

TALES OF TINMOUTH

April 2022
Vol. 36 Number 4

Tinmouth
Vermont

Editors' Notes: *Has Spring Sprung?!?!?*

The deadline for submissions is the 20th of the preceding month. Please email your information to *Tales of Tinmouth* (tinmouthtales@vermontel.net) or drop it off at the Town Office.

Gail Fallar & Pat Psholka

~ Special Town Meeting ~

WARNING

TINMOUTH SPECIAL TOWN MEETING Monday, May 2, 2022

The legal voters of the Town of Tinmouth, Vermont are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Tinmouth Community Center on Monday, May 2, 2022 at 6:30 P.M. to consider and act upon the following articles: Viz:

Article 1. Shall the voters exempt the Tinmouth Volunteer Fire Department from property taxes for the term of five (5) years - 2027?

Article 2. Shall the voters switch to the use of Australian Balloting for its Annual Budget votes?

Article 3. Shall the voters switch to the use of Australian Balloting for all Public Questions?

Article 4. Discussion regarding spending \$177,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)?

Article 5. To discuss any other lawful business.

Dated at Tinmouth, Vermont this 24th day of March, 2022.

Select Board ~ Town of Tinmouth, Vermont

Cathy Reynolds, Chair Meadow Squier Kevin Eaton

THIS IS A FLOOR MEETING, YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO VOTE.

Some actions can be decided by voice vote, the Moderator can also ask for a show of hands, and seven voters can request use of paper ballots for a particular Article.

Please see pages 3, 4 and 5 for *Letters to the Editors* regarding Articles 2 & 3 above.

~ American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) ~ By Cathy Reynolds, Select Board Chair

The Town of Tinmouth has received half of the of \$177,000 due from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). It's a one time opportunity!

As originally conceived by the Federal Government, this funding was limited to municipal water and wastewater systems, broad band upgrades, businesses impacted by the pandemic and front-line workers. Several months ago an adjustment was made that allows towns to spend it as they wish. So we now have the ability to decide, as a Town, how to direct these funds.

There are lots of ideas and we want to hear yours. Call or email the Town Office or a Selectboard member or put a note in the drop box at the Town Office. We will discuss this item in person at the Special Town Meeting being held on Monday May 2 at 6:30 at the Community Center. The primary purpose of the Special Town Meeting is to discuss and vote on traditional town meeting from the floor vs. Australian ballot.

Some ideas we have heard include:

1. Continue the Old Creamery upgrades - what would it cost to make it usable for the town - power, sewer, water? Museum for Historical Society or other uses - ideas?
2. Add solar panels to the Town Office and Town Garage
3. Digitize land records
4. Recreation space / opportunities - what does this mean to you?
 - Develop the land behind the Town Garage that the Town owns
 - Tinmouth Pond access; what would you like it to include?
 - Purchase new land
 - Pickle ball court
 - Town pond
 - Walking path/trails
 - Other
5. Upgrade town website with land records (if digitized) and permit applications, etc. Make it more of a one stop shop for Town items
6. Town Office upgrades - generator switch and generator for Town Office/heat for second floor/other upgrades
7. More paving
8. other - think big, this once in a lifetime money

*The following was written by **Logan Younce**, a UVM Student Intern, hoping to learn about civics and democracy, while helping the town. The Select Board first asked him to research town meeting voting and Tinnmouth's history on floor voting vs. Australian ballot. This is his report. (Edits specific to Tinnmouth)*

Floor Meetings, the Australian Ballot, or Both?

By Logan Younce

The town meeting is a tradition quite literally as old as America, and, depending on who you ask, as characteristic of Vermont as maple syrup. The practice of deciding as a community what laws to abide by is one wholly unique to a select few New England states, and nowhere is this practice more alive than in Vermont. There is some debate, though, how these town meetings ought to be conducted in our modern world, with the contention largely focused on whether to stay with the traditional floor meeting style, or to transition to an anonymous ballot, also known as the Australian Ballot.

In the traditional floor meeting, as usual, registered voters in the town can gather together on the first Tuesday in March (*Tinnmouth meets on the Saturday preceding the first Tuesday*) to discuss issues, propose solutions, and vote. The benefits of the floor meeting are largely threefold. First, such meetings enable citizens to learn deeply about the issues they're about to vote on, making their decisions more informed by the perspectives of those around them. Second, the discussion format enables voters to amend proposed legislation, making it truly reflective of community interests. And third, the town coming together to gather in one place serves to strengthen community bonds, fostering a mutual understanding. Its glaring deficit, though, is in the rather poor attendance relative to the community as a whole. In 2008, Vermont towns saw an average of 21.1% turnout, meaning only a fifth of the citizens were actually involved in the decision-making process. While a lack of desire to participate may be the case for some, it is difficult for many to get a full Tuesday off of work when bills need to be paid, and floor meetings can stretch anywhere from several hours to full days. It is worth mentioning that as a town's population gets larger, the proportion of voters that attend floor meetings decreases.

The Australian Ballot enables voters to bypass the need for this huge time commitment by holding open polls for a whole day. During this time, voters simply stop by the polling station any time between 10:00 (8:00) am and 7:00 pm, fill in a secret ballot in a voting booth, then leave. An Australian Ballot system also allows for voters who are homebound due to health or away from their town to vote via an absentee ballot.

Such ease can enable voting turnouts on average to range from 40% to 50% according to the same 2008 statistics.

That being said, Australian Ballots carry none of the usual benefits of the floor meeting. Voters are not required to attend the informational sessions that typically precede Australian Ballot votes, meaning their decisions may end up being less informed. There is no ability to amend issues on the ballot, only a box to check for yes and a box to check for no. If an issue is shot down, it falls to the Select Board to theorize an amendment to then include in a later vote. Finally, besides potentially running into neighbors at the polling station, there is little community gathering aspect to the Australian Ballot.

Many towns in Vermont take a mixed approach to the question, handling one or two of the three town meeting items (town officers, budget, and other questions) by Australian Ballot and the rest by floor meeting. As of 2021, 112 towns take this approach, with the vast majority having at least town officer voting be handled by Australian Ballot, seventy-seven towns still conduct their town meetings entirely by floor meeting, and forty-five are fully Australian Ballot.

Tinnmouth had historically conducted all town meeting issues by floor meeting, but in 2006, the Select Board was petitioned to transition all three town meeting items to Australian Ballot. The resulting special town meeting was attended by nearly 200 voters, and by an extremely thin margin, all three issues were decided to be handled by Australian Ballot.

On January 8th of 2007, petitions were received to reconsider the recent Australian Ballot vote. This intervention prevented the new system of voting from taking place until the regular floor meeting on March 3rd. There, around 200 Tinnmouth voters attended, a little more than the previous vote, and decided to maintain the decision to transition to the Australian Ballot. Similar petitions were introduced for the 2008 informational meeting, but discussion on them was largely rejected, and a plurality of the 295 ballot-casting voters rejected them once more.

After four more years, in 2012, the Australian Ballot was once again on Tinnmouth's town meeting warning. This time, though, the 235 voters decided to discontinue the use of the Australian Ballot for budget and public questions, but maintained it for the election of officers.

In January of this year, two petitions were received to move all town meeting issues back to Australian Ballot, and on May 2nd at 6:30, we'll be able to see whether the consensus has changed once more. The question of floor meeting or Australian Ballot essentially boils down to the age-old debate of quality vs. quantity. Should we prioritize well-informed voting? Or easily-accessible voting? Whatever's right for Tinnmouth is something only the voters of the town can decide for themselves.

~ Letters to the Editor ~ Special Town Meeting ~

KEEP TOWN MEETING:

This paragraph appeared in a letter I wrote to the editor of the Rutland Herald when this was an issue in 2006: “The virtual worlds we seep into as a community moving away from open forum decision making are those of the suburbs. The pure democracy of the small town town meeting can be messy, longwinded and always unpredictable, but essentially keeps the power of the legislative function in the hands of the citizens of the community. We discuss, we propose, we amend and then we vote. Australian balloting would be cleaner, smoother, five minutes in a voting booth; not much like the way real life is worked out. It “costs” to live in a small town, efforts of all kinds including a day every year set aside to function as an important branch of the town government side by side with your neighbors. As to the argument that some are uncomfortable speaking up, we all must be ready to defend firmly everyone’s right to that voice. Just as in all town meetings we all must insist on civility!”

And this I believe!

Nelson and Betti Jaquay

KEEP ABSENTEE BALLOT

During the pandemic, many voters enjoyed the convenience and safety and privacy of voting from home by Absentee Ballot! In order to keep Absentee Ballot available on all counts, we need to have Australian Ballot in our Town of Tinmouth! Australian Ballot must be voted in person at a Special Town Meeting on Monday, May 2, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center! Masks are optional.

A “paper ballot” will be requested, so that your vote will be private. You must be present to vote!

Just think, if Australian Ballot passes, everyone has the opportunity to vote!!

The Benefits of Australian Ballot are:

- *Absentee/Early voting
- *Vote in private
- *Vote if you are house-bound
- *Vote if you work on Saturday
- *Vote if you don’t wish to attend Town Meeting
- *Town Budget must be warned; no additional expenditures can be added
- *More voters cast ballots with Australian Ballot than at Town Meeting.
- *At Town Meeting approximately 70 people decide the Town Budget for the entire population. Australian Ballots allows more voters a voice.

Be sure to attend an in person Special Town Meeting on **Monday, May 2, 2022 at 6:30** p.m. at the Tinmouth Community Center!!!

Thank you,
Paula & Bart Bonazinga

My support for voting from the floor in Tinmouth

I’d like to lend my support to Town Meeting Days in person and voting “from the floor.” Vermont has a long history of community-based decisions and having everyone together to agree or disagree, ask questions and vote on changes is vital to continue this tradition. While a few might say that shy folks are afraid to speak up, the converse is that decisions that effect everyone in town necessitate being present, speaking one’s mind and perhaps being convinced to change that mind based on conversation with others. Voting from the floor allows everyone the right to be heard, and anyone to whom town policy matters will make the effort to be present.

Tracylea Byford

Australian ballot or Show of hands?

On Monday May 2, 2022 at 6:30 pm the residents of Tinmouth who are available for Town Meeting will vote on the petitions asking to switch to Australian balloting, and other important matters.

If you can’t attend because of other obligations, I’m sorry to say that you will not be able to vote. This is because, as it is currently decided, voting is done from the floor of the Town Meeting by a show of hands.

In the last election we voted via Australian ballot. The turnout was amazing! Over 200 voters came out and placed their vote at The Old Firehouse. The usual turnout for Town Meeting, voting via a show of hands is in contrast about 60 to 70 Tinmouth residents.

In retrospect, I feel that voting via Australian ballot at the polls will provide a better gauge as to what the majority of the residents of Tinmouth want and need.

There are many reasons why someone may not be able to attend Town Meeting in person. Some reasons may be because of COVID-19, physical disabilities, scheduling with work, childcare, children in sports or extracurricular activities etc.

Wouldn’t it be nice to vote on everything via Australian ballot? To make this happen we would need to show up at Town Meeting on May 2, 2022 and motion for this change. It seems simple, however, it won’t happen if you don’t attend Town Meeting and cast your vote there.

Town Meeting has been a tradition enjoyed by many Vermonters for many years, it does not have to go away if we make the switch to voting via ballot. The Town Meeting would have all the beautiful traditions and opportunities for questions and conversations. It would simply be an informational meeting. The voting would be separate and via a ballot.

If you wish to see this change happen, I encourage you to attend Town Meeting May 2, 2022 at 6:30 pm and cast your vote via a show of hands.

Ingrid Lepley

~ Letters to the Editor ~ Continued ~

Before we moved to Tinnmouth full time, we made a day trip just to attend Town Meeting. We found the sense of community quite impressive. Not only did we get to connect names from *Tales of Tinnmouth* to faces, we were also very welcomed. The opportunity to observe democracy, with citizens representing themselves instead of being represented by representatives is amazing. Members of the community could make changes to articles that then could be voted on, and the budget could be changed.

People with a wide range of views were able to have conversations. People who are shy about public speaking either rose to the occasion or asked someone to help them.

It is one thing to lose the practice of local government to a pandemic and another to lose it to impatience.

It would be sad to see this important tradition go.

We recognize that the compromise that was reached in 2012 to let officers be elected by Australian ballot, and articles and budgets to be voted on at Town Meeting was brilliant.

We plan on voting to keep town meeting with its floor vote for budgets and articles so the discourse can continue.

It is sad that the Corona Virus has kept us from attending the meeting in person. We miss the food, fellowship, and the opportunity to participate in democracy.

Kim Harbaugh and Sherry Johnson

* * * *

I'm writing in support of keeping Tinnmouth's practice of conducting the town's business in the form of a traditional Town Meeting from the floor.

Several years ago, the townspeople voted to conduct future Town Meeting business by Australian Ballot (paper ballot). No more getting together at the Community Center annually to hear and discuss articles, share a meal, and catch up with neighbors. This temporarily ended over 200 years of Tinnmouth citizens coming together once a year to become a legislature for a day.

Prior to this change, articles were read aloud, debated, amended and voted on from the floor. Not just the Select Board, but the townspeople could alter a budget item at the floor meeting. The depth of understanding that comes from this process cannot be approached by simply filling out a paper ballot with "yes" and "no" votes.

After moving to Australian Ballot, a group of concerned citizens of different political stripes came together as the Community Participation Committee to hear and address peoples' experiences and grievances

with town governance. After meeting for more than a year and devoting many hours to understanding the issues, the committee published the Tinnmouth Operator's Manual. This is a guide to town government, committees, officers, services and Town Meeting meant to help people navigate the Tinnmouth government landscape.

At around the same time, members of the committee petitioned to bring back the floor meeting. This passed at the following Town Meeting, for budgets and public questions, not election of officers. It was one of the few times in the history of the state that a floor meeting has been reinstated after moving to Australian Ballot. To me, this was a wonderful compromise that many people worked hard to achieve. It gave back to voters the chance to debate, question and change budget and business items from the floor on Town Meeting Day. The agreed-upon compromise also gave a quick and convenient way to choose our town officers by Australian Ballot.

A traditional floor meeting is not as fast or convenient as voting by Australian Ballot, but like many things, taking the time to discuss and understand the issues is time well spent. Please join me in voting "NO" to Australian Ballot at the Special Town Meeting on Monday, May 2. Your "NO" vote is a vote to continue Tinnmouth's proud history of participatory democracy.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Fontein

* * * *

Over the past years, I have looked at town meeting with more and more of a skeptical eye. Could be that attending regular Select Board meetings has broadened my understanding of citizen engagement and its importance.

The last two town meetings have increased voter turnout three times more than our current in-person town meeting. That should be reason enough to move everything to Australian ballot. If isn't, then let's look at a few more reasons to adopt Australian balloting on May 2nd.

1. It's more inclusive. What do I mean when I say it's more inclusive? Well, the majority of voters are not able to make town meeting. Either they are working, spending time with their families (Saturday afternoon should be time spent with one's family) or, and this seems to crop up more often than I thought, people get bullied and brow beaten down enough, they stop showing up.
2. With Australian ballot, we have the ability to stop in before or after work, cast a ballot and move on with the day. This makes so much more sense. As a town we become more inclusive to the working person. Having that flexibility seems to be important to us as

the number of voters last town meeting was 228, compare that to pre-covid turn-out of 70 including children.

3. The other benefit to Australian ballot is of course absentee voting. We can vote early from the comfort of our house and spend less on a stamp than on fuel.

I have lived in Tinmouth for the better part of four decades. Like some others, I can remember when town meeting was in the basement of the Church or in the fire house. The manner in which we conduct ourselves has changed over the years. From my perspective, it's not improving. Still, as a town we turn out in greater numbers using Australian ballot. We like voting in our own time, away from preying eyes and abrasive personalities. That may be the greatest benefit to Australian ballot.

I hope you will come out on May 2nd to support Australian ballot. It's better for voters in every way.

In order to switch to Australian ballot for budgets and public questions (we already vote for our officers that way), it requires one more in-person vote.

Please mark your calendar for May 2nd, 6:30, at the Community Center. Let's make voting equitable for all voters in town.

Thank you for your support,

Michael Fallar

* * * *

~ Amphibian Crossing Alert ~

You may have noticed some brightly-colored amphibian crossing signs on the roadsides in Tinmouth. These are placed by the Tinmouth Conservation Commission in areas where there are known migration routes for salamanders, frogs and turtles. These animals move on a seasonal basis to their breeding and egg-laying sites and are at risk of being killed by car traffic where their paths cross roads.

Please slow down and avoid hitting animals when you see these signs on the roads. There are especially high numbers of amphibians moving on rainy spring nights, so pay extra attention in those conditions. If you'd like to know more about amphibian migration, go to www.vtherpatlas.org. Please do not hit, move or disturb our signs, many of which are hand-made, and please contact me if you see a sign that's damaged or moved. The signs will be removed around July 1 and stored until next year.

Thank you,
Doug Fontein,
Tinmouth Conservation Commission
446-2928

~ Feedback Form ~

By Cathy Reynolds for the Selectboard

The Selectboard reorganized after Town Meeting and welcomed Kevin Eaton to the Board, joining Meadow Squier and Cathy Reynolds.

The Board adopted a guidance document for Selectboard meetings to ensure that meetings are efficient and orderly. This procedure came to us from the Town of Proctor and you can view it here <https://www.tinmouthvt.org/selectboard/>

We have also created a feedback form which any citizen can use to provide the Town with feedback. This form is available at the Town Office or at the weblink above. You will receive a call or email back if you submit a feedback form. Feedback to the Town includes Town office operations, the Road Commissioner and the Selectboard. All forms will be retained in a binder that is public information. The Selectboard meets once or twice per month and feedback will be reviewed at regular meetings. The Road Commissioner and Town Clerk, Treasurer and other positions will review feedback weekly and respond via phone or email.

You can call or email Selectboard members with concerns. We welcome your input.

~Sand/Salt Shed Grant ~

By Cathy Reynolds, Selectboard Chair

The Town was just awarded a grant from the Vermont Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to build a salt and sand shed. The grant award is \$300,000 and requires a \$75,000 match. This was the third application we had submitted and the third time was the charm.

This is great news to allow the Town to build both the Town Garage and Salt and Sand Shed without asking for more money from the Town. Due to Covid and increased costs the Bond was not going to be sufficient to cover both buildings.

Thanks to this grant, we should have enough money to build both buildings and have a small nest egg in our capital building fund.

**~ House Hold Hazardous Waste Day ~
Saturday, April 30, 2022**

8:30- 12:30 at the Rutland Town Transfer Station,
off Post Road Extension in Rutland Town.
Flyers of what to bring, what not to bring, are available
at the Transfer Station and Town Office.

*May your path be strewn with flowers,
Memories, friends and happy hours.
May blessings come from heaven above,
To fill your life with peace and love.
..... An English Blessing*



April 1, 2022

To the Tinmouth Community,

Our Winter Sports Program finished up on Friday, March 11th. It was by far the best WSP experience to date for the children. We worked with PICO instructors and our community volunteers for six weeks. The ski and board instructors were top notch and student skill progression was evident. It was a perfect opportunity to offset the stress of a two-year pandemic.

Our third and fourth graders completed their *Scat and Track* program offered by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife in February. Instruction was virtual but the tracking took place in the forest behind the school. Students utilized the new snowshoes gifted to us by a grant from the Vermont Principal's Association.

Kindergarten through sixth grade attended *Hiplet*, a multi-cultural dance performance at Castleton University on March 31st. It was dynamic!

Four Winds is starting up again in April. The 10 community volunteers took a short break during the Omicron surge in mid-winter. This is by far one of the students' favorite hands-on programs.

VINS will also be visiting on April 14th at 10:00 AM. They will bring raptors and discuss conservation. All are invited to attend. This will take place in the Community Center.

In mid-March, I was contacted by community members who are now working with our art teacher and the students to build a paper mâché falcon – the Tinmouth Mountain School mascot. This will be similar to a Chinese dragon float and will be carried by students in the July town parade. Staff and students are truly excited to have community members back in the school!

Our attendance has improved drastically during March. In spite of previous concerns over a high absenteeism rate, our mid-year math and literacy assessments showed solid growth across the board.

We're currently geared up for state assessments. We know covid has impacted learning over the past two years but teachers remain optimistic and students are engaged.

I would like to comment on our students' opportunity to participate in *Music in Our Schools*. This event took place at Mill River High School on March 11th. It was heartening to hear children join with peers across the district to sing, *It's a Wonderful World!* It was a culmination of weeks of music instruction taught with unmatched expertise. The program was a tribute to the fortitude of our teachers and the resilience of our students! **Maureen Fitzgerald-Riker**, Principal
Tinmouth Mountain School

~ Tinmouth Community Church ~



TINMOUTH CHURCH

Evil.

Would you use that word to describe Vladimir Putin? Would you use that word to describe what the Russian army has done to Ukraine and its people? In all the news reporting and commentary on the war, I have barely heard the word used. If the war in Ukraine is not an outbreak of evil, what is?

Once again, we are witnessing "man's inhumanity to man," the depravity which we are capable of when we give ourselves over to evil impulses and desires, or to our willing or conscripted cooperation with evil. It is staggering. It is horrifying. How vitally important it is to guard our hearts and safeguard our institutions, lest we become what we loathe and lest we end up with leadership the likes of Putin.

We not only need to be vigilant in our personal and corporate oversight, but actively nurture the good that is within us and the goodness that comes from governments pursuing the good of all. When power-hungry persons seek to intimidate and dictate, we must resist them right from the start with the demands of truth, the power of love's nonviolent, noncooperation with evil, and with the graced courage befitting the children of God. For when evil has its way, injustice, violence, and war, and their accompanying sorrow, misery and death, are sure to follow.

Still, conversion, and ever deepening conversion to the presence and love of God within us, is always possible as we turn from evil and turn to God. That we would know more clearly the truth that sets us free, God sent Jesus "to destroy the works of evil" and to usher in the reign of God's justice and love. True, the reign of God in us and in our life together does not come without struggle and sacrifice, as Jesus bore witness. But it will come. That is the meaning of resurrection. Though evil has its day, it will ultimately not have its way, thanks be to God and to those who live from God's Spirit, Christian and otherwise.

*Blessings,
Pastor John*



Rev. John Hardman-Zimmerman
(802) 282-7532 (cell, preferred)
(802) 884-8249 (parsonage)
hzfam@hotmail.com

**Tinmouth Community Fund 2022
Grants and Scholarships**

by Jan Krantz

It's the time of year to consider applying for Tinmouth Community Fund (TCF) grants and scholarships, if you are a Tinmouth resident. TCF has aligned the due date for ALL applications, i.e. Community Fund and Small Business grants, and Continuing Education and K-12 Scholarships. **All applications are now due on or before May 1, 2022.** Once again, we request grant reports be done on past Community Grants, prior to applying for a new one. The report form can be found on the TCF section of the Tinmouth website. TCF will host an awards night, in early June 2022, to announce all the grant and scholarship recipients.

All TCF applications can be found online at <https://www.tinmouthvt.org/community-fund/>. We ask that you use this online format for all grant and scholarship applications. Please note, Community Fund and Small Business Grant applications are both found under the Community Fund Grant Information tab on the website. **New for 2022**, TCF has increased the amount for individual Community Fund Grant proposals, **from \$500 up to \$750**. Small Business Grants are available up to \$500, with the total funding for all Small Business Grants combined capped at \$1000. If you have any questions about the application process, please reach out to Community Fund Bboard members.

Groups with outstanding grants, please file your final grant reports for past grants soon! We cannot issue new grants until the past ones are completed, which includes a report and a photo.

We look forward to seeing your ideas on how TCF can help support a new or existing community program, a small business project/expansion, an internship, scholastic endeavor, or sports/camp program that will enhance the well-being of Tinmouth residents!

~ Dog Licenses Due April 1st ~



A current rabies certificate is required. You can call the Town Office if you don't know if your dog needs a shot or not. Fees are \$9 for neutered/spayed dogs and \$13 for those that are not. 50% penalty is assessed after April 1st.

~ Community News ~

Get Well Wishes are sent to **Steve Halford** and **Anita Rogers**.

Heartfelt Sympathies are sent to family and friends of **Lucille (Lucy) Gilmore**.

Please Recycle or Pass Along Tales!!

Have you visited the new “**Miss Ruth Little Library**” located on the front porch of the Town Office? It's a great way to share a good book or find someone else's favorite.

And it is open all the time! It's quite full at the moment, a good time to stop for a visit and take a good book home!

Please bring only a book or two at a time.

There is a second **Little Library** in Tinmouth now at the **Tinmouth Community Center**, near the front doors. This Library is for children's books appropriate for all ages.

Thanks to a grant from the Tinmouth Community Fund, local builder Ken Krantz, and painting by the Jaquays, we have a second Little Library now where we can share books for kids. Feel free to drop by and give a book, take a book.

Thanks to the school for their assistance monitoring this Library.

~ Nature Notes ~

Red-winged blackbirds are singing along with phoebes, robins, cardinals, gold finches (wild canaries), and more! Geese, geese and more geese are flying overhead daily. Mergansers are at Tinmouth Pond, the ice is out!

Daffodils are stretching to the sky (not brave enough for buds yet). Crocuses are blooming. 10” of snow arrived on March 12th, was all gone by the 14th. Then more snow came during the night on the 27th, and hung around a few days as it didn't get above freezing, the warmth of the sun finally chased it away.

At least two bears have been spotted – one taking down a bird feeder and breaking into a shed on East Road (Jim Wetherby). And Shalane Layugan reported seeing a mountain lion on the south end of town.

No reports of fish worms yet.

But there are **LOTS OF TICKS** – beware, be careful.

~ Homestead Declaration ~

This is a reminder that you need to file an **annual Homestead Declaration** with the Vermont Department of Taxes, form HS-122. You must file this to qualify for the homestead education tax rate and to request a property tax adjustment if you are eligible.

You must also file form HI-144 (household income), **due April 18th**. This is required even if you do not have to file or pay state income taxes.

~ Meeting Highlights ~

(Complete minutes are available at the town office.)

As the Select Board asked that their minutes only provide the minimum required, there will be a supplemental report provided for readers following each of their meeting's Highlights.

Select Board ~ 3/10/2022 – These Highlights are from approved minutes.

Present were members Cathy Reynolds, Meadow Squier, and Kevin Eaton, as well as Eric Buffum – Road Commissioner, David Birdsall – ACO, Todd Dennis, Rick Fallar, Pat Psholka, Stan Wilbur-Public Works Project Manager, Michael Fallar-PC Chair, Michael Fannin-EMD, Hollis Squier, Kim Harbaugh & Sherry Johnson, and Gail Fallar-SB Assistant.

Board Re-organized for 2022 as follows:

Elected Cathy Reynolds Chair

Set Regular Monthly Meetings - 2nd Thursday and 4th Tuesday @7:00 PM

Designated Signer for Bills and Orders - Cathy

Newspaper of Record – Rutland Herald

Adopted Robert's Rules for Small Boards

Appointed Overweight Truck Permit Signer - Kevin

Appointed Member to Community Center Board -Cathy

Appointed Member to Tinmouth Pond Milfoil Project Board – Meadow

Appointed Liaison to Public Works Facilities Project Manager -Cathy

Adopted Select Board Meeting Rules and Procedures Policy

Board reviewed agenda, added David Birdsall and Otter Creek Engineering, and moved the Mask Mandate item to the top.

Mask Mandate: Board voted to lift the Mask Mandate from the Town Office and Old Fire House. SB asked that a Mask Optional sign be posted.

Public Works Facilities Update: Stan reviewed Otter Creek Engineering contract amendment, advised SB to sign, as the Town is required to have an engineer for the town garage project. Board voted to approve the contract. Stan advised he will work on the State's Fire Safety Permit, have it ready for SB review on 3/22. Briefly discussed on-going progress with the project, he departed at 7:30.

Highway: Eric reported there was lots of tree damage during the last storm and the black truck is having coolant leak trouble – covered by the warrantee. Board reviewed MRGP (Municipal Roads General Permit) plan and list of work done provided by Steffanie Bourque from the RRPC (Rutland Regional Planning Commission), and authorized Cathy to sign the report.

Board approved and signed Annual Highway Budget Plan for VTrans.

Chainsaw Use: SB discussed recent incident - safety concerns; Cathy wrote draft best practice guidelines - SB will review at its 3/22/22 meeting.

Feedback Form: After brief discussion and review, Board voted to adopt the Feedback Form and Guidance.

Michael Fallar, as Planning Commission Chair, presented the SB with proposed amendments to Tinmouth's Flood Hazard Area Regulations. He advised the changes are necessary for the regulations to meet state and FEMA standards – in order to be able to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. The biggest benefit to the Town is a higher rate of reimbursement from the State if a major disaster hits again. SB set a hearing date of April 14th, 7:00, just prior to their regular SB meeting, will hold a vote in August, as voter approval requires using Australian balloting.

Citizen Concerns:

Michael Fallar, as a private citizen, expressed concern with the involvement of town officials during the recent town meeting elections.

Michael Fannin, as a private citizen, took issue with those comments.

ACO David Birdsall advised he'd received a dog complaint. SB reviewed process in the Dog Ordinance – need a written complaint once all other options are unsuccessful. Long discussion due to past history of the dog owner(s).

Financials: Board reviewed monthly reports and warrants, Board voted to approve.

Special Town Meeting for Petitions regarding switching to Australian balloting for budgets and public questions. SB decided to hold this floor meeting on Monday, May 2, 2022 at 6:30 pm at the Community Center. Town Clerk advised that there needed to be another Article added to the warning regarding keeping the tax-exempt status of the Tinmouth Volunteer Fire Department, which has to be voted on every five years. Board concurred, will review and approve Warning at its 3/22/22 meeting.

UVM Democracy Internship: Meadow, Select Board liaison, updated the SB on projects the intern, Logan Younce, will be working on – ARPA Plan and possible community survey and the pros and cons of Australian balloting and Floor voting and Tinmouth's history (votes and revotes) regarding those choices of governance.

Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) Redetermination: Board accepted PVR's re-determination of the CLA and COD, Cathy signed agreement for the SB. CLA went from 91.38 to 90.89, COD went from 17.54 to 15.74.

Annual Appointments: Board re-appointed everyone (see town report); appointed Sherry Johnson to the Rutland Region Transportation Council, and Todd Dennis as Energy Coordinator.

BCA: Town Clerk advised that the Board of Civil Authority needed to meet just prior to the next SB meeting to accept a secure ballot drop box from the Secretary of State's office. SB agreed to meet with other members of the BCA at 6:55 on 3/22/22.

Members Concerns – Board pondered the possibility of discussing the need for more money for the salt/sand shed at the upcoming town meeting, along with a plan for the ARPA funds.

Mail/Correspondence: Board reviewed letter from Vermont Land Trust, email from Nelson and Betti Jaquay (re: special town meeting), and email from Steffanie Bourque at RRPC regarding the upcoming renewal of the LEMP - Michael Fannin, EMD, advised he would have the paper work ready for the SB's 4/14/22 meeting.

***Select Board Meeting March 10, 2022
Supplemental Report for Tales***

Public Works segment included discussion concerning Morton Building's email of plans, Stan will ask for printed copies, engineer needs to stake out location of water well for Parker Water Wells – who hopes to drill it in March. Stan also noted he had discussed the foundation with Rick from Morton who advised a longer cure time was okay. Eric and Stan will meet next week to discuss the plans and estimated time and materials for the town road crew.

Highway – Board briefly reviewed MRGP reports, Eric noted more has already been done, will be on next year's report. Eric will meet with Steffanie at RRPC for training on the program. Eric also noted that he spoke with Dan Allard, the Potter's Brook Project will happen during the driest part of the summer.

There was much discussion regarding a recent incident with fallen trees, procedure for road crew during a storm, how to keep everyone safe. Board was advised that if conditions are wild, road crew should wait to address the situation, common sense needs to be used. Kevin and David volunteered the Tinmouth Volunteer Fire Department to help if needed.

Board reviewed the Feedback Form, changed proposed #6 regarding personnel to be case by case, and noted that positive feedback would be appreciated as well.

Michael Fallar expressed concern with shenanigans during town meeting elections with slander and threats and was disappointed by the lack of concern on the part of the Select Board and others for that behavior.

Michael Fannin took issue with those comments, noting that it's politics.

Dog complaint discussion also included solid waste/trash disposal/burning in the back yard on Mountain View Road. ACO and Health Officer will contact Sheriff's Department for assistance.

Select Board ~ 3/22/2022 – These Highlights are from unapproved minutes.

Present were members Meadow Squier, Cathy Reynolds, and Kevin Eaton, as well as Eric Buffum – Road Commissioner, David Birdsall – ACO and Tree Warden, Rick Fallar, Sherry Johnson and Kim Harbaugh, Rainbow Squier – Conservation Commission Chair, Stan Wilbur-Public Works Project Manager, Michael Fallar, and Gail Fallar-SB Assistant.

Board reviewed agenda, added Kevin's request for an executive session for personnel issues and Cathy's request regarding the Community Center Board's need to meet.

Citizen Input: Sherry expressed concern that she was nearly hit by someone running the stop sign on Mountain View Road at its intersection with Route 140. She was bearing right on Route 140. Board discussed painting a solid line on the road, asked the road commissioner to investigate cost.

Board appointed Kevin as SB liaison to the Rutland County Sheriff's Dept.

Public Works Facilities Update: Stan reviewed State Fire Safety Permit Application, still need 3 sets of plans from Morton Building, permit fee is estimated at \$5,077. Board voted to authorize Stan to file when complete. Stan reported that there was an upcoming meeting between Otter Creek Engineering (OCE), Morton Buildings, Eric and Stan to clarify who is responsible for which steps, site work, foundation, slab, who stakes it out, etc. Stan also advised the Board of the need for a clerk of the works by June 1st to oversee the project.

Cathy inquired about Phase II, the salt/sand shed. Stan advised looking at remaining funds from the Bond vote to see what could be built. OCE would need to be hired for engineering, new state storm water permit, etc. Costs will need to be updated.

Highway: Eric reported there is lots of mud. He would like to move the storage trailer used for recycled paper to the area east of the storage trailer near the recycling shed. The fire department has been asked to move its storage trailer as well. The area where they currently are located is part of the site work for storm water control for the new town garage. He also reported a chainsaw was broken, a new one is needed.

Roadside Mowing Proposals: only one was received, from Dan Allard for \$100 per hour. After brief discussion, Board voted to accept Dan's proposal.

Chainsaw Practice: SB discussed draft proposal. Board voted to send the guidelines to the Town's Safety & Wellness for review.

David Birdsall, Animal Control Officer, updated SB on dog complaint – two dogs were surrendered to the Rutland County Humane Society, others will be licensed by April 1st.

Meadow, as Health Officer, updated Board on the solid waste situation, is working with the family to find a solution. Board discussed options, for the town, for neighbors, need for follow-up.

David Birdsall, Tree Warden, asked that the Shade Tree Policy be placed on the April agenda.

Rainbow, as CC Chair, advised that the Conservation Commission had briefly reviewed the Flower Brook Project Report, did not find any specific recommendations for the town to follow. She noted it is a great resource, she will continue to review and report back at a later time.

Citizen Input: Michael Fallar expressed concern with muddy road conditions, some being unpassable. He asked the SB to create a policy for maintaining back roads in the spring time, advising there were preventive steps that could be taken.

Real Rutland Request: Meadow volunteered to contact them regarding their request for a contact and event information.

Special Town Meeting Warning: Board added Article 4, for voters to discuss spending the ARPA funds, then approved and signed the warning for Monday, May 2, 2022 at the Community Center.

Follow-Up To-Do List: Board reviewed, removed some items that had been completed, added others to track.

After brief discussion, Board voted to seal the 2021 Grand List.

Member's Concern: Cathy noted that a recent event at the Community Center meant that the Community Center Board would be meeting in the near future, she will report back to the SB.

Executive Session – Board voted to move enter executive session at 8:49 to discuss personnel issues. Board only entered Library. Board exited at 9:10. Board voted to appoint Kevin as the SB liaison with the road crew.

Select Board Meeting March 22, 2022 Supplemental Report for Tales

In discussing the funds available for the salt/sand shed – the bonded amount minus the cost of the town garage - Cathy noted that the \$72,900 already spent from the regular highway budget would not count toward the total spent. Stan will contact Clear Span and Greystone to get updated cost estimates for the salt/sand shed (80' x 120').

Board discussed enforcement of the Solid Waste Ordinance – Rutland County Sheriff's Department is the enforcement agent – can issue a ticket if someone is burning trash – which is illegal. Board also discussed the Dog Ordinance. SBA was instructed to mail both parties copies of both ordinances.

Tinmouth Planning Commission ~ 3/17/22

Present were members Michael Fallar, Judy Gilmore, Andy Gilmore, Rainbow Squier, Kim Harbaugh, Vito Macaluso, Pat Psholka, and Bob Lloyd, as well as Gail Fallar, Secretary, and Sherry Johnson.

PC re-organized for 2022, Michael was re-elected Chair, Bob was re-elected Vice Chair, and Gail, Secretary.

Rainbow, as leader of the Equity and Inclusion Committee's Research and Development Working Group, reported issues they are looking at: affordable/alternative and workers housing; support for agriculture/farmers; and a survey to gage current town priorities. She inquired whether the PC would like to help with these, or would like the R&D's help.

Members discussed work plan for 2022 – certainly affordable housing needs to be considered. Concern was expressed about the definition of affordable housing – urban, rural, or in between? The definition needs to be clarified; understand past attempts in Tinmouth – what worked and what didn't; how does transportation availability affect it; carpooling; are there abandoned houses that could be a project; and a need for consultation with folks currently working with/for affordable housing to see what works and what doesn't. Rainbow and the R&D Group will work on getting speakers for the PC. Members briefly discussed the 2017 town-wide survey – need to look at changing demographics – aging population – need census data – working from home – how to determine best questions to capture where/what Tinmouth is and how it is changing.

Other work for 2022 – the four or five subdivisions waiting for surveyors to complete work, and beginning to think about updating the Town Plan. Kim suggested everyone read the current plan.

Michael reported that the proposed Flood Hazard Regulation Amendments had been presented to the Select Board, they will hold their hearing on April 14th, and tentatively set the voting date for August 9th which is Primary Voting day.

Conservation Commission ~ 3/21/22

Minutes not yet available.

Community Center Board ~ 3/28/22

With thanks to Cathy Reynolds, Sec.

Present in person were members Martha Stanley and Cathy Reynolds, as well as, Gail Fallar-Town Treasurer, Rainbow Squier-Community Center Manager, Tracy Byford-community member, and via zoom Maureen Fitzgerald – Riker, School Principal.

CCB member Josh Squier was not able to attend. Martha was elected Chair, Cathy Secretary.

Rainbow explained the issues with the recent event on Saturday March 20. Board voted that the CCB reimburse the school for damaged equipment and purchase a gift certificate for the custodian who had to deal with a mess.

Maureen explained the cleaning process and how the janitors are scheduled.

Pickle ball is Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Sunday am. Volley ball is Wednesday nights.

All parties are committed to working together to share the space. And noted that the community center was not available for two years due to Covid, so that routines/protocols needed to be re-set.

Rainbow mentioned that the documents are all written for the assumption that the building will start clean and to leave the building in the condition you found it or cleaner.

Maureen and the Board reviewed the cleaning responsibilities and agreements on shared space and how to work together.

Discussed storage spaces and what is available. Maureen and staff struggle with limited space and no special place for afterschool program, art or music equipment.

Rainbow will email Maureen when there is a big event coming-important for staff to know when the classroom and the south storage closet need to be used by an event so school staff can remove their items.

Maureen will email Rainbow to schedule events in the evening that the school is sponsoring. The regular sporting groups are happy to take a night off to support the school events.

Rainbow discussed the rental process and Gail's role (key pick up, form and check drop off). Rainbow will tighten up on protocol. Key will not be provided without signature of Town resident and security deposit. Rainbow will also let renters know that they need to be on site for the entire event and be sure the building is left in good condition. They are responsible for the condition of the building and any damage.

Rainbow will redo the guidance documents.

~ TINMOUTH GREEN UP – 2022 ~

By Doug Fontein



Green Up Day is Saturday, May 7.

The Tinmouth Green Up Committee is teaming up with the Conservation Commission to create a fun and delicious Green Up. In hopes of bringing the community out on Green Up Day, we're doing some fun activities at the Transfer Station at the conclusion of the event. It's been a long hard COVID and we're all looking forward to doing things together again!

Green Up volunteers will meet at the Transfer Station between 8:30 AM and 9:00 AM on Saturday morning to get bags and a section of road to clean up. We'll reunite at the Transfer Station at 11:00 AM for the GALA AWARDS CEREMONY (with prizes) and FREE ICE CREAM. This is a family and kid-friendly event so please come with your young ones so they can share the fun (and maybe learn a little about civic responsibility and protecting our environment).

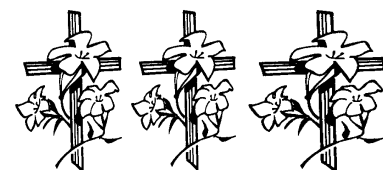
There won't be a Green Up activity at the school this year so this is your kiddos' opportunity to be part of the team! People are also welcome to do DIY Green Up by getting bags from the Town Office (there are bags there now) and cleaning a section of roadside as your schedule allows. But we urge you to come with your family on Saturday morning to help build community momentum for this important and fun activity.

Please dress appropriately for the weather, including boots, work gloves, long pants and long-sleeved shirts (to help avoid ticks). For more info. on avoiding ticks, go to the Vermont Dept. of Health website and search ticks or use this link:

<http://www.healthvermont.gov/diseasecontrol/tickborne-diseases/prevent-tick-bites-tickbornediseases> Any items too large (or too yucky) for your vehicle we can pick up with a truck if you tell us where it is.

There is also the option of "adopting" a section of roadway in town and keeping it litter-free year round as you walk or drive on it. In addition to keeping your neighborhood beautiful, this will allow us to focus on other roads on Green Up Day to make sure we cover all the roads in town.

We hope to see you at Green Up on Saturday, May 7. Feel free to contact members of the Green Up committee with any questions: Doug Fontein 446-2928 Nelson Jaquay 446-2367 Ed Hasenohr 446-2676.



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~ April 2022 Calendar of Events ~



Dog Licenses Due	Friday	1 st	8-Noon	Town Office
Fire Department	Thursday	7 th	7:00	In-Person/Virtual
Tin. Community Fund Bd.	Wednesday	13 th	7:00	Town Office/Virtual
Select Board	Thursday	14 th	7:00	Town Office /Virtual
Easter Service	Sunday	17 th	9:00 AM	Community Church
Conservation Commission	Monday	18 th	7:30	Town Office/Virtual
<i>Tales of Tinmouth</i> Deadline	Wednesday	20 th		Don't Miss It!
Planning Commission	Thursday	21 st	7:00	Town Office/Virtual
HHW Day	Saturday	30 th	8:30-12:30	Rutland Town Transfer Station

~ May 2022 Calendar of Events ~

Special Town Meeting	Monday	2 nd	6:30	Community Center
Fire Department	Thursday	5 th	7:00	In-Person/Virtual
Green-Up Day	Saturday	7 th	See Page 11	All Roads in Town!
Select Board	Thursday	12 th	7:00	In-Person /Virtual
Equity & Inclusion Comm.	Tuesday	17 th	7:00	In-Person/Virtual
Planning Commission	Thursday	19 th	7:00	In-Person/Virtual
<i>Tales of Tinmouth</i> Deadline	Friday	20 th		Don't Miss It!
Select Board	Tuesday	24 th	7:00	In-Person /Virtual

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

~ Sunday Church Service ~ 9:00 AM ~
 ~ The Library is open Thursdays 2:00-5:00 PM ~

**Special
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