

**TOWN OF WALPOLE
STAFF MEETING
JANUARY 20, 2022**

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

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

Excused: Kraig Harlow (Recreation Director); Justin Sanctuary (Police Chief)

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Mayberry called this Staff Meeting via Zoom to order at 5:00 PM. The Selectboard and Staff members are at various locations. This meeting was being recorded.

Ms. Mayberry called for a voice roll call of everyone present: Steven Dalessio was in the Town Hall; Peggy Pschirrer was at home in Walpole; Cheryl Mayberry was at home in North Walpole. Sarah Downing was in the Town Hall; Richard Kreissle was at his home; Helen Dalbeck was at home in Wilton; Jane Malmberg was in her Library office; Mike Rau was at the Walpole Town Garage; Ben Hoy was at the Recycling Center; Meghan Hansson was in the Town Clerk-Tax Collector's office; Regina Borden, Recording Secretary, was at home.

Recycling Center: Mr. Ben Hoy presented his Walpole Recycling Staff Meeting Report. The Town of Walpole bags were received from the new supplier Boxes and Bags Unlimited out of Lewiston, Maine. The bag delivery came just in time to keep us from running out, as our old supplier Wastezero could not fulfill orders due to production issues/staff shortages. Bag/box quality is excellent, and represents the same logo, size, yellow color with drawstrings, and Town of Walpole insignia. Town of Walpole trash bag sales reached an all-time high of \$123,274 in 2021. This indicates more recycling could be done.

Mr. Hoy attended an NRRA meeting (he is on the Board of Trustees) in which USDA southern NH area director Jon Muise discussed rural development grant monies available to municipalities serving less than 20,000 people. Recycling centers with equipment/infrastructure improvements can be covered at 55% up to \$50,000.00 maximum. There are a few projects that the Town could align with. It would be nice to have better storage containers for recyclables and their bags. Mr. Dalessio asked if the grants would cover the shredder they want. Mr. Hoy is going to talk to Mr. Muise about this. Mrs. Pschirrer mentioned money is available but they need a match. Mr. Hoy said that is correct. The money is available now through August. He feels applications are approved as towns apply.

Cardboard prices are dropping a bit lately, and wait times are increasing to ship cardboard to APC paper in Claremont as they are backed up with inventory. We made \$27,573.51 in recycled cardboard revenue in 2021. We ship 36 bales of cardboard on each trailer to APC Paper. Each bale weighs between 1175 and 1350 pounds, keeping each truckload around 45,000 pounds. This weight keeps the truck within the legal weight limit on the road. Other than this they are trying to keep sand on all the ice. It is an open area with a lot of people walking around.

Hooper Institute: Mrs. Helen Dalbeck, Executive Director, submitted the following report.
School Programs and School Gardens: December was a really busy time teaching in the schools. They are now back after the Holidays. For 5th grade, she taught soil studies plus water conservation/use.

Mrs. Dalbeck heard from Peter from the sign company; it is almost finished so that is good news.

Botany classes began for 6th grade with moss-fern-conifer life cycles. For Becky and her dedicated teaching, lessons included seasonal crafts; balsam fir sachets to conifer table arrangements, beautiful centerpieces and pine cone door wreaths. The New Year brings us to winter wildlife, adaptations, tracking in all grades plus winter botany in 6th grade.

Outreach and Marketing: December, January and February Clarion submissions plus many Facebook posts; monthly school newsletter, posters for February events.

Facility and Land: The new sign is almost ready and will be installed this January. The building's water/heat was shut off December 21. She will be checking on the building twice a week.

Administration: They are looking for new board members. She met with the Hooper Trustees, 12/10/21. The 2022 budget was adjusted and approved. Hooper Board meetings meet first Tuesday each month.

Special Events, Programs, and Friends: Planning is in full swing for the Winter Fun Day, February 12, 2 pm – 5pm. Outdoor activities will be at the Hooper Golf Course, sled making and nearby indoor warming area with refreshments at the Hooper Institute. The Walpole Parent and Teacher Group will join us bringing with them school families, staff and friends. Event description below:

“The Year of the Hooper Institute” introducing the George Levi Hooper Birthday Fund!

Winter Fun Day on Prospect Hill, February 12, 2-5 pm.

There will be sled-making and sledding, snowshoeing, sunset watching and more with hot drinks, popcorn and cookies offered by our staff and volunteers. George Levi Hooper will be our special guest to tell us stories about his life in Walpole and of his vision, long ago, for the Hooper Institute. The afternoon will kick off our fundraising campaign in George Hooper's honor, raising funds to support our education and scholarship programs. Please join us, in donating and enjoying the Hooper Institute's **Winter Fun Day!** All outdoor activities will take place at the golf course, 166 Prospect Hill with indoor fun and sled-making at the Hooper Institute, 165 Prospect Hill Rd. Hosted by Hooper Institute and the Walpole Parent and Teacher Group.

Development/Fundraising: This is “The Year of the Hooper Institute”. Planning, letter writing, marketing and more is in full swing. February 12th is the roll out for a town-wide and beyond fundraising campaign. A birthday celebration for George Levi Hooper at the Hooper Institute will be on May 24, 2022, and the birthday campaign itself will be wrapped up in June. They will continue to raise funds beyond the birthday bash with a Fall Annual Appeal, 2nd Annual Fall Festival, Giving Tuesday and end of year push for donations. Their goal is to raise \$100,000 to help secure the future of the Hooper Institute's education and scholarship programs.

The Year of the Hooper Institute: 2022 Calendar

February – Winter Fun Day 2/12/22 plus kick off of GH Hooper Birthday Fundraising Campaign;

April – Earth Day Celebration at the Hooper 4/23/22; Opening Day Walpole Community Garden;

May – George Hooper Birthday Party 5/14/22;

June – Birthday campaign will wrap up June 4 (16 week campaign); Old Home Days Hooper Institute

Alumni Display; 6th grade River Trip; 2 weeks Hooper Day Camp and 2 weeks Adventure Camp;

July – High Summer School Work Program; 1 week Woodworking Camp; 6 weeks Flower Bouquet CSA

begins: Presentation Night for HS Work Program and Hooper Scholarship Recipients;

August – High School Work Program, Flower CSA;

September – Flower CSA ends; Fall Festival kicks off Annual Giving Appeal fundraising efforts;
October – Garlic Saturday; Walpole Community Garden Closing Day;
November – Thanksgiving Farmers Market; GIVING TUESDAY;
December – Wreath-making workshops, End of Year Appeal.
This calendar will be published in the Clarion.

Walpole Town Library: Mrs. Jane Malmberg provided the following December 2021 Report:
December statistics continued to be strong despite the need to curtail programs due to staffing issues and the surge in Covid cases. Visits to the library in December totaled 833, vs. 412 in 2020 and 598 in 2019. While their numbers were lower this month than in November, they are higher than 2020 and 2019. Physical checkouts of materials totaled 1,683 vs. 1,191 in 2020 and 916 in 2019. Downloadable material checkouts also showed an increase over 2020 and 2019 figures. YTD these figures crept closer to 2019 totals and showed increases over 2020 totals. They are moving in the right direction despite the many Covid setbacks.

Budget: Mrs. Malmberg met with the Selectboard regarding the budget vis Zoom in late December. They have requested an increase in Julie’s hours to full-time. There will be a line item for a new full-time position in the proposed budget and the amount for part-time staff salaries will be reduced to reflect the change in Julie’s status. The repairs needed to the library’s chimney and front door will be included in a warrant article for the library. Thanks to Brad Nash the street light outside of the Library is working properly.

Library Board: The Selectboard has appointed Sarah Mann, a Walpole library patron, and Erin Bowen, a North Walpole patron, to the library’s Board of Trustees to fill out the remainder of the two vacant positions.

Outreach: At present the Walpole public schools remain open and Julie has continued her visits to the Walpole Village School and the Pre-Kindergarten for story time.

Policy: Due to the increase in challenges to library materials nationwide, it was recommended that all public libraries in the state have an updated policy and procedures in place to handle these challenges. She drafted a policy for Challenged Materials along with a Materials Reconsideration Form which the board voted to accept. The policy will be added to that section of their website and will also be available in print at the library, along with the reconsideration form.

Programming: In December, due to the surge in Covid cases in Cheshire County, they decided to suspend in-person programming for the month of January, supplementing with virtual program options and take-home kids. They will be continuing with this plan through February as well. Their Zoom program, Community Conversations on Redistricting was quite successful with 17 people participating. It was to explain the process. Representative Lucy Weber was the presenter of the information. They offer Wiggle Time and Story Time programs via Facebook/YouTube.

Mrs. Malmberg also distributed “December 2021 Monthly Library Statistics – Bridge Memorial Library” and “December 2021 Monthly Statistics – North Walpole Library”.

Finance Office: Mr. Richard Kreissle presented his January 20, 2022, report.

Just as January represents a new year, it also represents the start of a new set of accounting records. It is a chance to do some things differently based upon feedback on 2021. Hence, it's a very, very busy time.

- W-2's and 1099's are due 1/31/22
W-2's have been processed and should be on their way.
- Beginning benefit hours need to be brought forward in our accounting system (AccuFund)
This always a challenge – AccuFund tends to do funky things with these figures being brought forward so it always takes a fair amount of tweaking.
- New for 2022: Related to benefit hours, He will be issuing quarterly reports showing the number of hours employees have taken for each category (vacation, sick, personal), in the case of vacation, the number of hours accrued along with the ending balances for each.
- Budget and Warrant Articles: Once the budget is finalized and the warrant articles are written, he needs to put them into the Department of Revenue Administration's (DRA) portal to produce a form called an MS-636.
The DRA reviews everything, "suggests" changes and finalizes it. This is the official report to the DRA on our proposed budget for the forthcoming year including special warrant articles.
- A note about 2021 Transactions:
He will not be posting any more transactions against the 2021 budget. We're in the 3rd week of January of the new year and he stopped seeing invoices dated from 2021 so he feels now is a good time to close 2021.

It's one of the more intense times during the year because of the high level of detail involved in each of these tasks.

Selectboard Office: Mrs. Sarah Downing had submitted the January 20, 2021, Selectboard Office Report.

Assessing:

2022 Revaluation: The Selectboard met with the NH DRA and Avitar Associates on 1/19/22 for a kick-off informational meeting regarding the final year of property revaluation cycle. Audits for tax credits and exemptions will be conducted. Property owners receiving property tax credits and exemptions will be required to complete verification forms. This summer, representatives from the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) and Avitar will be visiting properties for sales and data verification.

Abatement, Veterans' Tax Credit, Elderly Tax Credit and Solar System Exemption application forms are being accepted. The deadline to file a property tax abatement is March 1st. All other forms have a deadline of April 15th. Forms are available on the Town website or by the tax map in the Town Hall.

Town Meeting:

Scheduled for Saturday, March 12th starting at 1 PM. Department managers are expected to attend. The meeting location will be the Walpole Elementary School Gym to allow for social distancing. As with meetings held in the Town Hall, masks are required.

Department recap of the year reports for the 2021 are due on or by this Friday, January 21st. Thank you to those who have already sent in the word documents.

The 2022 Budget Public Hearing date is to be set at tonight's Selectboard Meeting. Department managers should plan on attending and be available to answer questions related to budgets and warrant articles.

Human Resources:

A Domestic Partner Rider has been added to the Town’s health care insurance policy. An open enrollment period will begin on Feb. 1st for 60 days. A notice has been placed in the new year benefits update packet for employees.

Health Trust Coverage Overview is available as a recording. It can be accessed through the SEP (secure access portal for employees) on the Health Trust website. For those that missed the healthcare coverage presentation in December, this on-demand video is available for viewing to learn more about your health and wellness benefits.

Future Trainings during Staff Meetings: The Selectboard has requested that training occur during future Staff Meetings. A catalog of training topics available through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) was sent earlier. We are seeking feedback from managers as to what topics they feel would be beneficial. She would like to start scheduling something for next month.

Highway Department: Mr. Michael Rau had submitted their January 2022 report.

Summer floods: More detailed reporting of damage is being worked on to be submitted to FEMA. FEMA requires a breakdown of each location, a detailed description of all damage, estimation of cost of repair, photos, etc. After the date that this information is due, they will move on to the next phase, which will be a more organized breakdown of each site that will include hours of manpower, machinery, and materials. He hopes to submit more detailed information by the end of next week. He has until February 12th to get the Damage Inventory List in. Then they will move onto site visits, equipment, materials, etc. They would like to get some money from FEMA to off-set the Town’s costs. There is still a lot more work to be done.

Winter Storm call outs: 11/26, 11/27, 11/29, 11/30, 12/2, 12/8, 12/9, 12/11, 12/18, 12/19, 12/21, 12/22, 12/24, 12/25, 12/26, 12/28, 1/7, 1/8, 1/9, 1/11, 1/17, 1/18. Not only has there been snow but a lot of ice which makes it difficult to clean-up with these cold temperatures.

Truck repairs: They have had multiple truck/equipment breakdowns since the beginning of winter. Luckily, most minor repairs are able to be quickly resolved at the shop with their skilled and talented crew. However, though they do their best to resolve most issues in house, they do need to send out larger ones for repairs. This at times causes the fleet to be short making storm clean ups lengthier. They take this clear weather to repair equipment. All of their trucks except for the new one are 8-to-14 years old so they break down quite a bit. He has been working on the Town Report; it will be handed in tomorrow. Ms. Mayberry asked where we are with the new truck. Mr. Rau said the plant where the truck was sent has closed their facilities so it is now getting sent to Canada to their main plant to be finished. He hopes to see it in the next couple months. Mr. Rau said they had the one ton that was ordered two years ago; last year was the big truck. The next truck will be on a Warrant this year or next year. If it does not pass they are under no obligation to buy it.

Walpole Town Clerk/Tax Collector’s Office: Mrs. Meghan Hansson presented the following report dated January 20, 2022.

- Renovation is almost complete. Their contractor will be in one more time to install a late-arriving cabinet to go under the countertop. Also, some hardware needs to be installed for the drawers and cabinets. Painter will finish last few spots that were previously not accessible. People have noticed and are complimenting the space.

- Motor vehicle work is going as expected. They have had good turnout so far with people getting dogs licensed early this year (38 so far).
- On tax bills they asked the public if they would like the option of being able to use a credit card to make payment on their taxes. Due to the necessity of processing payments quickly, they have not yet compiled the results of that inquiry, but later this month she hopes to have some figures describing the public's response.
- On the Fall tax warrant they have collected \$5,140,840 and have \$591,573 left to collect.
- She has posted announcements for the filing period for the upcoming Town Election. The filing period goes from Jan. 19 to Jan. 28th. The 28th is a Friday; so, she will be in the office for filing only from 3-5 pm only.

Recreation Department: Mr. Kraig Harlow was unable to attend this meeting due to a conflict with a make-up basketball game however he did submit an Update dated January 19, 2021.

Winter Basketball:

- They have roughly 50 children signed up for basketball from grades PK-6th grade.
- The program generated about \$1,350 through registration and sign-ups.
- They currently have a one PK team, two 1st grade teams, two 2nd grade teams, two girls 3/4 teams, two boys 3/4 teams, and one girls 5/6 team.
- Games will be held on Saturday mornings at Walpole Elementary School from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. and at North Walpole School from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Practices will be held at North Walpole School for one hour between 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.
- They have Diamond Pizza, McGill Woodworking, Houghton, Pauquette & Sons, ServPro and Craig Vickers Insurance sponsoring teams this season.

Shed:

- Walpole Recreation just purchased a 10ft. by 20 ft. shed from LaValley's for \$6,094 from the revolving fund to store recreation equipment.
- The shed was delivered on January 5th to Whitcomb Park and was placed on the back end of the park.

Hockey Rink:

- Walpole Recreation just purchased an EZ Ice Rink for Westminster St. Field for \$4,311 from the revolving fund. The rink is 30 ft. x 60 ft. and they can purchase additional rink walls to increase its size if it becomes heavily used.
- Thank you to the Fall Mountain JV Basketball team for helping clear snow and ice from the ground and Brad Nash for helping build the rink and putting the first 3,000 gallons of water in.

Community Events:

- Currently, they do not have any community events scheduled until after January.


OTHER BUSINESS – Training Requests: Ms. Mayberry excused everyone except Mrs. Pschirrer, Mr. Dalessio, Mrs. Downing and Mrs. Borden. Ms. Mayberry's intent was not necessarily to have someone come in to train. She would like to see everyone have the same vision. They talked about the training and how they want to move forward. Mrs. Pschirrer has a lot of experience with training. She is willing to do some training; the ones she did the most were on communications. "How do you work with other employees?" "How do they talk to one another?" "Listening Is Important". They could design their own trainings. Mr. Dalessio would like to have one on the "Importance of Communication" and/or another on "How to Write Certain Types of Emails". Ms. Mayberry wants to be sure the employees still have opportunities to interact. Maybe next time they could do something from the list Mrs. Downing distributed. It would give Mrs. Pschirrer a chance to work on the training she will present. Ms. Mayberry feels they all have different skills they can share with the managers.

ADJOURNMENT: Ms. Mayberry adjourned this Staff Meeting at 5:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Regina Borden, Recording Secretary


Cheryl Mayberry, Chair


Steven Dalessio


Peggy L. Pschirrer

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the January 27, 2022, Selectboard meeting.)