

**TOWN OF WALPOLE  
STAFF MEETING  
MARCH 16, 2023**

Selectboard Present: Steve Dalessio, Chair; Cheryl Mayberry and Peggy L. Pschirrer

Staff Present: Sarah Downing (Manager of Administration); Jordan Cannon (Recording Secretary); Richard Kreissle (Manager of Finance); Helen Dalbeck (Hooper Institute Executive Director); Jane Malmberg (Library Director); Meghan Hansson (Town Clerk/Tax Collector); Kraig Harlow (Recreation Director); Justin Sanctuary (Police Chief)

Excused: Ben Hoy (Recycling Director), Mike Rau (Road Agent)

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Dalessio called the staff meeting to order at 4:59 PM in the Walpole Town Hall. There were no members of the public present. He introduced the new Recording Secretary, Jordan Cannon to the staff members in attendance.

**WAGE SURVEY PRESENTATION:**

Mr. Dalessio commenced a discussion regarding a salary survey which was recently conducted to make sure town employees are competitively paid. He reviewed the objective and process by which the survey was conducted. Mr. Dalessio stated that the towns compared in the report were similar in population but not all were similar in budget. Mr. Dalessio discussed total compensation, and described how it impacts the budget, which includes benefit compensation. He then compared the towns included in the survey report. Various staff raised questions regarding the report, and reasons why certain towns were included in the comparison. Ms. Mayberry reviewed the various factors which influence rates of pay.

**FINANCE:**

Mr. Kreissle stated he is preparing for the upcoming Town Meeting. He has entered appropriations as voted into the Department of Revenue Administration's portal and has entered budget journal entries for 2023. Based upon feedback from the auditors, Mr. Kreissle has started to develop analyses for certain areas involving 2022 accounts to assist with the 2022 audit. He has started working on the Cost-of-Living Allowances (COLAs) for 2023. He entered disbursements required immediately after Town Meeting.

**HOOPER INSTITUTE:**

**School Programs and School Gardens:** In grade 5, Mrs. Dalbeck has begun a Botany series that began with simple land plants that reproduce via spores to cone bearing trees (naked seeds) to flowering plants (enclosed seeds). The first class focused on plant characteristics and what plants need to live. The life cycles of moss, fern and introduced the white pine were taught. She added some lichen to have a common example of something they know and see day to day but alas, are not plants. Sixth grade has been all about the Earth Sciences beginning in January. Since our last Manager meeting, the students have been immersed in the rock cycle, rock ID and are about to learn more about the bedrock here in Walpole and our very own glacial history. Becky Whippie has been on a Family Medical Leave since mid-February and is due to return mid-April.

**Outreach and Marketing:** Clarion, fliers, Facebook, school newsletter, school posters, Town Report  
**Administration:** Ongoing, in every way. We have one new Board member, Will Grossman. Mr.

Dallessio prompted Ms. Dalbeck to describe the Hooper Institute to those in attendance.

**Special Events, Programs, Scholarship and Friends:** Scholarship notices have gone out to interested Walpole college-bound students. Dahlia Day is planned for May 20, organized by Friends of Hooper Institute. There will be up to 50 pots of dahlias to be sold. Subscriptions are now available for the 2023 Flower CSA; 8 sold, 7 more to go.

**High School Summer Work Program:** Mrs. Dalbeck has met with all of the 8th graders to invite them to apply and have sent out 6 applications, so far- all rising 10th graders.

**Development/Fundraising:** There will be more to report on in April. A letter is planned that features Becky Whippie, her upcoming retirement and her dedication to the Hooper Institute and Walpole kids for the past 22 years.

**Scholarship:** The total awarded for the school year 2022-23 is \$15,000.

**Other news:** Mrs. Dalbeck is out of state March 24-April 1 and will have the building reopened by April 7. The beds in the high tunnel are ready to be planted and will be part of the 5th grade classes upon my return. She has noticed some of the trim is lifting off the east side of the building, right below the roof line and a garage door on the shed that needs to be fixed or replaced; two upcoming maintenance projects.

## **RECREATION:**

### **Hockey Rink**

- The hockey rink extension is being stored with the Highway Department until spring.
- The hockey rink that was put out earlier this year will be brought in once all the snow melts.

### **Soccer Goals**

- Soccer goals were delivered and being stored with the Highway Department until the end of spring.
- The goals will be built and placed at North Walpole School.

### **Age in Motion**

- Janet Chamberlain asked if AIM classes could be conducted through a zoom recording.
- Selectboard and Primex decided that classes cannot be held without a certified instructor present.

## **TOWN CLERK-TAX COLLECTOR'S OFFICE:**

- Due to incoming weather, the Moderators of the District met on Monday and agreed to postpone the Town and School Election by two weeks. Town Election is now Tuesday March 28th and the Town meeting continues on Saturday, April 1st.
- Up until that decision was made, we were inundated with requests for Absentee Ballots.
- My office will be closed on Wednesday, April 5th so that my Deputy and I can attend Spring Tax Collectors Workshop. Last year we went to separate workshops and kept the office open, but to save money in our Training budget line, we are carpooling to the one workshop.
- The Intent to Lien notices will go out on 3/30. Outstanding liens will be perfected on May 4th. (Last day to pay by check will be 5/2.) Also, on May 4th the Impending Deed notices will go out with a deed date given as 6/14.
- During the month of February, 92 vehicles were registered online. So far this year 135 dogs are licensed.

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT:**

Chief Sanctuary thanked his staff in attendance for their additional work, as the Police Department is not fully staffed. One of his staff members had recently attended a training on human trafficking. Ms. Hansson commented on her observation of beer cans on the road, and questioned if she could post a camera on her property. Chief Sanctuary stated that she would be allowed to do so if the camera was on her property. Mr. Dalessio stated that the Police Station Study is moving along. The committee is reviewing architects to consult for this building.

## **LIBRARY:**

### **Building and Grounds:**

Barry Bellows and a mason came to the library to survey the damage to the chimney last week. Mrs. Malmberg had not yet received a proposal for the work. The building subcommittee has received quotes for the work on the front door from Adam Vose and Terry Cox. She did reach out last month to Dennis Fabis but did not receive any response from him. The Board will vote to choose a contractor at the March 21st meeting.

### **Programming:**

The first session of 20th Century French Songs was a success with fourteen people in attendance for the first session, all of whom wanted to continue in March. There was a small turnout (3 people) for the Stress Workshop and the Roblox program (4 kids). March 13th is the first of a two-part Great Decisions program on War Crimes. There has had a lot of interest in this program so far. There are two interesting speakers lined up for April. Both speakers are free of charge to the library. Mindy Cambiar, the Executive Director of Hundred Nights Homeless Shelter in Keene will be coming to talk about the organization and its mission, their project to build a larger shelter to accommodate the increasing number of unhoused residents in the area, and to answer questions. They will show a short film about the organization as well.

"Life, Death and Cake", is a two-hour open discussion on death and dying facilitated by local author Susan MacNeil and End of Life Doula Kasey March. Susan shares the lessons she learned from the recent passing of her mother, Jean, as described in her book "18 Minutes: A Daughter's Primer on Life & Death." Kasey will explain how end-of-life doulas support the dying and their loved ones. Following is an open group-directed discussion of death over cake, coffee, and tea. The duo has presented this program at libraries in Rockingham and Springfield, VT, and will be at the Hancock, NH library in April as well.

The library has received a grant from the Children's Literacy Foundation which will provide the library with \$150 of children's books to distribute and an author visit from Sy Montgomery, a local author who writes about nature and wildlife. She is probably best known for her adult book, *The Soul of an Octopus*, but she writes children's nonfiction as well. The library hopes to host her in June as a kick-off event for our summer reading program.

### **PR & Marketing:**

The library staff and Board of Trustees worked together for several months on a rebranding project for the library which produced a new logo, fonts and color scheme for use on all promotional and program materials. They were happy to be able to share the results of this work with the public in the Clarion, in our library newsletter, on our website, via social media, and in the library.

**Staff:**

Mrs. Malmberg has finished staff evaluations and am in the process of meeting with each staff member to discuss. She has also submitted her self-evaluation to BOT Personnel Committee. Carolyn Norback resigned her position on February 28, 2023, effectively immediately. Mrs. Malmberg has reached out to her regarding a farewell party and letter of appreciation in the Clarion. Mrs. Norback is amenable to both. Hank Shedd will be taking on Mrs. Norback's regular hours at the library.

**SELECTBOARD OFFICE:****Assessing:**

- The deadline date for Abatement Applications was March 1st. Early applicants have received responses. There was a flurry of submissions with the last week before the deadline. There were over 30 accepted applications. We are waiting for recommendations from Avitar. They are reviewing each application by date received.
- The deadline for Current Use, Solar Energy and Elderly Property Exemptions will be April 15th. Veteran and All Veterans' Property Tax Credits forms are also due on or before April 15th.
- For Solar Energy Exemptions, if there is a change in ownership, a new PA-29 form is required. This is also true for those that place their properties in a revocable trust. The exemption is tied the owner(s) and not the property.
- With the postponement of Town Meeting to April 1st, those wishing to apply for the Elderly Tax Exemption under the pending new income and asset limits will only have 2 weeks to submit their application. Also, those currently serving in the military will be able to apply for the Veterans' Tax Credit if the new warrant article passes at Town Meeting.

**Facilities Update:**

The Town Hall's elevator's addition of a "flashing hat" sensor has hit a snag and with the installation taking longer than expected. The elevator is currently not functioning. The Otis technician is to return on the 16th or Friday, the 17th to fix the elevator and finish installing the mechanism.

**Town Meeting**

- The Town Report arrived on Monday, March 6<sup>th</sup>. It has been distributed to all the regular locations in Walpole, North Walpole and Drewsville. The text is available to download online from the Town's website and printed copies are available at the Town Hall.
- On Monday, 3/13/23, after a noontime meeting of the moderators of the five towns that are part of the Fall Mountain Regional School District, there was a consensus to postpone Voting Day and Town Meeting by two weeks. Given the poor driving conditions and power outages, it turned out to be a wise decision to delay the two events.

**HIGHWAY:** Mike Rau was unable to attend the meeting but submitted the following report.

- Winter Storm Call Outs: 2/22, 2/23, 2/24, 2/25, 2/27, 2/28, 3/1, 3/2,3/4,3/11,3/14 and 3/15
- Winter storms clean up: With the large snow event we received, highway crews have worked tirelessly around the clock to maintain clear roads, fire/police stations, sidewalks and other town properties. The large amount of snow in a short amount of time proved difficult to keep up with. We always encourage motorists to stay home, when possible, to help plow operations go smoother and safer. The closing of schools, stores, and business's help greatly to limit traffic. Another obstacle road crews run into in these types of events are downed

trees and wires. When our trucks come upon downed trees across the road, communication is made with fire, police, and/or SWMA dispatch. Plow drivers then must turn back and go around using different roads, creating delay. When wires are down, the same process happens. However, an additional call to utility companies is made.

- \*Many thanks to each member of the highway department crew. The around the clock, prompt, thorough, and professional services provided to all of Walpole, North Walpole, and Drewsville are greatly appreciated. \*
- Weekly FEMA video meetings: Weekly video meetings are held with the homeland security and FEMA representative that has been assigned to us. These meetings consist of all information on damaged and repairs this includes materials, equipment used, manpower, permitting, etc. All this information is then entered into the governments grants portal for approval. A very lengthy process.


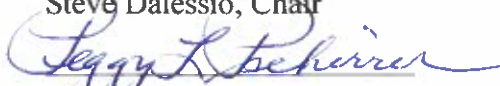


**RECYCLING:** Ben Hoy was unable to attend the meeting but submitted the following report.

Pay by bag method seems to be widely accepted as the best means of reducing trash and increasing recycling rates. Towns from the size of Concord and Lebanon to Walpole and Lancaster have all said that they saw around 40% reduction in waste with the pay as you throw method (Walpole bags). Boxes and Bags order for trash bags is on its way! The Westmoreland Selectboard reached out to Mr. Hoy and ultimately decided to go with a pay by bag system. He asked them to go with different colored bags to avoid any confusion between transfer stations. Michael Albert is now coming on Saturday, May 6th from 10-3. He will bring craft materials and wants the public to join him in making reuse art at the reuse center. Mr. Hoy's daughter Ella is in a high school band, and Mike Daley (Walpole volunteer) is part of a local band. They both agreed to get together and play at Walpole Recycling on May 6th with the blessing of the Selectboard. They are tackling a number of indoor projects until spring cleaning arrives. The Walpole recycling center is clean as a whistle.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Dalessio called the meeting to close at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jordan Cannon, Recording Secretary

  
Steve Dalessio, Chair  
  
Peggy L. Pschirrer  
  
Cheryl Mayberry 

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the March 23, 2023 Selectboard meeting.)