

TA Report 1.29.10

(Please Note attachments are available at town hall or you can call or email me and I will mail you any attachment you would like)

FIRE STATION GASOLINE LEAK Shutesbury hires new LSP Jim Okun, O'Reilly, Talbot & Okun, for emergency response IRA to gasoline outbreak in wetland. He got to work this week. I have not had further word from DEP.

CENSUS BUREAU JOB TESTING AT TOWN HALL Testing for the 2010 Census Bureau jobs will take place at the Shutesbury Town Hall, 1 Cooleyville Road on Tuesday, February 16, 23 and March 2 at 2:00pm. The positions are temporary, with a full or part time schedule, flexible hours pay rate of \$11 to \$17 an hour and reimbursement for car mileage.

Applicants must be a U.S. Citizen, 18 years or age and achieve a passing grade on the government test. The Census helps determine how federal funds are spent and helps determine how many Congressmen are needed to represent our communities. Walk-in applicants with a Passport or other forms of picture ID can take the test at the site. For practice test go to www.2010censusjobs.gov or call toll free to 1-866-861-2010 to make an appointment to take the free test. For information call Jake Bishop, Recruiter-Examiner, 413-549-3959.

ED REFORM AMENDMENT Ed Reform now has language allowing an individual town to leave a union by a vote of the majority of the town's school committee. The K-6 Regionalization Committee ended their last meeting 2 weeks ago with the question, what is a legal way for a town to leave a union? No one had an answer. Legal advice had to be sought on the issue but no one had funds to pay for the legal work. Now there is an answer. If a town develops viable plans for a different districting structure then they are currently in, the town can pursue it through a vote of the school committee. Any change of this magnitude would include research, evaluation of educational and financial benefits, community discussions, new agreements, and funding approvals by town meeting votes. The new ed reform language makes the door easier to open for new options. 53 towns now have this tool.

FULL FUNDING OF CHAPTER 70, EDUCATION FUNDING, GOVERNOR'S TOP PRIORITY Okay, so what does this mean? It means that \$604,000 in our elementary school budget, the state funded portion, may stay at \$604,000. We are budgeting for a 10% decrease and bracing for 20% less. So over the next 5 months the arguments will go back and forth. Last 2 years chapter 70 funds have been propped up with stimulus money. The state has spent a great deal of it. This year the Governor funds education with appropriated funds inside the budget. It would be marvelous if the Governor's budget holds up.

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS CHAIRMAN ADVISES CAUTION WRITING OUR TOWN BUDGETS. VICE CHAIR STEVE KULIK projects decreases in lottery aid, but hope for education aid. Representative Kulik is working hard as the Vice Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. Our representatives fight for us everyday. House Ways and Means Chairman Charlie Murphy spoke at the MMA conference. He gave no new information and no hope, with a sense of humor.

MASS MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION votes resolution advocating the elimination of unfunded mandates by the legislature. Communities are not happy about the amount of work and hidden expenses dumped on them. The new Ethics Code costs an average size Massachusetts town \$35,000 per year to administer. There is a long list of unfunded mandates. Here is a website to

view the resolution. <http://www.mma.org/advocacy-mainmenu-100/policies-a-resolutions/4359-resolution-opposing-current-and-future-unfunded-local-mandates>

STRETCH CODE Jim Barry, Regional Director of the Green Communities Division says that the Stretch code will not apply to historic or renovation projects. He reported going to a Building Inspectors training session in Lenox yesterday. Trainees commented that the Stretch Code is not a lot different from the new 2009 Building code, the subject of their training. The 2009 building code goes into effect 1/1/10, with dual options available until 7/1/10. The Stretch Code would go into effect for communities that adopt it 1/1/11. **IF ANYONE IS INTERESTED I have an updated power point available through email if you want to review it.**



Fire Chief Walter Tibbetts spent Tuesday opening up an overflow pipe in a Shutesbury fire hydrant pond. The level of the pond is now lower and possible flooding conditions are under control. We are ready for spring rains. Great thanks to all involved.

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