

Report of the Board of Selectmen

The continued reduction in state aid was one of the major issues that challenged the Board of Selectmen during 2003. As of December 31, 2003, the Town did not know the amount of state aid we would receive from the State for fiscal year 2004-05. This has made it very difficult once again to plan the Town's budget for '04-05. Difficulty in planning the town's finances makes it very difficult to address other priorities. As a town heavily dependent upon state aid, cuts over the past two years have had a significant impact on staffing through the town and school departments.

The Board welcomed back Bernadette Hemingway and Robert Merritt who were both re-elected to the Board in April.

The project of capping the North Carver Landfill continued throughout 2003 and is expected to be completed in late summer of 2004. This is being done at no cost to the taxpayers. The Board would like to express their appreciation to members of the Landfill Oversight Committee who have spent countless hours overseeing this highly technical and complex project.

It is anticipated that the new Animal Control Shelter will be built during the summer months. BATG, the firm capping the North Carver Landfill, will be constructing the shelter, at no cost to the Town. Our Animal Control Officer, Leah Pustejovsky, deserves much appreciation for performing her work under very undesirable conditions at the present shelter that is located in the landfill.

Members of the Board formed a task force that includes Selectmen from the Town of Middleborough and have met numerous times in the past year to forge a successor agreement to the existing contract between the towns pertaining to water supply and distribution. Carver is exploring infrastructure needs including wells, water storage capacity, etc. that will be critical if there is to be a true expansion of the partnership between the two towns. In anticipation of the completion of the Route 44 expansion project, we hope to provide the necessary services to assist in the development of the town's industrial zone in North Carver.

During this past year, construction began on the expansion of the Ambulance facilities behind town hall. The facility will be completed in early 2004. Expanding and updating this facility was a priority, both for our Call EMTs and for the safety of our residents.

The hiring of a Permanent Police Chief was very high on the Board's priority list this past year. A Police Chief Search Committee comprised of local citizens along with a professional consulting company has been going through the screening and assessment process. This is a nationwide search in order to provide our Town with the best-qualified candidate to lead this department in the future. The process of appointing a permanent Chief should be completed in the spring.

The Town hired a new Town Accountant, John Q. Adams, after Jennifer Petit left to take the position of Finance Director for the Town of Chatham. John brings many years of experience as a town accountant and municipal auditor.

The Selectmen's Office lost the service of Pat Clark who retired this year. We thank her for her many years of devoted service to the town - through good times and bad, and through many transitions over the years.

The Board would like to thank the Town Administrator and his Assistant, Jean Bouchard, as well as the town's Department Heads and all hard working Boards and Committees for their efforts this past year on behalf of the residents. In particular, we wish to note the efforts of the Finance and School Committees in working with us closely through another difficult budget year. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator's staff including Maria Gomes and Elaine Weston.

James M. Grimes, *Chair*
Ronald E. Clarke
Francis J. Casey
Bernadette L. Hemingway
Robert H. Merritt