

# Town of Milton

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## **TOWN MANAGER REPORT OCTOBER 2012**

### Hurricane Sandy

The Town of Milton really pulled together with preparations for Hurricane Sandy! Public Works staff, Police Officers, Volunteer Firemen and helpful neighbors made our town ready for high waters, wind and rain from Sunday through Tuesday of last week.

As of the writing of this report, the damage observed has been limited to businesses located where Union Street crosses the Broadkill River. Those businesses, and the Milton Public Library, have not yet calculated the value of their losses. ***Please support them any way you can.***

A large tree fell on a Union Street property – but the home and vehicles were spared. Flooding closed a section of Front Street, most of Magnolia and a part of both Union and Chandler Streets for a day or more. But power and water service was without interruption. Town Hall was closed all day Monday and until noon on Tuesday in observance of Governor Markell's travel restriction.

For this and future severe weather events, your best and most timely source of information will be the Sussex County government website ([www.sussexcountyde.gov](http://www.sussexcountyde.gov)). Emergency Operations are managed on a county level and the county has a full-time Communications Director, Chip Guy. There were several updates during the storm that used Facebook and Twitter – a few videos were uploaded to YouTube, as well. To get your updates, search for "Sussex County, Del., government" from your Facebook home page and "like" your local county government.

### Fiscal Year Wrap-Up

September 30 was the end of the 2012 Fiscal Year. An un-audited review of finances indicates that revenues in the General Fund were greater than in FY 2011 by \$423,370 and expenses were \$97,178 less than in the prior year. Having three less persons on the Administrative staff and one less person on the Public Works staff has significantly reduced expenses. Several items, including construction at the Dogfish Head Brewery, have helped to increase revenue.

Water and Trash Services are reported separately as a proprietary fund. The Proprietary Fund had a negative change of \$164,294, when FY 2012 was compared with FY 2011. This was due primarily to additional expenses for water meter installations and a cost-shift of salary expenses (from all Administrative to a shared Admin-Water Department expense).

For more information, please refer to the Town Manager's Monthly Financial Report for the period ending September 30, 2012 – and the Revenue and Expenditure Report for that month (a separate report, with more detail).

### Charter & Ordinance Review Committee

The Charter & Ordinance Review Committee, appointed by Mayor Newlands in July, have met twice in the last month. The committee members have elected John Collier as their Chairman. Together, the group will review our Municipal Code and suggest revisions. The first revisions to be considered will be purely technical. The best example is the grass cutting ordinance – where the ordinance provided for a particular fee that was different than the cost in our Fee Schedule.

Policy-inspired changes to the Municipal Code will continue to go through the Town Council or committees that are devoted to the subject of that policy, in particular. You may find the Town of Milton Municipal Code through a link on our web site, or at [www.ecode360.com](http://www.ecode360.com) (type in the name of town and state).

### Administrative Policies Being Developed

There is a hierarchy of laws by which your local government operates. Just as state laws must be consistent with the United States Constitution, your Ordinances (the Municipal Code) must be consistent with the provisions of the Town Charter. Administrative policies are developed as a way to consistently implement the intent of the Charter and Code and are a subordinate type of law. To improve and control the quality of our operations, new Administrative Policies are being enacted.

Town Hall has submitted a revised Employee Handbook to our employment practices insurer, for review. The Freedom of Information Act policy (as an ordinance) is under revision. And a policy for reporting on-the-job accidents and injuries has been developed. In the coming year, many routine processes will be documented, reviewed and revised if they are found to be lacking in any way.

### Assessment Services Under Review

In 2007, Milton contracted for a town-wide property assessment to be completed in 2008. Sussex County, by way of contrast, has not had a general re-assessment since 1974.

The contract for the assessment service and maintenance of records focused primarily upon completion of the initial project, though. Performance standards related to future assessments and on-going records maintenance were not so thoroughly detailed. These standards are currently under review by the Town Manager, the Project Coordinator (Building & Code Department Supervisor) and the company providing assessment services. Improved service and greater transparency about the process is the goal. Property tax appeals are heard by Town Council, each January.

### Holiday Closings

Town Hall will be closed, tomorrow, in observance of Election Day. In Sussex County tradition, we will be closing at noon on Returns Day, November 8. Monday, November 12, Town Hall will be closed for Veterans Day. And, on Thursday and Friday, November 22-23, we will be closed for Thanksgiving.

### Holly Festival – just around the corner!

Please tell your family and friends about the Milton Holly Festival on December 8th! The festivities start at 9am and go into the evening ([www.historicmilton.com](http://www.historicmilton.com)).

Hosted by the Milton Chamber of Commerce, you'll find an incredible array of arts and crafts to purchase at both the Milton Fire Hall and Goshen Hall (on Federal Street across from Town Hall). There will be lots of things for the young and the young-at-heart to do, as well. There will be demonstrations at the Historic Society, plus great food and Santa Clause at Goshen Hall. Stay in town for the Milton Century Club Holiday House Tour from 3 until 7pm. For tour tickets and information, call 684-3736 or 684-5544 (visit [www.miltoncenturyclub.com](http://www.miltoncenturyclub.com)).