

TOWN HALL MONTHLY: April

In March Selectmen continued completion of 2021 business and prepared for Town Meeting and its follow up.

At their March 7 meeting the Selectmen approved the Town's 2021 financial report for submitting to the State Department of Revenue. The financial report summarizes all of our revenues and expenditures of the previous year and shows their effect on our fund balance. Fund balance, which is essentially long term savings, is showing as just over \$200,000 up slightly from what we expected after using some of the fund for flood repairs last year. The slight increase is partly due to an increase in the State Rooms and Meals distribution which was raised by the legislature from approximately \$45,000 to \$66,000 during 2021. In addition to approving the financial report the Board reviewed the annual summary of the Town's insurance coverages and the Solid Waste Facility Report which has to be filed with the Department of Environmental Services every year.

Town Meeting was held March 8. Voters approved updates to the Zoning Ordinance, declined purchase of a highway truck and after thoughtful debate approved the top coating of the section of Cold Pond Road which received base coat paving last year. Discussion was framed by references to the ongoing cost of repairs from the July, 2021 rainstorm which wiped out Crane Brook Road, impaired the Forest Road Bridge and caused the temporary closure of 29 Town roads. The two million dollar loan for repairs approved at the Special Town Meeting last November is still active and will be applied to repairs once the 2022 construction season opens. The Town is working in every way with the State and FEMA to obtain reimbursement for as much of the repair costs as we can be eligible for. That process has persisted as being slow.

At our March 21 Select board meeting our flood repair engineer, Erin Darrow, provided a summary of work she is recommending for 2022. The large project sites listed are Crane Brook, Charlestown, Forest and Derry Hill Roads. In addition we hope to complete temporary repairs made last year to many of our smaller damage sites.

In other business the Board continued to hear complaints about zoning noncompliance. This ranged from unpermitted residences to junkyard violations. The junkyard violations are particularly worrisome because they carry the risk of groundwater contamination when derelict vehicles and hazardous waste containers are left to sink into the ground. The resulting contamination can travel beyond any property boundaries.

As of this writing the Planning Board will host a Joint Boards Meeting in late April. More on that as we get closer.

Charlotte began regular hours as the Selectmen's administrative assistant March 14 and has already brought some technology updates to our practices. We are still sorting out our emails. Charlotte is now at townoff@sover.net and I am at kasbradt@msn.com. I am grateful to all of you who supported me in moving from Select board administrative assistant to actual Board member. I feel fortunate to be able to keep working for our Town.

See you soon, Kathi