

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Officers and Committees

Of the town of

ASHFIELD MASSACHUSETTS

For the year ending 2014



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This year's Town Report is dedicated to
The Earliest Settlers of Huntstown

This Town Report is dedicated to the earliest settlers of Huntstown, the resident Proprietors, who were living here on 21 June 1765. On this day the General Court passed "An Act for Erecting The New Plantation called Huntstown, in the county of Hampshire, into a Town by the name of Ashfield." In 1762 the Proprietors (resident and non-resident) had begun a move towards local government by the town inhabitants. They had voted in 1762, at a meeting in Hatfield, that Obadiah Dickinson, Reuben Belding, and Nathaniel Kellogg, three non-resident Proprietors, "be a committee to prefer a plan to the great and general Court for confirmation of the Township of Huntstown, so called." In addition to their Proprietors' meetings, they began to hold town meetings in Huntstown in March 1762 to 1765 at which they elected town officers. The first "legal" town meeting was held on 6 January 1766. At that time the town had 79 registered voters. Among the resident Proprietors of Huntstown (and the date they first purchased property here) were:

Heber Honestman and his wife, Susannah Cord(i)ner, from Easton (1737). Heber was a freed black man. He was the only one, of the 60 original Proprietors who drew for their First Division lots in July 1739 at Braintree, to settle here, as one of the first settlers.

Thomas Phillips and his wife, Catherine Liscom(e), from Easton (1742). He was elected moderator of the 1763 and 1764 meetings, tax collector in 1765, and one of the first selectmen in 1766.

Chileab Smith and his wife, Sarah Moody, from South Hadley (1742). Chileab organized a Baptist Church here in 1753. He successfully petitioned Governor William Shirley in 1756 for help in defending the fort built around his home to protect the Huntstown settlers (29 persons and 54 more in outlying areas), against Indian attacks. He was part owner of the Proprietors' first sawmill and second corn mill, both located on the Bear River. Chileab was elected tax assessor in 1762 and one of the first selectmen in 1766. Chileab and Sarah were the parents of **Moses Smith**, who was elected first town constable in 1766. (Note: Chileab later petitioned the King of England for relief from the 1768 "act passed in addition to the aforesaid act of 1765," which required the Baptists to pay taxes to support a Congregational minister. The King disallowed this "Ashfield Law" in 1771, thus instituting freedom of religion here.)

Ebenezer Belding and his wife, Hannah Nash, from Hatfield (1752). He was elected moderator of the March 1762 and 1765 meetings, an assessor in 1762, and one of the first selectmen in 1766. Town meetings

were held at his home in 1763 and 1764. The Congregational Church members met at his home until the town finished building the first meetinghouse in 1771.

Samuel Belding and his wife, Mary Mitchell, from Deerfield (1761). In 1761 he purchased the home property of Richard Ellis, who had moved to Colrain. Samuel served as clerk from 1762 to 1765. He served the town as its first Justice of the Peace, acting as both judge and jury in civil and criminal complaints.

Captain Moses Fuller and his wife, Mary Blodget, from Stafford, Connecticut (1761). He owned a tavern on what is now South Street. He was elected one of the first selectmen in 1766.

Nathan Chapin (1761) was one of the nine men sent to guard the Smith fort in 1757. He married Mary Smith, daughter of Chileab, in 1759. He was elected one of the town tax assessors in 1766. Also elected tax assessors in 1766 were: **Richard Phillips**, who had come from Dighton with his wife, Ruth Pitts by 1756; and **Aaron Lyon, Sr.** and his wife, Mary, from Sturbridge (1765), grandparents of Mary Lyon.

Joseph Mitchell, Jr. and his wife, Lydia Foster, from Deerfield (1762). He owned an inn and potash house on what is now Bellus Road. The Proprietors began meeting at his inn in 1764 and in 1766 the first “legal” town meeting was held there.

David Alden and his wife, Lydia Thomas, from Stafford, Connecticut (1764). He was elected the first town treasurer in 1766.

Benjamin Phillips and his wife, Hannah. He was elected first town clerk in 1766.

Among the other elected positions in 1766 were two wardens, Jonathan Edson and Nathan Chapin; two fence viewers, John Briggs and Chileab Smith; four hog “reafs,” Lemuel Snow, Israel Standish, John Ellis, and Jeremiah Wait; two “dear reafs,” David Alden and Miles Standish.

Sources include: Huntstown Proprietors’ Records; Hampshire County Deeds; Town Vital Records; Town Meeting Records, Ranney transcript; Book #11; Congregational Church Records; Baptist Church Records; F.G. Howes, *History of Ashfield* (1910).

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

Senator Edward J. Markey

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

Appointed Positions

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

Executive Administrator	Mary Fitz-Gibbon
Assessors' Clerk	Jenn Morse
Assistant Municipal Clerk	Lynn Taylor

**Appointed Positions
*Town Office Staff
Two-Year Terms - 2016***

Town Collector	Laura Blakesley
Treasurer	Laura Blakesley
Town Clerk	Ann Dunne

Elected Officers

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
Ronald Coler Vice - Chair	2015
Paullette Leukhardt - <i>resigned 5/1/14</i>	2014
Todd Olanyk	2017

Board of Assessors

Sandy Lilly, Chair	2016
Richard Chandler - <i>appointed 5/5/14 until next election May, 2, 2015</i>	
Donna Sarro	2017
Peter Wiitanen - <i>resigned 5/2/14</i>	2015

Finance Committee

Ted Murray, Chair	2016
Ricki Carroll	2017

David Newell	2015
Janet Rogers	2016
Tom Schreiber	2017

Mohawk Trail Regional School Committee

Helen "Poppy" Doyle	2016
Emily Robertson	2015

Board of Health

Duncan Colter, Chair	2017
Michelle "Shelly" Carter - <i>resigned 6/3/14</i>	2016
Karen Lavallee - <i>appointed 6/6/14 until next election on May 2, 2015</i>	
Carrie O'Gorman	2015

Constables

Warren Kirkpatrick	2015
John LaBelle	2016
Elizabeth Lesure	2016

Park Commission

Maryellen Abbatiello, Chair	2015
Judy Haupt	2016
Kyle Taylor	2017

Sewer Commission

Nancy Hoff, Chair	2015
Daniel Lovett	2016
Tom Miner, Jr.	2017

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

Michael Fitzgerald, Chair	2019
Judy Haupt - <i>appointed 5/19/14 until next election on May 2, 2015</i>	
Sarah Holbrook - <i>resigned 5/14/14</i>	2018
Ken Miller	2016
Lauren Preston-Wells	2017
Alan Rice	2015
Jean Cherdack - <i>appointed scribe 12/15/14</i>	2015

Library Trustees

Marcine Eisenberg, Chair	2017
Sandra Carter - <i>appointed 11/17/14 until next election on May 2, 2015</i>	
Nancy Intres - resigned 10/25/14	2015
Caroline Murray	2018
Renee Rastorfer	2019
Virginia Wiswell	2016

Appointed Boards & Committees - Terms run July 1 - June 30

One-Year Terms

Town History Editorial Board

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

Green Committee

Brian Clark, Chair
 Mary Quigley
 Jen Williams
 Jim Cutler - *appointed Energy Manager 10/7/14*

Information Technology Committee

Brian Clark
 Tom Henry
 Juliet Jacobson
 David Kulp
 Andrew Smith

Town Hall Building Committee

Stuart Harris, Chair
 Doug Cranson
 Wayne Gardner - *resigned 7/25/14 as committee member & Town Hall Steward*
 Nancy Garvin
 Mary Quigley
 Donna Scott

Kyle Taylor - *appointed 1/22/15 as committee member & Town Hall Steward*

Three-Year Terms

Agricultural Commission

Tom McCrumm, Chair	2015
Johanna Anderson-Pratt	2015
Robyn Crowningshield	2016
Daniel Greene (<i>moved in 2014</i>)	2016
Steve Gougeon	2015

Zoning Board of Appeals

Mollie Babize, Chair	2015
Michael Melcher - <i>alternate, appointed 12/29/14</i>	2015
Kit Nysten	2015
Anne Yuryan	2017

Conservation Commission

Lester Garvin, Chair	2016
Brian Clark	2016
Janet Clark	2016
Dave Fessenden	2015
Phil Lussier	2017
Anne Capra Madocks - <i>scribe</i>	2015

Council on Aging

Wayne Wickland, Chair	2016
Doug Field	2015

Historical Commission

Steve Gougeon, Chair	2016
Mollie Babize - <i>resigned 12/11/14</i>	2016
Nancy Garvin - <i>resigned 5/6/14</i>	2016
Jody Hall - <i>appointed 5/19/14</i>	
Gerard McGovern	2016
Tristan Romer - <i>resigned 1/14/15</i>	2015
Bill Scaife - <i>appointed 2/23/15</i>	

Personnel Board

Priscilla Phelps, Chair	2016
Ricki Carroll, Finance Committee Member	2016
Thomas Carter, Select Board Member	2016
Wayne Farrell	2016
Paullette Leukhardt, Select Board Member - until 5/1/14	2016
Jenn Markens	2016

Cultural Council

Dawn Fessenden, Chair - <i>resigned 3/16/15</i>	2016
Roberta Evans	2015
David Fessenden	2015
Carol Groman	2016
Jane Willis	2015

Registrars of Voters

Muriel Cranson
 Susan Gambino
 Nancy Intres
 Ann Dunne, alternate

Fire Chief/Forest Warden

Delmar Haskins, Chief

Police Chief

Patrick Droney - *resigned 1/3/14*
 Diane Wilder - *appointed 7/1/14*

Interim Police Chief

Diane Wilder - *appointed 1/4/14 until 6/30/14*

Emergency Manager

Doug Field
 Kyle Taylor, Assistant - *resigned 3/2/15*

Highway Superintendent

Thomas Poissant

Animal Control Officer

Warren Kirkpatrick

Inspector of Animals

Kim Reardon

**FRCOG Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Advisory
Committee Community**

Arthur Pantermehl

Frederick W. Wells Trustee

Molly Robinson

Carl Nilman Scholarship Committee

Shelia Graves

Other Resources

Health Agent

Claudia Lucas

Carl Nelke

Building Inspector Program

Andrew French, Plumbing & Gas Inspector

James Hawkins, Building Inspector

James Slowinski, Wiring Inspector

Superintendent of Schools

Michael A. Buoniconti

Veterans' Agent

Mark Fitzpatrick

Burial Agent

Ann Dunne

Ambulance Service

Mike Rock, Highland Ambulance Director

Ashfield Burial Ground Association

Tom Graves, President, 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

The Select board has had no shortage of issues and projects to address in 2014. After the resignation of Police Chief Patrick Droney, and upon his recommendation, Corporal Diane Wilder was appointed as Interim Police Chief in January. Wilder's interaction with the community makes our Police Department more accessible and visible which seems to fit our small town. In June Chief Wilder was appointed to the permanent Police Chief position.

Also a hot topic was the request by Chris Gray of Hilltown Networks to use the Town Hall steeple and fiber optic data point at Town Hall for high-speed wireless access for the village. On March 20 the Board hosted a public hearing on this request. As is so often the case in Ashfield many different concerns and positions were heard. In the end the Select Board agonized and researched but finally entered into an agreement with Hilltown Networks in the fall.

Besides these issues the Select Board worked long and hard, shoulder to shoulder with the Finance Committee to present a 4.2 million dollar budget at town meeting in May. This budget reflected only modest increases in services. One hotly debated item (1 hr. 24 min.) was a petition question on sidewalk clearing during the winter months. After resounding support for the “theory” the Select Board decided to support a pilot project to gather data as to cost and support in the village. As this winter is playing out we should have plenty of data if it keeps pace with snowfall.

The annual election in May did yield Todd Olanyk as a new member of the Select Board filling a momentary vacancy. As a former sewer commissioner Todd brings a welcome “can do” attitude and refreshing perspective.

At a special town meeting held on June 23, 2014 a standing room only crowd discussed the proposed Kinder Morgan natural gas pipeline. The size, diversity, and manner of all in attendance was amazing. In attendance that night was State Representative Steve Kulik and State Senator Ben Downing who addressed many citizen concerns. At the end of the meeting it was voted by a resounding majority to oppose the proposed project in effort to preserve our safety, health and property rights.

In the fall we asked by way of a Finance Committee recommendation, for the State Dept. of Local Services to perform a review of financial operations in Ashfield. Published in December this report compares Ashfield’s fiscal and operating position to others in the Commonwealth. Of the 14 recommendations made the very first has been suspected by many. Reviving the Town Administrator position has many valuable merits. As so many who volunteer in making town government work know, the scope of town government, laws, regulations, and the

amount of taxpayer money involved require a professional skill set not routinely found by people willing to serve. To improve management and support town objectives the Select Board will be asking for the town's people to reinstate this valuable position.

Three ongoing projects are: rebuild and improve Smith Branch Road, Ashfield Lake Dam repairs, rebuild/replace retention wall on Bronson Avenue.

These projects are still in the engineering and study stage with hopes of funding and construction in a timely fashion. The town has received an amount of grant funds for the Smith Branch Road project, however at this date we are not sure of the final cost. Speaking of cost, all signs point to a budget busting winter roads account. This expense will have a negative effect on some services the town may be able to budget for in FY 2016.

In closing the entire Board would like to thank all the volunteers who make Ashfield work whether appointed or elected or just strictly as a volunteer when something needs to be done. The level of support, thoughtfulness and community is always amazing from our side of the table.

Thank you to each and every one of you!

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Carter, Chair
Ron Coler, Vice Chair
Todd Olanyk

Agricultural Commission

The Agricultural Commission continues to meet semi-monthly on the second Tuesday of the month. Any Ashfield resident who is interested

in agriculture in Ashfield is welcome to attend the meetings. We still have a little funding left from a state Ag promotion grant which we are using to re-print our Ashfield Farms brochure. This brochure, available at Town Hall, Fall Festival, the Farmer's Market and at local farms in town, is a guide to more than 31 farms in Ashfield. In 2015 we hope to build a re-usable display to be used on the Town Common during Fall Festival.

We again had a display at the annual Fall Festival to educate both residents and non-residents about agriculture in Ashfield. The Ag Commission will be making an effort in 2015 to link up landowners who have un-used pasture land with farmers that are in need of additional grazing land for animals, making a win-win situation for all.

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
Steve Gougeon
Johanna Pratt
Robyn Crowningshield
Alan Suprenant

Animal Control Report

This year has been the busiest thus far for animal issues. This is reflected by more than 400 additional labor hours and more than 1,000 more phone calls, not to mention the added expenses. Ashfield has become a very animal conscious community compared to even three years ago. There appear to be more domestic and wild animals in town than ever. Hopefully, with the cooperation of town residents and myself, we can continue help, protect and care for the domestic and wild creatures in Ashfield.

I wanted to relate a first in my 32 years doing this job. In early June, an adolescent moose went through a fence where horses were kept. The moose in a playful mood, chased one of the horses right down the middle of the town road on a full run. Thankfully, neither animal sustained injuries nor were any vehicles involved. The horse eventually ran back to its owners and the moose continued on its adventure alone.

As a reminder, all dogs six months and older must be licensed by April 1 of 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, through the drop box in front of Town Hall, or on a computer. Payment can be made in the form of cash, check or credit card. Cats six months and 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 don 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, the Post Office and Ashfield Hardware.

Dogs Confined	7
Dogs placed	7
Cats Confined	1
Cats Placed	1
Other animals Confined	0
Animal Bites	1
Phone Calls	2,859
Mileage	732
Labor	1,161

Fines Collected	\$10.00
Expenses	\$476.44

Respectfully submitted,
Warren Kirkpatrick,
Animal Control Officer

Board of Assessors

The total value of property in Ashfield, as of December 2013, was \$3,201,357, with 91.85% of the property classed as residential, 3.88% commercial, 0.44% industrial, and 3.82 % personal property. All classes are taxed at the same rate. The town's budget is \$4,479,832.29. When revenues from other sources, such as state aid, are subtracted, the total to be raised by taxation is \$3,485,277.86. The tax rate for FY 2014 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. Once the town votes a budget, the BOA calculates a tax rate that will raise that sum, 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 value is stagnant or declining, the tax rate rises accordingly.

Values in Ashfield and throughout the Commonwealth are determined according to practices certified by DOR. The most important factors are size and quality/condition. Other documented influences may play a role, such as a plus for broad views or a minus for seasonal road access. Additional individual adjustments to value and/or tax bills may include factors such as placing eligible land in Chapter 61 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 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 was completed in 2014.

In order to avoid abrupt short-term changes (except due to new construction or disasters), the BOA works on a 3-year average of comparable values. Market trends up or down are thus evened out. For most residents, the actual value of their property changes relatively little year to year when markets are stable. Changes in your tax bill result primarily from changes to the annual town budget that must be raised from taxation.

The BOA must inspect each property at least every nine years or within a shorter window when a building permit for significant structural that could change value has been granted. When the inspector arrives at your property he/she will present you with a signed letter from the BOA requesting the inspection. If you're not at home he/she 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.

This year we converted onto the CAI Query Manager Online system. This is an online system where you can assess property cards. The web address is <https://www.caigisonline.com/AshfieldMA/>. You can also access this website through the town's webpage under the Board of Assessors site.

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.

Summary of Monies Raised by Taxation and Receipts

	FY11	FY12	FY13
Total amount to be raised	\$4,097,522.50	\$4,009,913.78	\$4,203,680.78
Annual tax levy	\$3,098,561.51	\$3,229,351.26	\$3,325,676.00
Total property value	\$222,278,461.00	\$219,833,306.00	\$220,389,397.00
Tax rate per \$1,000	\$13.94	\$14.69	\$15.09

Respectfully submitted,
 Sandra Lilly, Chair (term expires 2016)
 Rick Chandler (term expires 2015)
 Donna Sarro (term expires 2017)

Board of Health

2014 was a slow year for construction with three perc tests, four septic system construction permits and 10 Title Five Inspections. A Total of \$3,175.00 was collected in fees for the year 2014.

The Board received no Open Meeting Law Complaints, however received five document requests in 2014.

Carrie O’Gorman was appointed and then elected to fill the unexpired term of Susan Clark. Shelly Carter moved out of town. Karen LaVallee was appointed to fill Carter’s unexpired term.

Carrie O’Gorman and Karen LaVallee ran another very successful flu clinic at Sanderson Academy. Thank you to all the nurses and volunteers that worked the 2014 flu clinic.

Thank you to my fellow Board members Carrie O’Gorman, Karen LaVallee and the Health Agents Carl Nelke and Claudia Lucas.

Respectfully submitted,
Duncan Colter, Chair

Ashfield Burial Ground Association
 Supplement to Town Clerk's Report
Burials in Ashfield Cemeteries
 January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Date of Burial</u>	<u>Cemetery</u>
George F. Bickford	02/02/2014	05/17/2014	Plain
Rose A. Basile	05/18/2014	05/29/2014	Plain
Leslie W. Smith	02/10/2014	05/30/2014	Hill
Norman B. Pike	01/29/2013	06/14/2014	Plain
Evelyn (Maynard) Roberts	08/21/2014	08/29/2014	Plain
Lois Bancroft	01/18/2014	08/30/2014	Plain
Allen M. Bassett	05/01/2014	09/07/2014	Plain
Ruth(Johnston)Craft	08/29/2014	09/13/2014	Plain
Barbara (Fontaine) McGuire	08/29/2014	09/27/2014	South Ashfield
Elsie (Tschudin) Hubbell	09/06/2014	10/01/2014	Plain
Eleanor (Lanoue) Fuller	11/01/2014	11/05/2014	Plain
Arlene (Caron) Deluca	10/23/2014	11/15/2014	Plain

Respectfully Submitted,
 Tom Graves, Burial Agent

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, make determinations and issue permits which allow these activities with certain conditions attached. 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 costs for required certified mailing of determinations; these fees are paid by the applicant and are returned to the town's General Fund. When we issue an Order of Conditions for activity in a resource area the applicant is required by law to register these conditions at the Registry of Deeds. After the work is completed the applicant can request the Commission to inspect the work and issue a Certificate of Compliance which removes the lien from the deed.

In 2014 we became aware of the Kinder Morgan plan to construct an underground natural gas pipeline through Ashfield in the existing transmission line corridor. In anticipation of impacts to our wetland resource areas we prepared three orthophoto maps to show the proposed pipeline location relative to these resources. Wetland Protection Legislation was enacted more than 40 years ago to protect the inherent values of wetlands for public water supply, private water supply, groundwater supply, land containing shellfish, fisheries, storm damage prevention, prevention of pollution, preservation of wildlife habitat and flood control. If the pipeline is permitted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the Conservation Commission will be challenged trying to protect these values.

The Commission continues to work with the Board of Health on the resolution of problems caused by beaver activity. 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.

Conservation Commission:

Brian Clark
Janet Clark
David Fessenden

Lester Garvin, Chair
Philip Lussier

Council on Aging

Last year was good, this year was better yet with the help of volunteers. For example, Charlotte Clement the phone person, Marie Fuller the lunch person, and Douglas Field board member and liaison to the Select Board for the consortium.

The luncheons have been successful but some deaths have sometimes hurt the attendance. A very successful meet and greet with many available programs and services explained was offered to those present. Thanks to the local police department, Sheriff's Department and others. Several programs were on safety and scams that were building and seniors being exposed. An exercise class held at St. Johns meets regularly. Some of the van maintenance has been done and hopefully the rest will be done by the time you read this report.

Thank you to the senior center staff. The lunch programs are constantly improving. We do need more members, and drivers in order to make better use of the van and to continue moving forward with desired programs, i.e. housing, shopping etc.

Sincerely,
Franklin Wickland, Chair

Cultural Council

For 2014, the Ashfield Cultural Council received \$4,300 in funding, from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. This was almost the same amount we received the previous year. That in addition to a balance of \$402.44 carried over from last year, made a total of \$4,702.44. After paying \$150.00 in administrative fees, we were able to allocate a final total of \$4,552.

The voting meeting took place on 12/09/14, and present were; Andrew Kinsey, Dawn Fessenden, Helene Leue, Jane Willis, Roberta Evans and Wesley Fleming. Absent were David Fessenden and Carole Groman. Of the 35 applications received, we were able to grant funding to 21 projects. Some of the projects that have already or will be occurring: an evening of story, music and song, presented by Rochelle Wildfong; a winter tracking workshop hosted by the Franklin Land Trust; How African-Americans are Presented as Photographic Subjects, organized by the Ashfield Emancipation Proclamation Committee; the Ann Hutt Browning Poetry Series and a workshop/performance by Knighthorse Theater. The variety of projects proposed was, as always, very exciting.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Carole Groman
Secretary

Emergency Manager

It is our pleasure to give this report to the residents of Ashfield. This has been a year without any major storms. There have been some small ones but there was no danger to report. The Emergency Manager received a grant and moved the office to the fire station, where, in case of an emergency, the emergency operation center would be located.

As always the Emergency Manager and Assistant Emergency Manager went to every quarterly Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency meeting. We keep up to date with what is going on in Massachusetts and Federal government as far as any new laws or grants that are out there or coming out to benefit Ashfield.

The only major storm that Ashfield had was on Thanksgiving day 2014, when 76 households lost electricity. At that time the Emergency Team did go out and make sure that everyone was OK and didn't need any help.

Just remember if you do lose electricity and it is cold, the Emergency Team (Emergency Manager, Assistant Emergency Manager, Fire Chief, Police Chief and their department personnel) will always be out to help you, or you can call the fire station.

We want to thank the Select Board, Town Administrator, and Town Clerk for their support throughout the year.

Douglas Field, Ashfield Emergency Manager
Kyle Taylor, Ashfield Assistant Emergency Manager

Finance Committee

In 1985 it was "voted to amend the Bylaws 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."

As has been our recent practice, 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 FY2015 budget at Annual Town Meeting in May. Similarly, we made recommendations regarding various warrant articles as presented at subsequent Special Town Meetings.

A number of special projects during the year are of note. First, at the initiative of one of our members, Tom Schreiber, we followed the lead and example of Amherst in creating a Financial Policies Manual for Ashfield. In it, we've codified and made more explicit the guiding principles we believe should be followed in managing the town's finances. A copy of that manual is now posted on the town's website for all residents to view.

Second, by dint of great time and effort, another of our members, David Newell, worked via the Vocational Education Advisory Committee (this VEAC consists of representatives from Ashfield, Hawley, Charlemont, and Plainfield) to improve transportation specifications in our new five-year contract. The committee has streamlined routing, and it was able to reduce the number of routes needed that resulted in substantial savings. It maintains close contact with the vocational schools to make certain that the towns are billed only for students who reside in the four towns. VEAC implemented a major change in the bus contract in October whereby Ashfield now furnishes gasoline for three of the routes instead of the contractor. Ashfield purchases gas at a less expensive rate, and does not pay the 18.4 cent/gallon federal excise tax. The reduction in contract daily rates, together with reduced fuel costs, will save the four towns an estimated \$20,000 or more during FY2015 alone.

Third, we recommended, and the Select Board approved, a periodic review and re-bidding of auditing services for the town. On the basis of this new policy, we've changed auditors for at least the next three audit cycles, now conducted biannually.

Fourth, we recommended, and the Select Board approved, the conduct of a Financial Management Review for the town by the Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services. This review of our financial management and administrative systems is now complete, and we intend to implement a number of its recommendations over the coming year.

Finally, at this writing (December 2014), 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 was certified at just over \$383,000.

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

Fire Department

I would like to thank all the firefighters and other people who helped out with the house fire, on a long cold day, last January and those who helped the next day getting everything back together.

We have one new firefighter, a Junior, Christopher Murphy.

The firefighters are doing more training now in order to keep up with all that is changing in firefighting. Captain Matt Haskins and the Fire Chief attended a 16-hour class on Fire Codes, which are changing in 2015.

We have applied for three grants in 2014. One has come back for the school kids. We are still waiting to hear about the other two grants.

In 2014 we gave out 63 permits.

We had 194 calls this year, which is the most we have ever had. Of those, 87 were fire calls and 107 were medical calls.

April was the busiest month, with 23 calls. Wednesday was the busiest day, with 38 calls. The busiest time of day was between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m., with 78 calls.

Respectfully submitted.

Delmar Haskins

Fire Chief

Franklin County Cooperative Building Inspection Program

As you know, your town received building, plumbing, gas, and wiring inspection and zoning enforcement services through the Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program (FCCIP), a 39 year old shared service housed at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG). 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.

2014 was a busy year for the program. We issued 2,643 permits, including a significant number of insulation upgrade, solar array and wood/pellet stove permits. The number of permits was higher in 2014 than in the previous year, although the fees collected were slightly lower. A total of 33 new dwelling units were constructed in our 15 member towns.

Our new online permitting program went live on July 1, 2011 and has issued 9,501 building, electrical and plumbing/gas permits since then. 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 3,046 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 2014, the FCCIP processed the following permits for Ashfield:

Residential Building Permits	90
Commercial Building Permits	5
Sheet Metal/Duct Permits	0
Electrical Permits	44
Plumbing Permits	23
Gas Permits	32
Certificates of Inspection	12

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 any 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

Green Community Committee

This year, in the continuing effort to decrease the town fuel bills, the Green Communities Committee continued updating building envelope

and heating systems for the Town Hall and Fire Station utilizing funds from the state's Green Communities grant. The Town Hall foundation was insulated and air sealed under the office spaces, thanks to labor donated by Quigley Builders. Insulation was blown into office walls and under the stage above the offices, and the office spaces were air sealed. Additional heating zones were added to provide more granular control and the ancient oil-burning boiler that heated the office area was replaced with an energy efficient propane boiler. We finished by installing six NEST thermostats, which are controlled remotely, so the offices can be monitored and temperature adjusted when no one is in the Town Hall. The main offices are now much better insulated and easier to heat; we are still working on balancing the system.

As for the Fire Station, we sealed and insulated the crawl space underneath, as well as the walls and attic space. We replaced the aged heater in the office with an electric air-source heat pump, replaced one leaky and rotting door and repaired another. As with the Town Hall, this was accomplished thanks to labor donated by Quigley Builders.

The Green Communities Committee also applied for and received funding through two more state programs. We received a grant to hire an Energy Manager, along with 13% of funds matched by town as passed at 2014 annual town meeting, as our progress has been severely curtailed by limits to volunteer time. We hired Jim Cutler as Ashfield's energy manager, who now has regular hours and can both monitor ongoing projects and help the committee develop new ones.

We also joined together with Buckland and Plainfield to become a Solarize Mass community. This state program provides homeowners with the opportunity to put photovoltaic panels for solar electric generation on their homes for less money. It does this by grouping all the orders from all three towns, which provides economies of scale the installer can pass on to the homeowners. This is combined with the state's current incentive program, which is to offer zero down, low interest loans for the installation costs, and the federal tax credit for photovoltaic installations, which is active until 2016. Jim Cutler volunteered to be the Solarize Mass contact person as well.

For those that are interested in more detail about the insulation process:

Town Hall Crawlspace walls- Closed cell foam was sprayed on exposed stone foundation walls and sills insulating to approximately R-14 and air-sealing the gaps and voids. This foam was then coated with a water-based fire retardant paint. The dirt floor was covered with a fire-rated reinforced plastic membrane that is sealed to the walls and columns.

The partition walls between the first floor offices and the main hall were filled with dense-packed cellulose [R 13-19]. The ceiling above the offices under the stage was insulated with blown-in cellulose to R-60 [16 settled inches]. The area under the south exit stairs was filled with dense-packed cellulose too, while the exterior office walls were already insulated.

Fire Station- The office exterior walls were filled with dense pack cellulose. R14

The attic space was refitted with shelving and a catwalk to make storage still possible above the newly installed R-60 cellulose. An extension for the access ladder and an insulated extension for the access door were built and installed.

The knob & tube wiring found in the attic was removed and office receptacles and lights rewired to code.

The band joist areas and walls of the crawlspace under the office were insulated with closed cell spray foam [R-14]. The dirt floor was covered with a fire-rated reinforced poly membrane sealed to the walls and support columns.

The old poorly functioning propane wall heater was removed and a Fujitsu mini-split heat pump installed. This unit will provide the office with both heat and air conditioning. The window air conditioner was removed.

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 service 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 37 members including 15 Paramedics and 22 EMTs.

Emergency Responses. During 2014 Highland responded to 519 emergency calls. These are broken down by town as follows:

Ashfield, 105

Chesterfield, 59

Cummington, 55

Goshen, 72

Plainfield, 37

Williamsburg, 158

Worthington, 18

Other, 15

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

Training. The following special training events were held:

- First Responder classes were held for Ashfield, Plainfield and Williamsburg Police and Fire personnel.
- Attended an Ebola response review at Cooley Dickinson Hospital.
- Provided the new National Certification class for all area EMTs.
- Four EMTs have completed their Paramedic training.

Community Involvement. Highland provided support to our communities including:

- Providing Ambulance coverage for Community events including the Chesterfield 4th of July Parade, the Cummington Fair and the Ashfield Fall Festival.
- Attending Safety Committee Meetings at Sanderson Academy in Ashfield.
- A flu shot clinic for area first responders and EMTs.
- Participating in a lock down drill at Dunphy School in Williamsburg.
- Providing a CPR and First Aid class for Williamsburg residents.

Cash On Hand June 30, 2014

Operating Funds	\$ (11,349.01)
Building Fund	53,828.89
Memorial Fund	20,750.09
Dresser Fund	1,843.16
Highland Funds	<u>6,998.94</u>
Total Cash On Hand	\$ 72,072.07

We were saddened by the death of Francis Dresser. Francis established Goshen Ambulance which formed the base upon which Highland Ambulance was formed. 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, Michael Packard
 Williamsburg, Christopher Smith
 At-Large, Bernard Forgea
 At-Large, Douglas Mollison
 At-Large, Vacant

Highway Department

At Annual Town Meeting the townspeople approved \$167,000.00 to replace the 1994 Ford dump truck

In June we took delivery of the new Caterpillar motor grader.

Chapter 90 work consisted mostly of resurfacing and related work. Chapter 90 work was done on the following roads: Baptist Corner Road,

Bear River Road, Hawley Road, Norton Hill Road, Steady Lane Road, and Spruce Corner Road.

Repair work from storm Irene still continues with work this year on Smith Branch Road. Eroded areas were repaired and design work on a retaining wall is ongoing.

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 and John LaBelle, for great work at the Transfer Station

Thanks to Bryan Mollison, 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

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.

In 2014 the Commission helped in celebrating the 200th anniversary of Ashfield's Town Hall. As part of this event we:

- Laid out what we believe to be the original location of the building in what is now the middle of the cemetery on Norton Hill Road.
- Held talks and a dramatized reading regarding the use of the building at that location.
- We then walked the presumed path the building took down the hill to get it to its current location, and discussed how it may have been moved.
- We concluded with tours and talks at the Town Hall followed by an ice cream social.

This was also the first year that we were involved in the siting process for cell towers in regard to their potential impact on historical properties in the vicinity.

In 2015 we are helping to coordinate the celebration of the Town's 250th anniversary (sesquicentennial). The year-long celebration started with a potluck dinner at the Town Hall on New Years Day, and will continue with events throughout the year. The celebration is a grass-roots effort, made up of events that were conceived and organized by individuals throughout the town, thereby reflecting the interests and passions of all interested Ashfield residents. Check for 250th anniversary updates, event calendars, and other info by:

- Keeping any eye on the Ashfield 250 bulletin boards at the Town Hall and the post office.
- Follow www.facebook.com/ashfield250 on Facebook.
- Check out www.Ashfield250.com.

Our meetings are usually the fourth Thursday of the month and we invite people with ideas or questions about the historical preservation, or this year's 250th anniversary plans to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Gougeon, Chair; Gerard McGovern, Jody Hall

History Project

The Ashfield History Project has been in existence for about seven years. It has taken awhile for the Project to gain some visibility. The year recorded in these pages (2014) has finally seen Volume III of the History of Ashfield begin to take shape.

The book will present the life and work and play of a town that is dedicated to preserving a democratic way of life in a place of extraordinary natural beauty. The materials in the book have been prepared and given

to the town by people who live here, some old-timers, others relative newcomers.

We are committed to presenting images of the town that are broadly representative, balanced and true. We hope our readers will find them informative and fun to read and look at. We trust that the History of Ashfield, Volume III, will be available not long after this Annual Report is in your hands, in good time for the town's 250th birthday party in June.

We are very grateful for the support that the town, its boards and commissions, and the Ashfield Historical Society have given us. We wish also to thank Corey Cusson, who grew up in Ashfield but now lives in neighboring Buckland. Corey joined the work last year (in 2013) as office manager. He has developed into a painstaking shepherd of the materials submitted by our contributors (more than 150 articles, plus hundreds of photographs, maps, drawings and other graphic materials), through the many stages of their preparation (initial submission and review, copy-editing, fact-checking, etc.). We would have been sunk without him. We also owe much to three of our writers who joined our editorial team in the crucial late stages: Mollie Babize, Faye Whitney and Hetty Startup.

Phyllis Kirkpatrick and Don Robinson, co-editors
and members of the editorial board: Tom Carter, Dave Fessenden, Stuart Harris, Harry Keramidas and Patricia Thayer

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

The quality of education within the Mohawk Trail Regional School District (MTRSD) continued to rise during 2014. According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education accountability and assessment system, the MTRSD is classified as a Level 2 district with all of its schools classified as Level 1 or Level 2. There are five classification levels within the Commonwealth's system with Level 1 being the highest rating. The MTRSD is striving to become one of the

higher performing school districts in Massachusetts by achieving a Level 1 classification, which requires all of its schools to be Level 1. 2014 marked a significant step toward the MTRSD realizing this ambitious goal.

Mohawk District Highlights: Level 2

Mohawk students made gains in all three major content areas. Our English Language Arts (ELA) composite performance index (CPI) improved to 90.7; our mathematics CPI improved to 81.7; and our science CPI improved to 80.4.

Mohawk Middle-School-High School Highlights: Level 2

The Mohawk Class of 2014 boasted a graduation rate of 84.1% with approximately 75% of the graduates attending a four-year or a two-year college. For the past two years, 92% of Mohawk 10th graders scored at the proficient or advanced level in ELA. Over this same two-year period, 67% of Mohawk 10th graders scored at the advanced level in math compared to a 53% statewide average. 75% of our HS Biology students scored at the proficient or advanced level with 40% scoring advanced, compared to a 30% statewide average. The 8th grade students made significant gains in ELA, improving to 79% proficient or advanced. The 7th grade Student Growth Percentile (SGP) in math was a remarkable 79 compared to a state median of 50.

The Mohawk MS-HS athletic program flourished during 2014 with 37 teams and 19 sports. 311 students participated in at least one sport (62% of the student population). 144 students participated in multiple sports (29% of the student population). The Mohawk MS-HS music program was also vibrant with 109 students participating (23% of the student population). The Mohawk MS-HS Theater Program continued to grow with 74 students (16% of the student population) performing three productions including the Wizard of Oz. Espousing a global view, Mohawk received its first international tuition-paying student from China in 2014.

Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School: Level 1

BSE did not just have a good year, the school had a great year! The cumulative progress and performance index (CPPI) for all students increased 11 points to 88. CPPI for high needs students increased 19 points to 92! BSE's ELA CPI improved 2.0 points to 90, and its math CPI improved 4.9 points to 83.3. Beyond this incredible growth, it is important to note that many best practices are being developed within BSE that are being shared with our other schools.

Sanderson Academy. Level 2

Sanderson remains a very high performing school. With a 2014 CPPI of 69, Sanderson is just 6 points shy of Level 1 classification.

Sanderson's ELA CPI improved 6.8 points to an impressive 95, which is the highest among the elementary schools within the District. Sanderson's math CPI improved 2.3 points to 87.7, also the highest in the District. Sanderson's science CPI improved 8.0 points to 90.5, again the highest in the District.

Colrain Central School. Level 2

Colrain Central took a giant step in a positive direction with a solid 17-point improvement in CPPI. This improvement was led by significant gains in ELA. Colrain's ELA CPI improved 11.6 points to 83.8.

Heath Elementary School. Level 1

Heath Elementary achieved its second consecutive year of Level 1 classification with a strong CPPI of 94. Beyond the classroom, 95% of Heath students participated in one of the schools many enrichment programs.

MTRSD student achievement during 2014 reflected very well on our students and our educational team. Our District continued to develop and implement fundamental educator support systems that generated positive learning outcomes for our students. The MTRSD operated at the forefront of educational innovation including Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), Learning Walkthroughs and Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO). While there is certainly more work to be done, we have much to be proud of! On behalf of our students, I thank our entire school community for your dedicated support of our children's education.

Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Buoniconti

Superintendent of Schools

**Report of the Principal
Mohawk Trail Regional High School**

Mohawk graduates returned to our school in many ways this past year. The commencement speaker for the Class of 2014 was Elizabeth McGowan (Class of 1979); in 2013 she and two of her colleagues at *InsideClimate News* were awarded the Pulitzer Prize for distinguished reporting on national affairs, and at the graduation ceremony she spoke about her journey from Mohawk into the world of environmental journalism. Nearly 400 alumni and guests gathered for the "10+2 Reunion" for Mohawk classes 1968 – 1979 on the weekend of August 30-31, reminiscing and reconnecting with classmates. Mohawk graduate Jesse Porter-Henry, Class of 1999, joined our faculty as Assistant Principal this year. He brings a focus on restorative justice approaches to school

culture and discipline. More than a dozen recent graduates participated in a round-table discussion about the transition to college in late December, sharing their experiences with current students.

This year Mohawk began to welcome tuition-paying students from overseas, beginning with two students from China. During the summer our school hosted two groups of Chinese students for short sessions and we look forward to continuing to expand our international programming.

We've added several new course offerings this year, including Economics, Latin, and Horticulture and Sustainable Agriculture. Our music program continues to thrive, with high school students studying Music Theory, Strings, Rock Band, and Electronic Music, in addition to more traditional music offerings. The Mohawk Music Association provides generous support for our music programs. Over the course of the year students presented three major theatrical productions: the all-school musical "The Wizard of Oz" in March that also featured elementary school performers, the spring "Two Roads" production, and Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in December.

Our athletic programs, with the generous support of the Mohawk Athletic Association, continue to provide students with diverse and enriching opportunities. During the fall season, more than 45% of our students were engaged in afterschool athletic programs. Mohawk student-athletes had a successful year: the girls alpine skiing team won their league, the girls track team won the Western Massachusetts championships, the boys track team won their league, and the girls cross-country team won their league, finishing third at Western Massachusetts. Mohawk retained the Frontier/Mohawk football trophy for the second year in a row.

At the midpoint of the 2014-2015 school year, enrollment in grades 7-12 is 464. There are 69 students in the seventh grade and 94 students in the eighth grade. There are 73 students in the ninth grade, 60 in the tenth grade, 74 students in the junior class, and 88 students in the senior class. Six students are enrolled in our post-graduate program.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn R. Dole
Principal

Report of the Principal Sanderson Academy

It is my pleasure to continue to serve as the Sanderson Academy principal. 2014 saw generally strong academic performances from students, some staffing additions, 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 2014-2015 school year was 125 students in grades K-6, an increase of 16 students from the previous year. The number of students at each grade level was as follows: 18 children in kindergarten, 16 children in first grade, 18 children in grade two, grade three had 12 students, fourth grade had 17 students, fifth grade had 20 students and 24 students were in our sixth grade class. There were 84 students from Ashfield and 23 enrolled from Plainfield. We had 18

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 2014 – 2015 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. Additional time is offered for band and chorus students in the upper grades. We also have a part-time library manager and seven additional paraprofessionals. We welcomed Jamie Bishop as our physical education teacher for the year. We welcomed Eva Jurgensen and Ashley Niles as paraprofessionals. We also welcomed Sandy Carter back for one morning a week to teach classroom music and chorus.

The spring of 2014 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 that were similar to or better than the performances of other students in our District or State. About 80% of our students performed in the advanced and proficient category in English Language Arts and about 70% of students performed in the advanced and proficient category in mathematics. We use this data when planning our curriculum, assessments, and groupings of students.

The Sanderson Academy Safety Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis to address school safety. We continually revise our safety binders. We have monthly fire drills, at least three lockdown drills a year, and school evacuation drills. Many of these drills include local and state emergency service personnel. The majority of staff are CPR certified and trained in the use of an epi-pen.

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

The districts continue to support and provide students with an identified disability an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan. An IEP provides direct service with accommodations and modifications. A 504 Plan provides accommodations that allow a student access to the general curriculum. The district continues to increase the use of Response to Intervention (RTI). This model enables schools to provide support to students based on regular assessment and data aimed at targeting more specific areas of concern or need. A student does not require an IEP or a 504 to benefit. Data has suggested that all students, especially those with an identified disability benefit from an RTI model.

Districts are required to support a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). A PAC is an advisory committee to the Director of Special Education. Both Mohawk Trail Regional and Hawlemont Regional

School Districts were cited for not having an active PAC. The Director of Pupil Services asked for and was granted a waiver to allow the two districts to form one PAC. Although we continue to solicit more members and support, there is currently an active group meeting monthly.

Differentiation is the practice of modifying and adapting instruction, materials, content, student projects and products, and assessment to meet the learning needs of individual students. Over the course of the year, we have provided professional development to regular and special education teachers on differentiation, on the Wednesday professional learning days. This method allows the districts to provide the least restrictive environment, as required by law, while at the same time providing the necessary supports to all students.

Respectfully Submitted,
Leann Loomis
Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Mary Lyon Foundation

Since 1990 the Mary Lyon Foundation has been providing innovative support for local education to the schools and communities in West County. We are grateful for the incredible generosity, which makes it possible for us to not only sustain a myriad of programs and services, but expand and strengthen them. We especially appreciate the continuing financial support of the Myrtle Atkinson Foundation, Cleveland Dodge Foundation, The Recorder, Bristol Myers Squibb, the Harper Gerry family and the many other generous donors who provide support for local education.

The ninth annual community spelling bee held on November 13 raised more than \$7,000 for the Mini-Grant program for innovative, educational grants for local schools. The Grand Champions this year were the Spelling Beans (Curtis Rich, David Henry and Erin Morrisey) sponsored by Shelburne Falls Coffee Roasters. The winners of the best

dressed costume award were The Artful Spellers (Nancy Baker, Nina Coler, and Denny Baker) sponsored by the Shelburne Falls Arts Co-Op, and the Queen Bee sponsor of the event was the Greenfield Savings Bank. It is a tribute to strong community spirit that teams from private and public educational, religious, political and civic organizations come together for this unique fundraiser.

Our annual spring Lyonnaise, a celebration of excellence in local education, was held in May at the Shelburne-Buckland Community Center and featured a powerful presentation by the 2014 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, Anne Marie Osheyack. A special tribute was paid to the very first Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, Roy Frude, who taught science at Arms Academy. John Sloan received the Pat Kerrins Career Award; Kevin Hollister was honored as the Outstanding Mohawk Graduate; Leslie and Ed Grinnell received the Jim Boulger Spirit of Adventure Award sponsored by The Textile Company, and Berkshire East was the Business Award recipient.

The Mary Lyon Foundation sponsors scholarships and a wide variety of projects, programs and services including, for example, an annual Gift Catalog or wish list of requested school supplies, a Children's Literature Festival in August for grades K-6 and the Harper Gerry Student Assistance Fund which provides warm clothing, eyeglasses, food and other basic necessities for children.

The Board of Directors was Marion Taylor, Past President; Stefan Kostka, President; Hugh Knox, Vice President; Sharon Hudson, Corresponding Secretary; Suzanne Conway Lagreze, Recording Secretary; Karen Fairbrother, Treasurer, Beth Bandy, Larry Wells, Robin Morgan Huntley, Sylvia Orcutt, Susan Schuman and Amy Love. Gina Sieber is the Business Manager, and Bruce Willard, past president, is an Honorary Lifetime Member. We remain grateful to the school district for a classroom at the Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School where our office is located. Thank you also to the many generous donors and volunteers who continue to help us make a positive difference for local education initiatives.

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 70 applications, 30 were from seniors and 40 were from previous graduates of Mohawk. \$33,300.00 was used, 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. 25 scholarships totaling \$9,800.00 were awarded to seniors (84% of applicants). 38 scholarships totaling \$23,500.00 were given to graduates (95% of applicants).

From 1991 - 2014 a total of \$843,425.00 has been awarded in scholarships. Mohawk seniors have received \$260,375.00 and \$583,050 has been awarded to Mohawk graduates.

The application is once again available on line to the graduates. Seniors can pick their applications up at Mohawk.

There are 15 members on the Carl H. Nilman Scholarship Committee. One from each of the nine member towns in the district, three at large members appointed by the School Committee, plus a past School Committee member, current School Committee member and the chairman of the School Committee. Membership is Sheila Graves (Ashfield), Marion Scott (Buckland), Marge Porrovecchio (Charlemont), Michelle Hillman (Colrain), Jonathan Diamond (Heath), Alice Parker (Hawley), Allen Irvine (Plainfield), Marion Taylor (Shelburne) and Rowe (open).

Officers are Marge Porrovecchio and Robin Hartnett, Co-Chair and Marion Scott, Secretary. Subcommittees: Finance, Marion Taylor, Robin Hartnett, David Engle/Eric Sumner. Scholarship: Marge Porrovecchio, Sheila Graves, Michelle Hillman, Marion Scott and Allen Irvine.

The Mohawk community owes a debt of gratitude to Mr. Nillman 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 2014/2015 are \$227,342.00 (Which included unused scholarship money from 2012/2013 that was reallocated to the scholarship fund)

EDUCATION: The Trustees received 268 applications and approved 258 students to receive \$198,282.00. This amount includes the two \$1,000.00 scholarships in memory 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 (5) programs were approved totaling \$17,600.00:

Community Action-WIC Program	\$5,000.00
Community Health Care Center	\$3,200.00

NELCWIT	\$2,400.00
Hospice of Franklin County	\$2,000.00
Franklin County Homecare	\$5,000.00

AGRICULTURE: An amount of \$11,367.00 was allowed by the Trustees for payment:

Franklin County Agricultural Society	\$7,173.00
Heath Agricultural Fair	\$3,160.00
Shelburne Grange Fair	\$1,034.00

Respectfully Submitted,
Molly J. Robinson

Park Commission

The spring started with an attempt at cleanup. It was cold and wet with little participation from the community. Twin Pines Landscaping was hired to finish what our small group started. We hope to have a larger crowd in the spring of 2015.

This past year we had Emmett Van Driesche leave the Park Commission. His small children and his dedication to the Bullitt Reservation, needed to be his priority at this time. Emmett was available to us this past fall to close up the beach. We couldn't have done it without him.

Kyle Taylor joined the commission in May. He has become our go-to guy with repairs and plumbing and has a great willingness to contribute in any way needed.

The beach was a little chilly last year, but we had a great team of lifeguards. Amar Abbatiello, Molly Donohue Meyers, and Eliza Chaput

worked very well together. The schedule went smoothly and we didn't have the issue of overcrowding. The YMCA provided swim lessons in July with a total of 19 children participating. Scott Decker donated a load of fresh, new sand. Doug Cranson continues to be a great help to us on many different projects including brush-hogging, cleanups, and opening and closing the bathhouses. Kyle strung all new swing chains at the beach this year. A new lock was installed on the men's room.

The Commission approached the Select Board in August asking for help with the decisions about the pile of canoes and kayaks at the town boat launch. They agreed it was a big problem and that we should go ahead with our plan to auction the boats after notifying the public. We placed a notice in the *Ashfield News* in September and October, giving owners until October 31 to remove all watercraft from the premises. We started with approximately 41 boats, and on November 1 we had eight. Of the eight, two were not usable and Mike Skalski disposed of them for us at no charge. The other six were awarded to Mike Skalski, David Kulp, and Tom Poissant, for a total of \$151. We hope this will set a new rule in that all watercraft must be removed no later than October 31 of each year. We will be posting signs on the premises this spring.

The Belding Memorial Park will have three new benches and two picnic tables installed in the spring of 2015. The furniture is made of recycled poly materials and is said to last for at least 20 years. We purchased the furniture in the early fall, but were unable to install it properly because of time and weather. There have also been five cherry trees ordered, with John Nawrocki heading up that project. We had to have Randall Sears remove a birch tree that was hanging dangerously over the memorial stone. The funds for these projects came from the Restoration Fund.

There have been two new invasive plants discovered this year, Japanese knotweed and fanwort.

There is work already in progress to through the Select Board to address the fanwort. The Park Commission greatly appreciates the hard work that other community members do to address the invasive plant problems.

Respectfully submitted,
Maryellen Abbatiello
Judy Haupt
Kyle Taylor

Personnel Board

The Personnel Board is composed of five members charged with keeping the Personnel Policy manual up-to-date. In 2014 there were major changes in board membership. The long vacant fifth position was filled by Jennifer Markens, an individual with relevant experience in human relations. When Paullette Leukhardt resigned from the Select Board, Tom Carter stepped forward to replace her as the Select Board representative. Following annual elections, Wayne Farrell was appointed to fill the position vacated by Beverly Chow, who chose not to be reappointed. Remaining members Ricki Carroll, Finance Committee representative, and Priscilla Phelps completed the five member board.

With this new board work has continued on updating the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual. Currently, we are moving through a series of meetings with the Select Board and will continue to do so until the draft is ready for legal review by Town Counsel. Valuable

input has been provided by the Collector/Treasurer and the Highway Superintendent in sections where guidance from their respective areas of expertise has been important.

All in all this has been a year of review; we look forward to completing the process in 2015 making it available for use by the town and its employees.

Respectfully submitted,
Priscilla Phelps, Chair
Thomas Carter, Select Board
Ricki Carroll, Finance Committee
Jennifer Markens, Member at Large
Wayne Farrell, Member at Large

Planning Board

In 2014 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.

The Planning Board spent some of the year working on the issue of senior housing in town center. The second half of the year was devoted to a special permit for Ashfield's first cell tower. The Board continues to study this issue and is looking for ways to keep modern communications from affecting the town's rural character.

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

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

The police department has had many changes this year. First of all I would like to thank the Select Board for appointing me as Chief of Police. It is a distinct pleasure to serve the Town of Ashfield. We are now fully staffed with four new officers appointed to the force. Please welcome aboard my second in command Officer James Bernier, Officer Peter Granitsas, Officer Jordan Zukowski and Officer Trisha Carlo. With the addition of the new officers our hopes are to provide more coverage for the town in the future and to alleviate some of the burden of

the Massachusetts State Police. We have had some major incidents this year where if we had additional coverage we could possibly deter some of the afterhours crime.

Community Policing has now been handed over to Officer Carlo. She has many new ideas and I'm sure the town will enjoy them. One of the projects I have requested her to start working on right away is the National Night Out. We have been trying to have the second Night Out and it has been a huge task with limited officers. I have all the faith that Officer Carlo will bring it together. Thank you Officer Carlo for stepping up to the plate.

The department vehicles have been holding up well. I have been trying to use the Explorer more often to keep the miles off the newer vehicle. My hope is to make it last for a few years. After using the Ford Interceptor for a year now I would like to again thank the Select Board and the Town of Ashfield for their support in the purchase of the vehicle. While the Explorer has had some maintenance issues such as brakes, I am told by the mechanic that this is a normal repair for the vehicle.

We continue to have issues with the police department computers. Hopefully this can be resolved in the very near future.

This year we have had the in-car video installed in the Interceptor. This video is equipped with audio and video. I believe this system will be an asset to the department.

Now in charge of grants is Officer James Bernier. Officer Bernier has applied for a grant for new equipment. This grant is a nonmatching grant, therefore there will be no cost to the town. We are currently looking into a second grant for a new video system for Sanderson Academy. Hopefully we can procure this grant and assist our school with an updated security system. Thanks go to Officer Bernier for taking on this important task.

Again I would like to thank the Select Board and the entire Town of Ashfield in their support for the Ashfield Police Department.

Diane Wilder
Chief of Police

Ashfield School Department Vocational, Technical and Agricultural Education

Ashfield maintains a town school department for vocational education students, grades 9 to 12 inclusive. It is financially separate from the Mohawk Trail Regional School District. The town tuitions these students to the Franklin County Technical School (Turners Falls) and Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School (Northampton). Ashfield is responsible for the cost of tuition and transportation of our students, and receives state aid from the Commonwealth (Chapter 70 aid and Chapter 74 transportation reimbursement). For fiscal year 2014, state aid covered about 31% of total costs – for the current fiscal year, this will probably decline to less than 25%.

Student Enrollment – Enrollment at the two schools is increasing as more students are expressing interest in the technical and agricultural trades. Last year’s enrollment was 14; this year we are at 19.

Franklin County Technical School

School Year	# Grade 9	# Grade 10	# Grade 11	# Grade 12	Total 9-12
2013-2014	4	3	2	1	10
2014-2015	2	5	2	3	12

Smith Vocational & Agricultural High School

School Year	# Grade 9	# Grade 10	# Grade 11	# Grade 12	Total 9-12
2013-2014	0	0	2	2	4
2014-2015	4	1	0	2	7

Congratulations to Franklin Tech graduate Julien Rodriguez and to Smith School graduates Sunil Shmuel Leue and Charlene Thouin, all who graduated in June of 2014.

Appropriation and Estimated Expense for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015 – The town appropriated the following amounts for vocational education at the May 2014 annual town meeting:

[For FY 2015: Smith School Base Tuition @ \$18,270. Franklin Tech Base Tuition @ \$17,850]

Item	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015
Regular Base Tuition		\$414,290
Special Education Tuition		28,745
Transportation		94,534
Total	\$320,000	\$537,569

Estimated expense for 2014-15 will likely be around \$449,000, due to four students who did not enroll, and savings on transportation implemented via an amendment to the bus contract.

Oversight – Currently, the Finance Committee is responsible for the administration and oversight of the town vocational school department. Each year the committee appoints one of its members to serve as department coordinator.

Vocational Education Advisory Committee – Two years ago, Ashfield, Charlemont, Plainfield and Hawley reestablished an advisory

committee to oversee the vocational-ed programs of the four ‘tuitioning towns.’ In October of 2014, the committee implemented a cost-savings program which is utilizing gasoline from the Ashfield Highway Facility. It anticipated that this contract revision will save the four towns in excess of \$25,000 this year. Ashfield representatives to the advisory committee are Poppy Doyle, Mary Fitz Gibbon and David Newell.

Respectfully Submitted

David Newell

Ashfield Finance Committee & Vocational Education Advisory
Committee Clerk

Sewer Commission

The treatment plant has come through another uneventful year. The plant is successfully treating sewage and there are no high flow events or permit violations to report.

In April the treatment plant acquired a “new” 2007 pickup truck. This resulted from the deteriorated condition of the previous truck, which had become too rusty to pass inspection. The new truck has more capacity and is also better looking.

Discussions with the Planning Board regarding a possible elderly housing bylaw prompted a revision to the Ashfield Sewer Regulations this year. Homeowners will now be required to apply for a permit to change the number of dwelling units in buildings that are connected to the town sewer. This change was made in consideration of the flow restrictions imposed by the permit. Commissioners will be able to better regulate the possible number of new sewer units, which could result from elder housing provisions.

The Sewer Regulation revisions also clarified the distinction between public and private sewers. The town is responsible for maintenance of the sewer mains, and homeowners are responsible for their own pipe up to the point that it enters the main.

The conversion of the boiler to propane has still not been completed, but the delay has been beneficial in that we are able to use the remaining fuel oil in the underground tank that would otherwise have been discarded. The work will certainly be finished by next year.

The town's contract for solar energy credits has so far proved a disappointment. In December the treatment plant saved \$28.65, which represents about a three percent savings on the total bill. Our original expectation was for an 18 percent savings.

Our thanks again to Michele Novak who took it upon herself to compose an article published in the Ashfield News regarding the problems caused in the sewer by disposable wipes. This is a problem that has received national attention because disposable wipes do not break down in the sewer and often cause pump failures. Michele also braved falling trees and dangerous roads to restart some essential equipment during a recent ice storm and power outage.

Our thanks also to the Fall Festival committee for the huge improvement in flow during the Festival for the last two years!

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hoff, Dan Lovett and Thomas Miner Jr.

Senior Center

As the population of residents reaching the age of 60 continues to increase dramatically in Ashfield, as well as all of West County, the Councils on Aging members, town representatives and staff are working together to accommodate needs and interests. More than 155 seniors from Ashfield participated, who were served a total of more than 2,300 times and the number is growing. Overall the Center served 694 individuals partaking 14,513 times during the year.

Doug Field and Wayne Wickland represent Ashfield's seniors by serving on the Council on Aging. They also serve on the COA Board of the Senior Center. The Ashfield COA is joined by Dot Lyman, Activities Coordinator and other volunteers who continue to offer a monthly luncheon and Osteoporosis Fitness classes as well as Tai Chi. Thank you to the First Congregational Church and St. John's Church for generously providing space for these programs.

At the Center residents benefited from services and programs coordinated by the professional staff. Professional staff provides expertise and consistency in warm and caring ways every day. Leanne Dowd, Outreach Coordinator expanded her availability to Ashfield residents by establishing drop-in hours at St. John's Corner once per month. She is available to assist with personal and family situations, provide caregiver support and assistance if needed with fuel and food assistance. Leanne also helps with housing rehabilitation and small repairs for the home. Many volunteers help with these services as well as being volunteer drivers.

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 wrote and received an incentive grant from the State, which has allowed more van driver hours, additional routes for shopping and errands as well as gas stipends for volunteers using their own cars.

The Senior Center building itself is being stretched with multiple programs happening at any one time and larger events limited by space. Having only one restroom is not only an inconvenience but a hindrance to participation for some. Utilizing a Local Technical Assistance Grant from the FRCOG, a formal Needs Assessment was completed by the Center for Aging and Demographic Research at UMass Boston. Additional space is necessary to provide appropriately for the determined growing needs. The member town liaisons, Board and staff are working to propose detailed options for the coming years. The Center also served as an emergency shelter during an extended power outage on Thanksgiving Day.

To help with current and future financial needs, a new 501 (c)3 organization "The Senior Center Foundation" has been formed by dedicated local residents to raise funds to support programs and services for seniors served by The Senior Center in Shelburne Falls. The Foundation will be providing financial assistance thanks to generous donors to reduce foot care clinics, give class instructor stipends, provide entertainment and provide reduced cost meals as well as ensuring an expansive mailing to over 500 homes of our 10-page newsletter. The Foundation is eligible to apply for grant and private funding for future projects determined by the member towns.

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

Technology Committee, Municipal Light Plant, and Wired West

Members: David Kulp (committee chair, MLP manager, WiredWest delegate), Andy Smith (WiredWest alternate delegate), Brian Clark, Juliet Jacobson, Tom Henry

Town Hall Information Technology

The technology committee's main concern this year was the improvement of document management and security for Town Hall staff. We studied different options for document storage and retrieval. We settled on a migration of the staff computer systems to Office 365, a service that provides up to date versions of the common software used in Town Hall, document sharing to facilitate collaborative editing and version control, integrated email, and a real-time off-site backup. The first steps of the migration began in the fall, but some changes are on-going. We believe that the new system is superior to the previous mix of tools: it should improve productivity through integration and collaboration features, simplify some types of electronic document searches and create a more robust, secure document archive. The up-front cost is far less than

conventional in-house server solutions and it can be maintained by committee members instead of requiring on-going third party support contracts.

The committee recommended that the town change its internet service to the newly available fiber optic internet connection. The town hall switched mid-year. In addition, we evaluated different voice-over-IP (VOIP) telephony options, determined that a VOIP system would be comparably priced to the current Verizon phone system but provide better service, and we recommended a new vendor. Migration to VOIP is expected in 2015.

We also recommended hardware purchases to replace or improve computers and telecommunication equipment in Town Hall. We installed and now maintain this equipment. Generally speaking, the committee has become the first response team for many technology needs (telephones, computer maintenance, wired and wireless network management), which has saved the town the cost of a technology consultant in some cases.

Broadband

The Ashfield Municipal Light Plant is the formal means by which the town is a member of the regional cooperative called WiredWest, which is working on deploying a fiber optic broadband network in western Massachusetts. This year the state legislature allocated \$40 million to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) to address the lack of broadband access. At the end of the year, the MBI decided to partner with WiredWest and the two groups presented a tentative plan to the towns in which the MBI would fund approximately 40% of the cost of a fiber optic network in towns including Ashfield if the towns would pay for the balance. The network would be transferred to and operated by WiredWest. At the end of the year, the Select Board expressed non-binding support for this plan, which is expected to be further developed in early 2015 and considered by voters at the annual town meeting.

Town Clerk

January to December 2014

Vital Statistics -1914

Births	17
Marriage	10
Deaths	12

Vital Statistics- 2014

Births	9
Marriage	6
Deaths	16

John M. Sears –Town Clerk

Ann Dunne-Town Clerk

Elections Results 2014:

Annual Local Election, May 03, 2014

1,364 Registered Voters
 244 Ballots Cast
 17 % turnout

State Primary, September 09, 2014

1,362 Registered Voters
 319 Ballots Cast
 23% turnout

Democrat: 292 Republican: 27

State Election, November 04, 2014

1,366 Registered Voters

867 Ballots Cast

64 % turnout

Number of Registered Voters: 1,323 (as of Dec 31, 2014)

Democrat 435

Green Party 2

Green-Rainbow 6

Libertarian 4

Republican 87

Unenrolled 789

Thank you to all our Election Workers who never fail to show up at 6:30 a.m. on polling day.

Election Workers 2014

Constables:

John LaBelle , Betty Lesure, Warren Kirkpatrick

Wardens:

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, Claire Cournand, Barbara Maloney, Honey Boyden, Jean Cherdack, Laura Spencer, Hannah Monohon, Dianne Field, Eliza Chaput

Tally Sheet Counters:

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

Hand Count Votes at ATM and STM:

Nina Coler, Marcine Eisenberg, Sandy Lilly, Caroline Murray, Betty Stewart, Faye Whitney

Dog License Program

A total of 410 dog tags/licenses were issued in 2014. Fees generated are deposited in the revolving dog fund, and are used to maintain this program and purchase dog tags.

Records Preservation

We continue to preserve one book/volume per fiscal year. Using donations from our Records Preservation Fund- funded by gifts/donations from our citizens. We preserved the following volumes during 2013 and 2014.

Marriages 1808-1840, Deaths 1808-1840, Microfilm and CD, Cost \$938.12

Marriage Intentions 1858-1904, Microfilm and CD, Cost \$925.00

Submitted by
Ann Dunne
Town Clerk

Town Accountant's Report: Fiscal Year 2014

FY2014 General Fund Revenues Budget to Actual Summary:

Revenues	Budget	Actual	Variance
Taxes	3,645,200	3,718,512	73,312
Licenses and Permits	2,000	5,375	3,375
Intergovernmental	272,208	342,600	70,392
Charges for Services	61,000	70,943	9,943
Fees and Fines	1,000	3,743	2,743
Unclassified	0	22,835	22,835
Transfer from other funds	6,200	4,200	-2,000
Investment Earnings	1,000	1,429	429
Total Revenues	3,988,608	4,169,636	181,028

FY2014 General Fund Expenditures Budget to Actual Summary:

Expenditures	Budget	Actual	Variance
General Government	356,143	308,359	47,783
Public Safety	235,745	203,583	32,162
Public Works	758,753	690,286	68,467
Community Services	151,607	117,216	34,391

Education	2,315,924	2,286,514	29,410
Insurance and Benefits	160,299	129,210	31,089
Unclassified	244,089	243,096	993
Debt Service	217,742	212,542	5,200
Total Expenditures	4,440,302	4,190,808	249,494

Special Revenue Accounts

	30-Jun-14 <u>Beq</u> <u>Balance</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>Revenues</u>	<u>YTD</u> <u>Expenses</u>	<u>Balance</u>
<u>Highway Funds</u>				
MA Highway-C90 FY08	-	341,104.66	-	-
	155,180.46	341,104.66	363,427.81	177,503.61
	-	-	-	-
	155,180.46	341,104.66	363,427.81	177,503.61
<u>Revolving Funds</u>				
Wetlands Protection Fund	4,379.11	0.00	0.00	4,379.11
Dog Revolving Fund	11,456.36	2,326.00	-446.33	13,336.03
Youth Comm Revolving Fund	571.50	0.00	0.00	571.50
Library Fees Revolving Fund	4,274.45	2,077.00	-2,500.00	3,851.45
Swimming Program Rev Fund	1,205.45	1,000.00	-920.00	1,285.45
<u>Other Special Revenue Funds</u>				
Big Yellow School Bus Grant	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.00
Food Inspection Grant	500.00	0.00	0.00	500.00

Employee Wellness Grant	186.84	1,050.00	-415.66	821.18
Tree Donations	1,494.87	0.00	0.00	1,494.87
Flu Clinic Donations	1,429.00	0.00	0.00	1,429.00
Sanderson Barn-Ins Donation	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Con Comm Clerk Donations	77.87	0.00	0.00	77.87
Human Relations	12.87	0.00	0.00	12.87
Record Preservation	5,368.60	0.00	-938.12	4,430.48
Police Donations Fund	115.49	494.87	0.00	610.36
O'Donnell Donations	101.34	0.00	0.00	101.34
Steeple Donations	2,336.82	350.00	0.00	2,686.82
Town Hall Restoration Fund	12,924.43	1,077.50	-60.75	13,941.18
Ambulance Donations Grant Program	995.24	0.00	0.00	995.24
Income	19,392.80	0.00	0.00	19,392.80
Cultural Council Donations	431.22	0.00	0.00	431.22
Septic Repair Program	74,899.33	72.20	0.00	74,971.53
Belding Endowment-Library	2,673.12	143.83	0.00	2,816.95
Library Investment Earnings	13,805.57	10,402.29	-9,000.00	15,207.86
J Donald Art Fund	483.97	0.00	0.00	483.97
Belding Endowment-Park	772.87	143.83	0.00	916.70
Green Energy Grant	57,601.19	0.00	-56,716.87	884.32
K-9 Support Fund	58.87	0.00	0.00	58.87
Library Donations, Fundraising	14,069.94	1,426.37	-7,994.93	7,501.38
Town History Fund	11,857.82	1,442.50	-2,493.76	10,806.56
T H Floor Preservation Fund	4,401.54	0.00	0.00	4,401.54
Insurance Proceeds	0.00	1,720.00	-1,720.00	0.00
Historic Commission Donations	300.70	0.00	0.00	300.70
WMRLS Grant	689.52	0.00	0.00	689.52
Agricultural Comm Donations	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Town Hall Employee Fund	16.67	350.00	0.00	366.67
<u>State & Federal Grants</u>				
FEMA Snow				
Emergency Funds	11,349.92	0.00	-10,986.38	363.54
FEMA Storm				
Emergency Funds	-15,472.81	35,598.52	-32,301.59	-12,175.88
Council on Aging Grant	3,761.50	4,000.00	-4,000.00	3,761.50
Library State Aid	0.00	2,074.57	0.00	2,074.57
Cultural Council	2,930.44	4,250.00	-3,539.00	3,641.44
Fire Gear Federal Grant	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Failed Septic System Grant	10,064.08	0.00	0.00	10,064.08
Fire Dept SAFE Grant	0.00	6,508.00	-4,832.75	1,675.25
Volunteer Firefighters Grant	389.26	0.00	0.00	389.26
Fire Dept Safety Equip Grant	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
EDS Grant	0.00	3,504.99	-2,834.00	670.99
Agricultural Innovation Gr	592.15	0.00	-25.20	566.95
MAPHO Minigrant	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Forest Fire Grant	-958.15	3,765.00	0.00	2,806.85
W Mass Homeland Security Grant	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	12,656.39	59,701.08	-58,518.92	13,838.55

Enterprise Fund

WWTP Fund	122,893.88	121,389.01	136,846.50	107,436.39
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Capital Projects

Capital Project-Highway Garage	1,640.43	0.00	0.00	1,640.43
Capital Project - Highway Truck	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Trust Funds

Mary Priscilla Howes Fund	13,053.02	118.65	-450.00	12,721.67
William Hathaway Fund	41,775.43	90.10	-47.50	41,818.03
Susan Howes Fund	8,069.54	15.64	0.00	8,085.18
Major King Fund	18,880.26	39.18	0.00	18,919.44
Eliza Miller Fund	36,080.66	78.36	0.00	36,159.02
Whiting Street Fund	10,534.69	23.51	-1,500.00	9,058.20
Henry Taylor Fund	19,994.13	50.93	0.00	20,045.06
Salmon Miller Fund	38,124.42	94.02	0.00	38,218.44
Fred Cross General Fund	51,987.88	145.51	-4,200.00	47,933.39
Other Cemetery Fund	1,250.00	0.00	0.00	1,250.00
Mabelle Jordan Fund	42.60	0.12	0.00	42.72
Fred Cross Library Fund	5,000.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00
Fred Cross Cemetery Fund	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
Belding Endowment-Park/Library	20,522.38	0.00	0.00	20,522.38
Mary Morrill Ellwell Sands Fund	5,046.71	14.23	0.00	5,060.94
Stabilization Fund	217,320.48	200,771.90	0.00	418,092.38

Agency Funds

Custodian Fees	11.04	0.00	0.00	11.04
Retirees Health Ins	-699.35	12,262.35	-11,781.00	-218.00
Off Duty Police Detail	-461.50	4,911.00	-5,011.50	-562.00
Firearm ID Cards	3,250.00	5,750.00	-4,350.00	4,650.00
Fire Dept Fees	-25.00	1,105.00	-1,105.00	-25.00
Collector's Demands	2,424.00	3,615.00	-5,600.00	439.00
Collector's MLCs	625.00	825.00	-1,325.00	125.00

Deputy Collector's Fees	1,565.00	3,984.00	-3,294.00	2,255.00
Water District Fees	-18.64	66,052.33	-70,422.44	-4,388.75

Town Hall Building Committee

Members of this committee worked with the Green Communities Committee to install energy upgrades. These included air sealing in the new crawl space (which maintains 60 degrees in winter), much insulation in the ceilings and walls of the office area, and a new gas boiler for heating the offices.

After Hilltown Networks made several presentations to this committee, the Historical Commission, the Select Board, and at a Town Meeting, members of these boards agreed, with certain conditions, to allow this company to install antennae for the purpose of providing and receiving fixed wireless internet service to the Town Hall, the Fire Station, and anyone currently in line of sight of the building. Some townspeople had concerns about this use of the historic steeple. As of the end of December, the system is not yet providing service to the village.

The Building Committee and the Historical Commission co-sponsored a celebration of the 200th anniversary of the first use of the

Town Hall building as a church, in 1814. Construction had begun in 1812. By reading dates on gravestones, we determined the building's original location in what is now Norton Hill Cemetery. We marked off this location, and floated balloons denoting heights of the interior and exterior, including the 100-foot top of the steeple. Various townspeople participated in a dramatization of Lydia Hall Miles' "Reminiscences," which described the building and its use as she remembered it from her childhood. We used information from other historical documents to present an overview of the possible method and route by which the building was moved in 1857 to its present location on Main Street. At the Town Hall, participants heard about changes to the building, listened to the Ashfield Community Band, viewed a timeline of the building's history, viewed photographs of some of the building's changes, read about different heating systems used, heard a brief account of the 1984-1986 volunteer steeple reconstruction project, and enjoyed donated ice cream on the Common.

Members of this committee, with the help of a carpenter and donated lumber, worked to install much needed shelving and other storage fixtures in the janitor's room.

With much regret, we accepted the resignation of our Town Hall Steward and committee member, Wayne Gardner, whom we thank, and whose expertise and abilities we miss.

We look forward to more interior painting, slate repair, stage curtains and lights, more insulation, glass repair, and a new exterior bulletin board, at least.

Stuart Harris, Chair
Nancy Gray Garvin, Secretary
Douglas Cranson
Mary Quigley
Donna Scott

Town Tax Collector

	Real Estate Balances As of June 30, 2014	Personal Property Balances As of June 30, 2014	Motor Vehicle Balances As of June 30, 2014
2014	\$94,212.00	\$2,658.00	\$7,563.00
2013	\$47,790.00	\$1,566.00	\$2,027.00
2012	\$18,231.00	\$1,580.00	\$5,227.00
2011	\$6,194.00	\$752.00	\$2,043.00
Prior years	\$12,692.00	\$1,092.00	\$2,746.00
Totals	\$179,119.00	\$7,648.00	\$19,606.00
Grand Total	\$206,373.00		

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, 2013	\$1,744,462.07
Cash Received	\$4,345,161.89
Cash Disbursements	\$4,237,842.31
Balance of Cash as of June 30, 2014	\$1,851,781.65

Balance consists of:

Bank of Western Mass

General Fund Checking/Payroll	\$501,697.86
General Fund-CD	\$1,934.99
Fred Cross-Library Trust Fund	\$5,000.00
Fred Cross-Cemetery Trust Fund	\$2,000.00
Consolidated Trust Fund	\$173,948.36
Septic Repair Program Account	\$75,085.49
RDC Account	\$60,739.39
Stabilization Fund	\$418,092.38
Cemetery Trust Funds	\$1,250.00
Mabelle Jordon Trust Fund	\$42.72

Bank of Western Mass

Fred Cross Trust Fund	\$47,933.39
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M.M.D.T

General Fund	\$291,961.33
Mary Priscilla Howes Trust Fund	\$12,777.83

Bank of America

General Fund	\$52,448.77
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Unibank

General Fund	\$90,702.01
General Fund-online banking	\$115,845.76
General Fund-quick pay	\$321.37

Total	\$1,851,781.65
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Trustees of the Belding Memorial Library

In writing these reports I usually begin with some mention of a difficult situation that has befallen the library. But this past year, the library's 100th, has brought much to celebrate. Commemorations included an exhibit and presentation of a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation to the library, and ended in late August with a birthday party on the back lawn, complete with cake and ice cream, balloons, and music from the Town Band.

This past year was also the first for new Director Martha Cohen, and a great many changes have occurred. The entire collection was weeded of damaged and uncirculating books, making room for a steady stream of new titles that are prominently displayed. With help from Nancy Garvin and Grace Lesure a reference room for local history was created. A Teen Section now has its own space with new furniture. The younger children had a successful Summer Reading Program and special events like a visit from the Lego Lady and a build- your- own-robot event at the dump. There were readings of fiction and poetry by local authors, and events to discuss the visioning of the library as it begins its next 100 years.

Sadly, 2014 saw the passing of two stalwarts of the Belding, Ruth Craft and Barbara Zalenski. The generous donations made in their memories will be used in part to expand audio books for children.

There is a spirit of excitement at the library, due in large part to Martha and her dedicated staff: Sherrie Scott and Irene Branson, as well as volunteers like Erin Townsley, and Larry Sheehan's terrific monthly book reviews. The Friends and Nina Coler continue to give us generous support with the book sale and the raffle at Fall Festival.

While the board lost a valued Trustee with Nancy Intres's resignation, her place is ably being filled by Sandy Carter. Sandy, along with fellow trustees Caroline Murray, Renee Rastorfer, and Virginia Wiswell each bring something unique to the care and running of the library. The trust of the town is well placed with them.

Respectfully submitted,
Marcine Appel Eisenberg, Chair

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 dependants and income from all sources. Eligible dependents of deceased veterans are provided with the same benefits as they would were the veteran still living.

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.

November 13, 2014 most member towns voted to dissolve this district and become a member of the new regional veteran's district, Upper Pioneer Veterans Services District 294 Main Street, Greenfield, Mass 01301. The new phone number is 4132-772-1571.

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 Advisor](#)

Leo J. Parent, Director

Mark Fitzpatrick, VSO

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals heard two cases in 2013. Both involved lots on Buckland Road, an area of town where the historic pattern of development included a number of seasonal cabins on lots with narrow frontage. Built before the town adopted Zoning Bylaws stipulating a minimum frontage of 200', a lot size of two acres, and a minimum building setback of 25', most of the properties along Buckland Road do not conform to the bylaws. In addition, these non-conforming lots generally have little level land close to the road, and steep slopes that drain toward the lake. All properties on the road are connected to town water and sewer.

Case 2014-1: Applicant requested a Special Permit to demolish an existing non-conforming structure and replace it with a new residential structure on the same lot. Following a public hearing and site visit, the Board determined the proposed structure would be slightly less non-conforming, the new driveway layout would provide improved access to and egress from the site, and the proposed structure would be compatible with the neighborhood. Special Permit granted, with the condition that the site and its drainage be approved by the Conservation Commission, and construction to begin within a year of the August 12, 2014 decision. Sitting for the ZBA were Stuart Harris, chair; Mollie Babize; Kit Nylen.

Case 2014-2: Applicants requested a variance to place a mobile home on a lot for more than six months. The lot in question was the subject of a variance in 2013, when the ZBA determined that although the lot did not have the required 200' of frontage, it met the requirement for 150' of frontage when it was created, and thus is a legal building lot. The applicants, new owners of the property, hope to place a mobile home permanently on metal cribbing with concrete cinderblocks. The attractive unit in question would have a small footprint and would be compatible with the neighborhood. A representative of the Conservation Commission attended the public hearing, said they had reviewed the Notice of Intent (given proximity to the lake and seasonal streams) and voiced support for the project. However, Section VI C(2) of the Zoning Bylaw specifically prohibits mobile homes to be on a site longer than six months within any calendar year; if the unit could be considered a "modular" home (to be determined by the building commissioner), then a variance would not be required. The case was continued to February 2015, by which time the applicants withdrew their request. Sitting for the ZBA were Mollie Babize, chair; Kit Nylen; Anne Yuryan.

In 2014, Stuart Harris resigned from the board, having provided great leadership and a level head. We thank him for his many years of service on the ZBA. Alternate Alan Surprenant also resigned, leaving the board with just three members. Mollie Babize became chair. Michael

Melcher agreed to serve as an alternate member, and was appointed by the Select Board. We are searching for another alternate member.

Mollie Babize, Chair
Katharine Nylén
Anne Yuryan
Michael Melcher, alternate