

Falmouth Enterprise

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One Dollar



PETER COOK/ENTERPRISE

Falmouth's No Place For Hate, as it stepped off affirmative action officer for Falmouth, and the round Eel Pond and returned to the community in Moniz of The Suspenders entertained walkers

Register This Year

valid saltwater anglers will comply with the law. All not have to "I break off \$10 lures every day. to fish in Mas- But for some people, it's a loss of s over the age freedom." The US Coast Guard to register, but and Massachusetts Environmental Police will have the authority to pay, said Dr. to enforce to law, he said.

Christopher F. Parisi, the store manager at Bad Fish Outfitters

in educating anglers will be better if he said, es-

80 percent of

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Town Manager Submits Austere FY11 Budget

Furloughs Included In Plan To Cut Expenses

By CHRISTOPHER KAZARIAN

At one point during last night's budget discussion among Falmouth selectmen, the board's Chairman Mary (Pat) Flynn looked out into the audience, consisting primarily of town department heads, and spoke bluntly.

"This is not a happy night, and I'm not going to try to make it a happy night," she said.

Instead, she continued, it was a difficult one that has been caused by depressed local and state revenues over the past two years.

It has reached a point that town services, Ms. Flynn said later in the evening, will begin to be impacted. "A large part of it that we understand, but I don't think the public will understand, is the reduction of services they will see over the course of the year," she said.

In order to present a balanced Fiscal Year 2011 budget to selectmen, Falmouth Town Manager Robert L. Whritenour Jr. will be relying on several strategies that still need the support of the town's local unions, which will begin negotiations for a new contract over the next weeks and months.

They include a five-day furlough for all town employees, including him and Assistant Town Manager Heather B. Harper, but excluding public safety personnel and school staff. That move, he said, would represent roughly \$225,000 in savings for Falmouth.

He also is recommending no Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) for town employees during the next fiscal year, but that, too, is subject to negotiations.

Other recommendations he made that are necessary to bal-

ance the budget include freezing a number of vacant positions, including a water plant operator, three police officers, 1.5 fire department positions, and a human services clinical social worker. The last, he said, would be filled by increasing the hours of an existing part-time clinical social worker employed by Falmouth Human Services.

In addition, he said, the town will benefit financially from the upcoming retirement of Falmouth Town Treasurer Carol S. Martin, merging her position and responsibilities with that of the town tax collector.

The Falmouth Public Library, he said, will be impacted by

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Verizon FiOS Not In Town's Immediate Future

By CHRISTOPHER KAZARIAN

In the midst of its negotiations with Comcast to renew its license with the town, Falmouth officials reached out to Verizon to see whether the company would be interested in providing its FiOS service to local residents.

They were joined by the several other towns that formed the consortium—Chatham, Dennis, Harwich, Mashpee, Sandwich and Yarmouth—in a collective effort to negotiate license renewals with Comcast, according to Assistant Town Manager Heather B. Harper.

Verizon's response?

"They told us it is not in their

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the "easy ramble," as it was described by the Reverend Robert Murphy of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in East Falmouth. At the end of the walk, a potluck party was organized for those participating. The walk was managed by Falmouth's No Place For Hate.

Verizon FiOS Not In Town's Immediate Future

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short-term build-out horizon to come to the Cape, but in their long-term plan," Ms. Harper said. "We have made outreaches to them and will continue to do that."

She said there would be no disincentive to having a second provider, such as Verizon, in Falmouth. "We don't see any decrease in services provided through our license, and it would only benefit the subscribers," she said. "We'd love to have a competitive environment here."

Kevin K. Lynch, chairman of the Falmouth Cable Advisory Committee, said he, too, would be in favor of such a move, which has been endorsed by the town's top board. "Selectmen sent a letter to Verizon asking them to put in FiOS, but they weren't ready to do so yet," he said.

Ms. Harper said the likelihood of the service, which competes with cable and satellite in other areas of the state, coming to Falmouth and other areas on the Cape is dependent on whether there is sufficient market demand to compel Verizon to invest its money on infrastructure improvements required to lay its wires in town.

"Realistically people feel that Comcast has a monopoly, but they don't," Mr. Lynch added. "Anyone can come in here to string their own wires, but there is an economic price to that. They have to decide whether it is worthwhile to make this investment to get half or a smaller percentage of users."

Richard B. Colon, regional director at Verizon, reiterated the stance that his company has no immediate plans to expand to the Cape.

As of now the service, which comprises fiber optic lines transmitting video signals digitally, has been expanded to 105 communities since it was introduced to the state in 2005.

FiOS has yet to reach larger cities like Boston or Worcester, he said, but is in close proximity to the Cape with communities such as Plymouth, Wareham, Marion and Mattapoisett welcoming the service.

The inability to reach some of these large cities, Mr. Colon said, is attributable to some of the state's antiquated cable television licensing regulations which impact how long it can take Verizon, in some cases up to 15 months, to negotiate a franchise in a community. "We would like to see changes to regulations that allow a speedier process for us to get into business and we think that can be done without sacrificing the need for local control from local officials," he said.

The company touts the service as technically and visually superior to cable and offers more high definition (HD) channels than its counterpart. These are all claims that Mr. Colon stood by, arguing that research shows that fiber "offers the the most robust video services available."

Beyond that, he said, FiOS has benefited the consumer simply by its presence in a number of ways. Before Verizon had a presence in the market, he said, such things as bundling—combining phone, Internet, and video services—was never done.

He also said that in communities where FiOS is available "rates have stabilized and, in many cases, go down."

It has led to residents through-

out the state, including those on Cape Cod, asking that the service be brought into their towns, something Mr. Colon said was healthy for consumers. "We truly believe competition is good for the consumer and we have seen it in areas, where we built FiOS. They benefit when they have choices," he said.

But to enter into a contract with a municipality, he said, is an expensive proposition and includes, by law, having to "build out to 100 percent of the community... We overlay a brand-new network, dealing with existing rights of way, to follow paths that have already been laid out for the copper-based [cable] network."

If the service were to come to Falmouth or other towns on the Cape, Mr. Colon said, Verizon would also be obligated to support the town's public access station, Falmouth Community Television (FCTV). "All land-based providers are required by law to carry public access programming, so Comcast with copper cables and Verizon with fiber would be required," he said. "Satellite is not land-based, so therefore they have no obligation to carry that programming."

This would mean that if FiOS did come to Falmouth, Ms. Harper said, Verizon would share the financial burden of carrying public access services with Comcast.

But, again, that will not occur any time soon, either in Falmouth or other communities on the Cape, despite the wishes of local officials. "We look at FiOS as the future of our business, but we have to think strategically of where it best makes sense to invest," Mr. Colon said.

roughly \$1.6 million over the period. In total, Falmouth received roughly six percent from the state, that Mr. Whrite does not accurately count the modest town's residents.

"We are forced to rely on a system to rely on because our [property] taxes are so high," he said.



Chief Riello

of \$75.4 million.

One area where revenue has been hit by the recession is construction. Just during Fiscal Year 2010, there was a loss of new growth of more than \$1.2 million. That revenue hit more than 60 percent of the town to an estimated 2011.

The remaining town's revenue is from property tax local contributions that contribute roughly 20 percent to town coffers and other different streams of revenue.

The top three revenue generators in these towns are vehicle excise, wastewater charges, and balance and budget charges that fall in the category of other charges that are stagnant.

That minimal revenue, which Mr. Whrite said is expected at roughly 10 percent, meant cuts for many services.

Highlighting the Falmouth Natural Resources, a \$955 increase in the fiscal year budget.

The Falmouth budget, which has increased to \$5.5 million, the current budget of \$5.5 million will act next year.

Falmouth Police Chief Riello said the town is able to decrease as the

Annual Bird Count

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Virginia rail 4
American coot 3
Ruddy turnstone 7
Sanderling 31
Purple sandpiper 11
Dunlin 25
American woodcock 2
Bonaparte's gull 1

Nashville warbler 2
Yellow-rumped (myrtle) warbler 103
Pine warbler 1
Palm warbler 3
Ovenbird 1
Yellow-breasted chat 2
Eastern towhee 5
American tree sparrow 39
Clay-colored sparrow 2

White-throated sparrow 254
White-crowned sparrow 1
Dark-eyed (slate-colored) junco 227
Northern cardinal 553
Indigo bunting 1
Red-winged blackbird 376
Purple finch 1
House finch 179
American goldfinch 265