

**TOWN OF WALPOLE
STAFF MEETING
FEBRUARY 18, 2021**

Selectboard Present: Peggy Pschirrer (Chair); Cheryl Mayberry; Steven Dalessio

Staff Present: Sarah Downing (Manager of Administration); Richard Kreissle (Administrator of Finance); Lt. Justin Sanctuary (Police Department); Michael Rau (Road Agent/Highway Department); Ben Hoy (Recycling Director); Kraig Harlow (Recreation Director); Jane Malmberg (Library Director); Helen Dalbeck (Hooper Institute Executive Director); Meghan Hansson (Interim Town Clerk/Tax Collector)

Excused: Michael Paquette (Chief Police Department)

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Pschirrer called this Staff Meeting via Zoom to order at 5:00 PM. The Selectboard members, Staff Department Managers and Mrs. Regina Borden, Recording Secretary, are all in separate locations. Mrs. Sarah Downing is in the Walpole Town Hall and is running this Zoom meeting. This meeting was recorded by the Town.

Mrs. Pschirrer called for a voice roll call of the Selectboard present: Cheryl Mayberry was present; Steven Dalessio was present and Peggy Pschirrer was present. All Staff members listed above responded they were present during the voice roll call. This meeting will be in accordance with Virtual Meetings, Emergency Order #12, which has been effective since March 2020.

Mrs. Pschirrer advised that an email was distributed that was apparently "hacked". It came to Jodi Daigle. Mrs. Pschirrer was not sure if other Staff received it or not. It states it was from her but it is not her email address. The subject line says "A Dispatch of Compensation for Pious Staffs". The entire email is not written in any way the same as one she would write to the Staff. If anyone responded they need to be cautious of what might come back to them. Let the office know because clearly it is a "hack" job of some kind. It is not real. They are getting a lot of similar emails. Some phone calls are always asking for money. She has turned the phone numbers over to the Police Department but they are looking for ways to "trip" people up because they hung up as soon as Lt. Sanctuary said he was from the Walpole Police Department. Be on the look-out and carefully notice the emails.

Mrs. Downing also sent each of them a copy of the Warrant as they need to be prepared to discuss the Warrant Article that pertains to them. The 2021 Annual Town Meeting is still scheduled for Saturday, March 13th, 2021, at 1:00 PM in the Walpole Elementary School Gymnasium.

Walpole Recreation Department: Mr. Kraig Harlow submitted the following written report dated February 18, 2021:

Community Events:

- We will be hosting online Trivia Night on February 26 and teams will be made from participants in each household. We will be awarding prizes to the top three winners.
- Over vacation we are asking children to build the Tallest Index Card Tower and send us a picture of their tower. We will award prizes to the tallest tower in four age divisions.
- Daddy and Me dance and winter basketball has been postponed/cancelled for the year due to COVID.

Improvements:

- We will be adding a new handicap accessibility chair for the pool for this coming summer.
- We are adding another shed at Whitcomb Park to hold equipment and provide additional storage for soccer goals and outdoor basketball equipment. Our goal is to free up some space we've been using at the Town Hall and to keep everything down at the Rec Center.
- With approval of Warrant Article 5, much needed repairs will be made to the meter pit down at the park. This is work that has been delayed in previous years.
- With approval of Warrant Article 13, we plan to repair the pool roof. We were hoping to have this work done this past year and hopefully can get it done this spring.

Recreation Board:

- Recreation Board will meet in March for its first 2021 quarterly meeting.

Recycling Department: Mr. Ben Hoy submitted the following written report for February.

- Received recoverable depreciation insurance check for old Reuse Center from Primex for \$17,360 last week. We had received a check for \$29,134.82 last year for the actual cash value of the Reuse Center, which brings Walpole recycling a total of \$46,494.82 in insurance money toward the cost of the Reuse Center. The total actual cost to the town of Walpole for the building of the reuse center is \$28,502.
- The Reuse Center has brought in \$4,263.00 since our grand opening on October 10th.
- The Friends of the Walpole Library has brought in \$846.73.
- Friends of the Walpole Library volunteers are helping to keep our bookshelves at the Reuse Center stocked with quality books.
- Walpole recycling is now picking up Friends of the Library books from the library during our recycling route to keep new books circulating.
- With the help of Walpole residents, we have begun recycling our newspaper, magazines, and office paper with Soundview Paper in Putney, Vermont. We have not previously sorted (exclusively) magazines or office paper. This has been separated from mixed paper, which does not currently yield any value-(mixed paper is recycled.)
- Recycling truck has all new tires. It is handling a lot better especially in the snow.
- Warrant Article #9 paving area pictured. It will help keep everything clean.

Mr. Hoy had of a notice from Northeast Resource Recovery Association with "Congratulations for being such active recyclers!" It lists "Recyclable Material" – "Amount Recycled in 2020 – Environmental Impact! The recyclable materials listed on the sheet were sent to market to be remanufactured into new products through our non-profit recycling organization, the Northeast Resource Recovery Association.

Administrator of Finance: Mr. Rich Kreissle submitted a written report as follows:

As he alluded to in our last gathering, December and January are a busy, busy time for him. He thought he would give us a sense as to what activities he is required to do during this end of year (EOY) time.

1. Out with the old, in with the new. Physically transfer files-2019 boxed and placed in the basement. These files include all Accounts Payable, deposit/receipt records, bank statements, payroll records, and NHRS records. Despite the use of computers, paper still rules in the accounting realm.
2. He uses a number of spreadsheets to keep track of ancillary data. 2021 spreadsheets are created and updated with any information pertinent to 2021.
3. Budget – assist in the finalizing of the budget and warrant articles. Enter this information into the Department of Revenue Administration's (DRA) portal. They then review the information, suggest/require corrections before they sign off of them and we can produce/post the MS-636.

4. Only 310 days until Christmas.
5. Produce W-2's, 1099's, and 1095-B's for 2020. 1095-B is an information return that reports to the government that all full-time employees had access to health insurance while they were employed by the town. When received, no action is required on our part. Though the accounting software automates these, they all have to be reviewed before submitting them.
6. Bring forward the benefit hours for all full time employees.
7. Enter in the 2020 wages/hours for our one retired employee.
8. Document/record the yearly interest on our various bank accounts.
9. File the year end unemployment report for 2020 with the Primex to assist them in their rate setting for the town.
10. This year, he had the added duty of assisting our auditors with the tax committal audit of the tax collector's office as a result of Sandy Smith's retirement.
11. Most of these activities need to be completed by the end of January and while he performs his regular duties.

Looking ahead:

After the town meeting (March 13th), he is required to enter the results of the town meeting into the DRA's portal and then start prepping for the 2020 audit. February ends up being a month where he can catch up on other projects that were less urgent to accomplish during January.

Mrs. Pschirrer asked if he normally gives each Department Manager a monthly report. Mr. Kreissle replied that he does but this year he wants to do it differently. He will use their budget as a basis; reports will go out monthly to the Department Managers who need to contact him if they see figures they disagree with. Ms. Mayberry clarified he would include their budget figure plus the year-to-date expenditures so the Department Managers know where they are every month. Mr. Kreissle agreed.

Hooper Institute: Mrs. Helen Dalbeck distributed a written report dated February 16, 2021.

School Programs and School Gardens: School programs were fully remote until Feb. 1 when schools got back to the hybrid attendance model. Becky Whippie and she are happily to be with their teachers and students again. It is hard to say exact numbers of students that are fully remote vs hybrid as it changes frequently. The Hooper lessons offer some normalcy, fun and really important science lessons, some of the only science they have for now.

Outreach and Marketing: Facebook, the Clarion, Friends of Hooper Institute. Both Jan and Feb editions had Hooper Institute articles. January introduced their new logo (above), the February focus was the Friends of Hooper Institute and membership. New letterhead has been created and next up is a new street sign at 165 Prospect Hill.

Facility and Land: She checks on the building two times each week. The driveway is being plowed and there is lots of evidence of people and dogs using our trails with some off trail snowmobiling. Their fruit trees will be pruned on 2/26 by the NH Extension Service. She plans to film this on their new I-Pad and post the demonstration. In process is an estimate by EE Houghton for a new, more efficient heating system for the main building.

Administration: Sue Nadeau's board membership has been approved. Town Report submission was made with photos. Becky Whippie and she talk weekly. They have planned an appeal letter from the two of them to support their education programs. The virtual Friends of Hooper Institute annual meeting will be March 10, 2021 with the agenda and details to follow. A ZOOM FORUM meeting with all frontline Hooper Institute community members will take place on March 16, 7 pm.

Public Programs: They hoped for county wide fruit tree pruning workshop at the Hooper, taught by UNH Extension Service staff, will not be in person due to COVID. She received an unusual offer from a youth circus organization, Flying Gravity Circus that she knows well, based in Wilton NH.

<https://www.flyinggravitycircus.org/> They are offering the Hooper Institute an opportunity to host “Circus in the Woods” this spring, performances in our woods, on our trails and in our fields. Hooper staff will meet with FGC directors 2/18 to begin program development; the performance date will be announced soon. It will be a fundraiser. Mrs. Pschirrer asked about fees. Mrs. Dalbeck expects it will be \$5.00/person or \$25.00/family. There will be no fee to the Hooper Institute. It will be on Sunday, May 23rd, 2021.

They still have the Owl Program scheduled for May 22nd in the Town Hall. Mrs. Pschirrer felt the State rules may change by then on having events indoors. Possibly having it on the Common under a tent is an option. However, Mrs. Dalbeck would prefer not to have the expense of renting a tent. Respectfully submitted and thanks to all for your support.

Highway Department: Mr. Mike Rau submitted the following written report:

Winter weather has finally arrived, with weekly storms and subzero temperatures. The highway crew has been kept busy around the clock with plowing, salting, and post storm clean up. The drivers (most of the time) begin their day when most of us are still sleeping and continue until the storm is over, at times this includes stopping for breakdowns, blown hydraulic hoses, broken chains, etc. In between storm clean up, we have been working on repairs of equipment that takes a beating when used. This consists of changing of plow blades when needed, changing fluids, ordering, waiting for, and installing parts, and so on. Here at Highway, they are looking forward to spring.

Mr. Rau had distributed copies of the 2021 Paving Schedule. The big project will be Elm Street; it is a complete re-do. Mr. Mark Houghton is going to re-do the water and some sewer. The Highway Department will do the drainage so the whole street will be ripped up. They will have to dig into the Common because that is where the drainage is now. The drainage will be moved out of the Common and go back to the street. They do not have a firm date yet but there will be some meetings with Mr. Mark Houghton, Selectboard, residents and Mr. Rau. The meetings will be similar to what they did on Pleasant Street. Mr. Rau would like to have it completed by July. Their paving usually starts in July. Mrs. Pschirrer expects the Brownfields area will be cleaned-up this summer but they do not have a date yet. They need to coordinate things but there will probably be a period of time when they overlap. The entire area will be disrupted.

He would like to again, thank the highway family for all the hard work and long hours they put into keeping the roadways, sidewalks, steps, public parking lots, town building parking lots, storm drains, etc. safe for public travel.

Walpole Library: Mrs. Jane Malmberg distributed a written report as follows:

February Update:

This month they are continuing with their 15-minute express browsing and curbside pickup. They have had one patron so far take advantage of home delivery. However, curbside requests continue to increase – 34 curbside pickups in January.

They have had trouble with leaking from the chimney in the office that was enclosed as part of the renovation. This has caused damage to the ceiling in that room. They have consulted with Barry Bellows and Tim Smith of Long’s Roofing as to the cause of the leakage and possible solutions.

Staff Development:

She has joined the New Hampshire Library Association's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee. She plans to attend their next meeting in March.

The library staff have an opportunity to participate in no cost training from ALA (funded by the NH Charitable Association) – Essentials for Library Workers. The trainings consist of 4 webinars geared toward rural libraries that cover the topics of creating a welcoming environment for patrons with disabilities, fundamentals of diversity and tools for creating inclusive environments, essential principles of intellectual freedom and the Library Bill of Rights, and how to provide excellent customer service. She plans to make watching these webinars one of the goals for all library staff this year.

Programming:

Facebook Live Story Times continue to be popular. Julie is now on her third book for Book Bites, and she has a small but steady following. They continue to have success with the Take and Make craft kits for kids and adults. This month they offered make your own bird feeder kits with backyard bird spotting activities. The virtual Bake Off started on the first. They received 19 cake entries and 194 people cast their votes by noon on the first day of voting. They plan to do a second Bake Off this Spring. She is working with a member of the community to plan a parenting program via Zoom on March 10th – it will be an IEP organization workshop. She is a volunteer parent advocate and part of her responsibilities are to present these workshops to the public so it would be no charge to us outside of providing 3 ring binders for the attendees.

Technology:

She is working with their Playaway rep to find grant funding sources to help them to expand their children's literacy offerings. Playaway has new Reading Academy Launchpads with a 5-level guided reading system, (based on the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessment system), geared toward readers of all abilities. They also offer audiobooks for all ages of children which are helpful to struggling and reluctant readers. The tablets are approximately \$160/each. Mr. Dalessio asked how many would they need. Mrs. Malmberg would like 10-to-15 to start. There is some funding available through Dollar General if the town has a store which Walpole has.

The library is now on Instagram. You can follow them at walpoletownlibrary. Mrs. Malmberg provided the January Monthly Library Statistics – 2021.

Walpole Town Clerk / Tax Collector's Office: Mrs. Meghan Hansson distributed a written report dated February 18, 2021:

- Have hired a part time, temporary office assistant, Debra Lane. She has been collating and organizing important documents, making them quickly accessible.
- Have made 21 tax deposits since the last staff meeting. This totals \$317,605.00.
- Barrington or delinquent notices have been sent out, and people are responding to that. A couple came in today.
- Tax training...came last day of January for the closing of the month and will be back for the closing of February.
- Registered 393 vehicles between the last staff meeting and this one, bringing in over \$66,000 for the Town.
- Ballots have been ordered for March Election (3/09/21).
- Only a few requests for Absentee Ballots so far.

- Office has undergone major cleanout and reorganization, becoming more streamlined and efficient, an ongoing project...new locks on some cabinets and drawers.
- Basement storage is undergoing its own cleanout and reorganization.
- They have 46 boxes ready for shredding on Thursday (today).
- Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has some training sessions scheduled in March, of which they plan to take advantage. (Free).

Mrs. Pschirrer asked how many ballots they order. Mrs. Hansson replied that last year they ordered 1,200 but she ordered 1,300 for this year. It is better to have more than enough than to run out.

Police Department: Lt. Justin Sanctuary reported they took advantage of the shredder being in town. Recently they had some more sexual assaults (juvenile and adult) and they did search warrants in eight vehicles. Last year they were limited with in-person training due to COVID-19 but the regulations have loosened up so they were able to do some training which was really good. They are currently working through the hiring process. They are working on the background of one applicant at this time. This could take up to three weeks before they move forward to fill an open position. This time next month they hope to have a new officer with them. Both their hybrid cruisers had issues but they were warranty issues. This has been taken care of. They hope Article #10 will pass so they will be able to order another cruiser. Lt. Sanctuary mentioned the Consolidated trucks are back in Town. They will probably be here another three weeks or so. In the next couple of months he would like to get the website up and running. If anyone would like to volunteer to assist please contact the Police Department.

Selectboard Office: Mrs. Sarah Downing submitted a written report dated February 18, 2021, as follows:

Selectboard Office Projects:

- Property Tax Map Archive: Due to a right-to-know request, town property tax maps that had been stored in various areas of the Town Hall were moved to the main meeting room, sorted and assembled. Property tax maps are to be kept forever by RSA. The maps are in the process of being bagged and labeled for storage in the basement Selectboard Office cubbie. Much thanks to Brad Nash who has spent quite a bit of time on this backburner project that moved up in priority.
- Updated Phone System in Tax Collector/Town Clerk's Office: An updated phone system was installed by Brad Nash in the Town Clerk's Office over the course of several weeks. Thanks to Jodi Daigle with setting up the auto attendant.
- General Basement/Office Cleanout: Several boxes of paper are to be taken away from offices in the Town Hall. Also, items were sent to the Reuse Center or to the metal pile. Thanks to Shaena Hakey for taking these items off our hands.
- Brownfields/EPA Grant: Several meetings were hosted by the Town for a team meeting and planning session for the clean-up of the former Central Plating Site located near the Mascoma Bank parking lot. Peggy Pschirrer is the Town Project Manager (TPM) and Ransom Consulting being the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) for this grant funded project.
- Town Report: Has been sent to the printers on 2/16/2021 with a proof pending. The report will be posted to the website for downloading.

Assessing Update:

- Tax Abatement Application Deadline is March 1st: There is less than 2 weeks left for property owners to file their forms.
- A-29 forms for elderly tax exemption, veterans' tax credit, blind exemption and solar energy system exemption are due on or before April 15, 2021.

- A-10 forms for placing land into current use status are accepted through April 15, 2021. Two applications were processed at last week’s Selectboard Meeting.
- If property owners have questions about current use, property tax credits and exemptions, contact the Selectboard Office for assistance.

Town Meeting:

- 2021 Town Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 13th starting at 1 PM at the Walpole Elementary School. Department Managers should plan on attending.

Water and Sewer:

- Water and Sewer payments for the fourth quarter of 2020 usage are being processed. Payments a bit slower so far this period per Jodi Daigle with a 10% decline in payment time.
- 4th quarter water payments are due on Feb. 28th.

2021 Town Meeting: Mrs. Pschirrer and Mr. Jack Wozmak have had questions on the 2021 Town Meeting. At this point we are still holding it on Saturday, March 13th, 2021, at 1:00 PM in the Walpole Elementary School Gym. We can be spread out for distancing. Masks are required. There will be no food by the Walpole Grange. It will be missed but food cannot be available this year. In the Keene-Sentinel, many towns are moving their Town Meetings to April and May.

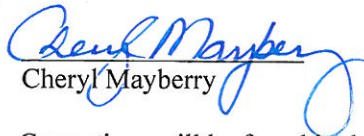
She appreciates all their time and hard work the Department Managers do. There are exciting things going on in our Town. We are all moving along even though we cannot be out-and-about as much as we would like to be right now.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs. Pschirrer adjourned this Staff Meeting at 5:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Regina Borden, Recording Secretary


Peggy L. Pschirrer, Chair


Cheryl Mayberry

Steven Dalessio

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the February 25, 2021, Selectboard Meeting.)