

TOWN HALL MONTHLY: October

In September the State Primary was held in the Town Hall. New Hampshire elections are overseen by the Secretary of State's office. For the September election that office estimated 20% of registered voters would vote. In Acworth 204 voters voted which is approximately 30% of registered voters.

During the election a voter asked what prevented fraudulent ballots. It turns out there's quite a lot of prevention. As Town Clerk, Charlotte receives a specific number of ballots from the Secretary of State. The ballots are counted and resealed. The ballots are then given to our ballot clerks who count them again on the morning of the election.

Before the election, poll workers are sworn in by our Moderator, John Luther. When the polls open, voters are met first by our Supervisors of the Checklist and asked for proof they are one of the names on our voter list. Next they move to the ballot clerks who check them off on the incoming voter list and provide them a ballot. Voting takes place in individual voter booths. From there voters move to the ballot box table where Charlotte checks them off on the outgoing voter list and our Moderator deposits their ballot in the ballot box.

During the September election we were visited by an investigator from the Attorney General's office. He was responsible for checking that we had the prescribed number of personnel and voter booths and the prescribed access to the hall.

When the polls close two things happen. First, the incoming and the outgoing voter lists are reconciled which provides confirmation of the number of votes cast. Then the ballots are tallied which reconfirms the number of votes cast and gives us our election results. The ballots are then boxed and sealed under the Moderator's signature and the tallied results are submitted to the Secretary of State and media.

Our poll workers are all neighbors and your neighbors. Election honesty in our miniature democracy depends on us.

Because of the election, the Select Board's regular first Monday meeting in September was canceled. The Board met for a brief posted session later in the week. The agenda was limited to review of building applications by two applicants eager to begin their projects before the construction season closes.

The Conservation Commission is continuing with its grant funded assessment of the Town's Keyes Hollow Wetland. Tracy Brook has deviated from its original course to run down Keyes Hollow Rd. There have been questions as to whether this an effort to close Keyes Hollow Road and it is not. This is a study of how the Tracy Brook course change has affected the health of the wetland to function as an important wildlife habitat, clean the water, and buffer against downstream flooding. Should the study show degradation of the wetland, a second study will follow to suggest ways to improve its health.

At the end of August, the Select Board reviewed the Town's annual summary of overall Town value which is required by the Department of Revenue. Our overall value is just over two hundred million dollars. This year's summary showed a small increase which shows that property values continue to have upward market pressure. The trend is less than that which followed the Covid pandemic. When value goes up, tax rates can come down provided spending remains fairly level. Our Capital Improvement Plan, which projects major expenses out over several years, is a valuable tool for level spending.

Thanks for being there, Kathi