

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Officers and Committees

Of the town of

ASHFIELD MASSACHUSETTS

For the year ending 2013



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This year's Town Report is dedicated to
**Susan Shaw Clark, Elice (Mimi) Pieropan,
and Walter Whitney, Jr.**

The fabric of a community is woven of many threads. Some of those threads are closely woven with each other, while other threads have more tenuous connections. Still, they all serve to hold the fabric together and collectively they make it strong. This year's Town Report is dedicated to three members of our community, all of whom passed away in 2013 - Susan Shaw Clark, Elice "Mimi" Pieropan, and Walter Whitney, Jr.

Susan Shaw Clark was born July 4, 1951. Susan grew up in Middleton, Mass., and was a 1973 graduate of Clark University, Worcester, Mass., and received Montessori Training in Toronto, Canada in 1973-74.

Susan and her husband, Ashfield native Brian Clark, returned to Massachusetts in 2007 from Minnesota, to the Clark farm in Ashfield, where she pursued her lifelong passion for sewing, especially quilting.

Susan was a talented and active member of the local Quilting Guild and a beautiful selection of her quilts were featured on the stage of the Town Hall during the 2013 Ashfield Fall Festival. She was a current member of the Ashfield Board of Health and of the Ashfield Fall Festival Committee, continuing a lifetime of childcare, teaching, and public service for which she was highly regarded by all who knew and worked with her.

Elice "Mimi" (Davis) Pieropan, was born in Binghamton, N.Y., March 4, 1931. Elice graduated from Williams High School in Stockbridge, MA and continued her education at the University of Massachusetts, where she graduated Cum Laude with a Master of Art degree. She was married to her high school sweetheart, Albert L. Pieropan, on Sept. 1, 1951. Mimi was a lifelong painter and teacher.

Ashfield, surrounding towns and landscapes were the inspiration for many oils, watercolors, and block prints. In addition to painting and exhibiting around the Northeast and winning numerous awards, Mimi taught in high school and adult education programs.

Mimi was a member of the Art Council for 12 years, a founding member of the Ashfield Fall Festival Committee and co-owner of 11 South Gallery in Bernardston, MA. She was also dedicated to her much loved church family at the Ashfield United Church of Christ, where she was a member of many years, served on many committees and was on the board of the Hilltown Churches Food Pantry.

Walter Whitney, Jr. was born February 8, 1916, in Ashfield, he grew up on the family farm, attended the Plain School, and graduated in 1933 from Sanderson Academy. He graduated from Massachusetts State College, now the University of Massachusetts, in 1938, where he majored in Mathematics.

In 1946, Walt was a founding member of Ashfield Legion Post 245, where he was a past Commander. At the time of his death he was the eldest member of the Post. In 1952, Walt was also one of the founders of the Ashfield Ambulance Service and served for 50 years as an ambulance volunteer and later as a member of the Executive Board.

Walt served as a Trustee of the Belding Memorial Library from 1950-1987, and was Chairman of the Trustees from 1968 until 1987. He was a member and past President of the Trustees of Sanderson Academy from 1941 until his death. He was a Director and Treasurer of the Ashfield Golf Club from 1951 until 2010.

Walt was a life member of the Ashfield Historical Society, a member of the First Congregational Church in Ashfield, an Incorporator of the Mohawk Valley Health Center in Charlemont and of the Knowlton Foundation in Gardner.

As the eldest resident of Ashfield, he had possession of the Boston Post gold cane.

These three citizens were very different from each other, yet they served their town in a myriad of ways. Without such volunteers our town would not be the special place it is today.

Government Contact Information

GOVERNOR

Deval L. Patrick

Massachusetts State House, Room 360, Boston, MA 02133
617-725-4005 or 888-870-7770

STATE SENATOR

Benjamin Downing, Pittsfield

7 North Street, Suite 307, Pittsfield, MA 01201
617-722-1625
benjamin.downing@state.ma.us

REPRESENTATIVE IN GENERAL COURT

Stephen Kulik

1 Sugarloaf Street, South Deerfield, MA 01373
413-665-7200

Stephen.kulik@mahouse.gov

U.S. CONGRESS

Richard Neal

2208 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-5601
www.house.gov/neal

U.S. SENATE

Senator Elizabeth Warren

Russell Office Building 2 Russell Courtyard Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-4543
www.warren.senate.gov

Appointed February 1, 2013

William Maurice Cowan

(Appointed February 1, 2013)

218 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

Edward J. Markey

(Elected June 25, 2013)

218 Russell Senate office Building

Washington DC 20510

202-224-2742

www.markey.senate.gov/contact

FRANKLIN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director

12 Olive Street Suite 2 Greenfield, MA 01301

413-774-3167 ext. 103

lindad@frcog.org

Town Officers

Elected Positions

One-Year Terms

<i>Moderator</i>	Stuart Eisenberg
<i>Tree Warden</i>	Thomas Poissant

Three-year Terms and Term Expiration

Select Board

Tom Carter - Chair	2016
Paullette Leukhardt	2014
Ronald Coler Vice - Chair	2015

Board of Assessors

Sandy Lilly, Chair	2016
Wayne Gardner	2014
Peter Wiitanen	2015

Finance Committee

Ted Murray, Chair	2016
Janet Rogers	2016
Tom Schreiber	2014
Ricki Carroll	2014
David Newell	2015

Mohawk Trail Regional School Committee

Helen "Poppy" Doyle	2016
Emily Robertson	2015

Board of Health

Duncan Colter, Chair	2014
Susan Clark	2015
Shelly Carter	2016

Constables

John LaBelle	2016
Elizabeth Lesure	2016
Warren Kirkpatrick	2015

Park Commission

Judy Haupt	2016
Emmet Van Driesche	2014
Maryellen Abbatiello, Chair	2015

Sewer Commission

Todd Olanyk	2014
Nancy Hoff, Chair	2015
Daniel Lovett (app. until 2014)	20

Five-Year Terms and Term Expirations**Planning Board**

Sarah Holbrook	2018
Michael Fitzgerald, Chair	2014
Alan Rice	2015
Ken Miller	2016
Lauren Preston-Wells	2017
Brittany Martin (assistant - appointed)	2014

Library Trustees

Caroline Murray	2018
Renee Rastorfer	2014
Nancy Intres	2015
Virginia Wiswell	2016
Marcine Eisenberg, Chr.	2017

Appointed Positions***Town Office Staff******One-Year Terms***

Assessors' Clerk	Jenn Morse
Assistant Municipal Clerk	Lynn Taylor
Executive Administrator	Mary Fitz-Gibbon
Town Clerk	Ann Dunne
Town Collector	Laura Blakesley
Treasurer	Laura Blakesley

One-Year Terms**Town History Editorial Board**

Phyllis Kirkpatrick, Co-Chair

Donald Robinson, Co-Chair
 Tom Carter
 Dave Fessenden
 Stuart Harris
 Harry Keramidas
 Martha Tirk

Green Committee

Mary Quigley
 Jen Williams
 Brian Clark, Chair

Information Technology Committee

David Kulp
 Juliet Jacobson
 Brian Clark
 Andrew Smith

Tree Committee

Harry Dodson, Chair
 Susan Todd
 Doug Cranson
 Laura Bessette
 Tom McCrumm
 Tom Poissant-Tree Warden
 Johanna Pratt

Town Hall Building Committee

Stuart Harris, Chair
 Doug Cranson
 Nancy Garvin
 Mary Quigley
 Donna Scott
 Wayne Gardner

Three-Year Terms

Agricultural Commission

Robyn Crowningshield	2016
Steve Gougeon	2014
Johanna Anderson-Pratt	2014
Alan Surprenant	2014

Tom McCrumm, Chair	2015
Daniel Greene	2016

Zoning Board of Appeals

Stuart Harris, Chair	2014
Alan Surprenant	2014
Anne Yuryan	2014
Mollie Babize	2015
Kit Nylen	2015

Conservation Commission

Lester Garvin, Chair	2016
Brian Clark	2016
Phil Lussier	2014
Dave Fessenden	2015
Janet Clark	2016
Brittany Martin (assistant)	2014

Council on Aging

Wayne Wickland, Chair	2016
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Historical Commission

Steve Gougeon, Chair	2016
Mollie Babize	2016
Nancy Garvin	2016
Tristan Romer	2015

Personnel Board

Ricki Carroll	2016
Paullette Leukhardt	2016
Priscilla Phelps	2016
Beverly Chow	2014

*Two-Year Terms***Cultural Council**

Roberta Evans	2015
Dawn Fessenden, Chair	2016
Jane Willis	2015
David Fessenden	2015
Andrew Kinsey	2017
Wesley Fleming	2017
Helene Leue	2015

Positions Appointed Annually

Registrars of Voters

Muriel Cranson

Susan Gambino

Nancy Intres

Ann Dunne, alternate

Fire Chief/Forest Warden

Delmar Haskins

Police Chief

Patrick Droney

Emergency Manager

Doug Field, Kyle Taylor – Asst.

Highway Superintendent

Thomas Poissant

Animal Control Officer

Warren Kirkpatrick

Inspector of Animals

Kim Reardon

Field Drivers

David King

Roland Townsley

Fence Viewer

Alden Gray

Surveyor of Wood & Lumber

Vacant

Frederick W. Wells Trustee

Molly Robinson

Carl Nilman Scholarship Committee

Shelia Graves

Open Space ad hoc Committee

Alan Rice
Lester Garvin
Nina Coler
Duncan Colter
Mollie Babize

Other Resources

Health Agent

Claudia Lucas
Carl Nelke

Building Inspector Program

James Hawkins, Building Inspector
James Slowinski, Wiring Inspector
Andrew French, Plumbing & Gas Inspector

Superintendent of Schools

Michael A. Buoniconti

Veterans' Agent

Leo Parent

Burial Agent

Ann Dunne

Ambulance Service

Mike Rock, Highland Ambulance Director

Ashfield Burial Ground Association

Tom Graves, 595 Smith Rd. Ashfield, MA 01330
Office hours: Wednesdays 9 a.m.-10 a.m. & 9 p.m. – 10 p.m.

Report of the Select Board

Another year has passed and even with many tasks being accomplished, an even longer list of projects is looming ahead for our community.

In the spring of 2013, the Select Board presented the FY 2014 budget at the Annual Town Meeting. This annual four-month exercise produced a blueprint for our immediate financial needs. Most notable was the approval to replace a 25 year-old highway grader. As of this writing, our new machine is on order at a cost of \$55,000, less than our best projections a year ago. Other line items, which met with Town Meeting approval were sums of money to be used on the Ashfield Lake dam, the repair of the town-owned portion of a retention wall on Bronson Avenue and capital Along with these items, of course, is the management of our year-to-year expenses working inside the confines of “Proposition 2 ½.” As a result of close management and collaboration with the Finance Committee, Ashfield was able to transfer \$200,000 in to our Stabilization Fund without the need for an override vote.

After the Town Meeting approved a small reduction in the police budget, a Special Town Meeting approved \$10,000 for the purchase of a radar speed trailer. This apparatus will be used at various locations around town to promote safe driving and give the Police Department information on where problems need to be addressed, if any.

In July, the Board voted to enter into an agreement with Nexamp and the Hampshire County Council of Governments for Ashfield to be the “host community” for a rather large solar electric project in Hadley, Massachusetts. This agreement will guarantee Ashfield town buildings a 27% discount on electricity for the next 20 years. At NO cost to us, this will be a savings in energy, in particular to our largest user, the Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Because of a downgrade of the Ashfield Dam, from sufficient to fair, lots of work has been done as preparation for future work to improve the condition of the dam. Many hours have gone into working out maintenance easements from the Nolans and the Deckers. Plans also include an engineering study, which has yet to be funded. An engineering study and report will be needed for Ashfield to secure available grants, not only for repairs but also for ongoing maintenance in future years.

The repair of the Bronson Avenue retention wall, shared with the “Field Trustees,” is in the planning stages. The cost of an engineering

study for this project is in place with hopes of being completed during the summer of 2014. Stay tuned

Thanks to Stuart Harris, Brian Clark, and others, the crawl space under the Town Hall has been excavated and insulation has been added. This will allow for better maintenance of the heating, electrical and information technology systems, as well as potential for additional meeting space at some point in the future.

Many thanks also to the Franklin County Sheriff's Department for their assistance in the painting of the Town Hall and Fire Station. The effort these gentlemen put into the preparation and execution of the improved exteriors was amazing.

In June/July, the Franklin Housing Authority approached the Select Board on subordination of a \$285,000 lien that the town has on the Ashfield House Apartments. This lien dates back to an original federal grant, which rehabilitated the building nearly 25 years ago. In the process of refinancing the project, HRA needed Ashfield to subordinate to banks, as was done previously. The Board spent many hours researching and debating the request. In the end, the Select Board decided to grant the subordination and present an article to the Town Meeting in May 2014 regarding a discharge of the lien entirely.

An agenda item on July 31, 2013 met the Board with a full house in lower hall. Our four Town Hall employees explained their frustrations with the number, accusatory tones and repetitiveness of the continued public records requests coming from a small group. After reading prepared remarks and examples of correspondence, the staff required direction on how to proceed as the real day-to-day tasks were not being addressed as they should.

After much discussion by the Board and several of the 50 or more in attendance, the Board decided to "side step" state law and respond to repetitive requests with a form letter, essentially informing the person that, as this ground has been covered, the staff was directed to file the request and proceed with the business of the town. Although document requests still come in, the number and repetitive nature does not exist to the same extent. As of this date, only two of these letters have been sent.

In December, the Board was relieved that an adequate amount of money had been reimbursed from FEMA and MEMA to discharge the prior year's borrowing to finance Hurricane Irene repairs.

Also, in December, the Select Board accepted, with regret, the resignation of our Police Chief Patrick Droney. During his tenure, Chief Droney updated our procedures and policies, assembled a reputable part-

time team of officers, and instituted a community police program. In his resignation he thanked the townspeople for their support and appreciation, as well as for the opportunity to know our part of the world. Chief Droney also openly recommended Corporal Diane Wilder as a candidate for Chief. At the January 5, 2014 Select Board meeting, the Board appointed Officer Wilder as Interim Chief until June 30, 2014 or until a replacement is hired. During the budget process the Board, along with the Finance Committee, will be exploring how the town should move forward with the Police Department.

Other projects on the horizon include a Town Hall Steeple in need of repair along with the Firehouse, routine but expensive replacement of Highway Department equipment, as well as much needed improvements to the social center of town, the Transfer Station.

Respectfully,
Thomas S. Carter
Select Board, Chair

Agricultural Commission

The Agricultural Commission continues to meet monthly on the second Tuesday of each month, and any Ashfield resident who is interested in agriculture in Ashfield is welcome to attend the meetings. Johanna Pratt has been writing an occasional monthly column for the *Ashfield News* about farm activities and life in Ashfield. We still have some funding left from a state grant last year, which we are using to re-print our Ashfield Farms brochure. This brochure, available at Town Hall, Fall Festival, the Farmers' Market and at local farms in town, is a guide to 31 farms in Ashfield. If you are a new farmer (of any size or crop) in Ashfield, you are invited to be listed in the brochure.

We again had a display at the annual Fall Festival to educate both residents and non-residents about agriculture in Ashfield, as well as our annual biggest pumpkin and tallest sunflower contest.

At the present time, the Ag Commission has no budget and receives no funding from the town. Expenses that we have incurred have been borne by the members themselves, or by minimal grant funds. We have established an Ashfield Agricultural Fund, where monies can be donated for the use of the Ag Commission to support local agriculture, or to conserve valuable agricultural lands. Ashfield has a Right to Farm Bylaw, copies are available at Town Hall or from the Ag Commission.

Respectfully submitted.
Tom McCrumm, Chair

Animal Control Report

In 2013, the Governor of Massachusetts signed into effect an unusual number of laws regarding animals. The new regulations included domestic and wild animal rights and the training of officers dealing with these species. These new laws mandated formal training for previous and newly appointed animal control officers in Massachusetts. The new training is administered to the officer at the Massachusetts Police Academy in West Boylston. The instructors of the classes are provided by the organization of Animal Control Officers of Massachusetts, known as ACOAM. Upon successful completion of the course, the officers become certified law enforcement animal control officers of Massachusetts. Also, any of the 351 towns in Massachusetts can now call upon animal control officers in other towns for assistance. After 31 years as animal control officer in Ashfield, I attended and successfully passed the academy course, which was held March 21, 2013 to May 23, 2013. I am happy to report Ashfield is 100% in compliance with all the Commonwealth's new laws. There were some concerns that the local animal control officer's position might change or loose control due to the new laws. As long as I am the head animal control officer, nothing will be altered or changed and we will be operating exactly the same way as before October of 2012.

As a reminder, all dogs six months and older must be licensed by April 1 each year. In order to obtain a dog license, an up-to-date rabies certificate must be presented to the Town Clerk. This can be done in person, by mail, drop box in front of the Town Hall, or on a computer. Cash, check or credit card can make payment. Cats six months or older are also required by state law to have an up-to-date rabies shot. In addition, Ashfield has a year round restraining order. Dog owners are fully responsible for all damages done by an unrestrained dog.

I want to thank all the people and organizations that have supported and assisted me in performing my duties as the Ashfield Animal Control Officer. Anyone having questions or concerns can reach me at 628-3811. Lost and found notices are posted at Neighbors Store and the Post Office.

Dogs Confined	8
Dogs Placed	8
Cats Confined	0
Cats Placed	0
Other Animals Confined	0
Animal Bites	1

Phone calls	1,814
Mileage	737
Labor	754 hours
Fines Collected	\$10.00
Expenses	\$653.46

Respectively submitted,
Warren Kirkpatrick

Board of Assessors

The total value of property in Ashfield, as of December 2013, was \$215,673,135, with 91.85% of the property classed as residential, 2.75% commercial, 1.14% chapter lands, 0.44% industrial, and 3.82 % personal property. All classes are taxed at the same rate. The town's budget is \$4,203,641.80. When revenues from other sources, such as state aid, are subtracted, the total to be raised by taxation is \$3,325,676.00. The tax rate for FY 2013 is \$16.16 per \$1,000 of value.

The BOA is charged only with determining values of property based on fair market value. The actual amount to be raised by taxation each year is voted at Annual and Special Town Meetings. Attendees vote to adopt or modify numbers presented by the Select Board with recommendations from the Finance Committee. Once the town votes a budget, the BOA must then determine a tax rate that will raise that sum based on town-wide valuation, and also what share of that sum each citizen will pay based on the value of property they own. If town wide value goes up from one year to the next, the tax rate will go down based on a similar budget. If the budget goes up and town wide value is stagnant or declining, the tax rate rises accordingly.

Values in Ashfield and throughout the Commonwealth are determined according to DOR reviewed and certified practices. The most important factors in standard valuation are size of property (acres for land and square feet for structures) adjusted for quality/condition/encumbrances and any other documented influences (examples could be a plus for broad views or a minus for seasonal road access). Additional individual adjustments to value and/or actual tax bills may include factors such as placing eligible land in Chapter encumbrance or various reductions and credits for documented income and disability. Annual fully completed applications are required to be eligible for these individual adjustments, and failure to submit the required information by the prescribed date will result in removal of the adjustment.

The town's values must fall within a very tight range of actual comparable sales. Since there are few annual sales in Ashfield (usually around a dozen), the BOA consultant (Mayflower Valuation), working with DOR and the BOA, incorporates some consideration of additional evidence in surrounding towns. Every third year, DOR gives extra scrutiny to this process - the triennial revaluation for Ashfield is to be completed in 2014 for fiscal year 2015.

In order to avoid unreasonable short-term changes (except due to new construction or disasters), the BOA works on a three-year average of comparable values. Market trends up or down are thus evened out. Though sales have been slower in Franklin County during the recent downturn, values have held reasonably steady compared to other regions of the state.

For most residents, the actual value of their property changes relatively little year to year when markets are stable. Changes in your actual tax bill result primarily from changes to the town budget that must be raised from taxation.

Is it our requirement to inspect each property every nine years. In 2014 Mayflower Valuation will inspect properties. When the inspector arrives at your property he will present you with a signed letter from the BOA stating the inspection. If you're not at home he will leave the letter for you. The inspection includes measuring the outside of all buildings. If possible, the inspector will set up an appointment with you to inspect the inside of all buildings. The inspector's car will have an "Ashfield Board of Assessors" sign. It is your responsibility to ensure that your property card is correct. The assessed value on your property card is what you are taxed on. If you have questions about your assessed value or if you want a copy of your property card to review please contact Jenn Morse, Assessors Clerk in Town Hall by phone (413-628-4441 x 6) or by email assessors@ashfield.org.

We would like to thank Jenn Morse for her professionalism and dedication.

Summary of Monies Raised by Taxation and Receipts

	FY12	FY13	FY14
Total amount to be raised	\$4,097,522.50	\$4,009,913.78	\$4,479,832.29
Annual tax levy	\$3,098,561.50	\$3,229,351.26	\$3,485,277.86
Total property value	\$222,278,461.00	\$219,833,306.00	\$215,673,135.00
Tax rate per \$1,000	\$14.69	\$15.09	\$16.16

Respectfully submitted,
 Sandra Lilly, Chair (term expires 2016)
 Wayne Gardner (term expires 2014)
 Peter Wiitanen (term expires 2015)

Board of Health

2013 saw an upturn in construction, eight perc tests, eight septic permits and 20 Title Five inspections were recorded with the Board. A total amount of \$4,375.00 was collected in fees for the year 2013.

The Board received eight Open Meeting Law Complaints and seven Document requests in 2013. The Attorney General's Office found that in all cases the Board did **NOT** violate any Open Meeting Laws.

Shelly Carter of Baptist Corner Rd. was elected to the Board in May of 2013.

I am very sad to report that Susan Shaw Clark passed away suddenly. She was an extraordinary member of the Board of Health and the community. Susan orchestrated a very successful flu clinic this year, and worked diligently to fill the many Public Document requests that were brought to the Board. Susan will be sorely missed.

Thank you to all the nurses and volunteers that worked the 2013 flu clinic.

Thank you to fellow Board members Susan Clark, Shelly Carter, and Title Five Inspector Carl Nelke, Health Agent Claudia Lucas.

Respectfully submitted,
Duncan Colter, Chair

Ashfield Burial Ground Association

Supplement to Town Clerk's Report

Burials in Ashfield Cemeteries

January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013

Name	Date of Death	Date of Burial	Cemetery
Richard A. Powers	1/6/2013	5/24/2013	Hill
Jeremy N. Pauig	6/18/2013	6/22/2013	Plain
Brister S. Gray	12/6/2012	6/29/2013	Hill
Deane A. Williams	10/22/2012	6/30/2013	Plain
Roy H. Goldthwaite Jr.	8/13/2013	8/19/2013	Plain
Lawrence R. Robertson	9/23/2012	8/3/2013	Plain
Nancy(Robertson)Wiitanen	11/30/2012	8/3/2013	Plain
Robert W. Martin	3/7/2013	8/10/2013	Plain
Dennis E. Clark	8/17/2013	9/7/2013	Plain
Angelina(Oriti) O' Donnell	9/6/2013	9/11/2013	Plain
Charles P. Buck	1/11/2013	9/15/2013	Plain
Henry H. Paige	8/7/2013	9/15/2013	Plain
G.Jane Loder Monohon	6/16/2013	11/16/2013	So. Ashfield

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Graves, Burial Agent
President of the Burial Grounds Association

Conservation Commission

Conservation Commissions in Massachusetts have regulatory responsibility stemming from legislative passage of three acts: Wetlands Protection Act, Riverfront Act and Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Act. We review applications for activities within resource areas, conduct site visits, advertise and hold hearings, and issue or deny permits allowing activities. We also have the responsibility to review Forest Cutting Plans prepared under the Forest Cutting Practices Act. Our budget is driven by fixed costs relating to scribe services for our twice-a-month meetings and membership in the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissioners, which keeps us current with changes or proposed changes in our regulatory responsibilities. Our variable costs are determined by the number of permits we process which entail legal ad fees for hearings and certified mailing costs for mailing determinations; these fees are paid by the applicant and are returned to the town's General Fund.

In the past, applicants for building projects met with individuals, such as the Chair of the Commission, for sign-off permission in order to proceed with the project. In 2012, the Commission worked with the Franklin County Building Inspection Department to initiate their on-line permitting system. The primary obstacle to the process is the need to have a plot plan with the application showing where the building activity will take place. Conservation Commission jurisdiction is based on distance to wetland resource areas and permanent streams.

The Commission continues to work with the Board of Health on the resolution of beaver problem issues. The Board of Health Agent can issue a permit to remove beavers if the flooding caused by the dams impacts wells, septic systems and residences.

In addition to the regulatory responsibility cited above, we assist applicants with Chapter 91 Licensing. Ashfield Lake is more than 10 acres in size and defined as a "Great Pond" which requires that all new docks and anchored floats be licensed. We review and sign off on applications for land conservation efforts of organizations such as The Franklin Land Trust and The Trustees of Reservations. We support the preservation of habitats for rare, threatened and endangered species. We have concerns about the impact of invasive species and how we as a commission can pursue programs to halt their advance. In 2013 there was a move by the Army Corps of Engineers to provide more protection for vernal pools. More information will be made available in the future.

Lester Garvin, Chair;

Brian Clark, Janet Clark, David Fessenden, Philip Lussier

Council on Aging

First, many thanks to retired Board members Barbara Kuhns and Marcia Klein. Thank you to Doug Field for his continued position as Ashfield's liaison to the Select Boards of the member towns.

The monthly luncheons have been growing and we now have a coordinator, Marie Fuller. Many improvements in programming are a result of the Senior Center Staff's much appreciated work.

The senior van has had all of its required repairs; however garaging access and sufficient drivers is still a work in progress.

The Council is in need of three new members and the names of potential drivers for the van. Driver requirements have yet to be finalized but do include town residents.

Respectfully submitted,
Franklin Wickland, Chair

Cultural Council

For 2013-14, the Cultural Council received \$4,250 in funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. However, due to a bookkeeping error, an overage of \$414 was granted to 2012-13 recipients, thus reducing this year's funding to \$3,836. The Cultural Council initially met on December 6, 2013, but due to the lack of a quorum, we reconvened on December 16, 2013.

Of the 50 applications that were submitted, we were able to approve 20 projects. We look forward to seeing some of the following projects come to fruition: a video created by the Rural Renaissance titled, "The Healing Power of Music," to be shown at various health care facilities; a series of six classes on African Drumming, to be offered at the Shelburne Falls Senior Center, culminating with a performance; a theater arts intensive offered by Double Edge Theater; a poetry series to be offered at Mocha Maya's, in Shelburne Falls; and a chamber music concert at the Plainfield Congregational Church. Our area is so very rich with creative visionaries!

For further information on the Massachusetts Cultural Council programs and the Ashfield Cultural Council, visit www.mass-culture.org.

Current members are: Roberta Evans, David Fessenden, Dawn Fessenden (Chair), Wesley Fleming, Carole Groman (Secretary), Andrew Kinsey, Helene Leue and Jane Willis.

Respectfully submitted,
Carole Groman, Secretary

Emergency Manager

Another year has gone by and it was very quiet weather wise here in Ashfield. We had to use our town wide emergency phone system a few times for weather and announcements in town but the weather wasn't as bad as we were told it was going to be.

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) again this year came out with a grant and Ashfield was eligible for \$2,400 dollars to buy equipment to be used in an emergency. With that money we purchased equipment that we needed without having to ask the town for it including a mobile radio to go into Ashfield Emergency Medical Director's vehicle, and a GPS to be used to help emergency personal getting to places they were not familiar with, and a tablet for the Emergency Manager to take out into the field and record any problem that arises.

I asked the Select Board for an assistant to learn the Emergency Manager's duties and to be able to take over at a later date. The Select Board appointed Kyle Taylor from Hill Road to fill that position.

I would like to thank everyone who helps out in an emergency, and if anyone would like to help out we would be happy to have you come out and help.

Douglas Field
Emergency Manager

Finance Committee

In 1985 it was "voted to amend the By-laws with respect to the Finance Committee as follows: The Town shall elect a five-member Finance Committee whose members shall be elected for three year terms and shall hold no other elected or compensated position while serving as members of the Finance Committee. The members of the Finance Committee shall serve without compensation and shall consider all articles for all town meetings and report its recommendations before each meeting or vote."

From January through March, we met weekly with the Select Board to receive and comment on budget requests from various departments, boards, committees, and commissions within the town. After all budgets had been submitted, the Finance Committee reviewed and analyzed all data submitted. We then made our recommendations with respect to the Town's FY2014 budget at Annual Town Meeting. Similarly, we made recommendations regarding various warrant articles as presented at subsequent Special Town Meetings.

In constructing our budget for 2014, particular attention was paid to vocational school expenses, especially the transportation charges. David Newell of our committee undertook a careful analysis of the transportation situation and initiated the formation of a Vocational Education Advisory Committee that includes representatives from the towns of Charlemont, Hawley, and Plainfield as well as Ashfield. In coordination with the Mohawk Regional School District and Travel Kuz bus company, the committee has successfully implemented a consolidation of van routes that has resulted in significant savings for our town.

Additional savings have been sought with regard to elevator lift inspections. There are four handicap lifts in town (two at Town Hall, one at Belding Memorial Library, and one at the First Congregational Church), and annual inspections are now required, whereas in the past inspections were required every five years. We are seeking to have all four lifts inspected at the same time (to avoid repeated visits and travel charges). We also have petitioned state legislators to modify regulations so that inspections for small lifts are made on a less frequent schedule. Finally, we have applied to FRCOG to participate in their joint service contract for such inspections (at an appreciable cost savings).

Finally, at this writing (December 2013), we are pleased to report that the town's financial position appears to be quite sound: our

Stabilization Fund amounts to approximately \$417,300 and our Free Cash position stands at about \$322,600.

Respectfully submitted,
Ted Murray (Chair)
Tom Schreiber (Secretary)
Ricki Carroll
David Newell
Janet Rogers

Fire Department

We would like to thank the town for backing up the Fire Department in the purchase of the new rescue truck, which is a great asset to the department, and being well used. We have applied for a grant to replace the old military brush truck. Again, this year we received the State Safe grant in the amount of \$5,700.00.

The Fire Department would like to acknowledge Firefighter Jacob Niquette who graduated from Mass Fire Fighters Academy this year, successfully completing the state courses of Firefighter 1 & 2, which included 330 hours of classroom time. Captain Bryan Mollison retired from the department this year and Captain Mark Hurley moved out of the state. Four firefighters have been promoted: Jacob Niquette and Kyle Walker are now Lieutenants, Matt Haskins and Mike Purcell are now Captains. We have two firefighters, Andre Chaput and Trevor Meservey, who are taking an EMT course. Also joining the department as a junior firefighter (ages 14-18) is Jared Taylor.

The entire Fire Station including the front doors, was painted this year by the Franklin County Sherriff's Department. Thank you to them. A new gas heater has been installed in the truck bays of the station, which is part of the Green Communities Grant.

43 Permits were given out this year: 16 for new propane tanks; 15 for smoke /CO alarms; and 12 misc. permits.

There were a total of 163 calls in 2013: 71 fire calls and 92 medical calls. Tuesdays and Mondays were the busiest days and 9 a.m. to-12 Noon were the busiest times.

Respectfully submitted,
Delmar Haskins, Fire Chief

Franklin Regional Council of Governments Franklin County Cooperative Building Inspection Program

Your town receives building, plumbing, gas, and wiring inspection and zoning enforcement services through the Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program (FCCIP), a 38 year old shared service housed at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. We thank your town for your continued participation in the FCCIP, which allows small towns to have access to professional staff and state-of-the-art technology.

2013 was a busy year for the program. We issued 2,335 permits, including a significant number of insulation upgrade, solar array and wool/pellet stove permits. 29 new dwelling units were constructed in participating towns. The number of permits and fee revenues were higher in 2013 than in the previous year.

Our new online permitting program went live on July 1, 2011 and has issued 6,858 building, electrical and plumbing/gas permits since the. The program allows you to apply, pay for, and track the progress of any permit online, saving you time and visits to our office in Greenfield. The program has 2,346 registered users. You can find it at www.frcog.org under the Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program. Our website also includes helpful information on inspection requirements, permit costs, and contractor licensing.

In 2013, the FCCIP processed the following permits for Ashfield:

Residential Building Permits	106
Commercial Building Permits	7
Sheet Metal/Duct Permits	1
Electrical Permits	37
Plumbing Permits	22
Gas Permits	37
Certificates of Inspection	14

We would like to remind all residents of the importance of applying for permits for work done. Building, Electrical, and Plumbing/Gas permits are required by law and are an essential step in ensuring the safety of our communities. Please feel free to call our office with and building or zoning questions at 774-3167, extension 2.

James D. Hawkins, Building Commissioner, jhawkins@frcog.org

James Cerone, Building Inspector, jcerone@frcog.org

Tom McDonald, Electrical Inspector, electric@frcog.org

Andy French, Plumbing/Gas Inspector, plumbing@frcog.org

Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority

The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority is a public body politic and corporate, created by the Massachusetts legislature in 1973 to serve the residents and communities of Franklin County. HRA has all of the powers and responsibilities of a local housing authority and a redevelopment authority in all 26 communities of Franklin County. Our services include housing education; development, ownership and management of affordable rental housing; administration of housing subsidies; programs for homeless families; homeownership and foreclosure prevention education and services; and Community Development Block Grant application and administration for Franklin County towns.

HRA is part of a statewide network of nine regional Housing Consumer Education Centers that provide information, education, counseling, and referrals to individuals, families, organizations and businesses with housing-related questions or problems. HCEC staff work closely with social and human services providers to coordinate assistance to individuals and families in need, and conduct outreach to local banks, schools and utilities to provide information on housing-related resources.

HCEC continues to offer foreclosure prevention services to Franklin County homeowners through a partnership with the Western Massachusetts Foreclosure Prevention Center run by HAPHousing. This fiscal year, 52 homeowners at risk of foreclosure took advantage of this service. Foreclosure prevention services are most successful when homeowners seek assistance as soon as they know they are having difficulty making mortgage payments.

In FY 2013, HRA managed 262 units of affordable rental housing, including 18 units at the Ashfield House in Ashfield.

Sources of revenue for property management include rent, subsidies, and laundry income. Rent at public housing properties is set as a percentage of tenant income. At these properties, the state pays the difference between what tenants can afford and a maximum level of subsidy set by the Commonwealth each year. Unfortunately, the combination of rent and state subsidies is not sufficient to cover the costs of managing HRA's public housing properties, which results in long-term maintenance issues and strains on the agency's budget.

HRA has been managing the Ashfield House, an 18-unit privately-owned affordable rental property, since 2005. The property has

been experiencing severe financial challenges attributable to a variety of factors including but not limited to high vacancy rates, high property taxes, aging building components, high utility and insurance costs, and expenses inherent in managing a multifamily property in a rural area. As a result, the property is currently in debt to HRA. HRA staff is working with Rural Development, Inc. and the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Trust to secure new funds to stabilize operations, which will include replacement of the oil-fired heating system with more efficient propane boilers, siding repair and exterior painting, new washing machines and energy efficient lighting and refrigerators, additional insulation, new water-saving fixtures and replacement of an amortizing commercial loan with non-amortization zero-interest debt. Completion of the project is anticipated in October 2013.

HRA also administers a housing rehabilitation revolving loan program for many communities in Franklin County. This program receives the proceeds of previous CDBG loans when the loans are paid off. These funds are then made available for the same purpose to income-eligible households in the same town. HRA updated its agreements with towns for administration of this program in FY 2013. The following towns are currently participating in the program with new agreements: Ashfield, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Heath, Leverett, Leyden, Monroe, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Shutesbury, Sunderland, Warwick, Wendell and Whately. Fifteen homeowners in nine towns took advantage of this program in 2013.

HRA works to develop affordable housing in Franklin County in partnership with its nonprofit affiliate, Rural Development, Inc. HRA's Executive Director serves as the unpaid Executive Director of RDI. RDI pays HRA for other personnel and administrative services.

HRA commissions an independent annual audit. HRA's audited financial statements include revenue and expenses that are passed through the agency to other parties, such as the revenue that the agency receives from the federal government for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, which is paid to landlords on behalf of voucher holders. Capital assets and depreciation are also included in the audited statements. Because HRA has an October 1 fiscal year, the most recent audited financial statements are for the FY 12 fiscal year, which ended September 30, 2012.

For FY 2012, the agency's net assets totaled \$4,726,151, a decrease of \$232,100 from the previous year. Revenues for FY 2012 totaled \$7,656,770, which was \$626,686 less than the previous year, a

decrease of eight percent. FY 2012 expenses totaled \$7,888,870, which was \$531,435 less than in FY 2011, a decrease of six percent. Total administrative salaries decreased by \$281,978 in FY 12, continuing a multi-year trend of reduction in personnel costs, due in part to new employees being hired at lower costs, and vacancies that were not filled. The FY 2012 HRA audit reported no findings or deficiencies. Copies are available upon request.

In November 2012, the HRA Board of Commissioners approved a FY 2013 annual operating budget showing anticipated total revenue of \$2,736,706 and total expenses of \$2,831,474, with an overall deficit of \$90,759 to be funded through use of \$150,900 from reserves. Budgeted use of reserves exceeded the projected deficit due to the fact that surpluses in some programs could not be used to fund revenue shortfalls in others. Both the projected deficit and use of reserves was substantially smaller than in FY 2011. While operating results are not currently available for FY 2013, internal financials through August 30, 2013 suggest that the operating deficit will not exceed the deficit approved in the budget.

HRA has an 11-member Board of Commissioners. All commissioners reside in Franklin County. Nine members are appointed by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments for five-year terms; none of these appointees may be from the same community. Two commissioners are appointed by the Governor and serve until they are replaced. The Board of Commissioners meets once a month, generally on the first Monday of the month at 6 p.m. at Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls. All meetings are open to the public and are posted on HRA's Public Notice blog, www.fcrhra.blogspot.com.

Green Community Committee

Since we focused on reducing electricity usage in 2012, the focus of the Green Community Committee for 2013 was energy efficiency of heating systems in our town buildings.

Our 2012 work did result in measurable reductions in electricity used, saving the town \$1,200 in 2013. To reduce energy used for heating buildings, we commissioned in-depth energy audits for most of the town buildings, and used those audits to determine what work would be done in each building.

We helped pay for work at the wastewater treatment plant that will decrease this year's heating bill as well as future bills. We found we needed to excavate underneath the Town Hall in order to seal under that building, and Brian Clark, Stuart Harris, Ray Gray, Claire Courmand, and Quigley Builders volunteered their time, equipment, and expertise to do this job. Not only can we insulate the building properly now, but the electrical and heating system underneath the offices in the town hall are easily accessible for maintenance or upgrade for the first time.

We had some preparation to do in the Fire Station too, before we could insulate and seal that building.

In early 2014 we replaced the antiquated heating systems in the Fire Station and Town Hall, and rezoned the Town Hall heating system so the offices could be warm when in use, and not heated when vacant. We also sealed and insulated the Fire Station and the office portion of the Town Hall, so the heating bills for the future should be much reduced, and the offices will have much healthier air.

In addition, we worked with the Library Trustees to develop a plan for that building, so the library will receive insulation work, air sealing, and some heating system revamping to improve efficiency and comfort in 2014.

Lastly, we finished installing tankless water heaters in the Town Hall and library, and replaced incandescent Christmas lights with LED lights that use less than 2% of the electricity. No more \$160 jump in the December electric bill. For 2014, once the Town Hall and Fire Station projects are complete, we will focus on the Town Garage.

Highland Ambulance EMS

Operations. Highland Ambulance is the primary ambulance service provider for the towns of Ashfield, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield and Williamsburg. Highland also provides primary back up in the town of Worthington in support of Hilltown Ambulance of Huntington. Paramedics are on duty at Highland's station in Goshen from 6 a.m. until midnight seven days a week. During the midnight to 6 a.m. time period, Highland EMTs are assisted by Paramedics from other ambulance companies when the service of a Paramedic is required. Highland's active roster consists of 36 members including 12 Paramedics and 24 EMTs.

Emergency Responses. During 2013 Highland responded to 507 emergency calls. These are broken down by town as follows:

Ashfield	95	Chesterfield	56	Cummington	64
Worthington	25	Goshen	54	Plainfield	44
Williamsburg	165	Other	4		

Out of these responses, 320 required advanced life support services of a paramedic.

Training. The following special training events were held:

- Advanced Cardiac Life Support training.
- Advanced training in critical care for children with special needs.
- Training in use of bone needle drill for use when standard IV access is not available.
- Training for all area EMTs in the new State protocol on spinal immobilization.

Community Involvement. Highland provided support to our communities including:

- Ambulance Coverage for community events including the Chesterfield 4th of July Parade, the Cummington Fair , the Ashfield Fall Festival and the Hilltown Bicycle Race.
- Safety Day programs at New Hingham School and at Sanderson Academy.
- A flu shot clinic for area first responders and EMTs.
- Support for an evacuation drill at Sanderson Academy.
- Participated with State and local police and fire officials in a lock-down drill at Berkshire Elementary School.

Cash On Hand June 30, 2013

Operating Funds	\$12,749.29
Memorial Fund	19,394.35
Dresser Fund	2,737.25
Highland Funds	<u>6,982.65</u>
Total Cash On Hand	\$ 41,863.54

We were saddened by the death of Jim Pilgrim, a valued Plainfield representative on the Board. He will be greatly missed by all of us.

Respectfully Submitted,
Highland Ambulance Board of Directors:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Ashfield | Patricia Thayer |
| Chesterfield | Spencer Timm |
| Cummington | James Drawe |
| Goshen | Donald Boisvert |
| Plainfield | Vacant |
| Williamsburg | Christopher Smith |
| At-Large | Francis Dresser |
| At-Large | Bernard Forgea |
| At-Large | Douglas Mollison |

Highway Department

At Annual Town Meeting the townspeople approved up to \$285,000.00 to replace the 1985 motor grader. Two bids were received; Schmidt Equipment bid a John Deere at a price of \$275,950.00. Southworth Milton bid a Caterpillar at a price of \$223,206.00. Both bids included a trade allowance for our current machine. Southworth Milton was awarded the bid. I was pleased the price was significantly lower than the original estimate.

Chapter 90 work consisted mostly of resurfacing and related work. Chapter 90 work was done on the following roads; Baptist Corner Road, Beldingville Road, Howe Road, North Warger Road, Murray Road, West Road, Bear Swamp Road, Smith Road, Hill Road, and Burton Hill Road.

During 2013 two new employees were hired. In May Luke Pantermehl came on board and in December Todd Senecal was hired. Both are residents of Ashfield. Alan Taylor was promoted to the position of Foreman.

At the end of March long time employee Curt Pichette retired. Curt was a very dedicated and reliable employee for more than 23 years. Thank you to Curt and I wish you a very safe and happy retirement.

I would like to thank the Town Hall staff for their continued help and support. Thank you to the Police and Fire Department, for all your help throughout the year. I thank the Finance Committee and Select Board for your support.

Thanks to Phil Nolan, John LaBelle, and Brian Dickinson for great work at the Transfer Station. Thanks to Bryan Mollison, Art Pantermehl, Kenny Roberts and Nick Nye for helping when needed. Thank you to the crew of Alan Taylor, Jack Clark, Luke Pantermehl and Todd Senecal for another year of dedicated work.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas G. Poissant
Highway Superintendent

Historical Commission

The Ashfield Historical Commission is responsible for community-wide historic preservation planning. We have ongoing projects, such as the inventory of historical properties and the updating of our historic properties inventory forms. We also take on shorter-term projects as they present themselves.

The Commission will be working on helping coordinate the recognition and celebration of two important times in our town's history. First the 200th anniversary of the Town Hall's occupancy in 2014, and town's 250th anniversary in 2015. Anyone who has ideas, or is interested in either of these milestones is encouraged to attend one of our meetings. All help is welcome.

Our meetings are usually the fourth Thursday of the month and we invite people with ideas or questions about the historical preservation of our community to attend.

Respectfully submitted,
Steven Gougeon, Chair
Mollie Babize
Nancy Garvin
Gerard McGovern
Tristan Romer

History Project

This was the year (2013) when the prospect of publishing Volume III of the History of Ashfield, an account of life in Ashfield over the past half-century, began to come into focus. It has been an exciting time.

Ashfield is a town of many voices, many differing points of view. In recruiting writers, we have sought to reflect that diversity. Besides articles on a variety of topics, Volume III will contain other types of material as well: poetry, paintings, photographs, maps, graphs, tables, lists of office-holders, among others. It will also feature a section of biographies, listing the vital statistics of as many people as we can reach and who wish to be included.

The Project has been funded mainly by donations, almost all of them from year-round residents of town. This year those funds have been supplemented by a small but vital appropriation from the town. We have used these funds for necessary equipment and to provide a small stipend for office assistance by a non-resident. (It is still true, and will be, that every person who has submitted content or editorial input for the book has volunteered her or his time and effort.)

In the year ahead, as we assemble these pieces into a book, we intend to make the articles available for review and fact checking by anyone who has time to do it. Our intention is to publish a book that the whole town can be proud of. We are counting on people in town to help us make it so.

Phyllis Kirkpatrick and Don Robinson, co-editors
and members of the Editorial Board: Dave Fessenden, Stuart Harris, Tom Carter and Harry Keramidas

Report of the Superintendent Mohawk Trail Regional School District Hawlemont Regional School District

The educational improvement planning of the Mohawk Trail Regional School District and Hawlemont Regional School District is aligned to the District Standards and Indicators adopted by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). This report highlights progress made by Mohawk and Hawlemont during 2013 toward achieving these performance standards.

Standard 1: Leadership, Governance, and Communication.

Mohawk and Hawlemont are developing and implementing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at both the district and school levels. PLCs are collaborative structures used to distribute leadership and cultivate high performing school districts.

Professional Learning Communities: The districts continued their PLC initiatives. Administrative Council developed and implemented a PLC-based structure to facilitate its weekly meetings. This structure has been used to facilitate professional development in fundamental educational matters, such as educator evaluation. In their second year of implementation, Mohawk Middle-High School, Buckland-Shelburne Elementary (BSE), and Sanderson Academy made significant progress toward institutionalizing a culture of PLCs. BSE made the very important step of transitioning from administrator-led PLCs to teacher-led PLCs. Colrain Central School, Heath Elementary, and Hawlemont launched PLC initiatives.

Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction.

Mohawk and Hawlemont are re-writing their curriculums to align with the revised Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The districts are using a common web-based platform to promote collaboration, vertical alignment and continuous improvement. The curriculum is being written according to the Understanding by Design (UbD) model, which focuses on teaching for understanding.

Curriculum: For the elementary schools, the districts purchased Houghton Mifflin Math Expressions, which will be used in grades K-5. Sixth grade teachers wrote three science units, thus completing the new Earth Science-based 6th grade curriculum. The teachers worked in coordination with seventh and eighth grade science teachers to create a meaningful and inclusive scope and sequence. For the middle and high school, the District purchased an Algebra 1 program. The middle and high school teachers received guidelines, structured Professional

Learning time, and individualized support to continue writing UbD curriculum units.

Instruction: The districts created a crosswalk document linking the new Educator Evaluation Rubric with the Characteristics for Standards-Based Teaching and Learning Continuum of Practice adopted by the MA DESE. This crosswalk provided educators with examples of evidence and observable practices of proficient teaching.

Standard 3: Assessment. Mohawk and Hawlemont are using student assessment results, local benchmarks, and other pertinent data to improve student achievement and inform all aspects of educational decision-making.

Collecting Assessment Data: Mohawk and Hawlemont established three assessment windows during the school year: fall, winter and spring. Assessments for English Language Arts include the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and the Benchmark Assessment System. Math assessments include the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP).

Using Assessment Data to Inform Instruction: In all of the districts' elementary schools, data team meetings were instituted to facilitate the use of student assessment data to inform instruction. The elementary teachers focused on DIBELS, Benchmark Assessments, and NWEA MAP data. The PK-6 Curriculum Director worked with the elementary principals after the fall data collection period to deliver professional development helping the teachers to analyze student data and form intervention groupings. At the middle and high school, the teachers focused on Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) data and NWEA MAP data. PLCs were used to conduct data-based inquiry.

Standard 4: Human Resources and Professional Development. The Mohawk School Committee and the Mohawk Educator Association reached agreement on the new educator evaluation system required by MA DESE. Similarly, the Hawlemont School Committee and the Hawlemont Teachers' Association reached agreement. Both districts began implementing the new evaluation system with fidelity.

New Educator Evaluation System: Administrative Council completed administrator training for the new evaluation system and took responsibility for training all staff. Central Office purchased a software application designed to facilitate the new system electronically. Principals met with all educators to assist in self-assessment and setting

goals. Educators submitted self-assessment and proposed goals. Principals met with educators to establish educator plans. Principals completed most of the educator plans and first observation of each educator. Educators have submitted some evidence supporting their performance.

Standard 5: Student Support. The districts' new Professional Learning Days structure is designed to increase educator effectiveness and thus support students. All administrators are focused on scheduling as a way to improve student learning.

Mohawk and Hawlemont recognize that teacher support is essential to student support. With this connection in mind, the districts introduced Professional Learning Days (PLDs). PLDs replaced traditional half days and focused on educator training. Within the Mohawk Middle-High School, an Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) short block was negotiated by a Joint Labor Management Committee (JLMC) and implemented. The ELO structure introduced a time frame within the school day to provide academic support to all students, including at-risk students. Some elementary schools created after-school enrichment on Wednesday early release days. Additionally, Mohawk introduced summer enrichment camps.

Standard 6: Financial and Asset Management. Mohawk and Hawlemont continued to struggle with financial sustainability. Both School Committees have charged Administration with the responsibility of proposing and operating affordable budgets that support quality education.

Chinese Tuition-Paying Students. Mohawk worked with the Department of Homeland Security to become eligible to receive international tuition-paying students. The District researched various models to develop an international program and selected a sister school model. Mohawk contracted with an intercultural consulting firm. The high school principal traveled to China with this firm and procured two sister school agreements. School Committee authorized the District to move forward with a summer program in 2014 and preparing to receive 1-2 Chinese students during the 2015-2016 school year.

Hawlemont Agricultural Program. Hawlemont applied for a \$325K Community Innovation Challenge grant. The purpose of the grant is to reconstitute and rejuvenate Hawlemont by providing an innovative elementary education through hands-on, experiential learning that combines agriculture and community involvement with traditional curriculum. A financial goal of this initiative is to increase choice-in

revenues and reduce choice-out expenses, which would support the district's financial sustainability.

In 2013, the Mohawk and Hawlemont School Districts made substantial progress toward meeting and exceeding the MA DESE District Standards and Indicators. These performance standards were set higher than ever. Indeed, the more rigorous MA Curriculum Frameworks and the new educator evaluation system reflect how extraordinary times have become within public education. After having served the Mohawk and Hawlemont school districts for nine years, I am extremely optimistic about the future of our children's education within this increasingly demanding environment. There is a remarkable resilience that characterizes our communities, our educators, and our students. Mohawk and Hawlemont are ready for today's challenges and tomorrow's. On behalf of our students, I thank our entire school community for your steadfast support of our children's education. Because of you, the future remains very bright for our students!

Respectfully submitted,
Michael A. Buoniconti
Superintendent of Schools

Report of the Principal Mohawk Trail Regional High School

Collaboration, initiative, and innovation have been major themes at Mohawk in 2013. This year our school system adopted a calendar that increased opportunities for educators to work together; students were released early on many Wednesday afternoons for a Professional Learning schedule that permitted staff time to work together for professional development, curriculum writing, and collaboration. This is the second year that Mohawk has participated in a statewide Professional Learning Communities (PLC) initiative and our faculty is working together in new ways to support student learning and their own professional growth. With the introduction of the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) period into the high school schedule this year, students can meet with teachers to receive additional support or pursue enrichment opportunities during the school day.

The arts, athletics, and other extracurricular activities enrich students' learning experiences. This year Mohawk staff and students produced "The Hobbit" in March, a medley of short plays in June, and Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" in December. Our music program is dynamic, with the introduction of Strings Ensemble, Rock Band, and Percussion Lab courses in addition to the core vocal and instrumental courses. The Mohawk Music Association generously supports our music programming.

Mohawk student-athletes had a strong year with increasing levels of student participation. Nearly half of our student body, 246 student-athletes, participated in our fall 2013 athletic program. Through their involvement with Varsity M, our student-athletes volunteer in the elementary schools to read to younger students and serve as role models. The Mohawk Athletic Association generously supports our athletic program through their fundraising initiatives, including this year's Doug Turner Memorial Walkathon, which raised over \$13,000.

Students are demonstrating initiative and leadership to make improvements for their school. Over the past two years Mohawk has established a composting program, introduced hydration station water dispensers for filling water bottles, and created a student newspaper, *The Mohawk Independent*. The Student Council, composed of representatives from all grades, is taking on a greater role in the school, serving as a forum for advocacy as well as organizing activities for the school community. Students with the Anti-Bullying Youth Council

organized a number of events within the school and the community to improve communication and strengthen the sense of community.

At the midpoint of the 2013-2014 school year, enrollment in grades 7-12 is 501. There are 89 students in the seventh grade and 89 students in the eighth grade. There are 67 students in the ninth grade, 82 in the tenth grade, 90 students in the junior class, and 79 students in the senior class. Five students are enrolled in our post-graduate program.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn R. Dole
Principal

Report of the Principal Sanderson Academy

It is my absolute pleasure to be appointed as the new Sanderson Academy principal. 2013 saw generally strong academic performances from students, some staffing changes, and work continuing on a number of mandates from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Our enrollment as of the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year was 109 students in grades K-6, a small reduction from the previous year. The number of students at each grade level was as follows: 14 children in kindergarten, 15 children in first grade, 11 children in grade two, grade three had 16 students, fourth grade had 18 students, fifth grade had 23 students and 11 students were in our sixth grade class. There were 75 students from Ashfield and 22 enrolled from Plainfield. We had 12 students who were classified as “school choice” students due to the fact that they were accepted from towns other than Ashfield or Plainfield. All classes are grouped heterogeneously.

The faculty for the 2013 – 2014 school year consists of seven full-time classroom teachers, one special education teacher, one full-time reading teacher, and one full-time math interventionist. Specialists providing services in our school include a psychologist three days per week, a speech/language pathologist that services students three days per week, a full time nurse, and occupational and physical therapists, each for less than one half day per week. We have part time Art, Music, and Physical Education teachers who provide students with one hour of class time weekly in each subject area. We also have a part-time library manager and five other paraprofessionals. In June, we said good-bye to Marie Hodgkins, our fourth grade teacher, and Budge Litchfield, school principal, who both retired. Jorie MacLeod rejoined our staff after teaching in Heath. We welcomed Ben Hause as our physical education teacher for the year while Liz Tyler spends time with her baby twins. We said good-bye to paraprofessionals Kachina Yuryan and Lauren Preston-Wells and welcomed Dan Girard.

The spring of 2013 saw Sanderson Academy students again performing well on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Achievement System (MCAS) tests. In the three areas assessed, English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology, our students performed at levels, which were similar to or better than the performances of other students in our District or State, but when compared to our own previous scores, our students showed some decline in the areas of Mathematics

and English Language Arts. We use this data when planning our curriculum, assessments, and groupings of students.

We continue to devote a great deal of time addressing numerous state mandates. Much of our focus has been implementing the new statewide educator evaluation system. Educators completed self-assessments, wrote SMART goals, are observed by an administrator, and are required to submit evidence of proficiency. We have continued our work with Professional Learning Communities and Learning Walkthroughs.

Thank you citizens of Ashfield and Plainfield for all you do to support your community school!

Respectfully submitted,
Emma Liebowitz M.Ed.
Principal

Special Education and Pupil Services

A three-step process determines eligibility for Special Education services. Initially, the student has to have a specific, identified disability. The student then needs to fail to make effective progress in appropriate curriculum after general education interventions have been delivered. Lastly, the student must demonstrate the need for specialized instruction or related services to access the curriculum. Related services, including speech and language therapy, occupational and physical therapy, assistive technology and counseling are provided in each of the three districts. The Mohawk Trail Regional School System has made a commitment over the last year to implement tiered instruction. Tiered instruction is a regular education service provided to all students. Teachers and staff collect and utilize data to determine intervention groups. Intervention groups are often short term and target a specific identified area of concern. Student data is tracked to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. Historically in order for students to access support they were required to be identified for special education. The Professional Learning Days have enabled teachers and staff to meet on a regular basis to analyze data and determine groupings.

The number of students receiving special education has fluctuated minimally. While the student population in our districts is on a downward decline, many factors influence special education. Our districts have a high rate of mobility for both foster children and families who struggle with housing. In addition, for the small districts one or two students can impact the percentages.

Data collected from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education indicates the following:

	2010	2011	2012	2013
MTRSD	19.5%	20.1%	20.6%	19.7%
Hawlemont	26%	24%	26%	27%
Rowe	10%	16%	14%	17%

Rowe and Hawlemont School Districts participated in the CPR (Coordinated Program Review). CPR includes staff and teacher interviews and record reviews. Both districts received no corrective action for student related services. They were cited for excluding newly required language in their school handbooks. The changes were made in the school year 2012-2013 handbooks. In addition, all districts are required to support a Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Please contact

Leann Loomis if you are interested in participating. Mohawk Trail Regional School District will begin their CPR in March of 2014.

Leann Loomis
Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Mary Lyon Foundation

This was a banner year for the Mary Lyon Foundation. The annual Community Spelling Bee raised approximately \$7,000 for the Mini-Grant program with a portion earmarked for the Harper and Paulyne Gerry Student Assistance Fund. A large gong acquired for the spelling bee was donated to the music department. This fall we funded 26 school-based mini-grants and during the year purchased various items for the schools including a reading desk and sleds for recess at the Buckland Shelburne Elementary School.

At our annual Spring Lyonnaise, a celebration of excellence in local education, school committee chairperson Bob Aeschback and superintendent Michael Buoniconti welcomed assembled guests and awards were presented as follows: Spirit of Adventure Award given to Michael McCusker, Career Award presented to Ruth Black of Mohawk Trail Concerts, Business Award given to The Optician, and the Mohawk Outstanding Alumni Award was presented to Elizabeth McGowan '79, a recent Pulitzer Prize winner. The Heath strings program provided music and a scene from the Hobbit was presented by Mohawk students led by Jonathan Diamond. The 23rd annual special education conference was once again held for two days in March at Deerfield Academy. In attendance were 710 educators from 31 school districts across western Massachusetts who registered for 50 concurrent workshops and listened to two keynote speakers.

We have two new scholarships, an art scholarship in honor of beloved K-12 itinerant art teacher Jack Shea and a scholarship sponsored by the Arms Academy class of 1963. For the first time the Mary Lyon Foundation participated in Valley Gives, an online charitable giving event, and we raised \$2,795 in one day. We are very appreciative of grants and matching gifts from the Cleveland Dodge Foundation, Myrtle Atkinson Foundation, The Recorder, Peoples United Community Foundation, Brookfield Community Foundation and Bristol Myers Squibb.

As winter approached we purchased about \$3,000 worth of warm winter clothing for local elementary school children, and the Mary Lyon Foundation was offered participation in Warm the Children. We continue to provide grocery certificates for food at Keystone Market for families in need, especially during school vacations.

For the past 23 years the Mary Lyon Foundation has been providing innovative support for local education in the schools and in our nine West County communities. Board members are past president

Marion Taylor, president Stefan Kostka, vice president Hugh Knox, corresponding secretary Sharon Hudson, recording secretary Suzanne Conway Lagreze, treasurer Karen Fairbrother, Amy Love and Beth Bandy. Gina Sieber is the business manager and we are proud to have approximately 60 volunteers, especially Sandy Gilbert of Heath. Our volunteers are from all corners of Franklin County and help sponsor events. We thank the community for such ongoing and enthusiastic support of our programs and services.

Susan Samoriski, Ed.D.
Executive Director

Carl H. Nilman Scholarship Fund

The fund was established under the provisions of the will of Carl H. Nilman for the purpose of providing scholarships. Recipients shall reside in the school district and be graduates of the Mohawk Trail Regional High School who desire and are deemed worthy of post high school education or training and who are in need of financial assistance.

This year the awards subcommittee read 75 applications, 38 were from seniors and 37 from previous graduates of Mohawk. \$30,900.00 is to be awarded using 30% for seniors and 70% for graduates. The committee feels that seniors have multiple scholarship opportunities from other sources while graduates have far fewer resources. 28 scholarships totaling \$10,100.00 were awarded to seniors (74% of applicants). 30 scholarships totaling \$20,800.00 were given to graduates (81% of applicants). The awards committee is Sheila Graves, Marge Porrovecchio (Charlemont), Eric Sumner (Heath), Michelle Hillman (Colrain) and Marion Scott (Buckland).

From 1991 – 2013 a total of \$810,125.00 has been awarded in scholarships. Mohawk seniors have received \$250,575.00 and \$559,550.00 has been awarded to Mohawk graduates.

The same formula for determining what percentage of the funds should be distributed as scholarships, which has been established by the School Committee and the management firm of Bartholomew and Company, was used again this year.

The application has been revised and is now available on line to the graduates. Seniors can pick their applications up at Mohawk.

Co-chairs of the Committee are Marge Porrovecchio and Robin Hartnett. The Finance Committee is composed of David Engle, Marion Taylor and Jim Pilgrim. Other members of the Committee are Paula Consolo (member at large from Buckland), Jonathon Diamond from Heath and Rebecca Bradley. Susan Crawford (from Hawley) has been appointed to serve as the liaison between the School Committee and the Carl H. Nilman Scholarship Committee.

This year we were saddened by the passing of Jim Pilgrim. Jim was a very valuable person on our Committee and will be dearly missed by one and all. Our condolences to Jim's Family.

The Mohawk community owes a debt of gratitude to Mr. Nilman for his foresight in supporting higher education for the students of the Mohawk Trail Regional High School. The committee members are honored to bring the wishes of his will to fruition.

Students of any age who are graduates of Mohawk (and were living in the nine town area at the time of graduation) are encouraged to apply for scholarships to help meet their continuing education needs. Call the Guidance Office at Mohawk for information regarding requirements and deadlines.

Respectfully submitted,
Marion E Scott, Secretary

Fred Wells Trustees

Funds available for the fiscal year 2013/2014 are \$209,365.00 (Which included unused scholarship money from 2011/2012 that was reallocated to the scholarship fund)

EDUCATION: The Trustees received 262 applications and approved 258 students to receive \$181,300.00. This amount includes the two \$1,000.00 scholarships in honor of Ralph and Hilda Haskins. The Trustees spent many hours on the selection process to ensure that as many students as possible could receive scholarship aid.

HEALTH: Four (4) programs were approved totaling \$17,600.00:

- Community Action-WIC Program
\$6,000.00
- Community Health Care Center
\$2,240.00
- NELCWIT
\$3,360.00
- Hospice of Franklin County
\$6,000.00

AGRICULTURE: An amount of \$10,465.00 was allowed by the Trustees for payment:

- Franklin County Agricultural Society
\$6,415.00
- Heath Agricultural Fair
\$2,836.00
- Shelburne Grange Fair
\$1,214.00

Respectfully Submitted,
Molly J. Robinson

Park Commission

The year 2013 was a transition year. After nine years of dedicated service, Nina Coler left the Park Commission. She had been a constant advocate of our parks and is sorely missed. She does however continue to lead the removal of water chestnuts in our beloved lake.

Our new member Judy Haupt came on board with lots of enthusiasm and dedication. Judy takes our meeting minutes and submits our bills to the town accountant. Maryellen Abbatiello was voted in as Chairperson.

Our biggest challenge this past summer season was keeping lifeguards scheduled. Judy Delaney and Molly Donahue were regularly scheduled, Marybeth Mizula covered some shifts and the rest was pieced together with various substitutes. This was due to Andre Chaput abruptly resigning to take a different position and vacation dates not reported at beginning of the season.

Emmett Van Driesche made repairs to the dock as some of the boards needed replacing. The boards needed for the repair were donated by Lester Garvin. Emmett also replaced several screws on the dock and bolts holding the diving board in place. Maryellen and family replaced the rope through the buoys and the men's bathroom lock.

We have incorporated a friendly notice handed to beach comers and sometimes placed on windshields, to try to deter non-residents from using the Ashfield beach. This method was used in late August and we hope to implement this tactic at the beginning of the 2014 season.

Swim lessons were also different this year in that we used the YMCA of Greenfield. There were some minor difficulties but the overall report from parents was very good.

Our sand was donated this year by Scott Decker and spread by Doug Pease. A thank you note was sent to both men. Also thanked is Doug Cranson who opens our bathhouses in May and winterizes them in September. He also does the brush hogging in the wilder open spaces of our parks.

Two new picnic tables were purchased, one was placed in the Belding Memorial Park and one at the beach.

We are proud of our parks and beach. And thank everyone behind the scenes who continue to help maintain these areas.

Respectfully Submitted,
Maryellen Abbatiello, Judy Haupt, Emmet Van Driesche

Personnel Board

A key responsibility of the Personnel Board is to provide and maintain a manual containing the town's policies and procedures. It has been this Board's task to update the existing 2008 manual and to include changes in the state and federal regulations, such as the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Small Necessities Leave Act (SNLA). Also MIIA, the town's insurer, has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) of which town employees may be unaware. In some instances local policies approved by the Select Board were not added to the manual. Altogether this process was more involved than originally anticipated.

Chair Dave DeHerdt resigned from the Board effective July 1, 2013. We are most grateful to Dave as he continued to give valuable assistance as a consultant and helped clarify a number of issues. We are pleased to report a draft of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual was submitted in November 2013 to the Select Board for review. Once a legal review has been completed and then approved by the Select Board, copies of the manual will be prepared for distribution to all town employees and posted on the town's website.

The Board collected and organized copies of employees' job descriptions, which from time-to-time will be reviewed and updated for approval by the Select Board. Maintaining and comparing job descriptions and wage information from other towns is part of this process. In May 2013 binders with all job descriptions were delivered to the Select Board for review. When returned, they will be finalized, submitted to the Select Board for approval, and posted on the town's website.

A current project to be finalized in 2014 is to evaluate various employment positions and develop a classification system to encourage equity in the town's salary structure. Development of a salary/wage range will be especially useful when hiring new employees.

The Personnel Board is a five-member board: one from the Select Board, one from the Finance Committee and three citizens. The Board looks forward to the appointment of a fifth member in 2014.

Priscilla Phelps, Chair
Paulette Leukhardt, Select Board
Ricki Carroll, Finance Committee
Beverly Chow, Member at Large

Planning Board

In 2013 the Planning Board provided a sounding board for citizens with concerns and questions about land use in our town. In most cases we were able to provide answers or direction for them.

Ashfield had a moderate amount of property boundary changes. As usual no subdivisions were proposed. No special permits were requested in 2013.

The Planning Board began the year by helping to update the Ashfield Open Space and Recreation Plan. Alan Rice has headed up this important project.

We continued to track wind and solar development issues and how changing state laws and regulations might affect planning and energy options.

The board has decided to ask the citizens about a bylaw change that could lead to more senior housing within town center. Please look for notices as we expect that there will be hearings.

The Planning Board meets the first and third Wednesday of each month. The public is welcome.

Respectfully Submitted
Michael Fitzgerald, Chair
Alan Rice, Clerk
Ken Miller
Sarah Holbrook
Lauren Preston Wells

Police Department

As I submit this annual report, it will be my last as chief of the Ashfield Police Department. As you are all aware by now, I have accepted a position in the private sector much closer to my home in Connecticut. I wish circumstances had been such that I would have been able to relocate to the area and made this the last move in my career, however that was not possible. With that being said, I would like to thank the former select board members...Dave DeHerdt, Norm Russell and Doug Field for giving me the opportunity to serve the community. I would also like to thank the current select board...Tom Carter, Ron Coler and Paultette Leukhardt for their assistance, as well as the Finance Committee. I would also like to give thanks to Laura Blakesley, Anne Dunne, Mary Fitz-Gibbon and Lynn Taylor for their assistance and support. Lastly, thank you to Corporal Diane Wilder, Officers Charlie Wilder, Jarek Konopko and Chris Mattson, and former officer Justin Roy for making my job easier. Ashfield has a tremendous staff of very dedicated officers and you are fortunate to have them. Finally to the residents of Ashfield...thank you for making me feel welcome and becoming a part of your community. I met some tremendous people whom I will miss a great deal.

The police department continues to operate in as efficient a manner as our current budget allows. We still rely on the Massachusetts State Police to cover town for a significant number of hours weekly, in excess of half the time on a weekly basis. I do not believe that this is optimal for our town. As reported the past two years, the staffing at the state police barracks in Shelburne Falls is stretched thin and response times may suffer through no fault of theirs. I believe in fairness to that organization Ashfield needs to increase coverage by our own department.

Personnel The police department is fully staffed as authorized by the Select Board. We continue to also have three auxiliary officers on our staff. As of the publishing of this report, I am not sure what direction the town has gone in as far as my replacement. I am hopeful that my recommendation to appoint Corporal Wilder as at least the interim chief is accepted.

Vehicles The Ford Interceptor has worked out well for our department. With that in mind, the Ford Explorer is eight years old as of this report and strong consideration should be made into replacing that vehicle next year at the latest. My recommendation is a six-year life for each car with a new vehicle being purchased every three years. With all of the inclement weather in this part of the Commonwealth, vehicles are

exposed to a great deal of road chemicals, which reduce the effective lifespan of vehicles.

All maintenance has been performed on the vehicles as appropriate; they have had their state inspections and are legally registered.

Traffic Trailer The trailer has been deployed many times and for the most part, we have determined that speed is not a “large” problem in town. The equipment has worked out very well and the department is appreciative of adding this to our inventory.

Other Equipment As of the writing of this report, we were still waiting to hear on a grant proposal for an in-car camera system.

Training The Commonwealth finally agreed to fund training for police officers to a limited extent by placing a \$5 surcharge on traffic violation citations. It is unknown how this money will be utilized. The new chief should stay on top of this.

Conclusion 2013 continued the rebuilding process for the department. I am hoping that the steps, which have been put in place by me can continue to move the department forward. If there is anything I can do to be of assistance in any transition, I am offering my help to the select board, any search committee or whatever course the community wishes to take. Thank you for welcoming me into your home.

Patrick Droney
Chief of Police

Sewer Commission

The most exciting development this year has been the insulation of a portion of the marsh greenhouse. This project was made possible with help from a Green Communities grant. One quarter of the marsh has been winterized and the remaining three quarters are being heated minimally or not at all. Previously, the marsh greenhouse has consumed about 85% of the propane required to heat both greenhouses. By reducing the area to be heated and better insulating that space, we are seeing a significant reduction in fuel costs.

Otherwise, the treatment plant has passed another uneventful year. The moderate rainfall of 2013 caused no difficulties with elevated flows. Fall Festival flows were also more manageable thanks to the increased use of porta-potties. As the plant ages we are experiencing a certain amount of equipment failure, but the necessary repairs have been minor and have had no impact on treatment. We continue to meet the discharge requirements imposed by our permit. The Franklin County Solid Waste District has negotiated a new contract. As a result, we are now able to haul smaller sludge loads, which is sometimes a benefit to our small plant.

Looking to the future, the truck belonging to the Treatment Plant is no longer able to pass inspection. Being without a truck makes it more difficult to transport equipment and maintain the pumping station. Hopefully, by the time you read this, a special town meeting will have approved the purchase of a replacement truck from the Sewer Enterprise Fund.

We are also considering upgrading the oil boiler used to heat the Administration Building with a propane insert. This may lead to cheaper fuel costs, but a primary incentive is to dispose of the 2,300-gallon underground tank which could eventually pose a leakage threat.

We continue to see higher flows during cold weather and would like to remind users once again that neither sump pumps nor taps let run to prevent freezing should be allowed to drain into the sewer. This clean water should be routed to outdoor drainage. Thank you for your continuing help in keeping things running smoothly at the plant.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Hoff, Todd Olanyk & Dan Lovett

Senior Center

It has been a year of smooth transitions and growth for the Senior Center. Interest, attendance and support for our organization have increased. As the population of residents reaching the age of 60 continues to increase dramatically, the Councils on Aging members, town representatives and staff are working together to accommodate needs and interests. Last year there were just over 500 residents 60 years and older. By 2020 that number is expected to increase to 723. Over 100 seniors from Ashfield participated or were served a total of over 2000 times and the number is growing. Overall the Center served over 500 individuals partaking more than 10,000 times during the year.

Doug Field has recently been appointed to the Ashfield Council on Aging, joining Wayne Wickland on the Council. Diane Field, Marie Fuller, Helen Boyden, Jane Wagener and other wonderful volunteers are assisting with programs in Ashfield including weekly Tai Chi and Osteoporosis Fitness classes as well as a monthly luncheon. Thank you to the First Congregational Church and St. John's Church for generously providing space for these programs.

At the Center, 2013 brought a change in staffing. Cathy Buntin continued as Director for her first full year in that position. Other staff changes included the addition of Leanne Dowd, first as Activities Coordinator then as Outreach Coordinator when our longtime and dedicated Jackie Stanford retired in July. Dot Lyman, who had volunteered and worked as our Volunteer Coordinator took over the Activities position, which saw a reduction in hours, passing some of the clerical duties to part time Office Assistant Gloria Fisher who began this past fall. Bob Szafran, our lead van driver saw the addition of scheduling of rides and record keeping to his duties. Over 100 volunteers continue to lead classes, provide rides for medical, shopping and visiting, work as receptionists, do small repair jobs at people's homes, raise funds and help coordinate operations at an administrative level. Without these dedicated people, we could not offer near as much as we do now.

Transportation seems to still be the number one concern in Ashfield and surrounding towns. A statewide survey resulted in transportation being listed as the priority need as well.

We are awaiting results of a grant application, which would allow us to expand the schedule and routes slightly, allowing some regular runs for Ashfield residents.

With the growing senior population, requests for information and support for younger seniors who are moving into caregiving roles for

their family members are increasing. Our Outreach Worker is coordinating more informational presentations as well as scheduling private meetings. Leanne is very knowledgeable and can offer information and referrals for everything from food and fuel assistance, housing options, transportation, Medicare coverage, taxes, to retirement planning. A new Benefits Counselor will be on site once per month to also share information.

We welcome your input. Please contact Cathy Buntin, Director at any time at 625-2502, email at sfsrctr@crocker.com or come for a visit.

Technology Committee and Municipal Light Plant

The Technology Committee was newly formed in January 2013 as the consolidation of the Telecommunications Committee and the Website Committee. The members were Brian Clark, Chris Gray (through June 2013), Juliet Jacobson, David Kulp (chair), and Andy Smith. Chris Gray provided abundant support as well. Its mission is to:

- Advocate for telecommunication services for all town residents, including broadband internet, cellular and copper-line telephone service.
- Provide support in cooperation with town consultants or employees, if any, for management, maintenance, development, procurement, deployment, and use of information technology and telecommunication services as needed by the town and town-related organizations and events. Such support would specifically include the town website and computers, telephone and internet systems in town municipal buildings.
- Advise and support the operational needs of the Ashfield Municipal Light Plant.
- Serve as liaison with regional technology entities such as Western Mass Connect, Massachusetts Broadband Institute, and WiredWest.

This year we upgraded the town hall wireless network to improve security and ensure adequate coverage throughout the building and extending to the town commons. We researched upgrading the town's antiquated telephone system to a voice-over IP system and moving the internet service to the state's new fiber optic network. However, MBI delayed the activation of the network until 2014. In the meantime, much effort was invested in rectifying poor Verizon DSL internet service in town hall.

The committee was tasked to improve the town's electronic document storage and retrieval systems in order to service public records requests more efficiently and to work towards compliance with the state's recommendations for electronic document management. Digitizing printed documents is also of interest. However the scope of municipal records is enormous including minutes, bylaws, emails, contracts, inspection reports, bills, checks, births and deaths, and much more. Our initial focus will be on better management of email and

existing electronic documents only. New hardware and software systems and new policies are to be implemented in the latter half of FY14.

In December, the committee expressed support that the Select Board should make an agreement with Chris Gray to allow the placement of radio transceivers in the town hall tower to provide wireless internet service to Ashfield residents. Final resolution continued into 2014.

The Technology Committee continued to work with our town service provider, Town Websites, to make updates and improvements to the town's website with the goal of increasing town officials' use of the website to keep Ashfield citizens informed.

The group works closely with the Municipal Light Plant. The MLP serves as the legal entity by which the town belongs to the regional WiredWest municipal light plant cooperative. David Kulp and Andy Smith are the appointed delegates to the cooperative, which meets monthly.

WiredWest made significant strides towards bringing fiber optic broadband to residential homes through the completion of a market survey, thorough mapping of utility poles, engineering designs for a network, and detailed financial modeling. The Patrick administration proposed \$40 million for "last mile" broadband that was expected to be approved in 2014. WiredWest began work in cooperation with the state's Massachusetts Broadband Institute to raise approximately \$60 million more, primarily through federal funds from the Rural Utility Service in 2014.

Respectfully submitted,
David Kulp, Technology Committee chair and MLP manager,
Brian Clark,
Juliet Jacobson,
Andy Smith

Town Clerk Report

January to December 2013- a vital records comparison

Vital Statistics -1913

Births 15
 Marriage 14
 Deaths 20
 John M. Sears –Town Clerk

Vital Statistics- 2013

Births 9
 Marriage 6
 Deaths 14
 Ann Dunne-Town Clerk

Elections Results 2013:

Special Local Election, February 02, 2013

1,290 Reg. Voters
 210 Ballots Cast
 16% turnout

Special State Primary, April 30, 2013

1,347 Reg. Voters
 305 Ballots Cast
 22.64% turnout
 Democrat: 260 Republican: 45

Local Election, May 04, 2013

1360 Registered Voters
 74 Ballots Cast
 13% turnout

Special State Election, June 25, 2013

1354 Reg. Voters
 547 Ballots Cast
 40.6 % turnout
 Democrat: 260 Republican: 45

Registered Voters: 1355 (as of Dec 31, 2013)

441 Democrat
 93 Republican
 809 Unenrolled
 12 Political Designations

Thank you to all the election workers/volunteers who gave their time during this busy election season. Especially Nancy Garvin as Warden and Lynn Taylor-Assistant Municipal Clerk. They are essential to the process.

A total of 389 dog tags/licenses were issued in 2013

Ann Dunne
Town Clerk

Election Workers 2013

CONSTABLES

John LaBelle , Betty Lesure, Warren Kirkpatrick

WARDEN

Nancy Garvin, Anne Yuryan, Lynn Taylor

PRECINCT CLERK

Duncan Colter

ELECTION WORKERS

Sally Yates, Lynn Taylor, Louise Poissant, Kyle Taylor, Wayne Farrell,
Doug Cranson, Poppy Doyle, Honey Boyden, Terry Cassidy, Claire
Cournand, Barbara Maloney, Beverly Chow, Brendon Gray

TALLEY SHEET COUNTERS

Virginia Wiswell, Wayne Farrell, Betty Stewart, Claire Cournand, Sandy
Lilly, Kyle Taylor, Phil Lussier, Faye Whitney, Buz Eisenberg, Marcine
Eisenberg, Harry Keramidas, Lynn Taylor

History of the Boston Post Cane in Ashfield

Excerpt taken from Research by Nancy Gray Garvin of Ashfield

In August 1909, Edwin A. Grozier, publisher of the *Boston Post* newspaper, contacted and sent an ebony cane with a gold head to the Selectmen of 700 towns in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine. Two towns in Vermont were included but none in Connecticut. The cane was to be presented to the oldest male citizen of each town with the compliments of the *Boston Post*. It was to be used by this oldest male citizen for the rest of his life, or until he moved from the town. At his death it was to be handed to the next oldest citizen. The inscription on the head read, "Presented by the *Boston Post* to the oldest citizen of Ashfield" In 1930, after much controversy, eligibility for the cane was given to women as well as men.

The Most Recent Recipients of the Boston Post Cane

Helen "Nell" Hall, October 21, 1912 - January 15, 2011

Walter Whitney Jr., February 8, 1916 - October 12, 2013

Claire Pless, October 15, 1914 - February 14, 2014

Ruth Craft, July 21, 1916

The Select Board agreed to present the cane to Walter Whitney Jr. in early 2011.

Ron Coler, Select Board member, presented the cane to Claire Pless on November 25, 2013. Claire had joined her family in Ashfield in August 2011.

Tom Carter, Chair of the Select Board, presented the cane to the current recipient, Ruth Craft, on March 16, 2014.

Town Accountant's Report: Fiscal Year 2013

FY 2013 General Fund Revenues Budget to Actual Summary:

Revenues:	Budget	Actual	Variance
Taxes	3,472,163	3,483,179	11,016
Licenses and Permits	2,000	9,213	7,213
Intergovernmental	263,979	265,441	1,462
Charges for Services	67,000	72,850	5,850
Fines and Fees	1,000	1,700	700
Unclassified	0	26,889	26,889
Transfer from other funds	7,755	7,755	0
Investment Earnings	1,000	1,173	173
Total Revenues	3,814,897	3,868,200	53,303

FY2013 General Fund Expenditures Budget to Actual Summary:

Expenditures:	Budget	Actual	Variance
General Government	289,893	251,936	-37,957
Public Safety	321,890	301,405	-20,485
Public Works	542,223	518,128	-24,095
Community Services	99,974	100,596	622
Education	2,309,104	2,192,171	-116,933
Insurance/Fringe Benefits	153,202	133,418	-19,784
Unclassified	41,280	41,679	399
Debt Service	157,456	155,509	-1,947
Total Expenditures	3,915,022	3,694,842	-220,180

Town Hall Building Committee

Our year was busy on many fronts:

A new demand electric water heater has been installed to save energy.

We updated the Application Procedure for Use of Town Hall. It was approved by the Select Board, and made available for downloading from the town website.

The Committee finalized its Fragrance Free Guidelines for Town Hall and sent them to the Select Board for approval.

With the Historical Commission, we discussed possible events to celebrate the building's 200th birthday in 2014.

The Fire Station and the Town Hall have been painted, except for the steeple above the bell deck, with labor supplied by the Sheriff's department.

A survey of the steeple at the bell deck and above has brought to light a number of serious problems that we hope to attend to in FY 15.

The #1 recommendation of the Green Community Committee's hired energy audit of Town Hall is "*energy conservation by air sealing the crawl space under office floors.*" We accomplished the excavation of over 200 cubic yards, needed for access to this space, with a volunteer skeleton crew of local people and their own equipment, light and heavy. The former interior crawl space supports have been improved. The perimeter has been sealed with spray foam from the underside of the floor boards to the base of the primary foundation stones, a vertical distance of as much as 32 inches. The excavation shows that we have two thousand square feet of unused building space. However, it needs a full foundation and floor slab before it can be used.

In December, at Brian Clark's recommendation based on his research, and with the Fire Chief's approval, Brian and his wife, Susan, changed the many strings of holiday lights for the Fire Station and Town Hall to LED at a savings of at least \$160 per year for electricity.

The Green Community Committee has added office heat zones for more individual control, and will improve office insulation, and install a new gas boiler in early 2014.

The Committee:

Stuart Harris, chair, Douglas Cranson, Wayne Gardner,
Nancy Gray Garvin, Mary Quigley, Donna Scott

Town Collector

	Real Estate Balances As of June 30, 2013	Personal Property Balances As of June 30, 2013	Motor Vehicle Balances As of June 30, 2013
2013	\$102,068.00	\$1,567.00	\$18,273.00
2012	\$39,793.00	\$1,999.00	\$6,420.00
2011	\$14,323.00	\$795.00	\$2,211.00
2010	\$7,567.00	\$750.00	\$2,066.00
Prior years	\$27,659.00	\$865.00	\$5,314.00
Totals	\$191,410.00	\$5,976.00	\$34,284.00
Grand Total	\$214,427.00		

All payments are due on the quarterly system, with due dates as follows: first quarter - August: 1; second quarter - November 1; third quarter - February 1 and fourth quarter - May 1. To keep postage to a minimum only two mailings are done with two quarters in each mailing.

Respectfully submitted,
 Laura Blakesley
 Town Collector

Town Treasurer

Reconciliation of Treasurer's Cash

Balance of Cash as of June 30, 2012	\$852,325.11
Cash Received	\$1,886,644.68
Cash Disbursements	\$4,483,431.84
Balance of Cash as of June 30, 2013	\$1,744,462.07

Balance consists of:

Bank of Western Mass

General Fund Checking-Payroll acct.	\$353,712.45
General Fund-CD	\$1,926.20
Fred Cross-Library Trust Fund	\$5,000.00
Fred Cross-Cemetery Trust Fund	\$2,000.00
Consolidated Trust Fund	\$173,509.12
Septic Repair Program Account	\$75,047.65
Stabilization Fund	\$217,320.48
Capital Stabilization	\$0.00
Cemetery Trust Funds	\$1,250.00
Mabelle Jordon Trust Fund	\$42.60
Mary Morrill Elwell Sands Memorial Trust	\$5,046.71

Bank of Western Mass

Fred Cross Trust Fund	\$58,487.88
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M.M.D.T

General Fund	\$639,211.97
Mary Priscilla Howes Trust Fund	\$13,219.20

Bank of America

General Fund	\$43,829.32
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Unibank

General Fund	\$67,497.69
General Fund-online banking	\$87,119.59
General Fund-online banking	\$241.21

Total	\$1,744,462.07
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Trustees of the Belding Memorial Library

Janus is the Roman god with two faces. One face looks back while one face looks forward. This past year at the library has had something of that Janus quality to it. The look back: after many years of service Library Director Anne Judson retired. A party was held in her honor and a great many people came to say goodbye and wish her well. The look forward: after a careful search of an impressive pool of applicants, the Trustees hired Martha Cohen, who has a Masters of Library Science and had worked in the King County Library System near Seattle for the past twenty years. Martha, originally from Northampton, brings with her great experience, energy, and vision. 2014 will mark the 100th year since the opening of the Belding library. Throughout the year there will be a number of exhibits and activities to commemorate this milestone.

We have also begun working with the tireless Ashfield Greening Communities Committee to make the changes they recommend to have the library run more efficiently, economically, and sustainably as we go forward. We will begin with insulating the attic.

Janus is the god of beginnings and transitions, a gatekeeper. One gate has closed, and another gate has opened. The prospects for the Belding as it begins its second century are full of possibilities and bright indeed.

There are a number of people to thank for a successful year. The support of the Friends continues to enhance our ability to advance the interests of the library and its patrons. As always, Sandy and Tom Carter quietly continue to contribute to the upkeep of the library grounds.

During this important time of transition Irene Branson served as Interim Director, and together with Sherry Scott, put in extra hours to keep the library running seamlessly. We were lucky to have volunteers whose generosity helped maintain the level of service the town has come to rely upon.

Finally, this year my fellow Trustees Caroline Murray, Renee Rastofer, Virginia Wiswell and Nancy Intres were especially tireless in their efforts. Each brought something unique but invaluable to the process of transition. From rolling up their sleeves for the annual fall clean-up to the due diligence required in our search for a new director, their commitment to the town and its library was unwavering. I am proud of all that has been accomplished this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcine Appel Eisenberg

Chair, Trustees of the Belding Memorial Library

Veterans Services

The Central Franklin County District was formed in 1940 and provides Veterans Services for 23 towns within Franklin County. Currently we are providing support for 76 veterans who reside in your district

The mission of the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) is to be the chief advocate for the nearly half-million veterans of the Commonwealth and their families.

Under Chapter 115 of Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L. ch. 115), the Commonwealth provides a uniform program of financial and medical assistance for income eligible veterans and their dependents. Qualifying veterans and their dependents receive financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, housing supplies, and medical care in accordance with a formula which takes into account the number of dependents and income from all sources. Eligible dependents of deceased veterans are provided with the same benefits as they would were the veteran still living.

The District office is located at 190 Millers Falls Road, Turners falls, Mass.01376. Our offices are open four days a week from 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM (413-863-3205), and Friday by appointment. Leo Parent is the Director of Veterans Services, Mark Fitzpatrick is your Veterans Services Officer, and Phyllis Meehan is our Administrative Assistant.

Leo and Mark held our first annual Job Fair for Veterans at the French King Bowling Center with great success; as well as, a Veterans Administration Health Fair

Many Veterans have been calling looking for the VA Web Sites here are a few for you.

Educational Benefits: www.gibill.va.gov

Home Loan Guaranty: www.homeloans.va.gov

Federal Jobs: www.usajobs.opm.gov

Returning Veterans: www.seamlesstranstion.va.gov

VA Home Page: www.va.gov

Government Jobs: www.usajobs.gov/opm

Massachusetts State Veterans Services: [MassVets Adviso](#)

Leo J. Parent, Director

Mark Fitzpatrick, VSO

Zoning Board of Appeals

After a period of little Zoning Board activity, three cases were brought before the ZBA in 2013.

Case 2013-1: The ZBA granted a Variance to allow a dwelling to be built on a lot that has 150 feet of road frontage—less than the 200 feet required by Ashfield Zoning Bylaws. When the parcel was created as a legal lot in the 1970s, zoning laws required 150 feet of frontage. At nearly 8 acres, the parcel is significantly larger than most lots with road frontage in the neighborhood and its frontage is in keeping with or exceeds many of the neighborhood lots. The shape of this lot is unusual to the neighborhood. There is accessible space to allow proper setbacks for residential buildings. With guidance from Town Council, the Board cited 18 Mass. App. Ct. 707; *Paulding v. Charlotte Heavens Bruins* as case law with sufficient similarities to reinforce this decision.

Case 2013-2: The Board granted a request to grant a Special Permit to allow the construction of a deck within the 25-foot side setback between buildings and property lines required by Ashfield Zoning Bylaws. There was no survey of the lot, and the deck, which was estimated to be 4 feet into the setback, had already been built. No abutters appeared at the public hearing or wrote concerning this case. Following a site visit, the Board reviewed the criteria for a Special Permit, and determined the deck does not have any negative impact on the neighborhood—it does not affect public health or safety; does not create disturbances of sound, light, or noise; will not cause drainage issues or water pollution; was built to minimize topographic change and tree removal; does not impact traffic patterns; and is completely compatible with the neighborhood character.

Case 2013-3: The Board approved Special Permits for the construction of an overhead, non-conforming canopy over the gas pumps and the replacement of a non-conforming sign at 244 Main Street with the following conditions: construction must begin by September 2014, and all lighting on the sign and/or canopy will be turned off when the convenience store is closed. The new canopy replaces an existing free-standing fire suppression system and overhead lights; a new fire suppression system and downcast LED lighting will be built into the canopy, which will extend to 8 feet from the front property line rather than the 25 feet required by zoning laws. The existing sign, which is both

taller and closer to the property line than zoning code allows, will be replaced with a 10-foot high, internally illuminated sign one foot from the property line. The Board noted the unanimous support voiced by the public at the hearing; no opposition to the application was received. The existing fire suppression system meets criteria of structure in Section II of the Ashfield Zoning Bylaws, so the proposed canopy is considered an extension of a nonconforming structure. Though the canopy does extend the non-conformity, it provides substantial improvement in public safety, convenience, and comfort; relocating the structure further back is not possible given existing building, parking, and side setbacks. The new sign will be closer to the front property line, extending the non-conformity of the location, but its height is reduced to meet zoning code.

Stuart Harris, chair

Mollie Babize

Kit Nysten

Anne Yuryan, alternate

Alan Surprenant, alternate

