

A PERIODIC NEWSLETTER OF THE TOWN OF WILLIAMSBURG



**Please be sure to
attend on June 7th
at 7:00 p.m. at the
Anne T. Dunphy
School.**

Visit **www.burgy.org**
for more information
about:
Town Meeting
Past and Current
Budgets
The School Renova-
tion Project
Board & Committee
Meetings
and much more!

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2010 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

While the Town's operating budget will be the main focus of the 2010 Annual Town Meeting, several other important articles will also be discussed, including:

Funds for a new truck for the Highway Department: the Town will be asked to approve \$66,000 to replace the department's small utility truck; this truck is used to plow our smaller roads in the winter and haul equipment in the summer.

Funds to repair and paint the Town Offices: a recent inspection of the roof of the Town Offices revealed that the chimney has split open at the roof line; the roof is also leaking in at least one place and the gutters are not functioning properly, allowing water to enter the basement; and the sides of the building need painting.

Funds to complete work on the Highway Garage: the Town will be asked to vote funds to both complete the build-out of the Highway Garage addition and to insulate and sheath the exterior of the existing portion of the building.

Transferring money into the Town's Stabilization Account: guidelines discussed and voted by the Selectboard, Finance Committee and Capital Plan Committee call for the Town to add money to the Stabilization Fund under certain circumstances, particularly when free cash exceeds a certain amount or debt service expenses fall below 2% of the

Town's annual budget.

Acceptance of a gift of land from the City of Northampton: Northampton is seeking to donate a small parcel of land to the Town to potentially be used to provide people a means of accessing the bicycle trail directly from a public way.

A bylaw to aid the police in enforcing the marijuana use laws recently enacted by the state: this would make marijuana use on public land, roads, sidewalks, and parks, or in public buildings a violation of a town bylaw as well as a state law, and provide the police with the tools they need to enforce the fines and penalties provided for in that law.

A bylaw granting the water and sewer commission authority to enact and enforce regulations: while the commission can promulgate regulations, its authority to impose fines for violations of those regulations is unclear; violations of its regulations, such as illegal sewer tie-ins, can prove costly as the town would be liable for any damages to the Northampton treatment plant caused by hazardous or regulated materials dumped into the sewers.

A vote to continue the town's membership in the Hampshire Council of Governments: the Town is being asked to commit to a four-year membership in the COG, in return for this commitment the COG is offering a substantial reduction in its annual membership fees; the Town currently purchases much of its highway materials, and some of its school and office supplies, through the COG.

ASSESSORS



The Assessors have been performing routine annual tasks in order to keep the records current. We have reviewed the exemption applications for fiscal year 2010 and have filed for reimbursement from the state. Applications for abatement of real estate taxes also have been reviewed and completed.

We have been reviewing the guidelines for establishing new lots in town, including parcels being taken out of Chapter 61, 61A

and 61B. We continue to work with the highway superintendent and the building inspector to ensure consistency in assigning street numbers to new building lots.

The Assessors will be reviewing the 2009 building permits in the near future. You may see us measuring and updating our information. We also are continuing to replace outdated photos of properties. If you have any concerns regarding this process, we can be reached at 268-8403.

COUNCIL ON AGING

The new resource guide for Hilltown elders entitled, *Care Options Pertaining to Elders* (COPE), is available online at www.burgy.org on the Council on Aging page. Hard copies of the guide are also available free of charge and can be picked up at the Williamsburg Town Offices in the entry-way, COA office or in the Town Clerk's office. Copies have also been distributed at the Meekins Library, Blue House Cafe, Florence Savings Bank, and Legacy Bank. Other distribution points TBA. The COPE guide has also been distributed at the Care Fair and the Hilltown Spring Festival. And, it will be available at the Safety Fair to be held on

June 19th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Ann T. Dunphy School.

The guides are also available in six other Hilltowns (Cummington, Chesterfield, Goshen, Westhampton, Plainfield and Worthington) through the COAs and libraries. The resource guides were produced by the Care Options Pertaining to Elders Project of the Hilltown Consortium of Councils on Aging with a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and funding from Overlook Health Center at Northampton. The project is administered by the Williamsburg Council on Aging

Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative

The Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative (HRMC), our regional approach to keeping trash disposal costs down and promoting recycling, is 20 years old! Our glass, paper & metal recyclables began going to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Springfield - the first such facility in the state - back in 1990. Recycling of Plastics was added in 1992. Today the Springfield MRF is operated by Waste Management Recycle America and accepts recyclables from 78 municipalities.

Since its opening, the MRF has processed 850,000 **tons** of residential recyclables! It is estimated that the

595,000 tons of paper recycled there have saved over 10 million mature trees; 4 billion gallons of water; 1,100,000 barrels of oil and 1,700,000 cubic yards of landfill space. This paper has been turned into newsprint, chipboard, book board, game boards & telephone books. Over the past 4 years Williamsburg has recycled 521.11 tons of paper, resulting in \$15,939.71 in revenue to the town. The HRMC has used these funds to purchase new roll-off boxes as the original ones deteriorate.

With climate change and soaring fuel prices the HRMC is now also filling a need for many local town governments by helping them identify and apply ways to

become more sustainable. The available funding is now supporting sustainability efforts such as solar, wind, and conservation not just recycling infrastructure anymore. "Recycling has been very successful and is part of sustainability, but not all of it," he said. There is a lot going on with sustainability at the state and federal level, but in order to understand how to participate, someone has to be paying attention to it. I'm happy to do it."

Finally, Williamsburg is currently seeking a second town representative to the HRMC since our loss of Ira Gabrielson. Anyone interested in joining this fascinating process, please get in touch with the Board of Health.

POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS

The Williamsburg Police Department is investigating a series of breaking and entering and larceny cases that have occurred over the past several months in Williamsburg and Haydenville. The Williamsburg Police are asking for your assistance in these cases; please contact us if you saw or heard anything that may be related to these cases. If you have any information regarding any of these cases please call the Williamsburg Police at 413-268-7237.

You are urged to call 911 immediately if you see anything suspicious. Reporting suspicious activity immediately can assist the police in both preventing and solving crimes.

Ways you can keep your homes safe.

Lock all your doors and windows when you are not home.

Keep your vehicles locked at all times.

Let your friends and neighbors know when you are not home.

Notify the local Police Department if your house will be vacant due to a vacation or extended business trip.

Help out your neighbors by keeping an eye on their

property when you know they are not home and call the police to report anything suspicious.

Install home security systems if you are able to do so.

Do not hide spare keys outside your home.

Install motion lights around your home.

Trim any hedges or bushes that surround your home.

Report all crimes to your local police department immediately.



WILLIAMSBURG COMMUNITY SAFETY DAY

Saturday, June 19th, 2010, 10am to 2pm at the Anne T. Dunphy School, Williamsburg MA

An Event where Public Safety and Other Officials from the Williamsburg area come together to meet with citizens about increasing safety in everyday life

Activities Planned: Child Safety Seat checks; SAFE House Demonstrations; Face Painting

And MUCH MORE!

Representatives planned to be present:

Williamsburg Police

Williamsburg Fire

Highland Ambulance

911 Dispatch Personnel

Hampshire Sheriff's

Meekins Library

Williamsburg Girl Scouts

Council on Aging

~ Drinks, Hot Dogs, and Hamburgers will be available ~

It seems as though we've been welcoming lots of new people to town so I thought I would give you all an update on tax payment information from my office.

Williamsburg operates on a fiscal year which runs from July 1st – June 30th and on July 1 we will begin fiscal year 2011.

Real estate taxes are paid quarterly, with bills being generated and mailed twice a year at the end of June and the end of December. Each of these billings has two coupons on the bill; the first mailing will contain coupons for both the first and second quarters, the second mailing coupons for the third and fourth quarters. Payments are due on August 1, November 1, February 1 and May 1. If these days fall on a weekend, the bills will be payable by the following Monday.

Personal property taxes follow the same dates as the real estate taxes.

Water/sewer bills are generated twice a year, in the spring and fall, depending on when meter readings can be obtained due to the weather. There is a small reader located on the outside of your house that must be kept clear at all times. Please do not stack wood, plant shrubs etc. in front of the reader. It also should not be behind a locked gate or a yard with a dog.

Motor vehicle excise bills are generated by the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Most of the bills are sent in February or March for the calendar year; however, bills are generated and sent several other times a year as vehicles change ownership etc. If your address is not correct on your bill, you must notify the Registry of the change, it cannot be done through my office. Bills are payable 30 days from issue. If unpaid after the due date, demands are issued and payable in 14

days. If they still remain unpaid, bills are then turned over to the Deputy Collector in Easthampton and stiff fines and interest apply as well as "marking" you at the Registry which prevents you from conducting business until the bills are paid in full. Once bills are late and have been turned over to the deputy for collection, payments must be handled through that office in Easthampton and can no longer be accepted in my office. According to Massachusetts General Laws, partial payments on excise bills cannot be accepted.

A big misconception seems to be the date bills are actually payable and the "grace period" for payment. Guidelines for Massachusetts collectors are that all bills are payable by and must be received in my office by the due date. Interest and applicable fees apply beginning the day after the bill is due. The "grace period" is the time from when the bill is issued until the date it is due.

Payments can be made online at www.burgy.org, in person at the collector's office, or by mail to P O Box 488, Haydenville, 01039. Partial payments for all bills other than excise bills are acceptable if you want to pay ahead or absolutely cannot pay the bill in full, keeping in mind that interest will accrue on the balance due amount.

The collector's office will be closed July 26 – 30th. There will be no one to answer questions, send a copy of your bill or accept payments in the office during this week. I will be back in the office on Monday, August 2, at 8:30 a.m.

I would like to thank the taxpayers in Williamsburg who always make every effort to pay bills timely which keeps the town government functioning. I enjoy seeing everyone to say hello to, even though you probably aren't crazy about seeing me so often!!

WILLIAMSBURG LIBRARIES

Summer Reading Program

The annual summer reading program is "GOING GREEN" this year. Children from pre-school on can sign up at the Meekins and Haydenville Libraries on Saturday, June 26th. Participants will be able to create green crafts as well as enjoy making their own sundae! Sign-up for the Teen/Tween Summer reading program (ages 11 and up), "tnk grEn" will be held on Monday, June 28th during the school year's final teen/tween hours at the Meekins starting at 2:30. Music, Crafts, games and refreshments!

Tweens and Teens

Jane Austen and her friends will be present at the library on May 29th from 1-4. If you are a teen over 13 please join them in costume for badminton, croquet, games of chance and the movie "Lost in Austen" Come dressed as your favorite Jane Austen character. Tea and sandwiches will be served. Adult chaperones will be needed; call to sign up.

Need more time to study for finals? Teen study hours will be held at the Meekins from 6-8 on June 15th and 16th. Teens can enjoy "Watermelon and Movies" every Monday in July starting at 6pm at the Meekins.

All Ages

Calling all wizards! Ed the Wizard makes a return engagement at the Meekins on July 7th at 3:00pm.

On display until the end of May in the Neil Hammer gallery in the Hawks~Hayden Room: sixth grade peace posters. Neil Hammer gallery shows this summer will include a Hooked Rug show in Honor of Lynda Hall who passed away this year. Betty Levrat and her students will display their handiwork and a show of Sophie Page's artwork. Check the library webpage or call the Meekins at 268-7472 for exact dates.

Tracy Kidder discussed his newest book, Strength in What Remains on April 6th.

Is there a book you would like to discuss? Taking suggestions—call the library or drop by.

Haydenville Library

Wi-fi is available 24/7 at the Haydenville Library. A new computer courtesy of a Gates Foundation grant and the Friends of the Williamsburg Libraries is waiting for patrons to use! Library hours are Tuesday 4:00- 6:00 and Thursday, 2:00 -4:00, thanks to our volunteers. Call the Meekins at 268-7472 for Maureen Mathers's contact information if you want to volunteer.

Find out what's happening at the Williamsburg Libraries by checking our webpage at www.meekins-library.org. From meekins-library.org you can also reserve or find materials, as well as search online databases with your library card. For those of you on Facebook we can be found at www.facebook.com/meekinslibrary.

Water-Sewer Commission

As a homeowner, you regularly check your roof for leaks, but do you also periodically check to see if you have any water leaks anywhere? You can easily do this by first locating your water meter which is most times in your cellar. Then, when you are sure there is no one using water, look to see if the meter is turning. If it is, you have a leak somewhere. It can be a leaky faucet, a toilet tank that is continually running, a broken pipe, etc. Even a pinhole leak can waste lots of water and cost you many unnecessary dollars. As a homeowner, you are responsible for this water usage.

Many homeowners, upon receiving a high water bill, jump to the conclusion that the meter is defective. In all the years the water department has been providing metered water, only a very small number of meters have ever proven to be defective; in all of those cases, the meter worked to the benefit of the homeowner, not the town.

The Water and Sewer Commission does its best to con-

tinue to provide you with safe drinking water and effective sewer disposal. The water and sewer rates provide the financial backing for these services. Unfortunately, costs over the last few years have dramatically increased forcing us to raise the rates to the consumers. We will continue to do all we can to keep the rates as affordable as possible while still providing the services.

Please keep in mind that it is illegal to pump any storm water runoff into the sewage system. You also must keep the reader on the outside of your house free from shrubs, woodpiles etc. that would hamper the reading of your meter. If we cannot access your reader from the outside, we will estimate your bill until the situation is remedied.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can call us at 268-8430 or come in to one of our meetings.

TOWN OF WILLIAMSBURG

141 Main Street
PO Box 447
Haydenville, MA 01039

Phone: 413.268.8400
Fax: 413.268.8409
Web-site: www.burgy.org

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Permit No. 7
Haydenville, MA 01039

Resident/Boxholder
Williamsburg, MA
01096



GRIST MILL FALLS, WILLIAMSBURG, MASS.

43-Published by T. M. Carter

**MEMORIAL DAY
PARADE**
IS SCHEDULED FOR
SUNDAY, MAY 30TH
AT NOON
BEGINNING AT THE
WILLIAMSBURG FIRE
STATION
WITH AN
OBSERVANCE
TO FOLLOW AT THE
VETERANS MEMORIAL