

On behalf of your Board of Selectmen, thank you for recently passing our town budget. By making general government cuts to the previous budget of nearly 4%, Woodstock was able to offset increased debt for recently installed new roofs to our elementary and middle schools and to provide increased funding for our schools.

To achieve these cuts, however requires your community to reduce its staffing at both the town hall and the highway garage effective July 1st. Your elected officials, selectmen included, will receive no salary increases. In addition, once again I will not seek the town's \$5,000 health care subsidy in lieu of medical insurance.

After much deliberation and a careful review of the hours of town halls in our region, it was agreed that the town would be best served by closing its town hall on Fridays effective July 1st. I believe that the reduced staffing levels will allow townspeople to be better served over the new four-day schedule than attempting to keep the town hall open five days with a reduced daily schedule. This is not a new staffing model for our region; several communities including Brooklyn, Pomfret, and Eastford already operate on a four-day schedule.

I believe the state's forecasted budget deficits of the next several years requires this measure and more from Woodstock's leaders. Toward that goal, your Board of Selectmen continues to seek opportunities to provide superior services to the community at even lower expense. For example, even though the new fiscal budget was based on a full-time assistant to our Board, we now seek a part-time individual to fill that position.

Woodstock is fortunate to have an extremely strong level of reserves, an excellent bond rating, and a mutual respect between boards and commissions that has made our new mill rate of 24.5 one of the lowest in the region. With the continued hard work of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and the Board of Education, along with the cooperative spirit of Woodstock Academy, I firmly believe that anything is possible and Woodstock's finest days lie ahead.

Sincerely,

Michael Alberts

First Selectman