

TOWN NEWS – MARCH / APRIL 2020

HAMPTON FALLS BOARD OF SELECTMEN

L. M. Smith, Chairman; E. B. Beattie, Vice Chairman, L. Gargiulo, Selectman

HOLLY E. KNOWLES, TOWN CLERK

ABSENTEE BALLOTS FOR THE MARCH 10 TOWN & SCHOOL ELECTIONS

Registered voters who qualify to vote absentee may submit the signed application form(s) (available on-line) to the Town Clerk anytime prior to the upcoming election. The ballots will be available approximately two to three weeks prior to the election. Absentee ballots are subject to restrictions as to their proper distribution and return.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Residents who would like to register to vote in town may do so with the Town Clerk or the Supervisors of the Checklist up until a week before the election or on election day (show proof of identity, age and domicile).

I.D. IS NOW REQUESTED IN ORDER TO VOTE IN EVERY ELECTION

(or fill out a challenged voter affidavit)

ELECTION

The annual Town and School District Elections will be held on Tuesday, March 10, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., at the Town Hall. Hampton Falls' voters vote all money articles and the annual budget by ballot.

VEHICLE REGISTRATION INFORMATION

- Please show photo I.D. for all motor vehicle transactions (for your insurance fraud protection).
- Renewals and transfers require the original, current registration(s) RSA 261:168 (copies are to be kept in your vehicle(s)).
- A notarized Power of Attorney is required when signing a title application for another person (even your spouse).
- Please allow time for processing your transactions by arriving as far in advance of our closing times of noon and 3 p.m. as possible (by 11:45 or 2:45 p.m. at the very latest).
- A limit of 2 “regular” vehicle transactions per person after 2:45 p.m. please. Financial closeouts are required daily at 3 p.m. Credit card transactions are closed at 2:45 p.m.
- All transactions may be done through the mail if you can't get in to our office (call 926-4618, Ext. 1 or E-mail us (townclerk@hamptonfalls.org) for instructions).
- Only ONE check required payable to “Town of Hampton Falls” which now includes town and state fees for your vehicle registration(s).
- All Major Credit Cards (not debit cards) are accepted for payment. An additional credit card fee applies to cc transactions.

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Cash payments should be as close to the amount due as possible -- no large bills please (we keep limited change).

INTERNET VEHICLE RENEWALS

We recommend completing your vehicle renewal(s) over the internet. Click on the plate link on the Town Clerk's web page (www.hamptonfalls.org) for instructions, and we will send you your registration(s) and decal(s) (allow mail time before the end of the month). Renewals over 3 months late and residents wanting to complete transfers or obtain new plates will still need to come in to the office.

VITAL RECORDS AND 3--YEAR DUMP STICKERS ON-LINE

You can request "Certified" copies of NH Birth, Death, Marriage and Divorce certificates on-line by choosing Vital Records on the town web page for processing.

Self-cling, 3-year dump stickers are available on-line or from the town clerk's office at a cost of \$30 each.

FILING FOR A MARRIAGE LICENSE

Please call ahead to schedule an early afternoon time when coming to apply for a new marriage license. Limited staff prevents us from being able to process a license "on the spot." Please note the filing fee is \$50. You may apply for a marriage license at any other NH City or Town Clerks' offices. They may be able to process a license "on the spot" without an appointment.

2020 TOWN BUDGET & TOWN REPORT

On January 8, a budget public hearing was held by the Board of Selectmen to review the proposed 2020 budget and to allow the public to voice opinions and ask questions. At the February 1 Town Deliberative Session, voters learned of the recommended budget as well as other warrant articles being presented on the 2020 Town ballot with one amendment being made by the legislative body. The 2020 operating budget of \$2,786,070 represents an increase over last year's budget of \$37,217. The 2020 default budget totals \$2,748,853.

The 2019 Town and School Report has been forwarded to the printer. In an effort to keep costs down, a limited number of reports will be printed and made available for **pick-up** during the first week of-March from the Town Hall or Library during regular business hours. It is requested that one copy per household be obtained. An electronic copy can be viewed at www.hamptonfalls.org

The Report provides information from departments to include statistical and financial reports. It also has handy reference information such as contact numbers and hours for Town departments and officials, schedules of fees, board and committee activity and includes similar information pertaining to schools as well.

TAX COLLECTOR – Stephanie Grant

As of December 10, all unpaid property taxes are now delinquent and are accruing interest. Please call or check the website for the correct amount due before sending your

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payment. You can also pay your taxes online at www.hamptonfalls.org. Please be aware there is a 2.95% charge to use your debit/credit card and a \$0.95 charge to use an online check. This fee is charged by the credit card company and bank, not by the Town of Hampton Falls. The Tax Office is now merged with the Town Clerk Office, when coming in for your taxes please go to the former Town Clerk window. Abatement applications for 2019 taxes are due before March 1. Anyone who qualifies for the veteran's tax credit or one of the exemption categories should submit their application by April 15.

BUILDING INSPECTOR / CODE COMPLIANCE / HEALTH OFFICER - Mark Sikorski

A Number Can Save A Life: Is your house number visible from the street? Is there a number on your mailbox? It could be as simple as the FEDEX driver being able to find your house yet if a threatening situation occurred it could mean the difference between life and death. Next time you are approaching your home look at it through the eyes of a first responder. Can you clearly see your address from the street? Precious seconds save precious lives.

We are deep into winter. The weather is cold. The windows are shut. Take a walk around the homestead. What conditions are my smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms in? Is the power on to the units? Are the batteries in good shape? These units can save a life.

Today more homes than ever are connecting backup generator units to survive the more frequent power outages. These units create dangerous carbon monoxide fumes which left unchecked can be deadly. Take a moment and take a walk around. It could save a life. While you're at it take a moment to look over your generator connection for safe installation. If you are unsure contact my office. I can give you a quick review to ensure a safe and comfortable evening when the lights go out.

Planning to remodel or add on? Visit the town web site for links to frequently used permit applications. Applications can take time to approve if certain conditions exist. Please remember that smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms are required to be brought up to current standards as part of any remodeling. Plan ahead and make the job easier for everyone involved. If you have questions or need help contact my office at 926-4618 ext. 5 or by e-mail at buildinginspector@hamptonfalls.org.

FIRE DEPARTMENT / EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS - Jay M. Lord, Fire Chief

Non-Emergency Telephone Contact - 926-5752 or email chief@hffd.org

- With snow, remember to clear all vents (dryer, water heaters, pellet stoves, etc.) around your house to prevent carbon monoxide from building up in your house; also, remember if you don't have a CO detector, go get one, they are inexpensive and worth the investment.
- If you have an LP tank also clear snow from the regulator where it enters the house.
- Prior to the power going out, see the Town website/Fire Department page for generator safety tips.
- Space heaters need a three foot clearance to all combustibles.
- If pipes freeze, use a hair dryer or hot water to thaw them out. don't use a flame torch.
- Check your emergency kit supplies (for both your home and cars) – more information is available at Ready.gov or NHReady.gov.

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- You can also sign up for NH Alerts at the NHReady.gov page. NH Alerts will notify you (text and/or call) if there is an emergency in your area (includes storm warnings, road closures, police action, and others.)
- Develop a fire escape plan and practice family fire drills. (Practice both in the daylight and dark.)
- House numbers – either both sides of your mailbox (2”/reflective) or on the house a contrasting color that is large enough to be seen from the road.

HAMPTON FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY – Anne Coombs, Secretary

Punxsutawney Phil has predicted an early spring. How exciting is that! Spring is “just around the corner”. But that does not mean that the HFHS has been hibernating. We have been fully awake and just as busy as the bees that will be waking up as soon as we round the proverbial corner.

The Museum Restoration Committee (MRC) has been meeting regularly with Greg Collin, Architect and his colleague Justin Williams. Because of the scope of the project, it will take time to design the optimal floor plan. Ward Dilmore constructed a model to scale with movable pieces in order to develop a plan that is not only functional but with movable props and displays for flexibility. The interior of the Museum needs to always be in a state of flux to encourage people to come in to see what is new. We are very enthusiastic about this project which has been mentioned in several newsletters so far and would really enjoy some input from members and especially from the townspeople. This is our town’s history.

The Collection Management Committee (CMC) is continually working on the conservation of our collection and cataloging.

Hunter Stetz has been improving and expanding our display of Indian artifacts in the Old Schoolhouse which have actually been discovered right here in our town. As mentioned, many times, these artifacts date back 10,000 years to the Paleo-Indian era. They are a very important part of our town’s history. Please watch for notices about our program at the Old Schoolhouse coming in June about the artifacts.

Rebecca Dean, our Treasurer, has been hand stitching away making a lovely quilt to be raffled off this summer along with a painting donated by Deb Meyer Baier to raise money for the repair of the 3 stained glass panels around the front door of the Museum. The lead is collapsing and separating from the stained glass. The cost of repair will be about \$4,100. Stay tuned for updates on this event.

Membership to the Society runs from May 1st to April 30th of the following year. Postcards are being prepared for mailing to remind members to renew their membership and to encourage new townspeople to join. Membership dues and donations to our 501(c)3 nonprofit Society help pay for the upgrades, improvements and maintenance of the buildings as well as conserving our collection. We receive no tax-based dollars from the town. Our mission is to **“....investigate, collect, preserve, illuminate & communicate whatsoever might relate to the history of Hampton Falls and its people”**.

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HAMPTON FALLS HERITAGE COMMISSION – Beverly Mutrie, Chair.

The Commission has been at work over the last few months with several pertinent projects. The most urgent issue is the replacement of David French as a Commissioner. We are a currently a board of 4 members, one of which is a Selectman with voting rights. We hope anyone with an interest in our town's history and its elderly buildings will come forward to help us educate our residents about their importance to our town's view scape. We meet on Tuesday mornings, but that can be changed to suit anyone's schedule. Please come to a meeting and learn more or contact the Chair through the town clerk's office.

We are still fine-tuning our historical resources survey data, obtaining photographs of historical properties and soliciting funds for the installation of memorial bridge signs for our two killed in WWII veterans. The bridge signs are due to be installed before Memorial Day by the DOT. We hope townspeople that see them will be encouraged to remember, Sgt. Robert G. Lord and Pvt. Lincoln H. Akerman, for their service to our country.

We also have been called upon to adjudicate a demolition delay permit at 148 Kensington Road or the Reuben Hardy 1817 house. We were able to take pictures, look at its deterioration, close proximity to the road and approved its demolition with the recommendation that the old interior doors, floors, paneling, and the exterior windows be saved as much as possible. We were also asked to advise the Planning Board about the tear down of the Pelton house c. 1936 on 19 Lafayette Road that was hand built by Ken Pelton. This property is under agreement to become a Seacoast Power Sports store. We will expect to rule on its Demolition Delay Permit. The Heritage Commission's opinion that the new 'big box' building does not meet the zoning code's general conditions according to Article III:3.4 was conveyed to the Planning Board who will be resolving the plan's issues.

We have found a supplier for hand painted historic property signs or historic house plaques. We have put out order forms at the Town Hall and hope residents that would like the public to know more about their property's age and history would contact us to purchase a plaque. Signs cost \$125 and will include research about your historic home or property.

We urge residents to become involved by volunteering for a town board or committee as doing so gives you a voice in your government, allows you meet other residents and is usually enlightening.

Beverly Mutrie, Chair