

Tinmouth Operator's Manual

**A Citizen's Guide to Everything
You Ever Wanted to Know
About Your Town**

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Published in 2013 by the Town of Tinmouth.

Many thanks to Vito and Cow Patti Macaluso for the front-cover photo of Susie's Peak; to Lydia Cannon for the back-cover photo of Tinmouth Pond; and to the Tinmouth Historical and Genealogical Society for the vintage black-and-white photos.

Text and copyediting: Grant Reynolds and Deb Thompson.

Design and layout: www.mosaicbookworks.com.

Printing: Quickprint of Rutland.

Special thanks to Susan Clark and the town of Middlesex for the inspiration and guidance that made this project possible.

Welcome to the Tinmouth Operator's Manual

A Citizen's Guide to Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Your Town

Just as you keep the operator's manual to your car in your glove compartment, we hope you'll keep the Tinmouth Operator's Manual someplace handy in your home.

We hope you'll not only find the manual a helpful tool, but that it might also encourage you to get more involved in your community. Take a look; whether you're interested in opportunities for recreation or business, for youth or parents or seniors, for exploring nature or for democratic participation, they're all available here in Tinmouth. And the more day-to-day interactions we have as neighbors, the healthier we are, the more vibrant our economy, the stronger and richer our democracy.

This booklet is intended to serve as a helpful first step to guide you to official sources for more in-depth information as needed. It was created for your convenience by volunteers and should not be considered an official town document or the last word on any topic. For more detailed information, go directly to the relevant town officers, as well as county or state agencies. Numerous community service numbers can be found in the opening pages of the telephone book you'll receive from the Vermont Telephone Company.

In this manual, the listed resources are, for the most part, those that primarily exist within Tinmouth. In some cases, it includes those that are particularly necessary to residents (for example, health care), with a special focus on those that we Tinmouth voters are asked to fund with local tax dollars. If you know of a resource that's missing, please let the Tinmouth Operator's Manual Committee (see Contacts sheet that accompanies this

manual) know, so that it can be included on the website and in future print editions.

This is the first edition of the Tinmouth Operator's Manual. We are indebted to Susan Clark and a group of volunteers in the town of Middlesex who created a pioneering version in 2003. They were kind enough to furnish us with their electronic files. Where the towns are similar, as in the Tinmouth Administration section, we have made only minor modifications to their language. Other sections, such as those on town history, taxes, and land trusts, are original. Most sections are a combination of the two.

Because names and numbers change frequently, the enclosed "Contacts" sheet is intended to be kept with your Operator's Manual and will be updated periodically. For the most up-to-date official information about town officers and issues, check the Tinmouth website (www.tinmouthvt.org) or call the Town Clerk's office at (802) 446-2498.

Extra copies of this manual, or of the latest Tinmouth "Contacts" sheet listing phone numbers of local officials, can be obtained at the Town Office. Questions, comments, or suggestions regarding the Tinmouth Operator's Manual can be addressed to the Tinmouth Operator's Manual Committee c/o Town Clerk, 515 North End Road, Tinmouth VT 05773, or contact Grant Reynolds, (802) 446-3457, e-mail grant62@vermontel.net.

Enjoy your town!

Your neighbors on the Tinmouth Community
Participation Committee

A Little History, or, How Did We Get Here?

Tinmouth was chartered to a group of land speculators in Farmington, Connecticut, by Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire on September 15, 1761. None of them planned to live here and apparently none ever did. They sent some of their members to survey the valley of the Tinmouth River (now called Tinmouth Channel); the survey was completed in 1763. Like the proprietors of 127 other New Hampshire-chartered towns, they knew Vermont had been part of New York since 1664, and Wentworth's authority to make land grants here was questionable. But Wentworth was offering very low prices, so they took the risk that New Hampshire titles might prove to be worthless. This conflict wasn't settled until Vermont became a state in 1791.

The first settler seems to have been John Hopkins, who walked here from Salem, New York, in the fall of 1769 to clear land on West Hill (near what is now Wallingford's westernmost border) and build a cabin. He spent the first winter sleeping in a fallen hollow tree—in those days, trees were often 6 feet or more in diameter. As legend has it, he blocked up both ends to keep the wolves out! By 1774, enough families had settled here that they held a Town Meeting and elected town officials—mostly to the same offices as we have in town today.

After the invasion by British and German troops under General Burgoyne in 1777, it was dangerous to live on the exposed frontier. Most men sent their families to friends or relatives farther south. The few who remained were under deep suspicion as suspected Loyalists. John Irish, of what is now North End Road, had taken the oath of allegiance to King George III, perhaps to avoid disturbance by marauding bands of Indians and Loyalists. He was shot by two Vermont soldiers, under circumstances still controversial. Were they protecting a third soldier from Irish, as they reported, or was it an intentional shooting, as Irish's widow claimed?

Most families were back that fall, after Burgoyne's army became prisoners of war at the Battle of Saratoga. By 1780, Tinmouth's militia company,

formed early in the town's history, had grown to 120 members. The militia consisted of all the men aged 16 to 60, indicating that the town was already at its 2010 size of more than 600 people. Entrepreneurs started building blast furnaces to take advantage of the iron ore that was readily available in both bogs and surface deposits. The remains of five of them are known, though there supposedly were even more. The Tinmouth River was dammed up at North End Road, creating a lake 3 miles long to provide water power for two blast furnaces and a sawmill. Today it is an 1,100-acre wetland. Nathaniel Chipman, of East Road, built one of the first of the furnaces, on the outlet from Tinmouth Pond west of the East Road. Chipman was a prominent lawyer who became Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court and a United States Senator. He led the fight for Vermont to enter the Union, both in the state legislature and in negotiations with Congress. The obelisk at the top of Tinmouth Cemetery is a memorial to him, erected by the state in 1854.

Tinmouth originally was 6 miles square, though surveying techniques of the day resulted in boundaries that were about 6.45 miles long. The town lost 3,510 acres when Middletown Springs was created in 1784. The legislature gave 3,388 acres of the east side of town to Wallingford in 1793, either as compensation for Wallingford losing land on its east side to Mt. Holly or because the residents of this area petitioned for it. The petition is understandable. They could see the growing villages of Wallingford and South Wallingford (which actually was, at the time, in Tinmouth) from their hillside farms, while Tinmouth village was several miles away, up and down a good-sized hill.

Tinmouth grew dramatically in those early years, with 935 people in the first national census in 1791. Farms were chopped out of the forest and charcoal burners extended the deforestation to supply charcoal to the furnaces. The soil at first was rich, the result of 10,000 years of unmolested forest growth, but by the early 19th century much of it had eroded away and the infamous rocks had

surfaced. Our maximum population was reached in 1820, at 1,069, and only 40 had left by 1830. By then, Tinmouth, like the rest of Vermont, was in the grips of the sheep boom. In 1840, Tinmouth had over 5,000 sheep! Even the area known as The Purchase, on the southwestern slopes of Tinmouth Mountain, which has no history of population, was at least partly cleared for sheep pasture. The Panic of 1837, a nationwide depression, shut down the last blast furnace, today a pile of stones north of VT Route 140 where it crosses Tinmouth Channel. Emigration to the richer farmlands of western New York and the new territories of the Midwest had begun even before that, as younger sons with no prospect of inheritance or the finances to buy a farm left to seek their fortunes. Population crashed, down 25 percent to 781 in 1840, beginning a long slide that ended with only 228 in 1960. In 2010, we were back up to 613.

Eighty-two men connected with Tinmouth served in the Civil War; six became officers. About 62 of them lived in Tinmouth when they enlisted. The others grew up in town but enlisted elsewhere, or they enlisted here for the huge bonus the town had to pay them in order to fill its quota of soldiers. A few came to town after the war. Only 13, six of whom came to Tinmouth after the war, are buried here. Vermont soldiers, mostly farm laborers from little hill towns like Tinmouth, had seen the world. Returning to the limited prospects available to them in Vermont after the war was not attractive. Thirteen of the Tinmouth soldiers had

no choice: three died in combat and 10 died from disease. Ten more were wounded but lived. Most ended the war “broken in health,” as the speaker at Tinmouth’s Old Home Day said in 1905.

Tinmouth Pond, which may have been known as Chipman Pond while Nathaniel Chipman was still alive (he died in 1843), was subdivided into tiny lots by a real estate developer in 1923. He persuaded the state legislature to pass a law calling it Chipman Lake and a privately erected sign on East Road still calls it that. But the town never has used this designation, and even the folks who live on its shores call it “the Pond” and themselves “Ponders.” There is no public access to the Pond, since the entire shoreline is privately owned. The state has never purchased land for fishing access or recreation.



FISHING ON TINMOUTH POND CIRCA 1910.

Tinmouth Administration

Note to new Vermonters: In most states, the general unit of local government is the county or chartered city. In Vermont, however, counties perform only a few functions and towns conduct most municipal activities. There are 251 of these “little republics” in the state. Rutland County’s limited functions are administered by two elected assistant judges, or “side judges.” These officials are not lawyers. They sit beside the appointed judge in superior and family courts, offering advice but rarely making binding decisions. However, they prepare the county

budget, mostly for the Sheriff’s Department, and bill the towns, rather than the property owners, for their share. Tinmouth budgets \$6,000 for county taxes (2012).

Select Board

The Select Board is at the center of town government in Vermont. Tinmouth has a three-member Select Board. Members are elected by Tinmouth voters at Town Meeting for staggered terms of

3 years. The Select Board is responsible for the general supervision of town affairs. It has a number of functions, including some that are legislative (enacting local ordinances, regulations, and policies), and others that are executive/administrative (preparing the budget, overseeing all town expenditures, supervising town employees, and maintaining town buildings and property). The board also performs work that is quasi-judicial—for example, it determines property rights when the town is laying out and reclassifying town highways.

Select Board members want to hear from you. The sooner they hear from you about a problem, or the earlier in a decision-making process you offer your comments, the better it is for everyone. Select Board members welcome questions, concerns, or the opportunity to just chat with Tinmouth citizens, and they encourage you to contact them by phone, e-mail, or in person (see Contacts sheet). Citizens are always welcome at Select Board meetings and are encouraged to attend them.

All public meetings in Vermont must be “warned,” that is, announced a minimum time before they are held. The warning is posted outside the Community Center that adjoins Tinmouth Elementary School and outside the Town Office and the Tinmouth Community Church. Select Board meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM at the Town Office. To get a particular issue on the meeting agenda, contact the Select Board chair or the Town Clerk.

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk’s office, located in the Town Office in Tinmouth Center, is the hub of town activity. Not only does the Town Clerk supervise Tinmouth’s elections, but the Town Office is where you go if you want to get a marriage license, Fish and Wildlife licenses, look at town records (land transfers, births, deaths, marriages, etc.), license your dog, get a transfer station card, or ask a question about local taxes or any other town business. Meeting notices (warnings) are posted at this office.

Vermont law entrusts the Town Clerk with an extraordinary list of duties, ranging from recording,



AARON PITTS AND HIS HORSE DELIA in front of Ned Taylor’s store, about 1910. The store is now the Town Office.

preserving, and certifying public documents to administering oaths of office, supervising the local elections, maintaining the Grand List, issuing civil marriage licenses, and licensing dogs. The Town Clerk is elected at Town Meeting for a 3-year term. Tinmouth also has an Assistant Town Clerk, appointed by the Town Clerk (see Contacts sheet). The Town Clerk is an independent official, answerable only to the voters. She/he may set the clerk’s office hours.

Other Local Elected Officials

TOWN TREASURER

The Town Treasurer is elected at Town Meeting to a 3-year term and is responsible for keeping the town’s financial accounts, investing money received by the town (with the approval of the Select Board), keeping a record of taxes collected, and paying orders drawn on town accounts. The Treasurer works with the auditors to settle town accounts prior to Town Meeting, and is often called upon to provide the Select Board with financial information. Voters may elect the same person to be both clerk and treasurer, and we customarily do so in Tinmouth (see Contacts sheet). The Town Treasurer is also the School Treasurer unless voters choose to elect a school treasurer.

AUDITORS

Tinmouth has three auditors, elected to staggered 3-year terms. These officials conduct an analysis of

the town's books after the close of the fiscal year (June 30) and report to the Select Board and the citizens at Town Meeting. Along with the School Board, they review the work of a certified public accountant hired to conduct the official school audit, which is included in the Annual Town Report. Periodically, the town contracts for a professional CPA audit of the town books. The auditors review this in conjunction with the Select Board (see Contacts sheet).

COLLECTOR OF DELINQUENT TAXES

It is the job of the Collector of Delinquent Taxes to notify taxpayers when their taxes are overdue, to make arrangements for late payments, or to take formal collection actions, including conducting tax sales of properties when necessary. This official must keep records of all delinquent property taxes and provide an accounting of them for the Annual Town Report. This official is elected for a 1-year term (see Contacts sheet).

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Although Justices of the Peace historically performed important judicial functions in towns, the tasks of today's JPs are primarily to administer oaths of office, to perform civil marriage ceremonies, to serve on the Board of Civil Authority as election officials, and to hear tax appeals. The number of justices allocated to each town is apportioned according to population; Tinmouth has five justices. Because the JP position used to involve great political influence, the nominating procedure is very different from that of other town officers. Five justices are nominated for office at the September political party caucuses in each even-numbered

year. (Independent candidates may also have their names placed on the ballot by petition.) Justices are elected biennially on the first Tuesday in November (see Contacts sheet).

BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY

The Board of Civil Authority is made up of the Select Board, the Town Clerk, and the Justices of the Peace. The BCA is the governing body for elections, under the chairmanship of the Town Clerk. This board assists in elections, counts and delivers ballots, and hears taxpayers' appeals of property tax decisions by the Listers (see below).

TOWN LISTERS

Listers determine the value of the real property in the town, filing a Grand List of town properties each June. The Select Board then sets a town tax rate necessary to raise the money to pay for town services. The Tinmouth Board of Listers consists of three members (see Contacts sheet). They are elected for staggered 3-year terms. For more on the Listers' responsibilities, see "About Property Taxes" below.

TOWN HUGGERS

Finally, a very important pair of town officials, appointed annually by the Select Board:

A happy man and woman who are responsible for keeping everyone in good spirits with a hug from time to time!

We are the only town in the country to have them (see Contacts sheet).

Town Democracy and You

Tinmouth is a unique town with a true democratic process of citizen participation. We believe that our opinions can be voiced in a fair, civil, and nonpartisan discussion. We encourage honesty, tolerance, and acceptance of one another so that our town will continue to be the special place it is.

Voting: A Primer

Voting is important and your participation is needed. To be eligible to vote in Vermont, you must be at least 18 years old and a resident of the state. When you first move to Tinmouth, you

must fill out a voter registration form and mail or deliver it to the Town Clerk. If you have never registered to vote in Vermont before, you must also take the Voter's Oath (formerly known as the Freeman's Oath). You can complete the entire process by stopping in at the Town Office during regular business hours.

Many people register to vote when they apply for a driver's license or a car registration (a program dubbed "Motor Voter"). If you register to vote at the Department of Motor Vehicles or any other state agency, double-check with the Town Clerk at least 2 weeks before the next Town Meeting or Election Day to make sure your registration form was received. Voters whose names are added to the voter checklist will be notified by mail. If you have registered but have not received confirmation before the next opportunity to vote that your name has been added to the list, contact the Town Clerk.

Tinmouth citizens vote at traditional Town Meeting, the first Saturday before the first Tuesday in March, on town and school budgets, and on policy issues. On statewide Town Meeting Day (first Tuesday in March), we vote by Australian ballot (secret ballot) for town and school officers. We also vote on Election Day (first Tuesday in November) in even-numbered years for state and federal officials. There may be party primaries (last Tuesday in August), and there is a Presidential Preference Primary (every 4 years on Town Meeting Day). There may be special elections warned to decide a particular question, such as whether to borrow money for a specific purpose, or amend the zoning regulations.

The polling place in Tinmouth is at the Community Center attached to the Tinmouth Elementary School in the town center. Voting is always wheelchair accessible. For voting in federal and state elections, and for voting for town officers, Tinmouth uses paper ballots; if a visually impaired voter needs a Braille ballot or some other accommodation, he or she should arrange this with the Town Clerk at least 2 weeks prior to the election. The polls are open from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Election Day in November and on statewide Town Meeting Day in March.

When you enter the polling place to vote, you will be asked to give your name to a poll worker who will check off your name on the voter checklist and give you your paper ballots. You then step into a voting booth and vote in private. After you mark your ballots, fold them and exit the booth. You will be asked for your name one more time before you deposit the ballots in the ballot box. Even though the poll workers may know you, they are required to ask for your name and to make certain you are on the voter checklist.

The ballots are hand counted by the members of the Board of Civil Authority and election officials shortly after the polls close. The results of the election are usually available within 2 to 3 hours. They are posted on the town's website (www.tinmouthvt.org) and at the Town Office. Maintaining a cadre of volunteer poll workers is essential to the integrity of elections. If you are interested in volunteering to help with the tasks that keep democracy strong in Tinmouth, contact the Town Clerk.

Many voters are interested in voting early. You can either vote early at the Town Clerk's office or have the ballot mailed to you. Formerly known as the "absentee ballot," early voting is available to any voter who requests a ballot prior to a primary or general election, or to vote for town and school officers on statewide Town Meeting Day. You do not need to be out of town or ill to vote early. Contact the Town Clerk's office if you are interested in voting early.

State and Federal Representatives

STATE REPRESENTATIVES

Tinmouth is divided into two legislative districts, with the boundary located on the "east side of the centerline" of East and North East Roads. Voters who live east of East/Northeast Roads vote in the Rutland 2 district, electing two representatives along with voters in Wallingford, Clarendon, Proctor, and West Rutland. All other registered voters in Tinmouth will, along with Middletown Springs, Wells, Pawlet, and Rupert, vote to elect one state representative for the Rutland-Bennington 1 district. All Tinmouth voters join with the other towns in Rutland County to elect three state senators.

These are your representatives in Vermont's legislature, formally known as the General Assembly (see Contacts sheet).

The General Assembly meets at the State House in Montpelier, usually from early January through mid-May. It enacts and amends state laws and must appropriate funds each year for the operations of state programs. Vermont's legislative session extends over 2 years. The first half takes place during an odd-numbered year and the second half takes place the following year. A budget must be passed every year. Unlike many states in which being a legislator is a full-time job, Vermont still has a "citizen legislature" made up of people who have other occupations during the rest of the year. In addition to dealing with legislative issues, legislators can sometimes help you in dealing with the various state agencies. All legislators do "case work"

for their constituents and can be powerful allies in problem solving. However, unlike the U.S. Congress, they have no staff employees to assist them, so they may not be able to devote a lot of time to your problem. (The Vermont State Legislature's website is at: www.leg.state.vt.us). The information you'll find at this site includes scheduled committee meetings; bills, calendars, and journals; the legislative bill-tracking system; the text of bills and other legislative documents; and minutes of selected committee meetings.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVES

Vermont has two U.S. Senators and one Representative to Congress. These legislators want to hear your views. They and their staffs can offer valuable help in solving problems with Federal agencies (see Contacts sheet).

VERMONT VOTERS' RIGHTS

- ✓ You may see a ballot in advance. The Town Clerk has sample ballots for you to see at least 30 days before an election.
- ✓ You have a right to assistance when you vote:
 - You may bring a person of your choice into the voting booth with you to help you vote (but not your employer or union representative).
 - You can get help marking the ballot. Ask an election official for assistance. Two election officials will help you. However, no one can tell you how to vote!
 - You can bring a magnifying glass or other device to help you see your ballot.
 - If you are disabled or ill, you may ask the election officials to bring a ballot out to your car.
 - You may bring a list of candidates into the voting booth to help you vote. (You may not show your list to other voters or leave it in the booth.)
- ✓ For town or school officials elected by Australian ballot, you can vote early or vote from home by absentee ballot. For those issues that will be decided at traditional Town Meeting, you must be present at the meeting to vote.
- ✓ For town and school officers, you can vote at the Town Clerk's office or take a ballot home to vote anytime 30 days before the election. Call the Town Clerk or sign a request form and the clerk will send you a ballot by mail.
- ✓ You can get a new ballot if you make a mistake. If you give your ballot containing an error to an election official, you can get another ballot. You can get up to three ballots.
- ✓ You may write in a candidate. If you wish to vote for a candidate who is not listed, you may write the candidate's name on the ballot's write-in line, or you may place a sticker with the candidate's name on the write-in line.
- ✓ Your ballot is private. No one has the right to see how you voted or to ask you how you voted. Cast your ballot by folding it and placing it in the ballot box.

Please ask questions. Election officials are present at the polls to help you understand the voting process. However, they cannot help you decide whom to vote for and they may not tell you the candidates' names or party designations.

If you are not sure that you are being properly assisted, ask to speak to the presiding election official. For more information, please contact the Town Clerk or the Secretary of State's office at (800) 439-8683.

A Voter's Guide to Town Meeting Procedures

Since 1762 (1774 in Tinmouth), Town Meeting has been the basic system of governance for Vermont towns. The annual meetings were traditionally held on Town Meeting Day, the first Tuesday of March. The traditional Town Meeting in Tinmouth has been moved to the Saturday before the first Tuesday in March. Town Meeting is actually divided into two meetings, one to address town business and one for school district affairs. At Town Meeting, the citizens act as the legislative branch of town government. They have an opportunity to speak, hear their neighbors, and make amendments to and vote on, budgets and other articles that affect the life of the town. Voters take binding action based on warned articles on the floor, usually after debate or discussion. The Select Board, School Board, and other town officials receive direction from the voters on matters of appropriations and policy. At Town Meeting, voters are in charge. Some of the basic rules on how these meetings are conducted are described in the next sections. Knowing how it all works is important for anyone who wants to play an active role in local democracy.

Town and school officers are not elected at traditional Town Meeting, but by Australian ballot 3 days later, on statewide Town Meeting Day, the first Tuesday in March.

The Warning for Town Meeting

How do citizens find out when Town Meeting will be held and what items will be on the agenda? This information is contained in the warning for the meeting. The term "warning" means, in quaint 18th-century style, that you are being notified that a meeting will be held and it's your fault if you don't attend.

The warning and notice for Town Meeting are contained in the Annual Town Report that is mailed to Tinmouth residents by mid-February. They are also posted in at least three public places in town, including the Community Center, the Tinmouth Community Church, and the Town Clerk's office. The warning and notice announce the date, time, place, and agenda of the meeting. They also give information on voter registration, including the cut-off date for applying for addition to the voter checklist. Because the Australian (printed paper) ballot is used to elect officers in Tinmouth, the warning and notice provide information about the day of the election, when the polls open, and how to get an absentee ballot.

PLACING ARTICLES ON THE WARNING

The warnings for the town and school portions of Town Meeting are prepared by the Select Board and the School Board. They include articles proposed by the boards that deal with town and school business, including the respective budgets for the next fiscal year. Sometimes the boards will agree to include articles suggested by individual townspeople. Otherwise, voters may petition to have articles added to the warning for consideration at Town Meeting (as long as the subjects of the articles are not illegal, frivolous, or beyond the authority of the electorate). Petitions must be signed by 5 percent of the voters on the checklist and the Town Clerk must receive petitions at least 40 calendar days before Town Meeting Day.

A petition should begin with the statement "We the undersigned voters of the town, hereby petition the Select (or School) Board to add the following article to the warning for the annual meeting."

This statement should appear on each page of the petition. Examples of articles that might be added to the warning by petition include a request to make an appropriation for a social service organization, or a proposal to change the size of the Select or School Board. Petitions may also cover political subjects, but they must do so in an advisory way. For example, an article might suggest that the electorate urge the legislature to adopt or prohibit something, or send a message to the United Nations expressing a position on a particular issue. Do your research well, however, keeping in mind that there are some things voters simply do not have the authority to do, such as impeach the governor.

Make sure your petition has a place for each voter's signature, printed name, and address. Remember that to be valid, your petition must include only the signatures of registered Tinmouth voters.

Voting at Town Meeting

THE ROLE OF THE MODERATOR

The Town Moderator is the presiding officer at Town Meeting. The Moderator keeps order and ensures that the business of the meeting proceeds in a fair and efficient manner while providing an opportunity to participate in the process to all those who wish to do so. It is the Moderator's job to put motions to a vote of the assembly and to rule on all votes and other questions of order. The Moderator serves as the central focal point of the meeting. All motions and remarks should be addressed to the Moderator, who has the right to order an unruly voter or visitor to the meeting to withdraw, on penalty of a \$200 fine. The Moderator is the first official elected after the annual Town Meeting convenes and serves a term of 1 year.

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER AND THE BASIC LAW OF TOWN MEETING

According to state law, Town Meetings in Vermont are governed by Robert's Rules of Order, recognized procedures for running meetings in a fair and equitable manner (although a town may adopt

some other rules of order if it chooses). These rules are amended by several additional state laws:

- Only warned articles can be considered at Town Meeting. No articles or subjects may be raised that did not appear on the warning.
- Once an article has been decided, whether voted up or down, it cannot be reconsidered after the assembly has taken up work on another article. For an article to be reconsidered, a new warning and meeting are required.
- While Robert's Rules require a majority vote to request a paper ballot, state law permits seven voters to request one.

Robert's Rules of Order is available in paperback and is published in various editions. You may wish to buy and read the latest edition; you can even bring your copy to Town Meeting, and use it to raise issues of procedure with the Moderator.

Don't worry if you're not familiar with Robert's Rules; don't let that keep you away from Town Meeting. Most of the discussion methods are common sense and the Moderator is trained to lead the group through all procedures. What's most important is your participation. If you have any questions, just raise your hand and ask the Moderator.

CIVILITY: IT'S NOT JUST ROBERT'S RULES

Making democracy work in our community is more than a process of showing up and playing by the written rules. It's also a matter of working respectfully with our neighbors to define our common interests. Some Tinmouth residents have expressed that they are "turned off" or even frightened by Town Meeting and other public discussions because they dislike uncivil discourse. It might only take one unpleasant experience to lose a citizen's valuable participation for life. What are some of the ways we can help our town succeed? Here are a few suggestions:

Listen actively. When others are speaking, stay engaged. Try not to tune out in order to formulate your response; instead, work to find the underlying meaning of the speaker's words. You may find out you have more in common than you think.

Speak respectfully. Conflict is a natural part of life and it makes good sense to be constructive in our confrontations. At points of conflict, stay away from personal criticisms and stay focused on the issue and its possible solutions.

Ask questions. If a speaker isn't being clear, he or she will appreciate the opportunity to clarify the point in question. And if it's the process that confuses you, chances are at least one other person is wondering about it, too. Raise your hand and ask the Moderator.

Use your imagination. Usually, there is an answer out there that meets the most important needs of the diverse parties.

Celebrate and appreciate your neighbors. Perhaps one of the most rewarding sights at the end of Town Meeting is two people who were on opposite sides of a debate shaking hands and chatting.

Participation makes democracy work. We can all appreciate those who care enough to speak out about our community.

Keep your sense of humor. After all, Vermonters are known for it.

Basic Parliamentary Motions

Discussion and decision making at Town Meeting are based on motions that set the assembly into action. Here are some basic motions used at Town Meeting:

THE MAIN MOTION

This motion is used to convert articles on the agenda as they appear on the warning into proposals the assembly can consider, perhaps amend, and then vote on. For example, an agenda item that asks "shall the town appropriate \$120,000 for highway maintenance," needs to be changed into an active proposal. A voter recognized by the Moderator might say, "I move the town appropriate \$120,000 for highway maintenance." The main motion requires a second by another voter, after which it is then ready for debate.

THE AMENDMENT

Amendments propose to change the main motion. In our example, a voter might say, "I move to amend the main motion to read '\$100,000 for highway maintenance.'" After being seconded, debate on the main motion then shifts to debate on the amendment. When debate on the amendment is over and there are no further amendments pending, the Moderator will put the amendment to a vote. If it passes and there are no other motions, the assembly will then vote on the main motion as amended.

POINT OF ORDER/APPEAL

If you don't understand a ruling of the Moderator, raise your hand and say "Point of order, Mr. (or Ms.) Moderator." After the Moderator recognizes you, ask your question. If you disagree with the Moderator's ruling, you may appeal his or her decision. The Moderator is obligated to ask the assembly, "Shall the Moderator's decision be sustained?" If a majority of voters say "no," the Moderator's ruling is overturned.

PASS OVER

Sometimes it becomes clear to voters that they don't want to vote "yes" or "no" on an article and would prefer not to vote on the article (main motion) at all. Traditional Vermont Town Meeting practice calls this a motion to pass over; Robert's Rules treats this as two motions. If offered before a main motion is made, it is a motion to object to consideration of the question and it takes a two-thirds vote of those present and voting to pass over the article. If offered after a main motion is made, it is a motion to postpone indefinitely and only a simple majority is required.

LIMIT OR CUT OFF DEBATE

If voters feel that debate on a certain article could go on all night if some control mechanism were not in place, someone might move to limit debate, for example, to a total of 20 minutes. If two-thirds of the voters agree, debate can be so limited. In a case where debate has gone on long enough—voters have made up their minds but some people are still repeating the basic arguments—a voter could

move to cut off debate, also referred to as “calling the question.” Once moved and seconded, calling the question is a nondebatable motion. If you agree that all voices have been heard and you are ready to vote on the issue at hand, you should vote in favor of calling the question. However, if you want to continue discussion, you should vote against calling the question. Two-thirds of the group must vote yes on calling the question in order to cut off debate; otherwise, discussion continues.

Remember that citizens have come to the meeting to speak and to hear each other’s viewpoints. In most cases, it is not necessary either to limit or cut off debate; the Moderator will simply call for a vote when she or he feels that all points of view have been heard.

—Adapted from “The Meeting Will Come to Order,” distributed by the Vermont Institute for Government.

PROPER AMENDMENTS

Remember that a Town Meeting cannot take up an issue unless it is warned. The same general principle applies to amendments. You can’t take an article asking voters to approve the purchase of a truck and amend it to ask for the purchase of a road grader because the amendment raises a subject that hasn’t been warned. For the same reason, you can’t convert an article to raise money by taxes to an article to borrow money to pay for something.

Amendments must be germane to the motion they seek to amend; that is, amendments must relate to the motion. An amendment cannot introduce a new and independent question or raise an issue (disguised as an amendment) previously decided by the assembly.

PUTTING THE MATTER TO A VOTE

After the group deliberates on a motion and the Moderator feels all points of view have been heard, she or he will call for a vote. There are three voting methods used at Town Meeting. The most common method is the voice vote. The Moderator asks those in favor of the motion to say “aye,” then those opposed to say “no,” and then announces the

outcome of the vote. Another form of voting you may expect to see at Town Meeting is a show of hands or a standing vote. These methods may be used if the Moderator feels the voice vote was too close to call, or if a voter disagrees with the Moderator after the results of a voice vote are announced. Note that for any vote, any voter may move that the vote be taken via paper ballot; if seven voters support this motion, pieces of paper are distributed and each voter writes down their vote. A checklist and a ballot box are used. Ballots are counted on a table in the front of the room.

Other Business

State law requires that on a meeting’s agenda, “The article entitled ‘other business’ shall not be used for taking binding municipal action, and the moderator shall so rule.”

—Excerpted from “The Meeting Will Come to Order,” distributed by the Vermont Institute for Government

How to Run for Local Office

Tinmouth needs you. As in communities all across Vermont, citizens take on the tasks of the Planning Commission, Select Board, School Board, Listers, Auditors, and Justices of the Peace among others, as volunteers or for token pay. How about you?

Getting elected or appointed to an office isn’t hard. First, look into which office is a good match with your skills and interests. Positions are listed in the Annual Town Report, and many are described in these pages. Let this booklet be your invitation to join with your friends and neighbors and get involved in local government.

To run for local office, you have to be on the Tinmouth voter checklist and you’ll need the signatures of 1 percent of the town’s registered voters on a petition for office (as of the 2012 checklist, about five signatures). Signed petitions are due by the sixth Monday before Town Meeting Day (in late January). Contact the Town Clerk’s office for more information.

The Select Board appoints the members of the Planning and Conservation Commissions, and makes about 50 other appointments as well (see the Contacts sheet for the entire list). It includes a Greenup Day Committee, two official Weighers of

Coal, three Fence Viewers, and two official Town Huggers! How appointments are made varies by the office. Applicants for the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment must submit a letter of interest.

Tinmouth's Annual Town Report: Take a Look!

Every year before Town Meeting Day, the Annual Town Report is mailed to all residents and taxpayers. Be sure to take a moment to sit down with the report. You'll be surprised how much you can learn. All income and expenses for the town and school are detailed there. Don't be put off by the long strings of figures. They are a remarkable demonstration of open government.

The Annual Town Report includes the warning for the upcoming Town Meeting. Be sure to mark the date and time of the meeting on your calendar. Take a look at the list of warning articles for the year. It will include budgets and policy issues for both the town and the school. Take the time to

look over the budgets, and compare last year's figures to this year's. Read the reports of the various committees and other town institutions. There, your neighbors share their thoughts on how the town has fared for the past year, and they detail plans for the future. Do you have any questions to bring up at the meeting?

The Annual Town Report is a great reference tool. Look it over when it arrives, and bring it along with you to Town Meeting. It is this year's story of your community.

—Adapted from "How and Why to
Read Your Town Report,"
by the Vermont Institute for Government.

Our Landscapes, Our Buildings

Planning and Zoning: Who, What, and How?

Planning is the process of designing a community's future.

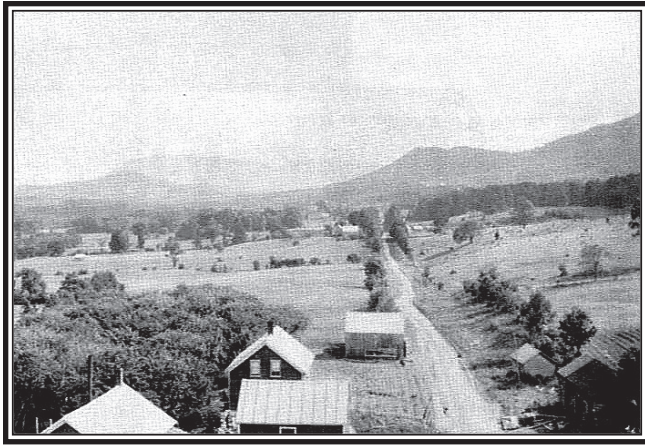
Zoning is the process of regulating proposed uses of property, so as to fit with the plan that the town designed.

TOWN PLAN

The Town Plan is developed by the Planning Commission, with input from citizens. After a public hearing, the plan is then referred to the Select Board, which is also required by state law to hold a hearing.

The Town Plan may include recommendations for both voluntary and regulatory actions. It is also used as a benchmark in certain Act 250 proceedings. The Public Service Board is required to consider the Town Plan when it rules on proposals for a variety of public utility improvements, although the PSB can override the plan if it considers a project warrants a certificate of public good. A town plan must be updated and readopted every 5 years.

Stop by the Town Office or go to www.tinmouthvt.org to take a look at a copy of Tinmouth's Town Plan. It is updated every 5 years (most recently in 2012), so if there is something in it you'd like to see written differently, there are regular opportunities to propose changes to it.



MOUNTAIN VIEW ROAD (then West Road), circa 1920, looking south from the steeple of the 1836 church. The old creamery and its ice house are in the foreground.

ZONING AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

The town is divided into four zoning districts, with the Rural Residential District (5-acre lots) and the Conservation District (25-acre lots with a limited number of permitted uses) predominating. There is a special Lakeshore District for Tinmouth Pond, allowing higher density development (1-acre lots). The Protection District, mainly areas with steep slopes and wetlands, allows only agriculture and forestry. There is no commercial or industrial zoning in Tinmouth. There is a table of uses for each district, though farming and forestry are allowed in all of them. “Allowed” uses require no zoning permit, while “permitted uses” do require one. In addition, there are “conditional” uses, such as a dog-training facility, home-based business, or private school that require site-specific approval from the Board of Adjustment after it holds a hearing.

There are three “overlay” districts, Agricultural, Ridgeline, and Flood Hazard. Any development, including a single-family house, in any of these districts is a conditional use. The Agricultural District encourages construction on the edges of fields and forests, while maintaining large open tracts for farming and forestry. The Ridgeline Overlay District limits construction on the upper slopes of the town’s mountainous areas. The Flood Hazard District is the 100-year flood probability zone, established on federal maps, with few allowable uses. There are no town building codes. The subdivision regulations establish the rules for creating

a number of lots out of a single tract of land, or consolidating several small lots into a larger one.

Unlike the Town Plan, Zoning and Subdivision regulations have the full force and effect of law, and can be enforced by the town in court if necessary.

Proposed changes in these regulations are developed by the Planning Commission and, after a hearing, are recommended to the Select Board. The Select Board also holds a hearing and then submits the changes to the voters at Town Meeting or at a specially warned meeting.

The Zoning and Subdivision regulations are fairly complex. You should consult them and perhaps discuss a proposed project with the Zoning Administrator before proceeding very far with your plans to build, subdivide, etc.

PLANNING COMMISSION

In a broad sense, the Planning Commission is responsible for thinking ahead—with the help of Tinmouth residents—and envisioning what we all want our town to be like in the future, and then helping to make that happen.

The Planning Commission consists of nine members, appointed by the Select Board for overlapping 3-year terms. It meets on the third Thursday of each month at the Town Office. It is responsible for maintaining the Town Plan and updating it every 5 years. The Planning Commission also proposes changes in the zoning regulations and the subdivision regulations.

The Planning Commission reviews the site plans that must be included in zoning applications for permitted uses (except one- or two-family residential uses, without subdivision, and forestry and agricultural uses). The commission can use this review to request certain conditions relative to the layout of roads and driveways, traffic flow, landscaping and screening, and erosion control measures. Zoning applications for uses defined as “conditional” are referred to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for consideration. The Planning Commission must approve any proposed subdivision.

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

When a proposed project represents a conditional use, a “conditional use review” is conducted by the Board of Adjustment. After a public hearing, the board can approve the proposed conditional use as requested, impose further conditions on it, or reject it. No zoning permit can be issued until the board makes a decision. In addition, the board hears appeals from decisions of the Zoning Administrator, and grants or denies requests for variances or waivers, in each case after a hearing. The Tinmouth a Board of Adjustment is made up of seven members appointed by the Select Board for overlapping terms (see Contacts sheet).

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

The Zoning Administrator is the person who administers the town’s zoning ordinances. This officer is typically one of the first public officials contacted when property development is proposed or when someone has a complaint about land use or development. The Zoning Administrator must administer the municipal bylaws literally, and does not have the power to permit any land development that is not in conformance with the zoning bylaws. The Zoning Administrator is appointed by the Select Board with a recommendation from the Planning Commission for a 3-year term. The current Town Clerk also serves as Zoning Administrator (see Contacts sheet).

ZONING PERMITS

Different kinds of development are permitted in each of the zoning districts. Minimum lot sizes and setbacks also differ. A copy of Tinmouth’s zoning regulations, including a map showing the zoning districts and the building setbacks within each, can be obtained from the Town Clerk. They are also posted on the town’s website.

If you’re doing work on the exterior of a building in Tinmouth, you’ll probably need a zoning permit. This permit is issued after verifying that your proposed project complies with all the zoning regulations. Zoning permits are required for constructing, enlarging, or moving most buildings or other structures; excavating or filling in land; and for any

change in the use of any land, building, or other structure (for example, changing from residential use to commercial use). If a project involves only the interior of a building or involves construction of a small accessory building of less than 64 square feet and no more than 8 feet high, a zoning permit is not required.

If you’re installing or changing your driveway, you may need an access permit, or “curb cut” permit, from the Select Board. Access permits are required for the construction of, or change in the use of, driveways that intersect town highways. A zoning permit cannot be issued until you have your access permit, if one is required, even if a subdivision plan showing curb cuts has been approved by the Planning Commission.

Remember: you need to obtain a zoning permit before you begin construction. Usually a zoning permit can be issued by the action of the Zoning Administrator. Permit applications are available at the Town Clerk’s office, as is a schedule of permit fees. The Zoning Administrator must either approve or deny an application for a zoning permit within the 30-day period prescribed by law; otherwise, the permit receives automatic approval. If the Zoning Administrator denies your request for a permit, you may appeal the decision to the Board of Adjustment. If you are planning to build a new home, add new buildings, put an addition on your existing home, install a pool, etc., please take special notice not to infringe on the electric utility’s right-of-way. If you have questions about possible infringement, please contact Green Mountain Power.

On completion of construction, you will need a Certificate of Occupancy before you can occupy the new or modified facility or before you can carry out the approved change of use. This certifies that the work conforms to the approved plans and specifications that are all conditions of your permit, and to the zoning regulations.

SEPTIC REGULATIONS

Tinmouth once had its own regulations concerning on-site sewage disposal systems. However, a state law passed in 2002 changed the way on-site

sewage is regulated. New subdivisions and septic systems under repair have to meet state standards for the design of an on-site septic system and obtain a state permit. As of 2007, most existing lots and all new lots have had to follow state standards for design, siting, and constructing septic systems. For information on the state standards, contact either the Permit Specialist or the Regional Engineer at the Agency of Natural Resources District Office in Rutland, (802) 786-9100. Town zoning permits required for construction are contingent on obtaining a state septic permit.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The mission of the Tinmouth Conservation Commission is to conserve the town's natural and cultural resources, such as historic sites, scenic views, etc. The Conservation Commission works with the town's other governmental entities and the public to identify and assess resources, to offer the town and landowners guidance on planning for the conservation of these resources, and to educate the residents of Tinmouth as to why conserving these resources is so important. It organizes hikes to explore the town and work parties to maintain trails and other town resources. Updates on the commission's work appear regularly in the *Tales of Tinmouth* (Tinmouth's monthly newsletter) and on Front Porch Forum (<http://frontporchforum.com>).

The Conservation Commission's seven volunteer members are appointed by the Select Board for staggered terms of 3 years. Citizens are encouraged to attend meetings on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM at the Town Office (see Contacts sheet).

Landowner Issues

Posting: In Vermont, there is a long tradition of property owners allowing others access to their lands for recreation, and a tradition of respect for that private property on the part of those who are allowed to use it for hunting, fishing, and other recreational pursuits. Under the Vermont constitution, if private property is not posted, you are not legally required to ask permission to walk, hunt, or

fish on that land. Nonetheless, asking permission shows appreciation and respect for the landowner. If you would like to restrict hunting, trapping, and/or fishing on your land, you can legally post your property so as not to allow these activities or to allow them by permission only. Legally posted land must be recorded annually in the Town Clerk's office. The requirements for such posting are stringent. They are found in 10 V.S.A. Section 5201 and are available from the Town Clerk.

Landowner Liability: Private land plays an important role in providing outdoor recreation opportunities for Vermonters. To encourage landowners to allow recreational users on their land, the Vermont Legislature has enacted strong legal protections for private landowners who allow others to use their land. Thus, it is difficult for a landowner to be held liable for any injuries an individual may sustain while using private property unless the landowner has intentionally created a dangerous condition. For more information about landowner liability, request "Public Recreation on Private Land: A Landowner's Guide," available from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, 103 South Main Street, Waterbury VT 05671-0601; (802) 241-3693.

TOWN-OWNED LAND

The town owns The Purchase Recreation Area, a 200-acre tract on the southwestern side of Tinmouth Mountain. It is accessible on foot, skis, horseback, or by snowmobile. No other form of motorized access or use is permitted. A brochure with maps of the area is available from the Town Clerk. "The Purchase" was a 19th-century term for the large tract acquired by the town's tax collector bidding at his own tax sales. It was a reference to the Holland Purchase, a huge tract of 5,000 square miles in western New York bought by Dutch investors in 1792.

LAND TRUSTS

In recent years, generous landowners in Tinmouth have donated the development rights to their properties (roughly, the right to subdivide a property into lots and build houses on those lots) to non-profit organizations like the Vermont Land Trust as

a way to keep the land from being over developed. These donations are embodied in legal documents called “easements.” An easement is the right to do, or prevent, something on land otherwise owned by someone else. The state’s Housing and Conservation Board has been buying development-rights easements to farms around the state, and paying farmers the market value of the right to subdivide and build houses on their land. The payments have kept many farms in business. They also allowed farmers to retire from farming with the full value of their farms, yet sell them at affordable prices to new farmers. These easements are held jointly by the state, the Vermont Land Trust, and in some cases here in town, the Tinmouth Land Trust. Close to half of Tinmouth is now conserved by land trusts holding development-rights easements. There is

still room in town for more individual houses, but large-scale subdivisions are unlikely. Tinmouth zoning does not encourage such development. Our minimum lot size is 5 acres. The landscape you see today is about what you can expect to see in the future.

Tinmouth has a local land trust, the Tinmouth Land Trust, Inc. It holds some development-rights easements jointly with the Vermont Land Trust. However, it has chosen not to hold any additional property rights. It is concentrating on helping the Vermont Land Trust arrange for the acquisition of further development rights and providing stewardship for those rights VLT already has. It also is working with Tinmouth’s Conservation Commission on the development of hiking trails in town.

About Property Taxes

Note: This tax information is provided as a general overview and should not be your sole source of information on property taxes. The state school tax system, in particular, has more details than can be covered in a few paragraphs. For up-to-date details and deadline information, contact the Town Clerk’s office.

Vermont has a complex property tax system. There are two separate taxes on real property (land and buildings): a town tax that pays for local government, and a state education property tax that pays for school expenses. The latter is a state tax, not a town tax as it once was. In 1996, the Vermont Supreme Court held that it was not permitted under Vermont’s constitution for some small, property-poor towns to have exorbitant tax rates in order to pay for mediocre education, while a few “gold towns,” such as ski area communities, could provide outstanding education with very low tax rates. The result was Act 60, passed in 1997 and later modified by Act 68 in 2003.

The state tax rate is the same for all Vermont towns: in 2012, it was 89 cents per \$100 of assessed value for homestead property and \$1.58 for all other property. This pays for a standard state grant of

\$8,723 per student. No town can educate its students for so little; the average cost statewide is \$12,782 per student. (Tinmouth’s cost is \$13,787 in 2012–2013. This is an average for all students, elementary and secondary, though the latter are more costly.) School budgets can vary substantially from year to year by the number of students enrolled (which affects the amount we receive from the state) and the cost of special education for that year’s students. The entire difference between the \$8,723 state grant and the actual amount of the town’s education expense is paid by homeowners. The homestead status of a property is established by filing a Homestead Declaration (HS-131) on or before April 15 each year, usually with your state income tax return.

About two-thirds of Vermont homeowners do not actually pay a school tax based on the value of their property. If a family’s annual income is less than \$97,000, they pay a percentage of their income rather than the property tax rate, a provision of the education tax law referred to as “income sensitivity.” The legislature recognized that for various reasons, such as inheriting a farm or retiring, people of modest incomes might own valuable property on which they could not afford the taxes. The

state reimburses the school district for the loss of revenue resulting from the difference between the income sensitivity amount and the total property tax amount. In 2012, the statewide income sensitivity tax rate was 1.8 percent of the previous year's income. However, the rate is adjusted upward to account for the difference between the state grant and the town's actual cost of education. In 2012, Tinmouth's percentage was 2.83.

The town's Grand List is compiled each year by the town listers. It consists of a description of each property in town, the property's owner, and the assessed value of each taxable property as of April 1. In other words, it is a once-a-year snapshot of town property values and ownership. However, there are, in effect, two Grand Lists: the one filed by the listers for town taxes and a school tax Grand List. The latter is the town list adjusted by a factor called the "common level of appraisal." This factor is derived from the percentage by which the actual selling price of properties sold within the previous 3 years differs from their assessed value. If houses have sold for 20 percent less than their assessed value, the CLA is .80 and a \$1.00 tax rate becomes \$1.20. At that point, the state requires the whole town to be re-assessed. This adjustment is supposed to prevent towns from lowballing appraisals to reduce the amount of state property tax local residents will have to pay. For a statewide property tax to work, all properties have to be assessed on the same basis. The CLA is difficult to apply in small towns with few property sales, but it has been used for a long time. Tinmouth's CLA for 2012 is 1.0328, meaning that our assessments are slightly more than the actual selling price of properties sold here in the last 3 years.

The municipal tax rate is determined by dividing municipal expenses by the Grand List total of all real property values in the town. For Tinmouth in 2012, it was .5242 or \$524.20 for a house assessed at \$100,000. The residential school tax rate is set by the state, basically the same way but using the Grand List modified by the CLA and by certain other adjustments. The 2012 school tax rate was \$1.4016 and the CLA was 1.0328, so the tax on the \$100,000 house was \$1,357.10. The non-homestead school tax rate is the Grand List modified by the CLA multiplied by the fixed state tax

rate of \$1.38. The 2012 tax on a \$100,000 property (land, commercial, etc.) was \$1,336.20.

Vermont's listers are required to list each taxable property on the Grand List at its fair market value. However, the listed values usually do not reflect fair market value. This is because real estate markets constantly change, and townwide reappraisals are not conducted annually. The last townwide reassessment was conducted in 2009. As a very small town with few real estate sales and no subdivisions of similar houses, the listers have difficult judgments to make. While the CLA of 1.0328 in 2012—meaning assessments are slightly higher than sale prices—indicates that our assessed values are fairly accurate, the CLA is only based on a dozen sales over 3 years. Listers do not reassess a house each time it's sold. To do so would be unfair to the new buyer, because the house reassessment would be based on a different market than the townwide reassessment.

Tax rates are usually set in July and the tax bills mailed in mid-July. One-half of the taxes are due on August 15 and the other half by October 15. Payments of taxes after the deadline are charged an 8 percent penalty and a 1 percent/month interest thereafter on the unpaid balance.

If You Feel Your Property Taxes Are Too High...

Property owners must be notified of any change in their town assessment via a Change of Appraisal Notice. The property owner then has the option of appealing the new assessment through a procedure described in the notice. This is called a tax grievance and the first step in this process is a hearing before the Board of Listers. If this doesn't settle the property owner's concern, the Listers' decision can be appealed to the town's Board of Civil Authority (BCA). The BCA is comprised of the Select Board and the Justices of the Peace. If the taxpayer continues to be unsatisfied, appeal can then be made to either the State Board of Appraisers or to the Rutland County Superior Court. The second choice will usually take longer and legal advice is recommended.

Property owners can appeal their assessment even if there has been no change in it. Check with the Town Clerk in early May to find out the grievance timetable for that year.

Current Use

Properties are assessed for their highest and best (economic) use. Thus, their value for development is likely to be higher than their value as farmland or forest. Vermont allows farm and forest properties to

be assessed at their value for those purposes—their “current use”—despite their higher development value. Property owners of 25 acres or more, or over 27 acres plus a dwelling, are eligible to enroll in the Vermont Current Use Program. Deadline for enrollment is September 1 of each year. There are important requirements and limitations on eligibility, so check with the Listers for complete information (see Contacts sheet). The state reimburses the town for the lost revenue resulting from current use properties.

Tinmouth Roads

Vermont is home to a spiderweb of thoroughfares including interstate highways, state highways, and town highways. Our local town taxes are directed toward the repair and maintenance of town highways. Town highways in Vermont are designated as Class 1, 2, 3, or 4. An additional, fifth class is “legal trails.” Such a trail is a public right-of-way that once was a road but is now usually little more than a footpath.

Class 1 highways are state-numbered highways that are actually maintained by the town. Vermont

Route 140 is a Class 1 highway. Vermont Route 133, in the northwest and southwest corners of town, is a state-maintained highway. Tinmouth does not plow or maintain it. Class 2 roads are well traveled and carry traffic to or from Class 1 highways. East Road and Mountain View Road are Class 2. All other regularly maintained town highways are Class 3 roads. The town plows Class 1, 2, and 3 highways in the winter. Class 4 roads are the least maintained town highways and are not plowed by the town in winter. The town does perform some minimal maintenance of Class 4 roads

TINMOUTH ROAD GANG CIRCA 1910. These are not town employees; in addition to paying taxes, local men were required to work a few days a year on the town roads.



and is required to maintain bridges and culverts on them. The Gulf Road south of its intersection with the Upper Gulf Road, Pent Road, Crow Hill Road, and the extension of Tinmouth Pond Road east of the Pond are Class 4 roads.

The amount of state aid the town receives for highway maintenance is related to the highway class. More money per mile is received for Class 2 than Class 3 roads. No state aid is available for Class 4 roads.

There is a legal process, including a public hearing, to change a road classification, or to abandon or “throw up” a public road. If you have questions about Tinmouth roads, contact the Road Commissioner (see Contacts sheet). For information on road classifications, contact the Town Clerk.

Road Commissioner

The Road Commissioner has the critical job of maintaining the town’s highways according to their classification specifications. This includes keeping the bridges and culverts in good repair, and seeing that the roads are properly graded, surfaced, graveled, and maintained for both summer and winter use. The Road Commissioner is elected to a 3-year term at Town Meeting. He oversees the road crew and regularly reports to the Select Board on the status of town roads. Reports include long-term planning for capital needs for the highway department, specific expenditures, and road reclassifications. Our skillful and efficient road crew in Tinmouth consists of just the Road Commissioner and one assistant, but they maintain our roads to the highest standards (see Contacts sheet).

Law and Public Safety

Tinmouth Volunteer Fire Department

All emergency equipment is located in the firehouse next to the Town Office in Tinmouth Center.

**FOR FIRE OR OTHER EMERGENCY,
DIAL 911.**

The Tinmouth Volunteer Fire Department responds to fires and any other emergency situations such as car accidents or searches for lost people. It is a volunteer organization that any able-bodied adult town resident is welcome to join. There is also a junior membership for those under 18 who begin training for their adult positions and help with a variety of tasks borne by the department. Normally scheduled meetings are on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM, with special training exercises throughout the year. Tinmouth is a party to mutual aid agreements with all the surrounding towns. Its equipment consists of three pumper tankers and one wild-land fire response vehicle. You may also see the

old ‘47 Mack open-cab pumper in local parades. All the active equipment is based in the firehouse next to the Town Office in Tinmouth Center.

When paged, Tinmouth firemen respond to the firehouse in their personal vehicles. These are normally identified with red lights. Please yield to these pickup trucks and cars when you notice them in front of or behind you.

Our Community Center at Tinmouth Elementary School in Tinmouth Center is designated as an emergency shelter if needed in general disaster situations.

Until recent years, 100 percent of the department’s funding was generated by its members. During the past decade, the taxpayers of the town have contributed a larger share. The largest single fundraising event for the department during the year is the famous Game Supper now held in the Community Center during deer season on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

Medical First Response

FOR MEDICAL FIRST RESPONSE, DIAL 911.

- The east side of Tinmouth, where the phone numbers are in the 446- exchange, is covered by the Wallingford Rescue Squad and the Rutland Regional Ambulance first responders.
- The west side of Tinmouth, where the phone numbers are in the 235- exchange, is covered by Middletown Springs First Response and the Poultney Rescue Squad.
- A small portion of Tinmouth, south of Middletown Springs, that adjoins Wells is covered by Wells, Middletown Springs, Manchester, and Granville first responders.

This may seem complicated but regional dispatchers can identify your location when you call 911 and can contact the nearest first responders.

The most important thing to remember in an emergency is that

DIALING 911 COVERS ANY EMERGENCY SITUATION.

Fire Warden

Tinmouth's Fire Warden enforces those laws designed to prevent forest fires. The warden is the person you should call if you want to get the required permit for open burning. The warden may go onto private property to extinguish fires (or call the fire department to do so) and may fine or arrest anyone who violates laws pertaining to forest fires. The Fire Warden is appointed by the commissioner of the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation with the approval of the Select Board, for a term of 5 years or until a successor is appointed. There is also a Deputy Fire Warden. Residents must acquire a burn permit from the Fire Warden.

If there is no snow on the ground, a fire permit is required to burn grass or brush within 200 feet of any woodland.

TO REPORT A FOREST FIRE, CALL 911.

For information about a fire permit call the Fire Warden or the Deputy Fire Warden (see Contacts sheet).

Emergency Management

The Select Board appoints an Emergency Management Coordinator who coordinates town efforts with the Vermont Department of Public Safety's Emergency Management Division, works with local and district emergency personnel, and is a part of the state's emergency management effort. This person is responsible for the local organization formed for management in case of such emergencies as flood, drought, and accidents involving hazardous materials (see Contacts sheet).

Law Enforcement

The State Police, the Rutland County Sheriff's Department, or the Town Constables may provide law enforcement in Tinmouth. Crimes are normally investigated by the State Police.

The Town Constables respond to various complaints including: dog control problems, loud parties, vehicles blocking the road or driveways, trash burning, and trash dumping. The constables may work with the State Police in certain situations. The constables provide speed enforcement periodically (see Contacts sheet).

All About Dogs in Tinmouth

Dog licenses: All dogs 6 months old or older shall be licensed annually, on or before April 1. Before issuing a dog license, the Town Clerk must receive a rabies certificate stating that the dog has been vaccinated against rabies within 36 months (for dogs 2 years of age and older); 12 months (for dogs over

1 year but less than 2 years old), and within the last year (for dogs 6 months to 1 year old). The certificate must be signed by a duly licensed veterinarian.

Regular license fees:

Neutered male or spayed female	\$8.00
Intact male or female	\$12.00

The fee includes \$1.00 for the state rabies program and \$3.00 for the state neutering program. The fee increases 50 percent for dogs licensed after the April 1 deadline. Dog licenses are issued by the Town Clerk.

If you have a complaint about a barking or nuisance dog, or a vicious dog, it is recommended that you first contact the dog's owner in an effort to work out an amicable solution. If the problem

persists, contact the Animal Control Officer or Town Constable (see Contacts sheet). Tinmouth has a dog ordinance that specifically addresses the process for dealing with nuisance or vicious dogs; for more information, contact the Town Clerk. If you come across an unsupervised dog, contact the Animal Control Officer or the Town Constable who will contact the owner. Complaints about dog bites should also be reported to the Health Officer (see Contacts sheet).

Unlicensed dogs can be temporarily housed by the Animal Control Officer or they will be brought to the animal shelter by the Animal Control Officer or the Town Constable. The shelter will hold them for 8 days before putting them up for adoption. In order to retrieve a dog from the animal shelter, the owner must have proof of registration, proof of rabies vaccination, and must pay a fine.

Education

Tinmouth Elementary School

Tinmouth once had 8 one-room schools. Because home-to-school distances were relatively short, all children walked to school. Now, children who are

in pre-kindergarten through grade 6 are served by the Tinmouth Elementary School in Tinmouth Center. While the number of students fluctuates as families arrive in or leave town, enrollment has averaged about 50 students in recent years. The school



TINMOUTH SCHOOL BEFORE 1909. This building is now the front room of Tinmouth Elementary School. In this picture, it is located in the corner of the current ball field, but it was moved 100 yards south to its present location in 1926.

uses multi-grade classrooms; one for Pre-K and K; one for grades 1 and 2; another for grades 3 and 4; and a fourth for grades 5 and 6. Although the school's front room, adjacent to VT Route 140, was once Tinmouth Center's one-room school, five more classrooms have been added over the years, mostly with community volunteer labor. The large gymnasium, kitchen, and art room are operated jointly with the town as the Tinmouth Community Center.

The school's mission statement reads as follows:

"The goal of the Tinmouth Elementary School community is to ensure that all students become life-long learners and caring, responsible, and productive citizens. Parents, teachers, students, and all members of the community will work together to provide opportunities for every student to develop and demonstrate high academic achievement, a positive sense of self, pride in individual and community accomplishments, and a healthy lifestyle."

The school sends out a weekly e-mail newsletter with reports of school activities, the schedule of special events for the next week, and the menu for school lunches. Thanks to a substantial U.S. Department of Agriculture grant, the school is able to provide healthy menus with many locally grown products. It has its own garden that provides the vegetables for early fall meals. The school district provides bus transportation on two routes for elementary school students. Since the routes can change depending on where students reside, contact the school for the current schedule.

SCHOOL BOARD

The Tinmouth School District is separate from the town's government. It is controlled by the School Board whose three members are elected for overlapping 3-year terms. The School Board is a broad policy-making body providing general oversight of the school, its administration, and its budget. The board's responsibility is to maintain fiscal accountability to the taxpayers while fostering an

environment in which educational opportunities abound.

Participation from Tinmouth residents is always encouraged. The School Board urges all members of the community to take an active interest in the school regardless of whether or not you have children enrolled. Residents are always welcome to attend board meetings and participate in discussions.

School Board meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 6:00 PM at the school, unless a regular meeting is changed to another time, in which case the new time must be warned at least 24 hours in advance. These meetings are open to the public. Discussions regarding the coming fiscal year's budget begin in November and continue through several meetings; participation is welcome. The board minutes are published in the *Tales of Tinmouth*.

SCHOOL DISTRICT TOWN MEETING

The Town of Tinmouth constitutes a school district that holds its annual meeting as part of Town Meeting. The procedure for the school meeting is the same as that for conducting town business: the School Board issues a warning and notice of its agenda and the Moderator conducts the meeting. The school's budget must be approved by the voters present at the meeting.

Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union

Vermont has created about 60 districts called supervisory unions. Each supervisory union employs a superintendent of schools, a business manager, and other personnel who conduct much of the business of the schools and oversee their accountability to the state's Department of Education, the Secretary of Education, and the state legislature. Rutland Southwest consists of the towns of Ira, Tinmouth, Middletown Springs, Poultney, and Wells. Ira has no school, but pays tuition to the school of a parent's choice. Tinmouth, Middletown Springs, and Wells have pre-K through grade 6 schools.

Poultney has an elementary as well as middle and high schools. Tinmouth children are not required to attend the upper-level Poultney schools and most of Tinmouth's students in grades 7–12 attend Mill River Union High School in Clarendon.

School Choice for Students in Grades 7–12

Because Tinmouth does not have its own schools above grade 6, Tinmouth children can go to any middle or high school selected by their parents or they can be home schooled. Pre-K and elementary students can also be home schooled. The town pays the state-approved tuition amount to any public school. It pays the average tuition amounts for all Vermont union middle and high schools to independent private schools. Parents are responsible for any extra cost and for transportation. However, the school district cannot pay tuition to any religious schools.

Most Tinmouth students in grades 7–12 go to Mill River Union Middle and High School in Clarendon, which is in the Rutland South Supervisory Union. Tinmouth does not belong to that union school district, but the town pays the full tuition for any Tinmouth students attending its schools. A bus leaves Tinmouth Elementary School for Mill River at 7:00 AM each morning and goes directly to Mill River. The afternoon bus leaves Mill River after classes. There is no “activities” bus, so families of students staying late for sports, drama, or other activities may be responsible for their transportation home.

Mill River Union Middle and High School

Mill River Union Middle and High School is a public school for students in grades 7–12 that serves the towns of Wallingford, Clarendon, and Shrewsbury. Mill River has an enrollment of over 500 students, including substantial blocks of tuition students from Tinmouth, Middletown Springs, Ira, Rutland Town, and Danby. With a reputation for academic excellence, Mill River students receive high scores on standardized tests, have an impressive college acceptance list, and receive many honors across academic subjects. The schools offer outstanding theater and music programs, and both boys' and girls' sports teams have a long record of success, with divisional and state championships in several sports. Tinmouth students have excelled there; we have sent star athletes, especially in soccer, baseball, basketball, and football, while Tinmouth actors and musicians have had lead roles in plays and musicals, are members of elite singing ensembles, and are both jazz and band instrumentalists.

Home Schooling

If you choose to educate your children at home instead of sending them to the local schools, the Vermont Department of Education can inform you of the state policies on home schooling, as well as direct you to resources and local contacts. Call the department's Home Study Program at (802) 828-3352, or visit http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_homestudy.html.

Recreation in Tinmouth

Swimming and Boating

Tinmouth Pond has no public access, so swimming there requires a friendly camp owner who will invite you to use his or her shoreline. Elfin Lake on VT Route 140 just west of Wallingford

village is open to the public. It has a good sandy beach and boat rentals for a fee.

The Tinmouth Channel wetland is interesting to canoe or kayak. The channel twists and turns for miles. It is best used in the spring and early

summer. Later in the season, there are so many weeds in the channel that paddling is difficult. It is a magnificent cross-country skiing area—miles and miles of dead-flat skiing! Access is from the culvert on North End Road.

Tinmouth Community Center

The Tinmouth Community Center is a 5,000-square-foot addition to the Tinmouth School that is owned by the town of Tinmouth and shared by the school and the town. It was constructed in 2000 with a local crew and donated funds. The building is used by the school during all school days until 5:30 PM and is available to the public on evenings, weekends, and during the summer. Tinmouth residents currently rent the building for pick-up basketball and volleyball games as well as yoga and exercise classes. Many other sporting events, various lessons and day camps, private parties, dances, and town functions have been held here over the years, the largest being the Fire Department's Annual Game Supper, which served over 500 dinners in 2011. To book the building, contact the Building Manager (see Contacts sheet). There is a small fee for private parties and the building is only available to rent to Tinmouth residents or taxpayers.

Youth Sports

Tinmouth youth participate in physical education at the elementary school. For many years, there has also been a volunteer cross-country ski program during the winter months (see below). After-school offerings may also include sports. Some years, parents organize a basketball team that plays other local teams. The after-school program has also offered rock climbing as well as a bicycling club. Parents are always encouraged to develop sporting opportunities for Tinmouth youth.

Many children also participate in T-ball, softball, and baseball. These teams are formed every spring out of Wallingford Elementary and information is sent home through Tinmouth Elementary. Similarly, many children participate in soccer for fall, winter (indoor), and spring seasons through Mill

River United, a volunteer group that organizes teams that play in the Rutland Recreation Department leagues. This information also comes home through our school. MRU has a Facebook page called "Mill River United Soccer." You can also visit www.rutlandrec.com for other recreation programs available to Rutland County residents.

TINMOUTH SCHOOL

CROSS-COUNTRY SKI PROGRAM

A group of volunteers—currently more grandparents than parents—conduct a 6-week cross-country ski program for students K–6. The school provides equipment that has been donated or purchased with funds raised by Tinmouth parents over many years. Younger students learn the principles of classic cross-country techniques on the school grounds. As they get older, open fields around the town provide a variety of terrain for touring and for the development of skills in downhill skiing on cross-country skis, including turning. The season ends with a Winter Carnival that includes games and informal races. Volunteers are welcome; skiing experience is helpful but not required.

Forests and Trails

The Long Trail/Appalachian Trail crosses VT Route 140 a few miles east of Wallingford. The Green Mountain Club publishes a *Day Hiker's Guide to Vermont* with maps of hiking trails in the area. For more information, call GMC at (802) 244-7037 or www.greenmountainclub.org. The Tinmouth Land Trust and the Tinmouth Conservation Commission are cooperating on the development of a ridgeline trail on Tinmouth Mountain. The access to The Purchase Recreation Area is another hiking trail, also being improved in 2012–2013.

The Tinmouth Channel Wildlife Management Area consists of 1,100 acres owned by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. It extends south 3 miles from its outlet at North End Road. There is a designated parking area, with space for about six cars, located on the north/south leg of North End Road. There is informal parking on the east/west leg of North End Road at the outlet. There is

an unconnected section of the WMA south of VT Route 140 bordering on the channel. Both of these areas are open to the public for hunting, trapping, fishing, wildlife watching, and hiking. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on these properties.

Mountain bikers and hikers should keep in mind that it is legal to use the town's Class 4 roads and town-designated trails (former roads) for any use that is allowed on other town roadways. Although not all of these byways are passable by motor vehicles, they can offer nice terrain for mountain biking, horseback riding, and country walks.

The snowmobile trail system in Vermont is operated by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers

(VAST). The VAST trail mileage in Tinmouth is located on private land. Permission has been obtained by VAST from landowners for snowmobiles to use these trails during the designated snowmobile season of December 15th to April 1st. You must be a member of VAST to snowmobile on the VAST trail system.

If you would like to use VAST trails for other purposes, such as cross-country skiing or snowshoeing, you must have permission directly from the landowners. The area snowmobile clubs may have some information on which landowners allow skiing on their properties. For contact information, or for a trail map, contact VAST at (802) 229-0005 or www.vtvast.org/VAST.html.

Tinmouth Pond Milfoil Project

The Tinmouth Pond Milfoil Project's mission is "to conduct an effective management, prevention, and educational program relative to aquatic invasive species. Project members seek to foster greater understanding of the importance of Tinmouth Pond as an integral part of the community of Tinmouth, with significant impact upon the critical ecosystem of the Tinmouth Channel and downstream destinations. The project's goal is to preserve its ecological, recreational, and economic value to present and future generations."

Eurasian watermilfoil was first found in Tinmouth Pond in 1998. It probably grew in the lake for at least 2 years before being detected, so it was likely first introduced to the Pond in 1996. The first efforts to attack this invasive plant began in 1999, including hand pulling and snorkeling to remove the weeds and their root balls. In 2003, Kim Harbaugh designed and built "Mili," a flotation platform to support the machinery, equipment, and staff to harvest milfoil by hand pulling and suctioning to the platform. This effort has continued

each year, with divers hired as money became available. In 2005, the project increased its efforts by putting bottom barriers down in the shallow parts of the lake. In 2006, it purchased the first SolarBee, a solar-powered floating water circulator—the first in Vermont, which increases the amount of oxygen in the water; this has been shown to slow the growth of blue-green algae and invasive weeds. In 2007, Mili was retired and a new boat was outfitted to use for suction harvesting, which continued in conjunction with the SolarBee. During 2008, we purchased our second SolarBee.

The bottom barriers continue to mulch out Eurasian watermilfoil in shallow waters. The circulators are pumping large volumes of water as they were designed to do. From a 2009 harvest of 742 five-gallon buckets, 2012 saw a harvest of 1,267 buckets. The Tinmouth Pond Milfoil Project was reorganized in 2012 to clarify the bylaws and add three board members and two additional officers. The Town Office has a copy of the new bylaws.

Waste and Recycling

The Tinmouth Transfer Station is located at 537 VT Route 140 just east of Tinmouth Center. It is open from 8:00 AM–12:00 PM on Saturdays and 4:00 PM–7:00 PM on Wednesdays. It does not normally take hazardous waste, except on designated Saturdays. There are areas to deposit scrap metal; wood scraps (not painted, pressure-treated, or plywood); and paper and cardboard, while all plastic and household metal waste go in one container unsorted. Returnable bottles are saved for charitable purposes, typically the school's class trips. Trash is bagged and deposited in a dumpster. There's a charge of \$2.00 a bag for non-recyclable trash. Tickets for trash bag disposal are sold only at the Town Office.

Household hazardous waste such as oil-based paints, varnishes, toxic cleaners, rechargeable batteries, etc. should be brought to Household Hazardous Waste

Collection Days. Multiple dates are scheduled each year between May and October; contact the Town Office or the Solid Waste Alliance Communities (SWAC) at (518) 854-9702 for dates. Hazardous waste can also be taken to the RCSW facility on Gleason Road in Rutland, (802) 775-7209.

Backyard Burning

It is illegal to burn trash anywhere in Vermont. It is legal to burn leaves, brush, and logging debris, but you must obtain a burn permit from the Tinmouth Fire Warden (see Contacts sheet). If you want to burn clean, unpainted, untreated wood such as lumber from construction projects, you will need to obtain permits both from the Fire Warden and from the Department of Environmental Conservation, Air Pollution Control Division at (802) 241-3840).



TINMOUTH VILLAGE IN 1910. The church burned in 1968 and was replaced with the fire house, but most of the other buildings remain.

Health and Human Services

Tinmouth Health Officer

The Health Officer and Deputy Health Officer (see Contacts sheet) are appointed by the Vermont Department of Health, on the recommendation of the Select Board. The Health Officers address public health and safety issues such as dog bites, failing septic systems, contaminated water, unhealthy living conditions, and mental health issues. The Health Officer is kept up to date by attending at least one statewide workshop each year.

Tinmouth Town Service Officer

The Town Service Officer (see Contacts sheet), appointed by the Select Board, is charged with assisting individuals within the town who require emergency food, fuel, or shelter assistance, but only

when the Vermont Department of Social Welfare is closed for the day or on weekends.

Tinmouth Community Fund

This fund was originally created from the surplus in the Community Center construction budget, which was a result of careful volunteer management, the dedicated Tinmouth carpenters who constructed the building, and the large amount of unanticipated volunteer labor. It has been increased by donations and fund-raising activities, such as the Firehouse Concerts and the annual Tinmouth Plant Sale. The fund gives grants, normally up to \$500, for community projects and activities. It also gives scholarships for Tinmouth high school graduates going on to higher education, both academic and technical (see Contacts sheet).

Tinmouth Garden Club

An informal group of gardeners comes together to work on Tinmouth's Annual Plant Sale and to create, design, and maintain the public-space gardens in the center of town. The Annual Plant Sale was started around 1987 to raise money for the benefit of children and programs at the Tinmouth School. Over the years, it has sold thousands of perennials dug from Tinmouth gardens and donated by a commercial perennial grower. The Plant Sale is

held every May on the Saturday morning before Mother's day. Starting in 2013, funds generated by the sale will be dedicated to the Scholarship Fund of the Tinmouth Community Fund. A book chronicling the works of the Garden Club was produced for the Tinmouth Time Capsule in 2012. A copy of the picture book is available at the Town Library.

Cemeteries

The town has records of 14 cemeteries or burial places, some with only a few stones, and one cemetery that has completely disappeared. Only Tinmouth Cemetery is still open for new burials, though families may be able to arrange for burials in old family cemeteries (see below).

The Tinmouth Cemetery

Tinmouth Cemetery is on VT Route 140 half a mile east of Tinmouth village. It has been the town cemetery since the early 19th century, with at least three Revolutionary War veterans buried there. It is

operated by the Tinmouth Cemetery Association, Inc., a non-profit Vermont corporation. For information about burials contact the Cemetery Association (see Contacts sheet).

The cemetery corporation was formed on August 31, 1921. The annual meeting of the corporation is held in April on the third Wednesday. The association is managed by a six-member board of trustees, three trustees elected at each annual meeting, and an appointed superintendent.

To be elected as a Trustee, a person must be a lot owner. Lot ownership and burial is limited to persons with a Tinmouth connection. The cemetery is closed for burial from November 1 through April 1. Because of liability reasons and out of respect, recreational use is not allowed.

An annual report of the Cemetery Association listing Trustees, officers, and activities is published in Tinmouth's Annual Town Report. For information about purchasing a lot or arranging for a burial, contact the Cemetery Superintendent (see Contacts sheet).

Burial transit permits may be issued to family members of a deceased person to move the body to another town. No law prohibits family members from moving the bodies themselves, provided they have a permit. The only restriction is when certain contagious diseases are the cause of death. In that case, the local health officer or board of health must first approve the issuance of the permit.

Families occasionally still choose to set aside a portion of their private property for the burial of their immediate family members. This is permitted under Vermont law, as long as no health hazard is created. Questions you have about establishing a private burial plot on your property may be referred to the Vermont Department of Health at (802) 863-7275. When property with a burial site on it is sold, the family may need to retain a legal right to visit the graves in the future. Otherwise, they may find that new owners have posted the property and may not be agreeable to informal access. Consulting with a Vermont real estate attorney is recommended before creating a family burial site.

Arts and History

Firehouse Concerts

The Old Firehouse, once a Grange Hall and now restored as a performance space, is next to the Town Office. Volunteers conduct a series of four or five concerts roughly two weeks apart in the spring and fall. Music may be bluegrass, country, folk, jazz, or rock. Admission is by donation. The performers receive 85 percent of the gate, the Tinmouth Community Fund receives 5 percent, and the town 10 percent to cover the cost of maintenance and utilities. Schedules will be in the *Tales of Tinmouth* and posted on Front Porch Forum (see Contacts sheet).

Spoon Mountain Singers

Local area residents have formed an *a cappella* (no instrumental accompaniment) singing group that performs everything from Renaissance to rock music at various venues in the area. It practices in Tinmouth at the foot of Spoon Mountain on the western border of the town, and many of the members are from Tinmouth. The group performs at the Old Firehouse twice a year. Call Bob and Sue Lloyd at (802) 235-9016 for information about participating in the group or the next concert date.

Tinmouth Handbell Ensemble

A group largely composed of people from Tinmouth raised the money for a 3-octave handbell set. Then they learned to ring them! They perform regularly at the Community Church, at the Old Firehouse, and other nearby venues. Call director Brian Gottschalk at (802) 446-3682 for information about participating in the group or the next concert date.

Tinmouth Historical and Genealogical Society

The Tinmouth Historical and Genealogical Society meets January through October. It also publishes the dates and times of meetings in the *Tales of Tinmouth*. Meetings are informal and open to all. Many of them involve working on unprocessed files of historic papers and photos. THGS publishes a journal, *The Tinmouth Channel*, with articles about Tinmouth and Vermont history and families. Dues are \$12/person or family each year, which includes the three or four issues of *The Tinmouth Channel*. Copies dating back to Vol. 1, No. 1 are available at \$4 a copy. A detailed index of all issues is also available.

There are two published histories of Tinmouth, *Reflections of Tinmouth*, by Mildred Allen (\$25), and *History and Records of the Tinmouth Congregational Church* (\$15), both for sale at the Town Clerk's office. Mrs. Allen's history has a complete set of photos of houses existing in town in about 1950, keyed to an available 1869 map. Tables of Tinmouth Historic Sites and Tinmouth Civil War Soldiers are available at the Town Clerk's office for the cost of reproduction. They are also available in electronic form from the historical society (Grant Reynolds, grant62@vermontel.net) at no charge.

Libraries

TINMOUTH LIBRARY

The Tinmouth Library is located in a space off the back of the Town Office. It was a store at one time, before the Italianate structure that housed a general store and then the Town Office was erected in

front of it in 1869. It may also have been the town's first meetinghouse. If so, it would have been built about 1790.

The library has a rich collection of children's books and up-to-date collections of adult fiction, along with non-fiction works, Vermont books, books on CDs, and DVDs. It is run entirely by volunteers and relies on funds from donations, raffles, and book sales. Hours are Monday, 9:00 AM–12:00 PM and 1:00 PM–5:00 PM, and Thursday 9:00 AM–12:00 PM and 1:00 PM–8:00 PM in the summer, and 9:00 AM–12:00 PM and 1:00 PM–7:00 PM in the winter. The library is open to everyone. It sponsors children's story hours, an active summer reading program, a writing group, and a book discussion group. The writing group ("the Motleys") normally meets on the second Sunday of the month at 1:30 PM. The book discussion group meets the third Sunday of the month at 3:00 PM. Both groups often change their meeting times to accommodate the schedules of the regular membership, so checking with the library for the actual time and date is recommended.

RUTLAND FREE LIBRARY

All residents of Tinmouth are entitled to Rutland Free Library cards at no cost. The town pays a small amount towards the support of the library and has a seat on the library's board of directors. Rutland Free Library offers adult and children's books, audio books and music, magazines, videos, DVDs, newspapers, databases, reference services, and Internet access. Materials can be reserved for you upon request. It has an excellent "Vermont Room" with historic and genealogical information. Free programs for adults and children are featured regularly and are highlighted in monthly brochures and on the website, www.rutlandfree.org.

Library hours: Monday, 9:00 AM–9:00 PM; Tuesday and Wednesday, 11:30 AM–9:00 PM; Thursday and Friday, 9:00 AM–5:30 PM; Saturday, 9:00–5:00 PM; Sunday, closed. Phone: (802) 773-1860; e-mail: rutlandfree@rutlandfree.org.

The library's catalogue, databases, and program information can be found on its website.

Tinmouth Community Church

The church is located at 6 Bliss Road in Tinmouth Center. Sunday worship at 9:00 AM is open to all. For information about any of the programs below, or to volunteer, call Pastor Shirley Oskamp at (802) 235-2500 or Rene Wilbur at (802) 446-3953.

Regular Sunday Worship: 9:00 AM

Special Services:

- Good Friday Service, 7:30 PM
- Inter-faith Community Thanksgiving Service, 5:00 PM Sunday before Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve Service, 5:00 PM

“The Tinmouth Community Church welcomes all. It is a congregation that honors, values, and respects diversity among people of varied ages, Christian traditions, sexual orientation, and ethnic and racial backgrounds. Clearly the great variety that God has created in the natural world extends to humanity as well and is to be treasured. It is our hope that our time worshipping together may bring us closer to the words and examples of Christ, and inspire us to go forth as His heart and hands in the world we inhabit.”

—Community Church Advisory Council

Tinmouth News and Mail

Your Mail

It’s a funny thing about Tinmouth: we have no post office, but six zip codes. Why? Because Tinmouth’s post office closed in 1910, we are served by those of the surrounding towns.

Tinmouth residents east of Tinmouth Mountain are mostly served by the Wallingford post office; their town/city mailing address can be either Tinmouth or Wallingford. These residents can pick up mail, packages, etc. at the Wallingford Post Office, and their zip code is the same as Wallingford’s, 05773. The Wallingford Post Office is located at 137 North Main Street (VT Route 7); phone: (802) 446-2140.

A few residents in the southeast part of town have a Danby address with the 05739 zip code. The Danby post office is at 214 N. Main Street, Danby village; phone: (802) 293-5105.

Many Tinmouth residents who live on the west side of town are served by the Middletown Springs post office, zip code 05757. These residents’ mailing address is Middletown Springs. The post office

is located at 17 South Street (VT Route 133), Middletown Springs; phone: (802) 235-2495.

A few residents in the northwest corner of town have West Rutland addresses, zip code 05777. The West Rutland post office is located at 66 Westway Mall Drive in West Rutland; phone: (802) 438-5752.

Some residents in West Tinmouth (the southwest corner of the town) get their mail from Wells, zip code 05774. The post office is at 10 North Street in Wells village; phone: (802) 645-0822.

A few West Tinmouth residents have Pawlet addresses, zip code 05761. The post office is in Pawlet Village, 5707 VT Route 30; phone: (802) 325-3065.

Putting up a new mailbox: If you are putting up a new mailbox, contact your post office about the specifications for it. The general standard recommends that you leave 48 inches from the bottom of the box to the ground; however, different rural carriers have different vehicles and some recommend a different height. Your street number is issued by

the town, not by the post office. If you have questions about your address, contact the Town Clerk's office.

Getting Tinmouth News

NEWSPAPERS

The *Rutland Herald* newspaper is published daily. As it is the local paper of record, warnings and notices of Tinmouth meetings and hearings are published in it. Tinmouth residents can receive home delivery by calling (802) 747-6121. The Herald carries primarily local and state news, with a smattering of national and international items. Its daily calendar section is widely relied on, but is not as complete as the "Invite" section of the paper's website, www.rutlandherald.com, which has a much bigger calendar. The paper also publishes an "Invite" section on Thursday, with a larger calendar section than on other weekdays. For a full range of print news from outside Vermont, it is advisable to purchase a national newspaper or read one on the Internet. The *Vermont News Guide* is a free weekly advertiser carrying information about coming events in the extended Manchester area, including Danby and Tinmouth. *Vermont Digger* at www.vtdigger.org offers a free daily collection of news and opinions about Vermont, some written by its staff but most selected from Vermont and Boston newspapers and Vermont press releases.

TALES OF TINMOUTH

The *Tales of Tinmouth* is a monthly newsletter that contains town, school, and church news, minutes of Select Board, School Board, and Planning Commission meetings, notices of upcoming events, and interviews with town residents, past and present. If you are not currently on the mailing list and would like to receive "Tales," please send your name and address to its editor Gail Fallar, 515 North End Road, Tinmouth, VT 05773. There is no charge, although donations are gratefully accepted. The newsletter receives no tax money and is published by volunteers. As of 2012, it has been published for the last 26 years.

FRONT PORCH FORUM

Front Porch Forum is an Internet connection to your neighbors! Several times a week subscribers receive an e-mail with Tinmouth news, comments, discussion, ads, pleas for help, lost dog notices, and most anything else a subscriber wishes to post. Only Tinmouth residents and property owners are eligible to access and post on the Tinmouth page of the forum. A poster's name and street are included in the post so there are no anonymous personal attacks. In fact there are no personal attacks at all; an impartial editor (not a Tinmouth resident) reads all the posts and can decline to include those deemed inappropriate. All the content comes in one e-mail, not sporadically during the day as on a listserv. Sign up at <http://frontporchforum.com>.

TINMOUTH'S WEBSITE

The Tinmouth website, www.tinmouthvt.org, features listings of Tinmouth events, town election results, up-to-date e-mail links and phone numbers for Tinmouth town officials and organizations, and minutes of the various Tinmouth boards and commissions.

TELEPHONE SERVICE

As with mail, there is no "Tinmouth" telephone exchange. We are served by Vermont Telephone Company (VTel), not by the much larger firm, FairPoint Communications, Inc., that serves most of the state. We have phones in the Wallingford exchange, 446-, and the Middletown Springs exchange, 235-. Calls between them are local. Local calls also include the Danby exchange, 293-, the Wells exchange, 645-, and the Pawlet exchange, 325-, each of which have a few subscribers in Tinmouth. The town publishes a Tinmouth telephone directory every 2 years. It is available at the Town Office.

Cell phone service is spotty but improving rapidly. In many parts of town, cell phone service is still not reliable.

A Year in the Life of Tinmouth

January

Do you want to run for a town office? For most elected positions, the deadline for filing your nominating petition with the Town Clerk is the 6th Monday before the election on Town Meeting Day. Contact the Town Clerk for more information on running for town office.

Are you interested in putting an item on the Town Meeting warning? You can attend a Select Board or School Board meeting and ask them to include an item. You can also file a petition with the signatures of 5 percent of the registered voters to specifying the item you want the board to include. The deadline to file petitions with the Town Clerk is 40 days before Town Meeting Day. For more information, contact the Town Clerk.

February

If you want to vote on Town Meeting Day, but aren't registered to vote in Tinmouth, the cut-off date to register and be added to the voter checklist is noon on the Wednesday preceding Town Meeting Day. Contact the Town Clerk to register.

Tinmouth's Annual Town Report is mailed to residents in mid-February, in time for Town Meeting. It features the report of the town officers; the agenda for the meeting, including the articles warned for voting; the school report; and reports from the organizations active in the town.

Absentee ballots for the Australian ballot voting for town officers on the first Tuesday in March are available 20 days beforehand. Contact the Town Clerk's office.

March

Tinmouth Town Meeting is held at 1:00 PM on the Saturday before the first Tuesday in March at the Community Center. This is actually two meetings: the town government meeting and the school district meeting. The meetings alternate years as to which is held first. Voters ask questions and discuss,

amend, and vote on items during the floor meeting. The town and school informational meetings for Australian balloting for officers will be held in conjunction with this meeting.

Statewide Town Meeting Day is the first Tuesday in March. Tinmouth voters cast ballots to elect officers for the ensuing year(s). Voting booths are open from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

The Presidential Primaries take place on Town Meeting Day (first Tuesday in March) every fourth year.

April

All dogs must be licensed by April 1. Contact the Town Clerk for details.

Trout season runs from the second Saturday in April through the last Sunday in October. Fishing licenses are available at the Town Clerk's office.

The Spring Firehouse Concert Series usually begins in April. Concerts are at 7:30 PM Friday nights at the Old Firehouse (see Contacts sheet).

Homestead Declaration (HS-131) is due with your state income tax.

May

Green-Up Day is on the first Saturday in May. Join with the thousands of volunteers across the state in this unique Vermont tradition, cleaning up litter from roadsides and public places, and sprucing up the community. If you need collection bags, information on drop-off points, or ideas on which Tinmouth roads need work, contact the Green-Up Day Coordinator, the Tinmouth Conservation Commission, or the Town Clerk (see Contacts sheet).

The Annual Tinmouth Plant Sale is held on the Saturday morning before Mother's Day; check the *Tales of Tinmouth* or the *Rutland Herald* for when the sale opens. Local gardeners donate hundreds of hardy perennials and shrubs to the sale with

proceeds going to the Scholarship Fund of the Tinmouth Community Fund. If it grows in Tinmouth, it will grow virtually anywhere!

June

School's out!

Visit the farmers markets in Rutland in Depot Park (Saturday 10:00 AM–2:00 PM) or Dorset (Sunday 10:00 AM–2:00 PM). Rutland also holds a winter farmers market that is held in a new facility at 251 West Street in Rutland.

July

Enjoy the summer! There are free outdoor concerts all around us. Check the Calendar in the *Rutland Herald*.

Tinmouth property tax bills are mailed out in mid-July.

August

Democratic and Republican party primaries take place the last Tuesday in August in even-numbered years. In some years there is also a Progressive Party primary.

First payment of one-half of your property tax bill is due August 15.

School starts, usually the last week of the month.

September

On or before the first Tuesday in September, members of the major political parties may caucus and nominate candidates for Justice of the Peace. For more information, contact the Town Clerk.

The Fall Firehouse Concert Series begins in September (see Contacts sheet.)

October

Early voting for state and federal elections is available to all. Mail ballots for these elections are

available 30 days before the election. You can vote at the Town Clerk's office, have a ballot mailed to you, or take a ballot home to vote. Call the Town Clerk for more information.

If you want to vote on Election Day, but aren't registered to vote in Tinmouth, the cut-off date to register and be added to the voter checklist is the Wednesday before Election Day. Ask for the Vermont Application for Addition to the Checklist from the Town Clerk's office.

Second half of property tax bill due October 15.

Bow hunting season runs for 23 days starting on the first Saturday in October, and for another 9 days starting the first Saturday after the completion of rifle season (see November, below). Moose season (by lottery) is in October as well; contact the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife for dates. Hunting licenses are available at the Town Clerk's office.

November

Attend the Select Board and School Board meetings starting in late fall if you'd like to follow and participate in the school and town budget process.

Voting for state, federal, and some local officials takes place on Election Day, the first Tuesday in November, in even years. Voting is at the Community Center from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Polls open at 8:00 AM for the General Election during presidential election years.

Deer season (rifle) runs from 12 days before Thanksgiving until the Sunday following Thanksgiving. Muzzleloader season and a second bow hunting season, run for nine days beginning on the first Saturday after the completion of rifle season. Hunting licenses are available at the Town Clerk's office.

The renowned Tinmouth Game Supper, hosted by our Fire Department, is an experience in outstanding wild game cuisine and represents the efforts of folks for miles around and their contributions to the department. Deer, bear, moose, and hundreds of home-cooked pies are prepared and served by

the department and dozens of other dedicated volunteers. Over 500 came in 2011; 613 (Tinmouth's population) is the next goal. The supper is held every year on the Saturday before Thanksgiving at the Community Center beginning at 4:00 PM.

The Winter Farmer's Market is held at its new facility, The Vermont Farmers Food Center, 251 West Street, Rutland; hours are 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

December

If you need your driveway plowed, or an extra cord of wood delivered this winter, hire your neighbor! Many Tinmouth businesses and services are listed in the *Tales of Tinmouth*, the Tinmouth Telephone Directory, and on Front Porch Forum. And be sure to enjoy winter in Vermont, whether snowmobiling, skiing, or skating.

Tinmouth Participation Committee

The Tinmouth Participation Committee is working to improve participation in Tinmouth's town meeting, and, by extension, Tinmouth civic affairs in general. This ad hoc group is not elected or appointed. All Tinmouth residents are welcome to

join this diverse committee. The Operators' Manual Committee (see Contacts sheet), a subgroup, prepared this Tinmouth Operator's Manual. We would appreciate any suggestions you can offer to make this manual more useful and user-friendly. Thanks!



TAKEN FROM THE CEMETERY PROPERTY around 1910, Alpheus Packard's sawmill appears in the left foreground with his gristmill just behind it and his house (now the Jaquay's) across the road. Today, Vermont Rte. 140 is much straighter, running through the site of the house at the upper left.

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Tinmouth, VT 05773

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