
SELECT BOARD 2018 REPORT

It has been an honor and our privilege to serve as your select board (BOS) this year.

Our goal is to provide our citizens with the highest quality essential public services and programs, directed toward community and constituent needs, at the least possible cost. We worked as a team in a manner that is respectful of the past, cognizant of the present, and anticipatory of the community's needs in the future.

Each year we publish an annual report, designed to present to you, our taxpayers and the community, a summary of our activities on your behalf, accomplishments of the past year and our challenges and outlook for the future.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT & FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Each year we compose the annual municipal budget. Our guiding principles during the process are to be transparent, promote public involvement and participation and consider the ability of our residents to pay. We do not use an incremental budgeting process. Our department directors use zero based budgeting techniques, identifying ways to improve processes, reduce waste, increase productivity and save money. The budget they present maintains the basic operations of the town and keeps services at the level our taxpayers expect and deserve. The operating budget for FYE 06/30/20 is essentially flat with an increase of 1.95% (The rate of inflation for 2018 was 2.44%). The entire budget with CIP warrant articles is an increase of only 2.1% over last year. It is a responsible budget that we are proud to present to our voters.

COMMUNICATIONS

Public engagement is important to us. We continue our efforts to better communicate with our residents, using state-of-the-art technology. Select Board meetings are broadcast live on Comcast, channel 22, Public Television. Meetings are also streamed online so you can watch them at your convenience on your computer or mobile device. Go to the Town's website, peterboroughnh.gov and click on USTREAM.

We do send news alerts (but not too often) to residents about the happenings here in town. Please sign up to be on the Selectmen's mailing list. Go to our home page on the website and type your email address in the space titled *Subscribe to the Select Board's Mailing List* in the side bar. Our *Nixle* Emergency Notification System is another free secure messaging service that allows town departments to send out both mobile text messages as well as emails (recipient's choice) instantly. Click on *Alert and Notification System* on the website and receive alerts when

there are road closures, flooding, downed trees and other emergencies which may impact you. For those who haven't signed up yet for these free services, please go to our Website, peterboroughnh.gov and stay informed!

Because 70% of our taxes go to the ConVal school district to operate our schools, the Board has frequent communication with the elected School Board members from Peterborough, our Superintendent and state legislators. We are determined to address the impact that continued declining student enrollment within the School District has on educational programming, facility usage, and capital planning.

Through the Selectmen's Advisory Committee (SAC) we coordinated a statewide campaign to address school funding fairness, which has helped to generate legislation being considered in Concord to create some relief for towns. We supported SB303, which if passed, would fully fund Special Education reimbursements to towns, for exceptionally expensive placements, at the 80% regulatory level in 2020, rising to 90% in 2021.

The Board kept in contact with elected officials from the state and our congressional delegation to seek support on a wide range of issues and to advocate for things that will assist the town. In the past year we have met and communicated regularly with our State Senator Jeanne Dietsch, State Representatives Peter Leishman and Ivy Vann, Governor Sununu and representatives from Congresswoman Annie Kuster's and Senator Jeanne Shaheen's staff and other officials. The Board gave testimony in Concord in support of the EDA Broadband/Telecom Committee's push to provide higher speed Internet to unserved and underserved towns. We are proud to report that SB170 which allows towns to bond for high speed internet infrastructure was passed. In addition, we spoke with and wrote letters to State Legislators, asking them to cease cost shifting to the towns and to return a larger percentage of Meals & Rentals tax revenue to municipalities.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

We continue to incorporate sustainability features into municipal building and renovations and use alternative energy sources, when possible, to reduce our carbon footprint. Our goal remains -- to be "the greenest town in New Hampshire."

In 2018, we received a \$200,000 LCIP grant to help underwrite the cost of the renovations to our town house. We repaired the distinctive windows, replaced the roof and purchased new flooring on the second level. On November 11, Veterans Day, we celebrated the town house's 100th year anniversary and showcased the renovations.

Our new Riverwalk parking lot should be open by the time this report is published. It offers 60 parking spaces for residents and employees and *Brenner's Bridge*, a pedestrian walking/bike bridge from the parking lot to Depot Square.

The Warrant Article for a bond to underwrite 35% of the cost of a new library passed at the 2018 town meeting. This is an excellent example of a public private partnership. Private donations will fund 65% of the building costs.

We promote the protection of groundwater resources and encourage water conservation measures. The recent drought and more frequent occurrences of extreme weather events are a major concern. We believe that future economic development will be highly dependent on finding alternative water sources. The Town continues to be proactive in the area of shared, consolidated, and regional services, having already achieved much operational efficiency by doing so. We already share support of youth recreational leagues and facilities, electricity purchasing, and open space acquisition. Other examples include the management of emergency sheltering services, grant administration, Mutual Aid for Police & Emergency Medical Services, Senior Services programs, among others. The need to maintain and expand shared service relationships will continue to be an ongoing priority of the community in the coming years. Watch for updates on our New Regional Water Source, Cold Stone Springs, which is a collaboration between Jaffrey, Sharon and Peterborough.

Planning activities have begun with a very energetic *Downtown Revitalization Committee*, to assist downtown businesses during the Main Street Bridge Construction project. Construction is scheduled to begin this year. It will be a one season construction period. Grants are already coming in to help with this endeavor. Our Heritage Commission has worked closely with Rodney Bartlett, Town Administrator, and Engineers at Hoyle, Tanner and Associates and made historic mitigation recommendations that have been approved by the NH Department of Historic Resources. Alternate routes on surface streets have been identified to ensure visitors have easy access to the town center. The Board is committed to doing whatever needs to be done to ensure that our local merchants keep their doors open and thrive during the construction phase.

Peterborough is one of only a few towns in NH, which does not have a state or federal road going through its town center and therefore has the space to accommodate town center activities. Wide sidewalks with close proximity to cafes, restaurants, museums, galleries and boutique retail stores appeal to tourists. We dedicated the corner of Main and Grove Street, *Grover's Corner*. It has become the epicenter of the town and a reminder of our rich history. To further that effort, a virtual walking tour was developed. It is available by QR code or directly from the town's website. From the walking tour app, we learn that the red brick Colonial Revival and Georgian buildings in the town center are unique to Peterborough and not found anywhere else in the state. We discover that the intersection of two rivers in our town center is an anomaly, referred to as sacred land by the Indians. The Contoocook River is the only river in the world (except for the Nile River in Egypt) that flows its entire route north!

LAND USE

According to research, livable communities are those with strong civic engagement, whose residents feel they have a stake in the future. The town has held visioning forums in the past with residents, business owners, employees and developers. We identified the qualities and attributes of Peterborough that are most highly valued, and these are incorporated in the town's Master Plan. The Master Plan is intended to serve as a resource for anyone who has an interest in or influence over the future of our community. The Master Plan provides future direction for boards and committees. The Select Board often refers to the Master Plan when deliberating on an issue. If you attend or watch our meetings you have probably heard us say, "This is consistent with the Master Plan" or "this is not consistent with the Master Plan."

Our planning documents, zoning and subdivision regulations are tailored to match the community vision as described in our Master Plan. In the coming years, we will be deliberating on some important land use issues, which could dramatically impact the character of this town.

Looking at our Capital Improvements funding requests for the next few years, there are many infrastructure projects on the horizon. These include major spending requests, for road maintenance, a new fire/rescue building and DPW garage. The Master Plan will play a key role in this decision-making.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our goal is to foster a local economy that supports a diverse but environmentally friendly business and industry base. Our Community Development and Planning Department provides the business community with a clear framework for establishing, maintaining and expanding business operations in town. We recognize and support tourism as a major driver of economic growth and continue to support the agricultural community in town.

The Economic Development Authority (EDA) retained *Firebrand International* to work on branding of the town and the creation of the new Economic Ecosystem "Hub and Spoke." The ecosystem is a structure to manage simultaneous and complimentary initiatives that impact economic development. This new "Hub and Spoke" model allows groups, working on different issues, a way to communicate and collaborate across various industries and specialties.

The EDA also hired the marketing firm, Drum, to create social media presence and the town promotional video. A sub-committee of the EDA, the *Welcome Team*, visited 125 new residents, held 6 *Meet and Greet* events in the last two years with about 500 people in attendance.

The board approved two applications for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) from Monadnock Economic Development Corporation, which when approved will create new jobs for low-income individuals.

SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS

The board is particularly sensitive to our elderly and those less fortunate among us. We strive to acknowledge the unique and valuable contributions of the veterans in our town and commit to a public environment which honors military service. In 2018, we restored the War Monument. This year we will be voting on a Veterans Tax Credit, a Service-Connected Total Disability Tax Credit, an Elderly Tax Exemption Asset Limits Warrant Article, which will ease the property tax burden for qualified elderly home owners and a Blind Tax Exemption.

THE FUTURE

The outlook for our future contains some significant challenges and threats. Working together we can face these and help to ensure that our future will continue to look bright. A major challenge will be to find ways to ensure the continued economic vitality of Peterborough. Threats on the horizon include: an aging population, not enough skilled workers to fill available jobs, and a lack of affordable housing for younger workers. Fortunately, we have hard working and competent staff in our Community Development and Planning Department and talented entrepreneurial members on our Economic Development Authority, Master Plan Steering Committee, Budget Committee, and Planning Board who have set goals to deal effectively with these issues.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Meeting future challenges requires enthusiastic and active participation of not only dedicated elected or appointed officials and paid staff, but also concerned, interested, and engaged citizens.

We have 17 major boards, commissions, committees and sub-committees within them. Volunteerism is what built and sustains this community. It is you – our volunteers - who take care of our parks and gardens, oversee our recreation programs, write our zoning and prepare our budgets, helping us run the town... adhering always to the vision we have for this town.

The Federal Government places a value on volunteerism. In NH the value of volunteerism is \$25.52 per hour. We estimated the number of volunteers and the hours you put in, and we can honestly say... you are worth a million dollars to us! Clearly, we couldn't afford to pay you!

We have learned through our many years of volunteering that joining committees and boards is a great way to network and meet other like-minded individuals. We have created friendships that we believe will last our lifetimes.

If you have ever seen something in town that made you think, “Why doesn’t somebody do something “please realize that you are the “somebody.” We encourage you to volunteer and help us run the town.

Peterborough Select Board

Barbara A. Miller, Chair

Tyler Ward

Karen Hatcher