is currently working on a radio system upgrade, which will result in better communications. In addition, the Timberman Triathlon is scheduled for this weekend – August 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, which will result in some traffic delays. The Town's Unwanted Medication Box, located in the Town Hall lobby, was dedicated tonight and encouraged anyone with medications in their homes that they are not using to leave them in the box so that they can be disposed of appropriately.

Overall, the Police Department has been very busy this summer with increased activity. Crimes involving technology have become increasingly time-consuming. The Department's Explorer Post has become active again and K-9 Ike is almost ready to assume the responsibilities of retiring K-9 Agbar.

Captain Rick Andrews of Gilford Fire-Rescue stated that they have also seen increased activity in 2013. To date, they have had 980 calls, which are 80 incidents more than the same period in 2012. The Department has also been busy providing EMS coverage for various special events this summer. The Meadowbrook expansion has resulted in increased activity and the Tough Mudder at Gunstock, earlier this summer, resulted in declaring a mass casualty event due to the extreme heat.

The Department has undergone some personnel changes, with Lt. Mercuri leaving to become State EMS Bureau Chief and Captain Andrews stepping in to fill his position. As a result, the Department has been interviewing for a Deputy Chief and they hope to have a recommendation for the Board of Fire Engineers next week. Captain Andrews provided an update on the Call Company and stated that their Explorer Post has also become active again. In 2014, the Department will be looking to replace an ambulance, make energy upgrades to the Station and rehab Engine 2.

Recreation Director Herb Greene provided an update of the events and activities of the Department. The tennis courts and basketball courts at the Village Field have been re-surfaced. In addition, they are currently in the process of fulfilling a Dredge and Fill Project at the Town Beach. Also, a new foot wash and shower have been installed at the back of the lifeguard building.

Programming has been very busy with Red Sox trips, band concerts and various golf programs and summer camps. Director Greene anticipates having the beach fully staffed through Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Old Home Day is scheduled for Saturday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, and the theme is "Superheroes Among Us".

Superintendent of School Kent Hemingway stated that the School District has maintained a flat budget for the past three years. This has been the result of reductions in staff, energy savings, and insurance reductions. He encouraged members of the public to utilize the School District's website for further information.

Superintendent Hemingway provided an overview of the District's long-range strategic planning goals. Their goals for the upcoming year will include energy savings and improving on student reporting. The apartment building at the Meadows has been removed, due to it not meeting building codes.

In closing, he pointed out that the Drop Box for Unwanted Medications is now in place in the Town Hall Lobby. This project was spearheaded by the Gilford Drug and Alcohol Task Force.

There were no comments or questions from the public.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gus Benavides  
Clerk