

Town of Williamsburg

Fall 2018

A periodic newsletter of the Town of Williamsburg



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Visit www.burgy.org for more information about:
Town Committees, Boards, Departments, Events, and much more!

Public Safety Complex—Request for Land Proposals

The town's Owner's Project Manager (OPM) Committee continues to explore how best to advance a new public safety facility for our community. The committee is in full consensus that current police and fire facilities are inadequate, obsolete and in conditions that make them unacceptable workplaces for our town employees and volunteers. Either a new, combined public safety facility, or new, separately-sited police and fire stations will be necessary.

Key to the committee's efforts is the selection of a site(s) that will be suitable and cost-effective. The committee seeks to explore all options, including both town-owned parcels and those currently in private ownership. To this end the town has issued a Request for Responses to Proposals to identify any appropriate lands, preferably on Main Street (Route 9), that might be donated or voluntarily sold to the town for this purpose.

Any viable sites identified through this process will be considered along with existing town-owned sites. Criteria such as cost (impact on tax rates), location (which impacts response times), suitability of the facility to surroundings, land elevation, accessibility, impact on open space, and capability with other town functions are among those that will be considered.

Any interested landowners are encouraged to view the Request for Proposals online at www.burgy.org under news or to contact the Town Administrator's office at townadmin@burgy.org.

Veterans' Day Ceremony

Veterans' Day ceremony will be held on **Sunday, November 11, 2018 at 11:00 am. at the Williamsburg Center Veterans' Memorial.** If it is raining the ceremony will move into the Anne T. Dunphy School.

FREE
Shredding Day in Williamsburg
Saturday, November 17, 2018
9 to 11 am
Williamsburg Highway Garage
24 R Main Street

All residents of Williamsburg and surrounding communities are welcome to bring documents that they would like to shred (up to three boxes per person). No businesses please.

Protect your identity – shred confidential documents!

Note: 3 Ring binders, large binder clips, vinyl & plastics are not acceptable.

For questions, call Charlene at 413-268-8418

This free public service is provided by Valley Green Shredding out of Westfield, Mass and hosted by the Town of Williamsburg!



"Your Neighbor, Your Partner in Document Security"

New Crosswalk System

Our new rapid flashing beacon crosswalk system is installed between Brewmasters and the Williamsburg Market.

Please push the button before you look both ways to cross!



For more info see Highway Department News on pg 6

Town-wide Electric Aggregation

National Grid announced that its winter rate for November 2018 through April of 2019 will be 13.7 cents per kilowatt hour. The Town-wide aggregation rate is set at 11.37 cents per kilowatt hour for the same period. A new rate for the aggregation will be determined by late April and will cover residents who have opted in to the service.

For more information, go to <https://colonialpowergroup.com>. Click on Our Communities at the top of the page and then on Williamsburg for more information on how to opt into the aggregation. You can also call 855-639-8126 for assistance.

If you are interested in opting in to take advantage of the lower rate, do it as soon as possible, since the process of changing providers can take up to two billing cycles.

Street Light Conversion on Track for Installation by Year End

The LED conversion project is on track for installation in the coming months and will be completed by year end. The June 2017 town meeting approved \$45,000 for the conversion and after some delays, the audit phase was completed in July. Requests for product and installation services were released in August and bids were received in early September. Product and installation vendor bids were reviewed by the participating towns and the granting agency, Metropolitan Installation Area Planning Commission (MAPC), and contracts were awarded.

Due to the delays experienced early in the program, it will not be feasible to do a pilot project and meet the grant's required deadline of December 31. While the lights selected for our project are not the same as those in Northampton, residents interested in seeing what the conversion will look like should check out thoroughfares and residential streets there.



Williamsburg 250th Anniversary Committee

The Williamsburg 250th Anniversary Committee has been meeting to get a schedule of events planned for the Town's 250th Anniversary in 2021.

We have four days filled with exciting events planned in July 2021, and are looking for volunteers to help with the various tasks from set-up to clean-up and all the responsibilities in between.

If you have an interest in helping in any way, please contact the committee at williamsburg250@gmail.com or call 413-268-8402 to get on the volunteer group list for notification of upcoming meetings and find out what duties are needed. It is going to be a wonderful celebration!

Police Department News

Happy Fall from all of us at the Williamsburg Police Department. Things have been busy at the Police Department this summer. We continued to cover the typical calls for service but we also participated in several trainings. Members from the Department attended the Hampshire Franklin County TRIAD picnic and helped serve meals. While there, the Police Department was presented with some stuffed bears, provided by Vermont Teddy Bear, which are used to comfort children in emergency situations. The bears were presented by TRIAD and Hampshire County Sheriff Cahillane. Officers also held an open house for the public and gave away three bicycles to children as part of a free raffle.

We also partook in National Coffee with a Cop Day. We enjoyed visiting with everyone who stopped by and appreciate the support shown for the job we do. Halloween is one of the favorite activities for the Police Department. The Fire Department and the American Legion host rag shag parades and the Police hand out glow necklaces to every child who participates. Relationship building is key, and is one of our core missions. We want the community to see the Police Department in a positive light and show some of the "behind the scenes" fun things we do.

We have officers on staff who are certified to check and install car seats. We also often have car seats available for families in need. The unused medication disposal program is year-round and we have a permanent box at our station available for use by anyone who needs to dispose safely of unused or expired medications. We continue to work closely with our schools to prepare for unthinkable emergencies. The school staff is amazing and the students do a phenomenal job with the drills.

We have mentioned before that Williamsburg is a perfect community for one to call home, but the Police Department still likes to remind residents that our community is not crime-free. Police Officers from the Williamsburg Police Department do an amazing job at handling emergencies and addressing criminal activity, most times without residents knowing it is happening in their neighborhoods. We do not want to frighten residents; instead we want to educate everyone on the importance of working together with the Police Department.

We encourage everyone to report any and all suspicious activity right away by contacting 911, report any thefts immediately, and speak to officers when you may have information about criminal activity. We all care deeply for our community and are here to help.



Burgy Flag to Fly in Massachusetts State House

On November 7, 2018, a delegation of Williamsburg town officials, Flag Committee members and Sewing Group will travel to Boston to deliver our new flag to join with Massachusetts' other 350 city and town emblems in the State House Hall of Flags. State Representative Steve Kulik and Senator Adam Hinds are organizing the official presentation in coordination with Town Administrator Charlene Nardi. Flag Committee chair, Jeffrey Ciuffreda, noted that Williamsburg's town flag represents our fine history, past and present.

Artist Lisa Tucker's flag design is based on the committee's original concept. The key position as Gateway to the Hilltowns is represented in the flag's seasonally colored hills. A winding Mill River connects the villages of Haydenville and Williamsburg. A classic water-powered wheel holds our founding date: 1771. New England clapboard houses and churches speak to us through the centuries. Our hometown name, Williamsburg, rests on a flowery border.



Flag Committee members are Jeffrey Ciuffreda, Jim Cahillane, Lisa Tucker and Jennifer Reagan. Sewing Group members are Liz Ducharme, Sara Fredette, Sandy Graves, Valerie Nicoletti, Victoria Nicoletti, and Lisa Tucker. **Special thanks to all of them!**

Department Hours and Contact Information:

Assessors: Tues, 9 – Noon, Tues Eve, 7 – 8
assessors@burgy.org 268-8403

Board of Selectmen (Admin Asst.): Mon & Wed, 10 – 2,
Tues & Thurs, 1 – 4. selectmen@burgy.org 268-8400

Senior Center: Mon – Thurs, 9 – 2:30
seniorcenterdirector@burgy.org 268-8407, 268-8410

Fire Dept.: no regular office hours – On Call department
jason.connell@williamsburgfire.com 268-7233

Highway Dept.: Mon – Fri, 7:00 – 3:30
burgyhighway@burgy.org 268-8405

Police Dept.: Mon & Wed eve, 5 – 9 pm. All other days &
eves by appointment. wicklandd@williamsburgpd.org
268-7237

Town Administrator: Mon – Thurs, 8 – 4
townadmin@burgy.org 268-8418

Town Clerk: Mon & Tues, 8:30 – 3:30, Thurs, 9 – 2.
Check the website for evening hours.
townclerk@burgy.org 268-8402

Town Collector: Mon – Thurs, 8:30 – 3
towncollector@burgy.org 268-8401

Meeting schedules may be found at www.burgy.org.

Williamsburg Trust Fund and Cemetery Commission

To the residents of Haydenville and Williamsburg, the trustees of the Williamsburg Trust Fund and Cemetery Commission want to inform you of a pending change to our funding of the maintenance and running of the clock in the Haydenville Congregational Church. Due to increased costs, we anticipate that our available funds to maintain and run the clock will run out at the end of fiscal year 2020. That leaves us with three possible choices.

1. Request a new budget line item in the town's budget of \$1200 to maintain the clock (\$500) and to wind the clock weekly (\$750). We anticipate that the trust will provide enough additional income to provide the electricity to illuminate the clock (\$200 per year).
2. Request donations to the trust fund to offset any costs to the town.
3. Terminate the maintenance and running of the clock at the end of fiscal year 2020 and wait till sufficient income is generated within the trust to restart the clock.

With regards to another funding issue, the trust fund at the end of this past fiscal year had to terminate the funding of our past practice of providing a floral bouquet to all those residents who were 90 years old or older on their birthdays. Our account for this program was simply not providing enough funding to cover the annual cost (\$1500) of maintaining this benefit to our oldest seniors.

Therefore, the commissioners of the trust are requesting donations to the trust fund to continue and restart these programs thereby minimizing a possible impact on the town budget.

Contributions made to either account should have checks made out to Pershing LLC (our account financial provider) and sent to Williamsburg Trust Fund, P.O. Box 447, Haydenville, MA 01039.

Thank you for your support,
Richard Kisloski, Chairman

Veterans' Volunteer Tax Relief Program

The Town's ongoing Veterans' Volunteer Tax Relief Program (also called Veterans' Work-Off Program) is still accepting applications. (Deadline was October 1.) People can do work for the Town and earn a reduction in property tax, up to \$1500 per household per year.

The program is open to all veterans, with no income or age limits. An approved substitute may do the work for someone physically unable to work. Note that the amount earned is considered taxable income by the Federal Government, and this may affect eligibility for income-based programs.

Applications are available from the Selectmen's Administrative Assistant (268-8400) or online (www.burgy.org) under Assessors (The similar program for seniors is full for this year; application deadline for next year will be October 1.)

Williamsburg Firefighters Association News

School Fire Lane Parking

Why are fire lanes so important?



Fire lanes are critical during emergencies, as they provide an area for emergency vehicles to park as well as provide the emergency responders adequate room to set up and work. Any obstructions could delay or even prevent emergency

operations from proceeding. This delay is not only an additional obstacle for emergency responders, but it could cost someone their life. Fire lanes also provide fire apparatus and other emergency vehicles additional space, ensuring that crews are kept safe and there is room enough to move other pieces of equipment or apparatus.

The Williamsburg Fire Department, with cooperation of the Anne T. Dunphy school, has been working to make people aware of the fire lane in front of the school. Notices have gone out in the school's newsletter, and from time to time you will notice temporary "No Parking Fire Lane" signs up around the curved area. These signs are a reminder that the area is a designated fire lane. Although the temporary signs are not present at all times, the area remains a designated fire lane 24/7.

Specifically at the Anne T. Dunphy school, there is a fire hydrant located near the fire lane. This hydrant sits back off the sidewalk and is intended to be accessed by the fire lane. In an emergency, clear access to this hydrant is vital. We understand that parking at the school is sometimes in short supply, especially during events. However, large events and crowds increase potential for an emergency, and we want to be able to respond as quickly as possible. We need your cooperation to keep our town safe.

- Unauthorized parking in fire lanes at schools is a violation of the law.

- The fire lane is not to be used as additional parking, especially during events.
- The areas identified and marked as fire lanes is not to be used for personal parking convenience, but is reserved for emergency vehicles providing services and for buses or as temporary/short-term authorized loading and unloading of vehicles.

The cooperation of parents and visitors to the school facilities is essential in ensuring the safety of the occupants and the protection of school property, and we appreciate compliance.

Hydrants

With winter just around the corner, the Fire Department would like to remind everyone to keep nearby hydrants shoveled out. In the event of a fire, precious time is lost when crews must locate and shovel out a hydrant that has been buried by snow. If you are unable to clean out a hydrant located on your property, please let the Fire Department know and we will do our best to clean it out or find a neighbor who can assist. We ask that the hydrant is clear of snow three feet in all directions and there is a clear path to the road. In addition, please ensure that the marker for the hydrant can be seen. If the marker is missing or has fallen off, please contact the Fire Department or the Water and Sewer Department, and we will do our best to install or fix the marker. The fire department depends on your help to keep our town safe. Don't hesitate to reach out with any difficulties in regard to snow removal around fire hydrants. The Fire Department may be reached at (413) 268-7233.



Closed for the Holidays

Highway and Town Office Departments will be closed on the following dates. Please note that Town Office Departments are always closed on Fridays.

- Monday, November 12, 2018
- Wednesday, November 21 (some town offices may be closed)
- Thursday, November 22, 2018
- Friday, November 23, 2018
- Monday, December 24, 2018 (some town departments may be closed)
- Tuesday, December 25, 2018
- Monday, December 31, 2018 (some town departments may be closed)
- Tuesday, January 1, 2019
- Monday, January 21, 2019
- Monday, February 18, 2019

Winter Parking Ban

No overnight parking is allowed on any street between December 1 and March 31. Vehicles found in violation can be ticketed. Vehicles impeding snow removal could also potentially be towed. We thank everyone in advance for keeping our roads clear during the winter months.

Snow Removal Reminder

The Town Bylaws require that all sidewalks must be cleared after a storm. The tenant, occupant, owner, or person having care of a property abutting upon any highway or town way is responsible for clearing the sidewalk within 24 hours after the storm. Please be courteous and help your neighbors who use the sidewalks to move about the town village and center.

Board of Health

Recycling

The Board of Health thanks the residents for their continued efforts to recycle! We are currently at about 40% of recycling and have a goal of increasing this to 50%. If we are able to maintain or increase this level, we will not have to move towards a throw per-bag fee, which many of the surrounding Towns have had to initiate. Our current yearly permit of \$75 (\$50 for persons 70 or older) is the lowest in the area. New permits are sold at the Transfer Station starting on May 15th, and are due July 1st. Remember to bring your proof of Town residency with you when you obtain your permit (car registration or mail with address).

Compost bins are available for purchase for \$45 at the Transfer Station.

In 2018 the Board of Health received two grants from the State DEP towards the purchase of the newly installed Cardboard Compactor. The compactor is not only easier for residents to use, it has saved the Town money in the cost of transporting the loads of paper to the recycling center in Springfield.

Did you know that Williamsburg is one of only two towns in Hampshire County that did not switch to a single stream recycling system? This has proved to be a big advantage for the Town and the Board appreciates everyone's help with recycling. Because the bottles and plastic are separated from the paper, the recyclables are a better quality. The Town receives money for the recyclables because they are separated. Towns with single stream recycling do not receive funds for their recyclables. For instance, the Board just received a check for \$1,276 for the period of 7/1/17-12/30/17. This money goes to support the Transfer Station general expenses. The attendants are Town employees and their salaries are part of the Annual Town Warrant.

Thanks, everyone for making the effort to recycle!

Got Pumpkins? Think Compost!

Did you know that pumpkins past their prime could be composted with your leaf and yard waste?

Faithful recyclers often wonder what more they can do to reduce materials going to landfills and incinerators. If you have a yard, the Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative (HRMC) suggests that you consider practicing composting.

Earth has its own natural recycling system to break down organic material into rich compost. It's valuable to anyone with flower gardens, shrubs, lawns, houseplants, and planter boxes because you won't have to purchase potting soil, fertilizers, mulch, and other soils and enhancers. Compost added to the soil results in healthier plant growth because it improves soil structure, adds nutrients, helps retain moisture and provides a good environment for earthworms and other soil organisms. It is chemical-free and therefore much safer for your home.

In addition to improving soil, composting provides homeowners with a way to help solve Massachusetts's growing

solid waste problem. Not only are you doing your part for the environment, but by composting, you also save on disposal costs and produce a valuable material for your own use. Composting can reduce your trash by 25% or more by composting leaves, grass clippings, garden debris, fruit peels, vegetable scraps, tea bags, coffee grounds, egg shells and shredded paper.

To start composting, all you need is a small bin constructed of wood or you could purchase an **Earth Machine** plastic compost bin from HRMC. The benefits of an enclosed bin include: protecting the pile from pests, and holding heat and moisture in, which speeds decomposition and has a neater appearance. In village settings, rodent-proof resident bins with secure covers and floor and side vents no wider than ½ inch must be used. The **Earth Machine** compost bin has a capacity of 11 cubic feet, the equivalent of about 4 bags of leaves.

To help you get started, HRMC will be displaying the **Earth Machine** at the Meekins Library on Saturday, November 10th. Kathleen Casey, HRMC Administrator, will be on site from 12:30-2:00 p.m. to provide composting information and to take fall orders. The Earth Machine is available to Williamsburg residents for \$25 thanks to an incentive subsidy provided by the Williamsburg Board of Health. Unable to attend the November 10th event? To order the Earth Machine compost bin, contact the HRMC at hrcm@hrcm-ma.org and provide your name, residential address and phone number (or call HRMC at 685-5498).



Don't have a backyard but wish to compost your kitchen scraps? Try vermicomposting. This method of composting using red worms, can be done indoors, in a basement or heated garage or other convenient location that doesn't freeze. It's a compact, convenient, and odorless method of composting, and the end product is a very fertile form of compost called worm castings. To make a worm bin, see the fact sheet on vermicomposting distributed by DEP, or the link to Vermicomposting on the Composting page of the HRMC website, or read Mary Appelhof's book entitled *Worms Eat My Garbage*, Flower Press, Michigan, 1982. Manufactured bins such as the Worm Factory from Go Green Solutions are also available online.

Do you have curbside trash and recycling collection? Check with your hauling company to see if they offer curbside compost collection as an additional service to their trash and recycling curbside service.

For more information on composting and recycling, visit the HRMC website at www.hrcm-ma.org.

Radon Testing

In Massachusetts, the Department of Public Health does not have radon regulations; however, the Williamsburg Board of Health recommends that residents test the air and well water at their homes. Air and Water radon testing kits may be obtained by calling the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at 413-586-7525.

HRMC ANNOUNCES ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION EVENT

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2018

9 am - Noon at the Westhampton Highway Department

Protect your home and the environment by proper disposal of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)

The Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative (HRMC) announces their annual HHW Collection Event for residents of the ten HRMC member communities of: Ashfield, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Plainfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington.

The program is free to HRMC member-Town residents, however, reservations and pre-registration are required. Pre-registration is October 1 - 28, 2018. Please email your name, street and mailing address (including Town and Zip Code), and phone number to hrcmc@hrcmc-ma.org. Or phone HRMC with the above information including an email address at 413-685-5498. **HRMC will confirm your registration by email and send an attached confirmation letter to bring with you to the event.**

Protect your home and our environment by properly disposing of old or unwanted household chemicals. Products containing lead, petroleum products, pesticides, herbicides, and acids should NOT be poured on the ground, down the drain, or placed in household trash. The HRMC HHW collection program accepts a wide range of unwanted household products with labels that indicate that special handling is required. Examples of common warnings include "caustic, toxic, corrosive, poison, flammable, warning, danger, caution and keep out of reach of children and pets."

For more information on recycling, visit the "What to do with" link at www.hrcmc-ma.org.



Highway Department News

Fall is officially here! It has been a busy summer. We had a full crew and a lot of work was done. Very early in the season we prepared both Petticoat Hill Road and Briar Hill Road for chip seal application. Then the hired companies came in and applied the chip seal. We applied gravel, edged and graded the dirt parts of Nash Hill Road, Old Goshen Road and Depot Road. Hydrants were flushed, the sewer was extended on Old Goshen Road and we replaced a broken hydrant on Williams Street. Blacktop patching and paving is ongoing and Cider Mill Road, Briar Hill Road and North Farms Road received some much-needed attention. We replaced a section of sidewalk on North Main Street this year. And of course, the yearly roadside mowing was going on whenever the weather permitted.

We had a few projects that were new and out of the ordinary. A concrete retaining wall was built at the South Main Street/Fort Hill Road intersection. We also prepped and paved the section of the bike path connecting the Haydenville end with the Northampton end. **And we recently installed pedestrian-activated flashing light warning signs at the crosswalk between Brewmaster's Restaurant and the Williamsburg Market.** (See pictures below left and on pg. 1.) A bit of explanation about the signs seems warranted just to ensure safety. These are NOT stop signs. When a pedestrian wishes to cross the street, they must press the button on the post. This activates the flashing light that will WARN drivers that the pedestrian wishes to cross the street. The pedestrian still is required to step up to the curb and look both ways. Again, the flashing light simply WARNS the drivers a pedestrian wishes to cross.

Our new excavator arrived a bit late in the season and has been an immense help in completing some of these projects. We would like to thank the town for this purchase. It really is a great machine and allows us to do quite a lot of things we could never do with a backhoe.

Bill Turner, Donald Turner and Jen Westlake all achieved the rank of Road Scholar from Baystate Roads education program this summer. Dan Banister and Bryan Osetek both studied for and passed the test to receive their 4G (Specialty Mowing Equipment) hoisting endorsements. Jen and Bryan have just begun classes in preparation for the entry level water licensure tests. And we will continue to attend classes periodically that help us serve the town.

As you do your fall yard clean up and winter preparations, please remember to protect your mail boxes from snow. Some sources are predicting a slightly warmer than usual winter, which means heavy and wet snow. As a general rule it is not the plow that damages a mailbox but the snow that comes off the end of the plow. In most cases simply standing a board up on the side of the mailbox (the on coming traffic side) will protect the mail box from snow.

A reminder that questions, concerns, complaints and suggestions should be directed to Bill Turner, the highway superintendent not the laborers. Bill can be reached at his office in person or by calling 268-8405.

Williamsburg Senior Center

Programs & Services for Active Living at 60+

Williamsburg Town Offices, Room 102
413-268-8407

Hours: Monday - Thursday, 8:30 - 2:30
with extended hours for classes and events.
Lunch is served in our Café, Rm 101, at 11:45.

Senior Center Introduces New Director, Jennifer Hoffman

Dear Friends,

I want to begin by greeting you all and introducing myself as the new Senior Center Director for the town of Williamsburg. I am humbled and honored by this appointment and I look forward to the opportunity of working with you, the town, as well as local organizations that serve Williamsburg and the village of Haydenville.

As I get settled into my new role in the weeks and months ahead, I look forward to becoming acquainted with all of you. I am committed to making our Senior Center a community where you feel welcome, relaxed and enjoy the programs that we do and will offer.

I am aware of the challenges that seniors face and the obstacles that may be present. I am hoping that the Senior Center will be a resource for you and your family. There is a lot of information available and having someone assist in navigating this can help alleviate confusion and stress.

Please come visit me at the office at any time. My door is always open and I would like to hear how I could help serve you and our community.

Jennifer Hoffman, MPH
Senior Center Director

Call for Interest! Intergenerational Involvement/Activity

The Williamsburg Senior Center is looking to collaborate with an international Female Empowerment group where women (45 and older) are willing to support/guide younger girls (15-25) in three distinct areas: Education and training, career guidance, and activism regarding women's issues.

You do not have to help in all three, just your preference. The overall goal of this program is to help women who are trying to improve their circumstances, whether it is trying to escape poverty, domestic abuse or just starting life over. Having the advice and support of strong women in our community who have "been there and done that" can be just the motivation needed to change their circumstances.

For more information about the organization, please visit soroptimist.org. If interested in the group, please call Jenn at 413-268-8410 no later than **November 30, 2018**.

Events Calendar

Mondays

Veterans' Agent, 2-4 pm
Monday Meals, every Mon, 11:45 am

Tuesdays

Healthy Bones & Balance, 10:30 am
SHINE Rep, 11-2 (call for appointment)
Congregate Meal, 11:45 am
Yoga for You, 6 pm
Basic Computer Class, 6-7 pm (call ahead)
2nd Tues alternate months: Podiatrist, 9 am-1 pm

Wednesdays

Modern/Creative Dance Class, 10 am
Congregate Meal, 11:45 am
3rd Wed: Advisory Board Meeting, 12:15, Public Welcome
4th Wed alternate months: Foot Nurse, 9 am-2 pm

Thursdays

Tai Chi, 9:30-10:30 am
Gentle Chair Yoga, 10:45 am
Congregate Meal, 11:45 am
Healthy Bones & Balance, 4 pm
Basic Computer Class, 6-7 pm (call ahead)
2nd Thursdays: Brown Bag, 10 am
2nd Thursdays: Blood Pressure Clinic, 11:30 am
3rd Thursdays: Men's Group at the Snack Bar, 8 am

Special events and programs are listed in the Living Well Newsletter, published monthly. To subscribe, call us or email sloomis@burgy.org. Get the Newsletter and stay informed!

Two New Groups Added

We are now hosting a **Knit & Crochet Group**, led by Candy Smith, every **Thursday morning at 10**. Several people have been coming, bringing their own projects or starting something new. Stop in to learn a new skill or finish those long forgotten mittens!

We also have a **Quilting Workshop**, led by Barb Estes, on **Wednesdays at 12:30**. We have stacks of donated fabrics and sewing machines and other equipment. Just bring yourself and bring home a lovely wall hanging or table runner. All adults are welcome to each group. Do stop in and check us out!

Noteworthy

The Senior Center is working with the local Police Department in creating a 65 and older population "**call-list**" for emergency or inclement weather incidents. We will call to make sure that you are safe, have food, medications and heat. **If you would like to be put on this list, please call us at 413-268-8407**

We are also available to assist in filling out new and renewal forms for **Fuel Assistance**. Fuel assistance applications will begin being processed on November 1, but you can submit them earlier. **Don't wait, please call us at 413-268-8410.**

Collector's Corner

Motor Vehicle Excise Taxes

Just moved to town? Has your mailing address changed? Purchased or sold a vehicle?

Motor vehicle excise taxes can be compared to a big thorn in the side. Let me try to answer a few questions here.

Motor Vehicle Excise [60A]

Excise Levy: Except as otherwise provided, there must be an excise assessed and levied each calendar year on every motor vehicle and trailer registered in the Commonwealth. The excise must be payable to the community in which the vehicle is principally garaged. When an individual moves during a calendar year, payment is due where the vehicle was originally garaged on January 1st or where garaged on the date of registration if registered after January 1st.

Calculation of the Excise

Determination of Value

1. The value of a vehicle for excise purposes is the applicable Ch. 60A Sec.1 percentage of the manufacturer's suggested retail price of that vehicle in its year of manufacture:

- In the year preceding the designated year of manufacture50%
- In the year of manufacture.....90%
- In the second year.....60%
- In the third year.....40%
- In the fourth year.....25%
- In the fifth and succeeding years.....10%

2. Assessors should not consider a vehicle's condition and market value in determining the excise value.

- The rate of excise is \$25 per \$1,000 of valuation.
- A special excise is assessed to motor vehicle dealers of \$100 per plate for every dealer plate issued to that dealer for the respective calendar year.
- No excise bill may be less than \$5. No abatements may be granted and no refund may be paid in an amount less than \$5.

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles generates these bills (NOT the town). The RMV determines the value to set and calculates the tax accordingly. Each time you have a transaction completed at the RMV, it will result in a bill.

As a Massachusetts taxpayer, you are responsible to pay an excise tax once a calendar year on each vehicle or trailer you own to the town where that vehicle is principally garaged. The owner's insurance coverage selection sheet provides the best evidence of the place of garaging. Due to Williamsburg's unusual circumstances with other towns having mailing addresses for Williamsburg, this can cause confusion and issues. The state has strict guidelines which we must adhere to – one of which is that excise tax must be paid in a timely way.

If an abatement is a possibility, we advise you to still pay the bill prior to the due date and then pursue the abatement with the Board of Assessors. Application for

abatement **does NOT stay the bill.** If not paid, your past-due bill will be forwarded to the Deputy Collector and will incur fees and interest that are NOT refundable even if a full abatement is issued and may result in your inability to conduct business at the registry.

If you have sold or traded a vehicle, you have the option of requesting an abatement from the Board of Assessors for the period of the year that tax was paid but you did not own the vehicle. Applications are available online at www.burgy.org under Assessors or from their office. The abatement is on the vehicle you no longer have, and please note that no adjustments can be made to the bill for the new vehicle. For an abatement, you will need the signed application and two forms of back up – one showing where the vehicle went (bill of sale, junk yard receipt, etc.) and one showing where the license plate went (new vehicle registration, plate return receipt, etc.)

You are NOT entitled to an abatement if you (1) cancel your registration and retain ownership of the vehicle, or (2) move to another Massachusetts city or town during the same calendar year.

It is your responsibility to keep your address current with the RMV. **Ch. 90 Sec. 26A requires registrants to notify the Registry in writing of any change in name or change of residential or mailing address within 30 days of the change. The Registry may suspend or revoke the license and/or registration of any person who fails to comply with this requirement.** The statute also authorizes the Registry to use reasonable sources, including insurance and postal records, to update its address records.

You can update it online at their website or notify them in person. The town is not able to access their records so cannot do this for you. Unfortunately, if you do not receive your bill and it is not paid timely because you did not receive it, no allowance can be made and fees and interest cannot be waived. **Failure to Receive a Bill (60A:2) "Failure to receive notice [tax bill] shall not affect the validity of the excise."**

Most bills are sent out in February or March for vehicles owned the previous year and cover the calendar year through December 31st. According to G.L. c. 60, sec 3, the annual tax bill is to be mailed "to the town where the assessed person resided on January first of the year in which the tax was assessed." If a new-to-you vehicle is purchased part way through the year, your bill is sent at some point determined by the RMV after the purchase and will cover the year from the purchase date through December 31st. If this occurs near the end of the calendar year, you may receive two bills at once – one for the balance of the purchase year and one for the next calendar year.

Lots to understand...If you have questions about your bill, please call the office at (413) 268-8401. For abatement questions, please call the Assessors at (413) 268-8403.

Enjoy the rest of your Autumn and Happy Holidays!

Bonnie Roberge, Collector

Mill River Greenway Committee

Mill River Greenway project planning is going full steam ahead. In June, Town Meeting approved the purchase of 4 (+/-) acres from Eversource to serve as a Mill River park and conservation area which will allow for restoration of the river edge and serve as an informal picnic and fishing facility. The Committee raised over \$9,000 for the park land purchase and initial topographic survey.

The Mill River Greenway Route 9 Right of Way Survey was completed to meet MassDOT requirements for Phase I work. The engineering firm VHB has commenced with the Phase II Pre-Construction Design Development Study aimed at pursuing the preliminary Greenway design within the new survey data, from the South Main Street Mass Central Rail Trail connection at the Haydenville line to the intersection of Route 9 and South Street in Williamsburg Center.

This year Smith College's Engineering Design Clinic will prepare studies for the proposed pedestrian/bicycle bridge that will connect the Mass Central Trail dismount to an extended sidewalk and bicycle lanes on South Main Street and bypassing the existing concrete vehicular bridge.

In September the Burgy Highway Department completed the trail surfacing to connect the Mass Central Trail to the Haydenville Dismount in a joint project with the Northampton Department of Planning and Sustainability. This work was funded by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation's Recreational Trails Program.

The Committee is also working with the Highway Department to develop improvements at the Fort Hill intersection that include pedestrian accommodation, improved safety and visibility, alignment and drainage, as part of the future South Main Street Complete Streets program.

The Town successfully secured the \$30,000 earmark for "Design of the Williamsburg Mill River Greenway" in the State Transportation Bond that was originally appropriated in 2014 due to the efforts of former State Senator Ben Downing. In 2018, we received additional funds from the Recreation Trails Program as well as the Healthy Hampshire program of the MA Department of Public Health. The Greenway Committee will be pursuing additional state and private funds to support the next phase of Greenway engineering and design work.

We appreciate the generous contributions made to the Town of Williamsburg by residents and businesses in support of the ongoing efforts to design and eventually build the Mill River Greenway in the years ahead. At the rate we are going, we can hope to break ground on this transformative project as soon as 2023. Additional contributions may be made on the Burgy.org webpage by clicking on "Mill River Greenway Donations."

Meekins Library

Did You Know...?

Meekins Library has a beautiful art gallery/exhibit space with a professional hanging system!

The Neil Hammer Gallery, located in the Hawks-Hayden Room at the Meekins Library, is named for Williamsburg photographer Neil Hammer, who died in a tragic plane crash in August 1998. Neil loved chronicling Williamsburg, its people, its landscapes, its buildings, and his passing left a rent in the fabric of the town.

The gallery is available at no charge to local artists, photographers, and crafts people. The gallery is scheduled for one month at a time per artist. Only family-friendly artwork is considered. Meekins Library serves as a public library to community members of all ages and also as the school library for the children of Williamsburg. Some of the local artists who have recently shown their art in the gallery are: Randall Deihl and Nancy Hill-Deihl, Fran Kidder, Carol Duke, Kim Wachtel, Patricia Belanger, Lauren Mills, Jane Dyer, Lauren Salva, Ed O'Brien, Anne Marie Taylor, Samuel Rowlette, Gary Niswonger, Barbara and Tom Rudzik, Nancy Mahoney, Nancy Dickinson, Angela Sciotti-Vincent, Thom Haxo, and many more!

For more info and photos with dimensions, see our website at:

<https://www.meekins-library.org/hammergallery.asp>.

If you would like to talk to us about hanging your artwork at Meekins Library (and we would love to hear from you!), please contact: Rochelle at rwildfong@cwmares.org or Katie at kkrol@cwmares.org.



Photo credit Eric Weber

Open Space Committee

Williamsburg's Open Space Committee has been working with the Mill River Greenway Committee to secure a public park site along the Mill River Greenway path in Haydenville. The Committee is also beginning the process of updating the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan. The plan includes information on existing open space and recreational resources, goals related to land conservation, land management and recreational activities, and a series of maps. The process of updating the plan will involve public meetings, review of related planning documents, and discussions with several town committees.

Hampshire Regional News and Events

Happy Fall, Williamsburg Families!

The staff at Hampshire Regional High School was excited to welcome the class of 2024 and welcome back all students on August 30!

New Staff

Hampshire Regional High School welcomes the following new staff:

- Assistant Principal: Mark Biagini
- Assistant Principal: Lauren Hotz
- Special Education: Ryan McCarthy
- Spanish: Elizabeth Caretti Ramirez
- School Adjustment Counselor: Sheela Haque
- Chemistry: Ashley Figueiredo
- Custodian: Albert Torres
- Van Driver: Joyce Dragon
- MS Para Educator: Ty Dickinson
- HS Para Educator: Janet Baron
- HS Para Educator: Jeni Glenowicz
- Life Skills Para Educator: Beth Illingsworth
- MS Para Educator: Linda Sickler
- BRIDGES History Teacher: Jake Fitzgerald
- Guidance Intern: Kelsey Cropp

Plus the following staff members have new positions:

- Attendance and Student Activities Administrative Assistant: Jen Reagan
- Guidance Administrative Assistant: Sarah Jablonski
- Cafeteria Manager: Carol Inman
- Girls Varsity Soccer: Steve Croft
- Boys JV Soccer: James Belcastro

Finally we had two awesome students, Lane Jablonski and Aidan Oligino, working on our custodial staff this summer to prepare the school to open.

New Courses Offered

Hampshire Regional is pleased to offer a number of new courses this year including:

- Digital Citizenship
- Intro to Music
- Intro to Guitar
- Aerobics and Dance

Digital Citizenship and Intro to Music were added to our 7th grade program of study to expose students to more technology and arts in their first year at Hampshire. The goal is to ensure that students are aware of all the course offerings and opportunities of the school and can explore their passion after getting an introductory course in all subjects.

Hampshire staff are also being more intentional about collaborating with one another to offer more interdisciplinary lessons and reaching out to families for more consistent and proactive communication, particularly in grades 7-9.

School Improvement Plan

Our school improvement plan is located on our website at www.hrhs.net. I invite you to review it and reach out to me with questions or concerns. It was developed by the HRHS School Council. School council members are: HRHS Staff: Kelly Carpenter (co-chair), Matt Collins, Amy Scully and Keith Wright; HRHS Parents: Melissa Adams, Bill Curran, Luci Dalton, Eileen Hamel; HRHS Student Rebecca Buelher, and HRHS School Committee Representative Margaret Larson. The HRHS School Improvement Plan goals include topics around college and career readiness, communication, curriculum alignment, safety, and supporting the whole child.

Please do not hesitate to contact Principal Kristen Smidy if you have questions or comments about Hampshire Regional!



SCBA Grant Awarded to Fire Department

On Friday August 3rd, the Town of Williamsburg was informed that the Williamsburg Fire Department was awarded a \$45,623 federal grant through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG) program for the purpose of purchasing six (6) Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA's), twelve (12) air bottles and personal masks for each firefighter. The AFG program is administered by the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration.

Fire Chief Jason Connell started a multiyear project in 2013 to upgrade all of the department air packs and their associated air bottles to a modern, lighter and safer design. SCBA's are devices used by rescuers/firefighters to provide breathable air in what is often referred to as immediately dangerous to life or health atmosphere (IDLH). Typically they are used during structure fires, vehicle fires and even incidents involving Carbon Monoxide.

Some of the features of the new air packs include washable harnesses, earlier low air alarms and more distinctive man-down alarms. The packs also feature a smaller and lighter design, to reduce firefighter fatigue and limit entanglement issues often encountered in building fires.

The grant award of \$45,623 covers 95% of the total estimated cost (\$47,904) for the SCBAs and Masks. The Remaining 5% (\$2,281) will be covered by the Williamsburg Firefighters Association, which leaves zero cost to the Town of Williamsburg.

The Williamsburg Fire Department is grateful to department member, Firefighter Shawn Rogers and grant writer Lisa Sihvonen-Binder of Cricklewood Consulting for preparing and reviewing the grant over a month-long process. We would also like to thank the Williamsburg Firefighters Association for providing funding and support for this grant. Without the continued support of the association, equipment like this would come at a greater cost to the taxpayers of the town of Williamsburg.



Highway Department Annual Holiday Celebration

The Board of Selectmen and Highway Department invite all residents to attend the Annual Holiday Celebration at the Williamsburg Highway garage on Friday, December 21, beginning at noon for a potluck lunch. This annual event is funded by contributions from employees, town officials, residents, and local businesses. Donations of food as well as funds are appreciated.

We hope to see you there! Wishing you a safe, healthy and happy holiday season.

Williamsburg Woodland Trails

Dam Trail Opening

On June 10, the Historic Dam Trail officially opened. The event allowed us to share the completed trail, highlight the interpretive signs telling the story of the dam and Mill River Disaster, and celebrate all those who made this important community asset possible.

Next Stop, Horse Mountain

Our next project will be to lay out and create a short trail on the newly conserved Horse Mountain property off Cole Road. This trail will provide a loop for hikers and cross-country skiers on a lovely woodland ridge in Haydenville.

Dogs on Trails

Dogs are an important part of many families in town and dog owners are important members of the Williamsburg community. However, dogs on trails, especially off-leash dogs, can disturb wildlife, impact other users, and leave their waste behind.

Because of this, dogs **MUST** be on leash on all Williamsburg Woodland Trails, and dogs are **NOT ALLOWED** on some trails, including:

- Historic Dam Trail
- Graves Farm and O'Neil Hill Trails
- Henhawk Trail
- Horse Mountain Trails

For more guidelines concerning dogs on Williamsburg Trails visit: <http://www.williamsburgwoodlandtrails.org/dogs-on-trails.html>.

Want to Know More about or Support Williamsburg Woodland Trails? Check us out, and let us know!

Visit: <http://www.williamsburgwoodlandtrails.org/>



Poop Scoop Reminder

When walking your pet on any public property you must pick up after it. This includes the sidewalk areas, school yard, town building grounds, and the watershed properties. Please take care of town property!

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Feed the Birds with Your Garden

Busy parent birds bringing fat caterpillars to their hatchlings is the quintessential image of spring. But where do those caterpillars come from? Most of those caterpillars emerge from eggs laid the previous fall on plants in our gardens, fields, and forests. In the spring, these eggs hatch and the caterpillars fatten up on the new leaves. Busy parents gather them up for their chicks. This cycle has gone on for thousands of years, but now our bird population is declining.

So what's the problem? We are not feeding the caterpillars. Most insects are specialists. Think of the Monarch feeding exclusively on Milkweed. Other insects love asters or birches. If those plants are not available, the insect can't just turn to a different plant. When new plants show up, either from your local nursery or by seeds dropped by invasive species, there are no native insects adapted to feed on these plants. In fact, nurseries tout plants that are pest free. But one plant's pest may be a baby bird's breakfast - or that of a fish, reptile, amphibian, or mammal.

What can you do to help?

- As we mentioned in our last article, clear out invasives wherever you can. If you clip them back repeatedly, most will eventually die out, or at least not set seed. Check out the links on the Conservation Commission's website (go to burgy.org) for more information.

- Plant native species in your garden. Local nurseries offer many beautiful low-maintenance and hardy ones.
- Plant a wide variety of plants. Diversity offers resources to wide variety of animals.
- Let your garden be a little messy. Eggs are laid on stems and leaves, adults burrow into the soil and nestle under leaf litter. If you leave garden plants standing in the winter, flower seeds will feed your birds for free! If you do cut stems, stack them loosely so the insects will hatch in the spring.
- Try to wait until May to rake out your garden. That gives time for the soil to warm up, the insects to wake up and begin their cycle. Bare soil is not natural or insect friendly!

Interested in learning more? Read Douglas Tallamy's wonderful book *Bringing Nature Home* or check out his



website, www.plantnative.com. Other good resources are:

The Green Garden by Ellen Sousa and *Attracting Native Pollinators*, by the Xerces Society.

<https://www.massaudubon.org/learn>
<https://cipwg.uconn.edu>