Building Inspector Office employees Dale Lucier (l.) and Marcia Thorell unpack their office space in Westminster's new Town Hall. The town offices were closed for two days to allow employees the time to get their offices ready.

JOURNAL PHOTO / JEFFREY W. BOUDREAU

South Street

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despite the recent snow storm, Murphy said. The movers began packing up boxes on Monday, Feb. 12, before the town hall closed its doors to the public on Wednesday, Feb. 14, to do the final move on that Thursday and Friday.

The former town hall at 3 Bacon St. is now almost entirely dark, Murphy said. The building, which has suffered from a deteriorating structure, a lack of office and storage space, as well as mold and ventilation system issues, now only houses a computer system to run the account software.

"It looks so sad," Murphy said. "It was full of life."

The town is in the process of converting the accounting programs, so the old system continues to be run in the old town hall while the new one is set up in the new building.

A revamped accounting program isn't the only change the South Street building will host.

There are other changes that town officials hope make the experience more consumer-friendly.

Town Hall will no longer be closed for lunch between 1 and 2 p.m. Instead the employees in each office will take a rotating lunch break.

"We've been talking about this for quite a while," Murphy said. "We just figured this will be the time to do it."

Residents and other Town Hall customers will also benefit from the new voicemail system in Town Hall. All of the departments will remain reachable at the same phone numbers, but instead of being transferred to a general voicemail account, each department will have a box.

There will also be an increasing number of e-mail accounts for town employees, said Murphy. The changes come as Town Hall moves onto the same server as the police and fire departments.

The town will also be phasing out the use of post office boxes. Instead, mail will be delivered to the building. The new mailing address is 11 South St., Westminster.

Ouellette

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highway department.

"I love being able to solve problems. I love building (something) and come back 10 years later and say I built that. It is really being able to see the work," Ouellette said.

Ouellette lives in Townsend and is the former city engineer for Medford.

Town Administrator Kevin Paicos said Ouellette's experience made him stand out from the three other finalists who were interviewed.

"His experience was broader then the others," Paicos said. "He had the strongest engineering experience. He had a longer water and sewer experience, which we need."

Ouellette's personality also helped him stand out.

"We liked his management style," Paicos said. "He had a very direct way of talking with people. He also made us feel very comfortable."

Paicos interviewed Ouellette with other town officials at the beginning of the year. He said Ouellette's references brought nothing but positive comments.

"The classic win-win," Paicos said.

Ouellette said he has been looking for a way to stop commuting two hours a day and get back to seeing projects through to completion.

"I worked in a small town before and I like that atmosphere," he said. "I wanted to get back into managing the projects from start to finish and managing the crews start to finish."

Ouellette has been busy meeting with Paicos and with the employees who will be working with him.

"Right now I still have to check the landscape out. I still have to meet with people," he said.

During the next few weeks, Ouellette will be developing a goal for the first year. He knows that looking at the newly developed capital plan for the water and sewer systems will be a priority as will developing a budget plan.

He hopes to get the roads on a preventative maintenance plan, but isn't sure that will be fully implemented during the first year.

Paicos is ready to add to Ouellette's list of things to do.

The water-sewer systems are absolutely his priority, he said. The goal in those departments is to organize the billing methods, to help renegotiate the waste water contract with Gardner and to help plan for the proposed 40B project off Williams Road.

As a professional engineer, Ouellette will also be able to review proposals before the planning board, the fire department and police department on construction and traffic flow.

Paicos and Ouellette agree the other major project is to develop the DPW.

"We have to figure out how to get that DPW pulled together," Paicos said. "It's moving to one department from five or six separate departments."

The first step is getting the organization set up, Ouellette said.

He said residents will be able to visit a single site to have questions answered and will see more planning as the DPW gets set up.

"It is awful hard for a foreman or a superintendent to get out there and plan what they want to do in the next five years, that is what I will be able to help with," he said.

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Robert F. Fairbanks, Jr.
Financial Advisor
461 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420
978 345-6007

Christopher Spencer
Financial Advisor
1 City Hall Avenue
Gardner, MA 01440
978 630-5479

Joseph Sciacca
Financial Advisor, AAMS
241 Main Street
Townsend, MA 01469
978 597-0537

Norm Wironen
Financial Advisor, CFP ®
1 City Hall Avenue
Gardner, MA 01440
978 630-5479

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