

March 8, 2018

Dear Residents of Milton:

Thank you for supporting the Town's budget for 2017 and your ongoing commitment to sharing your wisdom and insights with your Town Department Heads as well as myself or other officials here in Milton. I hope you will allow me a few minutes to share with you as an update of where we are on several significant issues that are before you, as you head to the voting both next week. I can assure you that your department heads are working for you, to stabilize your tax rates and specifically level your tax bills. We all worked diligently to bring in a budget that is conservative while providing the services you have come to expect from your Town, your employees take great pride in all that they do for you each and every day.

This past fall, we were able to lower the tax rate and the glee we felt with that revelation was very short lived, as soon as we announced that rate- we were shocked to discover that there was an issue with assessing. We were heartsick about the problems that occurred for some taxpayers with the assessing problems. As a direct result, the Board of Selectmen did not renew the contract for the assessing firm that conducted last year's revaluations. That contractor should have had hearings on what was occurring and the Town should have been in the loop, so clear and transparent communication could have occurred- as we all recognized now hindsight is 20/20. The Town of Milton has recently contracted with Avitar Associates of NE, Inc. for our Assessing Services. Avitar has been in business since 1986 and they are the largest municipal Assessing firm in the State. They perform a variety of assessing services and have their own suite of municipal software packages. They are well versed in assessing practices statewide. They are active on the Assessing Standards Board and often provide expert testimony before the Legislature as well as, the Board of Tax and Land Appeals and Superior Court. They are the contract Assessor in over 60 communities and are second to none in performing mass appraisals across the State with the goal of fair and equitable assessments for all. They have been apprised of the questions and concerns that have arisen in Town. They will first go through all of the abatement applications that have been filed and will discern if and where the issues occur. If the findings result in changes for the abatement filers that would similarly affect properties that did not file, those changes will be implemented going forward to the other properties. They are very familiar with the Town as they did a Town wide Revaluation here in 2004. They are eager and ready to assist and we have every confidence given their track record and recommendations from other communities that they are up for the task.

As you go to the polls on Tuesday I ask you to respectively consider the following information in regards to the CIP recommended projects. We have the opportunity to support our CIP program with using a measured amount from the unexpended fund balance which was a recommendation in the CIP report based on the needs for capital equipment and the underfunded state of our capital reserve funds. This will save your tax dollars. The CIP is designed to help the Town and the Tax Payers plan; the Planning board, department heads and Board of Selectmen support it. Everyone involved in this

process has a vested interest in keeping your taxes level and at the lowest possible rate in future years- they are taking their time to protect your interests.

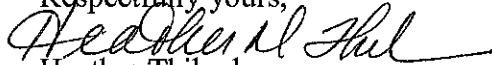
If the voters choose to not fund the CIP recommended projects it may have significant negative consequences, such as:

- a. Significant tax increases in future years
- b. Reductions in the Town's capital equipment
- c. Significant impacts on how Town delivers critical services, such as maintaining safe roads and providing adequate fire coverage

Following the CIP "road map" may not always be easy, however in the long-term it will smooth tax dollar spending and eliminate spikes. Following the CIP plan when you go to the Polls in 2018 and beyond is the first step towards establishing financial wellness for the Town of Milton -which are goals I believe we all share.

Thank you for your time and consideration. It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to serve the residents of Milton and Milton Mills with this outstanding team of dedicated department heads.

Respectfully yours,



Heather Thibodeau

Milton Town Administrator