

CHAPTER ONE

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Reports of the
Board of Selectmen,
Town Manager, Town Clerk,
Finance Warrant & Advisory
Committee, Library Trustees &
Housing Authority



Stephen R. Raymond, *Chairman*
William J. Caldwell, *Vice Chairman*
Lee E. Chauvette
Rebecca J. Bialecki
Holly A. Young

Shaun A. Suhoski, *Town Manager*
Email: ssuhoski@townofathol.org

Bridget A. Sullivan, *Administrative Asst.*
Email: selectmen@townofathol.org

To the Citizens of the Town of Athol;

The Board of Selectmen welcomed two (2) new board members, Rebecca Bialecki and Holly Young who replaced Alan Dodge and Anthony Brighenti. We also welcomed a new Town Counsel, John Barrett who replaced Town Counsel Mark Goldstein who was nominated by Gov. Charlie Baker to be a Worcester District Court judge.

Policy Discussions:

The Board worked along with Town Manager Shaun Suhoski and others to continue the growth of the North Quabbin Commons by welcoming Starbucks, Verizon Wireless, Sally's Beauty Supplies and Great Clips hair salon.

Licensing:

The Board completed its annual licensing by approving the following permits and licenses for the 2017 calendar year:

Class II Automobile Licensing: Bills Motor Mart, 12 Lewis St., Buy Good Deals located 134 Chestnut Hill Ave., C&D Towing located 158 Marble St., Dales Auto Body located at 25 Bickford Drive, Flint's Garage Sales located at 990 So. Main St., Main St. BP located at 223 Main St., Victory Lane Motors located at 22 Chestnut Hill Ave., Wilson & Steely, Kustom Coachworks, LLC located at 280 Main St.

Class III Automobile Licensing: Hayes Auto Body located at 81 Rich Place

Common Victualler Licensing: American-Lithuanian Naturalization Club, Athol Mini Mart DBA The Corner Store, Kashvi, Inc. DBA Athol General Store, Athol Pizza House, The Atholl House, Blind Pig, LLC, Conway Petro, LLC, Narayandev, Inc. DBA Country Convenience, Cumberland Farms Store 6688, 297 Main St., Cumberland Farms Store 6706, 1304 So. Main St., Edward H. Phillips Post Home, Inc., Ellinwood Country Club, Franco-American De Naturalization Club, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Athol Orange Aerie #4545, Inc., Nick's Breakfast & Lunch, Victory Distributors LLC DBA Hannaford Supermarket, Super Larry's Variety Store, Losier's Café DBA The Dery Bar, DeMoulas Supermarket DBA Market Basket, Olde Time New England Seafood Co., Karas & Mathew Inc. DBA Tool Town Pizza, Village Grill & Pizza, 11 Exchange St. LLC DBA The Steel Pub, Chi Gourmet, Inc. DBA Tea Garden, Mark IV, Inc. DBA Traverse St. Café, MySubs3 DBA Subway, Global Montello Group Corp. DBA Mr. Mikes Mini Mart, Gomez Enterprises III LLC DBA McDonalds Restaurant, R+13 Donuts LLC DBA Dunkin Donuts (1634 So. Main St.), R+13 Donuts LLC DBA Dunkin Donuts (2143 Main St.), Eight Dragon Restaurant

Pouring/All Liquor Licensing (Club Licenses): American Lithuanian Naturalization Club located at 365 South Main St. and managed by Paul Sundstrom. Edward H. Phillips Post Home, Inc. located at 325 Pequoig Ave. and managed by David Graham. Ellinwood Country Club located at 1928 Pleasant St. and managed by Vicki Johnson. Franco American De Naturalization Club of Athol located at 592-594 South St. and managed by Norman LaFountain.

Fraternal Order of Eagles, Athol Orange Aerie #4545, Inc. located at 99 Hapgood St., and managed by Clyde Woodbury. Losier's Café DBA The Dery Bar of Athol located at 5 Pine St. and managed by Richard Dery.

Pouring/All Liquor Licensing (Restaurant Licenses): Blind Pig, LLC located at 98 Exchange St. and managed by David Veautour. 11 Exchange Street LLC DBA The Steel Pub located at 11 Exchange St. and managed by Irvin Hartin. The Atholl House located at 491 Main St. and managed by Brian Dodge and Raeann Meunier. Mark IV Lounge DBA Traverse St. located at 73 Traverse St and managed by David Caldwell. Chi Gourmet DBA Tea Garden located at 631 Main St. and managed by Koulson Wu Chi.

Pouring/Wine and Malt Licensing: Athol House of Pizza located at 522 Main St. and managed by Agathi Spanakis. Olde Time New England Seafood located 2143 Main St. and managed by Leon Drouin.

Karas & Mathews Inc DBA Tool Town Pizza located at 246 Exchange St. and managed by Ayman E. Fares.

Package/All Licensing: Foster Liquors Corp DBA Athol Spirits located at 9 Tunnel St. and managed by Shawn Foster. Stan's Liquor Mart located at 1586 South Main St. and managed by Christopher Milusich.

Uptown Package Store located at 2280 Main St. and managed by John Cotter and Brad Cass

Package/Wine and Malt Licensing: Kashvi, Inc. DBA Athol General Store located at 390 Crescent St. and managed by Bhavikaben J. Patel. Narayandev. Inc. DBA Country Convenience located at 49 So. Main St. and managed by Gaurang Patel. Athol Mini Mart Corp. Inc DBA The Corner Store located at 229 Pinedale Ave. and managed by Jignesh Patel.

Auto-Amusement Licensing: 11-15 auto amusement devices: 11 Exchange Street LLC DBA The Steel Pub

6-10 auto amusement devices:American Lithuanian Naturalization Club, Losier's Café, Inc. DBA The Dery Bar, Franco De Naturalization Club of Athol, Fraternal Order of Eagles Athol Orange Aerie #4545, Inc.

1-5 auto amusement devices: The Atholl House, Mark IV Inc., DBA Traverse St. Café, The Blind Pig, Edward H. Phillips Post Home Inc.

Entertainment, Including Sunday (before 1 p.m.): American Lithuanian Naturalization, including Sunday, Franco American De Naturalization Club of Athol, Losier's Café DBA / The Dery Bar of Athol, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Athol Orange Aerie #4545, Inc., 11 Exchange Street LLC DBA The Steel Pub

Entertainment, including Sunday (after 1 p.m.): Ellinwood Country Club, Edward H. Phillips Post Home, Inc.

Entertainment, not including Sunday: Blind Pig, LLC, The Atholl House

Sincerely,

Stephen R. Raymond, Chairman
William J. Caldwell, Vice Chairman
Lee E. Chauvetter
Rebecca J. Bialecki
Holly A. Young

TOWN MANAGER ANNUAL REPORT

Greetings,

In preparing this fourth annual report I remain amazed at the substantial re-investment in the community of Athol over the past several years. Taxpayers and private-sector investors alike have demonstrated their resolve to grow and improve the quality of life and economic health of this wonderful town. The following reflects activity in the fiscal year running from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

In 2014, with the support of the Board of Selectmen and Finance & Warrant Advisory Committee, the “Finance Team” (Accountant, Treasurer-Collector and Principal Assessor) developed Athol’s first set of written financial policies and yielding an improved, investment-grade AA- bond rating by Standard & Poor’s. Today, by managing taxpayer funds a consistent and pragmatic manner, the Town’s fiscal posture remains stable with sufficient stabilization reserves.

Against that backdrop, Athol continues to witness job creation, growth in its commercial tax base, and sustained public and private investment. With a stable financial foundation, my office has been able to assist in aligning municipal operations and securing assistance for projects including:

- Completed parcel assembly for planned convenience store and gas station at Exit 18
- Improved coordination for code compliance through Housing Task Force
- Continued outreach and discussion with potential investor/owners for new hotel
- Advanced design for reconstruction of Exchange Street Bridge with DPW Superintendent
- Successfully budgeted to return one worker to the DPW – Cemetery and Parks Division
- Reached cost-sharing agreement with Athol-Royalston Regional School District to hire and staff a School Resource Officer
- Fully eliminated the use of “free cash” (one-time revenue) to balance operating budgets

Many positive strides have been made to improve the long-term prospects for the the town of Athol thanks to the deep commitment of department heads and staff, board and committee volunteers, elected officials and our residents.

Please email me at ssuhoski@townofathol.org should you have any questions or suggestions surrounding the operations of local government. I remain honored to serve as your Town Manager. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Shaun A. Suhoski
Town Manager

FACTS ABOUT ATHOL

HISTORY April 20, 1733, General Court of Massachusetts laid out the township of Pequage. September 17, 1735, the first five families settled here. March 6, 1762, the township was incorporated and the name changed to Athol.

LOCATION North central Massachusetts, 38 miles north of Worcester, and 71 miles west of Boston.

AREA Land 32.34 square miles
Water .73 square miles
Total 33.07 square miles

POPULATION 11,584

REGISTERED VOTERS 6,274

POLLING PLACES Precinct 1 – 3: Athol Senior Center
82 Freedom Street

ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION First Monday in April

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING Second Monday in June

FALL TOWN MEETING Third Monday in October

TOWN GOV'T Open Town Meeting
Five Member Board of Selectmen
Town Manager

TOWN HALL OFFICE HOURS Mon, Wed., Thurs. 8:00 AM-5:00 PM
Tuesday 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM
Friday CLOSED

STATE OFFICIALS

Governor

Charles D. Baker
State House, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133
Tel: 617-725-4000
Fax: 617-727-9725

Lieutenant Governor

Karyn E. Polito
State House, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133
Tel: 617-725-4000
Fax: 617-727-9725

Attorney General

Maura Healy
One Ashburton Place, 20th Floor
Boston, MA 02108-1698
Main number connecting all bureaus 617-727-2200
TTY: 617-727-4765
Fax: Call for specific fax numbers
Attorney General Hotlines:
Consumer Hotline: 617-727-8400
Elder Hotline Toll Free: 1-888-AG ELDER (243-5337)
Fair Labor: 617-727-3465
Insurance Hotline Toll Free: 1-888-830-6277
Insurance Fraud Tipline: 617-573-5330
Utilities Division Hotline Toll Free: 1-888-514-6277

Secretary of the Commonwealth

William Francis Galvin
State House, Room 340
Boston, MA 02133
Executive Office: 617-727-9180
General Information: 617-727-7030

Treasurer and Receiver-General

Deborah B. Goldberg
State House, Room 227
Boston, MA 02133
Executive Office: 617-367-6900
Connecting all divisions: 617-367-3900

State Auditor

Suzanne M. Bump
State House, Room 230
Boston, MA 02133
Tel: 617-727-2075
Fax: 617-727-5981

State Senator (*Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex*)

Ann M. Gobi
State House
Room 513
Boston MA 02133
Phone: 617-722-1540
Fax: 617-722-1078
anne.gobi@masenate.gov

State Representative (*2nd Franklin District*)

Susannah Whipps
State House
Room 540
Boston MA 02133
Phone: 617-722-2090
Susannah.Whipps@mahouse.gov

FEDERAL OFFICIALS

U.S. Senators

Elizabeth Warren

Boston Office

2400 JFK Federal Building
15 New Sudbury Street
Boston MA 02203
Phone: 617-565-3170

Springfield Office

1550 Main Street
Suite 406
Springfield MA 01103
Phone: 413-788-2690

Washington Office

317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-4543

Edward Markey

Boston Office

975 JFK Federal Building
15 New Sudbury Street
Fall River MA 02721
Phone: 508-677-0523

Fall River Office

222 Milliken Blvd, Suite 312
Fall River, MA 02203
Phone: 508-677-0523

Springfield Office

1550 Main Street, 4th Floor
Springfield MA 01101
Phone: 413-785-4610

Washington Office

255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-2742

U.S Congress (2nd Congressional District)

James McGovern

Washington DC Office

438 Cannon HOB
Washington DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-6101

Leominster Office

24 Church Street, Room 29
Leominster MA 01453
Phone: 978-466-3552

Northampton Office

94 Pleasant Street
Northampton MA 01060
Phone: 413-341-8700

Worcester Office

12 East Worcester Street
Suite 1
Worcester MA 01604
Phone: 508-831-7356

ELECTED TOWN OFFICERS

MODERATOR

Lawrence P. McLaughlin, 2018

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Lee E. Chauvette, 2018

William J. Caldwell, 2019

Stephen R. Raymond, 2019

Rebecca Bialecki, 2020

Holly Young, 2020

ATHOL-ROYALSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

From Athol:

Joao Baptista, 2018

Deborah Kuzmeskas, 2018

Dale H. Lougee, 2019

Joseph F. Maga, 2019

Kenneth A. Vaidulas, 2019* (appointed until April 2, 2018 to fill vacancy)

Lee E. Chauvette, 2020

Mitchell Grosky, 2020

From Royalston:

Carla Rabinowitz, 2018

Charles Pretti, 2019

Nancy D. Melbourne, 2020

LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Francis W. Foster, 2018

Christine Miranda, 2018

Sharon A. Brighenti, 2019

Margaret Feldman, 2019

John R. Greene, 2020

Margaret L. Young, 2020

ATHOL HOUSING AUTHORITY

Edward Ledgard, 2019

Edward C. Sawin, 2020

Cathy Muzzy, 2021

Joseph Hawkins, 2021 (State Appointee)

Cathy Savoy, 2022

CONSTABLES

Kenneth A. Vaidulas, 2018

Kevin Materas, 2019

Randy Mitchell, 2020

APPOINTED TOWN OFFICERS

Admin. Asst., Board of Selectmen/Town Manager	Heather Brissette
Alternate Inspector of Buildings/Zoning Agent	Brianna Skowyra
Animal Control Officer	Jennifer Arsenault
Assessor	Lisa Aldrich
Asst. Agent Board of Health	Melanie Rajaniemi
Assistant Collector	Susan M. Sargent
Assistant Gas Inspector	Robert Mallet
Assistant Municipal Coordinator	Jeffrey Parker
Assistant Plumbing Inspector	Rick Geyster
Assistant Superintendent of Public Works	Duane Truehart
Assistant Town Accountant	Mary Ann Murphy
Assistant Town Clerk	Carol Bachelder
Assistant Treasurer	Bridget Jowder
Assistant Wire Inspector	Gordon Dickie
Board of Health Agent	Deborah Karan
Civil Defense Director	John Duguay
Collector/Treasurer	Melissa Murphy
Deputy Fire Chief	Jeffrey Parker
Director, Council on Aging	Cathy Savoy
Director of Veterans' Benefits & Services	Neil McGuirk
Emergency Management Director	John Duguay
Fire Chief	John Duguay
Inspector of Animals	Jennifer Arsenault
Inspector of Buildings/Zoning Agent	Robert Legare
Inspector of Gas Piping & Appliances	Daniel Joly
Inspector of Wires	Gary Terroy
Library Director	Jean Shaughnessy
Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School Committee	Toni L. Phillips
Municipal Coordinator	John Duguay
Parking Meter Attendant	Ronny Cote
Plumbing Inspector	Daniel Joly
Police Chief	Russell Kleber
Police Lieutenant	Kevin Heath
Sealer of Weights & Measures	John R. Greene
Superintendent of Public Works	Douglas Walsh
Superintendent of Schools	Anthony Polito
Town Accountant	Christine Mailloux
Town Clerk	Nancy E. Burnham
Town Counsel	Mark Goldstein
Town Manager	Shaun Suhoski
Town Planner	Eric Smith

TOWN BOARDS/COMMITTEES

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

Sydney Adams, 2018
Aimee Hanson, 2018
Ranee LaPointe, 2018
Casey Smith, 2019
Pam Browning, 2020
Laurie Parker, 2020

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

John Gostan, 2018
Vacant, 2018
Vacant, 2018
Vacant, 2018
Vacant, 2018

ATHOL CULTURAL COUNCIL

Robin Brzowski, 2019
Tabitha DeHays, 2019
Bonnie Hodgdon, 2019
Kelsey Matthews, 2019
Joann Deacon, 2020

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Edward Ledgard, 2018
Kenneth A. Vaidulas, 2020
Lisa Aldrich, indefinite

BOARD OF HEALTH

Norma Purple, 2018
Joan Hamlett, 2019
Martin Miarecki, 2020

BOARD OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

David Small, 2018
Jacqueline Doherty, 2019
Richard Hayden, 2020
Duane Truehart, 2020
Aimee Hanson, 2021
Kathy Norton, 2021
Calvin Taylor, 2022

BYLAW REVIEW COMMITTEE

Heather Brissette, 2018
Nancy Burnham, 2018
Toni Phillips, 2018
Jean Robinson, 2018
Holly Young, 2018
Vacant, 2018
Vacant, 2018

CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Daniel Carey, 2018
Mark Wright, 2018

CAPITAL PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Robert Muzzy, 2018
Gary Deyo, 2018
James Smith, 2019
Gino Tontodonato, 2020
Kathy Norton, 2021
Linda Oldach, 2021
John Lambert, 2021

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Heather Bialecki-Canning, 2018
Gary Deyo, 2018
Eric Smith, 2018
Heidi Stickland, 2018
Thomas Tourigny, 2018

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Walter Lehmann, 2018
Robert Muzzy, 2018
Katheryn Harrow, 2019
Dennis Killay, 2019
James Smith, 2019
John R. Greene, 2020
Laura Smith, 2020

Associate Members:

Elwin Bacon, 2018
Jamie Briggs, 2018
Nicholas Tarara, 2018
William Wheeler, 2018

COUNCIL ON AGING

Lillian Bachelder, 2018
Walter Lehman, 2018
Jean Ryder, 2018
Arthur Herk, 2019
Stephen Larry, 2019
Margaret Young, 2019
Kathy Cygan, 2020
Linda Grenier, 2020
Barbara Smith, 2020

DOWNTOWN VITALITY COMMITTEE

Jonathan Eldridge, 2018
 Ranee LaPointe, 2018
 Stephen Raymond, 2018
 Ann Willhite, 2018

Associate Members:

Paula Robinson, 2018
 David Small, 2018
 Shelly Small, 2018

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION (EDIC)

Clinton Sykes, 2018
 Calvin Taylor, 2018
 Richard Plotkin, 2019
 Martin Robichaud, 2019
 James W. Meehan, Jr., 2022
 Keith McGuirk, 2022
 Mark Wright, 2022

Associate Members:

Vacant, 2018
 Vacant, 2018

FINANCE AND WARRANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Amy Craven, 2018
 Gary Deyo, 2018
 Ben Feldman, 2019
 Paul Nelson, 2019
 Michael Butler, 2020
 Kenneth Duffy, 2020
 Erik Euvrard, 2020

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Vincent Cerez, 2018
 Carolyn Brouillet, 2019
 John R. Greene, 2019
 Shelly Small, 2020
 Jean Shaughnessy, 2020

HOLIDAY DECORATING COMMITTEE

Patrick DiPietro, 2018
 Charles Shatos, 2018
 Ann Willhite, 2018

INSURANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Lisa Aldrich, 2018
 Ben Feldman, 2018
 Kevin Heath, 2018
 Robert Hughes, 2018
 Doug Kaczmarczyk, 20178
 Paul Landry, 2018

MEMORIAL BUILDING COMMITTEE

Heather Brissette, 2018
 Nancy E. Burnham, 201
 Lee E. Chauvette, 2018
 Ben J. Feldman, 2018
 John R. Greene, 2018
 Holly Young, 2018
 Vacant, 2018

MEMORIAL HALL REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE

Bonnie Benjamin, 2018
 Rene Lake-Gagliardi, 2018
 Ethan Stone, 2018

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Jaimee Briggs, 2018
 Joshua Feldman, 2017
 Brian Hall, 2018
 Travis Knechtel, 2018
 David Small, 2018

Associate Members:

Robert Muzzy, 2018

PLEASANT ST. SCHOOL REUSE & DISPOSITION COMMITTEE

Rebecca Bialecki, 2018
 Alan Dodge, 2018
 Aimee Hanson, 2018
 Richard Hayden, 2018
 Eric Jack, 2018
 Deborah Kuzmeskas, 2018
 James Smith, 2018
 Kenneth Vaidulas, 2018
 Steve Wills, 2018

REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

Vacant, 2018
 Gerard Lozier, 2019
 Hugh A. Horrigan, 2020
 Nancy E. Burnham, Town Clerk

SHADE TREE COMMISSION

Anthony Brighenti, 2018
 Sharon Brighenti, 2018
 Margaret Feldman, 2018
 Travis Knechtel, 2018
 Robert Mallet, 2018
 Paul Robinson, 2018
 David Small, 2018

TAX INCREMENTAL FINANCING COMMITTEE

Lisa Aldrich, 2018
 Ken Duffy, 2018
 Christine Mailloux, 2018
 Vacant, 2018
 Vacant, 2018

TOWN ENERGY COMMITTEE

Bill Aucoin, 2018
 Aimee Hanson, 2018
 Heidi Strickland, 2018
 Vacant, 2018
 Vacant, 2018

Robert Matthews, 2018
 Calvin Taylor, 2018
 Deborah Vondal, 2018
 Bruce Winters, 2018

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Elvin R. Chartrand, 2018
 Kala Fisher, 2019
 Robert Mallet, 2020
 Richard Coburn, 2021
 Susan Mondy Sykes, 2022

Associate Members:
 Vacant, 2018
 Vacant, 2018

VITAL RECORDS

	7/1/15- 6/30/16	7/1/16 - 6/30/17
Births	116	107
Marriages	50	52
Deaths	199	207

VACANT & UNOCCUPIED BUILDING COMMITTEE

Rebecca Bialecki, 2018
 Lee Chauvette, 2018
 Alan Dodge, 2018
 John Duguay, 2018
 Harry Haldt, 2018
 Robert Legare, 2018

WHEN BOARDS & COMMITTEES MEET

DATE OF MEETING	TIME OF MEETING	PLACE OF MEETING
ATHOL HOUSING AUTHORITY		
1st Wednesday	9:15 AM	21 Morton Meadows
ATHOL-ROYALSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE		
3rd Wednesday	6:30 PM	Middle School
BOARD OF ASSESSORS		
Tuesday	As posted	Room 15
BOARD OF HEALTH		
4th Tuesday	4:00 PM	Room 1
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES (no meeting July & August)		
3rd Wednesday	6:00 PM	Library
BOARD OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT		
1 st Wednesday	7:00 PM	Liberty Hall
BOARD OF SELECTMEN		
1 st & 3rd Tuesday	7:00 PM	Room 21
CONSERVATION COMMISSION		
4th Tuesday	6:00 PM	Liberty Hall
COUNCIL ON AGING		
3rd Tuesday	1:00 PM	Room 21
EDIC		
3 rd Wednesday	7:00 PM	Liberty Hall
FINANCE AND WARRANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE		
2 nd Tuesday	6:30 PM	Room 21
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS		
4th Wednesday	7:00 PM	Room 21

Meeting notices and agendas are available on the Town of Athol website at www.athol-ma.gov

The Annual Report of the Chairman of the FWAC
June 2017

The members of the Finance and Warrant Advisory Committee are appointed by the Town Moderator to be an independent advisory committee, representing our fellow citizens and taxpayers of the Town of Athol in the process of local town government.

The committee, comprised of seven members, reviews all warrant articles including the town budget and advises the citizens attending the town meeting what we feel is the best course of action to take on a given article. But the voters are not bound by any recommendations made by the committee.

The committee holds monthly meetings throughout the year, meeting with the Town Manager along with various boards, committees and department heads as needed, reviewing any matter of importance that may come before us during the year. We also are responsible for the administration of the town's annual Reserve Account, where we authorize use of these funds by a majority vote of the committee, without the need of town meeting approval for unexpected situations that may occur in a given fiscal year.

As you will see shortly – the budget that is being presented for your consideration is a budget that serves the community well, while at the same time puts funding into various accounts to prepare us for the future. This proposed budget also provides \$100,000 in taxpayer relief. It has been many years – since we have been able to have this type of flexibility in the budget process.

There are a few main reasons for this positive situation. A constant effort by the town's financial team to review expenses and work with town employees to do what is necessary to hold various costs in check. This is a team effort between the management of the town and its employees – in the spirit of cooperation that makes these actions possible.

Another reason for our improving financial situation is increased revenues – due mainly to the uptown shopping district – which continues to add businesses each year. This added revenue stream is vital to the future of our community. For Fiscal year 17 alone, the town has realized over \$262,000 in added tax revenues. In the coming years – this business district will continue to add revenues – which could reach a million dollars yearly. If these added revenues are used properly they will ensure that our town will be a vibrant community in the years ahead.

For a community of less than twelve-thousand people – we have a lot going for us. Very few communities have what we have. At times, I think many of us overlook what we have in our community.

Very few towns of this size have multiple shopping districts, have two newer schools, newer police and fire stations. Have a newly renovated library – which is one year away from being completely paid for.

Very few towns our size have recreational facilities such as our YMCA and an 18-hole golf course, various hiking and walking trails and lakes. In addition, few – if any - have a hospital (which will begin a major addition shortly) located within their town.

As you can see – we do have a lot going for us. But the most important aspect of any community are the people. People who live and take part in their community. It is vital that those of us who live in this community – also become active in this community.

During this past winter, we saw what can happen when people become involved. It does not matter what side of an issue you are on. It is important that you ask questions – state your case – cast your vote.

Our votes carry much more influence at the local level. Many local issues are decided by tens of votes.... not thousands or even hundreds of votes. In fact, over the years we have seen issues at town meetings decided by less than 10 votes.

Tonight, the assembly will be voting on a operational budget of just over 19 million dollars –this is a significant amount of money.

Many people who do not take an interest in their town – except to voice their concern about their tax bill, fail to realize the cost to operate this town. When I ask them what they think it costs to run the town on a yearly basis – I usually hear a number of 6 to 8 million dollars. When I ask these people about the costs to run the school district - again I often hear the 8-million-dollar number. When I tell them that between the municipal and educational budgets we are looking at almost 44 million dollars – they are shocked.

We encourage you to ask questions – and to give your opinions. You have a vested interest in these issues. The votes taken tonight – and at any town meeting have a direct result in shaping the services you receive, the amenities you enjoy and the taxes you pay. We truly control what type of community we live in and what type of community we will leave for future generations.

On behalf of the FWAC – I would like thank the various department heads, boards and committees for their help and cooperation during the past year, it has been greatly appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ken Duffy
Chairman FWAC

FWAC members: Ken Duffy (Chairman) Ben Feldman (Vice Chairman), Amy Craven, Gary Deyo, Erik Euvrard, Paul Nelson.

Athol Public Library
Report of the Board of Library Trustees
July 2016 - June 2017

To: The Board of Selectman and Citizens of Athol

The Library completed the Long Range Plan for 2017-2022 that is required by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. During the summer, several focus groups were held and a paper and online survey was conducted to collect information to use in creating the long range plan. The main response was the request for Saturday hours, while most feedback was very positive for what the library is doing and for the staff.

The library promoted summer reading for all ages. Participation in the adult reading incentive was great with about 300 adults submitting 657 entry tickets for the 94 prizes awarded. There were 26 active teen participants and 345 attended the 52 programs held during the summer. In the Children's Room, 211 children participated in the reading club, reading over 900 hours to earn 182 cans of food to donate to the Salvation Army food pantry, paid for by the Friends of the Library. The 67 different programs were attended by 1,249 children. The library participated in the summer free lunch program and 252 lunches were served. The library remained open late one evening as a cooling station at the request of the Athol Fire Department with several patrons taking advantage of the extra hours to stay cool.

Chibi Moku, a video marketing company hired by Tappe Architects, filmed a great 7 minute piece on the Athol Library on September 30 and October 1. Many people who were instrumental in the library renovation project were interviewed and Chibi Moku captured on film the beauty of the library and its history.

Additional lighting was installed in the Conference Room to highlight art works on display. In February, four data loggers were installed by Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, preservation specialist of the MA Board of Library Commissioners. They were placed in the Archives Room, Children's Room, adult stack area, and on the roof to monitor temperature, relative humidity, and ultraviolet radiation. They will be picked up in July, after six months, and the data analyzed and

reported back to the library. Ten new laptop computers were purchased for Mine Craft clubs and other programs.

The most important improvement of the year was the work on repairing and rejuvenating the landscaping which was undertaken by Noel's Nursery in June 2017. They added 2 ½ yards of loam and compost to the grounds, spread 38 pounds of grass seed, and trimmed the shrubs and trees. Ken Vaidulas, David Brothers, and Tom Henry were instrumental in keeping the sprouting grass seed watered during the summer.

The library was open on Saturday during the downtown festival, offering a Story Walk and craft for children, an exhibit of art by Ida Waslaske, and a Friends' Book Sale. The library was also open on Saturday, May 6 to host a Plein-Air Paint-In of Millers River, hosted by Millers River Watershed Council, followed by a month-long exhibit of submitted art work.

At the June town meeting, the library budget which included funding for Saturday hours, was approved. Beginning in the fall of 2017, the library will be open on Saturdays from Labor Day until Memorial Day, 9:30 am – 1:00 pm. Prudent Investor legislation was also approved at the town meeting, allowing the Trustees to next submit it to the State Legislature for approval. Karen McNiff and Anne Cutler-Russo were honored with the Margaret Grazis Employee of the Year Award.

The Board of Trustees reorganized in April and re-elected the following officers: Margaret Young as chair and Susie Feldman as clerk.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Young, Chair

Margaret "Susie" Feldman, Clerk

Sharon Brighenti

Frank Foster

J.R. Greene

Christine Miranda

ATHOL HOUSING AUTHORITY
ANNUAL REPORT
7/1/16 – 6/30/17

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen:

The Athol Housing Authority provides affordable housing to low and moderate income families, as well as to the elderly and disabled. Housing is available based on Federal and State Program Regulations.

The Authority owns 78 Elderly/Handicapped units under the Massachusetts Chapter 667 Housing Program as well as 16 units of Family units under the Massachusetts Chapter 705 Housing Program.

Additionally, the Authority administers housing subsidies for 45 families under the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program and 58 families under the Federal Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Effective January 5, 2015, the Orange Housing Authority (OHA) shares office space with the Athol Housing Authority (AHA). The combined staff is made up of the following:

Christi Martin, Executive Director/Secretary to the Board (AHA)
Diane Praplaski, Program Administrator (AHA)
Connie Parmenter, MRVP Administrator (AHA)
Linda Lefebre, Receptionist (OHA)
Barbara Smith, Receptionist (OHA)
Nicholas Tarara, Maintenance Supervisor (AHA)
Steven Belanger, Maintenance Supervisor (OHA)
Joseph Chiasson, Jr., Maintenance Staff (AHA)
David Brothers, Maintenance Staff (OHA)

The Authority is overseen by the Board of Commissioners, which meet on a monthly basis. The Board is made up of the following:

Cathy Savoy, Chairperson
Edward Sawin, Vice-Chairperson
Ted Ledgard, Treasurer
Cathy Muzzy, Commissioner
Joseph Hawkins, Governor's Appointee

The office of the Athol Housing Authority is located at 21 Morton Meadows and is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Phone 978-249-4848. Fax 978-249-9604.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christi Martin
Executive Director
Athol Housing Authority