

TALES OF TINMOUTH

July-August 2016
Vol. 30 Number 5

Tinmouth
Vermont



Editor's Note: Summer is gaining speed, take time to enjoy the sunshine, an ice cream cone, a dip in a cool stream, or a good book.

Please send news, ads, and items of interest to tinmouthtales@vermontel.net. The deadline is the 20th of the preceding month. Gail Fallar, Editor, 515 North End Rd, Tinmouth, VT 05773

~ **Fourth Annual Tinmouth Town Wide Tag Sales** ~
Saturday, September 3rd
by Beth Eaton

It's time once again to start cleaning those dusty corners and crevices, looking for items that haven't been used for several years, and getting them out and cleaned up for the **Fourth Annual Tinmouth Town Wide Tag Sales**. It's planned for **Saturday, September 3rd, 2016**.

Information will also be posted on Front Porch Forum.

Contact Beth Eaton at bethe97@vermontel.net or call 802 446-3645. Remember. . . your junk is someone else's treasures!

(Maps will be available at the town office and each location – sales run from 8 am – 2 pm.)

**Public Hearing for Proposed Amendments
to the Tinmouth Town Plan
Monday, August 22, 2016
7:30 Town Office**

Report regarding the proposed amendments to the 2012 Tinmouth Town Plan.

These amendments/revisions amend the existing **2012 Town Plan** with changes regarding Commercial Energy Generation and Transmission Siting – that includes Community Standards, Solar Electricity Facility Siting, Preferred Areas, Setbacks, Screening, Prohibited Areas, Other Recommendations, and Other Electrical Facilities.

They add a Section regarding Flood Resilience with Goals and Action Items.

They also add Section for Historic and Culturally Significant Features – that includes listings of National Historic Buildings, sites on the Vermont Historic Register and other features unique to Tinmouth.

Copies are available at the town office.

**1st Half Property Taxes are due on Monday,
August 15th.**

~ **Recipes Wanted for a New Tinmouth Cookbook!** ~
By Shirley Bucceri

With many changes in the way people cook and eat, do you think it's time for a new edition of a "Tinmouth Cook Book"? Thoughts would be: 1) old family tried and true; 2) gluten free; 3) Natural home remedies, etc.

From savory to sweets, all recipes are welcome. The goal is to have the recipes collected and printed in time for holiday gifts. Proceeds to benefit charities here in Tinmouth. **Deadline is October 1st in order to get it ready for holiday giving.**

If interested in participating, please e-mail your recipe to me at (smhb@vermontel.net) or send to Shirley Bucceri, 49 North End Road, Tinmouth, VT 05773. If you have any questions, please let me know (235-3434).

~ **Community Walking Program** ~
by Annie Robbins

Do you want to improve your fitness level with like-minded people? Do you want to learn how to get fit? Please consider our community walking program. Recent studies show most people prefer walking over other forms of physical activity. Come to an informational meeting about the Community Walking Program **Monday, August 15th at 7 pm** at the Tinmouth Community Center. For more information call me at 446-2343. This program is free and open to all who want to improve their fitness through walking.

~ **Tinmouth's Exhibit at the Vermont History Expo** ~
~ **now Upstairs at the Town Office** ~
By Grant Reynolds

Every two years the Vermont Historical Society holds its "Country Fair of History" at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds on Vt. Rte 110 in Tunbridge. Over 100 town historical societies displayed aspects of their town histories under the Theme H20: The Power of Water in Vermont History.

This year our (Tinmouth Historical and Genealogical Society) exhibit featured:

- the Channel, supplying power to blast furnaces and mills, and as a wetland;
- Tinmouth Pond – source of vacation and solitude;
- The Great Spring above Wright's Road and the marble mill that it powered.

It is now on display in the conference room above the Town Office. Please stop in and enjoy a bit of history.



July 2016 Calendar of Events



Town Office/Library	Monday	4 th	Independence Day	CLOSED !!
Fire Dept	Thursday	7 th	7:00	Fire House
Summer Reading	Friday	8 th	11:00	Library
Select Board	Tuesday	12 th	7:00	Town Office
Planning Commission	Tuesday	12 th	7:00	Town Office*
Summer Reading	Friday	15 th	11:00	Library
Old Creamery Com	Saturday	23 rd	9:00 AM	Town Office
Special Select Board	Thursday	28 th	6:30	Town Office
Personnel Policy Com	Thursday	28 th	7:00	Town Office*
PMNRCD	Saturday	30 th	8-10 AM	Danby Little Village Road

August 2016 Calendar of Events



PMNRCD	Wednesday	3 rd	7:00	Old Fire House
Fire Dept	Thursday	4 th	7:00	Fire House
State Primary	Tuesday	9 th	8:00 AM-7:00	Community Center
Select Board	Thursday	11 th	7:00	Town Office
PMNRCD	Saturday	13 th	9:00 AM	Lilly Hill Road
1 st Half Taxes Due	Monday	15 th	8-12 & 1-5	Town Office
Select Board-Special	Tuesday	16 th	7:00	Town Office
Hearing for Solar	Monday	22 nd	7:30	Town Office
Planning Commission	Monday	22 nd	7:30	Town Office
Book Sale	Saturday	27 th	8 AM-1:30 PM	Old Fire House
Vermont Strong 5 Years	Sunday	28 th	11 AM -2 PM	Edie's Green, Pawlet
School Starts (TES)	Wednesday	31 st	8:20 AM	School

Town Wide Tag Sale Saturday September 3rd 8 AM-2 PM All Around Town



* Upstairs Meeting Room at the Town Office

July Select Board meeting has been changed to Tuesday the 12th

July Planning Commission meeting was changed to Tuesday, July 12th in order to meet with the Select Board prior to the PC meeting.

Sunday Church Service 9:00 AM ~ All are welcome!

Transfer Station hours are Wednesday 4:00 - 7:00 pm & Saturday 8:00 am - noon.

Library Hours ~ Monday and Thursday 9:30-noon and 1-5 pm.

Fun "non-competitive" Volleyball on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm.

Kripalu Yoga, Saturdays 8:30-10:00 am \$10 per class Bess Lewis, Instructor, Community Center

~ Tales of Tinmouth in Need of Help ~

Ye Olde Editor has finally come to the conclusion that there are just not enough hours in the day for everything she wants/needs to do. Notice that this is the July/August issue (being mailed on August 25th) which followed the April/May/June issue. (*Tales* used to be published every month or close to it.)

After being Editor for over 30 years, perhaps it is time to step back and let someone else have a go. I have very much appreciated all the support, help, volunteers, and donations that have kept *Tales* a part of this community for three decades. It was not an easy decision.

If you are interested in keeping this publication in circulation, there will be a meeting at the Town Office on **Monday, August 29th at 7:00 PM** to discuss the options. Please bring your ideas.

~ **Tinmouth Community Church** ~

Dear Friends,

I often find wisdom in the natural world and this summer is no exception. Last year we grew one tomato plant in a 5 gallon bucket and were able to enjoy tomatoes past the frosts by bringing it indoors. There were some complaints in my family about having such a large and non-traditional houseplant sidling up to the dinner table, but the fresh tomatoes helped make my argument. So this year, we planted some of our tomatoes and peppers in buckets, while still planting the majority down in the garden.

What I am finding interesting is that the potted plants are growing stronger and taller than those in the garden. Normally the plants that have more space are healthier than those confined to 5 gallons of soil, but something is different this year. I know it has to do with nutrients and water. We are taking extra care to ensure that the potted plants receive water and fertilizer frequently, whereas the garden plants are more often left to fend for themselves unless the weather is really dry, and then we water them.

There is a parallel to this situation in our lives; when an issue or problem in our life is staring us in the face (*like a plant in a bucket right outside the door*), then we put energy into dealing with it. If it is an illness, then we take our medicine, drink fluids and get plenty of rest. But when we are well (*just growing as usual out in the garden of life*), then we can neglect some of the basic things that keep us healthy such as getting plenty of sleep, drinking enough water (*it shocks me to see how rampant dehydration is among us!*), exercising, having a centering spiritual practice, spending time with family and friends relaxing and laughing together, and eating nourishing food.

Summer offers a brief and beautiful growing season around these parts. Let's take advantage of it by getting all of the nourishment that is available in every form possible, for the food and flowers we grow, as well as for ourselves and for the well being of our body, our mind and our spirit.

Happy Growing!
Shirley

P.S. Worship happens every Sunday at 9am with great music and good food for your soul, not to mention delicious refreshments afterward. You are welcome!



~ **Library News** ~

by *Ruth Drachman, Librarian*

The Tinmouth Library's Annual Book Sale will take place on **Saturday, August 27th from 8 A. M. until Noon**. From **Noon until 1:30** there will be a \$2.00 bag sale. Fill a bag with as many books as you can for \$2.00.

We are now accepting books for the sale. Please donate books that are clean and in good condition. No encyclopedias or textbooks. Thanks!! Your donations help. The money from the book sale will be used to buy NEW books, NEW books on CD, and NEW DVD's for the library.

We also have a beautiful afghan throw which has been donated to the library, and we are going to raffle it. The prize winner will receive this attractive knitted and crocheted throw! Stop by and see it, and then buy a ticket. The drawing will take place at the book sale! Tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00.

It is not too late to join the Summer Reading Challenge at the Tinmouth Library.....Read Books, get prizes and surprises!!

The library will be open on Saturday once a month. Look for the librarian to be there on the **FIRST** Saturday of every month from 9:00 A. M. until noon.

~ **New books at the Library for Adults** ~

* ***The Road to Little Dribbling*** by Bill Bryson, "a loving and hilarious valentine to Bryson's adopted country, Great Britain".

* ***Becoming Nicole*** by Amy Ellis Nutt, an inspiring true story of a transgender girl, her identical twin brother, and their family.

****The Girl on the Train*** by Paula Hawkins, a psychological thriller.

~ **For young Adults and Children** ~

There are many new books for young adults and children. Stop in and check one out.

Writing group will meet on **Sunday, July 24th** at 1:30 PM at the library.

The **Book Discussion group** will meet on **Sunday, July 17th**, at 3 PM at the library.

The Library is open Monday and Thursday 9:30am until Noon, and 1:00pm until 5:00pm and also the first Saturday morning of the month from 9am until Noon.

~ **Small Batteries Are Now Being Recycled!** ~

Batteries are now being collected at the Transfer Station and the Town Office – any battery that weighs less than 4.4 pounds is acceptable. You were previously allowed to put them in the dumpster, please don't, please recycle them!! It's FREE, they can be regular or rechargeable. Cell phones are accepted as well. Details are available at the town office or transfer station.

~ **Composting is Coming to Tinmouth** ~

By Helen Mango,

Tinmouth Solid Waste and Recycling Committee

In 2012, the Vermont Legislature passed Act 148: Universal Recycling and Composting Law. The goal of this law is to reduce the amount of waste entering landfills by increasing recycling and composting. Available landfill space is decreasing while the overall amount of waste that Vermonters send to landfills has been increasing. A significant portion of a typical Vermont household's waste (by weight and by volume) consists of organic matter. This organic matter is divided into two groups: leaf/yard debris and food scraps.

As of July 1, 2015, all transfer stations and drop-off facilities in Vermont were required by Act 148 to accept leaf and yard debris. There is a specially designated area at the Tinmouth Transfer Station for leaf and yard debris (although most Tinmouth folks usually find a spot on their land to dispose of grass clippings and leaves and brush and other yard debris). It is free to dispose of leaf and yard waste at the Transfer Station. Clean wood (i.e. not painted, glued, pressure-treated, etc.) can also be disposed of at no charge at the Transfer Station.

Commercial-level generators of food scraps (greater than half a ton per week) currently (as of July 1, 2016) must divert all food scraps to a certified composting facility. By July 1, 2020, **ALL** food scraps from all residents (that means you!) must be properly composted and not end up in landfills. We have a composting facility in town (run by Wheaton Squier) that is already collecting compostable material – look for the designated container at the Transfer Station. Or you can compost your food scraps at home – lots of people already do this to make good soil for their gardens. Compost piles can be as simple as a corner of the garden where you toss your food scraps, or as fancy as a purchased composting container. Just keep out all meat and fish products so that you don't get visited by skunks, raccoons, and other interested critters! (Eggshells are OK.) For help with starting a compost pile, check out www.howtocompost.org. This site contains lots of links for composting beginners to experts.

(Speaking of meat products – by July 1, 2020, when all food scraps will be banned from landfills, this will include meat products – at this time, residents are advised to bring these to the compost collection bin at the Transfer Station. But you can keep composting everything else at home.)

The benefits of composting are many, including that it will save you money. Food scraps are heavy and bulky – why pay to have them go into the dumpster at the Transfer Station? Start composting now (either at home or using the convenient collection bin at the Transfer Station) and help the environment and your wallet!

~ **Electronic Waste Disposal** ~

So when you dispose of electronics, here's the scoop ~ some electronics we can be paid for, they are "covered" meaning the manufacturer or someone else will pay for them to be disposed of properly.

These need to be sorted into the two gaylords (big cardboard boxes) for electronics in the recycling shed.

THESE ARE 'COVERED' ELECTRONICS:

TVs
Computers
Computer Monitors
Computer Peripherals (mouse, keyboard, speakers, scanner, external hard drive, computer speakers, etc.)
Tabletop Printers (including all in one machines that print/fax/scan) No floor models.

All other E-waste not listed above will still be accepted but we will not get paid for them. Please note that these CANNOT go in the trash and cannot go into the metal bin!

THESE ARE ELECTRONICS SUCH AS:

Cordless phone/Charger
Answering Machine
Digital TV Converter Box
Video Game Console
Very Light Equipment
(small CD players/radios, etc.)
Bag of cords/chargers/misc.
VCR
CD/DVD Players
One Piece Stereos
Fax Machine
Stereo Speakers

If you are not sure which gaylord to place them in, please ask the Transfer Station Attendant.

Hunting and Fishing Licensees are available at the Town Office. The town receives \$1.50 for each license sold!!

*Please Recycle or Pass
Along Tales!!*

**Five Years after Tropical Storm Irene:
Making Flood Resiliency a Reality in the South Lake
Champlain Region**

Poultney ~ As part of the South Lake Champlain Partnership, the Poultney Mettowee Conservation District and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission have teamed up to facilitate flood resiliency education, planning and project implementation in the Flower Brook Watershed shared by Tinmouth, Danby, and Pawlet.

The watershed approach used in our project, titled *Weathering the Storm: Community-Based Planning for Flood Resiliency in Flower Brook*, is an important component of flood protection in vulnerable villages and towns, because the effects felt in one town are the accumulation of impacts from upstream.

In addition to this information sharing and feedback gathered in the three project towns, the Partnership will offer workshops in July and August leading up to a three-town gathering on August 28, 2016 (the 5th anniversary of TS Irene) from 11-2 at Edie's Green in Pawlet Village. All events are open to the public.

July/August Flood Preparedness Workshops:

July 30: Lets Talk Runoff: Keep Your Driveway Out of the Stream

Many driveways cross Flower Brook and contribute to the water, gravel, and sediment in the stream during storms, increasing the damage downstream. Learn stormwater management tools to minimize impacts to Flower Brook with Southern Vermont Stream Alterations Engineer Josh Carvajal, Danby Road Foreman Charlie Bush, Pawlet Road Commissioner Keith Mason, and Trout Unlimited's Erin Rodgers leading the discussion at 844 Little Village Road, Danby from 8-10 am.

Aug. 3: Green Stormwater: What You Can Do At Home

A presentation with UVM Sea Grant's Becky Tharp at the Tinmouth Old Firehouse at 7 pm. Find out what you can do to be more flood resilient using rain gardens and other stormwater retention methods on your own property.

Aug. 13: Flower Brook Hike: Explore Your Watershed

Led by Conservation District Manager, Hilary Solomon, this hike along Flower Brook from Danby to Pawlet will explore the results of weather and land use changes on a sensitive landscape. Please wear sturdy shoes and be prepared for a several mile hike along an abandoned road. Some off-trail walking will be included. Meet at Lilly Hill Road and the Pawlet Danby Road at 9:00 AM for this informational hike.

**Five Years Vermont Strong: Tropical Storm Irene,
Five Years Later – Where Are We Now?**

Join the three towns of Tinmouth, Danby, and Pawlet for a Flower Brook Community Event on **Sunday, August 28 from 11 am – 2 pm at Edie's Green in Pawlet**. This event is free and open to the public.

Share your stories of resiliency as we learn what Pawlet, Danby, and Tinmouth have done and will continue to do to protect their towns from future flood events. Presenters include Ned Swanberg, VT DEC Rivers Program; Ethan Swift, VT DEC Watershed Coordinator; and Hilary Soloman, PMNRCD Director. There will also be Tropical Storm Irene Photo and Story Displays.

There is great fun for the kids as well: Wonderfeet Museum and the Rutland Area Food and Farm Link (RAFFL) will have hands-on activities, and there will be a Watershed Model and Flume Table: an interactive display with sand and running water that helps users visualize how dynamic streams interact with the landscape.

Of course, no great community gathering is without food and music! We'll have Pizza, BBQ, Pies and Ice Cream for sale and rousing music by Spruce Knob Uprising.

For those who would like to explore the stream and to better understand its dynamic potential, there will be a hike along the Flower Brook from 2-4 pm starting from Edie's Green.

Weathering the Storm is funded by a grant from the High Meadows Funds as part of a series of watershed alliance projects throughout the state.

For more information, please contact Hilary Solomon, PMNRCD at (802) 287-8339; hilary@pmmrncd.org or Elysa Smigielski, RRPC at (802)779-4454; elysa@rutlandrpc.org.

~ Vacancies ~

The Select Board is still looking for volunteers to serve on the, the Old Creamery Committee, the Solid Waste and Recycling Committee, and Pound Keeper. If you are interested, please contact the Town Office at 446-2498.



~ **Mill River Unified Union School District** ~

Grant Reynolds, Chair of the Tinmouth School District Board, gave the following speech at the Organizational meeting of the new Mill River Unified Union School District held on May 12, 2016 . . .

“As Board chair of the smallest district I appreciate being chosen by my fellow Study Committee members to tell our story.

Individually and at our meetings we paid close attention to school district consolidation action in Montpelier over the last couple of years. None of us had any intention of yielding final decision authority over our local schools to a larger district. One town even voted never to merge with anyone.

On the other hand we had a very effective supervisory union, with a star superintendent. We were keenly aware, as many of our constituents were not, that a series of relatively obscure laws had transferred authority over special education, transportation, curriculum, professional development, financial management, union negotiations, and a number of other key functions from the town school board to the Supervisory Union. The superintendent was made the CEO of each district and of the SU. That means that the principal no longer works for the local Board, but for the superintendent. The Board’s role in hiring teachers and principals was limited, and support staff hiring and firing was done by the superintendent. I am not mentioning these things as a complaint, just as facts. There is not a lot of local control left, but I don’t think that is generally understood.

These functions were being carried out pretty capably by the SU, enough to give us some confidence that we could seriously consider a bigger step. That does not mean that there was any desire for it. But the advantages included lower tax rates for five years, keeping our small school grants, and most of all, we got to design it ourselves. We would not be subject to the state plan, required in 2018, of how everyone would merge.

But we couldn’t merge under Act 46! It required 900 students; we had about 825. We talked with several nearby districts, not seeking new members but just trying to find out what they were thinking. But we were too far ahead of them. They hadn’t begun to face how serious the merger requirement was. So we changed focus to Act 153, the existing voluntary merger act. That only required four districts. It offered most of the same financial advantages, except for one less year of tax reductions.

To get our feet on the ground, the SU Executive Committee began meeting frequently to figure out what our course should be. In the summer we had enough confidence to ask each School Board to vote to form a Study Committee. This is very important, because the Study Committee designs the new district. It writes the Articles of Agreement, which would become the Constitu-

tion of the new Union.

The Study Committee included the four town board chairs, plus one additional person each from Clarendon and Wallingford. Clarendon chose George Ambrose, Rutland South Chair and a member of the Mill River Board, while Wallingford chose Tammy Heffernan, Mill River Board Chair. So we got Mill River onto the Study Committee, even though the law on mergers strangely ignores existing union school districts.

The Essex School District had been working on a study under Act 153, the earlier voluntary merger law. So they basically changed “Act 153” to “Act 46” in their study and went to the State Board, which approved it. So we read the Essex study and said in effect, “If this is ok with the state board we can do this job ourselves. No consultants or high priced lawyers needed.” And that is how we did it, saving the taxpayers close to \$20,000.

Probably not a lot of words from the Essex study actually survived, but what a boost it was to have a starting point. I don’t have to tell you that two key issues were closing small schools and school choice in grades 7-12. Tinmouth and Shrewsbury have small schools. Tinmouth had school choice – but 80-90% of its students have always chosen Mill River. We dealt with small schools in Article 4, second paragraph: “No school may be closed without a unanimous vote of the Union Board, and a vote of the town in which it is located.” We put that in the warning, too, and in Article 16 we made it really, really hard to amend it.

At the very outset, one of my fellow Board chairs looked me in the eye and said, “You will have to give up school choice. We will not pay for a privilege our children don’t have.” That introduced me to two aspects of choice that had nothing to do with the controversy surrounding Section 4 of Act 46. The merged district runs a school. It is funded as a program, not by the number of children who attend. If the district allows school choice as well, the school every such child attends has to be paid in cash - \$12-\$15,000 per child in extra expenditures. The other aspect, of course, is that choosing your school at public expense is a privilege not many children in Vermont actually have. Many towns have school choice, but they are all small like Tinmouth. As you know, Tinmouth agreed to give it up, in return for grandfathering the 6 students already attending schools other than Mill River – and for protection against our small school being closed.

The result was we started seriously working on this in June, had the study ready for the School Boards to comment on in October and November, and presented it to the State Board right here in this room on December 15. And they approved it.

Over the next three months the Study Committee held six public forums and mailed out a letter or postcard to the voters every month. Dave put together a terrific presentation for the forums, which he repeated in con-

densed form at Town Meetings. Most forums were well-attended and brought probing questions from the audiences. Over 80% of the voters in each town voted in favor – Shrewsbury even accepted a 4 cent increase in their estimated school tax rate.

Forming a new district, even from a solid foundation like Rutland South, is a big job. We planned to do it in four months. Others are taking over a year. The Union Board has just been sworn in today. So to get started and indicate how decisions would be made by the Board, the Study Committee kept meeting, along with Five Friends. You can guess who the five friends were! In this Organizational Meeting we establish the framework for the new District. Next Monday the Union Board will ratify the recommendations of the Study plus 5 group and start making further decisions.

In my former life, I have worked on some heavy duty stuff – International agreements, multi-million dollar financing plans, expensive environmental cleanups – with some very, very smart people. But I want to tell you that the Study Committee in a little school district in Vermont was the equal of any of those teams, and a lot more fun to work with. So George Ambrose, our leader (stand up, George), Adrienne Raymond from Shrewsbury, (you too, Adrienne) Ken Fredette from Wallingford (who is underwater on a commercial diving job in Massachusetts at the moment), John McKenna from Clarendon, Tammy Heffernan from Wallingford, and Superintendent Dave Younce, who was with us all the way; working with you has been a real pleasure. And I think we can be proud of our work.”

~ Nature Notes ~

Chuck Bronk and TraceyLea Byford (Channel Road) reported a mid-sized bear at their bird feeders – they went out and shouted, away the bear scampered, and they removed the bird feeders – they just wanted everyone to be aware that these critters are out there.

Weather had been, hot, hot, hot, and muggy, muggy, muggy. Get used to the new climate!!

There was a very interesting thunder and lightening shower on August 5th. Lots of rain and an occasional lightening strike and its corresponding thunder – but south of town there was a lightening show like fireworks, flash after flash after flash. Some folks were without power for a few hours, kudos to Green Mountain Power employees who were out in it getting folks back online. The heat and humidity were nearly unbearable.

It's ZUCCHINI time!! Zukes, cukes, tomatoes and other veggies are beginning to show up on the bench at the town office – FREE for the taking. If you have extra and would like contribute it, would be greatly appreciated! If you see something there, please stop and take something home for supper! We would like to have folks use the picnic table under the porch of the old creamery for this!!

~ Marion's Musings for July ~

by Marion Hambly

Here I am again, continuing my 1996 trip around the US. Last time we were headed for Holbrook Arizona. Arriving at a campground, we stayed a few days so we could tour the Petrified Forest and the Painted Desert. The wood in the forest is something else. I understand as the years go by, it turns to stone.

The Painted Desert was amazing! It really looked like someone had huge paint brushes and went to town. The rock formations were huge! One place there were rocks which had been etched thousands of years ago; pictures of people, animals, and other features such as the sun and moon. There were a few dinosaur bones as well.

It was very dry there, river beds too. We traveled back to our campground for the night. The next day we headed for the Grand Canyon where we had reservations for a couple of days. Unhooked and went to the South Rim. I had been here before but it was just as beautiful. Very dry, though. I had to put lotion on my arms and legs every day. The temp was 82, but would go down to 44 at night. Dinner at a steak house, the waiters were dressed in blue jeans and cowboy hats.

On the way there from Holbrook, there was a big forest fire near Flagstaff. It was on the other side of the mountain, but the smoke was very visible.

That night the temperature dipped into the lower 40's. We woke up cold, cold. Dick put the furnace on for a bit. After breakfast, we drove down to the helicopter airport. The copter held six people besides the pilot, flew up to 7000 feet and then right down through the canyon itself. After a while it all looks the same. The river looked so tiny. I took a lot of pictures, real smooth ride. I hear it's not allowed now.

Traveling the next day, the landscape was very desolate, a lot of cactus, mountains and sand. We were headed to another state campground called Cat Tail Cove on Lake Havasu in Arizona. The lake is aqua-blue just like the glacier lakes. The campground had a few bushes but no grass. The houses down in the city of Havasu don't have any grass either, just sand for their lawn.

The next morning we started traveling through the desert for real to California - sand, cactus, and rocks, but no grass. We went through little towns with empty rotting shacks which had been given to people years ago who would work the land, but that soon went by with.

We were soon in Yucca Valley where one of Dick's sisters lived. Parked the rig in the yard and stayed for a few days.

We visited the Joshua Forest. These trees take 30 years to germinate. I understand they come from the deserts in Israel. They look like a small cactus which has stunted growth. There are also unusual rock formations there.

I am getting tired and so will continue this saga next month. We got to see Bob Hope's house, Palm Springs, and even went to a casino. *Until then, bye-bye.*

Meeting Highlights ~

(Complete minutes are available at the town office.)

Select Board ~ 6/9/16

Present were Board members Frank Sears, Matt Patry, and Laurie Phillips, as well as Eric Buffum – Road Commissioner, Tom and Zak Fuller (Fuller Sand & Gravel), Mike Mullin (Pike Industries), Kevin Ruane, Hollis Squier, Grant Reynolds, Amanda Gill, Kim Harbaugh, Beth Miller (Poultney-Mettowee Natural Resource Conservation District) and Gail Fallar- Bd. Asst.

Board opened 2016 paving bids – Fuller Sand & Gravel bid \$53.00 per ton; Wilk Paving bid \$55.53 per tone; and Pike Industries bid \$51.93 per ton. Board voted to award the bid to Pike as low bidder.

Beth Miller advised the Board that progress was being made in regards to the South Lake Champlain consortium's grant from High Meadows for flood resiliency planning for Tinmouth, Danby and Pawlet. There are a series of events this summer, including a Community Watershed Event recognizing the 5th anniversary of Tropical Storm Irene. Other events include river corridors, driveways, and storm water, and forest and stream walks, as well as dialogues with towns, planning commissions and the public/property owners.

Eric reported that the snow plows are painted, trucks have been washed and oiled, and road grading is nearly done. He inquired about renting a chipper for brush removal - \$246 per day for three days. Board concurred. He noted there was no word about the Better Back Roads grants. He asked about acquiring more tools, Laurie has the list, they will meet to discuss. He also reported that he had seen temporary stop lights that could help with situations that needed flaggers – still working on getting more information – wondered if they could be a safety grant.

Eric and the Board discussed paving for 2016, should there be a dig-out near the cat tail pond (just south of the intersection of Rte 140 and North End Road)? After discussion, Board voted to fix that area as part of the paving program this year.

Road side mowing – Laurie reported that Wade Mazure from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns PACIF (the town's insurance program) had advised that Hollis' tractor was too old to require a roll bar and seat belt, but that the town should hire him as a subcontractor and require lights, safety vest and signs, etc. Hollis advised that he had acquired liability insurance and was willing to work as a subcontractor. Board then authorized Hollis to mow the roadsides.

Board appointed an Equipment Fund Committee: Stan Wilbur, Amanda Gill, Kevin Ruane, Hollis Squier, Eric Buffum, Ronnie Crossman. Select Board members are ex-officio, Laurie volunteered to also attend meetings on behalf of the Board. First meeting was set for June 22, 2016 at the town garage.

Board voted to accept Kevin Allen's bid of \$690 to repair the chimney at the town office, including adding a cap.

Matt reminded the Tinmouth Volunteer Fire Department that they had been asked to remove old fuel oil tanks from the town garage area and from the old fire house and to remove old Scott air packs as well. Kevin advised that the old oil tank at the town garage was gone.

Gail requested the Board move their July 14th meeting to an earlier date – the Board will need to set the town tax rate, and taxes are due to be mailed on the 15th. Board decided to move to either the 12th or 13th depending on Laurie's work schedule.

Kevin inquired about bidding on ditch work and noted that the town could do much of the work on the proposed dig out on Rte 140.

Laurie reported the Personnel Policy Committee had three areas of concern for the Board to consider – a new drug and alcohol policy; evaluation of employees; and security regarding the public access computer – it should not be networked with the town's computer and the Wifi should be more secure.

Board signed and sealed the 2015 Grand List – there are no appeals or suits pending. Listers have also signed the form.

Select Board ~ 6/28/16 ~ Special Meeting

Present were members Matt Patry and Frank Sears, as well as Eric Buffum – Road Commissioner, Hollis Squier, Kevin Ruane, Mike Mullen from Pike Industries, and Gail Fallar- Board Assistant

Matt called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM. at the town office. Everyone proceeded to the site on Route 140 just south of the intersection with North End Road. Road section to be bomagged (chewed up and spit out by a huge machine) was inspected – about 300 feet with another 50 feet on each end for the transition. It clearly is in need of repair – not just a shim and topcoat of new asphalt.

Members discussed various aspects, ditching, gravel; bomag will chew up the current road, then another 6 inches of gravel will be added and then it will be paved with 4 inches of asphalt.

As a thunder storm was fast approaching, everyone trundled along back to the town office.

Mike calculated amount of gravel needed – 15 or 16 tandem loads- town will truck to the town garage to stockpile. Cost of this project will add approximately \$20,000 to the total. Discussion ensued as whether to reduce paving to cover it; although with the lower cost per ton for paving this year, it was decided to do as much paving as possible. After discussion, Board voted to use remaining FY15 highway funds (\$10,000) and \$10,000 of this year's (FY16) highway fund balance to cover the additional expense.

Mike from Pike will prepare new contract and get the project on the schedule. Pike was awarded the paving project for this year, made sense to use that company to do the re-claimation project.

Board also discussed ditching projects – the town received a Better Vermont Roads grant for controlling erosion on McCoy Road/Wells Brook – Board decided to go ahead with that work, and as it is beyond the scope of town equipment, it will need to be hired out (town will be responsible for matching 20%). Proposed ditching projects on Gulf Road and McNamara Road did not get grant funding. After discussion, Board voted to proceed with work on McNamara Road – using money from special projects, culverts and gravel budget lines. The Town will do trucking and purchase the stone, need to hire an excavator. Requests for bids for both projects will be sent to Dan Allard, Kevin Ruane and Wright Construction. Bids will be due on July 12th, next Select Board meeting.

Select Board ~ 7/7/16 ~ Special Meeting with the Personnel Policy Committee (PPC)

Select Board members present: Laurie Phillips and Frank Sears

PPC members present: Amy Martone, Judi Fox, Pat Psholka, Stan Wilbur, Cathy Reynolds, Laurie Phillips

Others present: Larry Smith - Member Relations Manager for Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT), Eric Buffum- Road Commissioner, and Gail Fallar-Board Asst.

Select Board and PPC members listened to presentation by Larry Smith, asked questions regarding health care and other benefits.

No separate Select Board action. Please see 7/7/16 minutes of the PPC for further details.

Select Board ~ 7/12/16

Select Board members present: Frank Sears, Matt Patry, and Laurie Phillips

Planning Commission (PC) members present: Michael Fallar, Vito Macaluso, Bob Lloyd, Grant Reynolds, Kim Harbaugh, and Kevin Ruane

Equipment Fund Committee members Stan Wilbur, Amanda Gill, Hollis Squier, Eric Buffum, and Kevin Ruane

Others present: Eric Buffum – Road Commissioner and Gail Fallar- Board Assistant

Board moved the *Planning Commission* to the top of the agenda.

PC members advised they wanted to discuss proposed amendments to the Town Plan with Select Board to get input prior to going holding a public hearing, after which the proposed amendments would come before the Select Board for review and its own public hearing.

PC members advised the Select Board that they wanted to have something in writing in the Town Plan regarding commercial solar/energy siting as the Public Service Board looks at a town's plan for guidance when they have an application before them. At a recent meeting in Middletown Springs, a solar developer advised he could do whatever they wanted as Middletown does not have anything in writing regarding solar projects.

Select Board inquired about suitable areas, prohibited areas (there is now a list of historic and culturally significant areas), protection for land owners and town, thanked them for their work and asked the PC to consider their concerns.

It was also noted that the Rutland Regional Planning Commission had determined that Flood Resiliency had to be addressed in order for the town plan to be amended and still retain RRPC approval. There will be a major updating of the town plan in the coming year as it needs to be re-adopted in 2017.

The Planning Commission exited at 7:39 to complete their own meeting and consider the SB's suggestions. They retired to the upstairs conference room at the town office.

Back to the regular agenda ~

Eric advised that recent thunderstorms resulted in ditches and culverts needing to be cleaned out. He inquired about spraying chloride to help keep dust down on gravel roads. There is \$1200 budgeted, none was purchased last year. It can be spread with a lime spreader – town does not have spraying equipment. North East Road, North End Road and Gulf Road all have areas that need application.

Board opened bids for erosion project on McCoy Road – Dan Allard bid \$24,000; Kevin Ruane bid \$16,500. Board voted to award the contract to Kevin as low bidder.

Board opened bids for ditching project on McNamara Road (per hour for excavator) - Dan Allard bid \$88 per hour; Kevin Ruane bid \$100 per hour. Board voted to award the contract to Dan as low bidder.

Eric inquired about needed wrenches. Laurie noted she is still working on acquiring more tools for the town garage, Hollis offered to let the town use his welder at no charge until they can get one. Laurie advised the town had a quote for a welder, she will make it happen, cost with helmet and gloves is around \$3,000.

Matt inquired about the town spraying poison parsnips, which are really abundant this year. He was advised that the Town would need a permit/license – landowner can do on their own.

Equipment Fund Committee – Eric provide before and after photos of brush removal on Journey's End Road – town had rented a chipper for three days – he decided to take getting a chipper off the wanted list, until he got a quote for brush removal on Mountain View Road for over \$3,800. He noted the road crew is working on a road inventory and needed brushing and ditching.

Gail advised the Equipment Fund has a balance of \$86,000 at the end of FY16 (June 30th). FY17's allotment is \$51,000.

Committee members have not been able to reach a consensus about which piece of equipment should be purchased first. The loader was scheduled to be replaced, the road commissioner wants an excavator, some members want a backhoe with various attachments; there are pros and cons for each piece being considered. Financing was also part of the discussion – there is not enough in the account to buy more than one – should the town take out a loan, or lease? They asked the Select Board to determine how much money could be spent. Eric has obtained ball park estimates for an excavator, backhoe, skid steer, trailer (for excavator) – municipal discounts play a big role in cost.

Frank noted that the Board needs to consider the road commissioner's wishes as well as keep taxpayers in mind. Stan noted that the Select Board can borrow for up to five years without voter approval – Gail advised against that without a public meeting to inform voters.

Select Board asked that numbers be run with various pieces of equipment and their uses for their next meeting.

Hollis inquired about VTEL's progress with the fiber optic line – there are still a few folks on the old copper lines – they will lose telephone service once VTEL stops maintaining two systems. VTEL still needs to remove the old pedestals and provide bore profiles. He asked the Board to write a letter to remind them that had promised to provide the bore profiles.

Gail advised that the town tax rate should be set at \$0.6273, and that there needed to be a local rate of \$0.0004 to cover veterans exemption voted at town meeting several years ago. Board approved both rates.

Kevin asked the Board to write a letter to VTRANS in Montpelier regarding the railroad track crossing on Rte 140 in Wallingford. It is in really bad shape, and nothing is being done to correct it. Board will encourage others to write letters as well.

Select Board ~ 7/28/16 ~ Special Meeting

Present were members Laurie Phillips, Matt Patry, and Frank Sears as well as Eric Buffum, Gail Fallar- Board Assistant, and Cathy Reynolds briefly.

Eric advised that he had received a substantial offer for the John Deere scoop loader from someone in Maine, who had inspected it.

Matt thanked Eric for his initiative, but advised that he should not have offered it for sale without Select Board approval. Frank noted that the offer was well within market value.

Process to dispose of town equipment was discussed. Gail advised there is no written policy but in the past it has always been put out to bid. Board voted to sell the big John Deere scoop loader through a bid process. Board will

accept bids at their regular August meeting on the 11th. To be advertised in the Rutland Herald, Front Porch Forum and Vermont Local Roads list serve. Eric had it advertised on Craig's list, and will contact others who had expressed an interest.

Cathy asked permission to continue work on the town's website update at an hourly rate, Board approved. She also noted that someone in town needed to be the web administrator – Board will inquire for a volunteer. Board appointed Carmen Fallar to the Website Committee.

Gail advised that the local contract tax rate was adjusted to \$0.0006 from \$0.0004, as she had calculated it incorrectly the first time.

School Board ~ 6/3/16 ~ Final TES Meeting

Present were members Grant Reynolds, Alison Alexander, and Sarah Graham, as well as Dave Younce - RSSU Superintendent, Maureen Fitzgerald-Riker-Principal, Cathy Reynolds, Violet Alexander, Jo Reynolds, and Gail Fallar – Treasurer and temporary scribe

Agreement between the Tinmouth Town School District and the Town of Tinmouth regarding future use and maintenance of the school buildings for educational purposes was discussed. Board voted to approve Agreement as presented and authorized Grant to sign it.

Jo and Gail thanked the Board for their service to the community and school – this may be the last Tinmouth Elementary School Board meeting – the new unified district takes over on July 1st. Grant is Tinmouth's representative to that Board.

Grant noted that this is the last official meeting of the Tinmouth School District Board, starting July first the school will be part of the Mill River Unified Union School District, wherein Tinmouth has one Board member. Tinmouth School Boards have been meeting since 1896 – schools were established in 1780. He noted it will still be a school, just different.

Planning Commission ~ 6/27/16

Present were members Vito Macaluso, Bob Lloyd, Grant Reynolds, Kim Harbaugh, Kevin Ruane, Amanda Vumbaco, and Michael Fallar, as well as Gail Fallar, Sec.

Members reviewed proposed flood resiliency amendment language, after changes, members voted to approve as edited and move along to a public hearing.

Members then discussed whether to proceed with the solar/energy amendment – state legislators re-wrote the energy bill that the Governor vetoed. Grant noted it was a state take over of town's rights and looked like they wanted as much solar and wind as possible. Bob advised that the Public Service Board has until this fall to develop guidelines, that regional planning commissions were also updating their energy plans as well. The catch is that the Public Service Board has to approve them all.

Kim noted that he and Grant had recently attended a meeting in Middletown Springs held by a solar developer who pretty much said he could do what he wanted as Middletown didn't have any regulations. Kim advised that Tinmouth needed something in writing and shouldn't wait for the PSB.

Michael advised that Tinmouth is not opposed to commercial solar development, but thinks there needs to be rules/guidelines for developers to use, to be able to provide guidance from the town's perspective.

Members decided to go ahead with proposed solar/energy amendment language, though they also decided to discuss the proposal with the Select Board at its next meeting before moving to the hearing stage.

Members then reviewed Bob and RRPC's suggested changes to the latest draft of the proposed solar/energy amendment language, removing reference to Mass and Scale, and adding Grant's list of historical and culturally significant features. Members voted to approve as edited.

Next regular meeting will be Tuesday, July 12, 2016, in order to attend the July Select Board meeting to converse with them about proposed draft amendments.

Planning Commission ~ 7/12/16 ~

Meeting with Select Board at the Old Fire House

PC members present Michael Fallar, Vito Macaluso, Kim Harbaugh, Bob Lloyd, Grant Reynolds, and Kevin Ruane. Others present: Select Board members Frank Sears, Laurie Phillips, and Matt Patry; Eric Buffum, Stan Wilbur, Amanda Gill, Hollis Squier, and Gail Fallar, Sec.

Members met with the Select Board to discuss proposed amendments to the Town Plan. PC members advised the Select Board that they wanted to have something in writing in the Town Plan regarding commercial solar/energy siting as the Public Service Board looks at a town's plan for guidance when they have an application before them. They also advised they wanted input from the Select Board prior to holding a public hearing, after which the proposed amendments would come before the Select Board for review and its own public hearing.

Select Board inquired about suitable areas, prohibited areas (there is now a list of historic and culturally significant areas), protection for land owners and town, and asked the PC to consider their concerns.

PC members then moved to the upper room above the town office to continue their meeting.

They reviewed draft language, addressed Select Board concerns – re-wrote the section regarding “Preferred Areas”.

Members voted to approve the proposed amendments as edited and move the process to a public hearing.

Hearing date of August 22, 2016 at 7:30 was decided upon.



Conservation Commission ~ 6-27-16

With thanks to Carmen Fallar, Sec.

Present were members Doug Fontein, Jo Reynolds, Barbara Held, Ann Czar, Jeff Alexander, and Carmen Fallar, as well as Barbara Noyes-Pulling-Rutland Regional Planning Commission, and Beth Miller-Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District

Reviewed the agenda and added the S. Lake Champlain Partnership to the top of the agenda.

Barbara Pulling and Beth Miller talked to the group about the South Lake Champlain Partnership. RRPC and Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District have partnered to implement flood resiliency projects in the Flower Brook Watershed. The watershed lies in Tinmouth, Danby and Pawlet. Discussions include channel erosion, thermal and pollutants. The CC is sponsoring a workshop on August 3rd, 7pm, OFH. The workshop will discuss Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI). Examples include rain barrels, rain gardens, trees and grasses to slow and filter water. Becky Tharp will lead the workshop. The Partnership is trying to get communities to come up with a set of projects for each town. The implementation would then need approval of the Select Board. Tinmouth already does a lot of great things to protect various watersheds, but we can always learn more and do more. The workshop on August 3rd is practical information for schools, property owners, road commissioners, etc... And more workshops to come in the future.

Ongoing Business:

Ridge Trail – Blow downs are present. Bob Lloyd had signs made for the Gilmore property but we will not put them up yet. In the meantime, Doug will put up temporary signs about the trail ending. The trail is blazed to the Gilmores. Doug has GPS'd from Gilmores south to Miles Notch. We are putting off flyers, interpretive exhibits and rock/geology samples until the Fall (hoping for help from the school students). Group will wait for cooler weather to schedule a work day on the trail. Jo will post on FPF in July to encourage folks to “Take a Hike.”

Group discussed a later winter workshop/talk about Edible Plants. Doug suggested we ask Leslie Silver.

Purchase Cabin – Members reviewed the Use Policy and made minor edits. The policy will include a map on the back. Policy approved with corrections. The cabin now has a ladder and bottom bunk. It has only one screen window and it needs more. The next big project at the cabin is building a privy. Doug has suggested a compostable, natural alternative to the typical pit construction. The group would like to get LeHigh School involved with Stuart Gerrol. Carmen will blaze the trail along the Road to the Cabin to remove any doubt about trail direction.

Green Up: GREAT prizes. BIG THANK YOU to **Jeff Alexander!** We would like to do Hot Spots next year with

the VYCC (Vermont Youth Conservation Corps).

Members agreed to take on a more involved role with the event. Doug will give out supplies at 9am at the Transfer Station. He will check with Nelson about coordinating with the school for Friday activities. Members will give out Green Up bags at the Plant Sale since they fall on the same day. Jeff and Doug will coordinate a raffle for all bags turned in on Saturday during Green Up hours. Gail will be asked to encourage folks who pick up bags early to join in the Saturday festivities of prizes and ice cream. Members discussed a possible "hot spot" early green up on some area roads in town (North End Road for example).

Group discussed Spotted Salamander crossing in the early Spring. Group would like to make signs at busy turtle crossing areas and salamander areas to slow folks down and be on the lookout. It is also a possibility to get a group of folks together to help the spotted salamanders cross on their mass migration nights; an event to help them succeed in their mating ritual.

Personnel Policy Committee ~ 6/9/16:

(with thanks to Cathy Reynolds, Secretary)

Select Board member present: Laurie Phillips (2nd half of meeting)

Personnel Policy Committee members present: Stan Wilbur, Judi Fox, Amy Martone, Cathy Reynolds, Pat Psholka, Michael Fannin

Others present: Alan Held

Members reviewed the work plan. Questions for the Select Board and/or Gail:

Section 7-The committee notes that overtime is paid after 8 hours, and recommends that it should also be paid after 40 hours of time worked (this excludes sick or vacation time taken).

The committee would like clarification of the short term disability policy and how many days until it kicks in and how many days of coverage it provides. Also clarification on the \$50,000 life insurance noted under short term disability. Is this a separate policy?

Laurie agreed to present these suggestions to the Select Board at their next regular meeting.

Personnel Policy Committee ~ 6/18/16:

(with thanks to Cathy Reynolds, Secretary)

Select Board members present: none

Personnel Policy Committee members present: Stan Wilbur, Judi Fox, Amy Martone, Cathy Reynolds, Pat Psholka, Michael Fannin

Also attending: Gail Fallar, and Hollis Squier (20 minutes)

Judi provided an Addendum draft to work from regarding health insurance.

Several points to consider: Should we provide insurance for the spouse when a spouse has coverage through their employer? It is suggested that we not provide coverage

when a spouse has coverage. We also discussed the buyback option in our current policy and clarified that the buyback is for the employee only. We also discussed retiree health benefits and moving to the Health Connect Exchange. We acknowledged that suggestions below might require a multi-year transition plan. There is no penalty to the Town for not providing health insurance.

We discussed the scenario for when an employee or spouse is Medicare eligible. It is suggested by the committee that the Town reimburse the cost to purchase supplemental insurance for employee or spouse and provide reimbursement for part B and D premiums. The Select Board should investigate the taxable implications of this benefit to determine if the reimbursement can be set up to be pre-tax.

We discussed a premium share with employees. A 10% premium share is recommended with a one-time salary adjustment to fully compensate employees for their share in wages.

We also discussed moving to the Exchange and having employees purchase their own insurance with a reimbursement from the Town. This allows the employee to receive the Exchange Subsidy, as well as an end of year tax credit on the Federal side which gives tax relief for deductibles if eligible. The Town could pay 90% of the platinum plan in the paycheck, and the employee will purchase their own insurance.

The committee will arrange (Judy and Amy will coordinate) for all of our employees to work with Health Exchange Navigators to determine the best course of action prior to adopting a new policy. The committee requests that each employee report back to the committee on how the Exchange will work for them and their concerns. Health insurance changes are only possible for the year beginning January 1.

Retiree health benefits were discussed. Pat presented a hand out of her research on other Towns who provide retiree health benefits (derived from a VLCT listing of pay rates and benefits for Town employees). Some towns provide this benefit, others do not. Pat looked at Towns with similar population and called them to inquire regarding their benefit. North Hero, Stockbridge, Grafton, Kirby and Westmore were interviewed. North Hero does not offer this benefit. Hubbardton did not respond. Stockbridge offered one retiree the benefit and the retiree declined. Grafton pays Medicare supplemental premium for current employees, but no benefit for retirees who are pre-Medicare eligible. Kirby has a comprehensive policy that offers the benefit based on years of service that was enacted in 2008. Westmore has one retiree for whom they are maintaining coverage, but they did not know when the policy was adopted. Michael noted that other towns of similar size and tax base do not offer this benefit. He also noted that the towns that offer this benefit are larger than Tinmouth, except Westmore which he considers a fluke.

Stan noted that many towns on the list offer this benefit but do not currently have retirees utilizing it.

Cathy suggested that we offer a retiree benefit for health insurance for pre-Medicare years based on years of service that would be retroactive to December 31, 2015. Judi suggested that the Town needs to decide if this is a benefit that we want to offer, it is a slippery slope and it needs to be designed carefully. Stan suggested that we offer a benefit based on years of service at the age of 62. Kirby's policy was used as a model for discussion:

The town pays health insurance premiums for retirees 62 and over – one year of premium for <10 years of service, for two years for retirees 20-25 years of service and three years for retirees 25-30 years of service. (Note that this policy does not specify the benefit for 11-19 years of service). Stan detailed the benefits to the Town of encouraging long term employee retention. These long term employees know how to do the job, have figured out efficiencies in the Town's particular systems and also have received all the certifications required by the Town and State (flagging, chain saw safety, back hoe operation, etc). The benefit provides the ability to retire gracefully prior to Medicare kicking in, particularly important in a physical job. Stan suggested the policy require the any potential employee considering taking this benefit provide notification the year prior by November 1 to allow the Select Board to budget accordingly. Amy outlined the potential risk and cost to the Town and the committee indicated that we would like to structure a benefit that values the work of the employee and limits the Town exposure to early retirement of all employees based on age and years of service.

It was agreed that the committee will refine the reasons why we should offer this benefit (develop a value statement).

Pat will fine tune a proposal for our consideration at the next meeting based on the elements we discussed and the Kirby model.

Gail requested that the committee consider a post-Medicare retiree health insurance benefit, answer was no.

Next meeting: Thursday July 7 at 7 in the upstairs of the Town Office. Gail will arrange for a representative of the VLCT to visit the committee to provide advice on health insurance options for municipalities on and off the Exchange and the options for retiree health benefits.

Personnel Policy Committee ~ 7/7/16
(with thanks to Cathy Reynolds, Secretary)

Personnel Policy Committee members present: Stan Wilbur, Judi Fox, Amy Martone, Cathy Reynolds, and Pat Psholka

Select Board members present Laurie Phillips and Frank Sears

Also attending: Gail Fallar, Larry Smith - Vermont League of Cities of Towns, and Eric Buffum

Conversation with Larry Smith from VLCT:

Amy asked Larry if other towns have put their employees on the health exchange as individuals. Pros are that they could get a subsidy on their premium based on income. Con would be that the lump sum paid to the employee is taxable (previously untaxed), it will up their salary which may put them in a different tax bracket, Workman's Comp cost to the town might go up "a tiny bit." VEMERS (retirement) contribution and taxes would also increase. Larry has worked with a large town to consider this. Larry was asked if there was a way to fund premiums through a tax free account (like an HSA) – Larry indicated that there are no ways to do this. (Can't fund an HRA for premiums as it does not meet the requirements of the ACA. HRA account can be created for retirees. The town could provide a retiree benefit and put a set dollar figure into this account. The retiree would go to the exchange and purchase their insurance (under 65). Retiree picks plan, pays based on earnings, retiree pays premiums out of this account and this is pre-tax. Typically cannot combine pre-tax benefit with being on the exchange except in this one instance. The goal of the committee is to provide flexibility to the employee on which policy they choose. Larry was asked if there was a way to do this.

Some towns are giving a set dollar figure to an employee (\$xx for a single, and \$xx for a couple, etc). All plans would be available from a provider (say BCBS). Employee would choose the plan and pay the extra if required. If the employee chose a less expensive plan, the extra funds could go to a qualified HSA or HRA. No subsidy can be available if this plan is followed, but employees have choice. HSA/HRA Gold Plan CDHC rewards is attractive in the municipal world. The deductible is the same as platinum, but the premiums are less. This is a qualified high deductible plan so the town can create an HSA/HRA for the employee (not possible with the "metal Plans.") "Out of pocket" includes the co-pay and the deductible. This is a new plan this year. HSA goes in pre-tax, interest is not taxable, and spending out of this account is also tax free.

New question re Medicare eligible employee or spouse: What options do we have to move spouse or employee who is Medicare eligible out of our plan and onto Medicare and provide a supplemental? Larry indicated that Center for Medicare Services (CMS) has determined that if an employee/spouse is continuing to work when Medicare eligible, Medicare has to become primary for that person. Larry was asked if we could make an eligibility statement that indicates that once eligible for Medicare, the town will continue to provide the same premium, and the employee/spouse can purchase their Medicare supplemental and pay part of the part B premium. Premium for supplemental plan with Medicare part 4, cost is ~ \$400 per person. This is a better benefit

for the employee/spouse. Larry will provide the language for us to consider. The Town cannot pay the Part B directly, but can pay for the supplemental directly. This is not taxable. The Part B premium reimbursement will be taxable. (About \$105 per month now). Recommended that we specify that the Town will not pay "more than the premium for the policy that is offered by the Town."

Can we provide a benefit for health insurance for retirees? Yes, we can. Mostly larger unionized towns do this, although there are some smaller towns as well. Often this is applicable for police and fire employees who typically retire at 50-55 with the appropriate years of service.

If we do retiree health insurance, Larry suggested that we set up a premium reimbursement account that the employee can draw from to pay for premiums. We would need to create this type of account. Larry suggested if we wanted to do this for an employee who has already retired, that we contact an attorney to be sure that we can do this. This plan must be administered by a third party benefits company. We are not clear if this third party is Health Equity (discussed below) or another third party.

Retiree health is not typically offered by small towns because it is expensive. The reason we would like to create this benefit is recognition for years of service. Some towns use this to help older employees gracefully retire at 62 when social security eligible when the job is physical. Others use this as a way to encourage high paid staff to retire early (when unionized ie police or fire).

Judi asked if we could create a cafeteria plan. How difficult is it to set up a cafeteria plan? VLCT works with Hickok and Boardman who provides a platform for this. There is a software available to do this. This is rarely used by a small town with three employees because we do not have a staff person to administer this. It was acknowledged that the town needs something simple and easy to administer. The two voluntary products that are offered by the League are life insurance and vision insurance. Dental insurance can be upgraded by including spouse and children. This can be rolled into the Health Equity administrator plan (described below) as well. This is a group plan, so the employee cannot upgrade to higher coverage as all employees need to have the same coverage.

Larry recommended that we use a company like Health Equity to administer our HRA and the premium offset plan. There is no charge for this as the cost is built into the Health Connect premiums (so the Town is already paying for this). Due to HIPPA Regulations, we do not want to have this personal information in the Town Office. The account can be set up so that each employee has a debit card so pharmacy bills can be directly reimbursed. Co-pays get paid by the employee and then automatically reimbursed to the employee by the third party. Deductibles get tracked this way as well, and are paid directly by Health Equity to the provider.

VLCT can provide a health insurance advisory role for \$15/employee per month (total \$540/year.) This does not seem like a good value for our small number of employees. (Employee education, renewal assistance and budgeting assistance.)

The League can also review our draft personnel policy – there may be a charge for this. Larry will check and let us know. Jill Muir from the League can review as part of the Municipal Law Center of VLCT.

Based on the feedback from Larry at this meeting and input from the employees in attendance we agreed that: The committee will encourage the Select Board to take advantage of the Health Equity third party administration. We also encourage the Town to have the proposed policy reviewed by the Municipal Law Center at the VLCT.

There was a conversation about offering a retroactive benefit to Hollis as a one time payment, not a formal policy adopted by the Town. There were mixed feelings about this and it will be revisited at the final meeting.

Decisions for the SB:

1. Recommend migration to benefit administration to Health Equity to manage HRA account and potentially a plan for pre-tax deduction for spousal benefits (dental for example).
2. Do we want to sign an advisory agreement for \$540 per year from the League for advisory services from the League? (Gail has handled this in the past as Select Board assistant). Not recommended.
3. Recommendation for retiree health: If this is approved, the Town will need to contract with a third party health benefits administrator. We need to clarify if this is Health Equity, or another firm should an employee be eligible and take advantage of it.

Recommended benefit is proposed to give employees the opportunity to retire at age 62 in recognition of their years of service (and acknowledgement of the manual nature of their job for the road crew).

For active employees who retire at age 62 with 15-20 uninterrupted years of service, the Town will pay 50% of the single premium for up to three years.

For active employees who retire at age 62 with 20 years plus one month of uninterrupted years of service– 30 uninterrupted years of service the Town will pay 75% of the single premium for up to three years of service.

For active employees who retire at age 62 with more than 30 years of uninterrupted service, the Town will pay 100% of the single premium for up to three years.

4. We recommend that the Town cover employees or spouses who become Medicare eligible while still employed, including reimbursement for their Medicare part B premium as well as a Medicare supplemental policy in lieu of being covered by the standard plan offered to employees. The part

D which is prescription drug benefit needs to be clarified. Is this covered? We would need to add a group supplemental plan. This benefit would cover costs up to the total cost of the

The committee will meet one more time with the employees for feedback and to finalize our draft. The draft will go to the VLCT for review prior to heading to the Select Board. Judi will provide the benefits addendum for inclusion.

Personnel Policy Committee ~ 7/28/16 *(with thanks to Cathy Reynolds, Secretary)*

Personnel Policy Committee members present: Stan Wilbur, Judi Fox, Amy Martone, Cathy Reynolds, and Pat Psholka; *Select Board* member present: Laurie Phillips.

Also attending: Gail Fallar (arrived at 7:30)

Amy provided a draft of a letter to the Select Board and the Personnel Policy crafted by the Committee with addendums. The group reviewed the documents.

There was significant discussion about several of the items included in the letter to the Board. We strived to create a set of recommendations that give the Select Board the benefit of our investigation and a clear, well thought out policy.

We also discussed whether or not this group was charged with making a recommendation in response to the town meeting petition that the Select Board received regarding retiree health benefits. It was determined that it was our role to create a policy, and that the Select Board will consider the petition independently. This policy will apply to current or future employees once adopted.

It is our understanding that the Select Board has the authority to create an individual agreement to resolve the open issue as identified in the petition.

Solid Waste & Recycling Committee (SWARC) 7/21/16 *(with thanks to Helen Mango, Secretary)*

Present were Gail Fallar, Wheaton Squier and Helen Mango.

Gail and Helen presented updated "Tinmouth Recycling Center – Acceptable Materials" and "Transfer Station Fees." These updated versions includes changes to what can be recycled and new regulations concerning batteries, yard waste and compostable materials. These documents will be enclosed in the next *Tales of Tinmouth* and will also be handed out to new folks in town.

Members voted to approve these updated documents, as well as the article Helen wrote concerning the value of composting food scraps.

It was reported that Tinmouth has begun collecting electronics again. There are to be two gaylords, one for computer, monitors and computer peripherals, and the other for all other electronics (e.g. VCRs, cords, fax machines), none of which should go in the regular trash. If

these are separated, we will get paid for the computer equipment. If all electronics are mixed we will not get paid. The SWARC will recommend to the Select Board that we not charge for the non-computer electronics, because this might encourage people to throw electronics into the trash. The money we get for the computer equipment should cover the cost of disposing of the other electronics.

A representative from the Solid Waste Division of the Agency of Natural Resources inspected the Transfer Station in May. There were a couple of minor issues to resolve (the tarp needs changing, and the food waste collection bin must be added to the certification). In addition, the topic of a gate came up again. According to the ANR, we must have a locked gate when no attendant is on duty. However, this would be impossible during snowstorms, since the road crew would not be able to lock and unlock the gate every time they come by for a load of sand. A report from ANR is pending, at which point the town will decide what to do.

Gail reported that Alan Held has volunteered to build a guardrail at the edge of the dumpster (as required by the town's insurance company).

~ Kudos and Appreciation ~

A BIG thank you and kudos to **Weezie Scott** for the lovely flowers in the planters at the Town Office! They have been wonderful all summer.

Get Well Wishes are sent to **Harry Chew, Marianne Gagne, Hollis Squier, Donald Allen, John Marro, and Shannon Squier.**

Heartfelt Sympathies are sent to family and friends of **Thelma Blanchard** and to family and friends of **Clyde Greene.**

Welcome to Tinmouth's newest arrivals – **Eloise Martell**, daughter of **Joe and Clara Martell** was born on June 15th. Proud grandparents are **Toby and Anne Lewis.**

And to **Emmaline Squier**, daughter of **Josh and Meadow Squier**, born on July 9th, proud grandparents are **Marshall and Melody Squier**, proud great grandmothers are **Marion Hambly and Mary Tremmel.**

And to **Layne Carleton**, son of **Jeffrey Carleton and Brianna Wood**, born on July 11th, proud grandparents are **Mike and Fern Allen.**

Congratulations to newlyweds **Matthew Chisamore** and **Amanda Vumbaco** who were married on June 11th. Best Wishes for many years of happiness!



(Editor's Note: Apologies to Rep. Potter for this not being printed in the last edition of *Tales*.)

~ **2016 VT Legislative Report** ~
by Rep. Dave Potter

The 2016 VT Legislature adjourned at 12:15AM early Saturday morning on May 7th, one week early. The total FY 2017 budget increased 2.4% over 2016, ending up at \$5.76 billion, of which \$2 billion comprised federal funds. Notable changes include additional funding for child protection initiatives, child care assistance, Medicaid reimbursement to primary care providers, higher education (State Colleges), and economic development/working lands grants.

Automatic voter registration will now occur when applying for a driver's license. VT is the fourth state to enact this. A long time coming, local and regional planning now has new increased opportunity to factor into the renewable energy siting process with the Public Service Board. While broad marijuana legalization efforts were stymied, medical marijuana opportunities were enhanced.

VT opiate related deaths totaled 76 in 2015. Legislation this year centered on improving treatment, education, prevention, and increased market constraints directed toward prescription abuse.

The transportation budget this year totals \$618 million. Following the Tropical Storm Irene bridge replacement surge, a little less this year will be spent on bridges, but a little more on paving. Western corridor rail service to Burlington continues in the mix, along with regional airport improvements and self-funding operating initiatives. You will notice the usual three year inflationary update to license, registration and other fees. This \$9.9 million in added revenue is applied appropriately into the T-fund for use on roads and bridges. The law around suspension of driver licenses for non-payment of fines is being changed to better allow people in poverty to climb out of the hole. DUI interlock systems, used to improve safety and prevent repeat alcohol related driving offenses, have been legislated into wider use.

Changes to the estate tax passed on a 142-0 vote. Now fairer and simpler, only estates over \$2.75 million are to be taxed at a flat 16%. Efforts were made by the Ways & Means Committee to successfully place the majority of state tax increases this year onto out of state brokers and mutual fund companies. A further improvement, only \$3.7 million of the total can now be considered use of one time revenue.

Education initiatives included district consolidation (Act 46), special education delivery, higher education support, and education taxes that were kept level this year. Too numerous to list individually, many new initiatives around

privacy concerns, economic development and health care were also enacted this year.

Please feel free to contact me concerning details around any legislation, or other issues that may be of interest.

You should also know I am running again for my 7th two year term. The primary election date is moved up this year to August 9th to get ballots out more timely to overseas troops. The general election is on the normal second Tuesday in November, the 8th.

Best,

Rep. Dave Potter (802 438-5385) dpotter@leg.state.vt.us
462 East Tinmouth Road West Rutland, VT 05777



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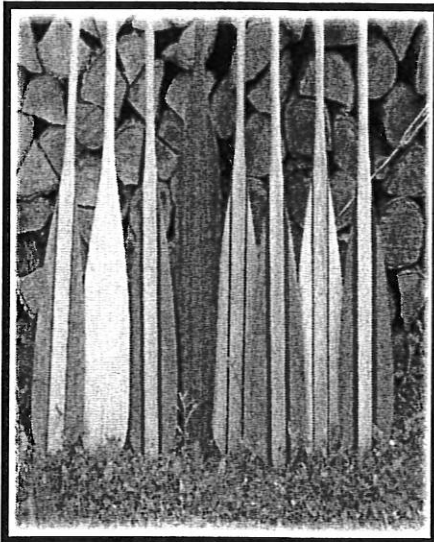
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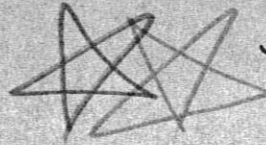
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