

**TOWN OF WALPOLE
STAFF MEETING
OCTOBER 21, 2021**

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

Staff Present: Sarah Downing (Manager of Administration); Richard Kreissle (Administrator of Finance); Michael Rau (Road Agent/Highway Department); Justin Sanctuary (Chief of Police Department); Ben Hoy (Recycling Director); Helen Dalbeck (Hooper Institute Executive Director); Jane Malmberg (Library Director); Meghan Hansson (Town Clerk/Tax Collector); Regina Borden (Recording Secretary).

Staff Excused: Kraig Harlow (Recreation Director)

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Mayberry called this Staff Meeting to order in the Walpole Town Hall at 5:02 PM. This meeting was being recorded by the Town. Ms. Mayberry welcomed everyone who is attending this meeting.

Police Department: Police Chief Justin Sanctuary submitted the Police Stats from September 16, 2021 to October 15, 2021. Total calls was 389; Criminal investigations – 95; Public Safety – 171; and Motor Vehicle – 123. He explained a change to the Police Department graph; under Criminal Investigation Comparison, it is now broken down into Drugs/Alcohol, Crimes Against People, Motor Vehicle Arrests and Crimes Against Property. They had the first problem with one of the hybrid cruisers. There were electrical issues but now it is the engine. They will be rethinking their fleet management. They are trying to get caught up with training before the end of the year; a lot of recertifications. They have had some interesting calls lately. There have been overdoses; one was at the Recreation Center. The officers stopped carrying Narcan for a while as the ambulances had it but they are now revisiting that issue. They were called to a party with a lot of underage youth drinking alcohol and doing drugs. One cruiser got a dented door when somebody kicked it. It went well as far as getting people home safely. It started as a local party, but it attracted people from other communities. A lot of cars were towed. Mr. Kreissle asked how many officers responded. Chief Sanctuary said 10-to-12 officers. The next day there were youth looking around the area for their wallets and cell phones.

Finance Office: Mr. Rich Kreissle, Administrator of Finance, submitted the following report dated October 21, 2021:

Why Budget

Much talk and discussion during the year involves the budget, either the operating budget as a whole or your individual departmental budget. But why budget; why is the budget so significant? Rather than just accept this budget “thing” as a part of our normal working lives it might be informative to take a deeper look into budgeting and budgeting.

Economics:

Resources are finite. There’s only so much money to go around. A budget illustrates how the town allocates their financial resources to maximize the benefit to citizens in the use of those resources. Keep in mind, the source of the money the town uses comes from citizens either directly (i.e. property taxes) or indirectly (state aid for example).

Story Telling:

Accounting is the known as the language of business. The story of an entity’s life is told through financial statements and budgets. A budget can communicate to others, to a degree, the values of an entity. Each time you allocate a certain sum to a particular item, it leaves that much less for other items. It’s the old guns and butter argument.

Control:

Budgets define the parameters of spending under which each department operates. There are limits to how much you can spend for any given line item. It allows managers to monitor how they're controlling their spending throughout the year.

Contract:

A budget is an agreement between the citizens of the town and the governing body. Once citizens approve the budget it's in essence an agreement between them and governing body (i.e. Select Board) that the board will only spend on the items voted on in the amounts agreed to in the budget.

Ms. Mayberry feels a budget is a plan for expenses. It allows you to plan ahead and use your best guess as to what you will need. Sometimes things go up and sometimes things go down; it is harder when prices go up to re-allocate funds but it is a plan for the coming year. Mrs. Pschirrer noted that this year the Town had unplanned expenses. Therefore, they had to go back to the State for permission to over-spend their budget. The State has given the Town that permission. They will have to borrow that money. The damage they had on July 29th and 30th exceeded anything the Town could afford in their budget.

Highway Department: Mr. Michael Rau, Road Agent/Highway Department, presented the following report dated October 2021:

As the Elm Street project is close to completion and as we head into colder weather months, highway has a full schedule with efforts to complete before snow arrives such as flood damage repairs. They hope the pavers will be here on Monday. They will be responsible for doing driveways because they are fixing them to the road level. All the catch basins will be where they are supposed to be. Some residents have said everything is looking good. They will have a good road that will last for many years. There are many roads that will require pavement to be repaired. This will need to be done prior to the plant, where we receive asphalt, closes during the week of Thanksgiving.

When time allows, they will begin preparation of their winter fleet. This includes preventive maintenance. Plows, winter tires, and chains will be added to the trucks. They will continue with stormwater damage until the snow takes over. They are still waiting for FEMA to contact them; all the paperwork is in. They are still within budget except for the Elm Street project. Mrs. Pschirrer noticed the Town Hall area of the sidewalk where it leads into the road. Mr. Rau explained the sidewalk was quite high. They will make repairs so the sidewalk will have a gradual slope to meet the road.

In anticipation of material cost increases, road salt has been ordered and was received early this year. This has proven to be beneficial as the price for salt has significantly risen since purchasing, about \$20/ton; saving \$16,000. Mr. Rau mentioned some culverts went up \$20/foot and they are waiting quite a while to get them. Ms. Mayberry said it is good to plan ahead if he is able to but stay within budget.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector's Office: Mrs. Meghan Hansson, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, submitted the following report dated October 21, 2021:

- Since the September meeting, Town Clerk collected about \$74,413, out of which Walpole receives \$56,858. This involved 365 vehicle registrations.
- Tax payments continued to come in (\$11,150). Of this \$5,150 was either a credit or prepayment.
- Most towns in NH accept credit card payments for property taxes, and they would like to do so. They will need a separate bank account for this. Their access to the NH Tax Kiosk can be expanded to allow online tax payments and the ability for people to print a copy of their bill, which is a popular request, especially around income tax time.

- Mrs. Hansson's Deputy and she attended NHTCA Tax Collector training October 13-15 in North Conway, NH. Training covered the liening and deeding process, of course, but we also had a presentation on Public Auditors. What we took away from this last presentation was that any area in a public building that is not meant to be open to the public should be posted by, for example, "authorized personnel only". This legally allows them to keep areas with sensitive information, etc. free from citizens that want to explore their access to public buildings and work areas. They also saw vendor displays and were able to network with others.
- They have made business cards for their office. They contain changes to their office hours that will begin on November 1st. The changes most notably extend their hours later in the day. They will be open to the public 34 hours a week, although both of them will be working at least 40 hours per week.
- Parts have been ordered and some have come in for the office renovation. They are still looking for the major installations to occur the week of Veteran's Day. Work will begin on Monday, the 8th, but they expect to still be able to meet the public needs on Monday and Tuesday. The office will be closed on Wednesday and Thursday (Veteran's Day). Barring unforeseen difficulties, they expect to be back up and open for business on Monday, the 15th.
- Mrs. Vicki Gohl has her notary public stamp now!

Ms. Mayberry noted they do not want people wandering around because it puts the Town at risk. We have file cabinets with personal information in them. There was discussion relative to postings for "No Trespassing" and "Authorized Personnel Only". This is important for all departments to think about and post signs as necessary.

Walpole Town Library: Mrs. Jane Malmberg, Library Director, presented their October 2021 Report. This Monday they hit their highest number for library visits in one day since before the pandemic – 85 people!

Outreach:

The library is participating in a community blanket square drive. They are collecting 7" x 9" blanket squares for Warm Up America. Warm up America is a charity that collects knitted or crocheted blanket squares from across the country. The squares are joined into blankets and distributed to homeless shelters, children's hospitals, veterans' homes, women's shelters, nursing homes and more. They have knitting needles and yarn.

They are having an Open House to celebrate the reopening of the North Walpole Library. It will take place on Saturday, November 6, from 10 am-1 pm. Refreshments will be served.

Programming:

They have moved their Wiggle Time and Story Time indoors due to the chilly weather. All participants over the age of two will be masked when in the library and practice social distancing during the program as much as possible. They had their first Code Club session with 8 participants in Walpole and 1 participant in north Walpole. Our author talk with Anders Morley went very well with 8 people in attendance. Their pumpkin decorating contest is in full swing and they have some wonderfully creative pumpkins on display at the library.

Coming up are two Walpole author talks – one with Alice Fogel who will read from her new book of poetry and one with Bill Ranauro, who has penned a biography of Asher Benjamin, an architect with ties to Walpole.

Staff Development:

Julie has been taking a self-care workshop offered by the State Library and sharing the handouts/videos with the rest of the staff. She has also completed three Universal Class courses – Vocabulary Building, ABC's of English Grammar and Excel 2019.

Jane has been busy with conferences and workshops, including virtual sessions of the New England Library Association Conference on the topics of Advocacy, Diversity and Leadership and an in-person “Unconference” session on Monday, October 18th, at Holy Cross in Worcester. She also attended a workshop for new library directors at the New Hampshire State Library in Concord on last Friday.

There will be a Book Sale at the Walpole Elementary School on October 30th and 31st. There are lots and lots of books to choose from.

The Bridge Memorial Library Monthly Library Statistics for Library Visits & Hours Open in September 2021; September 2020; and % Change are available in the Selectboard Office. Also available are the Monthly Library Statistics for the North Walpole Library.

Hooper Institute: Mrs. Helen Dalbeck, Executive Director, submitted the following report for Autumn 2021.

School Programs and School Gardens: The largest harvest day at Elementary School was delivering 72 lbs. of winter squash to Mrs. O'Brian in the school kitchen. Harvest and gardening lessons abound in pre-K – 4, 5th grade's focus is on migration, especially raptors. 7th grade “Ecosystem Series” is all about adaptation. There is concern about hunters at the Walpole School so they have not been going out into the woods for the last month.

Outreach and Marketing: October (November) Clarion plus many Facebook posts, school newsletter, Fall Festival and garden presentation posters. Marketing distribution lists have expanded to include the greater Cheshire County and across the river, especially Bellows Falls.

Facility and Land: The fields are now mostly brush hogged. They have discovered an invasive worm in the community garden and in the old wood chip piles on their property. The worm is the Asian Jumping Worm. They have started to implement best practices to minimize spread. People were asked not to take any wood chips. They can do a lot of damage in the forests. More research is forthcoming. They need to be mindful of them.

Administration/Special Events, Programs and Friends: It was all about the 1st Annual FALL FESTIVAL for weeks with the help FPHI, Community Garden members, HI staff, HI board members, generous community donors, the Women of Walpole and the Firehouse cook-out crew. 240 people attended their Festival on September 25th. Special thanks to those that planned the day and volunteered the day of, and to the Watkins Inn and Tavern and Friends of Hooper Institute.

Her **budget** work for 2022 continues. The next draft will be presented to the Hooper Institute Board on November 2. Program planning has begun for the December wreath making workshops 12/3 and 12/4.

Development: So many handwritten, personally delivered thank you notes to individuals and businesses in town that supported and donated to the Fall Festival and mentored our high school students this summer. A special thank you will also be published in the November Clarion. Mrs. Pschirrer advised that the Fall Festival was great fun.

Walpole Community Garden: “Garlic Planting with Fritze Till” happened on October 16. Ten people attended and enjoyed the morning in the gardens and their time with Fritze.

Selectboard Office Report: Mrs. Sarah Downing, Manager of Administration, submitted the following report dated October 20, 2021.

Human Resources:

The Aflac Insurance representative will be contacting department managers regarding setting up meetings with each group. The Town Hall is reserved for November 2nd for any larger group Aflac meetings. A new offering, the Aflac Network Vision Plan will be part of the presentation for employees to choose as an optional, employee paid coverage.

The Appreciation Lunch was held on Tuesday in the Town Hall. The harvest themed lunch had the option of eating in or taking it to go. Over 15 employees choose the to-go option. Those that assisted with set-up, serving and clean-up were Jodi Daigle, Brad Nash, Peggy Pschirrer and Sarah Downing. Than you to Joanie Joan's Eatery and Catering for a creating and delivering a delicious meal!

Several departments are working with their staff to complete the online Harassment Awareness Training module. The deadline for completing the training is December 31, 2021. Primex training certificates are to be sent to the Selectboard Office after the training module is completed.

Yearly Open Enrollment and coverage notice forms from Health Trust will be sent to employees within the next week. If an employee wishes to change their coverage due to family changes or to move insurance to a spouse's plan, a new enrollment form needs to be completed and sent to the Selectboard Office by mid-December.

On November 12th at 2 PM, the Benefit and Wellness Advisors from Health Trust will be part of a hybrid presentation in the Town Hall main meeting room. The presenters will be connected through an online meeting service to the large LED screen with benefited, full-time employees being present together in the main meeting room. There will be a sign-in sheet.

Health insurance costs to the Town will be decreasing by 8.1% for 2022. Additionally, a Return of Surplus Funds is to occur in November which will also lower medical insurance costs for 2022. Rich Kreissle is working on the cost breakouts which will be announced in year-end benefit info packet to employees.

Assessing:

The Selectboard office has been assisting property owners with online scheduling of interior viewings that are occurring between October 25th through November 2nd. Two extra days of appointments had to be added due to high demand. There is no obligation for property owners to allow Avitar field assessors interior access. However, to ensure accurate tax card information, allowing the visitation is recommended.

Budgets: Mrs. Downing will be setting up appointments for the Department Managers to meet with the Selectboard on December 10th to go over their proposed 2022 Budgets and Warrant Articles.

Walpole Recycling Center: Mr. Ben Hoy, Recycling Director, presented the following report for October 2021.

- Wastezero trash bag supplier cannot fulfill our Walpole trash bag order(s);
- The Texas deep freeze in February of this past winter shut down the majority of plastic pellet manufacturing plants. This created a global plastic resin shortage as many plants are still not open from the damage that the cold weather caused.
- Wastezero of Raleigh, North Carolina, is opting to keep its biggest customers accounts going, while cutting out the smaller towns as they have many production and staffing issues.
- He contacted Jeff Marcotte from Boxes and Bags Unlimited in Lewiston, Maine, who is able to pull materials from 2 different suppliers and fulfill our order within 6-8 weeks. We have had their business in the past. They can produce the same trash bag that we were getting from Wastezero. The minimum order is 23% higher than the current line item allocation of \$14,000. The delivered price for bags is \$20,439.04 for 256 cases (enough to get through year). Prices may go down when more plastic processing plants are up and running in the coming year.
- Concrete pads and new asphalt have made Walpole recycling a better place to work/attend.

Mr. Hoy is looking at their budget. They are running out of bags. If he places the order now he can have the bags in 6-to-8 weeks from Boxes and Bags Unlimited. This is important. He needs to make the order soon. Mrs. Pschirrer asked if he can accept black plastic garbage bags if they run out of yellow bags. Mr. Hoy said that would be a different system; people would be lined up. He has \$89,000 left in his budget. Ms. Mayberry said the bags can be yellow or orange as long as they state "Town of Walpole" on them. Mrs. Pschirrer wants to be sure they are not a lesser mil; they should be comparable. Ms. Mayberry summarized that the Selectboard will officially approve this at their regular meeting. Mrs. Pschirrer advised that Mr. Hoy should place the order immediately.

Recreation Department: Mr. Kraig Harlow was unable to attend this meeting but had submitted the following report dated October 21, 2021:

Pool:

- The pool cover was delivered and put on the pool.
- The new ADA chair has been delivered and is being installed.
- Eric Franklin finished repairing the pool roof which was covered by a warrant article. The cost of repair was \$18,320 and this included replacing parts of the cupola that was rotted.
- Houghton Co. has winterized the pool house.
- Walpole Recreation just purchased a 10 ft. by 20 ft. shed from LaValley's for \$6,094 from the revolving fund to store recreation equipment.

Fall Soccer:

- They offered travel fall soccer for grades Pre-K, K/1, 2/3, and 4/5/6.
- They had two Pre-K teams, three K/1 teams, three 2/3 teams, and two 4/5/6 teams.
- The season began September 13th and ends October 22nd.
- The program had over 80+ participants and generated roughly \$1,200.
- This year they provided a portable toilet at North Walpole School through Allard's Portable Toilets in Charlestown.
- Teams competed versus other recreation programs from Tri-Town, Charlestown and Westmoreland.

- Pre-K practiced and played games on Westminster St. Field, Grades K/1 played games and practices at North Walpole School, Grades 2/3 practiced and played games at Walpole Elementary School, and grades 4/5/6 practiced and played games at North Walpole and Walpole Elementary School.
- Thank you to their sponsors Home Away From Home, EE Houghton Co, Salon 488, Latham Electric, Craig Vickers State Farm Insurance Agency, WW Building, Walpole Savings Bank and Servpro.

Community Events:

- Walpole Recreation showed Tom and Jerry on October 1st at Whitcomb Park and we had about 20 community members attend.
- On October 15th, we showed Coco at North Walpole Park and they had 50 community members attend.

Winter Season:

- Basketball signups are going to take place in November and the season begins December 1st and goes until February 11th.
- Walpole Recreation just purchased a EZ Ice Rink for Westminster St. Field for \$4,311 from the revolving fund. The rink is 30 ft. x 60 ft. and they can purchase additional rink walls to increase its size if it becomes heavily used.

Next Staff Meeting: The next Staff Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 18th, 2021, at 5:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Mayberry thanked everyone for attending this meeting. She adjourned this meeting at 6:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Regina Borden, Recording Secretary


Cheryl Mayberry, Chair


Steven Dalessio


Peggy E. Pschirrer

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the October 28, 2021, Selectboard Meeting.)