

CHAPTER

FOUR

PUBLIC SERVICE

Reports of the Council on Aging,
Public Library, Veterans Services
& Sealer of W&M



ATHOL COUNCIL ON AGING
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Cathy A. Savoy
Executive Director

Margaret L. Young
Chairman

July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

To: The Honorable Board of Selectpersons

The Citizens of Athol

Mission Statement

Councils on Aging are the principal agencies of local government that serve older adults. First authorized by special legislation in 1956, there are now over 347 Councils in the Commonwealth. The three core responsibilities of the Councils on Aging are but not limited to:

- To identify the needs of senior citizens along with the available resources within the community.
- To educate the community at large in the challenges of aging and advocate for the needs of its senior citizens.
- To design, promote and put in place services that are needed and to coordinate the efforts of agencies which serve older people.

The Athol Council on Aging office and Senior Center is located at 82 Freedom Street in Lord Pond Plaza. The COA office hours are: Mon. Wed. & Thurs. 8:00-5:00, Tues. 8:00-8:00 and closed Fridays. The Senior Center is open 8:00-3:30 Monday through Thursday with occasional night and weekend activities. Hours are flexible and can accommodate special programming.

Over the past year approximately 2,550 community seniors were served in various capacities by the Council on Aging and Senior Center by the numerous programs provided through funding from the Town of Athol, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs Formula Grant, Frank S. Parmenter Trust Fund, LifePaths, Inc. (formerly known as Franklin County Home Care Corporation), EOE Title IIIB, Friends of the Athol Council on Aging and individual contributors.

The Senior Center dining program, sponsored by LifePaths, Inc, provided 1,840 nutritionally balanced congregate dinner meals served at 12 noon Tuesday through Thursday. Additional meals were offered outside of the established congregate program.

Activities at the Senior Center include health and wellness related activities and screenings including, hearing tests, foot screening, blood pressure clinics, flu clinics, preventive dental services, senior fitness, yoga, congregate meals, home safety seminars and educational forums. Social activities include bingo, red aces, senior arts classes, painting, quilting, card making, movies, meetings, a lending library and other special events. Social services include food stamp applications, food security counseling, fuel assistance, benefits counseling, tax preparation, SHINE, a program of LifePaths, Inc., (serving health insurance needs of everyone) and information and referral services.

Through a Title III D Grant administered through LifePaths Inc. and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs the Council was able to offer a “Wellness for Life” program “Yoga for Every Body” facilitated by Pat Roix. Our innovative Birthday Card Outreach Program continues and is funded through donations.

Through Formula Grant funding, the Council was able to continue the well attended “Senior Fitness” program, instructed by certified staff of the Athol area YMCA two mornings a week. The fitness program served 48 unduplicated seniors for 98 sessions. The fitness and wellness classes are extended year round.

The Brown Bag distribution continues with approximately 135 elders receiving surplus food each month. Approximately 75 of the brown bags are delivered by volunteer drivers. The program is supervised and led by the COA staff and 25 volunteers, who unload the truck, package the brown bags and distribute at the center site or deliver to homebound seniors and the disabled.

128 seniors received assistance in the preparation of their state and federal income taxes through AARP and the Council on Aging. Through outreach efforts the tax preparation program has shown a significant increase in demand over the past several years. Twelve seniors were assisted with filing the “Circuit Breaker” a State Tax Rebate program.

The Council has maintained their blood pressure clinics with 393 pressures taken at 48 clinics. There were 12 doctor’s referrals.

The “Shine” program assisted over 500 area seniors with health insurance issues and assisted with the Prescription Advantage program and the changes in the H.M.O. programs. Three volunteer SHINE counselors have been trained through the State and LifePaths, Inc and continue to participate in monthly trainings to keep up with the changing health care systems. In-kind Support for the program is provided by the Council on Aging.

The Council has maintained the foot-screening clinic available to seniors twice a month. Three hundred Fifteen (315) screenings were performed during the 24 sessions.

Fuel assistance – Over 60 elders were assisted with Fuel Assistance applications for the FY16 season. Twenty Six (26) were informed of and referred to other weatherization programs.

Through the generosity of the North Worcester County Board of Realtors and their “Adopt an Elder” Christmas program, the Council was able to identify and deliver 50 Christmas gifts to isolated and less fortunate elders.

The Council on Aging provided assistance and referral services to 28 seniors for free legal assistance offered through North Central Legal assistance and the Franklin County Bar Association.

On Christmas Day, 250 homebound elders and disabled were delivered a complete ham dinner. With the assistance of the COA Board and the *MANY* volunteers, the dinners were cooked, packed & delivered. The Christmas dinner program is a three day project.

The Council on Aging provided assistance with the Wm. J. O’Brien Thanksgiving community dinner where over 100 community residents were served a sit down meal on Thanksgiving Day that is annually held at the Athol American Legion.

Throughout the year the Council on Aging Director contributed time to the Friends of the Athol Council on Aging board, AARP, the Golden Ages Club and the Athol Housing Authority.

The Director and Board members participated in the Mass. Council on Aging, Western Mass. Council on Aging, Mass. Public Health Assoc., local school programs, (Inter-generational) and numerous other senior and municipal connected classes and seminars.

The Council on Aging applied for and received four grants to support various programming for the Fiscal Year 2016.

In June, a Volunteer Recognition luncheon was held for at the Athol Senior Center with 90 volunteers present. State and municipal representatives were among those who honored the volunteers for their commitment in assisting the COA with the many programs it offers to elder and disabled community residents. Guest Speaker Rebecca Bialecki representing Heywood/Athol Hospitals facilitated a power point presentation on the Athol Hospital expansion project and the North Quabbin Retreat facility to be constructed in Petersham, MA serving the local region.

The Friends of the Athol Council on Aging (a non-profit 501c3 organization) applied for and received \$40,000. (over a two-year period) from the John W.Boynton Trust Fund to complete the interior build out of the health and outreach room within the Senior Center facility. The organization also conducted their annual membership drive, raffle fundraisers and the Fall Frolic event with proceeds to benefit programming and other educational and social events for seniors at the Center.

In June the following slate of officers were elected for the coming year:

Margaret Young, Chairperson

Stephen Larry, Vice-Chairperson

Kathy Cygan, Secretary

Other board members

Jean Ryder

Walter Lehman

Lillian Batchelder

Ruth Black

Linda Grenier

The Board would like to thank the 180 volunteers that make the many Council on Aging programs possible. We are indebted to the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, the Massachusetts Councils on Aging, LifePaths Inc., the Friends of the Athol Council on Aging, the Frank S. Parmenter Trust Fund, Athol Memorial Hospital, the local Cultural Council grantors, Senior Dining Center Mgr., meal site volunteers, AARP tax assistants, Western Mass Food Bank, the Athol Public Library, the North Central County Board of Realtors, and many other clubs, organizations and individuals.

In conclusion, the Council on Aging wishes to thank the Town Manager, Board of Selectmen and the citizens of Athol for their support and assistance throughout the year. If any citizen has questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our Council office at (978) 249-8986.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cathy A. Savoy

Executive Director

Judy Thayer

Program Coordinator

**Athol Public Library
2015-2016 Annual Report**

To: The Honorable Board of Selectmen and the Citizens of Athol

“Libraries will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no libraries.”—Anne Herbert

The library customers and staff enjoyed their third year in the new building and first full year of the Millers River Park between the library and the river. Great programs and activities have continued to happen both inside the library and outside in the park. Those exciting events will be detailed by library staff further into the report.

Tom Deam, a former library employee and musician, organized several free concerts which were held in the park at noontime. Bonnie and Al Benjamin, Linda Piragis, Liz Warder, and Mark Erwin provided wonderful musical entertainment with Tom.

The newly formed Art Committee continued to provide the library with wonderful exhibits. Artists who displayed their art during the year, July 2015-June 2016, were: Joe Smith, Sarah Adam, Maryellen Burns, Mark Bosworth, Doreen LaScola, Laurie Neely, Linda Ruel Flynn, Mitch Grosky, and Susan Paju. A local farm exhibit and program featured the photographs of Oliver Snure that accompanied the work of Cathy Stanton and Mary King. There are exhibitions already lined up through the next year. Please be sure to stop by and see them. Some of the artists held receptions with refreshments and were in attendance to answer questions. Special thanks to Susan Paju and Heidi Strickland for their donation of the display system and for helping to get this off the ground.

The new spaces were also attractive to many outside groups for meetings and events. Several Massachusetts Library programs were held here, including an MBLC Construction Grant Workshop, Literacy Volunteers held trainings, testings, and an information session, Reliable Temps and several businesses held interview sessions, Secretary Ash met with the Abandoned Buildings Committee and the MA Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs also met here. A six week training conducted by MA Waterworks was held in the Conference Room and MIIA held a multi-session hoist workshop for DPW employees from area towns and cities. Annual meetings of Quabbin Harvest, Athol-Royalston Education Foundation, and Valuing Our Children were held in the Program Rooms. Heywood Healthcare held a catered information session to highlight their expansion plans and fund-raising campaign and Community Foundation of North Central MA held a catered breakfast for non-profits. Mt. Grace Land Conservation held several committee meetings in the Conference Room, and a Girl Scout sleep-over, union negotiations, exam proctoring, scholarship committee meetings, kindergarten screening, and investment seminars were some of the other uses of our meeting spaces.

Building News

(See also the Library Trustees Report.)

Even though we moved back into the building in December 2013, there was still plenty of work going on. The PARC (Parklands Acquisitions and Renovation for Communities) program grant was completed and a ribbon-cutting was held in September with speeches, music, and cake. The new library park and parking lot have been a great addition and are being used for a variety of activities from storybook walks to concerts. Many people simply enjoy walking in the park or eating their lunch there. An exciting “Super Hero Night” to kick off the “Every Hero Has A Story” Summer Reading Program 2015, was held in the library and outside in the park. A fire truck and a police car along with their “community hero” drivers were present for children to explore. Hot dogs were available from the grill in the park, also.

The raised garden beds were planted for our second summer with assistance from Laurie Parker and Tom Henry. Laurie purchased plants and Tom and Robin Shtulman donated plants from their own gardens to create two lush vegetable and flower gardens. Tom Henry, a senior tax abatement volunteer, also built a large compost bin for the library to use.

The solar panel roof project was finally completed this year and went into operation in September. This was an extremely lengthy and overdue project due to many factors on the vendor side. Thanks to the Town of Athol electrical inspector Gary Terroy for insisting that it be done right and to the state electrical inspector Louis Messier for getting the company to make those changes. Also thanks to town manager Shaun Suhoski for keeping on top of this project and finally pushing it through. Final connections were completed and the system began generating power in September 2015. Louis Messier conducted a safety training of the solar equipment for the Athol Fire Department and other interested personnel.

STAFF

Staff changes this year included the retirement of long-time director, Debra Blanchard, on September 30. Jean Shaughnessy became Director on October 1. Angela Dumas was hired as the new Children’s Librarian and began her duties on October 26.

Adult Services from Robin Shtulman and Kelsey Matthews

The Adult Summer Reading theme was “Every Hero has a Story” and we explored this with gusto, celebrating local heroes with an Author Expo in August, creating and drawing our own comic book characters in July, and via four well-attended writing workshops, held in September and November, and another in February, March, and April, all led by local talent (Mara Bright, Christine Miranda, Clare Panni, and Diane Kane). Athol patrons also had an opportunity to relax and explore their creative sides through Adult Coloring Club in December, which proved to be so popular that we have carried the program into 2016, and started coloring groups for teens and children. We continued our theme of self-expression by experimenting with tying scarves in October and needle felting in March. We learned about tea production and how to brew a perfect cup in April, and then launched into the how-tos of gardening, lawn care, and pruning season

with workshops by local experts Deb Habib, Melissa Levangie, and Travis Knetchel. The always popular trio from Stockbridge Herb Farm presented a cooking and tasting program using dill. J.R. Greene launched his Quabbin calendar sale here in December. Farm Values, an evening of discussion plus photograph exhibit, drew a huge crowd. It was a full house when the Delvena Theatre presented “All the Presidents’ Women” and Carol Cohen visited the library as “Eleanor Roosevelt”. Organ Donation Month in April was observed with a book talk by Marcy Robitaille and presentation by Tom Rich. In June, Ken Warchol explained the Role of the Honeybee and Liz Barbour demonstrated Cooking with Edible Flowers. We wrapped up FY 16 by sharing great local memories at the Free Sprints Commune movie screening and hosting spirited outdoor concerts in the library park.

Booked for Lunch, the noontime book discussion group, led by Robin Brzozowski, met to enjoy lunch and dessert while discussing a variety of books during the year. The evening Mystery Discussion group, facilitated by Karen McNiff, discussed mysteries monthly during the fall and spring.

The APL provided delivery service to more than a dozen home-bound readers, thanks to our senior tax abatement volunteers Jeanne Forand and Randy Mitchell. Our new private study rooms continue to be very useful and popular.

Young Adult Department from Anne Cutler-Russo

The theme of the 2016 summer reading program for young adults was “Unmask”, so participants in the program were able to reveal their talents by participating in mask making programs with Susie Feldman and Anne, attending a comic book creation program, playing on the Wii with Rheba, attending art and craft sessions with Emily, sewing a tote bag and a small pocketbook with Jean White using the sewing machines borrowed from the middle school, playing superhero bingo, and participating in the Wild Knights Chess Club with David Price, which meets weekly throughout the summer and during the school year.

ATAC, the teen advisory council at the library, met monthly throughout the year, enjoying pizza provided by the Friends of the Library, talking about books, and helping Anne plan teen events for the year. Their most memorable effort was The Great Chocolate Chip Cookie Bake-off which involved participants baking different kinds of chocolate chip cookies to bring in for evaluation by a panel of three generous judges. The public was invited to attend to sample the cookies. ATAC members served drinks, announced procedures and results, and helped to clean up. The downstairs program room at the library was packed with participants and visitors.

During the fall of 2015 and winter of 2016, students participated in a variety of science programs: Bridge Building 101, chromatography, stomp rockets, surface tension, balloon rockets, salad dressing science, oil spills, and a study of the crows of New Caledonia called “Grabbing a Bite to Eat”.

Other programs included duct tape wallets, marshmallow igloos, pasta creations, Hansel and Gretel houses, mug cakes, and decorating pumpkins with natural materials.

The enthusiastic members of the Minecraft Club met weekly throughout the school year using Minecraft Edu, purchased by the Friends of the Library, to play together in online worlds which they cooperatively constructed.

Jean White continued to meet weekly during the school year with her group of Knit-wits. This program is made possible by donations of supplies.

Anne visited the middle school in the spring to present book talks to students in the seventh grade. This annual visit involves coordination between the public library and the seventh grade English teacher.

Community Reading Day was held at the middle school and at the elementary schools. Volunteer readers visited all English classrooms at the middle school and each elementary classroom in the district to read and discuss selected books. Community Reading Day is a collaborative program involving the staffs at the public library and the schools.

The activities of this busy year were generously funded by the Friends of the Library.

Children's Department from Angela Dumas

The theme of the 2016 Summer Reading Program for children was "Every Hero Has a Story". The kick-off in June was a giant Super Hero Night with crafts, food, costumes, local heroes – police and fire, games with Matt Talbot and Sean Tomlinson from the YMCA, and lots of fun for all. Other super hero activities for the summer included *Super Science Series with Paul McNiff*, a visit by Teaching Creatures with live animal superstars, and a Drive-In movie night with children making their own cardboard box car to sit in to watch the movie.

Preschool Story Times and Y Nursery Story Times began at the end of September. In October, Jean headed upstairs to become Director, and Angela Dumas took over as Children's Librarian.

In November, in addition to regular programming—Preschool Story Times, LEGO Club, half-day movie showings, and a monthly story walk (in collaboration with Valuing Our Children of Athol)—the library attended the Big Read at the Elks. Free books were offered to attendees, and the library provided a craft based on *The Three Little Pigs*. Story Times were also brought to the integrated preschool classrooms at Pleasant Street School with a focus on community helpers. In December, patrons of all ages warmed up to the movie *Minions* with pizza and light refreshments. As the days grew colder families were encouraged to go outdoors with two Story Walks that 44 people attended.

Baby Time, Toddler Time, the Kids' Coloring Club, and Minecraft Club are several new children's programs that were added to regular children's programming to start off the New Year. Additionally, outdoor activity continued to be fostered with an interactive Story Walk of Jan Brett's book *The Mitten* which had 30 participants. Afterward, families enjoyed a craft, hot chocolate, and cookies indoors while listening to nursery rhymes. In February, Homeschool LEGO Club had their first of several monthly meetings with 25 participants.

In April, 46 attendees of all ages enjoyed *The Peanuts Movie* with pizza provided by Market Basket. During April vacation Corrinne Smith, former assistant director here at the Athol Library and the author of *Thoreau for Kids*, taught children how to make rock collection boxes and how to identify and label their rocks. Also that week, in collaboration with the Athol YMCA, 80 people attended Rae Griffith's Teaching Creatures programs. Griffith read stories and brought in springtime animals for children to engage with. In May, the library attended North Quabbin Coalition's Early Childhood Education fair, and participants collected resources from the different community organizations in attendance. The month concluded with several classroom visits to the Athol elementary schools to promote the 2016 Summer Reading Program "On Your Mark, Get Set... Read!"

June began with a school visit to Royalston Community School to promote summer reading and the Children's Library held the Summer Reading Kick-Off on June 15. A giant obstacle course was set up in collaboration with the Athol YMCA and 86 people attended the event. Several other exciting Summer Reading Programs ran until the end of June. Some of the more popular programs were Life-Size Candy Land with 66 attendees, Homemade Ice Cream Making with 36 attendees, and a Glow in the Dark Extravaganza with 60 attendees. By the end of June, a total of 663 people attended programming and 119 children registered for the summer reading program. Additionally, the library hosted a daily free lunch program organized by the Orange Elementary School Food Services Department beginning the last week of June.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Materials were purchased in memory of:

Marilyn Earley, Frances Kuniholm, Rita R. Fogg, and Robert Landry.

YOUR LIBRARY STAFF

ADULT DEPARTMENT

Debra A. Blanchard, *Director (retired September 30)*

Jean Shaughnessy, *Director (appointed June)*

Robin Shtulman, *Assistant Director*

Marie Lehmann, Anne Cutler-Russo, Kelsey Matthews, *Senior Library Technicians*

Robin Brzozowski, Carol Ann Fisk, *Part Time Library Technicians*

Rheba Gagne, *Page*

William Adams, *Part Time Custodian*

Brenda Buck, Sharman Prouty, Sean Tomlinson *Substitutes*

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

Angela Dumas, *Children's Librarian*

Karen McNiff, *Children's Assistant*

Emily Boughton, Olivia Skinner *Pages*

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Lillian Bachelder gave up her position as treasurer to become vice-president of the Friends. Jean White took over as treasurer and Patricia Ray took over as secretary. Thanks for all the many events the Friends sponsor and the support they give the library!

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOARD

President: Karen McNiff

Vice-President: Lil Bachelder

Treasurer: Jean White

Secretary: Patricia Ray

Trustee Rep: Margaret Young

Library Staff Rep: Jean Shaughnessy

Directors: Nancy Griffin, Julianne Matthews, Christine Miranda, Mary Roberts, Barbara Robichaud.

Join the Friends Today!

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY VOLUNTEER GREETERS

Mike Cygan, Nancy Griffin, Denise G., Bonnie Hodgdon, Muriel Holden, Randy Mitchell, Florence Pelletier, Patricia Ray, Margaret Robinson, George Roix, Patricia Tedford, Patricia Vandenberg. Jessica Mann worked as a greeter during the summer, under the sponsorship of Franklin/Hampshire Regional Youth Employment.

SENIOR TAX ABATEMENT VOLUNTEERS 2014 and 2015

Michael Cygan, Jeanne Forand, Tom Henry, Randy Mitchell, Jean White.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean E. Shaughnessy, Library Director

STATISTICS

CIRCULATION FY16

Adult	69,641
Young Adult	4,295
Children's	<u>30,488</u>
 TOTAL	 104,424

Interlibrary Loan

Received from other libraries	15,786
Provided to other libraries	11,188
Nonresident circulations	22,506

Programs

Adult	48
Adult attendance	1,284
Young adult	177
Young adult attendance	1,464
Children	251
Children's attendance	4,059

Registered borrowers 5,766

Volunteers

Number	88
Approximate hours worked	5,280

Website hits 26,907

Computer Use 14,768

Library Space/Room Use
for library programs
and by outside groups –

1,414



NORTHEAST QUABBIN VETERANS' SERVICES DISTRICT

584 MAIN STREET, ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS 01331

PHONE: 978/249-6935 FAX: 978/575-0269

email: vetagnt@townofathol.org

Serving the Towns of Athol, Orange, Petersham, Phillipston and Royalston

"To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan." – A Lincoln

FY16 ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016

To the Citizens of the Northeast Quabbin Veterans' Services District:

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts began providing for its needy veterans immediately following the Revolutionary War. In 1861, at the start of the Civil War, the state legislature formalized the assistance provided to veterans by establishing Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 115 and the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services (DVS).

DVS is the state's lead state for overseeing the general welfare of the Commonwealth's nearly 400,000 living veterans. DVS establishes policy, proposes legislation, provides annual training, and ensures compliance with MGL Chapter 115 and other laws and regulations germane to veterans.

MGL Chapter 115: Section: 3B was passed into law by the Commonwealth during FY15 establishing the mandatory requirement whereby Directors of Veterans' Services and Veterans' Services Officers (VSO) must become legally certified.

DVS implemented the law during its October 2015 Annual Training where Directors and VSOs were required to take and pass the written certification examination. In addition, mandatory recertification is required every three-years.

MGL Chapter 115 authorizes eligible veteran to receive certain financial, medical, and other benefits earned by military service. Services are available through the local area Director of Veterans' Services/ Veterans' Services Officers to veterans living in one of the Commonwealth's 351 communities.

DISTRICT GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

The Secretary – DVS authorized the Northeast Quabbin Veterans' Services District to begin operations in January 2006. The district serves veterans and dependents having a formal residence in one of the district's communities.

Pursuant to MGL Chapter 115: Section 11, for every authorized district, there shall be a Board of Directors. The board consists of a representative appointed by the Board of Selectmen from each member community. The Board establishes By-Laws to define district administration and operations.

I became legally certified on October 29, 2015 as Director of Veterans' Services by successfully completing and successfully passing the certification examination as required in MGL Chapter 115: Section: 3B.

With gratitude to the Town of Athol, the District Website is up-and-running and easily accessible to veterans on most town websites. It will always be a work-in-progress as it is updated periodically. The district link: www.athol-ma.gov/northeast-quabbin-veterans-services-district.

VETERANS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OFFERED BY THE DISTRICT

A. MGL Chapter 115

1. A program of financial and medical assistance that may be available to veterans and/or dependents based on eligibility requirements.
2. The following chart represents FY16 Veterans' Benefits paid, by community, to its eligible veterans and/or dependents. Benefits paid are reimbursed at 75% by the commonwealth.

FY16 VETERANS' BENEFITS DATA

Town	Benefits Paid	State Reimbursements	% Reimbursed
Athol	\$157,759.59	\$118,314.62	75%
Orange	\$131,264.07	\$98,448.07	75%
Petersham	\$7,994.88	\$5,996.16	75%
Phillipston	\$5,729.20	\$4,296.90	75%
Royalston	\$5,212.24	\$3,909.20	75%

3. Burials in one of two Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries, Winchendon and Agawam.
4. Women Veterans' Network – Provides women veterans with information on benefits, expand awareness of the needs, and identify health and human resources to meet those needs.
5. Homeless prevention, Transitional Housing and outreach services.
6. Wartime Bonuses, Annuities, etc.
7. And more...

B. UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

1. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): Applications for Agent Orange illnesses, Mesothelioma, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST) service-connected disabilities, pensions, Dependency & Indemnity Compensation, healthcare, veterans' grave markers, and more.
 - a. VA Compensation & Benefits (VBA) paid nearly \$7.1M dollars in annual compensation to veterans, dependents and surviving spouses living in the district.

- b. VA Central-Western-Massachusetts Healthcare System – Headquartered at Northampton VA Medical Center, Leeds has five Community Based Outpatient Clinics delivering medical treatment to over 25,000 veterans with an annual budget of **\$162.2M**.
2. Department of Defense (DOD): Military records; medical records; medals, decorations and awards not previously issued; applications to correct Military Records, and more.
3. Other Agencies including:
 - a. Massachusetts Department of Health & Human Services
 - b. Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development
 - c. U.S. Social Security Administration
 - d. U.S. Department of Labor
 - e. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
 - f. U.S. Department of Justice
 - g. Other Massachusetts & U.S. Departments and Agencies.

The office has seen an increase in the numbers of veterans applying for service-connected disabilities including presumptive Agent Orange illnesses, Mesothelioma, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), and more.

Veterans with service-connected disabilities are eligible for VA Healthcare. All other veterans may be eligible for VA Healthcare based on defined criteria. Due to the Affordable Care Act, wartime and peacetime veterans may qualify for VA Healthcare.

I look forward to serving veterans, spouses, surviving spouse of a deceased veteran, and dependents formally residing in one of the District's communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Neil P. McGuirk

Neil P. McGuirk, Director of Veterans' Services

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SEALER OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES FOR 2015 – 16

To the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager and Citizens of Athol:

The following inspections were made during fiscal year 2016:

Category	Devices Sealed	Adjusted	Not Sealed
Scales and Weights	268	7	0
Gas Pumps	97	0	0
Fuel Trucks	4	0	0
Scanning Systems	1	0	0
Bottle Return	7	0	0

Commodities tested and found correct; 8.

Total receipts were \$4,012.00, which were turned in to the Treasurer, whose receipts I hold.

The Sealer's office is located in the basement of the Memorial Building; inspections are by appointment. In closing, I would like to thank all businessmen for their cooperation, and note that there were no major problems during the past fiscal year.

J.R. Greene
Sealer