

## **2019 REPORT OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMAN**

*Francine Hart, Chair*

The year 2019 welcomed two new Selectmen to our Board; Greg Taillon and John Blinn. Our Town is truly fortunate to have members on the Board who come from a variety of professional backgrounds and areas of expertise.

Greg has served as an officer in the Air Force, and in private sector as a member of executive management. He brings to our table a professional knowledge of IT experience and training and continues to serve in a consulting capacity for his many clients. He has also served at the local and state level with non-profit organizations, which has enabled him to be quite comfortable embracing the parliamentary process of participating in Board meetings.

John is one of our own; a local business owner who has successfully grown his auto repair shop over several decades. As a new selectman, he hit the ground running, and has managed to keep up with the often fast-paced business of the Town. Despite his busy work schedule, he has always been prepared to participate at a high level and brings a thoughtful approach to whatever decision he makes.

I would be remiss if I did not include our amazing Administrative Assistant, Beth Hossack under this chapter. She brings the “light” to highlights. Not only does she assist the Selectmen in their various duties, but she also has several other town responsibilities which she carries out quickly, efficiently, and always with a smile. I personally would be lost without her knowledge and advice, and this Town Hall is truly blessed to have her here.

As Board Chair, it has been my honor and privilege to work with **All** of our dedicated Selectmen. Under their scrutiny, decisions are always made with a watchful eye towards the future of our Town. Their collegial and respectful way of discussing issues thoroughly and openly, allows us to conduct town business with the highest degree of integrity. I have no doubt the decisions made today by this Board will bring nothing but positive results long after ***the page is turned*** on 2019.

### ***TURNING THE PAGE ON OUTSTANDING PROJECTS:***

As I read the 2018 Annual Report, I marveled at the number of projects started in 2019 on which we can now ***turn the page...***

The most significant one is the signing of our Intermunicipal Water Agreement which will bring clean, potable water to our Town. This project has been 40 years in the making, a truly monumental undertaking involving many players locally and at the State and Federal levels. Under the orchestration of our Town Manager, Mark Pearson, our Town can look forward to state-of-the-art infrastructure which will bring much-needed water to a town with no aquifers. Many more ***pages will be turned*** before this project is completed, but our residents can look forward to a community that boasts clean, safe, drinking water for the first time in Plaistow's history.

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We ***turn the page*** on the completion of Safe Routes to School, a project that was initiated back in 2013. Not only can our Town campus boast of brand-new sidewalks for our students to safely get to school, but also the addition of safety crosswalk lights and attractive landscaping to showcase our beautiful town village. The old-world charm of the four metal light posts that flank the crosswalks conceals brand new LED lighting which will save our town considerable money in the future, as well as provide a positive impact on our carbon footprint... a perfect marriage of old and new.

We ***turn the page*** on completing the Westville Road Bridge Project, a much-needed solution to a dangerous stretch of roadway. This was made all the sweeter by receiving a grant to fund approximately 80% of the project cost; monies that would ordinarily have come from the pockets of all our taxpayers. I would encourage our citizens to take a drive along that stretch of road to fully appreciate the tremendous improvements made in visibility, maneuverability, and esthetics. Truly a beautiful piece of engineering!! Our grateful thanks go to our Planning Coordinator, Dee Voss, for supervising the project to completion, and a special shout out to our neighbors along Westville Road who were so patient and understanding of the disruption in their lives as this project unfolded.

Perhaps the crowning jewel in the Town campus would arguably be our new Public Works Facility. As of this writing, we can ***turn the page*** on completing the primary structure which will house our Public Works Department staff and vehicles. With an ever- thoughtful eye towards the future, our Project Manager (yes, our very own Mark Pearson) has included space and resources for a future Water Department and record storage area. By taking on this work in addition to his regular duties as Town Manager, we have saved tens of thousands of dollars in project management costs. The Energy Committee and Highway Advisory Committee have also been critical components in the design and energy-efficient outlay of this building. In 2020 we will be asking the voters to approve the last phase of completing this project; funding a salt shed with solar panels, using unassigned fund balances. Not only will this allow the Town to purchase salt and sand at bulk rates, but the solar panels will enable the town to pay for utility costs to run the building, with a little extra to offset other building utility costs. A win-win for everyone!!

Our Library has ***turned the page*** on completing some significant upgrades to their campus. I'm sure all who use our "unofficial community center" have noticed the freshly paved parking area, as well as a stunning stone wall running the length of the frontage of Main Street. For those of us old enough to remember the "good old days", stone walls played an integral part of the history of our town, and this beautiful nod to our heritage is in keeping with the intent of preserving our town village look and feel.

We can finally ***turn the page*** on street lighting; our Energy Committee has been working diligently to craft a project that will not only improve the lighting quality in our town, but also save a substantial amount of money to our taxpayers going forward, while reducing CO2 emissions and carbon footprint. By the time this report is penned, our town can also look forward to an upgraded lighting system at Town Hall, again with the goal of energy (and dollar) savings.

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Future projects include:

- Refurbishing our sidewalks at Pollard Park to become ADA compliant
- Replacement of the Pollard Road culvert
- Addition of a new softball field at P.A.R.C.
- Construction of hiking trails at Mt. Misery
- Landfill repair to potentially use the site for a solar array

WHEW!! It looks like we have our work cut out for us, but Team Plaistow is ready for these and future challenges.

### **FISCAL PLANNING**

Our talented finance department comprised of our Finance Director and Assistant Town Manager, Greg Colby, our Assistant Finance Director and Human Resource Director, Lori Sadewicz, and our Administrative Assistant, Susan Westin work together to keep our town in solid financial shape. If it sounds like these individuals wear more than one hat, it is because they do. Throughout the year our Town Manager has taken a critical look at restructuring our Town employment roster with an eye towards prudently managing the taxpayers' money without sacrificing services. We ***turn the page*** on the old way of doing business, and instead embrace job sharing and multi-tasking...always thinking outside the box to get the job done. The recent town-wide assessment has increased the net valuation of the Town by over \$147 million dollars (not including utilities), which in turn has translated into a municipal tax decrease of 7.74% and an overall tax decrease of 13.34%, landing Plaistow in the enviable position of being in the top-tier of towns with the lowest tax rates. We have streamlined the budget and reporting process so that department expenses are more transparent and accurately reflect the department expenditures. Our Finance Director has also shifted our excess general fund cash holdings into higher yielding accounts to gain even more revenue for the Town. His attention to detail and accurate fiscal reporting makes the Town shine at the State level. We continue to fund robust Capital Reserve Funds through careful analysis of our Capital Improvement Plan. This year, if voters approve the last payments, we can ***turn the page*** on two projects funded through this program, the MICS (Management Information Computer System) and SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) programs designed to assist our police and fire departments in maintaining state of the art technology. Our Town is firmly set on the four pillars of sound financial stability; revenue acquisition, prudent spending, sound 'best' management practices, and future planning.

### **EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHTS**

We ***turn the page*** on saying farewell to our former employees and at the same time welcoming new additions to our family:

Doug Mullin - Chief of Police  
Maura Wentworth - Animal Control Officer  
Brian MacHarrie – Secretary



## **2018 REPORT OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMAN** *(continued)*

Dianne D'Iorio – FT Dispatcher  
Christopher Iacozzi – FT Police Officer  
Elias Chaya – FT Police Officer  
Seasonal, part-time Police Officers:

- Scott Anderson
- Gregory Malisos
- George Winchell
- David Corneau
- Shane Childs
- Grace Greenwood
- Christopher Rothwell
- Daniel Gidley

Alex Shields - Highway/Maintenance

In closing, I would like to express my grateful appreciation to ALL the employees at Town Hall who selflessly and quietly assisted me in my duties as Chair. Without their guidance and support, this Town would not be the amazing piece of heaven that it is. I urge all our taxpayers to remember that these employees have a difficult job, and yet they approach their work always ready to assist, and with a smile. Our Town boasts a number of charitable and civic organizations which are always ready to say “yes” to making life in Plaistow a little easier for some of our residents who need a little help. Finally, a big “thank you” to all the men and women who volunteer their time, talent, and treasure whether in public service, or as volunteers. Without their help, we would never be able to ***turn the page*** to look forward to what is in store for us in the future.



*Southern New Hampshire Regional Water Interconnection Contract Signing*