

**TOWN OF WALPOLE
STAFF MEETING
DECEMBER 20, 2018**

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

Staff Present: Sarah Downing (Manager of Administration); Rich Kreissle (Manager of Finance); Justin Cassarino (Recreation Department Director) Chief Michael Paquette (Police Chief); Paul Clark (Highway Department); Justine Fafara (Librarian); Paul Colburn and Benjamin Hoy (Recycling Department); Eloise Clark (Hooper Institute Director)

Excused: Mike Rau (Road Agent) and Sandra Smith (Town Clerk and Tax Collector)

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 welcomed Ben Hoy, who will be the new director of the Recycling Center. The group will be saying farewell to Paul Colburn who is retiring after 13 years of service to the Town. There is a celebratory cake in honor of Paul's retirement.

For this meeting, the format will be changed. Mrs. Pschirrer asked the group what their challenges were for this past year and what would be the challenges in 2019.

Recycling Department: Mrs. Pschirrer asked if Paul Colburn could tell the group what would be different for him and the department in 2019. Mr. Colburn thanked Mrs. Pschirrer for the cake. The biggest difficulty that the department experienced last year and will be experiencing this coming year and most likely years to come is going to be markets. There was a downturn several years ago. This situation is not going to change overnight. There are going to be issues of pipeline, with demand being low and supply being high. Mixed paper has low demand and brings low to no revenue. On a positive note, Walpole has low volume for this type of recyclable. The big commodity is cardboard which Walpole does have in supply. Mr. Colburn hopes to have a contract in place by the end of the year for cardboard. Mr. Colburn predicts there will be changes in markets. The new baler will be helpful with meeting new market demands.

Mr. Hoy thought his new challenge would be getting to know and accommodate the public and staff members. He is soaking in all the new information about the Recycling Center. He thanked the Board for his new job. It is very exciting to be part of the Town of Walpole.

Mrs. Pschirrer asked Mr. Colburn what his future plans were. Mr. Colburn is going to expand his home this coming summer with the help of a carpenter friend. And, he's going to build a pick-up truck from the ground-up. Mr. Colburn also plans on traveling to Iceland sometime soon.

Mr. Dalessio commented that Ben Hoy will be a good asset to the Town and we shall progress forward.

Recreation Department: Mrs. Pschirrer asked Mr. Justin Cassarino how things went for him this year. Mr. Cassarino said they had a very, very good year. There were a lot of new programs. A lot of people enjoying the pool. Adult Nights were a huge success. The challenges were that people want improvements very quickly and all at once. Unfortunately, it's not easy to accomplish this. Mr. Cassarino is hoping that improvements can start small and then build. Mr. Cassarino explained pickleball. It is similar to tennis with smaller paddles and nets. It's a very popular game and there is a demand for courts. Other upcoming family events include the Daddy and Me Dance and the Mommy and Me Movie Night. Sponsorships with local business are being developed. Mrs. Pschirrer and Mr. Delessio agreed that

demand for programming is growing quickly. Mr. Dalessio felt the numbers supports investment. Mr. Cassarino agreed with Mrs. Pschirrer that the Recreation Committee is very supportive and involved.

Police Department: Chief Paquette thanked Mr. Colburn for his years of service to the Town. He felt that Recycling Center had improved with professionalizing several areas. Chief Paquette felt that Mr. Hoy will now help move the Recycling Center to another level of improvement.

The biggest challenge in the past year for the Police Department was obtaining their new hire. It took 18 months to find an officer. Then the recruit had to graduate from the academy. Following this is field training (FTO) with seasoned officers. The new officer must learn how to deal with people. There are several hundred items that an officer must demonstrate proficiency in order to work independently. It is a very demanding schedule for the supervisor with planning, documentation and follow-up. This created challenges for scheduling group firearm and strike strip trainings.

It's been a busy year with over 200 arrests this past year which is the highest yearly recorded amount for Walpole. There is a tremendous amount of paperwork that goes with processing arrests.

Mrs. Pschirrer wondered since the drug epidemic is highlighted in the media, were there any deaths due to drug overdoses in Walpole over the past year. Chief Paquette said there were several overdoses. State statistics are showing a decline in drug related deaths due the use of Narcan. There had been 3 deaths over an 18-month period. There are additional deaths that are under investigation. Mr. Dalessio and Chief Paquette agreed it takes many man hours conducting these investigations. Chief Paquette explained how the court process can be challenging with submitting paperwork.

Mr. Dalessio asked if drugs and alcohol continue to be the largest problem. Chief Paquette said it was drugs with less issues dealing with alcohol. There has been a spike in juvenile and child abuse issues along with embezzlement cases this year. Everything larger cities deal with, the local police deal with in a smaller volume.

Mrs. Pschirrer asked Chief Paquette if we should expect to see these trends continue into 2019. He agreed that the drug issues will continue with many of the stops being "pass-throughs" which are vehicles driving through Walpole on their way to some other destination. The police train many hours in order to be prepared for that one moment when they may need to take action. Chief Paquette thanked the Board for allowing the Police Department the time to train.

Highway Department: Mrs. Pschirrer asked Mr. Paul Clark what challenges the Highway Department experienced. Mr. Clark felt that the challenge was providing safety for highway workers. Mr. Clark referenced that accident in which Ken Thompson was seriously hurt. The Highway Department was doing everything right and it was an uncontrollable situation. Changes have been made with new LED signs which have received positive comment from the public. Another change has been the use of cones and one-way road signs instead of flaggers. Drivers are slowing down since they must think of what to do in these situations. There are still drivers going too fast. However, the group is watching each others' backs to make sure they're safe.

Mr. Dalessio mention that new headgear is now available that allows a flagger to hit a button to send a vibration to the ear muffs of coworkers' headgear to warn them of possible danger. Mr. Clark told of another incident where the flaggers were ignored on Main Street in North Walpole.

Mrs. Pschirrer gave an update regarding Ken Thompson's recovery from the accident that occurred in late August. Mr. Thompson recently stopped by to visit the Highway and Police Departments. It will be some

time before Mr. Thompson can return to work due to his multiple injuries. Sick Pool Leave was discussed with how to donate additional time.

Hooper Institute: Mrs. Eloise Clark reported that the Institute had a great year. The challenge in the past year had been the shifting population in the High School Program. There will be adjustments made in the coming year. The challenge for 2019 will be rebuilding the Hooper Institute Committee. There has been some attrition and new members are needed. Mrs. Pschirrer agreed that students' interests are changing. Mrs. Clark stated that students have limitations on where and when they are willing to work.

Library: Mrs. Pschirrer commented that the Library had an exciting year. Mrs. Fafara reported that they had reached their fundraising goal. The challenge was keeping everyone engaged. The challenge for the upcoming year is going to be the construction to renovate the library. Mrs. Pschirrer explained how the library is an independent institute with payroll being the one item that the Town administers. Mrs. Pschirrer asked Mrs. Fafara how much money was raised. Mrs. Fafara said that \$450,000 was raised in the past year. Another opportunity came up which was to add movable stack shelving on a rail system that would hold a majority of the Library's books. This system would make the library more handicapped accessible since the shelving can be moved. It also increases the capacity of books that can be stored. They are applying for a number of grants to fund the purchase. Mr. Dalessio agreed with Mrs. Fafara that "it will happen".

Finance: Mr. Kreissle said that on a broad perspective, helping managers with understanding how certain events will affect their budget and how it will show in a budget has been a challenge. The compromised general fund account in July and resolving that issue was also a challenge. It's taken several months of follow-up to settle. More recently, due to the delay setting a tax rate, the challenge has been cash management in order to pay the \$1.7 million Cheshire County tax bill. The bill was approximately \$300,000 more than last year. When the Town has excess funds, they are swept into PDIP. Although the Town could have tapped PDIP funds to pay the county tax bill, by using cash management, the Town was able to keep funds in PDIP which creates interest revenue for the Town. Another challenge will be the updating of the AccuFund program which will change how W2s and 1099 forms are produced. In 2019, another change will be the adding of a benefit time module to AccuFund. Mr. Kreissle said that the hiring of Mrs. Jodi Daigle, the Water and Sewer Clerk, has been beneficial since prompt, quarterly water and sewer payments help with meeting monthly payment obligations for the Town. Mrs. Daigle also recently assisted Mr. Kreissle with processing payables. There had been software issues with his computer. It was a learning experience for both of them.

Selectboard Office: Per Mrs. Downing, one area of change was increased property tax abatement requests. It took many months to respond to all the requests which were four times more than the prior year. This area may be a challenge in 2019 since several early requests have been submitted which is unusual. There were challenges in July with the General Fund compromise, along with modem and business line phone issues. At this time, we also lost our long-time custodian Gerry Brady, who is missed. The current challenge is being the recording secretary while Regina Borden is on medical leave. On a positive note, Brad Nash will become a full-time custodian in 2019. His job responsibilities will include cleaning office spaces and bathrooms at the Police Department and the Recycling Center.

Water and Sewer: Mr. Dalessio chimed in that the Water and Sewer Department has turned completely around from 2 years ago where the department was losing money, to having over \$100,000 surplus in that fund. There is over a \$300,000 surplus in water funding. We are heading the right direction. Mr. Dalessio thanked the field operations crew, Jodi, Rich, Sarah, himself and everyone involved with turning these funds around. Mrs. Pschirrer commented that all bond obligations are being met with the Bellows Falls

Waste Water Treatment Plant. Mr. Dalessio said the that Waste Water Agreement was finally signed off, after 12 years of discussions. The next challenge is creating a plan for moving the waste water line from under the Vilas Bridge in case the line should become compromised.

Cheryl Mayberry: As the liaison to the Recycling Department, Ms. Mayberry's challenge for this year is assisting with new leadership and employees at the Recycling Center. As discussed before, changes in the market place are a challenge. There will be a lot of learning ahead for all of us. Ms. Mayberry appreciated Paul Colburn's 13 years of service and the last two years she has worked with Mr. Colburn.

Peggy Pschirrer: There were several good things in the past year per Mrs. Pschirrer, one of which was July 2nd when the Hooper Property sold to local people. It has been a seven-year project. Mrs. Pschirrer has not visited the property in 4 months and is no longer making weekly trips to the property. It was a great relief when it was sold. There are several other pending property sales. The Walker Road Property will close in the near future. The local citizenry will be buying the land and transferring the property to the Town. The Conservation Commission will have the responsibility of shepherding that land. The land has access points to the Connecticut River. The other property the Town is buying is the Westberg Property, that was the Central Plating site. They are land-locked pieces of property. The Town is working on an EPA Grant for \$500,000 toward the cost of \$700,000 to clean up the property. The Westberg Estate and NHDES have also promised monies toward the clean-up. The property will become a town parking space. In fact, today it was very hard to find parking in downtown Walpole. Off-street parking is needed. Mrs. Pschirrer said that the DES is very supportive. We need to persuade the EPA that these grants are needed. Walpole may have wealthy individuals living here, but Walpole is not a wealthy town. Both Mr. Dalessio and Mrs. Pschirrer agreed that there are no pending lawsuits which is a positive for the Town. The Selectboard wished the group a happy holiday.

Recreation Department: Mr. Justin Cassarino submitted the following report dated December 20, 2018:
Basketball

- Four companies have sponsored our Rec teams
 - McGill Woodworks
 - State Farm – Craig Vickers
 - Beam Plumbing
 - Latham Electricity
- Teams have started practices and games
- Our skills and developmental programs are going great so far
 - This is new for kids in Pre-K to 2nd grade

Events

- Daddy and Me Dance
 - Speaking with local companies to help with flowers and treats
 - Speaking with a photographer and DJ for the event in February
- Mommy and Me Movie Night
 - Looking for deals on snacks for the movie theater experience
- Trivia Night
 - Because of the positive feedback, Trivia Night will be back on January 5th.
 - The adults who participated last time enjoyed it being 21+, so we will do this again.

Town Clerk-Tax Collector: Mrs. Sandra Smith submitted the following report dated December 19, 2018:

I HAVE BEEN VERY BUSY COLLECTING TAXES. DUE DATE IS TOMORROW!

COLLECTED TO DATE OF MY FALL WARRANT IS \$4,742,830.74 AND THE UNCOLLECTED IS \$1,254,575.26
TOMORROW SHOULD BE A VERY BUSY DAY.

EXCUSE THE “CAPS” BUT MY EYES ARE KILLING ME. SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME ON
THE COMPUTER.

WATER AND SEWER BILLS HAVE BEEN WARRANTED TO ME AND IF LEFT UNPAID WILL
ROLL OVER INTO MY TAX LIEN PROCESS. IF LIENS ARE NOT PAID IN FULL WITHIN 2
YEARS AND A DAY PROPERTY COULD BE DEEDED. JODI IS DOING A GREAT JOB WITH
WATER AND SEWER AND I APPRECIATE HER HELP.

WE HAVE COLLECTED \$11,173,434.54 TO DATE THIS INCLUDES ALL WARRANTS.

SARAH AND RICH ARE GREAT; WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON SOME OF THE
UNCOLLECTED PROBLEMS AND PROCESSING REFUNDS, ETC. IF PROPERTY OWNERS
WOULD UPDATE THEIR MAILING ADDRESSES IT WOULD SAVE US ALL TIME.

MOTOR VEHICLES HAVE COLLECTED APPROX. \$73,000.00 AND OVER \$18,000.00 FOR THE
STATE

SHORT REPORT, AS I HAVE TO KEY IN NEW TAX PAYMENTS. HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS
– SANDY

Selectboard Office: Mrs. Downing submitted the following report dated December 20, 2018:

- **Assessing Update**
 - Veteran Tax Credits and Elderly, Blind and Solar Energy System Tax Exemption applications are being accepted at the Selectboard Office. PA-29 forms must be submitted by April 15, 2019.
 - 2018 Property Tax Abatement applications are being accepted at the Selectboard Office. The deadline for submitting applications is March 1, 2019.
 - All application forms are available at the Town Hall or online at www.walpolenh.us
- **Water and Sewer**
 - On 12/14/18, overdue accounts for North Walpole Sewer and Walpole Water and Sewer were warranted to the Tax Collector. If they remain unpaid, they will be incorporated into the tax lien process.
- **Town Hall Facilities**
 - Thank you to Adam Terrell and Bill White for lighting up and decorating the gazebo on the Common. Additional thanks to the Cub Scouts for decorating the holiday tree on the gazebo.
 - Thank you to the Pinnacle View 4-H group for the greens basket that was given to the Selectboard Office.
 - The lighting fixtures in the Selectboard and Town Clerk/Tax Collectors Offices along with the restrooms in the Town Hall were updated to become LED based. This change will reduce Town Hall electricity usage while increasing the brightness of the lighting in each space.
- **Website**
 - The Town is searching for someone who would be available on a monthly basis to assist with website content updates such as uploading various board minutes.
- **Human Resources**
 - Several new employees have been hired to work at the Recycling Center and Transfer Station. The new hires include Benjamin Hoy, Manager; Shaena Hakey, attendant and Erica Sweeney, Office Assistant/Attendant.
 - Paul Colburn, the long-time Manager of Recycling Dept. is retiring at the end of Dec.
 - The municipal custodian will be a full-time position as of 1/01/19 with expanded cleaning and maintenance duties.

- **Employee Wellness**

- “A Fruit a Day” baskets were refilled with tropical fruits such as mandarin and navel oranges, grapefruit, and bananas along with nut packets for the week of Dec. 3rd. This wellness initiative, funded through a HealthTrust stipend, has received positive feedback from employees

Highway Department: Mr. Rau submitted the following report dated 11/15/18 to 12/19/18.

- Service trucks and equipment
- Cold patch
- Checked and cleaned catch basins
- Ditched dirt roads
- Pave in catch basins and drains
- Put out sand piles: N. Walpole, Walpole village, Christian Hollow, Valley Rd, Transfer Station.
- Unclog drain on Ash St.
- Ditched on Old Keene Rd, County Rd, Wentworth Rd
- Marked catch basin and culverts.
- Fixed ice spots in roads
- Winter Weather Call outs: 11/16, 11/19, 11/20, 11/25, 11/27, 12/2, 12/16, 12/17, and 12/18.

Walpole Town Library: Mrs. Justine Fafara submitted the Walpole Town Library December 2018

Report:

<u>Walpole</u>	<u>Nov. 2018</u>	<u>Nov. 2017</u>
Days Open	23	23
Hours Open	134	148
Hours Scheduled	134	148
Visits	1345	1350
Circulation	2131	1918
Overdrive Circulation	374	351
Wifi	47	33
# of Adult Programs	13	13
# of Adults attendees	126	162
# of Teen Programs	1	5
# of Teen attendees	4	49
# of kid/family programs	15	16
# of kid/family attendees	154	107
Website visits	335	522

<u>North Walpole</u>	<u>Nov. 2018</u>	<u>Nov. 2017</u>
Hours Open	24	25
Visits	50	71
Circulation	123	181
Computer Use	4	5

Big excitement is we've surpassed our fundraising goal of \$448,000. As of 12/20/2018 we've raised \$449,999.83 in cash and pledges.

The Library will be closed Monday the 24th, Tuesday the 25th and Tuesday January 1st. We'll also be closing early (5pm rather than 8pm) on Monday December 31st.

The Fundraising Committee is planning an open house to celebrate our fundraising success with the public on Saturday January 12th, 9am-1pm.

Police Department: Chief Paquette submitted the following report for the period of November 17, 2018 through December 15, 2018.

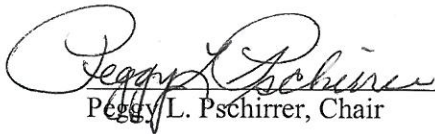
Calls for Service

Criminal Investigations – 72 at 25%, Public Safety - 118 at 43%, Motor Vehicles - 96 at 34%

- Total Motor Vehicle Calls for Service: 157 last month, 95 this month
- Total Public Safety Calls for Service: 149 last month, 118 this month
- Total Criminal Investigations Calls for Service: 59 last month, 72 this month
- Total Monthly Calls for Service: 365 last month (Oct-Nov.), 286 this month (Nov. – Dec.)

ADJOURNMENT: Mrs. Pschirrer declared this meeting adjourned at 6:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Downing, Recording Secretary Pro Tempore


Peggy L. Pschirrer, Chair


Steven Dalessio


Cheryl Mayberry

(**Note:** These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the January 10, 2019, Selectboard meeting.)