

Town of Hampden Newsletter – MARCH 2018

Budgeting Process for Annual Town Meeting Continues: *Update from Carol Fitzgerald, Co-Chair, Advisory Committee*

The Advisory Committee met on 2/12/18 and continued its review of department budgets for FY 2019. The Council on Aging, Highway and Fire Department heads discussed their level service budgets. Highlights of those discussions included changes due to new state rules regarding revolving accounts. Both COA and Fire will need to transfer some expenses historically paid from their revolving accounts to general budget line items. The Highway Department has requested a slight increase in the highway paving maintenance line item to help support the state aid and infrastructure bond funding to improve the roads in town. Both the Fire and Highway Departments, under the leadership of the Board of Selectmen, are considering warrant articles for town meeting for equipment and other upgrades. *[Town Meeting in May –Editor]*

Spring is coming!

The spring equinox is Tuesday, March 20th, at 12:15 pm EDT per *The Old Farmer's Almanac**. Below is link to article, which has a great NASA graphic showing the sun's position for the equinoxes, and solstices.

*<https://www.almanac.com/content/first-day-seasons>

Winter Parking Ban is still in effect through April 15, 2018 ...just in case we get a March or April snow storm. Remember Winter Storm Stella on March 14th - 15th, 2017? Snow was 12" or more depending on your location.

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What to do with Misdelaivered Mail: Phoned the Hampden Postmaster Danielle Harpin to inquire what residents should do about misdelaivered mail. She suggested phoning Communications Specialist Steve Doherty, which this Editor did. Here's his reply:

From: Doherty, Stephen N - Boston, MA <stephen.n.doherty@usps.gov>

Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 5:00 PM

To: [Editor's email address deleted]

Subject: Hampden newsletter

Thank you for your inquiry about the procedure customers should follow if they encounter misdelaivered mail. We cannot be plainer: Anytime a customer receives a misdelaivered mail piece they should bring it to the Post Office.

Often the cause of the misdelaivery can be found in one of the tracking barcodes on the front or rear of the mail. We need to examine the actual article for real time resolutions that may be the result of addressing, processing or delivery issues. Unfortunately, when a photo of an envelope is posted on social media with part of the address redacted we don't have the opportunity to examine it and address the root cause of the problem. All too many times a customer may throw it back into the mail stream, whether it's in a blue collection box or with their own mail in the receptacle box.

We regret any inconvenience caused to our customers by a piece of misdelaivered mail and appreciate the opportunity to educate mailers on proper addressing protocols and to examine our sortation plans for any potential problems.

Steve Doherty
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The following article is an excellent example of the level of education needed in today's municipal boards & workplace:

*"BOARD OF ASSESSORS by Carolyn Reed, MAA*

The Board of Assessors is an elected three member board. Currently serving on the board are Chairman Norman Charest and Assessors Robert Makuch and Stanley Witkop. All assessors are required to complete a training course and pass an examination in Massachusetts assessment law, administration, procedure, and techniques, including the income, cost and market approaches to property valuation.

The Board of Assessors has appointed office staff of Principal Assessor, Carolyn Reed, MAA and Assessing Clerk, Kelly McCormick. Carolyn earned the designation of Massachusetts Accredited Assessor in 2015 by the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers upon successful completion of a rigorous course of studies. Kelly is working toward her designation, having completed several courses at the University of Massachusetts Annual Assessor School.

The Assessor's Office is responsible for the determination of the fair market value of all real and personal property within the Town of Hampden. Assessments in Massachusetts are based on full and fair cash value as of January 1st of each year and are subject to review every five years to attain Certification by the Department of Revenue. Additionally, assessors act on all statutory exemptions, tax deferrals and abatement applications. All special assessment under forest management, agricultural/horticultural and recreational programs classified as Chapter 61, 61A and 61B are also administered by the assessors.

The Board of Assessors office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9:00am – 2:00pm and can be reached at 566-2151 ext. 106."

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"An Important Message for all Massachusetts Town Residents

The purest form of democratic governing is practiced in a Town Meeting. In use for over 300 years and still today, it has proven to be a valuable means for many Massachusetts taxpayers to voice their opinions and directly effect change in their communities... This booklet* outlines the forms and procedures used in Massachusetts Town Meetings. As the Commonwealth's information officer, I urge you to read it and make use of it as you engage in the debates and votes that give shape to your Town Government.

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth"

*The free, downloadable ***Citizen's Guide to Town Meetings*** is available on the state's website:

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/cis/cistwn/twnidx.htm> The Introduction continues- "Each town has a different way of running its Town Meeting, depending on its bylaws or charter...This guide is a general outline of the Town Meeting Basics...[and] is not intended to be an all inclusive text, but a broad overview designed to encourage you to find out more and attend your own Town Meeting. If you have any questions regarding the specific procedures employed by your town, please contact your Town Clerk or Town Meeting Moderator."

From Peter Block's *Community: the structure of belonging* [Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.: San Francisco, 2008, 2009, p 92]

"A place of belonging is one where all voices have value, so we need to make sure that citizen voices receive the same technological boost as the leaders'. When people speak to the large group, their voices need to be amplified so that all can hear. Our belief in the importance of the voices of citizens hinges on what may seem like a secondary matter: the availability of a microphone for all who choose to speak."

>>>>>>> → If there are issues or questions you'd like addressed in an Open Forum meeting, please email the Selectmen's Office at Selectmen@hampden.org , or call 566-2151 x 100, Mon-Thurs 9-3. **Note: ALL regular 'committee' meetings are open to the public;** per chairman's discretion, comments might not be taken. An Executive Session is not open to the public. See Open Meeting Law Guide at <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/09/25/2017%20Guide%20only.pdf> for more info. *Volunteer Editor: Nancy Zebert*

Thanks to Hampden Engineering for providing the paper and printing for this one page newsletter.