

## Part II

### Town Boards, Commissions, Committees & Departments

## **Selectboard**

Norwich has a Town Manager form of municipal government. Many citizens are uncertain of the role the Selectboard plays in this form of government. This form originated in the early 1900s as part of the progressive reform movement, one of the few original American contributions to political theory. The International City/County Management Association describes this form as “combining the political leadership of elected officials” with the “strong managerial experience of an appointed local government manager.”

One of the best characterizations of the Selectboard role comes from Paul Gillies who, when he was the VT Deputy Secretary of State, described the Board as “those who shall be held accountable.” By Vermont State statute: “The selectmen shall have the general supervision of the affairs of the town and shall cause to be performed all duties ... not committed by law to the care of any particular officer.” 24 VSA §872

It is a representative system in which power is concentrated in an elected board which hires a professional manager to oversee the delivery of public services. Board members are the elected representatives of the community, who concentrate on policy issues and are responsive to citizens’ needs and wishes. The manager is appointed to carry out those policy decisions and to advise the Board in the determination of policy. The manager serves at the pleasure of the Board and may be terminated if he/she is not responsive to the wishes of the Board.

After Stephen Soares announced in May he would not be renewing his contract as Town Manager, the Selectboard appointed a search committee for a replacement. In June 2008, at a Special Town Meeting, the Town once again ratified the Town Manager form of government. Soares resigned in August and the Board appointed Neil Fulton as Interim Town Manager. The search committee unanimously recommended the Town hire Peter Webster of Dorset and the Board concurred. Peter began his duties November 5, 2008. We thank the search committee for their industry, good humor, and congeniality.

*Gerard Chapdelaine, Chair; Suzanne Lupien, Vice-Chair;  
Ed Childs; Alison May; Sarah Nunan*

## **Town Manager & Collector of Delinquent Taxes**

Stephen Soares, who was appointed as Town Manager on October 1, 2004, resigned on May 14, 2008, and his last day as Town Manager was September 5, 2008. Neil R. Fulton served as Interim Town Manager from September 8 until November 4, and Peter Webster started as Town Manager on November 5, 2008.

The following are some notable events during the last year.

Portions of the Corridor Project have been integrated into a VTrans project that is scheduled for construction in 2009. This includes sidewalks along the Town Green, bicycle lanes, and paving of the parking area next to the Green across from Tracy Hall.

A Town Manager committee was formed to investigate options for preservation or rebuilding the bandstand located on the Norwich Green. The Selectboard chose an option that will recreate a structure similar to the existing bandstand. It will be handicapped accessible, have more performance space, and will be constructed with lower-maintenance materials.

Employees of the Public Works Department voted to join a union and were incorporated into the existing American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees bargaining unit which already represented our police officers.

After an exhaustive nation-wide search, Stephen Leinoff, who had been the Assistant Fire Chief in Hartford, was hired as the first full-time Norwich Fire Chief.

After many years of effort, the Kendall Station Road grade crossing will be relocated and improved.

As Town Manager it is my responsibility to act as the Collector of Delinquent Taxes. Taxes become delinquent after the second payment is due in February if taxes remain unpaid. A Warrant is issued by the Treasurer authorizing the collection of delinquent taxes along with an 8% penalty and 1% interest per month for the first three months and 1.5% per month interest thereafter. A tax collection policy outlines the collection process, which includes payment applications, payment plans and tax sale procedures, if necessary.

### Tax Year Summary for FY08

|   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| Taxes Billed: . . . . .                     | \$12,696,995.10        |
| Taxes Collected during FY: . . . . .        | <u>\$12,621,150.38</u> |
| Taxes outstanding at close of FY: . . . . . | \$75,844.72            |

### Delinquent Tax Report

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| 6/30/2007 Delinquent Tax Balance: . . . . . | \$99,801.37         |
| FY07-08 Delinquent Taxes: . . . . .         | <u>\$252,325.76</u> |
| Subtotal: . . . . .                         | \$352,127.13        |

Less delinquent taxes collected & abatements: . . . . . \$276,282.41

**6/30/2008 Balance: . . . . . \$75,844.72**

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| Taxes delinquent for FY07/08 . . . . .    | \$52,724.77        |
| Taxes delinquent previous years . . . . . | <u>\$23,119.95</u> |
| Total . . . . .                           | \$75,844.72        |

**Delinquent taxes as of December 31, 2008 . . . . . \$59,973.96**

*Peter Webster, Town Manager (649-1419 ext. 102)*

### Town Clerk

This year we had a slight increase in the number of documents recorded in our office. We went from 3,680 pages recorded in the Land Records to 3,891 pages, amounting to revenues of \$23,346 for the Town.

Due to the change in requirements to cross our borders into Canada and Mexico last year, we saw an influx of passport applications. This year after the rush we experienced a decrease in passport applications from 84 down to 44 for FY08.

We processed 159 motor vehicle registration renewals, down from 163 in 2007. We licensed 629 dogs, up from last year's 614, and sold 351 Fish and Game Licenses, up from the 340 sold last year.

We are all aware of the increased risk of identity theft. This is a concern for Town Clerks all around the State of Vermont. I, like many Clerks around the state, will now list only the number of reported births and deaths that occur in the Town of Norwich. I continue to list marriages and Civil Unions as has been done in the past.

This year we issued 21 Marriage and one Civil Union Licenses. There were 10 deaths and no home births to report this year.

The Town Clerk's Office is open Monday through Wednesday and Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm.; on Thursdays we are open from 8:30am to 6:00pm. During this time you may come in to register to vote, purchase cards for the Norwich Transfer Station as well as cards for the Hartford Landfill, renew your motor vehicle registration, obtain a passport, or research the records in the vault. Dog licenses will be available to purchase on January 2, 2009 and will increase one dollar to: \$8 for a neutered dog; \$12 for others.

If you have any questions or need help, please do not hesitate to stop in or call me.

Bonnie J. Munday, Town Clerk (649-1419 ext. 103)

## **Vital Records for 2008**

*As recorded by the Town Clerk's Office January 1 to December 31, 2008*

### **Marriages**

Town, William Karl . . . . . Cadwell, Catherine May  
Donnelly, James Paul . . . . . Moran, deBonneville Georgia  
Renaud, Ryan P. . . . . Koonz, Bethany A.  
Shafer, Thor Patrick . . . . . Whittemore, Rachael Leah  
Corum, Richard George . . . . . Filbin, Constance Emily  
Jones, Brian Leslie . . . . . Dunning, Rebecca Crosby  
Adams, Richard McClintock . . . . . McCormick, Lynn Marie  
Pience, John L. . . . . Maute, Diane  
McGee, Conner . . . . . Mattern, Katherine Elizabeth  
Taylor-Waldman, Aaron . . . . . Ketay, Sarah Beth Fewsmith  
Nochumson, Saul Andrew . . . . . Nelan, Jenica Erin  
Kearns, Charles M. . . . . Peterson, Heidi Noel  
Hardy, Wilbert Clark III . . . . . Johnson-Gaudette, Penny  
Littlefield, Laren Wayde Jr. . . . . Ballantine, Sara Griffin  
Town, James Charles . . . . . Cook, Lisa Yvonne  
Allen, George Kenton . . . . . Jones, Rachel Nicole  
Derry, Eric George . . . . . Smurkoski, Elizabeth Anne  
Lilienthal, Mark Melin . . . . . Gage, Phillipa Jonas  
Dole, Eric Burton . . . . . Wertheim, Sarah Churchill  
Prendergast, Thomas Joseph . . . . . Anton, Kristen  
Gilden, Jeremy Adam . . . . . O'Brien, Caitlin Elayna  
Porreca, Vincent Anthony . . . . . Hopkins, Alison Wheeler  
Morgan, Benjamin Eliot . . . . . Beston, Amy Elizabeth  
Premore, Brian Joseph . . . . . Kuchma, Sherry Lynn

### **Civil Unions**

Daulaire, Siri Liana . . . . . Shute, Andrea Rose  
Peterson, Kathleen Elizabeth . . . . . Taraska, Sheila Anne

## **Affordable Housing Committee**

Since 2002, the Affordable Housing Committee has been charged with recommending actions necessary to ensure that a continuum of affordable housing stock is available in Norwich. Members of the Committee meet with town, state, and regional commissions, committees, boards, coalitions, and housing entities to work toward this.

Last spring we proposed an article on the Town ballot to extend until 2011 the appropriation previously approved to create a revolving fund for use in bridging the time needed during typical real estate negotiations. We are pleased to report that it passed and consider it yet another sign of the support we have for our mission. We have continued to search for suitable land, but the cost and availability remain our biggest challenge.

We researched mandatory inclusionary zoning and reported to the Planning Commission on our findings, outlining under what conditions we consider it successful and identifying some areas of concern. We were pleased to be able to assist the Planning Commission in this way and look forward to more collaboration.

The Habitat for Humanity home at Starlake Lane is well under way and we will be welcoming a new family to Norwich by next summer.

We continue to look for opportunities to bring civic-minded land owners together with local and state agencies that can fund and develop affordable housing. If you know of any suitable parcels, or have ideas for funding or models, please contact us.

*Mary Ann Hankel (649-5232), Creigh Moffatt (649-5533), Co-Chairs*

## **Auditors**

The Town's elected auditors, who also serve as members of the Norwich and Dresden finance committees, are statutory officials whose principal responsibility is to prepare the annual Town Report for voters. We distribute the reports to those who want to receive them in one of three ways, as advised by the voters. Last year we mailed about 880 copies and had about 120 copies available to be picked up at Tracy Hall. Anyone may view the Report on the Town's website. Many voters chose that alternative. As voters are added to the checklist, we ask them their preference.

We meet at least once a year with the outside independent accountants to review the Town's annual audit report and to discuss the management letter, which includes suggestions for improving financial controls and procedures. We also regularly attend meetings of the Selectboard and School Boards to observe and advise.

We are each elected to three-year terms, one each year.

*Karen Kayen, Chair (649-2747)*

## **Boards of Abatement and Civil Authority**

For those Norwich citizens who are not certain what these two boards do, the following descriptions may help:

The members of the Board of Abatement are the Justices of the Peace, the Selectboard, the Town Clerk, the Town Treasurer, and the Listers. Their responsibility is to hear requests for reduction of taxes due to a disaster on, or diminution of, the property, or the owner's inability to pay the taxes.

The Board of Civil Authority is composed of the Justices of the Peace, the Town Clerk, and the Selectboard. One of its duties is to conduct Town Meetings and elections. Another is to hear appeals of property owners whose grieving of their assessments to the Listers has not yielded results satisfactory to them: the BCA hears the appellants and the Listers,

inspects the property in question, considers the testimony from the hearing as well as observations from the site visit, and decides on a new or sustained valuation of the property.

In FY08, the Board of Abatement acted upon five requests, while the Board of Civil Authority heard and acted upon 32 appeals.

*Nancy H. Dean, Chair (649-1324)*

### **Cemetery Commission**

The Cemetery Commissioners are responsible for the care and upkeep, as well as necessary improvements, of all Norwich cemeteries and Union Village Cemetery. Meetings are held once a month in the room adjoining the Town Clerk's office in Tracy Hall. The dates of the meetings are posted on the Town bulletin board prior to the meeting.

In Hillside Cemetery the roads have been put in and the lots are in the process of being laid out in the new section. Corner markers will be placed as the new lots are sold. The new equipment storage shed has been built.

The usual summer maintenance and upkeep has been ongoing this summer. The annual cleaning of gravestones will continue next summer.

The financial details of our operations during FY08 are summarized below, based on information maintained by the Finance Office and Treasurer:

#### **Revenue Received:**

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Appropriation from Town                          | \$15,000        |
| Hillside Expansion from Trustees of Public Funds | 8,426           |
| Woodworth Unitrust                               | 4,397           |
| Sales of Cemetery Markers                        | 420             |
| Perpetual Care Fund - Interest                   | 38              |
| Operating Account - Interest                     | <u>22</u>       |
|  | <b>\$28,302</b> |

#### **Expenditures Made:**

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Wages                   | \$9,966         |
| Capital Improvements    | 3,579           |
| Purchased Services      | 2,808           |
| Repairs and Maintenance | 1,217           |
| Mowing Supplies         | 1,182           |
| Payroll Taxes           | 762             |
| Workmen's Compensation  | 523             |
| Water                   | 253             |
| Equipment Purchase      | 247             |
| Liability Insurance     | 103             |
| Postage                 | <u>3</u>        |
|                         | <b>\$20,642</b> |

Schedule 4 of the Independent Auditor's Report states our Fund Balance as \$24,173.

*Fred Spaulding, Chair (649-1121)*

## **Conservation Commission**

The Norwich Conservation Commission (NCC) endeavors to inventory, monitor, and conserve the natural heritage assets in town. These assets include wildlife, wetlands, waterways, natural plant communities, and scenic resources, among others. We also work to share our findings with all of our fellow citizens, Town commissions, and governing bodies.

Projects undertaken by the NCC in FY08 included:

- On-going solicitation of email reports about wildlife sightings in town. The address is Norwich.Conservation.Commission@gmail.com. We would like to hear about people's sightings of some of our less common wildlife. If you see bear, bobcat, moose, fisher, otter, or snowshoe hare in Norwich, please send us an email letting us know what you saw, where you saw it, and how confident you are of your species identification(s). You are, of course, also most welcome to write us about your other conservation-related concerns, questions, and suggestions.
- On-going inventory and mapping of vernal pools and wildlife road crossings.
- Work with conservation commissioners in neighboring towns to insure regional linking of efforts to conserve wildlife core areas and corridors.
- Community values mapping, i.e., collecting information about the areas around town where people engage in and enjoy outdoor activities.
- Grateful receipt of conservation trust fund contributions and successful recommendation of fund use to help preserve land on Bragg Hill.
- Sponsorship of public lectures by Alcott Smith about winter adaptations and rattlesnakes in Vermont.

*Lee Michaelides, Secretary (649-2103)*

## **Development Review Board**

The Development Review Board (DRB) welcomed new members in May 2008, and is now at full strength with seven regular members and three alternates. The Board meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month. Meetings are posted on the notice boards and you may also sign up with the Zoning Administrator to receive email notices. All meetings are open to the public, who are welcome to attend.

During the year, the DRB started hearing applications "on the record". All the public proceedings are recorded on audio tape and by video camera. All written documents are numbered and entered into evidence. The result of this change affects DRB decisions that might be appealed to the Environmental Court. This Court considers the DRB's record rather than hearing the case de novo.

The DRB is presently using the "Preliminary Zoning Regulations" to consider Conditional Use and Site Plan reviews. Also, the DRB is working with the Planning Commission to consider improvements to the Norwich Subdivision Regulations, adopted in August 2002 and amended in 2006 to comply with changes in the Vermont Statutes.

*John E. Lawe, Chair (649-1585)*

## **Emergency Management**

The Norwich Emergency Management Committee is made up of all of the Town departments that would provide direct or support services in Norwich in the case of a major emergency requiring significant department and outside resources. Examples of such emergencies are floods, hazardous materials incidents, ice storms, pandemics, and similar events. The Town Manager is the Emergency Management Director and chairs the Emergency Management Committee with the assistance of the Emergency Management Coordinator. Jennie Hubbard is the Emergency Management Coordinator and would normally write this report but, at the time this report was written, was working for FEMA in Texas helping disaster victims from Hurricane Ike.

One of the major functions of the Committee is to develop an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that describes the responsibilities of Town departments in the case of a major emergency. It also pre-plans for more probable emergencies and describes the process for declaring an emergency and obtaining assistance and resources from other local, state, and federal agencies through Vermont Emergency Management.

In the last year we have started to update the 2005 EOP and will be adding sections dealing with responsibility for operations in the event that designated people are unavailable, continuity of Town government, and pandemics.

*Neil R. Fulton, Interim Emergency Management Director*

## **Energy Committee**

During FY08 the Norwich Energy Committee (NEC) conducted the following activities:

- Drafted a plank on energy to be considered for incorporation into the revised Town Plan; held a forum to discuss the plank.
- Sponsored a workshop on solar hot water systems that drew more than 200 people to Tracy Hall.
- Conducted monthly workshops on how citizens can reduce their carbon footprint.
- Discussed energy issues with the Town Transportation Committee.
- Advocated increased use of bio-diesel in Town vehicles and school buses.
- Continued investigating options for more efficient street lighting and other nighttime lighting in the village.
- Distributed literature and recommendations on solutions to global warming, including energy conservation, renewable energy, and state and federal incentives at various local events.
- Consulted with residents on energy conservation and renewable energy options for their homes.

*Alan Berolzheimer (649-2857; bercross@sover.net)  
Ames Byrd (649-3905; ames.byrd@valley.net)*



## **Finance Committee**

The seven-member Norwich Finance Committee, composed of the three elected Auditors, three elected Finance Committee members, and the Town Treasurer, has advisory responsibilities in the creation of annual budgets for both the Town and the Norwich School District. Together with a like number of members from Hanover, the committee constitutes the Finance Committee for the Dresden School District, with similar budget oversight duties. Both committees meet most frequently in December and January, when all three budgets are being prepared for submission to Town Meeting in March. The Finance Committee's mission is to advocate for budgetary restraint and fiscal responsibility, and to increase public understanding of issues affecting local taxation.

During this fiscal year the Finance Committee continued to assist the Selectboard and Town Manager in crafting financial policies that are in keeping with the town manager form of government. The Committee drafted budget guidelines for the School District and the Town, and the members attended meetings of both organizations and actively participated in the budget process. On March 1, 2008, members of the Committee participated in the "Town Eating Day" workshops by addressing the question "Can we afford Norwich?" Two of our members, Henry Scheier and Irv Thomae, held sessions to educate and assist individuals on the filing of Vermont Form HS-122 Homestead Declaration and Property Tax Adjustment Claim.

The Finance Committee generally meets at 4:30pm in Tracy Hall on the third Tuesday of each month. Interested members of the public are welcome at all meetings and frequently contribute to discussions.

*Al Converse, Chair (649-2326)*

## **Finance Office**

The Finance Office is responsible for all accounting functions for the Town and all tax collection. During FY08 we wrote 1,620 accounts payable checks and 964 payroll checks. We processed \$2,803,650 in Town bills and \$1,106,244 in gross Town payroll. The total income processed included the current year Town tax of \$3,184,059 and other revenues in the amount of \$833,922.

When Town and school taxes were initially billed, the total tax raised was \$12,807,338. After all amended bills were sent, the final tax billing was \$12,696,995. The original amount of billed taxes was reduced by \$123,472 due to 32 Board of Civil Authority and court settlements on assessments and eight Lister errors and omissions of \$19,693. On the other hand, 43 late-filed Homestead Declaration forms resulted in an increase in residential tax revenues of \$32,822. Prior year adjustments for assessments resulted in tax adjustment expense in the amount of \$38,482, and interest expense of \$6,691. Total school tax ended up at \$9,509,218 and, of that total, \$500,608 was sent to the State of Vermont Education Fund.

Please make sure that you file your Homestead Declaration forms by April 15 of each year! By not doing so, you will incur a 1% penalty on the education tax. Refer to your tax booklet for the form or go to [www.vermont.gov](http://www.vermont.gov) and file on line.

*Roberta Robinson, Finance Officer (649-1419 ext.105)*

*Alison McRee, Finance Assistant (649-1419 ext.106)*

## Fire Department

| Call Types                    | 2007-08           |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Structure fires . . . . .     | 7                 |
| Auto fires . . . . .          | 3                 |
| Wildland fires . . . . .      | 4                 |
| Medical . . . . .             | 111               |
| Vehicle crashes . . . . .     | 37                |
| CO alarm . . . . .            | 8                 |
| False call . . . . .          | 15                |
| Mutual-Aid . . . . .          | 10                |
| Electrical . . . . .          | 3                 |
| Hazardous materials . . . . . | 6                 |
| Investigation . . . . .       | 13                |
| Service calls . . . . .       | <u>33</u>         |
| <b>Total . . . . .</b>        | <b><u>250</u></b> |

In FY08 the Norwich Fire Department responded to nearly five times as many calls as it did just nine years ago. Since 1999-2000, our volume of calls has risen from 53 to 250. This year's list included seven structure fires, 111 medical calls, and 37 vehicle crashes. Community members, serving for nominal pay, professionally handle these and other emergencies.

Members not only respond to calls but participate in monthly training to maintain skills and certifications in everything from basic firefighting to technical rescue. In May 2008 Matt Herbert, Lisa Talmadge, and Jon Wilkinson completed the basic firefighter course and are nationally recognized as Level 1 Firefighters. Members use their life experience and career skills to protect the community. Their efforts save the community thousands of dollars annually.

The FAST Squad operates at the EMT-Intermediate (EMT-I) level and offers advanced life support skills that have saved lives. Toni Apgar, Susan Blum, Matt Herbert, and Jennie Hubbard have qualified as EMT-I.

Our department's rating from the Insurance Services Office is one of the best in the area and results in significant fire insurance premium savings to many property owners. We are not resting on our laurels, remaining dedicated to improving our services, and increasing our public education and fire prevention safety efforts.

We are working to correct problems with radio and pager coverage in portions of the Town. The fire station has significant operational, building, safety, and environmental issues that will need to be addressed in the future.

Before coming here in August, I served as Assistant Chief of the Hartford, VT Fire Department. One of my primary concerns was the transition from a predominantly career fire department to a volunteer one. The professionalism of the Norwich Fire Department members is first-rate, and their warm welcome made my transition practically seamless.

Our thanks go to Neil Fulton for his past service as Interim Fire Chief and service until December 31, 2008 as Deputy Chief. His leadership and expertise have made for a smooth transition. I would also like to thank our members' families, citizens, the Selectboard, and other Town departments for their ongoing support and assistance.

## Members

*Mark Anderson* \*, *Mary Anderson* \*\*\*, *Toni Apgar* \*\*, *Eric Bivona* \*\*, *Emily Blake* \*\*\*, *Jake Blum* \*\*\*, *Susan Blum* \*\*\*, *Charlene Bradley* \*\*, *Phil Brunelle (Captain)* \*\*\*, *Nox Connelly (Captain)* \*, *Linda Cook* \*\*\*, *Marie D'Amato* \*\*\*, *Lisanne Dorion* \*\*, *Neil Fulton (Deputy Chief)* \*\*\*, *Peter Griggs* \*, *Matt Herbert* \*\*\*, *Michael Hooper-Goetinck* \*\*, *Regina Hubbard* \*\*\*, *Jennie Lamb* \*\*, *Nancy LaRowe (Fire Warden)* \*\*\*, *John Lawe* \*\*, *Stephen Leinoff (Chief)* \*\*\*, *Luke Lindberg* \*, *William Mosenthal* \*, *Bonnie Munday* \*\*, *Pete Schwab (Lieutenant)* \*, *Matt Swett (Lieutenant)* \*, *Lisa Talmadge* \*, *Lloyd Tebbetts (Assistant Chief)* \*, *Warren Thayer* \*, *Alex Von Reyn* \*, *Evan Welch* \*, *Samuel Werbel-Sanborn* \*, *Jay Whitehair* \*\*\*, *Jon Wilkinson* \*\*.

\*Fire      \*\*FAST      \*\*\*Fire/FAST

The Support Team provides food and supplies to emergency responders at incident scenes and the station. Members are: Annah Dupuis, Barbara Merrill, Linda Cook, Linda Danilek, Cheri Henry, Cheryl Lindberg, Liz Russell, Laurie Welch, Lizann Peyton, Anne Marie Smith, Janet Von Reyn, Kenneth Cracknell, Jean Fraser, and Gerry Tolman.

We need more firefighters and FAST Squad members! Please contact us if you are interested in helping the community. Experience is not necessary; we provide training.

*Stephen Leinoff, Fire Chief (649-1133; Fire@norwich.vt.us)*

## Fire Warden

The Norwich Forest Fire Warden regulates open burning within the town by issuing burn permits, educating Norwich residents in proper burning practices, and suppressing any wild-land fires, with the assistance of the Fire Department. More than 270 burn permits were issued in 2008.

Remember that open burning of household trash is highly polluting, dangerous and illegal. Today's trash contains a number of materials that give off toxic by-products when burned. Air pollution has no boundaries and the pollution resulting from the burning of trash is endangering your children, your neighbors, and yourself. Eliminating backyard trash burning is an important step toward a cleaner and safer environment.

Burn permits can be picked up from the Town Clerk's office weekdays or from me at home. Permits can be issued a few days in advance, so please plan ahead for burning on weekends and holidays. Please read the permit carefully and follow the safe burning instructions on the back of the permit. We have a new sign at Tracy Hall that lets you know the fire danger level in Norwich; it is an effort to help residents burn safely. Thank you for your cooperation and please feel free to call with any questions.

*Nancy LaRowe, Fire Warden (649-8807)*

## Health Officer

The mission of the Town Health Officers is to protect public health. On an individual basis, this includes investigating problems with water supplies or septic systems. We follow up to ensure that dogs that have bitten humans are confined for 10 days and remain healthy during this period. Proper disposal of dead animals and investigation of rental housing problems are additional responsibilities.

There has been a gradual change in the overall mission of Public Health Authorities to move away from individual problems and to return to promotion of better community health. Several concerns have been emphasized. These include promoting exercise and publicizing the dangers of excessive weight and obesity. Another program is to promote protec-

tion from infections by use of insect repellents, combating mosquito breeding areas, and rodent control. Equally important is adequate inoculation protection against the growing range of diseases that can be controlled: Public Health needs to educate those who opt out of the recommended shots that this endangers their own health and that of the wider community. Gun safety and use of seat belts are other initiatives. Finally, warning about the dangers of smoking to individual health is a community responsibility.

If you have individual problems or questions please contact us.

*John E. Lawe, Norwich Health Officer (649-1585)*  
*Bonnie Munday, Deputy Health Officer (649-1419)*

## **Listers**

### **Definition and Responsibilities of a Board of Listers**

The responsibility of the Norwich Board of Listers, mandated by Vermont statute, is to appraise all real property that is subject to taxation at its fair market value. The Vermont Department of Taxes, Division of Property Valuation and Review, determined that, for the purpose of determining education taxes for FY09, Norwich assessments are 100.27% of the market value based on those properties that have recently sold. In last year's report the Listers provided a breakdown of types of properties in Norwich, a description of influences on the Listers' office which affect the Grand List, and a discussion of the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA). In the 2006 town report there is further explanation of the CLA. See both the 2006 and 2007 reports for a review of those items.

### **HS-122**

The Listers again remind Norwich property owners that they must file the homestead declaration form HS-122 if they expect to be a Vermont resident on April 1, 2009, own and occupy the Vermont property as their principal home on April 1, 2009, hold a life estate or are living in a home transferred to a revocable trust. Form HS-122 must be filed annually with the Vermont Department of Taxes. This form is relevant to the state tax rate paid on the property (there are two tax rates, residential and non-residential; in Norwich the residential rate is slightly higher than the non-residential rate), and for the property tax adjustment program, what is commonly known as the income sensitivity program. In order to avoid penalties, the form must be filed by April 15, 2009, even if your Vermont income tax filing deadline is extended. The penalty may be as much as 100% of the property taxes. HS-122 includes space for income sensitivity filing, i.e., the Property Tax Adjustment Claim. This year the state of Vermont has been active in contacting owners who failed to file their HS-122 forms. In December 2008 the state of Vermont sent several letters to owners who did not file, and sent a list to the Listers directing the Listers' office to advise the Town finance office to issue a revised tax bill at the residential tax rate.

### **Review and Summary**

In 2008 the Listers sent 381 change of assessment notices. Ninety-one grievances were filed with the Listers. Thirty-three appeals were taken to the Board of Civil Authority from the Listers' decisions on grievances; three of these were withdrawn by the parties who appealed. There are now pending two appeals to the State Tax Department and 13 appeals to the Windsor Superior Court. These notices reflected changes in property value for one or more of the following reasons: material changes to property, contiguous parcel assessments, neighborhood reassessment, and miscellaneous changes, ranging from errors in listings to commercial properties readjusted. The taxable Grand List value as of this writing is \$694,366,948; the latest CLA (based on the 2008 Grand List and applicable to FY 2010 taxes) is 96.79%.

In 2008 the Listers made changes in assessments to properties on Bragg Hill Rd, Cossingham Rd, Happy Hill Rd, Simpson Rd, +/- and Goddard Rd. The major (but not only) issue which has been raised in 12 of the 13 Superior Court appeals (which arose from changes on these roads) is whether a neighborhood may have its values changed without having a total town reappraisal. Several Vermont Supreme Court decisions have approved this, but it is always subject to interpretation and application. By comparing recent sale prices to current assessment, the Listers can identify areas of town where assessments do not reflect market value. The Listers plan to identify other parts of town for which neighborhood adjustments in listed value are appropriate and reassess those parts of town.

The Listers continued the final phase of the contiguous parcel reassessment, which began in 2005. Each individual parcel, whether subdivided or deeded separately, is being reviewed to determine whether it will be assessed for its own housesite value. In order to avoid this potential increase in assessment value, any contiguous parcels, whether deeded separately or subdivided, must be merged on or before April 1, 2009.

As indicated above, as a result of reassessment of a neighborhood in Norwich, a lawsuit has been commenced in the Windsor County Superior Court. This lawsuit will require significant time input from the Listers' office. This time commitment will impact the Listers' budget and the amount of time necessary to complete the tasks indicated above. The Listers will continue to inspect new construction, as well as improved properties, whether or not these improvements were made with a zoning permit.

Change of assessment notices will be sent in early June 2009. Formal grievances must be lodged with the Listers' office within 14 days of that date of mailing. Grievances can be filed whether or not a change of assessment notice was sent. The Listers remind everyone that a grievance triggers a review of the entire property, and may result in a property value being lowered, raised, or remaining the same.

The Listers recognize the complex nature of the role that we play in determining the Education Tax rates calculated by the state. We are working hard to balance fair and equitable assessments with full market value of property.

*Dennis Kaufman, Chair (649-1419 ext. 6)*



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## **Listers' Activities**

### **2007 Appeals to Dept of Taxes, Property Valuation & Review**

5 All resolved at time of this report

### **2007 Appeals to Windsor County Superior Court**

6 All resolved at time of this report

### **2008 Inspections**

87 complete inspections

70 exterior inspections

157 total inspections

### **2008 Change of Assessment Notices**

187 increases

32 decreases

33 no change in real value

129 current use changes

381 total notices sent

### **Of the 219 notices showing a real change (increase or decrease)**

103 were for material changes to property, including splits & mergers

53 were for Bragg Hill neighborhood reassessment

20 were for commercial properties reassessment

46 were miscellaneous

*NOTE: some notices fall into more than one category*

### **2008 Grievances**

7 withdrawn

3 increased

18 denied

63 lowered at grievance

91 total grievances

### **2008 Appeals to Board of Civil Authority**

33 appeals

3 withdrawn

## 2008 Grand List

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Total Taxable Property (2008 Education Grand List) . . . . . | \$694,366,948 |
| One percent (1%) of Total Grand List . . . . .               | 6,943,669     |

### Real Estate Exemptions by Vote

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Norwich Fire District . . . . .                                | 40,000         |
| Beaver Meadow Chapel Association . . . . .                     | 109,200        |
| Root District Game Club . . . . .                              | 254,900        |
| Upper Valley Community Grange Inc # 34 . . . . .               | 351,500        |
| Veterans (4) . . . . .   | 120,000        |
| Charlotte Metcalf Trustee . . . . .                            | <u>34,100</u>  |
| <b>Total Voted Exemption . . . . .</b>                         | <b>909,700</b> |
| <i>(lost education tax to be made up by remainder of town)</i> |                |

### Real Estate Exemptions by Agreement

|                                       |           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Norwich Housing Corporation . . . . . | 1,072,085 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|

### Real Estate Exemptions by Statute

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Veterans, Statutory (4) . . . . .                              | 40,000            |
| Child Care Center, Inc . . . . .                               | 800,900           |
| Montshire Museum of Science . . . . .                          | 6,144,100         |
| Norwich Historical Society . . . . .                           | 470,400           |
| Norwich Nursery School . . . . .                               | 152,700           |
| The Family Place . . . . .                                     | 651,600           |
| Sands Taylor and Wood Company (Vermont Public Radio) . . . . . | 150,000           |
| Andrew C. & Margaret R. Sigler Foundation . . . . .            | <u>2,032,900</u>  |
| <b>Total, Real Estate Exemptions . . . . .</b>                 | <b>10,442,600</b> |

### Breakdown of Education Grand List

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| R-1 Residence with under 6A of land (781) . . . . .   | 310,208,129 |
| R-2 Residence with 6A of land or over (479) . . . . . | 298,519,000 |
| MH Mobile Home with or without land (15) . . . . .    | 2,130,400   |
| C Commercial Properties (49) . . . . .                | 30,835,139  |
| CA Commercial Apartments (7) . . . . .                | 4,528,780   |
| UE Utilities Electric (4) . . . . .                   | 5,896,500   |
| UO Utilities Other (2) . . . . .                      | 156,100     |
| F Farms (11) . . . . .                                | 7,615,200   |
| Other (40) . . . . .                                  | 10,289,000  |
| M Miscellaneous (155) . . . . .                       | 22,363,900  |
| Cable (Education Grand List only) . . . . .           | 945,100     |

### Land Use Appraisal Program

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Number of parcels enrolled in program . . . . . | 128        |
| Number of acres in program . . . . .            | 12,198     |
| Exempt value of enrolled property . . . . .     | 21,035,800 |

### Municipal Grand List as of:

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 31 December 2003 . . . . .                       | 339,041,736        |
| 31 December 2004 Town-wide reappraisal . . . . . | 583,060,623        |
| 31 December 2005 . . . . .                       | 622,504,834        |
| 31 December 2006 . . . . .                       | 644,879,700        |
| 31 December 2007 . . . . .                       | 677,140,900        |
| 31 December 2008 . . . . .                       | <b>692,512,148</b> |

## **Land Management Council**

As a reminder to those not familiar with the Land Management Council, its mission is to manage the recreation and timber activities on the Fire District Lands. The Fire District comprises six different parcels totaling 917 acres. During the course of each year, a forester advises the Council on when a timber harvest should take place based on a combination of forest health and economic factors, in that order. All proceeds gained from timber harvests are reinvested in the land itself.

This past year, the Land Management Council continued to improve access to the Fire District Lands. This included trail work on the Ballard Trail between the dam and Brown Schoolhouse Road, and continuation of a timber harvest near the intersection of Tucker Hill Road and Bragg Hill Road. The trail work was made possible thanks to a grant from the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC). The work was completed during the summer by a crew of eight plus two leaders from the VYCC. Special thanks go out to Peter Griggs and Sydney Smith who graciously allowed the crew to camp on their property. Finally, the Council received a grant from the Norwich Women's Club to install a trail kiosk at the head of the Ballard Trail near the pool. We are grateful for the Club's continued support.

*Clay Adams, Chair (649-8635)*

## **Milton Frye Nature Area Committee**

The Milton Frye Nature Area (MFNA) is a 35-acre tract next to the Marion Cross School. Its trails receive steady daily use by hikers, teachers, and students. Countless informal outdoor education classes are held on the property throughout the school year, with topics including nature study, environmental awareness, and orienteering.

This year, we updated the management plan for the property (a task undertaken every five years) and submitted it to the Conservation Commission, the Selectboard, and the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT). This plan has been approved, and the UVLT has inspected the property and found it to be in order. The committee has worked to fulfill its mission as steward of the property: protecting it while maximizing its use as an educational and recreational resource.

Several well-attended programs were sponsored during the year. Alcott Smith led a snowshoe walk for animal tracking and other natural history; the Upper Valley Native Plant Study Group and the MFNA Committee jointly sponsored a wildflower walk led by Sarah Schwaegler, and George Clark led a bird walk.

Committee members continued trail maintenance and efforts to remove poison ivy and invasive species such as buckthorn. Dog waste bags at the trailhead are getting regular use, although we would always appreciate more compliance. The Nature Area is a precious resource, close to the school and the middle of town, and we would love to have more volunteers work with us!

*Warren Thayer, Chair (649-3737)*



## **Planning Commission**

This year was devoted to the final stages of revising the Zoning Regulations and the early stages of drafting a new Town Plan. In August 2007, the Planning Commission submitted new Zoning Regulations to the Selectboard for review and adoption. A collaborative process ensued with both groups working on the more challenging issues. These regulations took effect on an interim basis until October 2008 and were given final approval by the Selectboard in November. The Planning Commission continues to work on inclusionary zoning and wildlife habitat protection.

The Town Plan revision process continued in late 2007 with four workshops on: Land Use & Housing; Community Facilities & Transportation; Natural, Scenic & Historic Resources; and Rural Hamlets and Cluster Subdivisions. A preliminary draft was compiled by a consultant, using data: from the 2005 resident survey; the 2006 report on demographic, economic, housing, and fiscal impact data; the existing Town Plan; and information developed in the workshops. This draft was distributed to various Town committees and boards for comment and revision. It is anticipated that a final draft will be ready for public review and discussion in the second quarter of 2009, with adoption in the third quarter.

Lastly, the Commission has drafted amendments to the Subdivision Regulations with some guidance from the Development Review Board. These will be ready for adoption in late 2008 or early 2009.

The Commission meets every second and fourth Thursday at 7:00pm. Minutes, regulations, the Town Plan, and other documents are available on the Town website. Agendas and notices are emailed to those requesting them at [planner@norwich.vt.us](mailto:planner@norwich.vt.us).

*Daniel Johnson, Chair (649-5533)*

## **Police Department**

The Norwich Police Department is a full-service police department serving a small town community. We are dedicated to the safety and quality of life of the citizens of Norwich. The department has embraced the philosophy of Community Policing to provide for the protection of people, property, and businesses, and to reduce crime. In addition, we provide numerous community services to keep citizens informed and increase public safety. There have been three new additions to the police department, bringing us up to full strength again. Please visit our new department website at [www.norwichvtpolice.org](http://www.norwichvtpolice.org).

Please contact me or any of my officers should you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your support.

### **Norwich Police Department Mission Statement**

The Norwich Police Department is a community oriented department whose mission is to fairly and equally enforce laws, reinforce public trust, and inspire public confidence. Officers will perform their duties following the values of honesty, loyalty, professionalism, integrity, courage, and respect.

We will work collaboratively with the community towards effective problem resolution.

We will support education efforts directed towards enhancing public safety and crime prevention.

In order to maintain the public's trust and support, we must hold ourselves to the highest ethical and professional standards.

We each have a duty and obligation to play an active role in improving internal operations and delivery of services to the community.

We provide consistent and equal treatment to all through courteous and impartial service.

With continuous improvement we need to plan for growing technology, education, and training, remaining open to new ideas and concepts in law enforcement.

*Doug Robinson, Chief of Police (649-1460; drobinson@dps.state.vt.us)*  
*Officer Mike Scruggs, Officer Chuck Rataj, Officer Frank Schippert,*  
*Part-time Officer Phil Brunelle, Part-time Officer Jim Beraldi,*  
*Administrative Secretary Judy Powell*

**Police Department Statistics FY08**

|  |     |  |              |
|--|-----|--|--------------|
| 911 Hang Ups . . . . .                   | 44  | Larceny . . . . .                        | 21           |
| Abandoned Vehicle . . . . .              | 3   | Leaving Scene of Accident . . . . .      | 3            |
| Accidents . . . . .                      | 95  | Littering . . . . .                      | 5            |
| Agency Assistance . . . . .              | 182 | Lost or Found Property . . . . .         | 30           |
| Alarm . . . . .                          | 90  | Medical Assist . . . . .                 | 13           |
| Alcohol Offense . . . . .                | 9   | Missing Person . . . . .                 | 2            |
| Animal Problem . . . . .                 | 94  | Motorist Assistance . . . . .            | 38           |
| Arrest on Warrant . . . . .              | 3   | Motor Vehicle Disturbance . . . . .      | 109          |
| Assault . . . . .                        | 3   | Noise Disturbance . . . . .              | 10           |
| Attempt to Locate . . . . .              | 0   | Parking Problem . . . . .                | 32           |
| Attempted Suicide . . . . .              | 5   | Phone Problem . . . . .                  | 8            |
| Background Investigation . . . . .       | 18  | Property Damage . . . . .                | 1            |
| Bad Check . . . . .                      | 18  | Property Check* . . . . .                | 126          |
| Burglary . . . . .                       | 12  | Public Nuisance -Intox. Person . . . . . | 3            |
| Citizen Assistance . . . . .             | 112 | Recovered Stolen Property . . . . .      | 0            |
| Citizen Dispute . . . . .                | 18  | Residence/Vehicle Lockout . . . . .      | 67           |
| Condition of Release Violation . . . . . | 1   | Sex Offense . . . . .                    | 4            |
| Dead Body . . . . .                      | 1   | Suicide . . . . .                        | 0            |
| Disorderly Conduct . . . . .             | 7   | Suspicious . . . . .                     | 119          |
| Domestic Abuse Order . . . . .           | 3   | Traffic Citations . . . . .              | 324          |
| Driving License Suspended . . . . .      | 5   | Traffic Hazard . . . . .                 | 51           |
| Drugs . . . . .                          | 3   | Traffic Warnings . . . . .               | 493          |
| DUI . . . . .                            | 8   | Trespassing . . . . .                    | 12           |
| Family Disturbance . . . . .             | 14  | Unsecure Premises . . . . .              | 14           |
| Firearms Offense . . . . .               | 0   | Utility Problem . . . . .                | 2            |
| Fire Investigations & Alarms . . . . .   | 5   | Vandalism . . . . .                      | 9            |
| Fish and Game Offense . . . . .          | 3   | Vehicle Serial # Inspection . . . . .    | 61           |
| Fraud . . . . .                          | 13  | Welfare Check . . . . .                  | 12           |
| Juvenile Problem . . . . .               | 10  | Miscellaneous . . . . .                  | 9            |
|  |     | <b>TOTAL . . . . .</b>                   | <b>2,375</b> |

*\*Routine property checks for businesses, Town buildings, and residences averaged 12 per day for a total of 1,512*

## **Public Works Department**

The main goal of the Public Works Department is to provide safe and convenient roadways throughout the year for everyone. FY08 was especially challenging due to the record snowfall over the winter and the drastic economic downturn.

The Fairbanks Museum in St. Johnsberry reported that the winter of 2007-08 saw the most snow since 1894, with 135.5 inches having fallen as of March 29. Public Works Department employees were kept very busy responding to this.

The past year has seen major increases in the cost of petroleum products which have affected every aspect of our operation. We are doing everything we can to conserve energy by becoming more efficient and effective. Even though this economic downturn is beyond our control, we will make every attempt to maintain our level of service and our infrastructure while being fiscally responsible.

During the summer of 2008 we continued with our culvert replacement program, installing 25 new culverts, along with doing the related ditching. We also, in conjunction with the Norwich Fire District, continued with our efforts to improve drainage along Main Street. At the same time, granite curbing was installed and sidewalk improvements were incorporated for handicapped accessibility in front of the Norwich Inn. Next year we will further expand upon this.

Over the past year some steps have been taken toward addressing the road realignment at Kendall Station Road. We reconstructed 475 feet on the Connecticut River side of Kendall Station Road and applied a 2 inch base coat of asphalt to this area, which includes the River Edge Lane intersection. The Route 5 side cannot be completed until the new railroad crossing is installed. We appreciate the patience shown by the residents of this road during this long, complicated process.

A Buildings and Grounds technician was hired during the summer of 2008 as part of the Public Works Department, which has enabled us to maintain consistently the grounds of all Town properties. His other duties include winter sidewalk maintenance, the repair and maintenance of all Town-owned buildings, and support duties for the Recreation Department.

The Public Works Department was awarded the following grants this year:

- \$175,000 paving grant with a 20% match for the continued paving of Union Village Road.
- \$15,000 safety improvement grant with no match requirement, for guardrail replacement on Union Village Road.
- \$4,500 Park and Ride grant with no match requirement.
- \$705 from the Norwich Women's Club for plantings around the Town sign.

I thank the Town Manager, the Selectboard, other Town departments, and Norwich residents for their continued support of the Public Works Department. I also commend the Public Works Department staff for their continued hard work and dedication.

*Andy Hodgdon, Public Works Director (649-2209; Norwich\_highway@earthlink.net)*

*Public Works Employees: Neal Rich, John Thorp, Gary Durkee,*

*Albert Lewellyn, Paul Betters, and Frank Emerson.*

*Buildings and Grounds Technician: Justin Lewellyn*

## **Recreation Department**

What was the most incredible athletic highlight of 2008? Andrew Wheating of Norwich representing the United States to run the 800 meters at the Olympics in Beijing this summer. Norwich folks can now proudly say that a dozen Olympic athletes have grown up in our small town. With our population of 3,544, statistics allow us to predict that one child currently attending elementary school here will go on to compete in the Olympics, and pursue every athlete's dream.

The Norwich Recreation Council/Department offers a wide range of recreational activities for varied tastes, interests, and ages. Our Recreation Council members and many other volunteers, local businesses, and organizations contribute in ways that often go unnoticed to help us run a large percentage of our programs, events, and facilities. We rely on them and appreciate their support, time, and dedicated involvement. This year we received a grant from the Norwich Women's Club for two beautiful picnic tables for all to enjoy at the Norwich pool.

Doug Kennedy, Kathy Menard, and Eric Sachsse retired from the Council in 2008 and we thank them for their longstanding community involvement and contributions. We are always in need of volunteers. Please contact the Director if you would like to get involved, and check the Recreation portion of our Town website for the latest programs, schedules, and events at [www.norwich.vt.us](http://www.norwich.vt.us).

**Recreation Council:** Ann Greenwald, President, Lars Blackmore, Vice-President, Aimee Goodwin, Secretary, Lisa Adams, David Bibeau, Kristin Brown, Stuart Close, Bernard Haskell, Chris Healy, Hugh Huizenga, Bill Miles, Kris Strohhenn

*Jill Kearney, Director (649-1419 ext. 109; [Recreation@norwich.vt.us](mailto:Recreation@norwich.vt.us))*

## **Senior Action Council**

The Senior Action Council is a group of seven people appointed by the Selectboard. Our purpose is to answer to the needs of seniors in Norwich. Our main duty is the home-delivered meals program known as "Meals on Wheels." We coordinate this program with the Bugbee Center in White River Junction (White River Council on Aging), where the meals are prepared. We have volunteer drivers for each weekday to deliver the meals to Norwich. Currently there are eight people receiving the meals.

*Martha Drake, Chair (649-1301)*

## **Transfer Station / Recycling Center**

The Transfer Station has recently come under the direction of the Public Works Department. Judy Trussell continues capably to serve as the Station's lead attendant. John Wight operates the trash compactor. Matt Daniels has recently been given a permanent position, working Saturdays. We would like to thank George Scotten and all of the other volunteers who donate their time to help to make the Transfer Station/Recycling Center successful.

The current economic situation affects this department also with increases in hauling fees and volatility in the recycling market.

As always, we would like to remind everyone that the Transfer Station is open Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8:00am to 4:45pm.

*Andy Hodgdon, Public Works Director (649-2209; [Norwich\\_highway@earthlink.net](mailto:Norwich_highway@earthlink.net))  
Judy Trussell, Lead Attendant, Transfer Station (649-1192)*

## **Transportation Committee**

This committee is an ad hoc advisory committee to the Town Manager, with a charge to increase the efficiency of our Town by encouraging non-motorized transportation (i.e., biking and walking), public transportation, and carpooling.

There are several on-going efforts that we are helping with, including restoring the bicycle lane from Ledyard Bridge under the interstate highway to the corridor project; planning for a new sidewalk along Beaver Meadow Road, across Moore Lane and connecting to the end of the Turnpike Road sidewalk; and a new path from King Arthur Flour to the future Dresden Playing Fields and Co-op Farmers Market site.

Thanks to the efforts of the Norwich Safe Routes to School Committee, a sidewalk on Church Street (Route 5) from Marion Cross School to Carpenter Street has been awarded federal funding through the Vermont Agency of Transportation, and is now in the design stage.

Several years ago, our committee sponsored a Town warning article to establish a sidewalk reserve fund, which has been used as seed money for several of the above projects, and this will remain a valuable asset to allow new projects to get started. There is much more to do, so please join us if you are interested in these issues.

*Lucy Gibson, Co-Chair (649-5738)*  
*Sharon Racusin, Co-Chair (649-1496)*

## **Tree Warden**

The Tree Warden is primarily responsible for managing and clearing dead and diseased trees from the Town right of way, as well as maintaining and adding to the treescape. Working closely with the Public Works Department, we continued to improve our proactive approach of trimming and improving the treescape on our 100 miles of roads. This is for safety reasons to avoid overhanging trees hitting school buses and Town plow trucks, and to allow proper ditching to keep our roads from washing out. Roads we worked on this year included Hopson, Old Coach, Pine Tree, Overlook, Bradley Hill, Koch, McKenna, New Boston, Route 10A, Brigham Hill and others.

We did maintenance work on numerous recent plantings and continued to remove small diseased elms near the center of Town, partly to protect the glorious large elm on Church Street across from the school. We cleared sumacs and pruned apple trees off Route 10A above the Ledyard Bridge and continued a major improvement of Foley Park (adjacent to the bridge) to allow a better view of the river from 10A and the park. Working with Public Works, we extended the apron of grass in the park closer to the water, thereby allowing more efficient future maintenance, and pruned, fertilized, and mulched the existing plantings. We met with the state Transportation Department landscape architect regarding the Town's obligation to maintain Foley Park. At some future date, it would be great to have access to the river here via steps and a landing. We are also thinking about some benches and picnic tables. Most people are keenly aware of how much trees and parks add to our environment.

We continued to make excess hardwood cut in Norwich and other towns available for fuel to needy people in the Upper Valley. Helpful volunteers delivered wood to many people. This project is taking on extra meaning with the recent soaring fuel prices. Andy Hodgdon and his crew helped tremendously in hauling wood up to our site off Beaver Meadow Road, and also in improving the site. Killdeer Farm donated the use of its truck for picking up wood. Many landowners generously donated wood this year. We continue to work with LISTEN, COVER, and SEVCA to identify people who need the fuel. We need volunteers to help cut, split, and deliver the wood, and help in coordinating these activities. If you have wood to contribute or tree problems to report, please contact me at any time.

*Jake Blum, Tree Warden (649-2994)*

## Trustees of Public Funds

According to Vermont Statutes, if a town elects Cemetery Commissioners, then the town also elects Trustees of Public Funds. The Trustees are elected on a rotating basis for a three-year term. The Trustees of Public Funds manage cemetery funds and other monies left to the Town in trust and accepted by the Selectboard.

During the Town's fiscal year, the Trustees invest monies not currently in use to maximize earnings for these funds. The Trustees meet regularly to monitor the funds. A decision was made to support area banks with investments in accordance with the Vermont Statutes, typically requesting investment rates at a minimum of six different banks in order to determine the best investment offer. The Cemetery Commissioners apprise us of their plans for working in the various cemeteries and we invest to meet their needs. The interest is allocated between sale of lots and perpetual care.

The Land Management Council Trust Fund, WTCU Fountain Trust Fund and the other non-cemetery funds are invested based upon information provided to the Trustees by the respective groups and/or Selectboard with a disbursement made when a request is received from the Selectboard.

*Cheryl A. Lindberg, Trustee (649-1678)*

## Zoning and Planning Office

The Zoning and Planning Department, which includes the Zoning Administrator/Planning Coordinator and the Planning Assistant, is responsible for administration and enforcement of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, advising landowners and their representatives on matters relating to these regulations, assisting in the preparation of permit and hearing applications, and providing staff support to the Development Review Board. The department also provides technical support to the Planning Commission in preparing the Town Plan and land use regulations, and maintains the Norwich Geographic Information System (GIS), the E911 Locatable Address System, and the Tracy Hall network server.

Permits were issued this year for nine single-family homes and one duplex. Approved subdivision applications resulted in four new lots. The State has assumed responsibility for issuing all wastewater permits, although the Town will continue to provide information on old permits, and the current regulations.

Specific information on zoning and subdivision requirements are listed on the inside back cover of this report. Regulations and permit applications are available at the Town web site.

*Phil Dechert, Zoning Administrator/Planning Coordinator (649-1419 ext.107)*

## Permit Activity FY08

### Zoning Permits

|                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| New Homes           | .9          |
| Multi-Unit Building | .1 (Duplex) |
| Building Additions  | .27         |
| Accessory Structure | .26         |
| Home Occupation     | .1          |

### Development Review Board

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Subdivisions             |    |
| Preliminary Plan Review  | .3 |
| Final Plan Review        | .3 |
| (Creating 4 new lots)    |    |
| Boundary Line Adjustment | .1 |