

TOWN HALL MONTHLY: December

In early November Moderator John Luther, our Supervisors of the Checklist, our Election Officials and Charlotte, acting in her capacity as Town Clerk, carried out the largest election in any of our memories. Almost 600 voters cast their ballots and over 50 new voters joined the Town's checklist. Election personnel kept the polls open from 10AM to 7PM and then stayed to count ballots. For this election we had 5 teams of counters and finished around 9:30PM. State inspectors came through early in the day and found nothing amiss. All elections take considerable effort and we wouldn't make it through without the food provided by the Friends of the Meetinghouse, thank you!

Selectmen have begun reviewing the draft 2025 budget. As you would expect, inflation has had an effect on Town expenses just it has on householder expenses. Next year's big projects will be the continuation of engineering and, hopefully moving into permitting, for the remaining flood damage at Forest Road Bridge, Thayer Brook Road, and Crane Brook Road. In addition we will be revisiting drainage and shimming of Cold Pond Road which was postponed at Town Meeting last year, and hope to install drainage the length of Forest Road. Right now we are waiting for estimates for the engineering work. Once that is available the Board will know whether reimbursed FEMA funds will cover the new costs or whether we will need to explore financing. Keep in mind that word reimbursement. The Town has to front the costs of FEMA repairs before the agency will reimburse us and the remaining projects are our most costly to date. Thanks to all of you for following this winding path to restoration.

The Department of Revenue (DRA) has let us know they are waiting for our Regional School District to complete their reporting before DRA can set the fall bill tax rate. We really don't like sending out bills during the holidays any more than you like receiving them. The situation was similar last year and bills could not be generated and mailed until into December.

On November 19 the Board was notified of an active fire in our northwest corner. This while we all had been hearing through the media of fires burning throughout New England. We are so fortunate that Acworth Volunteer Fire and Rescue (AVFR) and surrounding cooperating towns were able to extinguish the fire by evening. Over 100 firefighters worked throughout the day at the scene and manning AVFR headquarters. Thank you.

What else? The Highway Department is getting equipment and roads ready for winter, the Selectmen will continue to work on the budget at their three December meetings, the Planning Board will finalize the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan which is a building block for the budget and continue work writing the 2025 Master Plan update. All meetings are posted on Town bulletin boards and our website. If you have questions, call our office, Charlotte can help you.

In the meantime, I am grateful to be here with you. Happy Thanksgiving, Kathi