

First Selectman's Corner – February 2012

As I wrote in my previous letter, the Beacon Falls town website is a work in progress. Our new webmaster, Ed Groth, is a volunteer who has been diligently partnering with both the website hosting company and our Town Clerk to update and maintain the site. Completing this task has been an extreme challenge, but we are expecting to have the site fully operational in short order.

The *CERT* (Certified Emergency Response Training) program has been fully approved and funded; training will begin February 29, 2012, at Beacon Hose Company #1. All residents who are eighteen years of age and older and would like preparation training in the event of a disaster are encouraged to apply. We have twenty open spaces that will fill quickly. Please contact the First Selectman's office at 203-729-4340 or kwilson@townofbeaconfalls.com to register.

Regarding the *Streetscape*, the entire Board of Selectmen has been meeting with our engineers, State DOT officials and other town consultants to fully understand the project, which is well underway and slated for completion in mid-April. As a Board, we are moving forward to finish the initial phase of the project, and we are endeavoring to understand how it was meant to be funded.

Several unforeseen issues have arisen that are having a negative financial impact on the Streetscape, and we will continue to seek additional funding as we near completion. We are working to add paving of the roadway to the project; paving was not part of the original plan.

Once again, I am very proud of the performance of our Department of Public Works during the clean-up after the past snowstorm. I was traveling out of state on business and the management of Beacon Falls was left in the very capable hands of Selectman D'Amico. Together, Selectman D'Amico and the crew quickly and completely cleared our roadways. And under Selectman D'Amico's able leadership, Public Works has begun to take on more challenging projects, thus continuing to save us valuable tax dollars.

The budget process has begun, and all boards, commissions and town departments are preparing their budget requests. My intention is to review all requests, evaluate the needs and the wants, balance them against our income, and then prepare the budget accordingly. The assessor's department is working diligently to finalize our full revaluation, and once that is complete, we will have the value of our Grand List. We are preparing for a challenging budget season in 2012.

I am writing this letter on Groundhog Day, grateful for the light snow season we have so far enjoyed, and I'm looking forward to a smooth rest of the winter, and to an early spring!

Gerry Smith
First Selectman, Beacon Falls