

Part II

Town Boards, Commissions,
Committees & Departments

Selectboard

This has been a challenging year for the Selectboard and no doubt will continue to be into the coming year. Although we are by comparison in a much better financial position than some towns, we are facing tough economic realities. Therefore, we have asked for a 5% cut from the Town budget for the coming year, and we continue to look for ways to curb spending. The Town Manager, Peter Webster, and the Finance Committee have been extremely helpful as we walk this timeline of looking for ways to cut costs and at the same time attempt to maintain the high level of services to which Norwich has grown accustomed. Our infrastructure has grown rapidly over the last 20 years and the maintenance and manpower and equipment to do the job are requiring more resources all the time.

We have seen significant changes in our village this year with a new bandstand, a new fence around the school yard, new sidewalks, and a bicycle path. While these changes are heralded as improvements, it must be borne in mind that exchanging the old and familiar with the new has difficult consequences, especially for some of our older residents and those most interested in historic preservation. As we face the coming year, we will be looking for ways to accurately gauge the will of the Town to better serve the public good and, at the same time, act as watchful stewards of our historic legacy.

Many citizens attend our Selectboard meetings and many make their voices heard at the biweekly meetings and through conversations with Board members, the Town Manager, and via email. We are honored to serve the Town and we listen to the needs and desires of many individuals over the course of the year. The obligation of the Selectboard is, as it has always been, to make decisions in the best interest of the Town.

Norwich is blessed with excellent employees and dedicated volunteers. We are grateful for the enormous contributions that are made singularly and collectively to keep the Town running smoothly and cheerfully. As challenging as Town government often proves to be, there is much to be said for volunteering in any capacity and we urge our citizens to join in whenever possible to build a much needed sense of community and cooperation in the Town.

*Sarah Nunan, Chair; Suzanne Lupien, Vice-Chair;
Roger Blake; Ed Childs; and Sharon Racusin*

Town Manager Report

I was appointed Town Manager on November 5, 2008. I serve on the Landfill Advisory Committee that is researching the development of a new solid waste landfill for the district. I was also appointed an alternate representative to the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District.

In March two new members were elected to the Selectboard, Sharon Racusin and Lynn McGrew. They joined Ed Childs, Suzanne Lupien, and Sarah Nunan. Tragically and suddenly, Dr. McGrew passed away within a month of Town Meeting. A special election was held to fill his seat. Roger Blake ran unopposed and is filling the vacant seat.

It has been a challenging and interesting year. Much has been accomplished, much remains to be done. The following are some significant events and issues that were addressed in FY09:

The Corridor Project and a major VTrans paving project were started in the spring (and successfully completed by the fall), transforming the entrance to our Town. Plans had been discussed for a decade. The state was willing to listen to Town concerns and conducted an experimental lane closure to accommodate a new bicycle lane up from the Ledyard Bridge. The project included new sidewalks, granite curbing, plantings, fencing around the Town Green, pavement, and travel lanes. Another major Town paving project went out to bid to resurface approximately four miles of Union Village Road. This was paved in the fall. We appreciate the patience and cooperation of all residents during the disruptions created by these necessary road projects.

The long-discussed bandstand project was completed with an enlarged, handicapped-accessible structure finished this summer. The entire project was funded with private donations, and special thanks go to the Norwich Women's and Lions Clubs and our Public Works Department for their significant involvement.

Union negotiations were held, and a responsible one-year contract for Police and Highway personnel was signed. Town employees agreed to switch to a less costly, high deductible Health Savings Account insurance plan, and for the first time ever are involved in paying a portion of the health insurance premiums or deductibles, at a great savings to taxpayers.

The Highway Department was kept busy with a number of projects in addition to the paving schedule, including the new park-and-ride bus shelter at Huntley Field and a new intersection of Route 132 and Union Village Road. Also involving the Highway Department is a 237-kW solar project proposed and developed by the Norwich Energy Committee. If this becomes a reality, it will supply all the municipality's electrical needs and would be located on Public Works Department property behind the Town Garage. This is a work in progress, and if it continues to go forward would require a vote at Town Meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Selectboard, Department Heads, and staff for their strong support of my efforts.

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

Collector of Delinquent Taxes

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. I enforced (for the first time in recent years) our policy for notifying and collecting those delinquent taxes for two or more years by setting up meetings with the individual taxpayers and establishing firm payment schedules. Tax sale procedures may still be necessary in some instances.

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

Tax Year Summary for FY09

Final Taxes Billed:	\$13,216,295.89
Taxes Collected during FY:	<u>\$13,137,032.65</u>
Taxes outstanding at close of FY:	\$79,263.24

Delinquent Tax Report

6/30/2008 Delinquent Tax Balance:	\$75,844.72
FY08/09 Delinquent Taxes:	<u>\$303,119.99</u>
Subtotal:	\$378,964.71
Less delinquent taxes collected & abatements:	<u>\$246,574.84</u>
6/30/2009 Balance:	\$132,389.87

Taxes delinquent for FY08/09	\$79,263.24
Taxes delinquent previous years	<u>\$53,126.63</u>
Total	\$132,389.87

Delinquent taxes as of December 31, 2009	\$67,374.67
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Town Clerk

This year we have seen a slight increase in the number of documents recorded in our office. We went from 3,891 pages recorded in the Land Records to 3,997 pages. This amounts to \$23,982 of revenue for the Town.

In FY09, we experienced a slight increase in passport applications from 44 to 50. We processed 160 motor vehicle registration renewals, up by one from 2008. We licensed 632 dogs, up from last year's 629 and sold 264 Fish and Game Licenses, significantly down from the 351 sold last year. We issued 25 Marriage and one Civil Union Licenses. There were 11 deaths and no home births to report this year.

The decline of the economy has affected my office this year. Therefore beginning January 4, 2010 I will be reducing the hours of my assistant from 32 to 24 hours per week.

The Town Clerk's Office is open Monday through Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm; on Thursdays we are generally open from 8:30 am to 6:00 pm, but please check with us during the day to confirm we will be here until 6:00. Winter months and bad weather may close us down early. 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 4, 2010. If you do not already have a rabies certificate on file with us, you will need to get a copy from your veterinarian.

If you have any questions or need help, please do not hesitate to stop in or call and we will do our best to help.

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

Vital Records for 2009

As recorded by the Town Clerk's Office January 1 to December 31, 2009

Marriages

Welch, Peter FrancisCheney, Margaret Rice
Ziegler, David AndrewDonoghue, Jamie Leigh
Gronas, MikhailNazyrova, Dzamilya
Rauwerdink, Adam MichaelEngman, Cocav Anna
Huessy, Johannes James BrownlowDe Sales, Emanuella Maria Fernanda
Schwab, Hans PeterBlaisdell, Patsy Jean
Stambaugh, Nathaniel PaulKirkland, Cassandra Kathryn
Piro, Justin RossBrown, Erin Elizabeth
Curran, Michael AllenPrice, Isabella Rosemary
Cote, Jason RossHoman, Katrina Elisabeth Linthorst
Heerdt, Casey LeeGuest, Ruth Kate
Gollnick, Peter WoodruffWoodford, Kathryn Jill
Peterson, Kathleen ElizabethTaraska, Sheila Anne
Patten, Alicia AnnJohnson, Anne Marjorie
Raymond, Dianne MaeHarlow, Kenneth Charles
Clouatre, Scott RaymondMinor, Meggan Hazel
O'Flaherty, Jennifer EllenRyan, Elizabeth Jamie
Sucheta, ArturConnelly, Rosemary L.
Bent, Matthew EdwinBefore, Rebecca Anne
David, Brian JosephKennedy, Dara Margaret
French, Philip ClarenceBarnes, Mark Alan
Swift, Raymond EugeneKingsbury, Dorothy Mae

Greenhalgh, Amy-LouiseHauck, Edmond Frederick
Goodrich, Megan ElizabethMcCune, Christopher Wilson
Keenan, Colin JamesDenton, Julia Anne

Civil Unions

Patten, Alicia Ann Johnson, Anne Marjorie

There were 0 homebirths and 11 deaths which occurred in the Town of Norwich

Boards of Abatement and Civil Authority

The Board of Civil Authority (BCA) and the Board of Abatement (BOA) are key to assuring the fundamental fairness of the Town's property taxation system. The BCA, which consists of the Justices of the Peace, the Selectboard, and the Town Clerk, hears appeals of valuation decisions made by the Listers, in an effort to assure that all taxpayers are truly assessed based on the fair market value of their property. In FY09, the BCA heard 31 valuation appeals ~ an unusually large number.

The BOA, composed of all BCA members as well as the Town Treasurer and the Listers, hears requests for relief from property taxes based on such things as hardship and loss of taxable property through fire. There were two such requests in 2008-09. In addition to serving on the BCA and BOA, the Justices of the Peace assist the Town Clerk with our highly efficient and well-run elections process. And, of course, they are always ready to assist the (newly expanded) universe of people entitled to seek the state's recognition of their marriages.

Donald M. Kreis, Chair (649-3073)



Finding the perfect pumpkin. Photo courtesy of The Norwich Times.

Cemetery Commission

The five member Cemetery Commission is responsible for the care and upkeep, as well as necessary improvements, of all 10 Norwich cemeteries. This also includes Union Village Cemetery.

All of the new construction has taken place in the Hillside Cemetery, the only one in Town which is in active use. New roads have been put in there, and new lots have been laid out. Corner markers have been placed as new lots have been sold. A new equipment storage shed has proved an excellent addition.

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 FY09 are summarized below, based on information maintained by the Finance Office and Treasurer:

Revenue Received:

Appropriation from Town Manager	\$15,000
Hillside Expansion from Trustees of Public Funds	.0
Woodworth Unitrust	4,100
Sales of Cemetery Markers	.330
Perpetual Care Fund - Interest	.5,740
Operating Account - Interest	<u>.22</u>
	\$25,192

Expenditures Made:

Wages	\$13,400
Capital Improvements	.0
Purchased Services	.4,099
Repairs and Maintenance	.252
Mowing Supplies	.1,260
Payroll Taxes	.1,025
Workmen's Compensation	.589
Water	.243
Equipment Purchase	.2,780
Liability Insurance	.101
Postage	<u>.3</u>
	\$23,752

Schedule 4 of the Independent Auditor's Report states our Fund Balance as \$22,609.

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. We share our findings with all of our fellow citizens, Town commissions, and governing bodies.

Projects undertaken by the NCC in FY09 included:

- Facilitation of several beautiful art and nature displays at the post office.
- Sponsorship of a public lecture about signs of wildlife, "Making Sense of Scents," by Sue Morse from Keeping Track.
- Installation of a beaver pond water-level control system in order to prevent road flooding and thereby protect the wetland.
- Excellent trail maintenance by the Trails Committee. The committee also received grant funding. The Student Conservation Association provided summer work.
- On-going inventory and mapping of vernal pools and wildlife road crossings.
- On-going work with conservation commissioners in neighboring towns to insure regional linking of efforts to conserve wildlife core areas and corridors.
- On-going community values mapping, i.e., collecting information about the areas around town where people engage in and enjoy outdoor activities.

Lee Michaelides, Secretary (649-2103)

Development Review Board

The Development Review Board (DRB) has seven members and three alternates. The Board meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month when applications are before the Board. Hearings can involve subdivisions, site reviews, variances, and appeals. 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.

All the hearings are recorded both on video and audio tape. These recordings are available for review and copies can be obtained for the cost of copying. The Board continues to hear all applications "on the record." If a decision is appealed to the Environmental Court, the Court will consider the DRB's existing record rather than hearing the case "de novo."

The DRB now uses the Norwich Zoning Regulations adopted in December 2008 in reviewing applications. The DRB is still working with the Planning Commission to consider revisions to the Norwich Subdivision Regulations, most recently amended in February 2006.

John E. Lawe, Chair (649-1585)

Emergency Management

Emergency Management's responsibility is to prepare for disasters and to coordinate responses to situations that may demand extraordinary action. Our approach is to use an "all hazards" management system. This meets the National Incident Management System (NIMS) standards established by the Department of Homeland Security. Many Norwich officials have received NIMS-compliant training in incident management and planning. Our current Emergency Operations Plan and Rapid Response Plan are NIMS-compliant. These plans are dynamic documents that require annual review and revisions. Floods, storms, fires, and hazardous materials releases have the highest probability of threatening our community.

We are working with our Upper Valley neighbors to develop a regional response to pandemic emergencies. This bi-state approach will enable each town to efficiently manage resources in the event of an emergency. Norwich transferred from Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) 3 to LEPC 12. Norwich and LEPC 12 are both associated with the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission. All of our Vermont neighboring towns are in LEPC 12.

The Town Manager is, by statute, the Director of Emergency Management. The Fire Chief is the Deputy Director and Regina Owens is the Emergency Management Coordinator.

Stephen Leinoff, Deputy Emergency Management Director

Energy Committee

Much of the Norwich Energy Committee (NEC)'s activity during FY09 revolved around researching renewable energy prospects for the Town. The NEC applied for and received a Municipal Technical Assistance Grant from the Vermont Clean Energy Development Fund, to assess the potential for developing community-scale wind power, photovoltaic (PV) power, and a combined heat and power system in the village fueled by biomass or geothermal energy. This led to a decision to design and seek funding for a PV system that would generate the amount of electricity annually consumed by municipal buildings. The Town will be asked to vote on this solar project at Town Meeting in March 2010. The heat-and-power system analysis is ongoing into FY2010.

In addition, the NEC: hosted a Button-Up Vermont Weatherization workshop at the Montshire Museum; participated in a workshop on community renewable energy projects at the annual conference of the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network; promoted language on energy conservation and efficiency to be considered for the revised Town Plan; discussed Vermont's energy future with our state representatives; conducted monthly workshops on how citizens can reduce their carbon footprint; distributed literature on global warming, energy conservation, and renewable energy at various local events; and consulted with residents on energy conservation and renewable energy options for their homes.

The NEC meets regularly on the third Thursday of every month, at 7 pm.

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

Finance Committee

The Norwich Finance Committee (NFC) comprises seven Norwich residents as follows: three are elected to serve on the NFC, three are appointed to serve on the NFC by the Selectboard, and the elected Town Treasurer. These seven serve on the Dresden Finance Committee (DFC) for the Dresden School District together with seven appointed members of the Hanover Finance Committee. The NFC exercises advisory oversight in the creation of annual budgets for the town of Norwich, the Norwich School District and, on the DFC, the Dresden School District. The NFC and DFC meet frequently in December and January, when all three budgets are being finalized for approval at Town Meeting in March. The NFC's mission is to advocate budgetary restraint and fiscal responsibility, and to increase public understanding of issues affecting local taxation.

During FY09, the NFC assisted the Selectboard and Town Manager in crafting financial policies which are in keeping with the town manager form of government. The Committee drafted budget guidelines for the school districts and the Town. Members attended School and Selectboard meetings and actively participated in the budget process. The Committee also drafted guidelines for contract negotiations for the School and the Town. In February 2009, NFC members participated in the "Town Eating Day" workshops, highlighting the Committee's role.

The NFC meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 4:30 pm in Tracy Hall. Members of the public are welcome at all meetings and encouraged to contribute to the discussions.

Steve Lajoie, Chair (649-2649)

Finance Office

The Finance Office is responsible for all accounting functions and tax collection for the Town. During FY09 we wrote 1,636 accounts payable checks and 1,103 payroll checks. We processed \$2,848,037 in Town bills and \$1,206,226 in gross Town payroll. The total income processed included current year Town tax of \$3,323,630 and other revenues in the amount of \$746,520.

When Town and school taxes were initially billed, the total tax raised was \$13,225,253. After all amended bills were sent, the final tax billing was \$13,216,296. The original amount of billed taxes was reduced by \$44,205 due to 20 Board of Civil Authority appeals and three Lister errors and omissions of \$8,233, and the removal of a Pilot payment in the amount of \$18,432. On the other hand, 129 late filed Homestead Declaration forms resulted in an increase in residential taxes of \$60,163. Tax adjustments resulted in tax adjustment expense in the amount of \$4,360 and interest expense of \$649. The final school true-up from the State of Vermont had school tax at \$9,892,666.

Please make sure that you file your Homestead Declaration forms by April 15 of each year! By not doing so, you will pay a 1% penalty on the education tax. Refer to your tax booklet for the form or go to 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

During the past fiscal year, the Norwich Fire Department responded to 200 incidents, a significant decline from the 250 incidents in FY08. There were 45 fewer medical calls. Our department was one of 16 that assisted in the suppression of the Roundhouse Fire in White River Junction – one of the largest fires the Upper Valley has experienced.

Call Types	2008-09
Structure Fires . . . . .	.7
Auto Fires . . . . .	.8
Wildland Fire . . . . .	.4
Other Fires . . . . .	.4
Medical . . . . .	.78
Vehicle Crashes . . . . .	.25
Hazardous Conditions no fire . . . . .	.9
Service Calls . . . . .	.29
Good Intent Calls . . . . .	.15
False Alarms . . . . .	.20
Other	<u>.1</u>
Total	200

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 for many property owners. We remain dedicated to further improving our services – including an increase in public education and fire prevention safety efforts.

We are working to correct problems with radio and pager coverage in portions of the Town. We also plan to repair the station roof, which is prone to ice buildup and leaks. A vehicle exhaust extraction system was installed, tremendously improving the interior environment in the firehouse. The total installation cost was \$63,200, about \$10,000 under budget. The position of the fire chief was reduced from full-time to three-quarter time.

Members respond to calls and participate in monthly training to maintain and expand their skills. Mark and Mary Anderson completed the Firefighter 2 course. The Department had hands-on training at the Norwich Inn buildings slated for demolition, practicing forcible entry, ventilation and rescue techniques. The FAST Squad and Support team provided logistical support.

The FAST Squad responds to medical emergencies and provides life support until an ambulance arrives. This past year, working with other emergency responders, members were directly responsible for saving the lives of two people in Norwich.

I thank our members for their commitment – their efforts save the community thousands of dollars annually. I also thank our members’ families, citizens, the Selectboard and other Town departments for their ongoing support and assistance. We need more firefighters and FAST Squad members! Experience is not necessary; we provide training.

Members

Officers: Chief Stephen Leinoff, Deputy Chief Neil Fulton, Assistant Chief Lloyd Tebbetts Captain Phil Brunelle, Captain Nox Connelly, Lieutenant Pete Schwab, and Lieutenant Matt Swett.

Firefighter-Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT): Jake Blum, Susan Blum, Linda Cook (Fire Warden), Matt Herbert, Regina Owens, Nancy LaRowe, Dan Schneider, David Yesman, Jay Whitehair, and Jon Wilkinson.

Firefighters: Mark Anderson, Mary Anderson, Mathew Davis, Peter Griggs, Richard Hatch, Luke Lindberg, William Mosenthal, Lisa Talmadge, Warren Thayer, Alex von Reyn, and Evan Welch.

EMTs: Toni Apgar, Eric Bivona, Charlene Bradley, Frances Eanet, Michael Hooper-Goetinck, Jennie Lamb, John Lawe, Bonnie Munday, and Hope Rennie.

Support Team

The team provides food and supplies to emergency responders at incident scenes and the station. Members include: Annah Dupuis, Barbara Merrill, Linda Cook, Linda Danilek, Jaden Gladstone, Cheri Henry, Cheryl Lindberg, Liz Russell, Laurie Welch, Lizanne Peyton, Anne Marie Smith, Janet VonReyn, Kenneth Crackwell, Jean Fraser, and Gerry Tolman.

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

Fire Warden

Having completed my first year as Fire Warden, I would like to thank the Norwich residents or their agents for making this a safe year.

More than 395 burn permits were issued this year. Burn permits are available through the Town Clerk weekdays during her regular hours or from me. A burn permit is needed at all times when there is no snow on the ground. When the ground is covered with snow, a permit is not needed. Throughout the year when you are ready to light the fire please call Hartford Dispatch at 295-9425 and the Fire Warden at 649-2825.

Linda Cook, Fire Warden (649-2825)

Health Officer

The mission of the Town Health Officers (HOs) is to protect public health. Included in this charge is investigation of rental housing problems that may be violations of the State Rental Housing code. Giving advice about possible rabies exposures and follow-up of human bites by dogs are additional responsibilities. Since the State of Vermont assumed responsibility for permitting new septic systems and dealing with failing systems, the HOs are involved only when a failed system creates a public health hazard.

This year the imminent threat of an influenza pandemic energized those who provide health care and those involved in public health. We will have to wait and see how this unfolds. While there is active planning underway at the State and local levels, individuals can also prepare. Keep an emergency supply of food, drugs, and essentials in the home. A helpful booklet is available from the Town Clerk.

If you are sick, stay home until your temperature has been normal for 24 hours. Wash your hands often, avoid sharing utensils, and minimize contact with sick individuals. Follow authentic official advice, ignore scare tactics, and keep calm.

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, as mandated by Vermont statute, is to draw up the Grand List, a record of all real property in Norwich that is subject to taxation, and assess that property at its fair market value. The Vermont Department of Taxes, Division of Property Valuation and Review, has determined that for the purpose of levying education taxes for FY10, Norwich's Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is 0.9707, which implies that assessments are at 97.07% of fair market value based on those properties that have sold between April 1, 2005 and March 31, 2008. The Listers provided a detailed discussion of the CLA in the 2007 Town Report which may be perused in the Town Clerk's office or is available by email from the Listers.

Homestead Declaration (HS-122)

The Listers again remind Norwich property owners that you must file the homestead declaration form, HS-122, for 2010 if you :

1. Expect to be a VT resident on April 1, 2010; and
2. Own and occupy your VT property as your principal home on April 1, 2010.

Residents who hold a life estate or live in a home they transferred to a revocable trust must also file the HS-122.

The HS-122 must be filed annually with the Vermont Department of Taxes. This form determines which of the two state education tax rates (residential or non-residential) applies to your property, and also includes the Property Tax Adjustment Claim, better known as the "Income Sensitivity Program." In order to avoid potentially serious penalties, the HS-122 must be filed by April 15, 2010, even if your Vermont income tax filing deadline is extended. Of late the state of Vermont has been active in contacting owners who should have filed their HS-122 forms but failed to do so.

The state directs the Town to send a revised tax bill for each late-filed or improperly prepared HS-122. This involves extra work and thus extra time for Town officials, time which could be put to better use.

2008 Appeals

As of January 7, 2010, there remain 10 appeals of 2008 Board of Civil Authority (BCA) decisions pending before Windsor Superior Court on behalf of 9 appellants.

2009 Summary

In 2009, the Listers sent 363 change of assessment notices. Fifty-one grievances were filed with the Listers. Five appeals were taken to the BCA from the Listers' decisions on grievances. None of these five BCA decisions was appealed further. The 2009 taxable Grand List value as of this writing is \$698,955,700. Next year's CLA (based on the 2009 Grand List and applicable to FY11 taxes) has been determined by the Vermont Department of Taxes to be 91.40%. The Norwich Selectboard has appealed this number to the Vermont Department of Taxes.

Further information about the Listers' activities in the past year and the 2009 Grand List appears on the following pages.

2010

In the spring of 2010, the Listers will inspect new construction and properties that have been improved, whether or not these improvements were made with a zoning permit. The Listers will also correct errors in the database as they come to light, and take other actions as necessary to maintain equity in the Grand List.

Change of assessment notices will be sent in early June, 2010. Notices are sent only to taxpayers whose property value (total, homestead and/or housesite) has changed. Formal grievances must be lodged with the Listers within 14 days of that date of mailing. A taxpayer may grieve his or her assessment in any year, whether or not the property's value has changed. The Listers remind everyone that a grievance triggers a review of the entire property, and may result in a property's value being lowered, raised, or remaining the same. The results of grievance may be appealed to the Norwich Board of Civil Authority.

The Listers can be contacted via telephone at 649-1419, ext. 6, or via email at (listers@norwich.vt.us). Office hours vary and are posted on the door of the Listers' Office in Tracy Hall.

Dennis Kaufman, Chair



The Little League Team. Photo courtesy of The Norwich Times.

2009 Grand List

Total Taxable Property (2009 Education Grand List)	\$702,318,400
One percent (1%) of Total Grand List	7,023,184

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 (2)	60,000
Charlott Metcalf Trustee	34,100
Timothy Brownell	<u>21,300</u>
Total Voted Exemption.	871,000

(lost education tax to be made up by remainder of town)

Real Estate Exemptions by Agreement

Norwich Housing Corporation	1,546,600
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Real Estate Exemptions by Statute

Veterans, Statutory (2)	20,000
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>
Total, Real Estate Exemptions	10,422,600

Breakdown of Education Grand List

R-1 Residence with under 6A of Land (784)	313,200,200
R-2 Residence with 6A of land or over (485)	304,924,800
MH Mobile Home with or without land (15)	2,349,300
C Commercial Properties (47)	30,592,800
CA Commercial Apartments (8)	5,399,300
UE Utilities Electric (4)	6,035,000
UO Utilities Other (2)	156,100
F Farms (11)	7,552,900
Other (40)	10,337,500
M Miscellaneous (146)	20,825,400
Cable (Education Grand List only)	945,100

Land Use Appraisal Program

Number of parcels enrolled in program	131
Number of acres in program	12,322
Exempt value of enrolled property	21,975,100

Municipal Grand List as of:

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	692,512,148
31 December 2009	698,955,700

Land Management Council

The Land Management Council once again had a busy year. As a reminder to those not familiar with the Land Management Council, our mission is to manage the recreation and timber activities on the Fire District Land. The Fire District comprises six different parcels totaling 917 acres. During the course of each year, we work with a forester who 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 lower portions of the Ballard Trail and completion 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. This work consisted primarily of a foot bridge and trail hardening. Special thanks go out to Peter and Sydney Griggs who graciously allowed the crew to camp on their property.

Clay Adams, Chair (649-8635)

Milton Frye Nature Area Committee

The Milton Frye Nature Area Committee manages the nature area in Norwich, (located between the elementary school and I-91) and offers nature education opportunities to the community. The Committee welcomed three new members: Matt Buck, Kate Emlen Chamberlin, and Stan Williams. Events included a Bird Walk led by George Clark; a Wildflower Identification and Photo Composition Workshop led by Kate Emlen Chamberlin and Donna Nelson; an Apple Tree Pruning Workshop, led by Stan Williams; a Winter Ecology Walk led by Alcott Smith, and an Invasive Plant Removal Work Day on National Trails Day. All activities are offered free to the public or at very reasonable cost.

New color-coded markers made by Marion Cross School (MCS) students are now in place on all the main trails, corresponding to a map of the trails at the entrance. Information about the Committee and maps of the area are now included on the Town website. The area is being used regularly by MCS students at all grade levels for nature study, orienteering, and a variety of "elective" activities. MCS students work during community service time to remove invasive plant species that damage the health of the forest. The Dresden Middle School cross-country running team uses the area for training.

The Committee welcomes all appropriate use of the area and, if you bring a dog, we remind you that we provide free dog waste disposal bags at the entrance sign. Thank you to all who have been using them. Please continue to do so; it has made a big difference. Enjoy the trails.

*Matt Buck, Kate Emlen Chamberlin, George Clark,
Lindsay Putnam, Warren Thayer, Stan Williams (649-1668)*

Planning Commission

This year was devoted to the final adoption of the Zoning Regulations and drafting a new Town Plan. New Zoning Regulations were adopted November 12, 2008 after several months of fine tuning by the Selectboard that included consultations with the Planning Commission and public hearings. The Planning Commission continues to work on inclusionary zoning, wildlife habitat protection, and revisions to the Subdivision Regulations. Minor amendments to the Zoning Regulations, adopted in July 2009, moved two properties from the Rural Residential District to the Village Residential I District, and added Adaptive Re-use as a conditional use in the Aquifer Protection District.

The Town Plan drafting process continued with review of preliminary draft chapters with members of advisory groups from the Norwich Conservation Commission, the Norwich Energy Committee, the Norwich Transportation Committee, members of the Affordable Housing Committee, and public review of specific chapters. A public workshop on transportation and community facilities was held in May 2009. The new Town Plan will highlight the interdependence and common goals of land use, transportation, resource conservation, and energy.

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.

Daniel Johnson, Chair (649-5533)

Police Department

The mission of the Norwich Police Department is to keep our community safe by providing the highest quality of police services. The financial constraints of the past year in conjunction with future budget issues will undoubtedly impact the way we do business. The residents of Norwich can be assured that the operations of the Department will remain at the highest level of performance, which has been expected and received in the past by Norwich residents.

In 2009 we saw slight increase in larcenies, in particular larcenies from motor vehicles. In 90% of the reported cases the targeted vehicle was left unlocked. We also investigated approximately 20% more reported fraud or bad check cases. In 95% of those investigations arrest and/or restitution was made. We believe that the increase in bad check and fraud cases is the result of the economic downturn.

We started the year with a full complement of officers; however, in January Officer Charles Rataj was deployed to Afghanistan as part of his attachment to the Army National Guard. Those shifts left vacant by Officer Rataj's deployment will be filled by part-time officers as well as overtime. Officer Rataj will continue his career with the Department upon his return in January 2011. We all wish him well and a safe return.

I know that I speak for every member of the Norwich Police Department in saying that our success would not be possible if not for the strong partnership that we have with Town leadership, Town departments and, most of all, you the community. As always, if you have any questions, comments or concerns please feel free to contact me or any member of the Norwich Police Department at 649-1460 or at the email addresses listed below.

*Chief Douglas A. Robinson drobinso@dps.state.vt.us
Admin. Asst. Judy Powell jpowell@dps.state.vt.us
Officer Michael Scruggs mscruggs@dps.state.vt.us
Officer Charles Rataj crataj@dps.state.vt.us
Officer Francis Schippert fschippe@dps.state.vt.us
Part-Time Officer Phil Brunelle pbrunell@dps.state.vt.us
Part-Time Officer James Beraldi jberaldi@dps.state.vt.us*

Police Department Statistics FY09

911 Hang Ups	42	Kidnapping	1
Abandoned Vehicle	0	Larceny	27
Accidents	87	Leaving Scene of Accident	6
Agency Assistance	190	Littering	3
Alarm	76	Lost or Found Property	42
Animal Problem	114	Medical Assist	30
Arrest on Warrant	2	Missing Person	2
Assault	2	Motorist Assist./Complaint	91
Attempted Suicide	4	Noise Disturbance	7
Background Investigation	6	Parking Problem	25
Bad Check	13	Phone Problem	14
Burglary	6	Property Check*	81
Citizen Assistance	96	Public Speaking	10
Citizen Dispute	27	Residence/Vehicle Lockout	69
Condition of Release Violation	1	Sex Offense	2
Court Appearance	9	Stalking	1
Directed Patrol	85	Suspicious	105
Disorderly Conduct	3	Training	26
Domestic Abuse Order	3	Traffic Citations	421
Driving License Suspended	6	Traffic Hazard	41
Drugs	5	Traffic Warnings(written)	606
DUI	10	Trespassing	11
Family Disturbance	3	Unsecure Premises	4
Fireworks	5	Utility Problem	6
Fire Investigations & Alarms	2	Vandalism	11
Fish and Game Offense	5	Vehicle Serial # Inspection	46
Fraud	17	Welfare Check	24
Juvenile Problem/Runaway	7	Miscellaneous	20
		TOTAL	2554

* Property Checks were conducted on 81 days with an approximate total of 640 property check visits

Public Works Department

The main goal of the Public Works Department is to provide safe and convenient roadways throughout the year for everyone. We continually strive to maintain the level of service that Norwich residents require and desire while being fiscally responsible. The economic downturn has caused prices of goods and services to level out in most areas, but not all. Therefore, budgeting continues to be a challenge.

We made the decision in the fall of 2008 to postpone using the \$175,000 paving grant funds until the summer of 2009 because of the high cost of asphalt at that time. The price of asphalt did fall back to reasonable levels in 2009, making it possible for us to pave a significantly larger area than would have been possible the previous year. During 2009 we also continued with our culvert replacement program, installing 24 new culverts, along with doing the related ditching.

The Kendall Station Road realignment project was completed in the summer of 2009. This project involved the installation of a newly relocated rail crossing, the removal and proper disposal of an underground storage tank from the Boston & Maine Railroad days, realignment and paving of the roadway, a new sign package, and full restoration of all disturbed areas. Once again, I would like to thank all of the residents on this road for their patience during this long and complicated process.

Another important project completed this year was the installation of the Park and Ride at Huntley Field. A Vermont Agency of Transportation Municipal Park and Ride Grant funded this project. This park and ride is going to be a very valuable resource for Norwich commuters.

The Public Works Department continues to perform service work on all municipal vehicles. The Buildings and Grounds division of Public Works has become an important part of our operation, performing maintenance on all Town properties.

Public Works and Buildings and Grounds employees worked with the Recreation Department on a major repair project at the Norwich Pool during the fall of 2008. Repairs were made to the cracked concrete on the far end of the dam. Various other needed repairs were made at the same time, such as refurbishing the diving platform.

We have collaborated with other Town departments on various other projects throughout the year. These projects included work on the new bandstand and working with the Tree Warden in the preparation of the site for a new woodshed at the Town woodlot. Colby Jantzen is constructing the woodshed as an Eagle Scout project.

We have updated the Public Works Department information on the Town website. We invite residents to visit the site to find answers to many of your questions concerning road maintenance policies, procedures, and permits.

I would like to thank the Town Manager, Selectboard, other Town departments, and Norwich residents for their continued support of the Public Works Department and for their patience during summer construction projects. I would also like to 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 Staff: Neal Rich, John Thorp, Gary Durkee, Albert Lewellyn,
Paul Betters, and Frank Emerson. Buildings and Grounds Technician: Justin Lewellyn*

Recreation Department

In FY09, with the economy in a tougher state than recent years, we found residents even more appreciative than usual of our local facilities and services. In cooperation with the Buildings and Grounds/Highway Department, we gave Huntley Meadow a much-needed facelift. Overgrowth around the perimeter of the fields and tennis courts was trimmed back, giving it a much more attractive and cared-for appearance. We installed dog waste bag stations at both Huntley and the pool in an effort to encourage and improve cleanliness of our Town treasures. We also received a grant through the generosity of the Norwich Women's Club for two attractive new waste receptacles at Huntley Meadow.

The Norwich Recreation Council/Department offers a diverse range of recreational activities and events for varied tastes, interests, and ages. We strive for our youth offerings to inspire a lifetime love of activity. We rely heavily on the kindness of volunteers, including the Recreation Council, as well as local businesses and organizations, all of whom contribute in ways that often go unrecognized publicly, but are appreciated from within. They help us run a large percentage of our programs and events and provide services such as our ski-tracking. We could not manage without their support, time, and dedicated involvement.

We are continually in need of volunteers. Contact the Director if you would like to become involved. Please check the Recreation portion of our Town website for the latest programs, schedules, and events (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, Scott Neuman, Kris Strohbehm

Jill Kearney, Director (649-1419, ext. 109; 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 the needs of seniors in Norwich. Our main duty is the home-delivered meals program also 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 six people receiving the meals.

Martha Drake, Chair (649-1301)

Transfer Station/Recycling Center

The Transfer Station/Recycling Center is under the direction of the Public Works Department. Judy Trussell continues to capably serve as the Transfer Station's lead attendant with John Wight operating the trash compactor and Matt Daniels handling most of the recycling. We would like to thank all other part-time employees and dedicated volunteers who help make the Transfer Station/Recycling Center successful.

During the past year we updated the Transfer Station and recycling information on the Town website. We also developed a new informational handout, which is available at the Transfer Station and the Town Clerk's office. Other improvements included: the eradication of knotweed at the Transfer Station, reseeding the area, and the construction and installation of a new trash compactor attendant's building and a new bottle/can redemption and ploughshare building.

Future plans include the installation of a community bulletin board at the Transfer Station/Recycling Center and the possibility of electronics recycling at our site.

As always, we would like to remind everyone that the Transfer Station is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8:00 am to 4:45 pm. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please contact me, Andy Hodgdon, Public Works Director at 649-2209 or Norwich_highway@earthlink.net. You may also contact Judy Trussell, Lead Attendant at the Transfer Station at 649-1192.

Transportation Committee

It has been an active year for improvements to Norwich's environment for walkers, carpoolers, and bicyclists. While many of these projects have been in the planning for years, we have seen several come to fruition.

At long last the "corridor" project has been constructed. While the improvements that were completed this summer were considered to be the first phase of a more extensive design, there are no definite plans or funds for additional work. The sidewalk connection on Turnpike Road from Huntley Meadows to Moore Lane is complete. There is room for "park and ride" use and a new bus shelter for commuters at the Huntley Meadows parking lot. Advance Transit has extended their route into Norwich, serving the park and ride lot and Beaver Meadow Road. There is a design and funding (federal) for a sidewalk on Church Street (US Rte. 5) from the Marion Cross School to Carpenter Street, provided by the Safe Routes to School Program.

We are especially fortunate to have a very talented and dedicated Department of Public Works in Norwich, which is committed to making our roads better and safer for all users, and has made many of the above improvements possible.

There is more to be done in the coming years. Some of the ideas we have been considering are a sidewalk or path along Beaver Meadow Road from Moore Lane to the Norwich Pool, a sidewalk on Rte. 5 north of Carpenter Street, bike lanes on Rte. 5, a crosswalk on Rte. 10A to the Montshire Museum, and others. Your ideas and participation on this committee are welcome. Current members are: Lars Blackmore, Carolyn Frye, Lucy Gibson, Jeff Goodrich, Linda Gray, Susan Hardy, Jamie Hess, John Lawe, and Sharon Racusin.

Lucy Gibson, Chair (649-5738)

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 in the town of Norwich. Working closely with Andy Hodgdon and the Town Public Works Department, we continued our proactive approach of trimming and improving the treescape on the 100 miles of roads in Norwich each year. This is for safety reasons in terms of overhanging trees hitting school buses and Town plow trucks as well as to allow proper ditching to keep our roads from washing out. Some of the roads we worked on this year were New Boston, Union Village, Turnpike, Upper Turnpike, and Main. We did maintenance on numerous trees that have been planted in recent years and continued to remove small diseased elms near the center of Town. One purpose of the elm removal is to protect the glorious large elm on Church Street across from the school.

We continued to improve the landscaping and the work done on the north bank of Route 10A above the Ledyard Bridge. We also continued a major improvement of Foley Park. A large number of poor species were removed, allowing a much nicer view of the water. Working with the Public Works Department, we extended the apron of grass in the park closer to the water, thereby allowing more efficient future maintenance. We also pruned, fertilized and mulched the existing plantings in the park. At some future date, it would be great to have access to the river from Foley Park via steps and a landing. We are also thinking about some benches and picnic tables.

We continued to develop our project to make excess hardwood cut in Norwich and other towns available to needy people in the Upper Valley for fuel. Volunteers delivered fuel to many people, enabling them to get through a tough winter. This project is taking on extra meaning with the high fuel prices and the bad economy. Andy Hodgdon and his crew helped tremendously in hauling wood up to our site off Beaver Meadow Road and also improving the site. Colby Jantzen will be completing a shed for the wood for his Eagle Scout project. 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 need help coordinating these activities. If you can help with this, have wood to contribute, or need to report tree problems, 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 checking the rates at a minimum of eight different institutions to determine the best rate. 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, and disbursements are made when a request is received from the Selectboard.

Cheryl A. Lindberg, Trustee (649-1678)

Zoning and Planning Office

The Zoning and Planning Department, staffed by 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, Planning Commission, and the Ancient Roads Committee.

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 only two new single-family homes, a significant reduction over the prior five-year average of 11 new homes per year. Additions to existing buildings did not decrease from previous years. Approved subdivision applications resulted in five new lots.

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 website.

*Phil Dechert, Zoning Administrator/Planning Coordinator (649-1419 x 4)
Pam Mullen, Planning Assistant*

Permit Activity (July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009)

Zoning Permits

New Homes	.....2
Building Additions	.....31
Accessory Structures	.....21
Home Occupation	.....1
Development Envelope	.....1
Replacements: Bldg./Home	.....2
Agricultural	.....1

Development Review Board

Subdivisions	
Preliminary Plan Review	.....2
Final Plan Review	.....2
(Creating 5 new lots)	
Conditional Use Review	.....4
Boundary Line of Adjustment	.....1



Installing sidewalks at Huntley Meadow. Photo courtesy of The Norwich Times.