

I am proud to announce that, after a cancellation due to a Leap Day snow storm, classes have begun for Beacon Falls' new Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). We are excited by this initiative, where participants will gain skills to allow them to aid their families and neighbors, as well as first responders, in the event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack. Classes are limited to twenty-five trainees, and a second class is slated for the summer. If you would like to equip yourself with potentially life saving skills and knowledge, please call Town Hall at 203.729.4340 to add your name to the growing wait list, or email kwilson@townofbeaconfalls.com

At the February meeting, the Board of Selectmen appointed Rich Minnick as liaison to the BOS in the completion and renovation of Tobey's Pond. This multi-faceted task entails marshalling the ongoing effort of O&G and many dedicated volunteers, which has already reaped visible results. We hope to have a substantial amount of work done by the annual Duck Race on May 5. Plan to stop downtown to watch the race, and then make your way to Tobey's Pond for an enjoyable day of family fun and entertainment.

The current budget session has begun, with a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance. The four largest town departments were in attendance and each offered their projected budgets and capital requests. With a drop in the Grand List of 12.75 %, this will be the most difficult budget planning season that Beacon Falls has endured, but I am confident that the two boards will successfully work together to create an acceptable package to present to the townspeople.

Once again, the Public Works Department has used originality and innovation to solve a tricky problem, and save the town thousands of dollars in the process. Beacon Falls has the opportunity to bulk purchase gas and diesel fuel for town trucks, slashing that annual expense *by almost half*. But, it appeared that the only viable locations for the new tanks were either a spot squeezed between the fire house and senior center on Main Street, or in a densely populated section of town, directly across the street from private homes. Selectman Dave D'Amico and the crew listened to residents' concerns, and after a quick brainstorming session, designed a plan to reconfigure the town dump and level the PW yard, creating new space to place the fueling tanks. I am most gratified that the work was swiftly completed and we are good to go.

These are a few highlights from a very busy month at Town Hall. To learn more, please peruse the various meeting minutes by clicking on "Boards and Commissions."

As we enter a new season, I sense an optimistic, can-do spirit in town. We join you as we engage in our own spring cleaning, clearing out the old and embracing new systems and procedures designed to streamline Town Hall. We welcome your input as we work toward the common goal of an ever stronger Beacon Falls.

Gerard Smith
First Selectman