

## ***Newsletter from the First Selectwoman February, 2013***

February may be the shortest month, but it was certainly a busy one. There is a lot going on in Town, with the Rogers Lake Dam Repairs becoming a reality, the study on the Community Septic System for densely populated areas on the fast track, and the announcement of the Grant Approval for the Sound View Improvements. And just to keep things hopping, a Winter Blizzard, the likes of which we have not seen in over three decades, made an appearance!

### ***Volunteers – Going beyond!***

On Tuesday, Feb. 5, members of the Fire Dept and EMS spent their evening at the new High School – not for classes, but to “walk the halls”. By taking time to tour the school, and becoming familiar with the new layout, our first responders can be more effective should there ever be an emergency. This is the kind of dedication to their job that our volunteers have – and who would know that they take this kind of time in an effort to be best prepared. It is clear we are in good hands with our First Responders! Thanks to all of you for going beyond the call of duty!

### ***Winter Blizzard 2013***



Whether we call it **Nemo**, **Charlotte**, or **Blizzard of 2013**, a blizzard is a blizzard, and Old Lyme was one of the worst hit communities in Connecticut. With over 80% out of electricity at the height of the devastation, many trees and wires down, and LOTS of snow and ice, it took a while to get cleaned up. Our Public Works Dept. worked hard to keep up with the snow, but with trucks getting stuck, backhoes and loaders getting stuck, it was quite a challenge. The Emergency Operations Center was opened on Friday night, and in full operation from Saturday through Monday evening. Many meetings and events were cancelled due to many roads not being cleared and power outages. By late Sunday night, and the early hours of Monday, electricity was on for over 99% of homes, and most roads were passable. It took another week to move snow and clean up. Though there is no curbside debris pickup by town crews, residents can bring storm debris (only) to the Transfer Station at no cost. The National Guard was called in to help evacuate people who were unable to get out of their homes to get to the Regional Shelter. Of course, a major concern was the power outage and lack of heat, particularly for our high risk residents. Once again, we thank the volunteers for their many hours making sure people are safe.

### ***Storm Followup Meeting***

On Wednesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, our Emergency Management Team came together to review our response to Storm Sandy. This was an opportunity to review how the storm was handled, identify the successes, discuss the challenges that we faced, and review the areas that need improvement. It also gave us an opportunity to include the response to the Blizzard. Each agency (Fire, Police, EMS, PW) was represented and suggestions were made for improvement. While we all work very hard on response, admittedly there are areas that we need to focus on in the future. The fact that after working so hard, these individuals are willing to come together and honestly review their performance, both good and bad, is admirable and highly appreciated. While we continue to strategize on improving our response, we sincerely hope that we will not be put to the test any time soon!

### ***Wastewater Management Task Force***

The Task Force has been on the fast track during the month of February, trying to beat the clock in order to determine if a Community Septic System, is viable in Old Lyme. The Task Force published a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in early February, and received six responses on Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>. They immediately met to review the submittals and establish their selection process. In early March, they will interview firms and make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen. In order to be able to conduct the study in the Spring, the BOS will need to be decisive and work with the chosen firm on a Scope of Work (SOW). Once this is established, and the cost is estimated, a Town Meeting will be scheduled to approve an appropriation for the project. But before that time, we will be schedule an informational hearing to share the project details with the public. So, please, watch the schedule closely, and be sure to join us when we plan our presentation on this important issue. The entire Board of Selectmen would like to thank the members of the Task Force for their hard work and dedication to this project.

### ***FY 2014 Budget***

The Board of Finance has been busy throughout February dissecting the Proposed Budget for FY 2014. It is an immense task and responsibility, and they are cognizant of the fact that our economy is still not on firm footing. They anticipate having the job completed by mid to late March, and a public hearing is scheduled for Monday, April 22, 2013 in the Town Hall Meeting Room at 7:30 PM. As usual, once the Regional District #18 budget is completed and passes, the Town Budget will go to a Town Meeting vote for approval.

## ***Sound View Improvements Grant***

This is truly exciting news. As mentioned in the last newsletter, an application for a grant which will pay for 80% of the cost of improvements to this area, which include a bike path, a new parking lot, restrooms, and kiosk parking meters, has been approved. Since then, the Board of Selectmen has approved the plan, the Board of Finance had consensus to approve the concept of the plan, and the Planning Commission has approved recommending the plan, as well. A Sound View Improvements Committee will be formed to issue a Qualitative Based Selection request (QBS), in order to hire a firm to draft the final plan and specs for the project. Once the firm is hired, the Committee will agree on the Scope of Work and a cost will be negotiated. At that time, a Town Meeting will be scheduled to approve an appropriation to cover the cost of plan development and specs. So, this will happen in two parts, because once final plans are developed, we can get an Opinion of Probable Costs, have another Town Meeting for approval, and go out to bid. It is likely that this second Town Meeting will be next year. So the park and restrooms will not be done for this summer, and maybe not next. Progress can be slow, but it is progress just the same, and we will keep you informed as we move forward.

## ***New Sanitarian Appointed***

I am delighted to announce that the Board of Selectmen has appointed a new Sanitarian, Sonia Marino, who will begin on March 4, 2013. Ms. Marino has worked in the Bristol-Burlington Health District, as well as the Connecticut River Area Health District most recently. Her experience with the Wastewater Management District in Old Saybrook will be invaluable as we move forward with our own study of Wastewater Management. I am certain that Sonia Marino will serve the Town of Old Lyme well, and I hope you will stop in to say hello.

*Compared to the weather we've had in February, March has started more like a lamb.  
Let's hope it doesn't go out like a Lion this year!*