

REPORT OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
Year ended June 30, 2021

As I have done each year I would like to begin by once again bringing attention to the Town's dedicated department managers, employees, elected officials and numerous volunteers who serve on the many boards, commissions and committees for all their hard work and commitment. Paxton would not be the Town it is without the involvement of these people. I would like to especially thank the Board of Selectmen for their continued leadership of the Town.

This year started in the middle of COVID-19 and ended without all the restrictions. The State of Emergency was lifted by Governor Baker on June 15, 2021.

Activities for fiscal 2021 include the following:

All boards and committees had to be more versatile and adapt to remote meetings.

Conducting Town business was more challenging for sure this year with Covid restriction and social distancing measures put in place. Employees adapted and our residents were patient with the changes put in place. It reminds us that Paxton is a great place to live.

The Town was awarded up to \$437,576 in CARES Funding to spend on Covid related items that were not budgeted at March 2020. The money was used throughout the year to purchase personal protective equipment, HVAC repairs for Paxton Center School and the Public Safety Complex, COA and Town Hall air conditioning, additional cleaning at Town buildings, remote working, food pantry, additional trash collection costs, online permitting, and various social distancing measures. This funding along with the FEMA funding added additional work to Larissa Kennedy, Town Accountant. Larissa handled this extremely well and for that I very grateful.

The DPW Building Committee continued to meet and discuss other alternative option for improvement to the aging/outdated DPW building. It was decided by the committee not to put forth an article for the Annual Town Meeting.

The state provided a \$1,000,000 small bridge grant, this will complete the engineering on the Black Hill Road Bridge.

New crosswalk signs were installed on West Street and around the Common.

Online permitting went live on January 1, 2021. Sheryl Lombardi, TSC was instrumental in the success of this project, for which I thank her.

The Town voted to raise and appropriate to and from the Road Improvement Stabilization Fund the amount of \$113,142.

The implementation of the meal tax brought in \$17,034 revenue for the third year. Although not a substantial amount, it is a new source of revenue for the Town.

The Town chose not to hold the annual Paxton Days but hope to bring the event back in 2022.

The Annual Town Meeting was held for the second consecutive year outdoors. Although it did not draw a large attendance, only 68 registered voters, we accomplished everything in a very short time.

The Town through the BOH and Fire Department ran a very successful COVID19 vaccine clinic for our most vulnerable population, our seniors. The intent was to continue these clinics to reach all our residents, unfortunately the day of the first clinic, supply to individual municipal clinics was discontinued. This did not take away from the fact that Town employees and officials were prepared and worked together to provide the clinics. I want to thank Julia Pingitore, BOH and Michael Pingitore, Emergency Manager for all their relentless hard work and leadership organizing the clinics and for keeping the Town updated on all COVID related information and protocols. We really are very fortunate to have them both.

This year we experienced the retirement of both our DPW Superintendent, Mike Putnam and Fire Chief, Jay Conte. I want to thank them both for all their hard work, dedication, and leadership to the Town. I am truly grateful.

Travis Thibault was appointed as the new DPW Director in October 2020 and Michael Pingitore was appointed the new full time Fire Chief in January 2021. I wish them all the success in their new roles and hope that they stay with the Town for many years to come.

In closing I would like to thank all Department Managers and Town employees, Donna Graf Parsons, Executive Assistant, Donna Couture, Collector/Treasurer, Larissa Kennedy, Town Accountant, Laurie Becker, Town Clerk, Sheryl Lombardi, Town Service Coordinator, Kathy Stanley, Assessor, Tiffany Sidhom, Municipal Assistant for their continued hard work and support. This year has been especially difficult due to the many challenges of COVID-19. Everyone worked hard and cooperated to keep the business of the Town continually running.

I would also like to give a special thanks to the Town's Police and Fire Departments who we know put their lives in danger daily to protect the Town, but this year even more so as our Police, Fire and EMT's are often the first to respond when emergency calls involved COVID-19 victims and patients.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol L. Riches
Town Administrator

