

Select Board Report 2020

Select Board: We must begin with a note of appreciation to all our community members for wearing masks, keeping six feet apart, and limiting the number of those gathering in indoor spaces, as we worked to limit any exposure to COVID-19 here in town. We thank you for understanding the need to close the town office for a period of time and to hold all our municipal meetings virtually. Along the way, many of us learned about webcams, Zoom, and how to mute and unmute our microphones . . . and how to quickly reschedule a meeting when a widespread power outage shut us down! Our hybrid model of both in-person and Zoom attendees brought new technical challenges. We are immensely grateful to Okemo Valley TV for the many hours of work they put in to help make our meetings happen. All the precautionary measures your Select Board members have implemented at the town office, town garage, and transfer station have been done with the continued good health and safety of our community members always foremost in our minds.

In March, Jeff Chase was elected to the Select Board. Our thanks go out to Ron Tarbell for his many years of service to the community while on the Select Board.

As we worked diligently to look after the best interests of the Town, your Select Board members approved an updated Local Emergency Management Plan. You can find emergency numbers and shelters listed on the Town of Mount Holly website. Mr. Chase, Jon McCann, Russ Garrow and Clinton Woolley worked to update the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which the Select Board looks forward to adopting soon. We approved the Rutland Regional Planning Commission Mutual Aid Agreement so area towns can provide us with assistance when needed and vice-versa. We also were able to take two-cents off the municipal tax rate by careful budgeting and thrifty spending.

Mr. Chase set up a Town of Mount Holly Facebook page. Jennifer Matthews continued to update and add information to the town website (www.mounthollyvt.org). Both the website and the Facebook page serve as resources of important town information for both community members and visitors alike.

Through Federal CARES Act funding, the Town of Mount Holly received a grant to digitize 10 years of land records. Jon McCann working with Mr. Chase and Town Clerk Sue Covalla did all the required data entry within a very short timeframe. Mr. McCann's initiative saved the taxpayers of Mount Holly \$30,000, for which the Select Board is most grateful.

In order to protect the community we so value, the Select Board asked the Planning Commission to review the current Town Plan and strengthen it where need be. And working with the Planning Commission, we updated and approved the Application Fee Schedule for the first time in over 20 years. The Select Board was regularly updated on the work of the Emerald Ash Borer task force so as to protect against any EAB infestation. And the Select Board created the Mount Holly Conservation Commission to serve as an advisory board to both the Select Board and the Planning Commission on issues concerning the town's natural resources, the environment, and conservation.

At the close of the year, the Select Board issued a RFP (Request for Proposal) for an audit of the town's finances to assure taxpayers that all is well with town finances and to insure our continued ability to pursue grant funding for necessary projects in town.

Throughout the year, your Select Board worked to meet the needs of the community with the best interests of residents and the future of Mount Holly in mind, all while keeping services as high and costs as low as possible.

Appointments: In April, the Select Board appointed Jeff Chase to be the town's Emergency Management Director and Laura Swartz to be the town's Animal Control Officer.

The Select Board reappointed Jon McCann as the town's Rutland Regional Planning Commission representative and Clinton Woolley as the town's Rutland Regional Transportation Council representative.

To the Planning Commission, the Select Board appointed Jon McCann, Stephen Michel, Brigid Sullivan, and Lisa Terreri. And on the unanimous recommendation of the Planning Commission, we appointed Renee Sarmento to be the Town's Administrative Officer.

To the newly-created Conservation Commission, the Select Board appointed Jim Corven, Phil Crane, Francis DeVine, Fred Garrow, Phil Leonard, Nicole Lewis, Annette Lynch, Peter Smith, and Mark Zelis.

The Select Board whole-heartedly thanks these individuals for their willingness to step up and serve the Town of Mount Holly.

Highways: This past year the road crew replaced 11 culverts throughout town, and they replaced a culvert as a temporary repair on Summit Road. They ditched and stone-lined both Bowlsville Road North and Roger Hill Road. Five-tenths of a mile on Healdville Road was paved. The town purchased a leaf blower to help the road crew keep our ditches as clean as possible, and the town purchased a new, 2019 F550 one-ton truck and snowplow so the road crew can tend to our roads as efficiently as possible. In July, the Select Board reappointed Clinton Woolley Road Foreman. Our thanks go out to Clinton, Les Deyette and Gordon Dimick for all their efforts to keep the Town of Mount Holly's roads in the best shape possible.

Transfer and Recycling Site: As of July first, food scraps were no longer allowed in the trash. Food scrap collection in the containers continues to increase in volume, and we hope to have our own composting operation up and running at the transfer station soon. The town's membership in the Rutland County Solid Waste District brought two Household Hazardous Waste collections to the transfer site in 2020, and two are currently scheduled for 2021: on April 17th & July 17th. The town participates in electronics recycling under the statewide program which provides free recycling for Vermont residents. A list of acceptable electronics for this program can be found at the town office and on the town website. We saw lots of cleaning out during this past year due to the pandemic. In doing so, community members made good use of the open-top container and of the Zero Sort recycling. And a number of treasurers could be found in the Swap Shed. Last but far from least, David Hill and Kevin Stillwell continue to offer residents courteous & efficient help at the transfer site. We thank them for their exemplary service!

Meetings: The Select Board meets at 6:30 pm on the second Tuesday of the month. If you have any questions or concerns, please attend a monthly meeting, or contact us at 802-259-2454 or at mounthollyselectboard@gmail.com

Your Select Board,
Jeff Chase
Jennifer Matthews
Mark Turco