



Town of Weathersfield

Volume 1, Issue 3

Spring 2019

Calendar of Events

April 27 - Pat Waite Art Show at 3:30pm at Weathersfield Proctor Library

May 4 - Green Up Day hosted by Historical Society

May 20 & 21 - Town Meeting Warnings

May 27 - Memorial Day Presentation by Veterans Committee

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Town Manager's Minute

It looks like we are finally clawing our way into spring, and it is nice to see some of the trees starting to bud as the sun warms them, after this long winter. I would like to remind everyone that VT Fish and game recommend putting away bird feeders, starting April 1st. The bird feeders, if left out, may attract bears and other wildlife as they emerge from winter. As the health officer, I would also ask that people stay on the lookout for raccoons or other wildlife that are not acting normal. We have had a few cases of rabid animals reported each of the last few years. If you notice an animal acting strangely please contact VT Fish and Wildlife (802- 722-4600) or the Town Office (802-674-2626).

On another note, our new website is up and running, even though we will be continuing to make updates. I would like to draw your attention to the notifications/alert page, where you can register to get an email and/or text message when a change has been made to the page you apply to. If you sign up you should get a confirmation email/and or text, and once you confirm you should start getting updates. We have also added the new GIS website which has different mapping tools and parcel information available (for basic research purposes).

Many people are asking about the fire departments after the vote for funding a municipal fire department failed. The Selectboard is working on a new budget and planning for a Special Town Meeting, for the purposes of voting on a fire department budget. The current plan is to put forward a budget similar to the past few years, before continuing to work on how the Town will provide fire services in the future.

Finally, we are continuing to work on enhancing our outdoor recreation around Town, with a focus on the Town Forest. We will be planning some trail clean up days this summer before promoting use of the forest. We are also starting to wrap up our three-town outdoor recreation initiative and look forward to hearing what the consultants from our regional grant have to present at the conclusion of this project.

Ed Morris
Town Manager

Zoning and Planning

The adoption of new bylaws is underway, with several changes already entering the final stages of approval. Among the changes are to permit accessory dwellings up to the greater of either 600 square feet in size or 30% of the size of the principal dwelling, and the establishment of an administrative approval process for certain developments within mapped deer wintering habitat areas. Residents are encouraged to attend Planning Commission meetings held at Martin Memorial Hall on the 2nd and 4th non-holiday Mondays each month to provide feedback on proposed changes to the bylaws, and can view the meeting agendas, posted on or before the Thursday preceding each meeting, either on the Town website, or at the Ascutney and Perkinsville post offices.

Land records are being uploaded to the Town's new GIS website, located at <http://www.axisgis.com/weathersfieldvt>, with the goal of having all zoning permits, Zoning Board decisions and Planning Commission decisions available to the public online by early this summer. Scanning has already been completed for certain parcels, and all new permits and decisions will be available at the GIS website immediately following their issuance.



Weathersfield Police Department
 Honor × Integrity × Courage
 5259 US RT 5; PO Box 550 × Weathersfield, VT 05030
 802-674-2185 × 802-674-1082 Fax



Here are some tips to keep you and your family safe on the roads this spring.

- 1. Be on the lookout for potholes.** Extreme winter weather takes a toll on our roadways, creating large potholes. Heavy rain can fill them with water making them difficult to see. These monsters can damage your car leading to expensive repairs. Damages can include: Punctured tires; Bent rims; Suspension damage; Poor alignment; and Exhaust system damage. Keep a safe following distance in case the driver in front of you reacts. Never swerve to avoid a pothole. This can put you and your family in a more dangerous situation. Gently brake before it if you can.
- 2. Slow down for spring showers.** Did you know that roads are the most slippery when it first begins to rain? This is caused by the rainwater mixing with contaminants on the road, such as oil and grease. Make sure to increase your following distance to allow for proper braking.
- 3. Watch for animals on the move.** Animal activity increases during the spring. For some, this is mating season and for others, they're waking up from their long winter slumber. Remember, deer are most active at dawn and dusk.
- 4. Watch for pedestrians on the move.** As temperatures increase, more people are outside walking or bicycling with their families. Slow down in your neighborhood and pay extra attention at crosswalks. If pedestrians have the walk signal, they have the right of way.
- 5. Share the road with motorcycles.** Because of their speed and size, motorcycles may quickly come in and out of your blind spots. Always take a second look now that motorcycles are out on the road. In addition, be courteous. Motorcycles have the same right to be on the road. If you end up following a motorcycle, maintain a safe following distance of at least four seconds.
- 6. Maintain proper tire air pressure.** During the winter months, tires lose air due to the cold temperatures, causing tires to be underinflated. Warmer temperatures can cause tires to be overinflated. Each situation can lead to increased wear and poor handling.
- 7. Inspect your tires.** Adequate tire tread is important for wet weather driving. Tire tread actually moves water away from the tires. As tire tread wears, less tread means reduced traction. When it comes time for buying new tires don't focus only on price. Read reviews and recommendations. Remember, you're relying on a contact patch the size of your hand to keep you and your family safe.
- 8. Pay attention in construction zones.** When driving through construction zones, follow these tips. Be attentive. Construction workers and equipment may suddenly enter the roadway. Traffic patterns can change daily to accommodate the work being done. Understand and follow the signs. Make safe lane changes. Solid lines in construction zones mean that you should stay in your lane. Slow down. Fines may be doubled in construction zones. In addition, slowing down can save a life.

Weathersfield Police Department

Chief William J. Daniels

Weathersfield Proctor Library

Library Director
Mark P. Richardson



The integration of technology in Weathersfield Proctor Library programs and services is an integral library function, contributing to opportunities for all people. Technology increases our ability to serve patrons in whichever manner they choose, leverages our resources and supports the Library's mission. The library is both a physical place as well as an information portal. It is accessible 24 hours each day, 7 days a week, through its website and electronic resources. The library creates and provides programs and services aimed at targeted audiences, including preschoolers, teens and older adults.

In the past few months, with the help of the Town Manager, the library has modernized its basic staff computers and their infrastructure as well as adding three public use computers to replace aging equipment. This update included a service contract for the first time in the library's history. Now that this work has been completed, we are ready to move on to the next phase.

The Weathersfield Proctor Library participated in the national EDGE Initiative, a management and leadership tool helping libraries create a path for the continuous growth and development of their public technology services. EDGE was developed by a national coalition of leading library and local government organizations, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and led by the Urban Libraries Council. Results of the library's baseline EDGE assessment have been incorporated into a technology plan that will be presented to the Library Board of Trustees by the Director. This plan identifies six service areas driven by technology. Objectives for technology implementation will be outlined in the Director's Report and include current needs as well as positioning the library for future growth.

**Property Tax Reminder
Susanne Terrill**

4th Tax Installment

The last installment (4th quarter) of our property tax bill is due on May 8th and becomes delinquent after 5:30 p.m. You will NOT receive a notice of payment due for this installment. If the installment is not paid on or before the close of business at 5:30 PM it will be subject to interest on the unpaid principal at the rate of 1% per month for the first three months and 1.5% thereafter. We do accept postmarks. Please note you can pay property taxes more frequently than the four installments and also sign up for Direct Debit through the Town.

Homestead Declaration

By Vermont law, property owners whose homes meet the definition of a Vermont homestead must file a Homestead Declaration **annually** by the April 15, 2019 filing deadline. A late filing fee will apply after that date. A homestead is the principal dwelling and parcel of land surrounding the dwelling, owned and occupied by the resident as the person's domicile. All property is considered **non-residential**, unless it is declared as a **homestead**. It is your responsibility as the property owner to claim the property as a homestead if you meet, or expect to meet, the following requirements: you are a Vermont resident and you own and occupy a homestead more than 182 days as your domicile as of April 1, 2019. Declare your homestead with the Vermont Tax Department by filing Form HS-122.

Property Tax Adjustment Claim

The Vermont Property Tax Adjustment assists many Vermont homeowners with paying their property taxes. You may be eligible for a property tax adjustment on your property taxes if your property qualifies as a homestead and you meet **all** of the following eligibility requirements:

- Your property qualifies as a homestead, and you have filed a Homestead Declaration for the 2019 grand list
- You were domiciled in Vermont for the full prior calendar year
- You were not claimed as a dependent of another taxpayer
- You have the property as your homestead as of April 1; and
- You meet the household income criteria (see form for current year income limit).

Property Tax Adjustment Claims are made to the Department of Taxes by filing Form HS-122, Section B. Visit the Department of Taxes website at www.tax.vermont.gov or call 1-866-828-2865 for more information.

IT IS DOG LICENSE TIME

JANUARY-APRIL 1 ST :	NEUTERED/SPAYED DOGS	\$10.00
	UN-NEUTERED/UN-SPAYED DOGS	\$14.00
AFTER APRIL 1 ST :	NEUTERED/SPAYED DOGS	\$12.00
	UN-NEUTERED/UN-SPAYED DOGS	\$18.00



Please be sure to bring a copy of your dog's current rabies certificate.

Furthermore, the Agency of Agriculture has sent out this rabies vaccination reminder:

All Vermont-resident dogs three months of age and older are required to be vaccinated for rabies.

There is no provision in Vermont that allows for the substitution of rabies titers for vaccinations.

While veterinarians are welcomed to do rabies titer testing on their client's pets, those results, regardless of what they are, do not exempt an animal from the vaccination requirement. Please note that pet owners who present rabies titer documentation in lieu of proof of vaccination can't receive licenses for their dogs.

There is a provision in Vermont that allows licensed veterinarians to issue vaccinations exemptions for medical circumstances.

They may exist with a particular dog that, in the judgment of the veterinarian, would prevent the development of adequate immunity to rabies. In those instances, the dog must be vaccinated as soon as that medical circumstance resolves. If the medical circumstance is prolonged or permanent, the rabies vaccination exemption document must be updated accordingly. Old age alone does not constitute a legitimate "medical circumstance". A philosophical aversion to vaccination does not constitute a legitimate "medical exemption". There is a specified form that must be completed by the veterinarian to allow this exemption. While the form is not publicly available, the possibility of fraud still exists. We are aware of some municipal officials who contact the veterinarian upon receipt of this vaccination exemption certificate to verify authenticity.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD

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We're on the Web!
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Ray Stapleton, Highway Department

April news letter

Well, as I am writing this we are a week into Vermont's famous mud season. For those of you who have not grown up dealing with this, or just want to understand better what's going on with the roads, here is a short review. When winter settles in our roads start to freeze up. During the cold winter months the frozen ground or frost gets thicker and deeper into the ground. When the temperatures rise and the sun gets warmer the frost will rise and cause heaves in the roads. This is the first sign that mud season is coming. As the frost starts to thaw you will start seeing the roads "sweat" usually later in the day and especially where the sun can shine on the roads. The thawing of the frost will cause mud there is no way to avoid this fact. The amount of mud or severity depends on many factors. Mainly how warm it gets and if the temperatures drop below freezing at night. When the temps drop below freezing it will slow the thawing process and lessen the amount of mud. The thaw this year started fast and furious around March 14th with high temps, sunny conditions and several nights with above freezing temps. All these factors combined has made the roads change extremely fast, and even faster when it's a road that has a lot of traffic. When this happens it makes it very difficult to repair the muddy sections without causing more damage with our loaded trucks and the grader. Fortunately the weather changed and the temps went below freezing at night. This slowed the thawing process down and allowed us the needed time in the mornings to repair the roads in the worst condition. We can only work on the roads in the morning until they start to thaw without damaging them. That is why we make daily plans and get as much done as we can during these short windows of time. It is very frustrating to us all to have to deal with mud season and all your patience has been greatly appreciated. I am sure that we will have more mud before it is over, and we will continue to monitor the roads and do our best to keep them passable. One of the only factors that can be controlled is traffic flow. So whenever possible if you do not live on the road and can find a different route please do so. All of us at the Highway Department, and more importantly, the people that need to be on that road to get to and from their homes will greatly appreciate this.

As soon as possible we will start "raking" the roads with the Grader. This will help them to dry out and finish the thaw process, while also smoothing out some of the rough spots. Once the roads are fully thawed we will start the grading process on all 54 miles of our gravel roads. The weather will greatly impact how quickly this is done. In a perfect world there will be just enough rain to dampen the roads allowing us to grade them and have them pack down perfectly. In reality it often rains hard the roads become too wet to grade them without them turning to a muddy mess. The grader will be out and we will be doing our very best to get the roads all graded as quickly as possible. Thank you very much for all your understanding, patience, and support. It is greatly appreciated.

Ray Stapleton, Highway Superintendent

