

**TOWN OF WALPOLE
STAFF MEETING
AUGUST 20, 2020**

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

Staff Present: Sarah Downing (Manager of Administration); Richard Kreissle (Administrator of Finance); Michael Paquette (Chief Police Department); Justin Sanctuary (Lt. Police Department); Michael Rau (Road Agent/Highway Department); Kraig Harlow (Recreation Director); Julie Rios (Library /Interim Co-Librarian).

Excused: Ben Hoy (Recycling Director); Sandra Smith (Town Clerk/Tax Collector); Helen Dalbeck (Hooper Institute Executive Director).

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

Mrs. Pschirrer pointed out that it is important we all speak up because we have masks on and it is difficult for Ms. Borden to hear us to document the meeting minutes and so the recorder will pick-up our conversations.

Mrs. Pschirrer mentioned that we have not met for a couple of months therefore she wanted to take a few minutes to find out how everybody is doing. She does not often see many of us. How are they personally getting along with this virus that we have been plagued with. Fortunately, none of us have contacted it. It affects what we do every day and how we do it. Everyone went around the room and gave a brief summary of their day-to-day challenges and how they are coping with them both at work and in their personal lives. Selectboard members also shared their experiences during this pandemic.

Mrs. Pschirrer mentioned we have been fortunate, as a Town, we have had low-to-no cases. A majority of people feel we have had nothing in Town. The Town has not had to furlough or dismiss any employees from the work force. We are in a good situation in this respect.

Walpole Library: Mrs. Julie Rios had submitted a written report for the period of August 1, 2020 through August 18, 2020.

“As of August 3, 2020 the library is open its regular hours with full access. Masks are required and patrons must sanitize their hands prior to entering the library. Curbside pickup is still available to those patrons who do not feel comfortable coming into the library. The North Walpole Branch remains closed.

Rose Werden, the North Walpole librarian since 1980, has retired. Cards may be sent to her in care of the Walpole Library, PO Box 487, Walpole, NH 03608. A committee has been formed and in the coming months public input will be gathered to explore the role of the North Walpole Branch.

The search for the new director is going well. Applications will be accepted through the end of August. The committee is actively screening applicants and interviews will start soon.

The staff at the library has stepped up wonderfully to fill Justine’s absence. Things are running smoothly. Staff have also been busy calling and emailing patrons to let them know the library is open and they can return the books they have kept safe for us for so long. Returned books must be quarantined for 4 full

days. The website has been updated and includes homeschool resources and a survey for families about how we can help them.

The Summer Reading Program was a great success despite the Covid-19. 96 people participated: 28 birth to 5 years, 21 6-13 years, 1 teen and 40 adults. The State of NH provided software for organizing the program online. Participants had reading goals and missions to earn raffle tickets towards weekly and end of program prizes. There were Take-Away Craft kits for kids each week.

The Library has partnered with Distant Hill Nature Trail on a Story Walk. Pages of a book are laminated and placed along the trail to read. Each page includes a silly transition from one page to the next (ex. Jump like a frog, sing a song, walk backwards). This program is so successful that they will continue with a new story every month for the foreseeable future.

The library does not have any current in-library programs due to Covid-19 but we are having Wiggle Time. Morning and Evening Story times outside. This has been a big hit. Families bring a blanket and they stay on that ‘island’.

The library has been in touch with the school library to see in what way they can help. At this time things are still up in the air but they know we are here and willing.

8-1-2020 through 8-17-2020 Statistics:

In-library patrons: 328

Book circulation: 641

Wiggle Time and Story Times attendance: 35 kids, 21 adults

Hoopla and Overdrive continue to be very popular.”

Mrs. Pschirrer recommended going out to the Distant Hill Nature Trail and to walk it. It is handicapped accessible. Mrs. Rios noted that their next door neighbor gave them permission to use his lawn, when needed, for Wiggle Time. The children are so happy to see other children.

Police Department: Police Chief Michael Paquette distributed copies of a graph prepared by Mrs. Clough on “Motor Vehicles May 15th – August 15th, 2020”. It provided information and was broken down for all motor vehicle issues. The State has not given them as many Grants to do radar safety patrols, etc. Mr. Dalessio requested they go back to the other format for the next meeting. Mrs. Pschirrer pointed out that motor vehicle work is a small percentage of the other work they do. Chief Paquette advised they have been dealing with assaults, domestic calls, criminal mischief, juvenile stuff that might increase with the start of school, drug issues, on-going investigations, etc. Burglaries are down probably because people are spending more time at home. About four days a week they are doing construction details including work for Consolidated Communications. A gate was installed at the pull-off area off Route 12 across from the Aubuchon store. In the past 900 lbs of trash was removed from this area by Mrs. Kara Dexter who took it to the Recycling Center. She is ready to go back to do another clean-up. He was aware of the complaint on the Common from Mr. Boas. All cruisers are up and running. They are trying to work out vacation times.

Administrator of Finance: Mr. Rich Kreissle had submitted a written report. He began with providing an up-date on the CARES Program.

GOFERR Covid-19 Expense Reimbursement Submission: Concord has added another submission period making October 15th the last time municipalities can submit reimbursement requests for Covid-19 related

expenses. This new submission period covers only costs incurred between September 16th to October 15th; any costs that predate September 15th will not be allowed on this last submission. He is working with Mr. Mark Houghton for any expenditures related to the Walpole Fire Department (WFD). He also contacted North Walpole for the same. Specifically, as it relates to the WFD, Elizabeth Gilboy of the NH Department of Safety – Homeland Security believes we should be able to include radios so we can have the Town Hall as an alternate emergency operating center. Estimated cost is \$6,000. The next deadline is September 15th. We are also planning on submitting a report for reimbursement for Town Hall cameras under the auspices of enhancing the town's ability for contact tracing.

The MS-434 is due to the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) on September 1st. This is one of the reports that assists the DRA in setting the town's tax rate. The report is an estimate of our revenues for the year. Due to Covid-19, he will be conservative in his completion of it to reflect the apparent impact of the pandemic.

It is budget time signaling the coming of a new year even though it's only September. He will be forwarding to you your worksheets and any additional information you request to assist you in formulating your budgets.

As always, he is available to address any concerns, questions or suggestions.”

2021 Budgets: Mrs. Pschirrer reported that they expect preliminary department budgets submitted to Mr. Kreissle by September 10th and they are requesting they all be level funded budgets. We had a good rate of collections for the Spring Tax Warrant this year. They know there will be increased costs from the County, the Schools and that the State will give the Town less money for highways next year. The Selectboard will be discussing the preliminary budgets that all departments turn in on September 14th. They will schedule the usual meeting in December when Department Heads will have the opportunity to request other items. There will be very little money for discretionary spending next year.

Highway Department: Mrs. Pschirrer advised they all know the beautiful results on Main Street. People are so happy that it was paved. Mr. Rau advised it came out better than he thought. It was done at a lower cost than they could have done it themselves. It took about 1-1/2 weeks to have it done as opposed to about a month for the Town crew to have done it and the Town saved money. Maple Street in North Walpole is still being done. It is taking longer than he estimated but new drainage is being put in. The old system / materials needed to be replaced. It is now being done the right way.

Mr. Rau had submitted a written report dated August 2020.

“Highway has been busy the past few months with their routine summer projects as well as vehicle/equipment maintenance. This year, their road paving project included reclaiming a portion of the Old Drewsville Road as well as milling Main Street. Portions of Main St, portions of Old Drewsville Road, Sand Hill Heights, Blanchard Brook Circle and Maple Street in North Walpole were then paved. They would like to thank the Police Department for their help with traffic control on these large projects, as it helps with safety precautions for crew members as well as motorists. It also helps cut down confusion of traffic flow. Crews have also been busy painting new and repainting old cross walks and parking areas in the village as well as in North Walpole.

Preparations for Tropical Storm Isaias began with cleaning out storm drains and catch basins. The Highway Department does not have anyone “on call” for emergency call outs. The process of having roads cleared of debris is having it reported. Typically, the Highway Department receives notice of debris

in the roadway by Fire Mutual Aid Dispatch or the local Fire Department. After any type of storm (wind/rain) roads are assessed and a prioritized list is made of damage and debris. Depending on the situation, certain equipment and safety measures are taken to complete the projects.

Lastly, they continue to have issues with the safety of their crews working near or in the roads. There are 70 miles of road in Walpole. Crews do the best of their ability to take safety precautions while working in the roads. Unfortunately, the occurrence of motorists not slowing or yielding for road work is very common.”

For display: Mr. Rau brought in a cone that had been dragged by a vehicle for a long distance. Mr. Dalessio advised they will make it a policy that when a crew is working in the Mountain View Drive area or a similar dangerous area they will have a traffic control officer at the site. Mrs. Pschirrer will write an article for the Clarion on Safety and Highways. They do not want to see anyone injured while working on the roads.

Recreation Department: Mr. Kraig Harlow had submitted a written report dated August 20, 2020.

Pool:

- They opened the pool on June 29th and the pool will close on August 28th, slightly longer season than previous years. This year due to COVID-19 they had to modify the hours and create a block scheduling. The pool hours were shorter and they created blocks of activity for lap swims, open swims and cleaning. Due to distancing requirements they did not offer swimming lessons.
- They also created 14 pods that were 10 ft. x 12 ft. to help with social distancing, each pod held a family of four and everyone needed to be from one household.
- The pool usage was down from previous years mostly due to limited capacity and having to sign up for a block of time.
 - They increased the unaccompanied age from 10 to 12 years old
 - Were busiest from 2:30pm to 4:00pm
 - Pool usage was highest during the mid-day block which was open to both resident and non-resident people.
- The pool’s lifeguards did a great job adapting to the new added restrictions.
- Thank you to Justin Cassarino who officially retired as Recreation Director on July 15th so that he could help us transition to open the pool under new COVID-19 guidelines.

Tennis:

- Walpole Men’s Tennis started back up in early July and have been playing through August. Matches begin at 9am Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- They had two companies, VT Tennis and Wilson & Lawrence came down this summer to look at the condition of the courts. They are finalizing their quotes to make minor repairs as needed.
- New Benches arrived July 2nd and were placed at the tennis court and basketball court.

Picnic Tables:

- They received the donation of the two picnic tables from Santa’s Workshop in Unity NH.
- The tables were delivered on July 11th by members of the North Walpole Fire Dept.
- Thank you to Steve Dalessio in being instrumental in building and donating the tables.

Basketball Clinics:

- They held 5 basketball clinics during the month of July. There was a great turnout.
- They had 25 total kids participate from surrounding areas and generated roughly \$700 in registration fees.
- Feedback from parents was really positive and they are hoping to schedule another one in the fall.

Soccer:

- They are prepping for a fall soccer season that will last 6 weeks from September 8th to October 18th made up of Walpole residents only.
- They are hoping to play one game and practice one day a week.
- Following week three if schools remain in session and COVID-19 numbers haven't drastically risen, games will continue. If numbers drastically rise they will either cancel the season or move to 2 practices a week.
- Thank you to Fall Mountain for allowing them to continue to use the soccer fields.

Community Events:

- Due to COVID-19 they have not had the ability to schedule any community events.
- If circumstances change in the near future, they plan on hosting events.”

Replying to a question about the Fall Soccer Program, Mr. Harlow noted the program could be shut down at any time due to COVID-19 and at the discretion of Walpole Recreation and the Town of Walpole. Registering is voluntary and are allowing child to participate at your own risk. He reviewed the information outlined on the “Walpole Fall Soccer 2020 as of 8/18/20” that included safety precautions and the Rules and Guidelines.

Selectboard Office: Mrs. Downing had distributed a written report dated August 20, 2020.

Assessing Update:

- The MS-1 report to be signed next Thursday, August 27th. This form establishes the overall property valuation for the Town. It is the first step toward establishing the property tax rate for the year. Last year's MS-1 can be found in Town Report.
- Letters will be sent to property owners when the Avitar field assessor conducts visits to the last quarter section of Walpole as part of the cyclical revaluation update. The letters allow property owners to opt out of exterior list and measures and/or interior inspections. At this point, no date has been set for this work to begin. Any changes would affect 2021 property tax assessments and billing.

Town Hall Update:

- At the July 16th Selectboard Meeting, the requirement that masks be worn inside municipal buildings was approved. New signage was created for the Town Hall to give notice of this new requirement.
- For those that forget to bring a mask, one will be provided.
- Parking signs to reserve parking spots for those visiting the Town Hall are to be created and installed. There has been a shortage of parking on the Elm Street side of the building due to increased usage of the Common. 2-or-3 parking spaces will have signs that indicate “Reserved for Town Hall Business – Monday through Friday 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM”.

Water and Sewer:

- Second quarter water and sewer bills posted on 7/30/2020. The due date for 2nd quarter billings is Monday, August 31st.

Recycling Center: Mr. Ben Hoy was unable to attend this meeting but had submitted the following written report:

“New reuse center is well on its way to completion! Jan Galloways' milled logs are now adorning the entryway(s) to the new reuse center.

Custom shelving to encompass the perimeter of new reuse center with the gable end supporting book shelves and varying width/height shelving throughout the new addition for miscellaneous items.

New hire Tom Donovan is taking over for college bound Jake Velazquez as the new recycling attendant. Welcome Tom!

Reuse volunteers Peter, Sydney and Trevor Palmiotto have graciously donated their time to a fresh paint job for the new reuse center. We are looking for volunteer help to keep the new reuse center open, and stock the shelves with reusable items in the coming weeks!

Running out of Walpole bags at local retailers has been a constant issue for both our department and local retailers dealing with slow moving corporate financials. I spoke with Doug at Shaw's and have come to an agreement in which we are currently increasing our deliveries from 360 packages of Walpole bags to 500 Walpole bags per delivery. Forecasting sales and staying on top of this issue is something that we are taking seriously going forward. This will ensure that Shaw's will no longer be running out of bags, improving both our image and Shaw's in the Walpole community. Walpole recycling will be receiving \$2,772 more per delivery, equating an annual increase of approximately \$27,700 based on previous delivery statistics (every 5 weeks). I have been working to increase sales at other corporate retailers such as Jakes and Aubuchons as well."

Town Clerk / Tax Collector: Mrs. Smith was unable to attend this meeting but had submitted the following written report dated August 18, 2020.

"They have been very busy with questions regarding the upcoming elections! Their phone has been ringing, never seems to stop, between questions and making and cancelling appointments. They do look forward to the weekends.

They have mailed out 164 primary ballots and received 70 back already. These are keyed into the State computer system. The dates when they receive the request, when they mail the ballots and when they receive the ballots back. The voter can go online and check on all these dates.

Usually during a Presidential General Election, they receive approximately 150 requests.

She will be glad when these Elections are over, she just hopes that people get out and vote, this is a very important year!

She is making plans to have someone come in and help part time.

They have collected \$62,934 in registration fees. Total clerk income for the past month is \$65,068.00. People are using E-Reg to renew their vehicles and this is a big help to them. They can process these, print and mail them when they can.

Since their last staff meeting they have collected \$133,632.95 in taxes and interest.

Tax Collection has been great---very low amount of uncollected. Their Spring tax Warrant was in the amount of \$5,803,501.00 and their uncollected for that Warrant is only \$183,083.26. Their total uncollected is only \$390,688.50. They have collected \$58,853.61 interest and penalties for this year.

She will be taking Wednesday and Thursday off, so will miss the Staff meeting."

Hooper Institute: Mrs. Helen Dalbeck was unable to attend this meeting but had submitted the following written report dated August 18, 2020.

“School Year 2020-2021: Becky Whippie and I met with Justin Cassarino and Sam Jacobs on 8/17. The school day schedule will be very different this fall and the Hooper Institute programs will be woven into this new schedule, really more important than ever to get the students outside, into the gardens and the woodlands. We will adapt programs for smaller groups and the new COVID reality. We are also training for the potential switch to online learning and classes if our community needs to quarantine again. We’ll follow all staff mandated protocol and will stay safe. Both of us are really happy to be part of the life of the school and with the kids again.

School Gardens and Community Outreach: Gardens have been very productive and we have been donating produce and flowers to Monadnock Understands Childhood Hunger (MUCH) via Walpole school volunteers and the Fall Mt Food Shelf.

Summer Programs: We offered both at-home projects and in the field. The final round of owl nest boxes will be distributed soon.

Summer High School Work Program: Nine students participated in the summer work program, working at total of 750 hours at four sites in town: Malnati Farm, Abenaki Springs, Alyson’s Orchard and Walpole Recycling Center.

Walpole Community Garden: The garden members are very happy and active this year. Members are also donating to the Fall Mt Food Shelf.

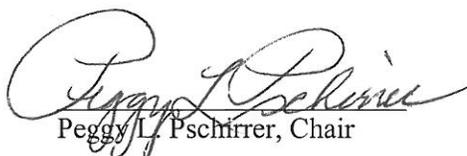
Building and Grounds: A few weeks ago our old maple tree split in half, damaging the Institute’s roof. The rest of the tree will be removed 8/19. The roof has a temporary patch and is scheduled for a permanent fix later this fall. Also on the docket, an improved building alarm system and a roof repair on the old forge/shed.

Governance: The HI Board met 6/1 for our regular monthly meeting and 7/29 for a night of presentations with the Hooper Scholarship recipients (college/university) level. The Hooper Scholarship Committee work is ongoing. The high school students also spoke with many of their parents in attendance.

Marketing: Mostly Facebook and the Clarion.

Fundraising and Grants: Ongoing via Friends of Hooper Institute and my office. We have had some successes with more applications to go.”

ADJOURNMENT: Mrs. Pschirrer thanked everyone for attending. Stay Safe! She adjourned this Staff meeting at 6:05 PM.


Peggy L. Pschirrer, Chair


Cheryl Mayberry


Steven Dalessio

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the August 27, 2020, Selectboard meeting.)