

TOWN MANAGER

Christopher Whelan, Town Manager

2017 started off on January 4 with a fire in the West Concord Fire Station that caused more than \$2.5 million in damage to the structure and several vehicles. Fortunately, no one was injured in the fire and the town's insurance carrier fully coverage all losses. The station was re-opened in June with a new sprinkler system and other improvements.

Work was completed on several other construction projects during the year, including the completion of the new School Transportation Facility on Knox Trail which opened in August. In the fall, significant improvements were made at Rideout field to provide safer parking, a perimeter walking trail, and attractive landscaping. The purchase of the building at 55 Church Street allowed the consolidation of most of the town's Human Services operations onto the Harvey Wheeler Center campus. The structure included an unfinished third floor that is now hosting a Recreation Department presence in West Concord. And a groundbreaking ceremony for the long-anticipated Bruce Freeman Rail Trail was held in June, with completion of the trail expected in late 2018.

Town Clerk Anita Tekle retired in February with the community's well-wishes, and a very capable replacement, Kaari Tari, was appointed in May. Long-serving Fire Chief Mark Cotreau retired in August. His integrity and compassion will be missed. In December, thirty-year CFD staff member Tom Judge was promoted to replace him.

Town Meeting met in the high school gymnasium for the first time and took several noteworthy actions, including adopting a Tree Preservation Bylaw; adopting Energy Goals consistent with the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015 and providing funding for a Green House Gas emission study and hiring a Sustainability Director; and the adoption of a means-tested property tax exemption for Concord's seniors.

The broadband internet service offered by the Light Plant reached the level of 1,000 customers by year end. Customers have reported great satisfaction with the service.

Two significant legal matters arose this year. The Town's application to upgrade our water treatment facility at Nagog Pond was approved in April by the Acton Board of Selectmen with onerous and unduly expensive conditions. So it was necessary to appeal the conditions imposed on the special permit needed to expand the facility. And relative to the unpaved portion of Estabrook Road, a trail long used by the public for hiking and skiing, signs were installed indicating that the road is "private property". In October, a complaint was filed in the Land Court requesting that the defendants be barred from taking any action to prevent the public from using the road for pedestrian access and trail purposes. The decision to litigate in these two cases was difficult and challenging. But the goals in each case is to preserve the public's historic rights.

Several initiatives were proposed this year which were not well-received by residents, and the Select Board and Town Manager were asked to reconsider several decisions. Among these were implementation of the Parking Management Plan, which included pay-by-phone only meters on portions of Main Street; the proposed leasing of the cupola in the Emerson Umbrella building for a cellular telephone antenna which was opposed by neighbors. And CCTV's contract to provide public access television services was not renewed in favor of having town staff provide those services for better accountability and responsiveness. In each case, those initiatives will be given reconsideration in the coming year based on citizen feedback.

Town residents remained very active in town affairs with committees such as the Comprehensive Long Range Planning Committee and West Concord Advisory Committee delving deeply into issues of concern to the community. Concord continues to benefit from the community spirit and enthusiasm of residents who volunteer to work on town projects together with a very professional staff committed to Concord's continuing success as an excellent place to live, work and play.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Mark Howell, Chief Information Officer
Leslie Koplow, Information Technology Services Manager
Russ Gaulin, GIS and
Application Integration Program Manager
Jill Moonheron, GIS Analyst
Open, Information Systems Technician

The Information Technology department is managed by the Chief Information Officer (CIO), Mark Howell, who reports to the Town Manager. The department's mission is to provide information systems and technology to support all Town Departments and Enterprises. In 2017, the IT department organization was modified to better accomplish this mission. A full-time position of IT Technical Services Manager was created to supervise the IS Technician, oversee end-user computing support and provide coordination of the Helpdesk and IT Service delivery. By adding a person to the full time staff, IT will be better able to keep up with the ongoing support requirements of the various departments.

In addition to approving the regular budget for the IT department, in 2017, Article 3 of the April Special Town Meeting authorized \$1.5 million to be expended on technology improvement programs. Working with the Town Manager and other department heads, the CIO has identified the first project to be delivered under this program to be providing Online Licensing and Permitting for Concord citizens. Planning for this program began in 2017 with a review of needs, priorities and available products. Implementation of the project will begin in 2018. The funding will be used to acquire hardware and software, and to pay for professional services and project management to complete this and other designated projects over the next few years.

Key IT department accomplishments in 2017 included a major upgrade of the Town's e-mail system, which included updated SPAM filtering, URL protection and archiving. In addition, the Town's Internet Firewall was replaced and the Internet connection improved. Major application upgrades included: the NetDesigner fiber management software, the DSX building access control system, and the Futura electric Outage Management System (OMS). The telephone system was expanded to the new Knox Trail and Church Street buildings and a virtual Fax Server was added to help save paper and eliminate analog phone lines. The Geographic Information System (GIS) team deployed a new ArcGIS

Server. As always, these projects required investments and improvements in servers, data storage, and workstation hardware. For example, the virtual server system software, VMware, which is the underlying platform for most of the Town's servers, was upgraded in October 2017.

IT provided support for a number of facilities-oriented efforts in 2017. IT infrastructure was installed for two new office buildings which opened at 37 Knox Trail and 55 Church Street and was removed from 105 Everett St. which closed. Regional Housing Services Office employees were relocated from 141 Keyes Rd to 37 Knox Trail and Concord Retirement System and Community Services employees were moved to 55 Church Street. The West Concord Fire station IT infrastructure was completely replaced as part of the reconstruction of the building after a fire. This involved fitting up a temporary fire station in West Concord while the repairs took place, and replacing much of the computer equipment that had been destroyed in the fire. Site security improvements across the town included adding video security cameras at the Nagog Pond Ozone treatment facility for the Water Department and adding key electric department substations to the DSX electronic building access system. The IT department also planned and coordinated technology for the April 2017 Town Meeting which was held in the Concord-Carlisle Regional High School Gymnasium for the first time.

Below is an outline of the responsibilities of the IT staff with more details of some of the 2017 accomplishments.

The CIO manages the IT department, consults with the Town's Senior Managers, and directs all major IT initiatives. The CIO is responsible for making capital investments in information technology such as servers, workstations, telephone systems, data networks, and information storage. The CIO also guides all major application system investments made by departments. This strategic focus emphasizes collaboration and coordination to address common needs in applications systems and business processes across departments. The IT Services Manager manages all aspects of end-user computing for Town employees. She supervises the Information Systems (IS) Technician. Her responsibilities include management of the IT help desk (staffed by a vendor); planning, purchasing and

overseeing replacement of all workstations, laptops, printers and other peripheral end user equipment by the IS Technician; writing and maintaining help desk procedures; coordinating support to individuals and departments; planning and managing internal IT projects, and helping departments with IT expenditures.

The IS Technician installs job-specific hardware, software, and applications and provides first-level technical support for the Town's phone system. The Town now owns and uses 385 workstations and laptops, representing a 4% increase over the number of systems in use last year. In 2017, the IS Technician planned and oversaw the replacement of 40 workstations and laptops which were approaching obsolescence, required an upgrade, or failed, and deployed approximately 16 new laptops for new initiatives. Of the 70-plus printers that were in use, 12 failing or obsolete printers were replaced (including 4 large multifunction copier/printers in key locations). Of the 6 plotters in use throughout the town, 2 plotters were decommissioned, and one new plotter deployed in its stead.

The IT department supports a variety of GIS systems used by employees and citizens. The GIS staff includes the GIS & Application Integration Program Manager, who focuses on the GIS server implementation and sharing data between multiple systems; and the GIS Analyst who maintains the data and publishes many of the maps available on the Town's web site. The team has been working to upgrade the GIS data repository to utilize a specialized GIS server. Over time the server will enable consistent data to be made available across applications, on the web and to mobile applications. During 2017, the GIS team conducted end-user GIS training for Town staff and published a quarterly newsletter which helps to keep everyone up-to-date on this important information asset.

We continued replacing physical servers with virtual servers and upgrading application servers to more current operating systems. Capacity was added to the servers by connecting an additional host to each of the CMLP and Public Safety Building server clusters. Running with three hosts per cluster permits better load balancing and resilience in the event of a hardware issue. Both of Concord's server sites are always processing work and each site provides backup for the other.

Data and voice communications are critical to municipal operations, and network requirements continue to grow rapidly. In order to address these needs and stay aligned with IT strategic direction, the Light department's telecommunications staff is also managed by the CIO. In 2017, the team upgraded the entire Internet Service core network, replacing the routers and switches with new, larger devices. The throughput of this network was increased 150% and the design capacity was increased by a factor of ten. This major upgrade is expected to enable the Broadband service to continue to grow for another four years. The telecommunications staff also supported the Town's operations by installing fiber-optic based connections to the new Town properties at 37 Knox Trail and Church St., and coordinating the telephone upgrade project at 141 Keyes Rd. This same staff continued to deploy internet service to residents and businesses as described in the CMLP Telecommunication Operations section of this Annual Report.

The need to provide network services continues to expand. In 2017, the CIO negotiated an agreement with the Town of Bedford to hire and share a Network Engineer. This employee will be employed by CMLP and will be part of the Telecommunication Division. They will also provide support to the Town of Bedford and to Concord's IT department. By sharing this resource, all three teams benefit from having access to a highly skilled network resource while offsetting expense. Effective Information Technology depends on a mix of hardware and software, personnel and business applications. Performing ongoing maintenance is critical to stability, security and functionality of the applications used by employees. So is planning for future needs. In 2017, multiple servers were upgraded to the latest operating systems. A utility billing system upgrade was completed even as we plan for a major system replacement by early 2019 for the Light Plant and Water & Sewer departments. IT also invested in a system to tighten up data management and improve access control, auditability of security privileges and protect data from loss.

In summary, the rate of technology change and the need for information continues to increase. Keeping our information secure and our systems available requires effort by IT, well-trained employees, and constant maintenance. Fortunately the Town has also been able to increase the resources expended on In-

formation Technology over the past few years. Recent investments have resulted in more stable, secure, and functional platforms for Town operations. The new resources available from the technology improvement fund will enable IT to work with staff to bring more functionality to citizens through the Town's web site and mobile devices.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Erin Stevens

The role of Public Information Officer (PIO) was vacant from March 2017 to September 2017 as the Town searched for someone to fill the role left by former PIO Sean Dugan. In September, Erin Stevens, joined the Town of Concord as its new PIO. To ensure a community oriented aspect to the position, the new PIO began by spending time in the community getting to know Town employees, Business Owners, and community members.

Social Media

To shed light on the good that happens here in Concord, Feel Good Fridays was started on the Town's social media. This campaign highlights the positive aspects of the Concord community and is a positive engagement tool. An Instagram page was also started for the Town as yet another way to interact online with community members. The PIO continues to use social media as a tool to engage in two-way communication with the Concord community. The website continues to be updated and improved with feedback we receive from our citizenry.

Citizen Engagement

The Town began a relationship with Involved, a mobile app and website which allows citizens to answer questions directly from their elected officials with the push of a button. This mobile app will be further implemented throughout 2018.

Outreach

A Welcome Packet was created for new residents and the Visitor Center webpage was updated with the latest tour information, photos, and historical points of interest in anticipation of a robust tourism season at the Visitor's Center. Spring 2018 will see the Visitor Center's newly redesigned pocket maps.

Communication

The Public Information Officer continues to look for new ways to reach the Concord community in order to keep our residents well informed. This includes working with local community members on the Event Juggler community calendar and meeting with different interested community groups to improve two-way communication throughout the Town.

The Public Information Officer has also been working with the Town Clerk's Office, Recreation, and Health Department, among other Town Departments for coordination of public events such as the Road to Town Meeting series, hearings, and events such as the Annual Holiday Tree Lighting and Parade. The PIO also provides support to many different committees to ensure a positive experience during hearings, workshops, and events. The PIO serves as the Town's webmaster and provides photography for Town events.



Chief O'Connor provides a press update after a breaking and entering situation in Concord led to a police pursuit; PIO Erin Stevens assisted with media relations during and after the press conference.



The Town of Concord's Annual Holiday Tree Lighting and Parade