

# WILLIAMSTOWN NEWS

July 2019

## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Well we survived an extremely long winter and wet spring. The Road Crew has been working hard at getting the long to do list done in the short summer months. We rented an extra grader to play catch up due to long rainy days putting us behind. They have already replaced several culverts and have many more on the list. Pleasant Street paving project is underway, the old pavement has been taken up and we have repaired two of the storm drains and raised 4 of the man holes. Stone Road Rehab Project will start later this summer this will be a two year process. Terreault Hill and Tower Road are getting some much needed ditching this summer.

We have been getting several calls from landowners asking the Highway Department to fix areas around mail boxes because the Post Office will not deliver mail. The town is not responsible for maintenance, this is the land owner's responsibility. This also goes for private driveway culverts. It is the responsibility of the landowner to keep them cleaned out and maintained.

We have repaired several water main leaks this spring and summer. All the hydrants have been flow tested and any minor repairs have been taken care of. We have one hydrant that will be replaced that has failed within the next two weeks. We are in the process of putting a maintenance and replacement plan in place for hydrants. Flow testing will be done on Cogswell Street. We have an engineering firm doing a manhole study on Cogswell Street.

Delinquent taxes are currently \$80,471.36, Water is \$12,405.35 and Sewer is \$15,275.78.

And finally if you have a road or sewer/water issue or any other concerns or complaints please call the office or email me. I do not respond or even go onto the several facebook pages that have been set up. The Town does not have an official facebook page.

Jackie Higgins, Town Manager

## Town Clerk Report

Welcome summer!

The Clerk's office has been very busy so far this summer. With that being said, the new Vermont State law (Act 46) went into effective July 1, 2019. There is a new way to process your requests for birth and death certificates. We can no longer make certified copies from the vault.

Only family members, legal guardians, certain court appointed parties or their legal representatives can apply for a certified copy of a birth or death certificate. For death certificates, a funeral home or crematorium may also apply for a certified copy.

Applicants must provide valid identification when applying for a certified copy of a birth or death certificate. (Applications are found on our website and in the office.)

Nothing will change when ordering copies of marriage, civil union, divorce or dissolution certificates.

The Board of Civil Authority met in June to go over and purged the checklist, which is something we do every two years. With the town wide appraisal close to being finished we also will be getting ready to hear Tax Appeals later this summer.

Barbara Graham, Town Clerk

## WILLIAMSTOWN SELECTBOARD REPORT

Summertime!! Finally, it seemed like a long wet cool spring, following an even longer winter. I guess when we look back the pattern is consistent, summer is short, and all the other seasons always seem too long.

The Memorial Day parade and festivities afterwards went well this year. We had a lot of local participation and the weather was great, sunny, not too hot not too cold. The water was cold in the dunk tank. We had a dunk tank set up at the fire station and Jackie and I gave the towns people an opportunity to get a little payback. Jackie took the first shift, and the longest shift on the wet seat. She was dunked many times, I thought that was funny until it was my turn, that water was so cold, it was like taking a dip in a snow melt stream. The fire department later told me that water was around 55 degrees. Breathtaking cold.

I noticed this spring the roads that were completed as part of the Road Rehab project really seem to hold up well. Stone road is on the list this year. Each road has been taking two years to complete. Road maintenance is the primary role of town crew, and the road rehab, I call road construction is the secondary task, both are important, but Maintenance is key.

The Select Board has two new faces, Jasmin Couillard, and Chris Wade. They both were elected in the March election. I welcome them to the board and thank Scott Vallencourt and Rodney Graham for their service to the town. Also, a longtime member of the board, Ed McGlynn has stepped down and the board will appoint a town's person to that seat with a temporary appointment until March 2020, where that seat will be on the ballot for the voters to fill for the remainder of the term. I special thanks goes out to Ed for his commitment to the town and his commitment to the Veterans Memorial park.

In April a newly forming club, The Billtown Wheelers, an ATV rider club, came to a select board meeting to seek the board's blessing to use some of the town's class 3 roads to connect a trail system from Williamstown to Washington where a trail system currently exists. They had a hand full of private landowners that had allowed access to their land and connecting those properties with sections of class 3 roads. The board seeking additional input from a greater cross section of the community got just that in the June meeting. There were over 100 people at the meeting, many on either side of the issue. The group posed some good questions we felt needed to be answered. It was decided that a committee should be formed with equal representation on either side of the issue. The committee has 8 members and 2 board members, they have just begun their work. They have the questions posed at the meeting to review and answer, but their primary task is to answer the question, what could this mean for Williamstown. They will report back to the board as things progress. The timeline for this seems to point to a possible ballot question on the March 2020 town meeting.

Matthew Rouleau, Selectboard Chair

### PLANNING COMMISSION

The planning commission elected a new chairman in June. The new chairman is Richard Turner. Rich is also our representative on the regional planning commission, and he is our eyes and ears working with the state on the emerald ash borer issue.

The planning commission hired a consultant with funds from a state grant to complete the Hazard mitigation plan. The plan identifies hazards that may be specific to Williamstown, like flooding, dam failure, snow and ice storms as well as invasive species. The plan identifies roles and responsibilities for officials in the community in the event of an emergency. The plan has been submitted to FEMA for review. Once approved it insures those that need flood insurance will be able to continue to have access to it.

Matthew Rouleau

## **LISTERS' REPORT**

Listers are now reviewing the 1600+ properties they inspected, measured, photographed, and valued for the town-wide reappraisal. This review will include current changes to bring the town assessments to fair market value as of April 1, 2019. In future years, annual updates on a computerized assessment program will allow us to monitor sections of the town on a regular basis and eliminate the big changes between reappraisal years.

By the end of the month each property owner will receive a booklet showing the 2018 value and the 2019 market value for the coming year. There will be a period for lister appeals and the booklet will outline the procedures for the appeals. The tax bills will be issued after the period of appeals and after we receive the State certification of the reappraisal and a new common level of appraisal (CLA).

Finally, homestead declarations coming in from the State show there are still taxpayers who may not have filed their forms. If you haven't filed a HS – 122, it's not too late. If you receive a letter from the Tax Department, call them to find out what you need to do. You do have more time to file, but be aware there is a penalty for late filing.

The listers office is staffed Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and through this reappraisal Thursdays and Fridays as well. Messages may be left at 433-5455 ext. 6. Thank you for your cooperation and courtesy.

## **WILLIAMSTOWN CEMETERY COMMISSION**

We had a busy spring with many burials. The preparation of some of the burial lots required us to rent a hoe ram digger for removal of ledge at an increase in cost of the burial.

The Commission, with some volunteer helpers, placed flags on graves of Veterans prior to the Town's Memorial Day Celebration. If you know of a grave of a Veteran that does not have a flag on it, please contact the Towns Clerk's Office.

The cold wet winter frost knocked many stones over that will have to be repaired this summer and fall. We will have to straighten forty stones in the Village Cemetery, sixty stones in the West Hill Cemetery, and seventy stones in the East Hill Cemetery this summer and fall. We have cleaned eighty stones in the Village Cemetery and replaced three broken stones with grass markers. We hope to start cleaning some stones in East Hill this fall.

We plan to continue replacing broken stones with grass markers this summer. With research ongoing with several more broken stones in our cemeteries.

We have been asked about several home burials in the Town of Williamstown. It may seem like a good idea however, in 40 or so years, with the sale of the old homestead, you may be required to move your loved one.

We have let a contract to construct a new road into the West Hill Cemetery to service the new section by the gate and it should start in August. We have to remove several large trees in the Village cemetery this summer, because of the danger of falling branches.

I hope you will come and visit our cemeteries this summer, and see the changes we have made.

John Perkins, Chair

## **AINSWORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY**

In March, the library was very fortunate to have so much support from town residents who voted for the 2019-2020 library budget to pass at Town Meeting. We would like to extend a thank you for your generosity in helping us to be able to continue to serve the public the best that we can. Part of the Town Meeting process was that the library did a survey to try and understand what the library could do to serve the public in the best ways. After the March meeting, a new Board of Trustees was formed with Helen Duke as the Chair, Kaitlin Mullen as the Secretary, Jill Plastridge as a member, Karla Perkins as a member, and Carol Corneille as a member. Since March, the Board has been working hard to address the concerns and suggestions that we learned about from our survey. The Trustees are a dynamic group with a lot of commitment and drive to support the needs of the library. The Board meets monthly on the second Friday at 10 am, our meetings are open to the public and we love visitors. If you have any suggestions, questions, or concerns, you can fill out a suggestion card at the library, stop into a meeting, or speak to the librarian, Sarah Snow. Your opinions matter to us.

The March survey included three top concerns about the library from the public: parking, our hours and increased programming. The Board is currently working on having the library property surveyed so that they can better understand what is possible for parking. We acknowledge that parking is a challenge at the library, especially in the winter months. For now, parking is available along the street and in the bank parking lot. We will continue to work through the process of trying to provide more parking spots at the library itself. Our monthly newsletter will contain information about our progress, it is available in the library or on our website.

Our budget for the fiscal year 2019-2020 was already set when we learned that people would like the library to be open earlier throughout the week, so we could not add hours at this time. What we have accomplished, is to shift the hours that we were already open to allow us to open earlier on Mondays. The Board has begun to work on the budget for 2020-2021 and will consider adding hours as part of the budgeting process. Our hours are now: Monday 12-6, Tuesday 2-7, Wednesday 10-6, Thursday 2-6, Friday 2-7, Saturday 10-2. Stop in and visit.

We continue to add programming to this year's schedule. Look for events on our website, in our monthly newsletter, and on our website page. If you have ideas for programming, please contact the library so that we can consider them. Some of our best programs were recommendations from our patrons. Currently, we have a very active summer reading program that includes 38 adults and 23 youth. The summer reading program includes free programming for youth including a weekly craft, Harry Potter night, Watermelon Day, the performer Exordium, Storytime and more. Everything is free.

The library has begun a new program called "Adopt an Author, Magazine or Newspaper." Here is how it works: The patron chooses an author, magazine or newspaper from our list of items that we would like adopted. The library purchases the author's new book, magazine, or newspaper subscription with its discount from Baker and Taylor. The librarian sends an invoice for the item to the patron. The library processes the item and the patron is notified when the book is ready so that they can be the first to check it out from the library. A book plate is placed in the front of the book that indicates the donor or a message that the donor chooses. We post a list of donated items on our website. The item stays in the library collection for all patrons to enjoy. We order items monthly. How does this help the library? Our book, newspaper, and magazine budget is \$6,000 a year and does not include dvds or other book related products. By adopting an author we are able to use funds within the current budget to purchase dvds, provide book related programming, and purchase other items. If you are interested in this program please stop in the library, give us a call 433-5887 or look on our website for more information. The list of items waiting to be adopted is on our website and in the library. Adopting an author is a great birthday gift, acknowledgement for someone, or a fun way to support the library.

We would like to acknowledge the generosity and hard work of Larry Ellison. This spring, Larry volunteered to help to make the grounds of the library beautiful. When you drive by you will see his work. There are gardens out

front, trimmed trees and even surprises that are hidden in the gardens out front. It makes the library an even more inviting and cheerful place to visit.

The library continues to offer many wonderful free opportunities. We offer a cool place to relax, with full air conditioning in the summer. We have books, dvds, audios, magazines, including new titles for you to check out. We have passes that are free to places like Shelburne Farms, all the state parks, the museum in Montpelier, Echo, and more. There are 3 computers for public access as well as free wifi. Printing services for black and white copies (15 cents a page), color copies (50 cents a page), scanning (free) and faxing (25 cents a page local and 50 cents a page long distance). We offer a free Storytime every Wednesday at 10:30 am to help prepare children for preschool and as a way to meet families in the area. There are two bookgroups that meet monthly. And we offer a variety of free programming all year round for adults and youth. Library cards are free and we have no fines. Please stop in and experience all that we offer.

Finally, look for our Amazon Wishlist on our website. The library is a non-profit organization, so any items that you purchase can be used as a tax deduction.

See you in the library!

### **ATV Committee Meeting Minutes - July 16, 2019**

Chris opened the meeting suggesting the committee not continue to meet. Chris stated his concern about a subcommittee meeting independently and should get direction the Selectboard. Francis agreed that the committee needed further direction from the Selectboard. Shaun explained that he has met with his neighbors and has been working on a document to provide some direction to the committee.

The committee agreed to suspend meetings until the Selectboard provides them with some guidelines to conduct the meeting.

Next meeting not scheduled.

Further discussion will take place at the August 12th, 2019 Selectboard Meeting.

**TOWN OFFICE HOURS**

TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE  
Town CLERK'S OFFICE

MONDAY – FRIDAY 8:00 TO 4:00  
MONDAY – THURSDAY 8:00 TO 4:00  
FRIDAY 8:00 TO 2:00

**TOWN WEBSITE & EMAIL ADDRESSES**

WEBSITE	<a href="http://www.williamstownvt.org">www.williamstownvt.org</a>
TOWN MANAGER	<a href="mailto:twnmgr@williamstownvt.org">twnmgr@williamstownvt.org</a>
ADMIN. ASSISTANT	<a href="mailto:adminassistant@williamstownvt.org">adminassistant@williamstownvt.org</a>
TOWN CLERK	<a href="mailto:clerk@williamstownvt.org">clerk@williamstownvt.org</a>
TOWN TREASURER	<a href="mailto:treas@williamstownvt.org">treas@williamstownvt.org</a>
LISTERS	<a href="mailto:listeners@williamstownvt.org">listeners@williamstownvt.org</a>

**TOWN GOVERNMENT MEETINGS**

SELECTBOARD	2 <sup>ND</sup> MONDAY – 7:00 P.M. – WILLIAMSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY
PLANNING COMMISSION	2 <sup>ND</sup> WEDNESDAY – 7:00 P.M. – TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
CEMETERY COMMISSION	4 <sup>TH</sup> THURSDAY – 7:00 P.M. – TOWN OFFICE BUILDING

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