

# Town Manager Update

January 2020

## Inside This Issue

- 1 Snippet from the Manager
- 2 Employee News
- 2 Department Profile
- 3 Some addit'l accomp.
- 3 TM & Dept Heads
- 4 Upcoming Events

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*Two of the seven  
responsibilities of a US  
Citizen:*

*Stay informed of the  
issues affecting your  
community.*

*Participate in your local  
community.*

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## Front Page Accomplishments

**Budget.** The Selectboard with support from the Town Manager's Office and Town Department Heads completed its annual budget proposal process. After careful deliberation, the Board is recommending a 3.97% operational budget (\$4,441,173) increase for voter approval at March Town Meeting. Other Monetary Articles (\$552,868) if all pass represents an increase of 26.74% from the prior year. On the other side of the coin, to ensure sufficient funding to offset those expenses, new property taxes will need to increase by 6.73% (4.16% for operational budget expenses and 26.74% for Other Monetary Article costs).

**FEMA.** The Town continues to wait for its final reimbursements from costs incurred due to the July 1, 2017 storm event. To date, reimbursement received amounts to about \$2.2M with about \$685K still owed the Town by FEMA and the State. Currently, it's anticipated that funding will be received before the end of this fiscal year. Receipt of the reimbursements to date has resulted in paying off the \$1.4M line of credit and eliminating the Town's negative fund balance. Final reimbursements will further support the Town's fund balance.

## Snippet from the Manager

According to the US Dept of Homeland Security's US Citizenship and Immigration Services, a citizen has seven basic responsibilities to exercise. Four are pretty "mom and apple pie":

- Supporting and defending the Constitution.
- Respecting and obeying federal, state, and local laws.
- Serving on a jury when called upon.
- Defending the country if the need should arise.

A few we all know:

- Participating in the democratic process.
- Paying income and other taxes honestly, and on time, to federal, state, and local authorities [BTW, the next property tax payment deadline is on or before Friday, February 14, 2020 ☺]
- Respect the rights, beliefs, and opinions of others.

But, the final two should really resonate with any and all Norwich citizens:

- Stay informed of the issues affecting your community.
- Participate in your local community.

## Employee News

Sadly, **Police Officer Frank Schippert** took a new position with the Windsor County Sheriff's Department. While he'll be missed at NPD, it's a good move for him, and we wish him well in his new position. He'll be at the Windsor County Court House, so if you do see him, hopefully, it's for good reasons! BTW, **Chief Frank** still has him handcuffed for some part-time duties when she needs some shifts filled, so he hasn't totally disappeared. Also, the Chief is amid interviewing candidates for the officer vacancy.

There's a new (interim) face in the Finance Office. **Becky Grammer** is holding down the fort, so to speak, since the business e-mail compromises and other bookkeeping issues the Town weathered during the fall of 2019. Further discussion with the Board about the Finance Office's staffing is pending.

Finally, congrats to **Christopher Connor** for making it through his first year of employment in the Highway Department! He's now off "probation"!

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*Police Officer Frank Schippert took a new position with the Windsor County Sheriff's Department.*

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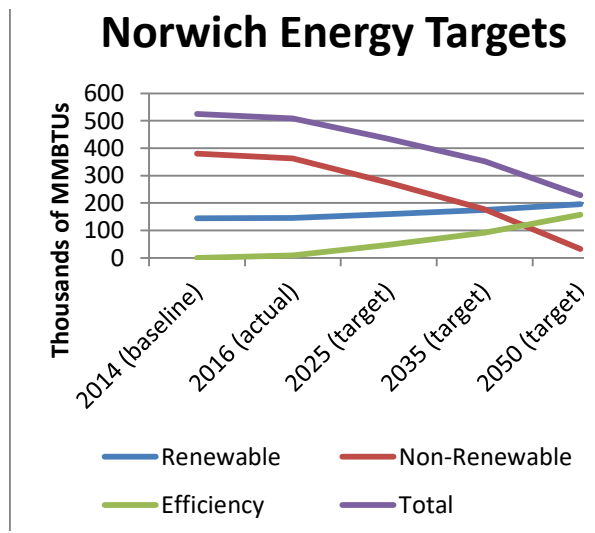
## Department Profile: Planning & Zoning

Looking to build a house or an addition to your house? Does your business need an outdoor sign? Are you looking to convert that unused shed into an apartment? If so, and any other similar question, you probably need to obtain at least a zoning (building) permit. **Rod Francis**, Director of Planning & Zoning and **Pam Mullen**, Planning Assistant are the staff persons you need to consult.

Not only are these two responsible for development applications and related land use regulations (e.g., Zoning Ordinance), but they are key staffers for how the Town plans for its growth and development, natural resource protection, and social/cultural influences affecting land use. In tandem with the Planning Commission, the Selectboard, and the public at-large, Rod and Pam have to piece together all these land use considerations. The result is a comprehensive plan (i.e., the Town Plan) that lays out the Town's overall vision for land use, while maintaining the delicate balance between statutory requirements and value-added local insight.

To that end, a fully updated **draft Town Plan** has been prepared by the Planning Commission with Rod/Pam's expertise, and now resides at the Selectboard level. Public hearings on the plan are scheduled for Wed., Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> (6:30 pm at Tracy Hall) and Sat., March 7<sup>th</sup> (Noon at Tracy Hall which promises to include a potluck Town "Eating" Day). Copies of the plan are posted on the Town's webpage – [www.norwich.vt.us](http://www.norwich.vt.us) – and available at Tracy Hall (300 Main St.)

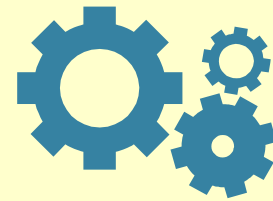
Graph based on Fig 12, draft Town Plan



Source: Energy Action Network 2050 Energy Pathways Analysis

## Some Additional Accomplishments...

- OSHA 300 annual workplace injury filing completed/posted.
- RFP released to hire a consultant to help with preparing the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan – a critical document necessary to receive FEMA funding for any future disaster event.
- Re-constituting Manager Safety & Health/Wellness Committee – a committee helping to keep insurance rates at a minimum
- Set up all staff mandatory, on-going cyber security training, especially given financial issues last fall.
- Amid drafting RFQ's for overall IT/digital realm assessment and for legal services (since former attorney retired).
- Assisting Finance Office with proposed budget, capital budget & program, designated funds status, filing W-2's on-line, Town Report items, expenditure reports, payroll, A/P Warrants, FEMA documentation, grant requirements, Town audit and Single Audit reporting, and other efforts related to organizing/staffing the office, including working with NEMRC under the "bulk time agreement".
- Collaborating with NPD on filling an officer vacancy along with filling another short-term officer vacancy.
- Working with local residents for the start-up Norwich Community Nurse (coming later this spring).
- Helping Town Clerk prepare for Town Meeting (e.g., drafting Warning).
- Met with interim Congregational Minister and REMAX officials concerning possible Tracy Hall energy project. In addition, participated with EEI, Energy Committee, and ad-hock working group related to the project, essentially elimination of fossil fuel use at Tracy Hall with proposed installation of a geo-thermal system for heating/cooling (along with other related energy efficiency and ventilation code projects).
- Serving as Town liaison for the *Prevention Network Grant through Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center, and the VT Department of Health Grant* – a short-term pass-through grant that will offer multiple programs/events for youth and families between now and June 30, 2020 intending to help prevent youth from becoming involved with tobacco, marijuana, illegal drugs/substances, etc.
- Numerous other projects, individual resident requests, e-mails, and the like. If more information is necessary, please ask.



*"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."*

*Henry Ford*

## Town Manager & Department Heads

Herb Durfee, Town Manager	802-649-1419 x1
Jennifer Frank, Police Chief	802-649-1460
Larry Wiggins, Public Works Director	802-649-2209
Bonnie Munday, Town Clerk	802-649-1419 x3
Alex Northern, Fire Chief	802-649-1133
Rod Francis, Planning & Zoning Director	802-649-1419 x8
Brie Swenson, Recreation Director	802-649-1419 x9
Becky Grammer, Interim Finance Officer	802-649-1419 x6

FEBRUARY 2020						
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## Upcoming Events

The following information are meetings and hearings of the Selectboard, along with other important dates (e.g., tax payments, Town Meeting Day, and an attempt to bring back Town "Eating" Day – a potluck opportunity for the community to get together and, in this case, talk about the draft Town Plan.

<b>Selectboard Meeting</b>	Feb 12
<b>TAX PAYMENTS DUE</b>	Feb 14
<b>Presidents' Day Holiday</b>	Feb 17
<b>School Vacation</b>	Feb 17 - 21
<b>Selectboard Meeting / Plan Public Hearing</b>	Feb 26
<b>Public Informational Meeting</b>	March 2
<b>Town Meeting (VOTING)</b>	March 3
<b>Selectboard Re-Organizational Meeting</b>	TBD – March 4 (?)
<b>Town "Eating" Day / Plan Public Hearing</b>	March 7
<b>April Selectboard Meetings</b>	TBD

APRIL 2020						
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