

TO: Mayor and Board of Aldermen  
FROM: Lee Galloway, Town Manager  
DATE: July 14, 2004  
SUBJECT: Status Report for period ending July 13, 2004

The 2003-2004 fiscal year came to a close and we moved rapidly into the work plan in the 2004-2005 fiscal year budget. Several projects have been put on the back burner until we could reach the point of having new money appropriated in the new budget. Other projects from my office have been on hold until we could get the old budget closed out and the new budget finalized. I am excited about several of the new projects under way and we have started moving on some of these as quickly as possible.

## **PROJECTS**

Town crews worked hard during the month of June to completely finish the work on **Depot Street**. Even though the rains presented a number of challenges, work proceeded and the sidewalk construction was 99% completed by our self imposed deadline of June 30. Personnel had already met their first deadline of having the street reopened to vehicular traffic by June 1, and they were anxious to be completely finished with the project. Work on a few driveways is continuing, and we are fortunate to be working with some patient property owners. We have received many positive comments about the work on the street and the enhanced appearance, and some business owners there have told us they have already noticed an increase in foot traffic on the street. There are also some building improvements in the works, making it evident that street improvements such as these encourage further growth and development.



Water and sewer work has been underway in various areas in recent months. We bid out work on sewer line replacement on **Westwood Circle** between Georgia and Hazelwood Avenues. The rest of the sewer on Westwood Circle had been replaced, and this one showed evidence of severe deterioration when we ran a camera through the line. While installing sewer, the contractor discovered a galvanized water line which was severely undersized for the number of customers and in very poor condition, so that was replaced at the same time. Already we have had comments from people expressing thanks for the increased water flow they are seeing at their homes.

Another private contractor installed a new sewer line along the Asheville Road between Haywood Electric Membership Corporation and the Waynesville Family Practice. This new line had to be delayed until the construction work on that portion of the highway was completed, but has now been installed and accepted. Already you have had two customers wanting to tap onto the line and Waynesville Family Practice will be switching from a system where they pumped back to a sewer line in East Street to being able to reach the Asheville Road line by gravity flow. Our own crews have been working on replacement of utility lines on **Craven and Babb** Streets area. Some of this work was related to the work that the Department of Transportation is doing on Pigeon Street by installing storm drainage lines to relieve the Salvation Army of some storm water problems they have experienced coming off Pigeon Street.

Electrical crews have been doing a good deal of **tree trimming work** this spring and summer. Our community experienced above average rainfall in 2003, and thus far in 2004, we have seen the same thing. As a result, we have seen tremendous growth of trees and bushes, with many limbs working their way into power lines and causing problems during periods of snow and ice, high winds and storms. So our personnel have been cutting back on these limbs and there has been a related reduction in the number of power outages and system blinks. During one recent storm, a number of Progress Energy customers in and close to town were blinking or out completely for an extended period, and we were fortunate to have not even a blink during that evening. At other times, our system does blink, sometimes when the weather is nice. Usually there is a related cause, either from a tree limb falling on the lines or a tree is cut and hits the lines or a vehicle strikes the utility poles. Most frequently, the blinks are from squirrels which cross transformers and hit the wires, and these usually result in blown fuses. The department has a large photo album of many squirrels which met their untimely deaths while crossing the transformers.

The rainy weather has also presented tremendous challenges for the personnel in the **cemetery department** in trying to keep up with grass mowing and weed eating. In talking with Superintendent Freddie Rathbone last month, he indicated that this year was the worst year he could ever remember for the high grass. Not only does the rain make the grass grow faster, it also prevents our personnel from mowing when it is very wet. They have begun raining or when the grass is early in the mornings and worked some in the evenings and on weekends to try and contend with the rainfall. While there have been a few complaints, most people are sympathetic with the situation, for they must experience the same problem in mowing their own yards.



In addition to interfering with created some extra Torrential downpours on Friday evening, July 10, resulted in some flooding and wash out problems we have not seen in several years. The Hazelwood, Laurel Ridge, Plott Creek and Hyatt Creek areas were hit especially hard on Friday evening, while the Allens Creek, Ninevah and Sanctuary areas were hit especially hard on Saturday evening. Our personnel have been involved in cleaning out dirt and debris from roads and ditches this week and in trying to open drainage channels.

In the Sanctuary area, rocks and debris washed into the creeks and culverts and have blocked several. We are hiring some outside crews with long necked cranes to clear these areas since our equipment is not suitable for reaching areas that far off the road. You will perhaps recall that in the spring of 2003, we had serious damage and mud slides in Laurel Ridge resulting from very heavy rainfall. From what we can tell, the repairs done at that time seemed to hold in the severe weather this past week. I was very surprised at the volume of water I saw flowing on both Friday and Saturday evenings and am not surprised at the damage that resulted.



## FIRE DEPARTMENT

The work on flushing, checking and running flow tests on fire hydrants has been completed. In addition, fire personnel have been painting bright orange “H” symbols on roads in front of hydrants to assist in locating those devices.

## ACTIVITIES OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR

I am enthused to get the new year off with a bang as we get to work on several activities which have lingered or which were awaiting the new budget.

On Tuesday, July 7, Town Clerk Phyllis McClure, Finance Director Eddie Caldwell and I met with representatives of the CGI Group, a computer graphics and programming firm located on Depot Street here in Waynesville. We discussed the Town’s desire to improve the **web site** that we started a few years ago. The site is already outdated and has been under construction for two years. It has no flash or flair to it, nothing to draw potential residents, business people or industrialists to the site. We want to add a great deal more to the site, with ordinances, policies, minutes, events calendar and information about the various departments and programs of the town. We also want training so that Town staff can make changes to the web site when needed. In adopting the new budget, the Board included funds for assistance with computers and with the development of the web page. We are expecting a proposal back from CGI this week and hope to have the updated web page on line with changes and improvements early in 2005.



In addition to our efforts to improve communications with our citizens through the use of the internet, we are continuing to provide written information to the public through our quarterly newsletter. The second edition of the quarterly newsletter began arriving at the homes and businesses in the community on July 1, meeting our goal of trying to have this in their hands by the first day of each month in the quarter. We again received nice compliments about the newsletter, and I commend Town Clerk and Administrative Assistant Phyllis McClure for her work and coordination of this project.

On Tuesday, July 7, Eddie Caldwell and I met with Denny Martin, Financial Specialist with Martin-McGill. During our budget work sessions, the Board and Staff discussed at length the problems we face continually with too little money to do all the needed work to properly maintain and repair the **water and sewer lines**. Eddie and I were asked to research this issue in the new fiscal year and come back to the Board with some alternative solutions. Mr. Martin is the financial specialist with McGill Associates, the Town’s engineering firm since the late 1970s; consequently, he has an understanding of our system, the issues we have faced over the years.

We discussed finances and how to best fund the repairs and the improvements needed. Mr. Martin suggested that we develop a Capital Improvement Plan for ten to fifteen years rather than the five years we have used and updated annually prior to developing the annual budget. He suggested that the Town submit an application to the Rural Center for a grant to help pay the cost of developing the plan and the funding alternatives. The cost of the work may be in the range of \$30,000, and the Town would be eligible for a grant of 50% of the cost. We think this would be money well spent, and the engineering firm could assist us in keying in on the improvements we might anticipate at the water and wastewater treatment plants while we attempt to list out the most serious problems with water and sewer lines, manholes, pump stations, tanks, etc. We gave Mr. Martin the authority to proceed with the application to the Rural Center as their deadline for the applications is September 1, 2004. Grant announcements follow in December. If we are successful, the work on the Plan could be finalized while the 2005-2006 budget is considered.

On Wednesday, May 14, I will be meeting with John Broadbrooks and Daniel Hyatt to discuss the design of an area for cremation **columbarium units** at Greenhill Cemetery. Mr. Broadbrooks is a landscape architect who has done work for the Town several times, and his firm designed the landscaping on park grounds at the new recreation center. The committee the Board appointed has ideas on how the columbarium area might appear, but we need the expertise of a professional landscape designer to assist and bid the work for construction. This project has lingered for a while, and we need to have the columbarium units in place by the end of the year.

Dr. Gibbs Knotts has taken over the directorship of the **Masters Program in Public Administration at Western Carolina University**. He has made contact and we are to meet on Thursday, July 15, to talk about the program and where he feels it should be heading. I would like to see the Town using more interns in our organization, offering these graduate students the opportunity to have more hands on training. Dr. Knotts is anxious to help the MPA students develop the skills that are needed by local governments, and he wants to make contact with area municipal and county managers to assure that the program is relevant to our needs.

On Tuesday, July 20, Mayor Foy and I will meet with representatives of the Little Tennessee Land Trust, the Coweeta Hydrological Laboratory and Western Carolina University to continue investigation of the **future use of the watershed**. Mayor Foy had asked about a meeting of this nature to give us a chance to learn more about the environmental forestry program that is conducted by the Coweeta Laboratory. We will continue gathering information related to the Conservation Easement as the Board moves toward a decision on that document.

The Board authorized a **Facilities Needs Study** and hired the architectural firm of ADW of Charlotte for that work. In mid-May, the police, fire, public works and administrative departments met with representatives of ADW and began work on a survey about existing and perceived future needs. Those were returned to ADW in mid-June. The firm has now compiled the answers and will be here July 21 to give me an administrative report on their findings. After that, the firm will begin working on the second phase of the work, determining how we might make better use of our existing facilities, whether we need to reorganize, renovate or relocate or consider new construction of facilities.



I am excited about implementing the various programs included in the new budget.

## PERSONNEL

During the recently completed budget work sessions, we made the mistake of bragging about the low amount of turnover we have experienced the past few years. We are paying for that now as we suddenly confront a number of openings throughout various town departments. Since June 1, ten full time positions have become vacant and one, permanent part-time position has become available. We have also been advised that other retirements are on the horizon.

Two of our longest serving employees, Dennis “Butch” Cutshaw and Fred Rathbone, have decided to retire. Butch came to work with the Town on July 12, 1972, and at the present time, he is the active employee with the most service, at 32 years. He has worked in various departments, but for the past several years, he has served the community very well as a utility meter reader in the Finance Department. He has been a very dedicated Town employee. Fred Rathbone came to work with the Town on March 8, 1976, beginning in the cemetery department and promoted to superintendent of the cemetery in March, 1981. He is the Town employee who is third on the list of years of service. When the “Employee of the Year” award was introduced in 1989, the first individual selected for that recognition was Fred Rathbone. He is certainly one of the kindest, gentlest employees with whom I have ever had the pleasure to work in my 31 years in municipal government. (Doug Grasty now holds the distinction as being the employee with the second highest amount of time working for the Town, as he joined Town forces on December 15, 1974.)

Patrol Officer Kevin Suggs has had to take a disability retirement from the Waynesville Police Department. Officer Suggs was injured last year when he fell down some steps during an arrest in the Robinson Street area. He broke his wrist and suffered other injuries and had never been able to regain the ability to fire his weapon in the manner required of an officer. He was provided benefits through worker’s compensation and has been granted disability retirement through the Local Government Employees’ Retirement System.



Sean Sojack, Criminal Investigator with the Police Department, has resigned to accept a position with the United States Secret Service, and Lora Cooper, Lab Technician at the Waste Water Treatment Plant, has resigned to accept a similar position in management at Blue Ridge Paper Company. Courtney Clinard and Amanda Hutchins, full time life guards in Recreation have accepted teaching positions in the public school systems.

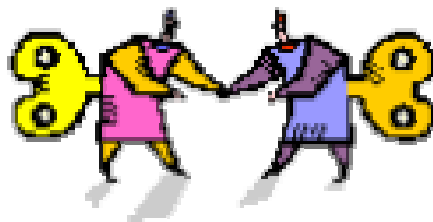
Janet Kirkpatrick, Customer Service Representative in Finance, Jim Cochran, Maintenance Worker at the Recreation Center and Doris Davis, part-time custodian at the Recreation Center resigned their positions with the Town.

In late June, we learned that the School System had included funding for the position of Recreational Specialist with the B.A.D.G.E. Program. The future of the B.A.D.G.E. Program had been discussed during our budget work sessions, and there was concern as to whether the program would continue at all since further grant funds for the program were very unlikely. The Board voted to approve the funding of the police officer’s position assigned to the program if the School Board would fund the Recreational position. The School System decided to assign a certified teacher to that position, and since the Recreational Specialist in B.A.D.G.E., Bruce Yarrington, did not have a teacher’s certification, he would not be able to continue after June 30.

The Finance Department had accepted applications for the position of Customer Service Representative, and when he learned that his job was being eliminated, Bruce applied for that opening. The Department interviewed Bruce for the position, and he was hired to begin as quickly as possible. We were pleased to be able to offer Bruce another position with the Town so that he did not have to be unemployed for long.

I should also note that Paul Benson, former Town Planner with the Town, has been hired into the position of Planning Director. We evaluated the applications received for the planner's position and learned that Paul was interested in returning to work with the Town. Planning and Zoning Manager John Swift, Paul and I agreed that it would be best to try and separate the planning and zoning functions. John worked through revisions of the job descriptions to create a Director of Planning position, which Paul will hold, and a Land Use Manager, which John will hold. Paul has many years of experience in the field, and we welcome him back to Waynesville.

In addition to the vacant positions noted above, we are presently advertising for the position of Assistant Cemetery Superintendent, and we are working on the job descriptions for the position of horticulturist and part time, secretarial position in the Public Works Department. During the next several weeks, various department heads are going to be involved in making selections to fill these positions. We have been able to select good employees in the past, and that makes for a stronger, more productive organization. We will do our very best to assure that the new employees coming on board will have the same desire and dedication that our other employees possess and that all have the skills or the capabilities to develop the skills for the jobs available. Our employees are the "key" to the accomplishment of the goals and objectives of the organization, so we want to make sure that we hire well!





## MANAGER NEWS

As indicated to you in June, we have tried to assure that there were no matters to come before the Board which would require a meeting on Tuesday, July 27. Thank you for your vote last evening to cancel the meeting. I have not missed a meeting while serving as Town Manager, and did not want to begin now. With the experience of losing one of her brothers this past February, my wife, Nancy, is drawn toward a closer connection with her family. I certainly understand that and have been able to enjoy that from being an hour away from my own family. But Nancy wanted to join her brother, his wife and their two boys from Ohio for a week's vacation on the Outer Banks, and we will be in the Rodanthe/Salvo/Waves area near Nags Head from Saturday, July 24 until Friday, July 30.

Nancy and I will then drive to Greensboro and fly to Minneapolis, Minnesota, to spend the week with her father, attend her high school class reunion and attend a Minnesota Twins baseball game. Knowing of my love of shopping (yeah right!), she has suggested that we visit the world famous Mall of America near Minneapolis, a shopping mall that is alleged to be the largest in the world and supposedly has almost five miles of retail store frontage, an amusement park and probably plenty of ATM machines. (Maybe they will have a shop with fishing gear!!)

On Friday, August 6, we will fly back to Greensboro and drive to Waynesville. I plan to be back in town Friday evening and back in the office on Monday, August 9. As usual, when I am away, I will leave contact information with Fred Baker, Phyllis McClure, Mayor Foy and the Police Chief, and I will have my cell phone with me, keeping it turned on most of the time.

I appreciate the opportunity to work with each of you and feel it is a pleasure to serve with you. In the other five communities where I have worked, I never felt more a member of the "team" than I have in Waynesville, and that means a great deal to a manager. On July 9, I completed 31 years as an employee in municipal government. None of those years have meant more than the ten years I have been here in Waynesville. I am deeply appreciative of the boost in compensation that the Board recently approved for me, but my pleasure in serving here goes beyond the money. I love the work and I love the challenges and the excitement of facing those challenges. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve you and the citizens of our town.

