

STATE OF THE TOWN

2013

Good evening...

Under our revised budget approval process as adopted by the voters in March of 2011, the Town Council is responsible for submitting a recommended operating budget, which can be amended at this Deliberative Session. Over the last several months, with hard work from the Department Heads and staff the Council has struggled with the questions of 'how much' and 'should we'? This is their recommendation. As I mentioned you as the deliberative body can amend portions of it. The voters on March 12 would then vote to approve or reject the budget; if rejected, the Town would operate under the Default Budget.

The Council's recommended budget for FY13 is less than the Default Budget; it reflects an expenditure increase of 2.9% over this year's operating budget. The largest portion of that increase comes from increases in the cost of Health Insurance, and a down shifting of retirement costs from the State to the Town. As there were last year, there are several initiatives in this year's warrant to address equipment needs in the Fire Department & Public Works. There is a continuation of the reserve programs for vehicles, heavy equipment and town building maintenance which promotes tax rate stability. There are two labor contracts on the warrant (LEEA and AFSCME 3657, the police union); neither proposes an increase in the first year, indeed the police contract is simply a one year extension, with no increase. There is an Article that requests an additional School Resource Officer. There are Articles that seek money to begin a comprehensive review of our Zoning Ordinance & to develop the rail trails in Londonderry.

Much like last year, the economy is improving, but at a pace, that is too slow for most. Even with a slower than we would like economy, the Woodmont project is making its way through the Planning Board process and we have received a number of inquiries about the Londonderry's development potential, in the area surrounding Woodmont and North in the Pettingill Road/Manchester Airport area.

These inquiries confirm that Londonderry is at the core of what is best about New Hampshire, both in terms of lifestyle and economic growth.

Finally let me take this opportunity to say thank you for this opportunity to address the Town deliberative session. As well I would like to say thank you to the Council for their support during the last few months as we have struggled openly with resolution of the impact fee concerns, and with changes in leadership. In other communities these challenges would have taken their toll on staff morale commitment and professionalism; here because of the highly professional & committed Town employees who serve the residents of Londonderry, the Town has weathered the storm. And. As with all adversities that brace us, we are stronger, better for it. We have said through this year farewell to those who served this community well and for many years. We thank them for their service. Tonight especially though I wish to congratulate Chief Kevin MacCaffrie on his retirement as Fire Chief; I know I speak for the men & women of LFD, your co-workers in the Town, and the residents of our community when I say thank you for your good work, good luck to you and your family in all you do.

With that, let us begin.