



# MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP

1 Colonial Drive  
Manchester, New Jersey 08759  
732-657-8121

MICHAEL FRESSOLA  
MAYOR

## STATE OF MUNICIPALITY ADDRESS July 1, 2008

Since 1990 it has been the policy of the administration to do everything in our power to stabilize our municipal tax rate and ease the burden of property taxes on our residents.

Until Fiscal 2007-2008 we have been extremely successful in this endeavor.

In Fiscal Period 2007-2008 events occurred, over which we had no control. I will restate them generally, but I know you are all aware of the details.

Revenue was down \$1,490,500 as a result of decrease in state aid, decrease in host community benefits, decrease in interest income and decrease in all township fees.

We decreased our spending in areas over which we have control by \$153,000.00, but mandated programs unfunded by the state, including the shifting of pension costs from the state to the municipality, increased our spending by \$476,483.00, all of this resulting in the first meaningful increase in the municipal tax rate in many years.

I hate to say it, but financial conditions do not appear to be any better for fiscal year 2008-2009. Despite all of these problems I believe, through the dedicated and hard work of our department and division heads, and a skilled dedicated work force, we were able to move ahead and successfully accomplish many programs and undertakings, details of which I provide below.

### **Police Department**

There are many accomplishments that I would like to highlight this past year. All have had a significant impact on this department and the level of service it provides.

1. Radio System: The final phase of the radio system project is almost complete. It is scheduled to be fully operational by the end of August. With that, the remainder of the township units will be brought onto the system hopefully in a short period of time.
2. Tactical Team: They continue to expand their capabilities in the area of Tactical Team capabilities and have included police officers from Police Departments throughout Ocean County. This joint regional team now serves all of Ocean County. This team is a fully equipped and trained Tactical Response Team capable of handling any type of police tactical emergency. As part of the continuing expansion of capabilities, they will continue the necessary training to be proficient in all our areas of responsibility. They also are part of a team that encompasses Ocean, Atlantic and Cape May counties to form a southern state Homeland Security Response Team for all three counties.

3. Personnel: They have expanded their administrative staff and have also maintained the current size of the department at 68 sworn officers.
  
4. Vehicles: They continue to improve the overall condition of our police fleet. They are maintaining and upgrading necessary equipment for these vehicles and are continuing to realize a stabilization of vehicle mileage with the maintenance of shift assigned vehicles. They continue to move forward with the Mobile Digital Video Recorders for our police cars and have been experiencing great success with those units.
  
5. Training: They continue their dedication to training. More of our officers are receiving advanced and/or instructor level training in many different areas including an increased emphasis on supervisor training. They continue to host outside training at our location and have expanded the training companies they deal with to provide police and dispatch regional training for Ocean County and the surrounding area.

### **Department of Finance**

The Department of Finance, lead for the past 14 years by Bill Garofalo, under perhaps the most challenging financial climate this department has faced in all these years, continued their outstanding performance.

Comptroller Diane Lapp has completed her Certified Tax Collection program and passed the certifying exam on her first attempt. This is a valuable asset to the Township to have a person in the Finance Office with the same knowledge and expertise as in the Office of Revenue Collection.

The Township excelled among all the other communities in Ocean County and received the first place award for safety and risk management.

The SFY-2007 audit was complete without major comment or recommendation.

### **Township Clerk**

In addition to a very smooth transition of Sabina Skibo from Deputy Clerk to Clerk, this department again this year provided our residents with outstanding service, including the following:

The staff participated in the most comprehensive program of the 2010 Census and, with limited time, managed to add approximately 1800 additional units to the census counts. Increased population is used to calculate many financial benefits to the township.

The department is revamping our archives and records management areas, as well as increasing our storage area and created a “Minute Book Library” of our various Municipal Boards. (Council meetings minutes, Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, etc.)

They have streamlined the Council meeting packets, allowing Council members the ability to view packets on CDs and hyper-linking agendas to all departments to view ordinances and resolutions being considered on the next meeting's agenda.

### **Senior Services**

Under the very capable leadership of Brenda Sloan, this department had another year of providing outstanding service to our senior population.

**Medical Transportation:** Manchester Senior Services provided medical transportation to 7,968 residents whom are frail/disabled or are isolated and vulnerable.

**Information & Assistance:** Provided Information/Assistance to 6,704 residents.

**Benefit Screening:** Provided screenings to 4,688 residents who wanted to know what benefits they were entitled to such as Nutrition Program, Prescription Programs, Assistance with Medicare bills, Food Shopping for the homebound, Home Energy Assistance, etc.

**Food Shopping:** Provided 3920 hours of Food Shopping for residents 60 years of age or older whom are confined to their home due to medical reasons.

The most serious problem they currently see on a daily basis is residents 60 years of age or older whom are unable to pay their utilities bills due to high cost of fuel and electricity.

### **Department of Land Use, Inspections and Planning**

In the past fiscal year the department has continued to move forward in becoming a paperless department. They have been able to microfilm all of our documents up to and including all of calendar year 2007. Additionally, they were able to sustain a high level of professionalism with fewer personnel. The department has been able to close out a substantial amount of older permits and the entire staff has excelled in customer service.

### **Court Administration**

Our new Administrator, Tracy Barcus, hit the deck running and she designed and completed several new projects, improving internal operations, and providing for a vastly improved arraigned and trial date procedure.

### **Division of Purchasing and Personnel**

The Division of Personnel is working with the Safety Committee and Police Department regarding security for our employees and members from the public sector who visit our buildings. Working directly with the Comptroller, they will begin processing new photo identification badges for all employees who will be wearing the badges while on duty. They will transmit the photos electronically to our Human Resources software so that we can easily identify names with faces.

They have continued our “Wellness Campaign” by providing smoking cessation and will soon embark on a weight loss program. Once the Blue Collar Unit is trained on sexual harassment issues, our entire staff will have been provided with this training which is pertinent in today’s work environment.

The Purchasing Division continues to be proactive in using inter-local agreements with state, county and local governments. The bidding power for these larger units provides substantial savings for our municipality. We expect our next inter-local project will be sidewalk and curbing replacement for the municipal complex. The Police Department and Purchasing Division has developed a smooth and efficient process for disposal of surplus property through PropertyRoom.com. This project is ongoing.

### **Division of Data Processing**

I am very pleased to report that this division has completed a very successful year of operations under the leadership of Josh Schnoor and his very capable assistant Mike Sabie.

The division successfully completed the following projects in a timely and efficient manner.

The transfer to new office and setup of new server hardware. In addition, the completion of new server software infrastructure for over 100 computers was very successfully accomplished.

A new phone service with more internet bandwidth was installed.

### **Department of Recreation**

Under the direction of Geri Teutsch and an outstanding staff, the department provided exceptional services and programs for Manchester residents in each and every age group.

Pre-School Camp, Day Camp and Camp Adventure again were very successfully run.

### **Division of Tax Assessor**

Although the completion of the Reassessment has been extended to 2009 because of the changes in the real estate market, it is proceeding according to the plan that was put in place in 2005. It will be completed in-house at a savings of over \$600,000. They have completed all of the approximately 15,000 inspections. An informative public relations campaign has included 21 public meetings with residents, several press releases and a letter was sent to the homeowner. The notice of the new assessed values will be mailed to each property owner by the end of December 2008. This project is a large undertaking and its completion will be our greatest concern in 2009.

Martin Lynch and his skilled staff have done an outstanding job under very unstable market conditions.

### **Emergency Management**

Emergency Management Coordinator Art Abline undertook a number of very important projects and the results were outstanding.

He successfully completed two (2) full scale major disaster drills within three (3) weeks of each other with very positive responses. Along with the drill there were also critiques done to address our shortfalls which have been addressed.

He successfully completed another C.E.R.T. class within the Country Walk development graduating 33 members of the community that have now joined our C.E.R.T. program bringing the total number of C.E.R.T. team members to 119 (that also includes the joining of Lakehurst Borough C.E.R.T. members).

A major undertaking was to identify and complete a hazard mitigation plan to the Ocean County Office of Emergency Management identifying all critical structures within the township that could be or would be affected in a disaster situation. The disaster situation being anything from a wildfire, tornado, hurricane, power outage, nor-easter, heat wave etc.

**Public Works Department**

This year, as in the past, the Public Works Department, under the direction of Stephen Stanziano, and staffed and supervised by a talented hard working crew, continued to maintain our roads and parks in excellent condition, and concentrated in a “going green” direction highlighted by the successful solar lighting installation at the Public Works garage.

Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL FRESSOLA

Mayor

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