

## **VISION STATEMENT PERTAINING TO TOWN SERVICES**

Tolland is recognized as a desirable community in which to live. Community means a sense of shared values accompanied by the willingness to ensure the safety, well being and respect of our neighbors and neighborhoods.

The Town provides efficient and high quality services in a fiscally responsible and efficient way. Residents' quality of life expectations will be preserved by the Town continuing to promote a sound infrastructure and recreational opportunities and with an engaged citizenry committed to the betterment of the entire community encouraging a balance among open space, residential and economic development, a town budget process that expands community involvement and a progressive educational system that meets or exceeds the challenges of a common core of knowledge.

## **Review and Comment on Town Department Activity Centers and Expenditures**

### **Recommendation:**

1. Continue the budget process initiated by the Town Manger which involves the identification of Department Activity Centers.
2. Take the various cost centers/activity centers and identify various levels of funding and potential impact on the service.
3. Make activity center information part of the budget process.

## **Review Town Revenue Data**

Concern: How do we close the gap between estimated expenditures and anticipated revenues?

Recommendations:

1. Review what is being charged currently for licenses and/or fees.
2. Look for additional grants. Determine if there is a need for a part-time grant writer.
3. Additional revenue may be available from economic development opportunities.
4. Excluding grand list growth, budgets should be prepared based on a goal of not more than a 2-4% annual increase in taxes.
5. If services need to be reduced, residents will accept them provided they are lower priority.

## **Suggestions for Efficiencies in Town Operations**

### Recommendations:

Items of highest priority include:

1. Develop a pavement management plan by an outside consultant.
2. Expand the activity center methodology
  - a. quantify outputs and costs for such products.
  - b. consider a bonus or incentive program to reward significant savings.
3. Convene a blue ribbon committee to review possible energy efficiencies.
4. Develop a work order and task management system.

Other items include:

1. Review options for reducing the cost of refuse/recycling.
2. Review methods for performing snow and ice control
  - a. rely more on salt than sand.
  - b. look to rely more on contractors for plow routes.
3. Possible issues for a Charter Revision Commission
  - a. acquisition of real property should require a 2/3 majority at referendum.
  - b. review debt issuance levels.
  - c. timeline for budget process.
  - d. establishment of a Finance Committee.
4. Review possible reorganization of Town Departments.
5. Review insurance savings options.
6. Allow on-line payment of taxes/fees.
7. Review outsourcing payroll and consolidating functions with BOE.
8. Reduce the cost of lawn maintenance
  - a. reduce the amount of fertilizer used.
  - b. review possible cost sharing with user groups.
9. Review alternatives when purchasing vehicles/trucks.

10. Review Purchasing Policies.
11. Perform a Library needs assessment and examine possible expansion of the current facility versus a new building.
12. Promote a Town culture that is more results driven and innovative and constantly looking for ways to be more efficient.
13. Establish committees where necessary.
14. Strive for attaining GFOA's budget certification.
15. Review the cost efficiency of additional staff to allow for additional billing for EMS services.

## **Suggestions for Improving Methods of Communication with the Public**

1. Establish a Communication Committee responsible for the delivery of relevant information to Tolland residents.
2. Purchase and locate a large, permanent central activities sign near Town Hall.
3. Dramatically increase subscription to the Tolland eblast service. Ask people to sign up when they pay taxes, check out books, register to vote, etc.
4. Monthly meetings with residents hosted by Town Council, BOE, P&Z, EDC, etc.
5. Better use of the Community Voice channel.
6. Use local businesses to post information.
7. Initiate a “Resident to Resident” series in local publications.
8. Improve relationships with local reporters so that print news is informative and not inflammatory.
9. Link to various community group websites to disseminate Town information.
10. Have regular updates in Tolland Monthly on the budget process as well as through eblasts.
11. Continue community conversations on specific issues.
12. Have as a goal that all Town officials will employ courtesy, respect and timely response to citizen inquiries.
13. Conduct periodic citizen surveys.
14. Use citizens to help communicate
  - a. citizen section in Town newsletter.
  - b. fact sheet on Tolland issues.
  - c. community calendar on web and hard copies available at key locations.
15. Have an employee newsletter.
16. Prepare “Welcome to Tolland” packets for new residents.
17. Create a “how are we doing” postcard to solicit feedback from residents.

18. Improve budget communications

- a. website links.
- b. updates simple.
- c. have monthly updates on CATV.
- d. use targeted mailings.
- e. seek the distinguished budget award.