

**TOWN OF WALPOLE  
STAFF MEETING  
MAY 20, 2021**

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

Staff Present: Sarah Downing (Manager of Administration); Richard Kreissle (Administrator of Finance); Michael Rau (Road Agent/Highway Department); Kraig Harlow (Recreation Director); Helen Dalbeck (Hooper Institute Executive Director); Jane Malmberg (Library Director); Meghan Hansson (Town Clerk/Tax Collector); Regina Borden (Recording Secretary)

Staff Excused: Chief Justin Sanctuary (Police Department); Ben Hoy (Recycling Director)

**CALL TO ORDER:** Ms. Mayberry called this Staff Meeting via Zoom to order at 5:00 PM. The Selectboard members are in three separate locations. This meeting is being recorded by the Town.

Ms. Mayberry called for a voice roll call of the Selectboard present: Peggy Pschirrer was present (at home) and Cheryl Mayberry was present (at home). Steven Dalessio is expected but will be late.

Ms. Mayberry also called for a voice roll call of the Staff members present. All Staff Members responded that they were present and provided the location.

**Finance Office:** Mr. Richard Kreissle, Administrator of Finance, submitted the following report:

Life in the bean-counting office has been dominated by pulling transactions for our auditors, Vachon, Clukay out of Manchester. There is less emphasis on the tax collector's office as they did a tax committal audit required by law because of Sandy Smith's retirement so that's lessened the load a bit.

Audits are an exercise in determining the risk that an entity is exposed to due to their safeguarding of resources (i.e., assets). The greater the strength of the controls involved in accounting incoming resources and those involved in the disbursement of those resources. And by resources it all comes down, in the end, to how the cash of the entity is accounted for. Cash is the oil of any entity that keeps it lubricated and allows it to continue to run. It should come as no surprise then that billings and receipts are closely looked at, disbursements of cash are also examined closely, and the reconciliation of bank accounts are also examined. We've developed a good track record of controlling these three functional areas but still they ask us to pull a number of specific records (i.e. source documents) to be ever vigilant in their efforts.

Fortunately, they don't ask for every record but rather a sample and make a determination of the veracity of the overall financial position of the town based upon those samples. Therefore, the completed audited financial statements do not purport to testify that the financial statements are 100% accurate but instead state that they are a reasonable representation of the financial position of the entity as of the time period that was audited.

Printers & Copiers:

Mr. Kreissle contacted four outside vendors to bid on replacing the printers and copiers in the town hall and is happy to report that all four have expressed interest in bidding. The copier in the Selectboard office is getting increasingly cranky and it'll be nice to have machines with features that we currently don't have with the current machines.

Elm Street:

Work on Elm Street has started requiring a careful tracking of the costs so we can pull the correct amount out of the water/sewer surplus that has built up over the years.

**Walpole Recreation:** Mr. Kraig Harlow provided the following report:

Basketball Camp:

- The recreation department hosted a week long basketball camp from April 26 to April 30.
- Walpole Primary School has allowed us to use the gymnasium to host the event.
- The camp had 25 children total and generated roughly \$600.

Pool:

- The recreation department is preparing to open the pool for June 10<sup>th</sup>.
- They are looking to hire a couple more lifeguards for the summer season.
- Ralph has taken off the pool cover and started treating the pool on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- The pool cover will be needing a repair this summer due to general wear and tear.
- The select board has rewarded Eric Franklin the contract to repair the pool roof at the cost of \$15,200.

Walpole Summer League:

- The select board has approved the recreation department to host the annual summer basketball league.
- In 2020, the league was cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- The grades 5-8 basketball will be played at Whitcomb Park with a 5/6 B team and a 7/8 A team. Teams are co-ed.
- The league is 8 weeks long and will include guaranteed 2 playoff games.
- They have added two basketball programs for younger kids.
- Kids finishing K-2 program will meet once a week to teach the fundamentals on Monday nights and kids finishing grades 3 and 4 will play in a 3v3 league.

Tennis:

- Wilson and Lawrence will be repairing the tennis courts this spring.
- They have an estimate from last fall of \$5,796 dollars from the fall and have encumbered the funds from last year's budget.
- The courts may need additional repairs due to new cracks and damages from winter.

Sport Camps:

- The recreation department is working with local coaches to help host multiple week long daily camps which include volleyball, football, and soccer.

Community Events:

- The Hooper Institute will be hosting an owl event on May 22<sup>nd</sup> down at Whitcomb Park.
- The recreation department just purchased an outdoor movie screen to host events once a month during the summer.

Mrs. Pschirrer mentioned movie night will be in collaboration with the Library. Mr. Harlow replied that after talking with Mrs. Malmberg, they learned that their contract is for movies to be shown at the Library. He will try to work with another company. Mrs. Malmberg mentioned having Mr. Harlow talk to her because they might have movies on DVD at the Library that can be shown.

**Town Clerk/Tax Collector's Office:** Mrs. Meghan Hansson submitted the following report:

- Have deposited \$181,598 of property taxes since the last staff meeting.
- Intent to Deed Notices were sent out to owners with accounts two full years delinquent. (5 for 2018, 2 should have been deeded in 2017). Of the five, one has cleared. One has cleared the 2017 but is still working on 2018.
- Redemption information will be sent to Cheshire County Registry of Deeds for 7 liens.
- Waiting for approval of tax pre-payments.

- Tax Collector needs to be involved in decisions involving unusual scenarios...payment plans, deferrals, unusual PID assignments, etc. Tax Collector has different viewpoint from assessing regarding outcome.
- Tax bills are now out in the mail.
- Deputy Vicki Gohl is now doing MV renewals, E-registrations, and dog licensing.
- Registered 578 vehicles between the last staff meeting and this one. Of the \$106,682 collected, about 80K belongs to the Town.
- Have registered 23 boats between the last staff meeting and this one.
- Have licensed 325 dogs (had licensed 264 by this date last year – COVID year). Maximum number of dogs ever licensed was 514 two years ago. (445 last year)
- Have sent a couple of dog licensing reports to the Police Dept for their use. I have sent them information on a service that our software provider offers that allows police departments to access the Clerk's dog database.

Ms. Mayberry asked what the cost would be for the Police to have access to the dog database. Mrs. Hansson said the software company could do a live demo if the Police express an interest. At that point they could discuss cost. Ms. Mayberry feels it is a good thought for future consideration.

**Walpole Town Library:** Mrs. Jane Malmberg provided the following report:

Circulation of materials continues to increase which is encouraging. They are open their regular hours now with one small change: instead of closing between 12 noon and 1 pm on Mondays and Wednesday, they are open from 10 am – 7 pm both days. They continue to require masks and try to main social distancing as much as possible in the library.

North Walpole Library:

Their biggest news is that they are planning to reopen the North Walpole on Monday, June 14<sup>th</sup>. It will be a soft opening as they will still need to require masks and distancing. They plan on having a bigger celebration in the Fall when they can open both libraries for programs inside. Technology-wise it is looking good. The new hours for the North Walpole branch will be Mondays 1 pm – 4 pm, Tuesdays 3 pm – 7 pm, Fridays 10 am – 1 pm and Saturdays 10 am – 1 pm. They will have materials for adults, teens and children. They hope to have story times and other programs soon.

Museum Passes:

They have renewed their museum passes for patrons. They have the following available to check out: American Precision Museum, Brattleboro Museum, Currier Museum, Eric Carle Museum, The Fells, Montshire Museum and Vermont Institute of Natural Science. They are adding a new pass this year: MASS MoCa (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art). She just ordered it; they should have it in a week or so. (*Mr. Dalessio came into the meeting*).

Programming: Their Talking About Race was successful with 11 attendees from Walpole and surrounding communities. They will be meeting again (without the guest presenters) to discuss possibilities for further discussion/action. Round 2 of their Virtual Bake Off was disappointing with only two entries from adults and three from kids. Since they didn't have enough entries to vote on, they gave prizes to all who entered. She thinks the time of year was most likely a factor, winter seems to be a better time for this type of contest.

Their seed library is well stocked with seeds from Walpole gardeners and donations from Seed Savers.

Their Friends of the Library are once again holding a plant sale on the front porch of the library. There is a good variety of plants available. The sale will continue through the summer.

Summer Reading plans are underway. It will be an online program again this year for all ages. The program runs from June 16 through August 8. Details will be forthcoming on the website and on Facebook soon.

Outreach:

The library participated as one of the locations for the Walpole Chick Scavenger Hunt during the Walpole Parent Teacher Group's screen-free week activity. They handed out 59 activity bags to students who stopped by to look for the chick. They were able to sign up 17 new adults and kids for library cards that week. They were also a location for a display for the Hooper Institute that was part of their activity for the scavenger hunt.

The library had hoped to be able to provide a site license to show movies outside this summer with the Recreation Department. Unfortunately, they found out that the license only covers movies shown on library premises. Hopefully, the Rec Department can get its own license to cover the summer movie showings. The library has offered to provide copies of the movies on DVD for each showing.

Policy/Procedures:

They now have a new Collection Development policy for the library. It has been posted on the library website.

Monthly Library Statistics were also attached to the May 2021 Report.

**Hooper Institute:** Mrs. Helen Dalbeck submitted the following report:

“The work that they do at the Hooper Institute is informed and inspired by their mission to provide educational and scholarship programs to the youth and citizens of Walpole in the following focus areas: Agriculture, Forestry, Botany, Soils and Environmental Science”.

School Programs and School Gardens: Right now, the gardens are the focus of a variety of lessons throughout the grades with lots of composting, garden planning, some planting and mulching of beds at all 3 schools. They are keeping drought conditions in mind. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade canoe trip over 2 days is happening in June and to prepare, there have been river and watershed lessons. Regular Hooper science classes continue daily, mostly outside in the field, pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Outreach and Marketing: Ongoing, on all fronts; Facebook, the Clarion, Friends of Hooper Institute, posters, Walpolean, school newsletter, the library, friends and more. Program announcements posted in The Shopper, Monadnock Shopper News, and local newspapers promoting Eyes on Owls on May 22 and Circus in the Woods, May 23. She also utilized her connections in the youth circus community in NH and VT to spread the word.

Facility and Land: Connecticut Valley Landscaping was hired to clean up front lawn debris and two fir trees, cut down by wind, the other pillowed and going. Our building has been cleaned including all of the old wainscoting and woodwork. She takes care of the gardens and beds around the Hooper Institute.

Administration: Joni Cormier and Kim Anderson are their newest board members. FOHI members have begun to plan a Fall Festival at the Hooper Institute on September 11.

Public Programs: Circus in the Woods on May 23 is sold out. (200 people over four shows). She is getting lots of calls and inquiries about the live owl program and is expecting a good crowd on Saturday.

Camps: Yes, camp is happening during the last two weeks of June (Hooper Day Camp and Adventure Camp) and the week of July 19 (Woodworking). They could use more campers week 1, June 21-24 in both camps. Please spread the word. Campers that week are entering grades 1-2 and grades 5-8.

High School Summer Work Program: She has six mentors (including Hooper Camp counselors) and has interviewed 10 students. She plans to accept them all. She has a few more calls to make, then acceptances will go out, work forms signed, processed and we are off to the races. She expects many will begin to work on June 21 and will stay on the job until August 21 or whenever they complete the hours that they were granted through their program.

Walpole Community Garden: The WCG (with FOHI) is hosting four garden talks/presentations this year. The first one was May 15. “No-Till Gardening” with Jackie Caserta. Seven people attended. Next one is July 31 on “Pollinators” presented by her.

Scholarship Program: Mrs. Dalbeck would like to schedule the Scholarship Program for July 28<sup>th</sup>. This is when the college students come back to make reports on the Hooper scholarships they received.

**Selectboard Office:** Mrs. Sarah Downing submitted the following report:

The Spring Tax Warrant was approved by the Selectboard on Thursday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. The signed warrant was handed over to the Town Clerk/Tax Collector’s Office. The warrant is the document that directs the tax collector to bill and collect the tax as set forth on the list taxable property. Three copies of the listing of properties and associated tax were printed. The first copy is given to the Town Clerk/Tax Collector’s Office. A copy for public viewing is kept in a binder on a shelf under the maps in the Town Hall hallway. The last copy is archived in the basement storage area.

The spring tax Warrant normally has over 30 days payments to be received. The warrant must be created and signed by May 15<sup>th</sup> by RSA with taxes being due on or after July 1<sup>st</sup>, also dictated by RSA.

Looking ahead, with the Brownfields clean-up grant remediation beginning, there will be at least two public meetings via Zoom. One will be on June 2<sup>nd</sup> for identifying and reading the bids for cleaning up the site. The second will be a public hearing on July 6<sup>th</sup> with all the stakeholders and any interested public visitors.

The summer of construction has begun with the removal of pavement from Elm Street and the replacing of water/sewer lines. The Town Offices have managed to get by without water for several days. The group will be very happy and appreciative once the bathrooms and kitchen are once again functional.

**Highway Department:** Mr. Michael Rau provided the following report:

The Elm Street project has begun. All utilities have been marked prior to construction. The old asphalt has been removed and trucked away. Things seem to be moving along well. Chloride was put on it yesterday to keep the dust under control. While they wait for the next phase of Elm Street, crews have been busy replacing insufficient culverts and ditching roadsides in preparation for paving. Routine mowing of town properties has also begun for the season. On Monday they have a project scheduled at North Main Street and Drewsville Road to help some drainage problems. There will be some disruption to traffic for a few days. Hopefully they will have a good paving season in July. They will be graveling all the dirt roads they did not get to last year and will put chloride down to help control the dust. They have all the equipment to do this. Everything seems to be going well at the Highway Department. Paving on Elm Street should be done by mid-July.

**Selectboard Notes:**

CDC Guidelines: Ms. Mayberry mentioned it is summer and there will be nice weather. With the CDC guidelines changing they feel more will open up in a few weeks. As of right now the Selectboard has not made any changes to mask requirements or social distancing. The Selectboard will keep them updated.

Vacations: It is also time to schedule vacations. Make use of this time. The Selectboard has not talked about a carry-over waiver this year. Some employees have a lot of vacation time. They want people to manage their stress. Make sure your staff is using their vacation time. If you have any questions, contact the Selectboard or Mrs. Downing in the office.

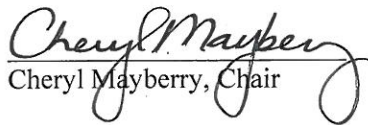
Mission Statements: At the last meeting they asked everyone to come back with their Mission Statement. Everyone now has another month to prepare for this. It will be expected for the next meeting.

**Drive-By – Police Department:** Mrs. Pschirrer reported that on Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 PM the Police Department is planning a Drive-By Salute for former Police Chief Michael Paquette who is retiring on May 31<sup>st</sup> from the Police Department after at least 20 years of service in the Town of Walpole. They have invited Police Departments and Fire Departments from numerous communities; it will be a big parade. They are asking everybody to gather at the Fire Station and/or across the street in E.E. Houghton's parking lot. Because of all the construction they will be coming down only Main Street. The Library has graciously agreed to position Mike and others on the Library steps. The parade will come up Main Street, past the Library, go back down South Street and out to Route 12. As many of you as possible are invited to attend.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Ms. Mayberry thanked everyone for attending this meeting. She adjourned this meeting at 5:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Regina Borden, Recording Secretary

  
Cheryl Mayberry, Chair

  
Steven Dalessio

  
Peggy L. Pschirrer

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the May 27, 2021, Selectboard meeting.)