



Town of Weathersfield

Volume 11, Issue 2

Spring 2020

Property Tax Reminder

Susanne Terrill

2019-2020 Property Taxes

4th and final Tax Installment

The last installment (4th quarter) of our property tax bill is due on May 13th, 2020 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. An 8% penalty on the unpaid principal will be charged if payment is not received in full on or before the close of business at 5:30 PM on the final installment due date as provided by 32 V.S.A. §5136. Interest and Penalty can be abated. An application can be obtained from the Town Clerk and will need to be filed with the Board of Abatement.

Note: The Town Office will be closed on Memorial Day, Monday May 25th, 2020.

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Welcome 2020

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager

Dear Weathersfield Residents,

On January 27, 2020 I took the Vermont Oath of Allegiance and Oath of Office as your Town Manager in Weathersfield. I am honored, excited, and eager to serve the residents of Weathersfield and assist all of you in achieving our goals. As you know, the novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19 has swiftly become the most pressing situation facing our Town, State, Nation, and World today. Our Team is doing our best to protect and serve our residents, our town officials, and our staff. Since Vermont Governor Phil Scott issued a “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order on March 25, 2020 we closed municipal buildings to the public, as well as the Weathersfield School and Library. Town Operations continue and we encourage our residents and others to either call or email our departments directly. All board, committee, and commission meetings will be held virtually. Selectboard meetings will be broadcasted by SAPA TV, and our meeting platform, “GoToMeeting” provides direct access to our meetings during scheduled meeting times to the public.

We continue to provide most services except for services requiring attendance in buildings or with more than 10 people at a time. Our team reviews this situation daily and provides updates to the Selectboard at bi-weekly meetings on Monday’s at 7PM. Instructions on how to participate or call into these meetings will be listed on each meeting agenda. Our Emergency Management Team coordinated our response to COVID-19 by doing our part locally to practice social distancing, to ensure our first responders have the appropriate equipment and protocols in place to protect themselves so we may continue to provide emergency response and other public safety services to our residents and others, and to protect our town staff and officials in order to continue our local town government operations.

As I write this message to you the Weathersfield Town Website is being redesigned to provide user-friendly information for Weathersfield residents. The new website design will provide easy to find links to meeting and agenda information, ease of access to department information, upcoming projects, events, and electronic billing options. We expect to see direct civic engagement regarding resident experiences and community issues. Easily and efficiently capturing resident feedback will help from enhancing resident experience to adding relevant topics to meeting agendas. The new website redesign will provide us with better connectivity during emergency situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic we are all living through today. By creating a functional website with easy navigation, we will be able to better connect with you to ensure you always stay well-informed. We anticipate the new website to be up and running by April 27th, 2020.

Weathersfield’s Emergency Management Team developed our Local Emergency Management Plan. The Weathersfield Emergency Management Team will be meeting regularly to monitor COVID-19 and expand our Local Emergency Management Plan by taking an “all-hazards” approach. This plan is on the Selectboard Agenda to be adopted on April 20, 2020. We expect to amend this plan to include “all-hazards” this summer. We invite public input on this plan as we move forward through the process.

Continue Page 1 Town Manager:

Over the next year I will be conducting an analysis of the towns existing services. Evidence driven analysis will be a successful decision-making approach to innovation and improve operational efficiency and effectiveness, reduce costs and redundancies, and lead to the adoption of innovative solutions to existing issues. The first perspective under review is service delivery. Within this I will analyze and determine resident expectations and needs and compare it to the existing resident experience of service delivery. During my first month as your Town Manager the Town's existing website was one of the services that called for an immediate improvement. Overtime I will identify and address other areas for improvement, many of which are currently under review. The second perspective under review is financial management to ensure the efficient and cost-effective use of public resources. The third perspective under review is Human Resource Management to ensure the attention on key internal processes that drive our municipality. Here we will highlight the need to properly manage, motivate, involve, and train staff to deliver a cost-effective and quality service to Weathersfield residents.

Prior to and during my tenure as your Town Manager I found that residents, boards, committees, commissions, and staff make the Town of Weathersfield a special place to be. Volunteers are a critical component of community success. This hard work and dedication provides guidance the Town needs to ensure the action's we are pursuing reflect the character of Weathersfield. As the Town Manager I look forward to collaborating with Residents, Boards, Committees, and Commissions to absorb the goals, initiatives, and vision we are pursuing. There are several openings on our local boards and committees, including the Budget Committee, Connecticut River Joint Commission, CRJC Mt. Ascutney Subcommittee, Fence Viewer, Parks and Recreation Commission, Tree Warden, and Veteran's Memorial Committee. I urge you to contact our office about the work of these committees, and if you have interest, please contact Susanne Terrill with a letter of interest at Weathersfield@weathersfield.org.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, please take care of yourselves. Follow the instructions provided to us by our federal, state, and local officials. Although it may seem difficult at times, practice social distancing, be aware of your surroundings, and use personal protective equipment during your trips to obtain essential supplies, avoid unnecessary travel, and avoid private gatherings. We will get through this together and become an even stronger community in the future.

Listers Office

By Carolyn Hier

The Listers Office is still functioning and processing land transfers, accepting homestead declarations from the state, updating assessments, and are responding to phone messages and emails as promptly as possible. The state has recommended that no interior inspections be conducted this year. We have been contacting property owners via email, letter, and telephone concerning their zoning permits or completion of previously started construction. We are grateful for the cooperation we have received.

Although the state has extended the deadline to July 15 for filing Homestead Declarations and Property Tax Adjustments, we encourage all landowners to file as soon as possible.

Information is being updated daily from our District Advisors regarding grievances. Their recommendation is that grievances not be held face to face this year. This will mean that we will be conducting grievances only by letter, or telephone. Our goal is to file the Grand List by the original date of June 4, in which case grievances will be held mid June. However, due to the extended deadlines being granted by the state and our challenge of completing our work under the current Covid19 restrictions, we may be forced to request an extension from the selectboard and the state. Should that be the case, our grievance dates will be later than usual. Any property owner who has a change to their valuation will receive a Change of Appraisal notice from our office which will include the actual date of grievances. Thank you and please stay safe!

Town Clerk
By Flo Ann Dango

Since the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order was put into effect on March 25th of 2020 the Weathersfield Town Clerk’s Office has made several changes to comply with Vermont’s ACCD recommendations and CDC guidelines. We feel it is necessary in these trying times to do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19 by limiting person to person contact. The following is a list of changes made in our office:

- We are only accepting payments for dog licensing via the mail or the drop box located by our parking lot entrance.
- We have also pushed back the late fees this year for dog licensing from April 1st, 2020 to May 1st, 2020 (liable to change) in order to give our residents the time they need to access vets for rabies shots.
- We are no longer allowing researchers into the vault until further notice. The State of Vermont has deemed Land Records and Title Research as a non-essential service. If, however, an attorney or individual knows the specific Book and Page number of the document they need then they may contact our office and we can supply them with copies. Our more recent Land Records (about 2006-current) can be found online through COTTS.
- We will be looking at marriage licenses on a case by case basis, but it has also been recommended that we limit them to the best of our ability given that they too require some face to face interaction.
- We are recommending that anyone in need of a Notary Public tries to contact their banks since this is another service deemed non-essential by the State.

We do ask that if anyone has any questions to please feel free to reach out to our office, our goal is and has always been the welfare of our residents and we will do whatever we can to accommodate your needs.

We can be reached by phone at 674-2626 ext. 1 Monday & Wednesday from 9am-4pm, Tuesday from 9am-2pm, and Thursday from 9am-5:30pm. We can also be reached by email at town-clerk@weathersfield.org and deputyclerk@weathersfield.org.

Land Use Administrator's Office

By Chris Whidden, JD

The Land Use Administrator's Office is available to process zoning permits and help members of the community with zoning or any questions related to land use. Chris Whidden, JD, is the town's new Land Use Administrator.

Chris is a veteran of the United States Army, and deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait. After nine years of service, Chris earned a Bachelor's of Arts in Legal Studies at the University of West Florida. He was also an executive member of both the Kappa Sigma Fraternity and the Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity. After earning his Bachelors, Chris earned his Juris Doctor and Certificate in Experiential Advocacy at Vermont Law School and was awarded the International Academy of Trial Lawyers Award for his advocacy for veterans. He now lives with his wife and children in Baltimore, VT and is very excited to play an active and helpful role for the Weathersfield community.

The Land Use Administrator can be reached via email at landuse@weathersfield.org, phone at (802) 674-4510, or by mail at PO Box 550, Ascutney, VT 05030.



Weathersfield Police Department

Honor × Integrity × Courage

5259 US RT 5; PO Box 550 × Weathersfield, VT 05030

802-674-2185 × 802-674-1082 Fax



We are now responding to calls for service based on a need for response. We are no longer responding to calls for service for minor thefts, disorderly conduct by telephone, vehicle inspections, thefts etc. Our new response is to take the calls for service and adjust accordingly. What this means is continue to call in a complaint and the officer will determine if they will be responding or be mailing to the complainant a statement form with directions on how to mail in the report.

This time of year; we go out and enjoy the trails and waterways of the state. As you enjoy the outdoors please remember to hide your valuables and lock your door and roll up the windows in your vehicles.

When you go on vacation you can request the police department to do a residence check on your property. You can request a home check from the police department via mail service or email, once we receive the form we can stop by the residence when we have an officer on shift. Please do not post on social media that you are away; this is a good way for criminals to follow who is away on vacation.

Weathersfield Proctor Library

Mark Richardson, Library Director



The Weathersfield Proctor Library is adjusting its community presence for the current emergency. Long a center for community engagement, the library has for 118 years been a place for our patrons to gather and engage with one another. With the new reality of social distancing, we are busy beefing up our digital collections during this pandemic. We are also trying to get the word out on what resources we have available. Patrons can access our digital collections through the Libby and Overdrive apps, as well as through our website. We have just added the Duke Classics collection of over four thousand volumes and the Project Gutenberg collection of over twenty-eight thousand volumes to the digital collection. Both these collections allow simultaneous use (no wait time). From our website patrons can also access the National Emergency Library for over 1.4 million ebook titles. The library has also launched a YouTube channel, easily found under our name, where community news can be announced and where a Story Time with Glenna for children is broadcast several times a week. More types of programming will be added in the coming weeks. Additionally, we will be experimenting with the GoToMeeting program for digital book clubs and virtual community programs.

In partnership with the Vermont Department of Libraries, we are offering Learning Express Online. LearningExpress Library provides a comprehensive selection of academic and career-related solutions available in one platform. It includes skill-building in reading, writing, math, and science, college admissions exams, occupational licensing tests, workplace skills improvement, career exploration, and much more. The subscription includes Job & Career Accelerator, a job and career platform where job seekers can explore occupations, find career matches based on interests and skills, search for jobs and internships, search for scholarships, write winning resumes and much more. Also included is computer Skills Center, where one can learn the fundamentals of using a computer, the Internet and popular software applications with these self-paced, easy-to-use online tutorials - in beginner to advanced levels. LearningExpress library is a deep and broad tool that has something for everyone, from prep for the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) exam, nursing and medical testing prep, job interview and resume writing, computer skills, SAT, LSAT, and GRE test prep, to interactive tools to help someone choose a career. It can help someone choose a pathway in life or provide the tools to get a better job.

WiFi access has always been a focus of concern for the library. We still offer free, public access WiFi at the library. This can be accessed in our parking lot. All we ask is that social distancing protocols be followed, and we recommend staying in your vehicle while using the service.

Solid Waste

By Ray Stapleton
Covid-19 response
Updated 4/15/2020

We have made the following changes in response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Guidelines:

- Follow all social distancing guidelines while at the facility.
- We recommend that everyone wears a mask
- Bring a marker or pen to mark your own punch cards as directed by the attendants
- If you have not brought a marker or pen please hold the punch card so the attendant can punch it without touching it
- Limit trips to the facility
- Only bring necessary items such as household trash or compost
- No brush is allowed at this time due to a town wide burn permit ban
- Limit bringing “spring cleanup materials” and Construction & demolition waste (if it is not absolutely necessary to dispose of it don't bring it)
- Bag all household trash
- Attendants have been directed not touch vehicles or any waste entering the facility (they like to help but we are trying to keep them safe)

If you have large amount of C&D (construction & demolition) waste that you need to dispose of rent a container from a vendor or bring the waste to the vendor's sites

The highest increase has been with household trash and C&D waste. If this trend continues we will need to limit the household trash quantities allowed, and suspend all C&D collection.

Many Towns have limited or discontinued waste disposal services during this pandemic. We are trying to keep the Weathersfield Transfer Station open as long as we can. We need all your help and understanding to achieve this goal. The facility has seen a large increase in use due to residents doing more cleaning during the Governor's Stay Home Safe policy. If this continues and we're unable to provide adequate social distancing and/or unable to keep up with the volume of waste, we will need to reduce or suspend services. If the attendants become ill we have very limited resources to provide people to run the facility.

Normally we use Highway Department staff to run the facility when needed. At this time we will not be able to provide any help as we are trying to limit our Highway staff from as much public contact as possible. We all need to provide Tyler and James with as much help as possible to stay safe and allow the transfer station to remain open. Please do your part and follow these guidelines.

**TOWN OF
WEATHERSFIELD**

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We're on the Web!
www.weathersfieldvt.org

Highway Department

Ray Stapleton

I hope everyone is healthy and safe. I would like to send out a special thanks to all the care providers and service workers that are helping us get through these tough times. You have all done a wonderful job under very difficult conditions. Our local businesses have been having a very difficult time and could use any support you're able to give. Anything from purchasing gift cards for future use to buying groceries at local stores can make a big difference. I feel that we have a great community and once we make it through this we will be even stronger.

Highway department news:

The Highway Department has implemented many guidelines to help us all stay safe during this pandemic. We have closed the Highway garage to all the public, and restricted public entry to only essential vendors. We are practicing social distancing as much as possible between crew members, and the crew is sharing equipment as little as reasonably possible. We are cleaning the equipment between each use as well as daily cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces (or more often as needed). Everyone has been given information on best practices for prevention of Covid-19 as provided by the CDC, and Vermont health department guidelines. We will continue to update our guidelines as needed.

Weather has allowed us to work on some projects this spring earlier than usual. We have completed several ditch cleaning projects around Town. (If any resident is interested in providing us with a place to dump material for fill please contact us 802-263-5272, or highway@weathersfield.org) if we can get a network of suitable fill sites around town we can spend less time getting rid of materials and more time ditching. This winter we were able to get out and complete a project cutting trees on a section of Center Road as well.

Mud season has been more manageable than usual this year. We still had places that required materials, but were able to come out of it relatively well with a limited financial impact to the budget.

Our grader has been out on most of our roads smoothing out the worst spots as they dry. At this time we have started to grade some of our roads that have finished the thaw process. We will be doing all roads as the weather allows. Please be patient and careful when driving through our worksites.

Our bigger drainage project on Skyline Drive, which is funded in part by the State of Vermont, has been pushed back due to the Covid-19 response. We will be completing this project later than the planned finish date of June 30th.

We have sent out a bid request for a one year roadside mowing contract. In order to try and lower the overall cost we will be mowing where we can with our old tractor with a sickle bar mower. We will be reviewing data to see if it would be more cost effective to purchase a new or used mowing machine in the future rather than hiring a contractor.

We have been awarded a grant for the replacement of the undersized culvert on Lottery Lane. There was a bid for this project last fall but due to a low response from contractors we did not award it. I just applied for an additional grant that will provide us with funds to hire an engineer for this project. This will allow us to look at more options for the structure's design, provide a clear definition of the scope of work to bidding contractors, and allow us to find the most economical way to meet the Vermont Water Study requirements for water flow.

Weathersfield has requested grant funds for stone retaining walls on Perkins Hill road for two culvert inlets that are showing signs of erosion. If funded these stone retaining walls will be similar to the two that were previously built on Perkins Hill.

We will continue to apply for all grants available to aide us in lessening the tax burden on us all.

Thank You



**Town of Weathersfield
Newsletter
Spring 2020**

Town of Weathersfield
5259 US Route 5,