**Board Liaison Report September 10, 2020**

**ATVs/VASA:** Danny Hale was going to be present to discuss our previous meetings. First, I spoke with him at length on my own. Then, we met with him, and Ethan the VASA trails director, along with with Mike Gardner, Bob Jarvis, and The Spokesperson from the local ATV club. Since that meeting, the local club has officially become a VASA club. VASA involvement brings the following benefits to Pownal:

- Enforcement from both the local sheriff dept and Fish and Wildlife, for afterhours partying, etc... at the expense of VASA, not from the Town Budget.
- A ready-made sticker system, to which we can add the town sticker at cost. The club is willing to refund people the cost of the town sticker from their club dues, which provides incentive to procure the town sticker.
- Liability protection for Pownal landowners who allow VASA trails to go through their property.

It is important to note that VASA is the organization that is mentioned in Vermont Statute with authority to maintain, create, etc.... ATV trails. ALL ATVs in Vermont are now required to have Trail Access Decals (TADs) from VASA. This means that on the State level, all ATVs are required to have VASA registration and identification. If the town has an ATV specific ordinance, VASA can bring enforcement with more “teeth”. Allowed roads on a traffic ordinance do not qualify as an “ATV ordinance” especially since the new legislation which essentially makes VASA the statutory DMV of ATVs. Also, because the traffic ordinance does not require helmets, registration, etc... VASA cannot “enforce” an ordinance without their required specifications.

**JULIE/SPECIAL ELECTION:** Julie handed me clarifying information regarding the special election she asked me to read tonight. There is some wrong information online, so she wants to be sure the public has the correct information. Included in folder.

**TOWN OFFICE PROJECT:**
- We received our local Waste Water permit
- I have been working with John Rahill our architect closely. We have reviewed all codes, and suggested modifications. We were able to potentially increase the occupancy of the meeting room to an “assembly space” by adding a second exit, and remedying a “dead end corridor”. The plans and notes of these modifications are in your folders.
- **TIMELINE:** Pauline and I met, and created a preliminary timeline for some first tasks:
  
  **Beginning Timeline/Order of Operations:**
For action tonight: Please sign the paperwork from Gunlow so they can apply for the State Waste Water Permit. A Landowner Signature Sheet and a Certification Statement.

Bids: We are ready to put out bids for Electric, Plumbing, and Foundation. ACTION REQUESTED: I would like to start preparing the bids. Pauline and I will work on the content, and Linda will actually put out the bids and manage that part of the process.

Actual Work Planned:

- Schoolhouse interior needs to be cleared. Furniture inside is being saved for the town offices and also the Historical Center. Joyce and Pauline are speaking to Mr. Winchester about the possibility of storing the contents of the Schoolhouse at the Legion since large parts of it are unused in Covid. They will seek community volunteers to help with the move of this furniture. Goal to finish this by September 20.
- After upper exterior is emptied, the porch, chimney, and ramp need to be taken town and put into a dumpster. Pauline found someone willing to do this work as a donation in-kind, the only expense would be the dumpster. Goal date: October 11.
- We awarded the bid for excavation, but if something happens with timing, then Mike Connors, who is our building mover, is willing to do the excavation for same price or less of what we awarded. He is also an excavator, so there would be benefit to having do the excavation and the move....as these need to be tightly coordinated. This is just a heads up, we will know more once we have.
- Linda and I are starting to discuss the Bond and the letter of intent for a carryover loan. We will work together over the next two weeks to get a plan in order. She will take a webinar on the process in early November. However, we need to first make contact with a bond contact/counsel who can help us make sure all of our ducks in a row and help us with the transitional funding.

Mission Statement:

- I was sent some grammatical corrections, which are reflected in the current document.
- Received a citizen suggestion to "remove all Libertarian language" and "political ideology". I reviewed the statement as written numerous times, and also sent it to the VLCT. That communication is attached here, bullet points below are (from my communication):
1. Vermont statutes do not address how or whether a board uses the terms "free speech" or "personal freedom." There is also no statute guiding the creation of mission/vision/goals statements. This is at the discretion of the Selectboard.

2. "Some definitions of “policy” could include “mission and vision statements.” Regardless, board mission or vision statements would not generally override policies the selectboard adopts per its legal authority, such as a personnel policy.” In other words, these statements never over-ride or constitute policy, which we had already asserted.

3. "As described in the two articles about social media provided below, sometimes a town can act to discipline an employee for their personal use of social media, but it depends on the circumstances and whether the town has a policy and what that policy says. We recommend always consulting an attorney before any adverse employment action. PACIF members have the benefit of free legal consultation via the Employment Practices Program in those situations."

These articles are part of the board packet for this week, but some informative quotes:

"Most municipal employees also have personal social media accounts on which they post content and comments in their capacity as private citizens. For example, the same town highway worker may have a personal Facebook account on which he posts content about his personal interests and writes on his friends’ walls.

The question arises: As municipal employers, are you allowed to regulate or discipline your employees for posting inappropriate content or comments, or saying something that harms your interest as employers, when employees use their personal accounts? The answer is, it depends. Municipal employers should consider the following issues before taking an employment action against an employee for their personal use of social media.

Constitutional Protection. Similar to a member of the general public posting on the municipality’s social media, municipal employees also have certain First Amendment constitutional protections to free speech. The Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects one’s right to communicate ideas and opinions. This freedom, however, is not absolute. Employees’ rights may be restricted more than the public’s in order to further your interests as an employer.

Generally, when government employees make statements pursuant to their official duties, they aren’t protected by the First Amendment because they aren’t speaking as private citizens in those circumstances. Additionally, even if an employee is off-duty and posting on their personal social media, speech that serves no aim other than to make a gripe or personal attack is usually unprotected. Hate speech and obscene material that
serve no other purpose are examples of this type of low-value speech and may be a basis for discipline or termination because they negatively impact the workplace.

When employees are speaking privately, off-duty, about matters of public concern, their speech is protected. Examples of “matters of public concern” include speech related to public safety or governmental wrongdoing. One way to think about this conceptually is to ask yourself if a reasonable person would view the speech as a simple workplace gripe or something with more value, like a broader social or policy interest to the public. Even if an employee is speaking on a matter of public concern, an employer isn’t necessarily prohibited from taking any employment action. This is because the courts will still weigh the interests of the employee’s free speech against the employer’s interests. If the interests of the employer — such as ensuring effective and efficient public services — outweigh the value of the speech in a particular circumstance, the employer may nonetheless be justified in discipline or termination.

Even if an employee’s social media post appears to be unprotected speech, municipalities should still be prudent before taking any disciplinary employment action. Making the determination of whether speech is a matter of public concern is not easy and depends on the context, content, and form of the speech on the whole.”

Green Mountain Bible Conference Land:

- Last Saturday, myself, Bob, and Angie walked the land. It already has some trails. There is no garbage. It is a great piece of land, with easy access off of Route 7. With a little grading and a couple of loads of gravel, there could be a trail head created with a small parking area. Under the deed, the land must be used for “religious or civic purposes” so if we accept the land, we will need to use it for purposes of the town.

- **Description of Land:** 8 plus acres, sloped. Wooded. Already has trails. We had the idea that perhaps it would be a good “starter project” to build capacity. This is helpful to show that we have the capacity to create and maintain projects for when we are in the position to go after larger grant funding and development programs. Some ideas for the land: pump track for mountain bikes, walking trails, archery range, nature walks, a couple tent platforms, etc..... We already have access, it would be simple to grade and add gravel for some parking spots at the base.

- **Action requested:** would the Board like to proceed with conveyance of the land to the Town of Pownal?

Access to Town-Owned Land and Potential Uses:

- I met with Ray Rodrigues to get a sense of what, if anything, he had done regarding this land as part of the private recreation task force. He is happy to serve on a task force with me. He states that there is access available from NY side of things. If this is true, we have the possibility of applying for a very
large grant program that favors projects done in collaboration across state lines.

- I put out a call for volunteers to join a task force. Flyer is on Facebook, etc.... I have received two letters of interest from Mat Zwinge and Jennifer Boucher, in your folders. Also, Ray said that her would serve on the committee, and sent my flyer out to his contacts. To remove confusion over “Recreation Task Force”, we will call it “Tannery Lands Task Force” or “Recreation Economy Task Force” or “Park Development Task Force” or.....???. Perhaps this group could work on the 8 acres as well.

- My idea of how we will work is to meet monthly. First we will set an “order of operations”. We will start with just evaluating the documentation that already exists, and going to look at the land, and creating a small report about what we have learned. After that, we will start brainstorming project and development ideas.

**Grants Updates:**

- Waiting to hear on Digitization Grant and Cultural Facilities Grant.
- LGER is submitted, for the cost of four laptops and four phones. An ask of approx.. 10k
- We met with the Church Council again regarding the Historical Preservation Grant. We have estimates for roof repair and paint/cornice repair.
- I want to digitize the pictures and article clippings that Angie gave me at staples....the price is....I would like approval for this. These, along with the pics from the Church Council, will be used for the application, and also to create a “scrapbook” of the Church through the years. This book we hope to “sell” in exchange of a minimum donation towards the work on the Church building.
- I priced out the cost of digitizing Angie’s grandmother’s scrapbook, and if I have Staples do it, it is 1.98 a page, or they can guide me in the right direction and I can do it there for 50 cents a page. I may be able to figure it out on our Konica as well, so I will do that first.

**National Forest Acquisition in Pownal:**

- Kate Wanner is here along with representation from the National Forest. I sent you a report in advance of this conversation so you would have a heads up about what she is going to discuss. That synopsis is included in your packets, and also, if you decide to move forward with support of this acquisition I have a letter written for you to sign.

**Audit updates:**
• 9/9/2020 I spoke with Joe Heroux and Tim Doyle of Bonadio, our auditing firm. Because our former auditor is refusing to provide the required documentation, they require certain documentation to create a baseline for the beginning of their FY 2019 auditing work. Joe is working with Ellen to get that documentation. If we retain Bonadio as our auditors, this won’t be an issue again, it is only when the auditing work is transferred from one company to another.

• The other issue that they have had is because of the 30 page “fraud report” from the former Selectperson. Because such a large fraud report was filed, they really need to see a complete and detailed finished Forensic Audit report to be able to put that entire thing to rest. They did reiterate that from their work, all of the accusations appear baseless, however, once “fraud” is claimed, there are procedures that must be followed so all t’s crossed and i’s dotted.

• The hold up on the finalization of the 2019 audit is hands down the delay of a thorough and completed forensic audit report coupled with the 30-page document of fraud allegations from the former Selectperson. These two things are not the fault of the Town of Pownal, our Treasurer, or any other town entity that is included in the audit. Joe Heroux mentioned that Ellen is always incredibly receptive and also provides all required information when asked for.

• I have received a DRAFT copy of their audit report, as I sent to you. This is a draft, and could be subject to change once they see the forensic report and the “beginning numbers” as provided by Ellen, but Mr. Heroux “does not anticipate any changes”. They wanted to emphasize that the draft report is NOT to be disseminated to the public, but is only for the Board’s information.

• They did clear me to share with the public that:

1. From their draft final report “Our responsibility is to express opinions on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor’s judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity’s preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity’s
internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial opinion of the governmental activities, each major fund and the aggregate remaining fund information of Town of Pownal as of June 30, 2019, and the respective changes in financial position for the year ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

- I want to re-iterate, to make sure I state both to the Board and to the public, that with this auditing process, as stated above, evaluates and examines literally every aspect of our accounting. There is a misconception that there is “no one looking at the books”, and I think it is important to educate the public about this process of auditing. We very much have someone looking at the books, in depth and thoroughly. This is the same auditing process as used by a majority of other Vermont towns.
- The final page of the draft report offers the summary “no material weaknesses identified”, “no significant deficiencies identified”, and “no noncompliance material to financial statements noted”
- Bonadio Group has requested that we give them a specific timeline for the Bond application so that they can work within our timeline the best of their ability. I can do this with Linda this coming week. I can send that to them and they will respond with a specific timeline for completion in response.

OTHER NEWS:
- I was in office today, and Ellen gave me the report of what she has been doing, and asked if I would make copies and put in your packets.
- Want to speak to you about the possibility of making the Board packets publicly available. I noticed that Bennington does this. This would offer more transparency to the public, and allows the public to see the context of our conversations. Obviously nothing legal, sensitive, or confidential will be in that.
- Road and Transfer Station Reports, I was asked to present and read them, in your folders.
09/23/2020

Dear Select Board,

Could you please read my notice to residents re: Special Election.

I have mailed out 700 ballots. Received back 110.

Thank you,

Julie

Fyi, social media has my early voting days listed incorrectly.

Posted August 27th 2020
POWNAL SPECIAL ELECTION TUESDAY OCTOBER 13, 2020

(Hand Count)

Polling Hours will be 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Location: 2872 North Pownal Road (Pownal Valley Center Station)

DUE to COVID-19

ONLY (6) RESIDENTS IN AT A TIME TO VOTE.

YOU MUST WEAR A MASK, USE THE PROVIDED HAND SANITIZER, TAKE PEN, BALLOT, DROP PEN OFF BY THE CHECKOUT EXIT.

Absentee Ballots are available for pick up on Tuesday’s, Wednesday’s and Thursday’s 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or

To request Absentee Ballots by mail please call (802)-823-0116 Ext. 101 or email me at town.clerk@townofpownal.org

*IF YOU VOTED ABSENTEE IN PRIMARY YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE AN ABSENTEE BALLOT, SO NO NEED TO REQUEST AGAIN.

Early Voting will be held at the Town Clerk’s Office 467 Center Street from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the following dates: Saturday September 26, 2020 and Sunday October 11, 2020

Ballots can be returned to the Town Office on any these days, A drop box will be available inside the door.

Julie Weber, Town Clerk

Posted August 27th 2020
Conversation with Kate Wanner of The Trust Republic Land – September 8, 2020

• Kate, as part of the Trust Public Land, handles contractual issues and funding for new acquisitions for the National Forest.
• A Pownal landowner wants to sell the 700+ acres to the National Forest for the purposes of preservation.
• If this land becomes Nat'l Forest, there would be a new access road created in East Pownal, with parking and signage.
• Vermont is the ONLY State that likes to speak to the local communities before acquiring new land for the Nat'l Forest. This is why Kate and reps from the NF are coming to speak with us.
• She was here in 2013 and spoke with the Selectboard at that time regarding another NF project, and was met with suspicion of the NF service. However, since that time, there is more NF presence down in the part of Vermont doing “Innovative Resource Planning” so she is hopeful that we are more receptive to their presence here.
• Funding for this National Forest Project/development does NOT come from taxpayer money. The funding comes from a federal fund created by a percentage of the lease money from offshore gas and oil companies.
• TAX IMPLICATIONS: the property is removed from the grand list as a taxable property, however the Federal government pays the town a per acre fee. This fee will give Pownal MORE income than at its current property tax rate.
• She is requesting a letter of support from the town. I will draft one, and if you vote to send it, it will be ready to go on Thursday.
John Sinclair  
Forest Supervisor  
Green Mountain National Forest  
231 North Main St  
Rutland VT 05701

Dear Supervisor Sinclair:

The Pownal Selectboard supports the permanent protection of the Roaring Branch Project as an addition to Green Mountain National Forest. Federal ownership of these parcels in Pownal, Stamford, and Readsboro protect the Town's most important features as a source of year-round recreation, wildlife habitat, drinking water and scenic values. This project supports Pownal's rural heritage, and enhances residents' long-term relationship with the land, which has shaped Pownal as a community. The protected ridgeline of the Green Mountain National Forest is one of our town's greatest assets.

This project addresses many of the goals, strategies and actions in the Pownal Town Plan (2019), such as:

- Use the extensive natural, scenic and recreational resources to provide recreational opportunities for both Pownal resident and visitors;
- Support policies and new developments that protect and maintain the rural character of Pownal, with special attention to preserving the Town's prime agricultural soils and historically farmed lands and to promoting the general health, safety, and welfare of the public;
- Assure that forested areas remain available for limited public use, which may include both traditional recreational activities and appropriate forestry;
- Limit new development in forested areas to improvements for public recreational use or commercial forestry, thereby maintaining the wilderness character of these lands for the public;
- Conserve and manage the Highest Priority Interior Forest Blocks that occur within the town and extend beyond the town boundary;
- Keep the Interior Forest Blocks and Connectivity Blocks unfragmented to provide habitat for wide ranging organisms, Neotropical migratory birds, and to maintain forest integrity;
- Support the forest conservation activities of groups such as the U.S. Forest Service and nonprofit conservation organizations in Pownal;
- Maintain land cover that provides for water retention, reduced quantity and velocity of flow and groundwater recharge to adequately address the impacts from flooding and erosion and to protect surface and groundwater resource quantity and quality;
- Avoid the destruction, diversion, or contamination of rivers, streams and waterbodies and shorelands and wetlands that could potentially increase flooding, destroy wildlife habitat, result in erosion or detract from their scenic
quality;
• Through regulation and/or the acquisition of fee or easements, protect areas which provide water supplies from any disturbance which affects the quantity of clean water for public use. This includes surface and ground waters used for shallow wells in populated areas within the towns;
• Purchase properties or development rights of properties within the SFHA and river corridor to permanently prevent development in those areas; and
• Restore and protect river corridors, flood plains, wetlands and upland forest areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and erosion.

The Pownal Select Board gives its full support of this property’s permanent protection as an addition to Green Mountain National Forest, and recommends highest consideration for a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Angie Rawling
Pownal Select Board, Chair
**Town of Pownal Mission and Vision Statement**

**Mission:** In partnerships with our community, the mission of the Town of Pownal is to create a culture of unity and shared purpose between its citizens, foster civic engagement that holds disagreements in mutual respect, and deliver cost-effective and common sense/practical solutions to any issues the Town and its people might face.

**Vision:** The Town of Pownal is to maintain and develop capacity and infrastructure that allows for

- maximizing citizen well-being and personal freedom
- access to natural resources
- encouragement of economic growth across a diversity of sectors
- preserving the rich history of Pownal
- creation of opportunities that bring otherwise divided and sometimes marginalized groups together to encourage mutual understanding and civic unity and shared civic pride
- inclusion of all citizens in civic discussions and decision making that is representative of diverse backgrounds and ideologies without being exclusionary of any marginalized or vulnerable groups

**Values:** The Town of Pownal, in all of its dealings with the public, will work from the following shared values:

- We believe our primary responsibility is to our citizens, employees, officials, and those who come into direct contact with our Town.
- We believe it is important to listen to our citizens and be sensitive and responsive to their needs.
- We believe it is important to work together and to be willing to step outside of our roles when needed to help a co-worker if able to help. The success of our co-workers has a direct positive affect on our personal abilities to perform in our individual roles.
- We believe that we need to express disagreements without casting doubt on the character or personhood of the person we disagree with.
- We believe that when we have an issue to address with someone, we will go directly to that person to seek resolution before escalating the issue to others.
- We hold the privacy and dignity of our co-workers and citizens in high regard. We will not do or say anything that compromises the privacy or personal reputation of others for personal agenda or gain. Personality conflicts should never fuel policy or action.
• We uphold the right of our employees and officials to have free speech (religious, political, etc.) in all realms of their personal lives including their speech on social media platforms and other public platforms. When speaking in official capacity, however, we hold our employees and officials to strict standards regarding their speech to and about others. We are dedicated to a separation between personal and public opinion/speech.

• We will encourage and seek training and education opportunities for our employees and officials that will enhance their abilities to serve the Town and its citizens.

• We believe in open communication and access to the processes, policies, and actions of the Town.
In the March-April 2020 issue, we began a series of articles that explore the emerging legal and policy issues surrounding the use of social media applications by municipalities, their officials, and their employees.

This second article explains how municipalities can manage public content on their social media while also respecting the First Amendment rights of public users. In other words, if a municipality allows public users to communicate on its social media platforms, what content can be censored without violating the users’ right to free speech? Municipalities don’t have to allow every kind of speech on their social media. They can have reasonable rules so long as they don’t discriminate based on the speaker’s viewpoint.

Social Media as a Public Forum: Government Speech or Limited Public Forum?

Before your municipality jumps into using social media, you should decide whether you will allow users to communicate and interact with the municipality’s posts and content on the social media platform.

A municipality can designate and operate social media as a government speech forum, which deliberately precludes public users from participating through comment or posting content. This type of forum is reserved for the municipal government to engage in its own expressive conduct – for example, to promote its own message and distribute information.

The other option is a limited public forum, which permits user communication and interaction with the municipality’s social media. Still, the municipality need not allow all speech in a limited public forum. Municipalities can impose reasonable viewpoint-neutral rules that may, for example, prohibit obscene or threatening comments, ban advertising, restrict user participation to those topics raised by the municipality, or place a reasonable limit on how many times a user can post within a certain timeframe. (If these seem similar to the rules your selectboard or planning commission has at its physical meetings, it’s not a coincidence. The same First Amendment principle applies.) With viewpoint-neutral reasonable rules, a limited public forum allows only discussion related to topics raised by the municipality in its initial post. Everything else is subject to removal.

Section 5 of VLCT’s model social media policy shows you how to designate social media as either a government speech forum or limited public forum. VLCT’s Municipal Assistance Center suggests that municipalities designate their
websites and social media as platforms for government speech only, unless the municipality has sufficient resources (e.g., staffing and time) to moderate and maintain a limited public forum.

**Avoiding Improper Censorship.** Even if your municipality has designated social media as a limited public forum and has posted clear rules for permitted speech, your municipal moderator (or whoever moderates content) must be consistent, objective, and predictable in their censorship of speech (i.e., editing or removing user comments or interactions). One of the most egregious forms of violating free speech is censorship based on the speaker’s viewpoint. Therefore, while a municipality can restrict certain content that, for example, is not relevant or violates a specified rule (e.g., it is obscene), it cannot edit, hide, or delete content merely because the municipality disagrees with it or the content is critical of the municipality or a municipal official.

American jurisprudence on how governments may regulate users’ speech on social media is rapidly evolving. Although federal courts haven’t yet given us a uniform precedent, they have ruled that free speech is violated on social media when a government completely blocks users from communicating or interacting based on a disfavored viewpoint. Federal courts have also found free speech abuses when a government deletes user comments or interactions without any justifiable viewpoint-neutral basis or without considering whether there are less restrictive options, such as giving the user a warning.

The upshot of these cases is that governments should almost never censor a user based on their viewpoint alone. When a moderator targets particular views taken by speakers on a subject and not the subject matter, the municipality could be sued and be liable for attorney fees and other legal costs.

Note that if a municipality has designated a social media platform as a limited public forum but fails to consistently moderate user content, the platform may become a de facto unrestricted public forum (such as parks, sidewalks, and other public areas traditionally open to public speech), further restricting the municipality’s ability to limit or remove content.

**Moderating Content and Due Process.** If your municipality sets up a social media platform as a limited public forum, it needs to establish social media rules and appoint a moderator to apply the rules evenhandedly and consistently. In addition to being clearly posted for users to see, your social media rules should detail the criteria and process for removing content, including:

- notifying users when they have violated the municipality’s social media policy;
- identifying the specific rule violated and, if it’s not obvious, explaining why it constitutes a violation;
• whether the moderator has edited, removed, or blocked the user; and
• how users can appeal the moderator's decision.

The July-August issue of VLCT News will continue our social media series. In the meantime, you can refer to VLCT's Model Social Media Policy for help in creating and managing your municipality's social media platforms.

Carl Andeer, Staff Attorney II
VLCT Municipal Assistance Center
Recreation task force/ Attn: Rebecca Dragon

From: Mathew Zwinge
Sent: Thu, Sep 10, 2020 at 10:43 am
To: info@townofpownal.org

I am very interested in being involved in the recreation task force. I think Pownal is a wonderful place to live, and is a place for great growth potential. I feel like if we come together as a town and use the opportunities we can build up our local economy. I am currently a member of a local ATV club and see this as a great opportunity to come together as a community. I am interested in exploring and discussing other Pownal residents with different backgrounds and ideas and coming up with diverse ideas for development. Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards,
Mathew Zwinge.
September 10, 2020

Ms. Rebecca Dragon, Board Liaison
Town of Pownal
467 Center Street / PO Box 411
Pownal, VT 05261

Dear Ms. Dragon,

I am interested in participating as a volunteer on the Recreation Task Force.

I have previously participated as a member of the River, Recreation, and Trails Task Force that formed as part of the Empower Pownal initiative. I am interested in continuing to explore and develop recreational opportunities for the benefit of Pownal residents.

Aside from the River, Recreation and Trails Task Force mentioned above, I have been an active volunteer with local organizations and initiatives, most recently with Faith Church, Grace Christian School and the Tim Tebow Foundation’s Night to Shine. As a volunteer, I have served in various capacities including Board Member, Treasurer, & Secretary, as well as on committees in the areas of Budget & Finance, Marketing & Development, Youth Leadership, Event Planning, and Fundraising.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jennifer M. Boucher
TO: BOARD OF SELECTMAN
FROM: ELLEN STROHMAIER
DATE: SEPTEMBER 10, 2020
RE: REPORT DEL. TAX COLLECTOR & TREASURER

FROM July 1- September 7

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I calculate, print, stuff, and mail monthly bills to all Delinquent Tax Payers. Return phone calls, make calls for follow-up on payment plans when I have citizens number. I do weekly deposits to avoid holding checks which may cause a check not to clear. Data enter all payments to keep updated delinquent list for Attorneys, citizens, realtors, and staff. Update addresses

Treasurer

July quarterly reports for State, IRS, Unemployment, VMERS, Workman’s Comp.

Weekly collection of transfer station fees.

Collection of all deposits from UB, Town Clerk, Delinquent Tax Collector, Zoning Administrator, other money from outside sources.

Data entry daily of revenues collected.

Weekly review accounts payable and payroll before release of checks. Weekly pay in of IRS and State taxes.

In July and August all accruals done for payroll and accounts payable for bills payed from previous fiscal year. Preparing for FY 20 audit.

Worked on wrap up of FY 20 Fund Balance Sheet, and created FY 21 Fund balance sheet.

2020 tax rate sheet and calculations so Board could set tax rate.

Printed and mailed 2020 tax bills.
Returning many phone calls on a daily basis.

Return e-mails

Collection of current taxes has started.

I go to the bank 2-4 times a week depending on the amount of money collected in a day for all departments.

Daily pick up of mail in South Pownal PO Box 411

Spoke several times with Bonadio trying to receive FY 19 audit also made a call to the previous external auditor to follow up on request made to him by Bonadio.

Collection of current taxes to date: from state from homesteads $46,653.91

Tax payers prepaid 45,528.68

Tax payers from 9/1-9/9 87,711.80

Refunds to tax payers - 7,888.94

Total collected 172,005.45

These are the tasks that stand out with description.
Pownal Transfer Station Report July-August 2020

The increases in fees, especially the permit fees, have been a success. We have sold 352 in July and August. We are only $350.00 behind all of last year in permit sales. Our comingle recycling costs have skyrocketed from $30.00 to as much as $132.00 per ton. The price fluctuates weekly as recycling costs change. By raising the permit fees, we have been able to cover the increased costs in that and mixed cardboard and paper.

The Pownal Transfer Station started receiving organics July 1, 2018, two years before the mandatory use of organic collections. During that time, we have collected far more than any other town in in the Solid Waste Alliance. Now that it is mandatory, we are collecting approximately three time that amount. It is nice to see that our customers are being very conscientious about reducing waste to the landfills. We shipped 13.4 tons of organics in the last fiscal year. We have shipped in July and August approximately 4.5 tons since the organics section of Act 148 was enacted.

One of our changes for this year is that we are charging for radios, DVD, VCR, stereos, receivers, phones, and any other non-covered electronics. We receive $.08 per pound of covered electronics (computers, computer peripherals, and TVs) and are back charged $.15 for non-covered. Our receipts for E-waste and lead acid batteries last year was $1,766.18. The price for lead acid batteries is down to $.19 per pound from $.25.

The highway department is going to put a drop inlet and a 15” pipe under the roadway to remedy the severe water problem we have coming off of the hill. In the past it has reached almost to the wall in the tipping shed. The highway department has also mowed the closed landfills and lower fields.

We finally shipped our 513 tires out. We have been assisting the Vermont Dept of Agriculture and Vermont Department of health with mosquito traps. This is the third year that we have worked with these Departments. We were selected because we are the southernmost facility that handles used tires. We hope to be able to assist them in the future. has

The turn over from Tam to Cassella’s has gone well. The dispatchers are in Rutland not local as has been case. We sometimes have had minor issues with times to switch the dumpsters out, but nothing to drastic. I just received a new contact person for us to talk to if we have any issues.

I assisted with the BCSWA HHW Event in Bennington August 8th. We had over 250 cars and over 300 families drop off items. We ended up with over 10 boxes of batteries. I will be helping out at the Dorset event on September 12th.
I received an email from Call to Recycle about high output lithium batteries recycling. I called the Regional Representative for Call2recycle for explanations and costs. These are the 300watt hour to 800watt hour batteries that are being use in lawn mowers, chainsaws, e-bikes, and e-scooters. I will bring this up at the next Alliance meeting because the cost for the Transfer Station for recycling them would be between $35.00 to $50.00 apiece. I hope we can get the state to put these batteries in the same type of manufactures program as the TVs and computers. I realize this will be a long time coming, if at all. Until then, I hope we can use the HHW events to recycle them.

Our Swap Shop has been quite busy since the pandemic hit. We were fortunate enough to receive hundreds of very high-quality children’s books in March. I posted a Front Porch message to inform people that we had these, and was that a success. At the time parents could only get books online. We had quite a few families come over and take advantage of selection. All of the people were greatly appreciative of the opportunity.

On the Brownfields, all of the wells have been drilled and we await the test results. Steve has done quite a few tests on neighbor’s wells and still needs a phone number for an absent owner.