

**TOWN OF WALPOLE
STAFF MEETING
OCTOBER 18, 2018**

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

Staff Present: Sarah Downing (Manager of Administration); Rich Kreissle (Manager of Finance); Chief Michael Paquette and Lt. Justin Sanctuary (Police Department); Michael Rau (Road Agent); Sandra Smith (Town Clerk-Tax Collector); Justine Fafara (Librarian); Paul Colburn (Recycling Center Director); Rebecca Whippie (Hooper Institute)

Excused: Justin Cassarino (Recreation Department Director)

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Pschirrer called this Staff Meeting to order at 5:00 PM in the Walpole Town Hall. She advised this meeting is being recorded.

Mrs. Pschirrer thanked everybody for turning in their reports. She appreciates that. They all look at them. It gives everyone a good sense of what is happening in the Town and in the departments. She asked Sandy to give us an overview of how we handle property tax bills.

Town Clerk-Tax Collector: Mrs. Smith submitted a report on property taxes, dated October 2018. They send the first bills the end of May. According to State law, the Collectors should receive their tax warrants by May 15th. They have 30 days to mail out bills. These dates are determined years ago when things were done by hand instead of computers! She usually has the bills printed and mailed in three to five days. These taxes are due on or before July 1st. These first bills are approximately ½ of the previous year's total bill. Sarah and the Board have been great in getting everything out on time.

The second billing is always a problem; this time of the year. Ideally they would receive the Warrant the middle of October and have the bills mailed before Halloween. But, the problem is that the DRA (Department of Revenue Administration) has to set a tax rate for each town. In order to achieve this goal, the County, School, Fire Departments, North Walpole and the Town all have to have their reports sent to the DRA in a timely manner. The first towns to send in their correct work are the first towns to receive their rates! These reports are reviewed by the DRA and if anything is not correct, it holds up the setting of the tax rate. The DRA determines a preliminary rate which the Selectboard reviews. Then the town receives the final rate.

The Selectboard's Office prints the Warrant. The Selectboard signs the Warrant.

When she receives the Warrant, then she can begin printing the tax bills, stuff the bill and finally mail the bills. This is a large project for all of us!

They also have to reply to the mortgage companies and tax services such as CoreLogic. They send them print outs of the properties that they service. They fill in the amounts due, mail and fax back to them. She tries to do this as quickly as possible to encourage prompt payments! However they usually wait until closer to the due date.

When they receive the checks, there can be all types of errors, regarding map and lot numbers, change of ownership, etc. refunds may be needed or additional funds needed to pay the bills.

Bills are returned due to a change of address that the property owner "forgot" to send them.

If the due date was December 1st, they would have a month to work on problems. They have over payments and under payments, checks received without map and lot numbers, addresses or names of the owners. Some tax services outsource their work to India – trying to understand them with her hearing problem can be stressful!

Her books have to be in balance by December 31st. When taxes are not due until December 21st or 23rd, etc. you can see that December is a terrible month for their office.

Another time they might tell us about the lien process and all the problems that come with that!

Mrs. Pschirrer noted that if the bills do not go out in a timely fashion, the Town does not receive payments in a timely fashion. Then we have no money to pay the Town's bills. At this point we do not have a tax rate, do not know when the tax bills will go out and we have to give everybody 30 days. This week the Town received a tax bill from the Cheshire County Commissioners that we have to pay by December 17th in the amount of \$1,721,171. We hand deliver this check because if they do not get it on time, the interest rates are horrific. That is why it is important to start collecting tax money on December 1st. Since it doesn't look like we will be able to do this, Mr. Kreissle will have to balance things very carefully. This week we are sending a monthly check to the Fall Mountain Regional School District in the amount of \$560,964. We will not be able to pay this in December if we do not start collecting tax money. Sandy plays an important role in this Town collecting taxes so the Town can pay its bills that includes salaries. She does a time consuming, meticulous job collecting property taxes. North Walpole sends in their own tax information; they pay a slightly higher tax rate than Walpole. Mr. Kreissle checks the website once or twice a day to make sure the DRA has all the information to set the tax rate. The Town will have to borrow money if they do not have enough to pay the Cheshire County tax bill; they do not like to do that because it costs money. It is quite a process. Mrs. Pschirrer thanked Mrs. Smith for all she does. Property Taxes is only one service they do as they also register vehicles, etc.

Hooper Institute: Mrs. Pschirrer advised they asked Mrs. Becky Whippie to tell us about how their work changes with the weather. The Institute shifts gears when the weather changes for the types of programs they work with in the schools.

Mrs. Whippie said if they are running out of things to do outside, they move inside. Students know if it is a good day to go out they should bring their sneakers and be ready to bundle up. They do not always go out; it depends on weather conditions. She expects they will be in the garden later this year unless there is snow. If there is snow, it shuts down garden activity 100%. She is hoping for a load of wood chips before too long. The kids will bundle up and put them down. They bring as much as they can outside inside. In the past, she brought evergreen activities inside. They talk about how to identify them and talk about the leaves and needles; they talk about all the evergreen parts. They talk about what kinds they would find in the forest, in their yard or maybe on the Common. They also play games about the evergreens. In the winter time she talks about mammals and their behavior, how they migrate, are they active all the time, what are they looking for food, looking for their shelters. They have a lot of fun with tracking. Sometimes the snow works in their favor but sometimes it does not. It is not safe to get the students outside if it is windy or icy because it is not safe. She is looking for a little bit of snow for good tracking but then a sunny day. Sometimes she is in the middle of something else but if the weather is good, she just goes outside. In one class she does a farm unit because they do not have farm animals at the school. This lasts for several weeks. They talk about the different types of farms; how different are dairy animals, chickens and apple orchards and she brings the sugaring into their discussion probably in March. They tie it all together for the area. She drives around and takes pictures of different areas; sometimes the students say "oh, I know where that is". She explains that Walpole is rich in farms. We are fortunate to have such a variety of farms. This is a fun unit in the second grade. In the winter time

with the fourth grade she tries to get them out to see different farms; between 6 and 8 during the school year. They generate questions before they go. When they get back they do a presentation to the other class and then they get to visit the farms. Both classes get to ask questions wherever they are going. In the younger classes there is a lot of mammal play, they create a track story and talk about predators. They identify the mammals that live here, what they eat. They create patterns of tracks in the snow. They try to take everybody out to do tracking. Then it is sugaring season and they can start to do things in the garden. Mrs. Pschirrer mentioned all these programs sound exciting. Maybe she should give us all a day of tracking? Mrs. Pschirrer asked if she had a discussion on the abundance of squirrels and mice, other rodents. Mrs. Whippie said they had the first catastrophe in their garden this year at both locations. They had corn growing and was at the Primary School when she first noticed something was eating their corn. After some time, she actually saw the squirrels eating the corn right off the cobs. The popcorn growing in the North Walpole School was a lovely crop of corn but on a Monday morning she discovered the squirrels had taken cobs and all. There was a discussion relative to the abundance of squirrels and there will be an abundance of mice this winter. Mrs. Pschirrer thanked Mrs. Whippie for her presentation.

Budgets: Mrs. Pschirrer talked about the budgets. They all turned their budgets in on time and stuck to a flat budget. She asked that the Department Managers look at their budgets carefully and decide what they can reduce. The health insurance is going up 10-1/2%. Last year it went down. Mr. Dalessio explained the Town is a part of a large pool; depending on experience, the rates could go up or down. Mr. Kreissle has been working on how this will impact each and every one. Mrs. Pschirrer said some costs are locked in like the retirement. After looking over their budgets, she asked Department Managers to please come back to the Selectboard with their recommendations on what they can reduce by the beginning of November. They will meet with individual managers in the beginning of December, no later than the second week. The bill from the Cheshire County Commissioners will probably be higher next year because it will begin to show the impact of the nursing home renovations. Mr. Peter Graves had told them to plan on an extra \$50.00/person increase. That is a huge amount and we have no control over it.

There will be no Staff Meeting in November because that week at least two Selectboard members will be attending the NH Municipal Association conference. They will be back in time for the regular Selectboard meeting time but not earlier. There will be a meeting in December.

Mrs. Pschirrer hopes to see all the employees here on November 2nd because at 1:00 pm we will be having a training session that will last two hours. Lt. Sanctuary is involved in this. It is an emergency training and will involve active shooter scenes. We hope to not ever have an active shooter situation in this Town but if we do we need to be prepared. They are occurring across the country. The emergency training came out of the unfortunate accident with Mr. Ken Thompson of the Highway Department.

Mr. Dalessio reported that on November 2nd there is a “Meet the Candidates” night. It is sponsored by the Grange and will be here in the Town Hall at 7:00 PM.

Mrs. Pschirrer mentioned that Election Day is on Tuesday, November 6th. The Library is having a Tea on November 11th to help them raise money.

Mrs. Fafara advised their fundraising is going very well. In the last couple of weeks they received two very generous donations. They are about \$20,000 from reaching their goal. The goal is to start construction in May 2019. Mrs. Pschirrer asked if they have thought about their books and handling the normal functions of the library during construction. Mrs. Fafara said they are not too worried about the older books because almost everybody wants the newer books. They will keep the front room open.

When boxing books, they need a dry place to store the books. The Selectboard feel the Town Hall on the second floor is a good option. They will have to be completely shut down for two weeks. There was discussion about how they are handling the mold problem.

Mr. Colburn reported that their new baler will be arriving next week. Ms. Mayberry said training is next Friday at 7:00 AM. Mr. Colburn wanted to thank the Highway Department for giving them a new asphalt entrance. Mr. Rau said it came out pretty good.

Mrs. Pschirrer advised the Selectboard is working on a Brownfields Program. These two small properties are next to the parking lot behind the Mascoma Bank. They are highly contaminated. Westberg Central Plating was in there and the family is anxious to have the Town buy them. The Town is interested in buying them if they can have some security that the Town will be held harmless from liability in the future. They are prepared to sign these applications tonight. They are going through negotiations with the Westberg family for a Purchase and Sale agreement. The EPA has federal monies available through grants; 20% of the grant has to be matched. This is a part of the negotiations with the Westberg family.

Mrs. Pschirrer noted the Town has been trying to fix the Old Alstead Center Road. They have been working with the DES for about 2-1/2 years. One issue is we have to build a fish ladder because we are close to the Cold River. We were supposed to have it done by October 1st but that was not possible. Therefore, we are asking for permission to do the culvert but wait until spring to do the fish ladder. We are concerned because heavy trucks go over that road and the culvert might collapse.

Highway Department: Mr. Rau submitted the following report dated 9/20/18 to 10/17/18.

- Serviced trucks and equipment;
- Did Cold patching;
- Cleaned Catch Basins;
- Roadside mowing and lawn maintenance;
- Helped Chesterfield with trucking;
- Prepared trucks for State inspection;
- Paved Transfer Station entrance;
- Paved in cuts;
- Cut back brush;
- Fixed washouts on High Street and N. River Road;
- Met with 3 Sales Reps for quotes on a new truck body;
- Foundation for new garage / quote for garage construction;
- Delivered roller to Westmoreland.

Selectboard Office: Mrs. Downing submitted the following report dated October 17, 2018:

Assessing Update:

- The 2018 tax rate is pending. Once this is set, the fall tax warrant will be processed as quickly as possible.
- Representatives from Avitar Associates of New England are visiting properties as part of the ongoing revaluation project that will be completed in 2022. Per the 5 Year Assessor's Agreement, twenty-five percent (25%) of the Town's parcels will be verified with measuring and listing (interior inspection) over the next 4 years.
- For homeowners who are not available during the initial visit, a door hanger shall be left as a notification that the property was visited. A follow-up letter with more information on when and how to schedule an interior inspection will be sent from Avitar.

- It is recommended that property owners review tax cards on an annual basis to ensure accuracy. Contact the Selectboard Office with questions or for assistance.

Water and Sewer:

- Third quarter meter readings are almost complete. Invoices will be posted on or by October 31st.

Town Hall Facilities:

- The Selectboard Office is pleased to announce that a new part-time custodian has been hired. Brad Nash is working every morning at the Town Hall and part-time in the afternoons at the Bridge and North Walpole Libraries.
- This position will become a full-time position in 2019 with additional municipal buildings to be cleaned on a weekly basis.
- The Town Hall is heavily booked with multiple civic group and board meetings, weddings, fundraising events, and local non-profit events i.e. art shows and Historical Society presentations. We are very happy to have a custodian to help keep the Town Hall looking its best during this time of heavy use.

Website:

- Future updates with minute and agenda postings, edits and new material will be occurring in the near future. Ben Kathan, a highly recommended Fall Mt. High School Senior, has agreed to handle the weekly updating of the site.

Employee Wellness:

- “An Apple a Day” fruit baskets were created for each Town Department. A variety of popular and heirloom eating apples and pears from Alyson’s Orchard were purchased with funds provided by HealthTrust for wellness initiatives.
- Due to the high level of positive response from employees, the baskets were refilled for a second distribution of local apples and pears.

Employment Opportunities with the Town:

- The Manager of Recycling and the Transfer Station position is accepting applications. Paul Colburn, the current manager, will be retiring in December of 2018.
- The Recycling Department also has an open part-time Office Assistant/Recycling Attendant position. This position will become full-time in 2019.
- Both job descriptions and an employment application form can be found on the Town of Walpole, NH website.

Town Employee Training:

- On Friday, Nov. 2nd starting at 1pm, all Town employees are encouraged to attend Emergency Preparedness and Active Shooter Training at the Town Hall.
- Much thanks to Asst. Fire Chief Mark Houghton and Police Lt. Justin Sanctuary for volunteering to deliver this training.

Walpole Town Library: Mrs. Justine Fafara submitted the Walpole Town Library October 2018 Report: The report includes numbers for the “Days Open” and “Hours Open”, etc. for September 2018 and September 2017.

A new group of homeschooling families have started meeting at the library. They usually have 15 and 25 people and are conducting their own book club discussions.

Mrs. Fafara attended a meeting in September with their sales reps from Overdrive about changes coming to the pricing structure of some publishers’ content. Another publisher is moving from the “purchase to own” model to the “leasing” model, which means we get much fewer check cuts for around the same cost.

They have two new substitutes working at the library; Lil DeCoste & Beth Colley. Both have been wonderful new additions to the team.

Julie is once again conducting story time outreach at the Walpole Village School. She goes down to the school once a month with the bubble machine and some books to read. The kids at the school teach her a new song each month that she then teaches at Wiggle Time and Story Time here at the library.

Police Department: Chief Paquette submitted the following report for the period of September 16, 2018 to October 15, 2018. Calls for service were 453.

Public Safety Comparison:

Emergency – 38	Administrative – 89	Citizen Assists – 47
Motor Vehicle Calls:		
Accidents – 14	MV Stops – 141	Traffic Safety - 17
Criminal Investigations:		
Drugs/Alcohol – 32	Crimes Against Persons – 50	Crimes Against Property -25

Total Monthly Calls for Service: Aug – Sept 566 Sept – Oct 453

Recycling Center: Mr. Paul Colburn submitted the following documents: Recycling Revenues Monthly Report as of October 17, 2018. The categories were listed. Their Budget is \$173,300.00 – the Actual Revenues To-Date is \$128,506.59. The “Daily Weight Report and 3 Year to Date Comparison” and the “3 Year Comparisons to Recyclables” were distributed. The Recycling Center is doing very well. Mr. Colburn thanked Mr. Rau and the Highway Department for paving the entrance.

Finance Department: Mr. Kreissle provided financial information for the period ending October 17, 2018.

Recreation Department: Mr. Justin Cassarino was not present but submitted a report dated Thursday, October 18, 2018.

Park:

- Have been in contact with multiple companies to receive quotes on basketball/pickleball court and siding for the pool house.

North Walpole Park:

- Lights are being put up;
- A new sign is being delivered;
 - Location is being discussed at the next meeting;
 - Group wants to keep the old sign because a scout made it for his project.
- Discussing the tree lighting date.

Soccer

- Season is going great;
- Player participated in “Walpole Night” at a Varsity FM Boys soccer game
 - Players were introduced and played a mini game at halftime;
- Will be meeting with coaches at the end of the season to see if there are any recommendations to improve our league;
 - Suggested by other local Coordinators to shrink our league because of how parents/coaches have been acting in other towns that participate in our league.

Basketball:

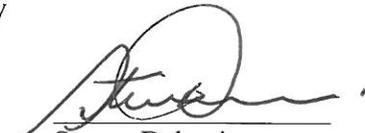
- Worried that we will not have a 5/6 team for both boys and girls because of class sizes and middle school team adding 5th graders to their school team;
- Reaching out to find other local companies to sponsor our teams
A few companies reached out to me asking if they could do a team because they saw how the soccer uniforms turned out.
- Still working on developing a league or camp for our younger players at North Walpole School
Use smaller hoops that the school would supply.

Mrs. Pschirrer thanked everyone for attending. She will be away for a week. They hope to hear from the department managers about if their budget has any “wiggle” room.

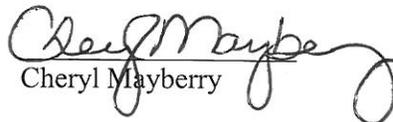
ADJOURNMENT: Mrs. Pschirrer declared this meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.

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 November 01, 2018, Selectboard meeting.)