

**TOWN OF WALPOLE
STAFF MEETING
MARCH 15, 2018**

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

Staff Present: Sarah Downing (Manager of Administration); Police Chief Michael Paquette, and Lt. Justin Sanctuary (Police Department); Michael Rau (Highway Department); Justine Fafara (Library); Sandra Smith (Town Clerk/Tax Collector); Rebecca Whippie (Hooper Institute); Justin Cassarino (Recreation Department); Paul Colburn (Recycling Center)

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Pschirrer called this Staff Meeting to order at 5:05 PM in the Walpole Town Hall. She advised this meeting is being recorded. Rich Kreissle is absent as he is attending a seminar.

Mrs. Pschirrer reminded everyone that Town Meeting is Saturday, March 17th at 1:00 PM and they would like the staff to attend. We hope the proposed budget goes through quickly. However, we have to be prepared to answer any questions that might come up. Mr. Kreissle has been working with department managers to reconcile sick time, personal days, etc. The Selectboard discovered there have been misinterpretations of the personnel policy regarding vacation time. They are now working with an employment lawyer to rewrite those sections so they will be clear. They are not going back but will start with where we are at now. They will start to mandate that people use their vacation time. Employees need vacation time to maintain good health and take some time away from their jobs. Employees have not been asking the Selectboard for permission to carry-over this time. This will be re-written and new pages issued in the next month or two. As of January 2019, all employees will have this as their anniversary date. The Selectboard will work hard to balance all the figures. They have also been discussing and are concerned about comp time which employees accrue. They are going to work on a new policy for this as well. There are several options on this.

Highway Department: Mr. Rau announced it has been snowing and they have been fixing things. They had a little break the first part of March when they went to Westmoreland to help during the mud season. They will repay the favor. They have been doing some fabricating with the new loader. Mr. Dalessio hopes with the fabrication they are not doing anything when a certified welder is needed; not mission critical. Mr. Rau said they are not doing any welding with structures. Mr. Rau's truck had some problems so needed to be towed to S.G. Reed but it is running fine since it came back. Following is Mr. Rau's report for the period of February 15 to March 14, 2018:

- Serviced trucks and equipment;
- Did Cold Patching;
- Fabricated wing cart for loader;
- New hydraulic lines on Kubota;
- Air cans and batteries on Truck-3;
- Fixed mud hole on Crehore Road;
- Fabricated new trap door for Truck-2;
- Truck-5 towed to Reed's during snow storm;
- Posted roads on March 5, 2018;
- Changed plow blades on Truck-5, Truck-4 and Truck-7;
- Truck-3 to Reed's to replace leaf springs and heater;
- MSHA Training (safety training);

- Winter weather callouts were on:

February 18	February 22
February 25	February 26
March 2	March 5
March 7	March 8
March 9	March 23
March 24	

The Salt and Sand budget is okay. These will be refilled when they are at the lowest price. When plowing, he tries to let the crew go home for some rest even if it is only for three hours. Mrs. Pschirrer thanked Mr. Rau for representing the Town at the Department of Transportation (DOT) meeting on the Walpole-Charlestown Route 12 Project. Police Chief Paquette was unable to attend but talked to the project manager who advised they were going to go over a lot of river water sampling tests. They are looking for a location in North Walpole where they can do some testing. The North Walpole Commissioners are concerned about vibration and noise from the crusher during the project.

Library: Mrs. Fafara advised the library had to close a few days due to the snow storms. She provided the following March 2018 report. In addition Mrs. Fafara is keeping track of the scheduled hours they are open.

February 2017 Stats:

20 Days Open
135 Hours open
1136 Visits
1815 Circ
28 Programs
117 Kids
48 Teens
167 Adults
325 Website visitors

February 2017 Avg: 56 ppl & 91 circ/day
12 People per program

February 2018 Stats:

22 Days Open
131 Hours open
1271 Visits
2106 Circ
29 Programs
107 Kids
23 Teens
144 Adults
467 Website visitors

February 2018 Avg: 58 ppl & 96 circ/day
9 people per program

NHUPAC-State Inter Library Loan System has been down since mid-December and has been declared dead. The State Library was planning to get a new system in 2018 anyway, so the money is there. How this impacts Walpole: turnaround time for books we request from other libraries is 2-3 weeks instead of the normal 1-2 weeks. It also requires many more staff hours to process requests both from our patrons and for other libraries. A carrier system delivers and picks up books. There are 3 book clubs that meet at the library but there are another 9 or 10 book clubs in Town that use the library.

The presentation on Social Security at the library was postponed due to the snow storm on Tuesday. It's rescheduled for April 17th at 6:30 pm.

They had a program for kids to learn how to knit. A local knitter/story time mom ran the program for them and it was a huge hit. They originally had a class limited to 8 kids. With the instructor's permission, they had 12 girls participate. They each knit a hat over the course of the two-session class, one in February and one in March.

Fundraising for the expansion/renovation project is going well. They are more than halfway to their goal. They have ordered a banner that will hang out front of the library. It's a kind of thermometer to show

their fundraising progress, but it will be a stack of books. That should be hanging outside by the end of the month. Mrs. Pschirrer asked how much money is needed. Mrs. Fafara noted the project is anticipated to be about \$448,000; they have almost \$300,000. It might not include all the furniture they will need. Mr. Dalessio advised the moveable section should be in the design.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: Mrs. Sandy Smith provided the following report dated March 15, 2018: They have been very busy preparing for the Election and Town Meeting. The elections went well and now they have the Town Meeting to look forward to on Saturday at 1:00 PM. She hopes to see everyone there. There is a Primary Election in September and another election in November. They are a lot of work. Mrs. Smith had a “Bug” for six weeks, still doesn’t feel great but hasn’t come down with the flu!!

They have collected \$56,614.83 for autos and this also includes dog licenses of \$156.00 and a bad check fee of \$25.00. She called the customer and notified him that the check did not clear and he came in the same day with cash and made the check good. He is in good standing with their office. They will take checks from him in the future. She wishes all their customers would respond in that manner.

Their credit card option is being used and the customers are pleased to be able to use their card and pay the 2.95 percent convenience fee. If the fee is too large they decide to just write a check. The customers also love that they only have to write one check for auto registrations.

As Tax Collector, she sent certified notices of “Intent to Deed” the Deed date will be May 9th at 11 A.M. If not paid in full properties could be deeded to the Town. She has a dozen; only three have a mortgage. They hire a company to do a search of mortgagees and certified notices are sent to those companies also. She expects all will be paid in full before that date. The property owners pay all expenses for the notices and search. The Town has been collecting 18 percent interest on these properties.

They have collected \$104,350.67 since the last Staff Meeting. The interest amount was \$9,587.15. The Town does quite well with the interest that we collect.

She is preparing to send “Intent to Lien” notices; these also have to be sent certified. After she executes the lien, the interest jumps from 12 percent to 18 percent. The lien is recorded at the Cheshire County Register of Deeds office in Keene and can affect credit ratings when people apply for a loan. She has approximately 90 notices to prepare.

April will be very busy, as people will start to pay taxes when they receive these notices.

Hooper Institute: Ms. Becky Whippie provided the following report: Mrs. Eloise Clark is getting outside more than Ms. Whippie because she deals with older students. Ms. Whippie talked about winter mammal behavior. Local mammal track matching game. Explain use of NH Fish and Game Track Field guide. Passed out field guide copies to second and third graders. Played track detectives with the older students. Predator – Prey. Introduced carnivore, herbivore, and omnivore. Created a track story in first grade. Researched local mammal facts in the third grade. Next week they will talk about their individual mammals to share information.

Snow and Snowflakes: Explained how snowflakes are made. She has a book that explains there are six points on every snowflake. They made a paper snowflake.

Second Grade: Farming – different types of farms. Domestic animal needs, dairy cow breeds, and cattle terms.

Pre-K: Senses on the farm. Set up a farm themed play table for the classroom with dried beans, peas, rice and corn. For a week or two they will play with farm toys.

Fourth Grade: Forest Design: Discuss native trees and plants and the benefits to native fauna. She asks the students to design a forest layout, identify tree species in their design. Native plants benefit native animals. They will add other native plants to forest design researching a NH plant list and they tried to insert other plants/flowers. Count number of white pine trees in their forest, estimate value of trees if harvested. Count Sugar Maple trees in forests and estimate possible maple syrup yield. Carved a wooden sumac spike for tapping a sugar maple tree.

Sugaring Season: Pre-K and kindergarten have been involved. They talked about frozen nights and thawing days and Sugar Maple trees. Where in the world do people make maple sugar, temperature affects it, tap a Sugar Maple tree and taste sap. Explain whole sugaring process. Taste sugar maple syrup.

On Wednesday, March 21st at 6:30 PM there will be a Gardening Workshop at the Library.

Mrs. Pschirrer had a question about climate change. She has been reading about wood-burning and environmental impact with the smoke. Should they encourage people to replant trees? Ms. Whippie's answer was they do not have to replant all those trees as they regenerate quickly. She was not sure about all the tree species wise but provided some information on climate change.

Recreation Department: Mr. Cassarino provided a report dated March 15, 2018.

Pool:

- Reached out to past employees to see who is returning;
- Charlestown employees have reached out because their pool might not be opening this season;

Tennis:

- Committee agreed to purchase a backboard for the park;
- Trying to find one through a different company. The one that they wanted was \$6,000.00. He found some for cheaper.

Spring Clinics:

- Will be running a spring soccer and basketball clinic;
- Josh Beer and George Tsitsonis will run a soccer clinic while Mr. Cassarino will be running the basketball clinic.
- All participants will receive a ball and t-shirt.

Adult Leagues:

- Looking into starting adult leagues over the summer;
- People have been asking for this.

Selectboard Office: Mrs. Downing provided the Staff Meeting Report, dated March 15, 2018.

Assessing Update:

- The cut-off date for abatement applications was March 1st.
- Over 40 properties have requested an abatement.
- Due to the higher volume of requests, Avitar's response time will be longer than requests submitted earlier in the year.
- Veterans Tax Credit, Elderly and Blind Exemption application forms will be accepted up through April 15th.

Water and Sewer:

- As of 3/8/18, seventy-five percent of the total amount owed by users has been paid as of today.
- Thirty and 90-day notices were mailed to users with outstanding amounts on 3/6/18.

- Water and Sewer Intent to Lien Notices are being processed by the Tax Collector.
- The next quarterly billing will occur at the end of April this year.

Town Hall Facilities:

- Town Meeting set-up will be occurring later in the week.
- The Town Meeting starts at 1pm on 3/17/18. There will be cake at the end of the meeting. The Walpole Grange will be selling hot dogs as well as other food items.

Human Resources:

- Town of Walpole Dental Plan: A new coordinator will be handling dental claims.
- The Town remains self-insured for this employee benefit which is less costly than other dental insurance options.
- Plan overview sheets for employees will be distributed to managers at this meeting.

Wellness

- A free webinar on “Budgeting and Personal Finances” is available to all Town of Walpole employees and to appointed/elected officials through the Life Resources Program (see flyer for more information).

Recycling Center: Mr. Paul Colburn submitted the following reports:

Mr. Colburn reviewed the “Daily Weight Report and 3 Year to Date Comparison”; it is up a little bit over February last year. This has to do with the material that come into the Center. Weather plays an important part of their operation. February is usually a slow month. His second report is the “3 Year Comparison to Recyclables”. Financially they are slightly up over last year. They borrowed the backhoe from the Highway Department as it was needed to process their C & D materials. They had a big load of metal from a local business. Other commercial entities plus the schools come into the Center on a regular basis. They recently shipped out loads of cardboard and C & D. Banana boxes were given out. Today Kevin and he went to a Cheshire County meeting of other recycling centers. They learn about what is going on in other towns. The annual Department of Environmental Services (DES) report was sent in; Mrs. Downing has a copy. The last Saturday in April will be the Walpole Clean-up Day. Kevin and Greg will be going to the Fire Extinguisher class. Ms. Mayberry noticed the returnables are up about 40% over last year. Is there a reason? Mr. Colburn said it is a number of reasons; there are more bottles, cans and glass that are returnables. Some are \$.15 each.

Police Department: Police Chief Michael Paquette distributed copies of their monthly report for the period of February 15, 2018 to March 14, 2018. Their total number of calls for service was 342.

Following is the break-down: The numbers are up a little since last month.

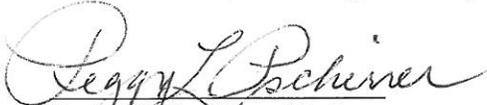
- Public Safety Calls:
Emergency Calls – 27 Administrative – 70 Citizen Assists – 30
- Motor Vehicle Calls:
Accidents – 10 MV Stops – 123 Traffic Safety – 20
- Criminal Investigations:
Drugs/Alcohol – 26 Crimes Against a Person – 14 Crimes Against Property -22

People have been calling about the newest scams. For example: People are getting calls and thinking that their relative needs money because they have been arrested; sometimes they send money or gift cards. They have had domestic calls and made arrests. Crashes are up because people are going too fast for the conditions. The officers are kept busy. The flagging for the Route 12 construction project is coming up. They will be taking some training classes on bringing them up-to-date. Taking a refresher class every four years is a requirement of the State of NH. On the big Route 12 Project, they might not be doing flagging but are there to enforce safety. Officer Wendy Rawlings completed the DARE Program. Officer Mike Tollett also does the DARE Program. They are looking at enhancing this program by going into

other grades. Lt. Justin Sanctuary is working with the school district on their safety planning. Chief Paquette is prepared to talk about the Police Department Warrant Articles at Town Meeting. Mrs. Pschirrer is grateful that the Police Department had a cruiser on Main Street recently and it was good to see that a vehicle had been stopped.

Adjournment: Mrs. Pschirrer thanked everybody for their time and hard work. She closed this Staff Meeting at 6:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Regina Borden, Recording Secretary


Peggy L. Pschirrer, Chair


Steven Dalessio


Cheryl Mayberry

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the March 22, 2018, Selectboard meeting.)