

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

The Arlington Board of Selectmen is pleased to submit to the residents of Arlington our annual report for 2004. The Arlington Board of Selectmen is composed of five elected individuals who are entrusted with the responsibility to set policy and oversee the management of the municipal functions of local government.

The current members of the Board of Selectmen are Diane M. Mahon, Chairman, John W. Hurd, Vice-Chairman, Kathleen Kiely Dias, Kevin F. Greeley and Charles Lyons.

### ***New Town Manager***

In January, Mr. Brian Sullivan, who had formally served as Town Manager in Winchester, took over the position of Arlington Town Manager. Mr. Sullivan brought with him 29 years of municipal management experience. As the Board began working, and throughout 2004, the Board greatly appreciated the professional expertise Mr. Sullivan has brought to Arlington.

### ***Financial Overview***

The Town continued to experience significant budget shortfalls in 2004. The Budget and Revenue Task Force, Chaired by Selectman Diane Mahon, brought managers, department heads, the School and Finance Committee, as well as and many citizens together to grapple with continuing financial insecurity. Every budget was examined in search of additional cost savings and every program was scrutinized in an effort to prioritize and discover additional sources of savings. In order to maintain the existing services, which had been severely reduced last year, the Town used its reserves in the Stabilization Fund and more than one-half of the free cash to ease the shortfall. This allowed the town to add back some of the services to the school budget. Additionally, sufficient reserves in the Health Insurance Trust Fund, coupled with an increased contribution from the employees, allowed the Town to reduce the health insurance appropriation by one month. However, there still remains a \$2 million structural deficit which will have to be dealt with in future years.

Primarily because of increases in employee health insurance and out-of-district special education costs, and a \$3 million loss in State aid over the past several years, the Board began considering placing a Proposition 2 ½ override to the voters in 2005. By the end of 2004, it was very apparent that without an override, predicted budget deficits would force drastic cuts in both Town and School services.



### ***Board of Selectmen***

*Standing (l to r) Charles Lyons and Kevin F. Greeley.*

*Seated (l to r) John W. Hurd, Vice Chairman; Diane Mahon, Chairman; and Kathleen Kiely Dias*

### ***Symmes Development***

In 2004, with votes of Town Meeting, the Town of Arlington made significant steps forward in the redevelopment of the former Symmes Hospital property. Continuing to adhere as closely as possible to guidelines set by the Board of Selectmen prior to the debt exclusion campaign which allowed Arlington to purchase the property, the Arlington Redevelopment Board -- continuing the work of the Symmes Advisory Committee -- asked Town Meeting to support the proposal of the E.A. Fish Company.

The Board of Selectmen unanimously supported the proposal and are extremely grateful for all the work done by the Symmes Advisory Committee, Chaired by Charlie Foskett, and the Arlington Redevelopment Board. After over three years intensive effort Town Meeting voted to move forward with this project that will keep half of the sites 18 acres open space, offer twenty percent affordable housing and promises increased tax revenue to the town.

### ***Sister City***

In the fall, Arlington was pleased to celebrate its 20 year partnership with our sister city Nagaokakya, Japan. As Diane Mahon, Chairman of the Board said at the dinner celebrating the anniversary:

*As sister cities, we can learn from each other, and even though our cultures may be quite different, our desires are not very different at all. As people, we all want the best for our children; safety and security for our families and for our countries, so we all can live in peace and harmony. I believe these are the same desires held by the people of America and Japan, as well as those in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Sudan.*

*By gathering together, our two sister communities -- situated half a world apart -- we share our culture and we share our lives. I believe that, in a small way, we do our part in bringing the world closer together. We have a unique opportunity to help change our world for the better.*

The Board looks forward to continued opportunities to expand our relationship with our sister city.

**Mr. Charles Lyons serves as National League of Cities President**

The Board of Selectmen is honored this year that Charles Lyons served as the President of the National League of Cities. The National League of Cities, established in 1924, represents 40 state municipal leagues and over 1,700 cities and towns across the country. As stated by the organization:

*The NLC serves as an advocate for its members in Washington in the legislative, administrative and judicial processes that affect them; develops and pursues a national urban policy to meet the present and future needs of our nation's cities and people who live in them; offers training, technical assistance, and information to municipal officials to help them improve the quality of local government in our urban nation; and under takes research and analysis on policy issues of importance to the nation's cities and towns.*

Mr. Lyons is the first Selectman to ever serve in that capacity and brings a tremendous amount of prestige to the Arlington Board of Selectmen and Town of Arlington.

**Staff Changes**

The Board saw changes in the office staff this year. Sandy Chamberlain who served as Principal Clerk for the past 8 years resigned in September. Ms. Chamberlain was instrumental in the smooth operation of the annual Town Day event. The Board wishes Sandy much success and thanks her for her dedicated service to the town and the Board. Taking Ms. Chamberlain's position is Mary Ann Sullivan. Mrs. Sullivan has experience with the town working for various boards and commissions and part time in the Selectmen's office. The Board welcomes her to our dedicated staff.

The Board continues to be inspired by the level of citizen activism in the Town of Arlington. Through the time, effort and commitment of many Arlington residents our community continues to move forward even in challenging financial times. Arlington is truly a community where citizen involvement makes our town a better place to live, work and play.

