



PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND

# Annual Report 2014-2015



*Proud Heritage, Bright Future*

ESTABLISHED 1638

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# Town Council Report

Dear Fellow Citizens,

Election years provide a platform for change and 2014 was no exception. Vice President John Blaess and Councilwoman Molly Magee did not run for re-election. I would like to thank them both for their insight and leadership during their term on the Council. We welcomed back former Council President Joe Robicheau and newcomer, former Zoning Board Chairman Kevin Aguiar. Both Joe and Kevin bring vast experience to the Council and will help Portsmouth move forward to a better community.

We also said good bye to our Town Administrator John Klimm who has moved on to a new position in Aiken, SC. John did a great job helping Portsmouth move from an old outdated budget process to a newer process that aligns our expenses to better track them. John also established a \$1,000,000

per year road improvement program that is not only showing results today but for the long term future of the Town. John led the Town to significant changes in the way we provide benefits to our Town employees that will provide both the employees and the Town security for the future. I wish John the best of luck in his new position in SC. I thank Jim Lathrop for bringing the year to a close during the transition to our new Administrator. Jim did a great job building our 2015-16 budget and preparing the office for a smooth transition.

2015 also brought a resolution to many years of battle with DEM over how to handle the treatment of wastewater in Portsmouth. I would like to thank Town Planner Gary Crosby for all his work with the staff at DEM to help provide a solution which will assist our residents in moving forward with upgrades to their systems. Families are now able to work with DEM directly to find ways to build a system to help protect the future of our environment and stay in their homes.

In addition, we were able to take advantage of energy savings programs through National Grid to help upgrade our Town and School Buildings. The summer of 2015 will see upgrades to the aging heating systems in our schools and town buildings using mostly surplus dollars to accomplish the upgrades. Some of the furnaces are over 40 years old and well past their useful life. The upgrades will provide our children a safer environment while saving the town money in energy costs long into the future.



The winter of 2014-15 was going along great until January 23 when over 24 inches of snow fell and seemingly did not stop falling until March. I would like to thank all of our Town staff for their hard work keeping the streets and our residents safe. I would

specifically like to thank the DPW staff for their tireless work to keep our streets clear and safe. The men of the DPW worked long, hard hours keeping our streets clear through some incredible conditions; thank you all.

Finally, I would like to thank the School Committee and School Department for continuing to improve our schools and education system. We have begun a new era of cooperation with our partners in the schools to help consolidate services and provide the best and most cost effective educational experience for our children.

I hope you all enjoy reading our annual report and I look forward to an exceptional remainder of 2015 with our new Administrator and a new beginning for our great Town.

Best regards,  
Keith Hamilton, Town Council President

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TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH**

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TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH**

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*Portsmouth...four seasons of splendor*



Richard A. Rainer, Jr. Town Administrator

## Town Administrator

Dear Portsmouth Residents,

It is an honor to prepare and submit Portsmouth's Annual Report for your review. The citizens of Portsmouth voted to incorporate an annual report into our Charter that would be prepared each year designed to show the state of the town. We have completed this report to memorialize the activities of the town during fiscal year 2015, which runs from July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015.

Fiscal year 2015 was a year of change and transition. We welcomed a new Town Council in November 2014, saying good-bye to some good friends and welcoming new ones. In April 2015 Town Administrator John C. Klimm, who joined the town in 2012, left for a new position. Town Finance Director Jim Lathrop became the Interim Town Administrator until the town brought me on board July 1, 2015.

This fiscal year started off with the presentation of the Portsmouth Award to some long time Portsmouth volunteers: Carolyn Evans-Carbery, for her continued work in several areas including the Town's gardens, war memorials, and with senior citizens, and because she is, as then-President Seveney stated in a proclamation, "...a shining example of citizenship and generosity of spirit." Immediately after, the Portsmouth Award was presented to the Portsmouth Concerned Citizens "Film Crew" who have been filming Town Council,

School Committee and other meetings of note on a volunteer basis for 13 years, providing both staff and video equipment with no public funds. In particular, the Portsmouth Award went to Larry Fitzmorris, Charlie Cook, Debra Faber, Peter Roberts and Hadley Rood for "They are a clear example of citizenship and commitment to their community..."

In September of 2014, the Town of Portsmouth became one of only a handful of communities in the United States to be awarded an AAA bond rating. This was a huge accomplishment for our town and affects our finances in a tremendously positive manner.

The Town changed the way it did business this year by issuing an RFP and choosing a third party to run the Melville Campground and pay the Town first. This has resulted in a winning situation for the Town that can serve as a model for future town endeavors.

Finally, and as always, a debt of gratitude is owed to the dedicated and proficient Town employees who keep the Town running on a daily basis, as well as the scores of volunteers who freely give of their time and efforts to make Portsmouth a better community. Thank you. It could not be done without all of you!

Regards,

Richard A. Rainer, Jr.



# School Committee



*Anything  
is possible  
"with our  
children in mind"*



Terri Cortvriend, School Committee Chair

## Highlights from the SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Each year brings a list of achievements the students, teachers and administrators of Portsmouth can be proud of, and the 2015 school year was no different.

The tenure of Portsmouth's new superintendent, Ana C. Riley, coincided with the start of the 2014-15 school year and she faced many important challenges in guiding the district starting on day 1. First she had to make a recommendation to the School Committee as to whether or not we should depart from the Newport Regional Special Education Collaborative. Thus, beginning July 1, the district will directly offer special education services to its student body. Dr. Lisa Colwell was hired to be the new Director of Pupil Services. The School Committee anticipated that the district will not only be able to improve the education delivered to this population of students but the change will also save over \$400,000 in costs.

Next, Supt. Riley had to select a new Assistant Superintendent, and Dr. Thomas Kenworthy joined the Portsmouth School district in October. Together they oversaw the transition from NECAP to PARCC testing. While the adjustment of the curriculum had been made, 2015 saw the first administration of the PARCC exam. Thanks to the hard work of our IT staff, Portsmouth students were able to take the entirety of the exam online. Portsmouth was one of only a few districts in the state which was able to do so. Results of PARCC are not expected to be received by the district until the fall of 2015.

In the fall of 2014 the ribbon was cut on a new artificial turf field, updated tennis courts and track and field venues at PHS. The School Committee is grateful for the generosity of all the donors whose contributions made possible this significant improvement to our athletic facilities. The improvements to our track and field have led to a rental arrangement with Roger Williams



University. The improvements of the tennis courts are one of several projects that have been approved by RIDE for state reimbursement. These reimbursements will flow back to the town.

For the upcoming school year, the school department brought forth a budget request with a 0% increase while improving the social/emotional support structures at each school, bringing special education back in to the district and fully funding our athletic programs. In cooperation with the Portsmouth Police Department, a school resource officer will be assigned to the High and Middle schools to assist in town wide prevention efforts. The district also completed a thorough review of all our building assets and presented a 5 year capital improvement plan to the Town Council. This plan includes the replacement of the boilers at all four schools which have all exceeded their useful lifespan by many years. The School Committee will fund the boiler replacement with existing surplus dollars. This effort

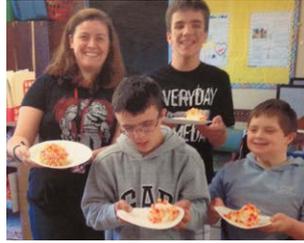
will not only spare taxpayers from needing to bond an expensive repair, but it will also funnel the reimbursement dollars from RIDE back into the town coffers.

School Committee members for fiscal year 2015 are Terri Cortvriend, Chair, Emily Copeland, Vice Chair, Thomas Vadney, Clerk, Frederick Faerber, Andrew Kelly, Jessica Lineberger (through September, 2015), and John Wojichowski.



## Highlights from MELVILLE ELEMENTARY

- Participated in Level 2 Foundation's Coaching throughout the school year, training 2nd grade teachers on phonics and grammar practices.
- 100% PARCC participation.
- Held their annual Fall Festival that raised over \$5,000 for the school.
- Held an adult "Whale of an Evening" raised over \$8,000 for the school.
- Celebrated Reading and Spirit week during the month of March. Students met their goal of reading over 1,000 hours throughout the month of March.
- Science Week at Melville consisted of a Robotics Night led by PHS students, 1st grade science night, and a Mad Science after school family performance.
- Awarded a \$10,000 grant from Mr. Feinstein for being a Feinstein Leadership School and representing a community with a commitment to good deeds.
- Collected over 4,000 non-perishable food items at a fall and spring food drive. Awarded a \$4,000 Feinstein grant for participation in these drives.
- Melville students raised over \$12,000 for the Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser.
- Coffee with the Principal was offered to parents on a monthly basis.
- Parent Appreciation Ceremony was held during Melville's last MPTG meeting. Grace Finnegan, was honored as volunteer of the year.
- Students continued to be recognized weekly for "Whale Done" behaviors.
- Class of the Month and Teacher of the Month recognitions were new to our recognition program this year.
- Twitter was used daily to communicate daily classroom and school based activities.
- Qualified for Title I funding for the 2015-2016 School Year.



## Highlights from PORTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL

- PHS was recognized in December by Governor Chaffee and Commissioner Gist as a Commended School in Rhode Island by virtue of its performance on standardized tests, attendance data, and graduation success rate.
- The Class of 2014's four-year graduation rate of 96% was the highest of any high school in Rhode Island.
- For the second year in a row the school was recognized by The College Board for its Advanced Placement (AP) Honor Roll for increased participation and improved performance on AP exams.
- The Girls Varsity Soccer Team won the Division 1 State Championship over LaSalle Academy.
- At the annual Scholastic Art Awards, PHS art students collected 17 individual awards, more than any other school in RI.
- The student group, Patriots Committed, dedicated to promoting healthy life choices among high school students, was named Program of the Year at a national conference by the Human Performance Project in Lake Placid, NY.
- Two members of the Class of 2015, Katherine Barry and Natalie Yaw, were named National Merit Scholars and were awarded National Merit scholarships.
- By virtue of over 300 units of blood donated by members of the Portsmouth High School community, the school was named the top donating school in Rhode Island for 2014-2015.





## Highlights from PORTSMOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Mr. Escher received the 2015 Presidential Award for Mathematics and Science Teaching excellence.
- Rebecca Silveira, interventionist, was named Portsmouth's District teacher of the year.
- Mr. Joseph Amaral was recognized by Governor Chafee for his dedication as principal for 20 years of service in the state of Rhode Island.
- PMS was named a Feinstein School by Mr. Feinstein.
- PMS Girls' Basketball Team won their first ever state championship. Go Patriots!
- Over 50 community members shared their career expertise at the PMS career day.
- Through a volunteer drive organized by the PTO we were able to certify a record number of parents who received background checks to be able to volunteer in the school.
- PMS doubled the number of robotics teams this year culminating with a summer enrichment STEAM academy offered this summer.
- The PMS Art Department secured a community grant for \$5,000 dollars to support technology in PMS Art classes.
- PMS received a grant/award from the Department of Defense as the recipient of Forces in Motion Live, a live performance integrating a theatrical production and student/teacher participation to illustrate and demonstrate Physics Concepts for grades 6, 7, and 8.
- One to One infrastructure work was completed including the wireless network upgrade to prepare for the student one to one pilot in 2015-2016 school year.

## Highlights from HOWARD HATHAWAY ELEMENTARY

- Feinstein School – Hathaway officially became a Feinstein school this year! We received a \$10,000 grant for proudly displaying the Feinstein Leadership sign on our building.
- Curriculum – Teachers collaborated with literacy coach and others in the areas of reading and writing – Foundations and Flying Start, math - Envisions, and science - Fusion/Foss Kits. Next year, the team will consist of a literacy coach, a math coach, and a science coach. Just like the children – Hathaway teachers are always ready to learn!
- Creating a Safe, Fun, Learning Culture – Hathaway continues to focus on creating a culture that fosters a safe, fun, learning environment. For example, students may receive golden apples for excellent behavior on a daily basis. Friday mornings feature a catchy tune to get kids moving and Community Meetings are held on a monthly basis. This gives us a chance to gather as an entire Hathaway community.
- After School Enrichment – Students participated in a myriad of after school enrichment activities over the past year. The Physics of Toys, Lego Mechanics, Drawing, Buoyancy and Boats, Beginning Conversation in French, Animals, Authors and Art, and Introduction to Guitar were just a few of the many opportunities provided to our students.
- Good Will Bin – This year we joined forces with Good Will and we now have a collection bin on the premises. Not only are we supporting Good Will, but we will also get a portion of the proceeds from the donations.
- Big Brothers Program – Big Brothers and Hathaway School joined together to make a difference in the lives of students!
- HPTA – Our HPTA continues to run strong. This year we saw another successful fundraiser. The Springabaloo was attended by faculty, family, and friends and raised a generous amount of money for our Hathaway community. Monthly meetings are held in the library at 6:30 PM. All are welcome to attend.
- Twitter – This year we became a proud owner of a Twitter account! For those who aren't able to follow along, we send home a weekly "Week in Tweets" so nobody misses out. The response has been wonderful! Join us by following us at @HathawaySchool.

# Police Department

In case of an emergency  
dial **911**



Chief Thomas F. Lee

The Portsmouth Police Department is currently staffed with 32 sworn officers, down 3 positions from our authorized strength due to retirements. The Department also includes one Prudence Island Public Safety Officer, one Animal Control Officer, one Records Clerk, and the Harbormaster. The Department was recently authorized to add a School Resource Officer position by the Town Council working in partnership with the School Committee, and we believe this will be a great benefit to our substance abuse prevention efforts with our students.

## **Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Portsmouth Police Department is to prevent crime, protect life and property and improve the quality of life in Portsmouth by working in partnership with the community.

## **Department Awards**

The Police Department held our second annual awards ceremony at the Glen Manor House in May. Patrolman David Powers was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for preventing a suicide on the Mt. Hope Bridge. Patrolman Jack Clarke also received the Distinguished Service Award for apprehending a suspect on Route 24 for a shooting that had occurred in Colt State Park in Bristol. Patrolman Jeffrey Cornelisse received the Meritorious Service Award for his off duty assistance at an accident scene with an overturned vehicle and injuries on Route 95 in Pawtucket. Patrolman Scott Sullivan was awarded the Community Service Award for his leading the Christmas Drive to provide gifts for the children of needy families. Lieutenant Michael

Arnold received the Chief's Award for the numerous drug investigations and seizures he had made throughout the year. Detective Michael Morse also received a Chief's Award for locating a missing 13 year old girl in Fall River and arresting a male for endangering the child.

In November, Patrolman Scott Sullivan received the Traffic Safety Hero of the Year Award from the American Automobile Association for his outstanding work in Drunk Driving Enforcement in Portsmouth. Detective Michael Morse and the other members of the Rhode Island Internet Crimes against Children Task Force received the Justice Award for Crime Prevention from the Attorney General's Office. In June, Lieutenant Steven Hoetzel and Sergeant Steve Burns received the CPR Life Saving Award from the American Heart Association for using a defibrillator to revive a man having a heart attack at Glen Park.

## **Department Goals**

The Department continued the process it began last year of seeking statewide accreditation. All of the Department's policies and procedures have been updated to meet the new Rhode Island Police Accreditation Commission standards. All employees have been trained in the new policies and procedures. The Department's traffic prevention efforts have resulted in a reduction in our reported traffic accidents from last year from 594 to 505 accidents, a 15% decrease. We also continued our community policing efforts with our citizen's police academy, community meetings with concerned citizens and a cookout on National Night Out with the youth and families at Boys Town.







Chief Michael Cranson and Deputy Chief Michael O'Brien

# Fire Department

## In case of an emergency dial **911**

The Portsmouth Fire Department employs 2 chief officers, 32 firefighters (line officers), and 6 civilian dispatchers. The department is led by Fire Chief Michael Cranson and Deputy Fire Chief Michael O'Brien. The department is structured into 4 shifts, each led by a captain with 2 lieutenants and 5 firefighters.

Deputy Chief Michael O'Brien was recognized by the State of Rhode Island as the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Coordinator of the year. The presentation of the award took place at the RI State House in Providence and the award was presented by Jason Rhodes, Chief of Emergency Medical Services, RI Department of Health. In addition, this year 4 firefighters were promoted to the rank of Firefighter Second Class.

The mission of the Portsmouth Fire Department is to provide optimum protection from fire loss, and deliver prompt, professional service during medical emergen-

cies. Our goal is to prevent the loss of life and property by using an enthusiastic approach to fire prevention. When fires do occur, our efforts are focused on containment and extinguishment, minimizing loss. Our department is divided into 2 groups; the line personnel, who are the first responders to all emergency calls, and the staff personnel, who include the chief and deputy chief who conduct all of the administrative functions. These functions include supervising fire prevention activities, training and emergency operations, personnel management, and conducting all fire investigations.

During FY 14-15, the Portsmouth Fire Department responded to nearly 3,000 calls for service. These calls included nearly 2,000 emergency medical calls, 400 automatic alarms, 160 motor vehicle accidents, over 100 marine calls, less than 5 major fires, and several calls involving hazardous conditions. In addition, the department responded to Prudence Island 28 times.





The department saw one retirement last July, as well as the departure of several civilian dispatchers. One firefighter was hired, again bringing the department up to full staffing levels. The fire department applied for, and was awarded, an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) in the amount of \$142,000 to replace the department's aging inventory of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and a tracking system to locate firefighters who may be injured or lost in a fire building. In all, 20 SCBA's were replaced in accordance with the NFPA 1852.



Agency (FEMA) to replace the fire department's Marine 2. The department is working diligently to procure a marine asset with firefighting capabilities. The fire department is still awaiting a decision on the Port Security grant application, but if awarded, it will be in the amount of \$1,000,000.

The department has applied for three more AFGs to replace the department's reserve ambulance. The cost of a new ambulance is roughly \$250,000. The deputy chief also applied for a grant through Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency for \$90,000. If awarded, this money will be used to enhance the Town's cybersecurity, disaster recovery, and network backup for the Town's Information Technology System. The fire department recently applied for a Port Security Grant through the Federal Emergency Management





Deputy Director Brian Woodhead and Director David Kehew

# Department of Public Works

## **Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Department of Public Works is to provide a responsive and high quality public service to all Portsmouth residents in the maintenance and improvement of Town-owned property and infrastructure through positive interaction, interdepartmental relationships, and cost effective management.

## **Activity During the Year:**

The Department of Public Works was created in 1972 as one of the many significant changes to Portsmouth government brought by the enactment of the Home Rule Charter. The Charter change envisaged the transformation of the old "Highway Department" into a modern multipurpose organization with wide ranging duties including street lighting, public parking lots, waste disposal, water supply, parks, public buildings and other public works as may be developed by Ordinance. In the intervening years, the capabilities of the Department have evolved to match its growing responsibilities.

The Department is based at the Public Works facility off Hedly Street. This building houses the bulk of the Department's equipment, its office, workshop, and a repair facility for all Town vehicles (with the exception of the specialized vehicles of the Fire Department). The surrounding "yard" area includes areas dedicated to the storage of sand, gravel, and a variety of construction materials required to carry out the Department's

duties. In addition, the Department maintains a smaller facility on Prudence Island and operates the Prudence Island Transfer Station.

The Department is currently comprised of the Director, Deputy, two Foremen, two Mechanics, and twelve Operators. Two of these men are permanently assigned to Prudence Island. The Director of Public Works oversees the operation of the Department and reports to the Town Administrator. The Director prepares the Department's budget, attends meetings, and coordinates the Department's activities with other Town Departments, the State, Navy, neighboring communities, and a wide range of civic groups. He also takes an active role in Town and regional special projects, and is responsible for a variety of managerial and administrative tasks. He is assisted by a Deputy Director who functions as the second in command. The Deputy is primarily responsible for day to day operations, special projects, such as subdivision inspections, drainage projects and implementation of the pavement management program.

Most people are familiar with the Department through its maintenance activities on Town roads and properties. Few people, however, realize the extent of these activities. Public Works is responsible for 467 separate roads and growing. Routine maintenance activities include roadside vegetation control, grass cutting, street sweeping, plowing, sanding, patching, and the installation and maintenance of roadside signs. On Prudence Island, additional, regular activities on the primarily gravel road system include grading, shaping, and dust control. Our drainage system includes over 2,750 catch basins that must be cleaned and inspected at least once a year to meet with Phase II storm-water regulations. Other components of the drainage system require annual attention and repair, especially after heavy weather. A roadside tree program has been instituted to safeguard our roads, residents, and utilities from fallen limbs.

The current replacement cost of the Town's roadway system (approx. 110 miles) is in excess of \$200,000,000. The magnitude of public investment accentuates the importance of a vigorous program of preventive activity designed to lengthen the useful life of Town roads (generally 15 to 20 years). The single most important measure in this is high quality initial installation. This requires diligent quality control measures and rigorous inspection by the Department. Similar concerns apply to road cuts. Every effort is made to avoid cutting the sur-

face of a road, and when road surfaces are cut, every effort is made to ensure that the repair is of the highest quality. The Department uses its authority under the revised Subdivision Rules and Regulations to review and comment prior to the approval and construction of new subdivisions. Quality initial installation serves the Portsmouth taxpayer by lengthening the useful life of new roads and minimizing the need for future repairs. This is the position the Department takes with all items of infrastructure that will come under Town control.

The Department also assists the Water and Fire District, the Board of Canvassers during elections, Police, Fire, Town Hall, Senior Center, Glen Park, Glen Manor, and supports the activities of the various groups and Boards using the portions of Glen Farm and other Town properties. The Department is responsible for the upkeep of all Towns parks, recreation areas, and properties.

### **Fiscal Year 2015 Accomplishments**

- Full Depth Reclamation: McCorrie Ln from Linda Terr to the end McCorrie Beach, Carver, Butts, Manion Dr and the Fire Department front and rear parking lots
- Mill and Overlay: Annette Dr, Stewart Dr, Kerr Rd, Williams St, Windstone Dr, Athena Terr, Julia Ct, Anthony Rd from State DOT to end, Massasoit Ave, North Water St, Summit Rd, Narragansett Rd, Mount View Rd, Sakonnet Dr, Oliver Hazzard Perry Rd, Roger Williams Ct
- Overlay: Sherman Ave, Greylock Dr, Greystone Terr, Anchor Dr, Schooner Dr, Dawn Marie Dr, Soars Dry, Sloop Dr
- Town Hall Line Striping Parking Lot
- High School Gas trench repair (paving)
- Winterized and opened Sandy Point Beach, Glen Park, Lions Club building (next to the Phelps House)
- Winterized the Melville Campground
- Installed 30 yards of Fibar Mulch at the Turnpike Ave Playground
- Installed a 2 post rail fence at Linden Ln on the exit side (north)
- Installed Memorial plaques on benches on Park Ave
- Coastal Clean up
- Working on the capital improvement plan for all Town-owned properties
- Cleaned & inspected over 2,750 catch basins
- Swept more than 110 miles of roads and 7 parking lots
- Mowed the shoulders on over a 130 roads

- Mowed Phelps house, Overlook off High Point Ave, Founders Brook, Boat Ramp, Glen Park Open Fields, Linden Ln Parking Field, the areas behind Fire and Police Departments, Public Works and the Sakonnet Greenway Trail on Sandy Point Ave
- Repaired & Rebuilt 59 Catch Basins
- Installed 81 new street signs and repaired 76 street signs
- Emergency repairs made to the Weaver Cove boat ramp
- Last winter responded to 27 snow and ice events and removed more the 69 inches of snow accumulations (successfully handled historical snow falls/frost including two blizzards)
- Set up necessary equipment for Canvassing, including the removal of equipment on both Aquidneck and Prudence working with the Canvassing office
- Maintained 43 pieces of equipment
- Chipped 1,554 Christmas Trees
- Held a household hazardous waste collection (ECO Depot) at the High school on June 20, 2015
- Continued monitoring and maintenance of the capped landfill on Prudence Island
- Maintenance/improvements to the gravel roads on Prudence Island
- Maintain/improve operations and site work for the Prudence Island Transfer Station
- Provided traffic control barricades for the Fourth of July Fire Works

### **FY 15 Goals**

- Continue the replacement of our street and regulatory signs
- Install new catch basins and concrete pipe for Adams Drive (drainage)
- Continue the implementation of our Pavement Management Program
- Work on a maintenance plan for the utility fields on Linden Lane
- Work on a plan to stop the silting in of the Weaver Cove boat ramp and other improvement to the boat ramp
- To keep the condition of its facility and its fleet of vehicles, especially the "yard" areas at both the Aquidneck and Prudence Island functioning
- Continue evaluation of the Department's ability to meet its evolving service burden through the use of new practices and technologies
- Increase the department's commitment to training, education, and professionalism
- Look for ways to improve monitoring the condition of the town's buildings and infrastructure including the use of GIS for tracking, assessment and work orders



Left: Clerk Katherine Inch Center: Town Clerk Joanne Mower Right: Clerk Amanda Lawson

# Town Clerk's Report

## **Mission Statement:**

The Town Clerk's Office records and maintains all historical, legal and vital records for the Town of Portsmouth in accordance with Rhode Island General Laws and the Town's Home Rule Charter. We seek to provide the very best customer service, treating everyone with respect, doing so in a careful and conscientious manner, and understanding the importance of each request.

At this time the Office is comprised of the following personnel: Town Clerk Joanne M. Mower and Office Clerks Amanda Lawson and Katherine Inch. We are responsible for the following tasks:

## **Land Evidence**

The Town Clerk's Office processes and maintains all deeds, mortgages, liens and documents pertaining to the property (land) located in Portsmouth. During the past fiscal year we have recorded 3,572 Land Evidence documents and those recordings have brought in fees of \$779,420.63.

## **Probate**

Over the past fiscal year the Town Clerk's Office has processed 99 new Probate cases and prepared 21 sets of agendas and minutes. A total of \$38,247.05 was collected in Probate Court fees.

## **Vital Records**

924 Birth, Death and Marriage certificates were issued for events happening in Portsmouth or for the residents of Portsmouth and 114 Marriage licenses were processed and issued bringing in fees of \$18,681.

## **Licensing**

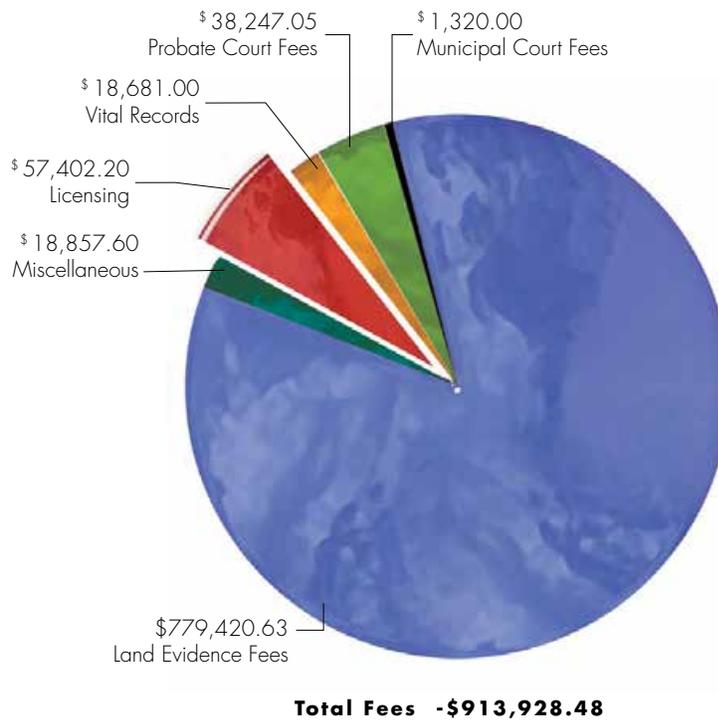
The Town Clerk's Office processed and issued 148 various Business licenses, i.e. Alcoholic Beverage (Liquor), Victualler (Restaurant), Holiday, Sunday Sales, Peddler, Amusement Games and Entertainment Licenses along with 1,672 Dog Licenses, 54 Hunting / Fishing Licenses, and 32 Duck / Trout Stamps bringing in fees of \$57,402.20.

## **Municipal Court**

Over the past twelve months of Municipal Court sessions the Court has ruled over nine dog complaints, nine zoning complaints and seven police infractions with fines and fees amounting to \$1,320.

## **Miscellaneous Income**

In addition, the Town Clerk's Office issued 511 Sandy Point Beach Stickers (most of which were free as they were issued to residents), 80 Tent permits along with numerous copies of documents, files, maps and other sundries bringing in fees of \$18,857.60.



### Town Council

The Town Clerk received correspondence, prepared the agendas and minutes and attended 35 Town Council Meetings over the past year. Our office also prepared 43 Proclamations, 17 Resolutions and 8 Ordinances or amendments to ordinances. The original documents from those meetings are maintained on file in the Town Clerk's Office. Correspondence concerning those meetings was also prepared and processed.

The Town Clerk provided support at the Town Council meeting on Prudence Island.

### Outstanding Services

The Town Clerk's office began the re-organization of office records and completed the following:

- The Survey/Map card index is being added to our computer system.
- The Probate Files index has been added to our computer system.
- All original Town Ordinances were scanned and a computer file developed.
- The records of Town's boards and committees and their members has been reviewed and updated.
- The Town's license application forms have been updated and re-designed as well as added to our computer system.

### In addition:

- The Office has expanded the Land Evidence documents available online at [uslandrecords.com](http://uslandrecords.com).
- Town Clerk Mower and Records Clerk Lawson attended the RI City and Town Municipal Clerks' Association's Conference which reviewed responsibilities regarding: Land Evidence, Probate, Alcoholic Beverage Licensing, the State Archives (and records retention) and the Secretary of State's Office on filing meeting agendas and minutes.
- Records Clerk Lawson attended the RI Attorney General's Open Meetings Summit at Roger Williams University.
- Town Clerk Mower attended RI City and Town Municipal Clerks' Association quarterly meetings regarding: Elections, GIS, and proposed General Assembly legislation.

### Current Goals

- Appointment of a Deputy Town Clerk.
- AG Open Meetings Summit training for Records Clerk Inch and the two year review training for Town Clerk Mower.
- Boards and Committees information and minutes on the Town's website.
- Update the Municipal Code.
- Computer training for the Town Clerk's Office employees.
- A new recording system for Town meetings.
- A stand-alone computer terminal for Vital Records.

# & Finance Personnel



Finance/Personnel Director, James Lathrop

The Town's Finance Department also is responsible for the Personnel, Purchasing, Treasury and Technology functions of the Town.

Duties include accounting for revenue and expenses, which include the work for the annual audit and plays an instrumental role in development of the annual budget. The department believes that information must be presented in an understandable and relevant manner, and this idea led to the creation of a new form for the annual budget and monthly budget reports.

The department believes that transparency and the accountability it inspires benefits the Citizens of Portsmouth. Monthly budget reports, annual budgets, annual audits, non-payroll check register and other financial information is posted and maintained on the Town web site.

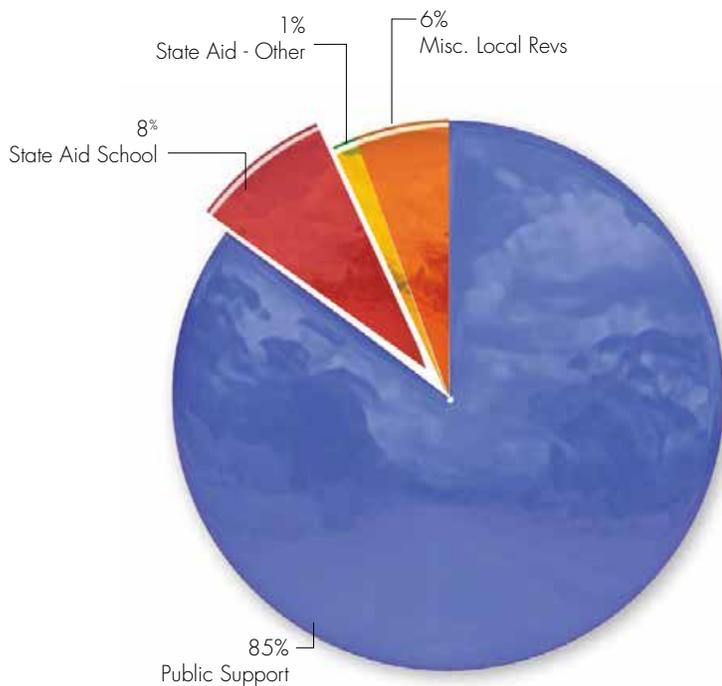
This past year the Finance Department prepared and led the presentation to Standard & Poor's on the financial condition of the Town. This presentation, the sound fiscal decisions of Community leaders, and proactive approach to future issues, resulted in the Town being given an AAA rating. Portsmouth became only the second community in Rhode Island to earn this rating.

The department is part of the Town's efforts to improve revenues. Working with the Collection Office, we have changed the method of addressing past due motor vehicle taxes, introduced a responsible vendor ordinance that bars entering into contracts with vendors that owe back taxes, and was part of the team that developed a new business model for the Melville Campground operations.

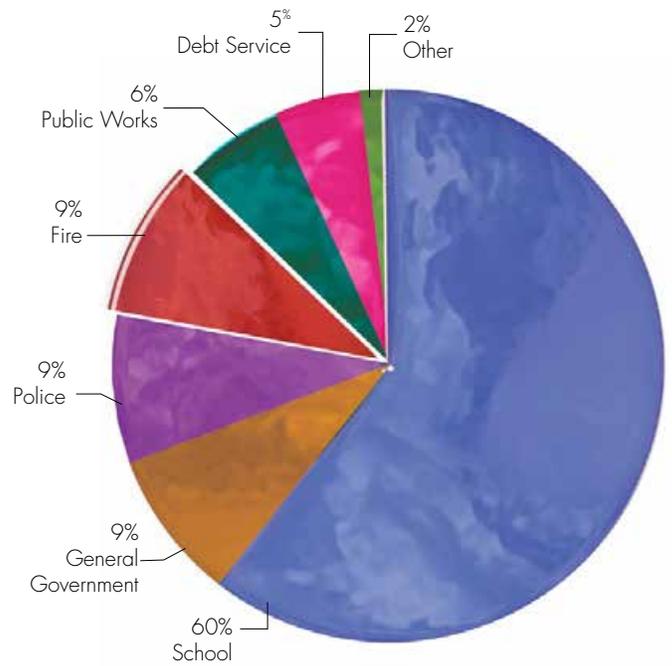
The Finance Department plays a key role in contract negotiations and were part of the effort that successfully negotiated a contract with the Police Union that did not result in the use of binding arbitration.

The personnel division of the department has worked to support employees and provide a healthy work environment. Department staff organized a Thanksgiving Food Drive for the local Salvation Army Food Pantry and we had our first Football Friday, celebrating the start of the NFL season where employees could wear clothing supporting their favorite team.

For the upcoming year the department will be upgrading the Town's accounting software to the same system used by the School Department. Working with the School Finance Department we are reviewing the method by which we acquire benefits. This review has already resulted in a 30% savings in the cost of life insurance and we are now working on healthcare.



**Major Revenues - \$58.2 Million**



**Total Expenditures - \$57,878,383**

**FY 2015 Revenue**

Public Support	85.00%	\$49,198,386
Inter-Gov't Support	9.18%	\$5,311,301
Licenses, Permit & Fees	4.25%	\$2,457,850
Rentals, Investments & Other	1.57%	\$910,846

**\$57,878,383**

**FY 2015 Expenditures**

School Department	60.62%	\$35,086,474
Town Gov't	9.85%	\$5,702,133
Police	9.45%	\$5,468,203
Fire	7.86%	\$4,547,800
Public Works	6.05%	\$3,501,503
Debt Service	5.01%	\$2,899,450
Local appropriations	1.16%	\$672,820

**\$57,878,383**

## OPEB: Other Post Employment Benefits Commission

The OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) Commission was formed to review the unfunded liability which exceeds \$12 million based on the most recent actuarial reports. The Commission has met four times in 2015 and has requested reports from the town actuaries to assist in designing a recommendation to present to the Town Council which will address reducing or eliminating the unfunded liability.

The Commission has nine members, five are disinterested parties of Portsmouth citizens and four members are representatives of the police, fire, public works and town hall collective bargaining units.

Jonathan Harris  
Chairman

# Canvassing Authority



Closeup-Registrar Jacqueline Schulz. In back left to right: Canvassing Clerk Barbara Sherman, Jennifer O'Dwyer

## Mission Statement:

The mission of the Portsmouth Canvassing Authority is to protect the integrity of the electoral process and to effectively and efficiently administer the provisions of the election laws of the United States and the State of Rhode Island including, but not limited to, the governance and conduct of elections, voter registration, campaign finance, public funding of campaigns and any other duties prescribed by law.

The Board of Canvassers is comprised of three bipartisan members appointed by the Town Council for 6-year terms. Current members are E. Richard Carpender (D) (chair), Jill Wilson (R), and Glenn Allen (D). The Board of Canvassers appointed Jacqueline Schulz as the Registrar of Voters in 2013. The Registrar serves as clerk to the Board, is responsible for all voter registration and election records, and oversees all daily office operations. The office is supported by Barbara Sherman (part-time clerk) and Jennifer O'Dwyer (temporary clerk).

The Canvassing office serves all Portsmouth voters and candidates. We seek to ensure that all eligible voters are able to participate in the election process, providing opportunities and information concerning voter registration, maintaining accurate voter records, providing

educational resources, and monitoring accessibility of election materials and facilities. We strive to guarantee that candidates know and follow prescribed procedures mandated by law to ensure that they appear on local ballots and that their information is accurately and timely submitted to governing authorities. This is accomplished by working closely with both the Rhode Island Office of the Secretary of State – Elections Division, and the Rhode Island State Board of Elections.





## Accomplishments

The following activities were conducted by the Canvassing Authority to achieve the goals identified above:

- Maintained and updated all voter registration records;
- Provided notary services;
- Attended trainings/seminars at the Board of Elections, Secretary of State – Elections Division, and throughout the state concerning preparations for the 2014 elections and pending legislation;
- Conducted presentation to residents of Atria Aquidneck Place concerning mail ballot applications; and
- Conducted Prudence Island poll worker trainings and refreshers for all precinct election officials;
- Provided opportunities for residents to register to vote on the last day to register before Election Day on Sunday, August 10 & Sunday, October 5, at Clement's Market and the Portsmouth Library (Deadline is 4:00 PM, 30 days prior to Election Day.);
- Processed Nomination Papers for candidates running for local offices;
- Prepared the facilities, hired staff and trained officials for the 2014 Democratic and Republican primaries and General election;
- Certified local primary and general election ballots;
- Processed and certified all local election results;
- Conducted election recounts with the Board of Elections to determine the offices of Town Clerk and Councilor on the Town Council;
- Completed the RI Attorney General's training on Open Government & Access to Public Information;
- Attended the Election Center Workshop in Chicago, April 2015, addressing Outside Influences on the Election Process;
- Reviewed Prudence Island polling site accessibility with the State Board of Elections;
- Assisted Town Clerk by issuing dog licenses;
- Supported the annual Portsmouth Water & Fire District Board election on June 10, 2015 – certifying nomination papers and voting lists;
- Supported the semi-annual Prudence Island Water & Fire District Board election on June 20, 2015 – supplying certified voter lists; and
- Attended trainings at the Secretary of State – Elections Division, concerning the National Change of Address process conducted in conjunction with the United States Postal Service. This process is conducted every odd-number-ending year to verify residential addresses and update all Rhode Island voting records. Portsmouth had 991 registered voters requiring address verifications as of May 2015.



left to right: Lee-Ann Ferreira, Matthew Helfand, Tax Assessor/Collector, Christine Preuit, Victoria Santerre

# Tax Assessor/Collector Office

The mission of this office is to determine accurate values of all taxable property (Real, Personal, and Tangible) in a fair, efficient and cost effective manner in accordance with local and state laws so that the distribution of the tax burden is fair and equitable. The mission is also to effectively and accurately administer the billing, collecting and accounting of all taxes in a professional, fair and courteous manner

## Activity During the Year:

To accomplish this mission, we perform the following tasks:

- List and value all taxable property in the community
- Maintain and ensure the accuracy of the assessing databases and maps that contain physical/legal property information
- Record changes in property ownership, land subdivisions, and changes in use codes
- Process and act upon taxpayer appeals
- Process, review and administer exemptions
- Review, oversee and administer the State of RI's triennial revaluation
- Provide information to taxpayers, appraisers, title examiners, mortgage companies, attorneys and the general public regarding assessed values
- Receive, post and deposit funds for Real Estate, Motor Vehicle Excise and Tangible taxes
- Administer (including the collection and processing of fees) the Transfer Station Sticker program
- Administer and oversee the annual Tax Lien Sale for delinquent taxes on real property in accordance with RI General Law
- Preparation of Municipal Lien Certificates
- Provide information to taxpayers, appraisers, title examiners, mortgage companies, attorneys and the general public regarding tax accounts, transfer station procedures and general information relating to the Town



In carrying out these tasks, the Tax Assessor/  
Collector's Office:

- Gathered, maintained and updated information for 9,257 Real estate accounts, 711 Tangible property accounts, and 21,824 Motor Vehicle accounts
- Maintained, updated and administered personal exemptions on 3,221 accounts
- Processed and updated 769 property transfers
- Completed over 645 site visits and building inspections due to building permits and CO's (Certificate of Occupancy)
- Acted on 53 appeals
- Produced 19,367 bills totaling \$49,187,930 in receivables
- Processed 39,545 transactions
- 97.25 % collection rate for 2014 fiscal year receivables
- Working with a new Collection agency, we were able to recover an additional \$43,298 on some of our more challenging delinquent accounts
- Collected \$667,291 by credit card (2,173 transactions) and \$2,257,497 by Automated Clearing House (4,564 transactions) payments
- Sold and processed 5,485 Transfer Station stickers which generated \$559,527 in revenue.

## Tax Assessment Board of Review

The Tax Assessment Board of Review was created under Article V Chapter 503 of the Portsmouth Town Charter. The board consists of three members who are qualified electors of the Town and are appointed by the Town Council for a term of three years. Board members for fiscal year 14 – 15 were Chair John Endrusick, Vice-Chair Hugh Atkins, William Wood , and alternate Bradley Finnegan.

The Tax Assessment Board of Review hears, reviews and considers the appeal of any Real or Tangible property owner concerning the amount of their assessed valuation as determined by the Assessor. The Board keeps accurate records of its proceedings which shall be available for public inspection. If it appears the valuation of any property has been erroneously or incorrectly assessed, the Board has the authority to order a correction.

This year the Board heard and acted upon 22 Real property appeals.

# Planning Board



Leon Lesinski, Administrative Officer

The Planning Board is responsible for approving all subdivisions (creation of a new lot or revisions of existing lot lines) and Land Development Projects. The purpose is to establish procedural and substantive provisions for the subdivision and development of land that will be consistent with the provisions of the Portsmouth Comprehensive Community Plan, Land Development and Subdivision Regulations, the Zoning Ordinance, all other duly adopted land development regulations of the Town of Portsmouth and Section 45-23 of the Rhode Island General Laws. This includes Subdivisions, Mergers, Planned Unit Developments, Open Space Developments, Cluster Housing Developments, Planned Industrial Developments, Planned Corporate Developments, Planned Marina Developments, Planned Retail/Service Developments, Planned Resort Developments and Low and Moderate Income Housing. The Planning Board has also given Advisory Opinions to the Town Council and the Zoning Board of Review for zoning ordinance changes, commercial developments, special permits and zoning variances.

## Activity During the Year

Planning Board regular meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month, except for July and December. The Board met ten times during the 2014 calendar year and heard twenty-two (22) land development applications and five (5) advisory opinions. These included a number of major subdivisions such as a seven (7) lot subdivision off Vanderbilt Lane, a fifteen (15) lot subdivision by Jam Construction on Middle Road and Schoolhouse Lane, an eight (8) lot subdivision by Harkin Development on East Main Road and a six (6) lot subdivision by Hope and High Properties on Turnpike Avenue. Progress continued on the construction of the Newport Beach Club (152 residential units) on Bristol Ferry Road, Seafarer Residences (33 residential units) on East Main Road, Prescott Point Condominium on West Main Road and three additional buildings at the Clock Tower Square commercial condominium development on West Main Road.

In the first six months of 2015, the Board heard twelve (12) land development applications and five (5) advisory opinions. Major Subdivision developments were submitted by Prescott Point, LLC for a major resort development on West Main Road with one-hundred & forty-seven (147) residential units, for a twelve (12) lot subdivision by Windrock, LLC on East Main Road and an eleven (11) lot subdivision by Middle Creek Farm, LLC on Cornelius Drive. During the 2014 - 2015 fiscal year, the Planning Board collected \$7,925 in application fees and \$11,000 in inspection fees for road construction associated with the subdivision developments. Two projects were held in default for not completing the road construction. These were Indian Hill (Greystone Terrace and Greylock Drive) and Bristol Ferry Landing (Dawn Marie extension, Sloop Drive, Schooner Drive and Soares Drive). Funds in the amount of \$311,000 were received from the road bonds to complete the construction of these roads.

# Zoning Board of Review

The Zoning Board of Review is comprised of five regular voting members and two alternate members. We meet the third Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM in the Town Council Chambers at Town Hall.

There was a big change in membership this past year. The Chairman, Kevin Aguiar, resigned to run successfully for the Portsmouth Town Council. Tia Scigulinsky and Byron Hall also resigned after serving on the board for many years as regular members and Brian Smith resigned after several years as an alternate. The Town of Portsmouth is very grateful for their hard work and dedication.

Fortunately, several civic minded citizens stepped forward and were appointed by the Town Council. Jim Nott, a past chairman, rejoined the board and was elected Vice Chairman. Jim Hall was promoted from alternate to regular member. James Sherrod joined as a regular member and was elected Secretary. Gene Kohls and Allen Shers joined as alternate members. They joined John Borden and myself, Jamie Edwards, to fill out the slate.

Building Official George Medeiros and the department's clerk Denise Davis do a terrific job of educating people about the Zoning Ordinance and helping them prepare applications for zoning variances. The Board is also well served by our Solicitor Kevin Gavin and Recording Secretary Barbara Ripa. This support team helps the Zoning Board every meeting – preparing and distributing petitions, recording and issuing meeting minutes, attending the meetings, explaining nuances of the ordinance, and guiding the board with legal interpretations.

The Zoning Board could not run effectively without the help of the Design Review Committee and Planning Board which review and issue advisory opinions about commercial petitions.

The Zoning Board lost a friend in Vernon Gorton who passed away in May 2015. Vernon was a Town Solicitor for several years and legal representative for countless petitioners over the years. He will be missed.

Finally, the Zoning Board would not work without the citizens of Portsmouth who come to meetings, whether to present or listen to petitions. The Board appreciates and respects your opinion and will do its best to serve the Town.

## Planning Board Members

The Planning Board consists of seven members and an Administrative Officer. The Administrative Officer is available most mornings to answer questions and discuss plans and procedures prior to formalizing an application and to schedule meetings with the Design Review Board or the Technical Review Committee. The members are appointed by the Town Council for a four year term. The current Board members and the Administrative Officer are as follows:

Guy Bissonnette – Chairman, Luke Harding – Vice Chairman, David Garceau, Michael James, Edward Lopes, Jr., Ryan Tibbetts, and Kathleen Wilson.

Leon Lesinski – Administrative Officer

The Planning Board Administrative Officer is responsible for reviewing development applications to ensure their conformance with the Portsmouth Land Development and Subdivision Regulations. These regulations are intended to promote development that is consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Community Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, and will accomplish the following purposes:

1. Provide for the orderly, thorough and expeditious review and approval of land developments and subdivisions;
2. Promote high quality and appropriate design and construction of land developments and subdivisions;
3. Protect the existing natural and built environment and to mitigate all significant negative impacts by the proposed development on the existing environment;
4. Promote design of land developments and subdivisions that are well integrated with the surrounding neighborhoods;
5. Provide a thorough technical review of the proposed land development or subdivision;
6. Apply consistent procedures for local record keeping on all matters of land development, subdivision and construction;
7. Protect the public health, safety and welfare; and
8. Assure the orderly growth and development of the Town.



Gary Crosby, Town Planner

# Planning Department

Applying the principles, practices and techniques of the planning profession, it is the mission of the Planning Department to develop, coordinate and implement all programs related to comprehensive community planning, land use, environmental stewardship and community economic development in the Town of Portsmouth.

## Objectives of the Department

To identify and analyze community needs and develop long-range plans to meet those needs. This activity includes the coordination of available resources as well as the identification of new resources in the implementation all planning activities.

To provide timely advice, technical expertise and professional assistance in decision-making to the Town Council, the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Review, as well as the various citizen boards and committees, as needed.

To coordinate with various Regional, State and Federal agencies in order to ensure Portsmouth remains in compliance with all such agency rules and regulations.

## Planning Staff

The Planning Department currently is staffed by a single AICP-certified Town Planner under the general supervision of the Town Administrator and a half-time

Planning Assistant to work under the supervision of the Town Planner in the updating of the Town's Comprehensive Community Plan.

## FY 2014 - 15 Accomplishments

FY 2014 - 15 saw continued effort to update the Town's Comprehensive Community Plan. We continue to dissect and outline each element of our current Comp Plan in order to organize the content, determine the facts, figures and inventories that need to be updated and to clarify and categorize the language in the plan regarding the Town's goals, policies, and implementation tasks.

The Town of Portsmouth has entered into an agreement with a Rhode-Island based wind energy developer to replace the Wind Turbine. The agreement includes provisions for retiring the Town's existing debt, a 25-year power purchase arrangement and a lease agreement to allow the energy company to operate the turbine on Town property.

The Portsmouth Planning Department continues to manage the Town's Phase II storm water compliance in monitoring for illicit discharges to our storm drains.

The Planning Department was instrumental in the Town Council's adoption of an Agricultural amendment to the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance regulating non-farm activities on Portsmouth's farms.

The Planning Department assisted the Portsmouth Harbor Commission in drafting and seeking approval by various state agencies of a new Harbor Management Plan. Final approval from all necessary agencies will be forthcoming.

The Town's long standing dispute with RIDEM regarding wastewater issues was resolved this year with the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement. The Town agreed to produce a Wastewater Management District Ordinance and Wastewater Management Plan containing provisions acceptable to RIDEM in exchange for a stay in adjudication of an outstanding Notice of Violation against the Town.

During the fiscal year, the Planning Department was instrumental in rolling out the Town Council-approved municipally-financed Septic Loan Program to assist Portsmouth homeowners with funding to replace cess-pools and failed septic systems.

The Planning Department was a key component in a smooth transition to a new ferry service to Prudence Island, Prudence & Bay Islands Transport, beginning operations this fiscal year.

# Director of Business Development

## Activity During the Year:

The part time contract position of Director of Business Development (DBD) was established by the Town Council in 2002. The intent of the office is to actively promote the development and expansion of businesses in Portsmouth, provide assistance to encourage businesses to locate or expand in Portsmouth and support local business initiatives – all aimed at growing the valuable commercial tax base.

The new owners of the undeveloped portion of Clocktower Square completed construction of a new 25,450 square foot two story building. Two units were quickly sold and built-out for retail and medical offices. The plans are to sell space on a commercial condominium basis similar to the first building that has proven a success with a similar mix of retail and professional/medical offices. The owner is optimistic that additional sales will follow with significant interest from prospects.

We are assured by Commerce RI and the Navy that the long awaited process of transferring 32 acres of commercial waterfront in the middle of the Melville Marine District to a partnership of existing marine businesses is near completion. Acquiring the land, known as The Backyard, will be a vital step in ensuring growth, added employment and expansion of our many world class marine construction and services businesses.

Only two parcels in the Portsmouth Business Park remain for sale. The variety of tech companies in the Park continue to grow with the recent addition of six small companies. This increased employment in the Park from 186 to 253. Similar employment increases have been experienced by many of our marine trades companies. At last count there are 42 marine related businesses in Portsmouth.

For the past twenty years, Portsmouth and much of the business community have been fortunate to have most of the Town a State designated Enterprise Zone. This designation benefited many new and expanding businesses with tax credits for increasing employment and or constructing new or enlarging commercial buildings. Changes in the RI Tax Code have completely gutted the program and eliminated available tax credits for the majority of companies. The new State budget includes new programs aimed at encouraging and supporting business growth. Promulgating and implementing the new incentives is in the hands of Commerce RI. Time will tell if the new initiatives successfully attract new business and stimulate expansion as well as the former Enterprise Zone program did. The EZ



William Clark, Director of Business Development

was successful because it was available to, and gainfully used by, businesses in all lines of work both large and small.

We continue to watch closely possible reuse of three large buildings and adjacent land for sale or lease on a portion of the large West Main Road Raytheon campus. The majority of the buildings are modern, readily useable for light industry. Reactivating the space with office, distribution or light manufacturing would bring vital new employment. It would be a real shame if the buildings continue vacant or, in a worst case ever, be demolished and lost from the tax roll.

The DBD participated in the special committee to review and improve Melville Campground operations resulting in the selection of a new operator which is proving very successful for the Town.

For the past thirteen years I have been fortunate to serve as the DBD for the Town. It has been very rewarding to me personally with the many businesses I have met, enjoyed working with and the friendly relationships that have been established. It is terrific that the past seven Town Councils have chosen to continue the DBD position as a reflection of appreciating local business and encouraging beneficial commercial growth. I wish my successor and all of Portsmouth good fortune in the years ahead!



George L. Medeiros, Building Official

**FY 16 Objective:**

- To make every attempt to properly enforce the regulations with available resources.

**FY 16 Needs:**

- Additional staff and vehicle

**Summary:**

The responsibilities of the Inspection Department have grown beyond the role of traditional building inspection. The Department is tasked with primary enforcement of the Building Code, the Zoning Ordinance, the Property Maintenance Code, and the variety of regulations that afford protection to the handicapped and the disabled. The Department has significant interface with the Fire Department and a variety of State agencies including the State Building Commissioner’s Office, CRMC, DEM and FEMA. The office provides clerical and technical support to the Zoning Board of Review and the Design Review Board.

The Inspection Department is one of the most active Town Departments in interfacing with the public. Numerous conferences on substantive issues are held on a daily basis with the public. The Department’s records are used in research frequently each day. The introduction of processes like Design Review, while helping the Town manage growth, have also increased the Department’s workload. The Department is the depository of crucial data on building and mechanical construction, DEM, CRMC and FEMA flood maps, permit history, engineering data, zoning and subdivision history, and similar data. It is anticipated that information links with Departments requiring access to this data, or from whom the Department requires data, especially Assessment and Town Clerk, will be strengthened in the coming year. The changing regulatory climate and developments in the building trades and construction industry requires that each member of the Department engage in continuing education to stay current on the latest developments in their field.

Given the Department’s current workload, and the need for the Inspector to be at job sites and out of the Town Hall for significant stretches, it is difficult for the staff to use its normal vacation leave allotment and any illness leads to disruption of the Department’s operation. The office sometimes must be closed during normal work hours.

# Inspection Department

**Mission Statement:**

The Inspection Department is responsible for the interpretation, inspections and enforcement of the Rhode Island State Building, Residential Code, Electrical Code, Mechanical Code, Plumbing Code, Fuel Gas Code, Accessibility Code, Energy Code, Property Maintenance Code, and Native Lumber Code. It is also responsible to interpret, inspect and enforce the Town of Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance, the Soil & Sediment Control Ordinance, the Growth Management Ordinance, Tent License-Inspection Ordinance, Stone Wall Ordinance, and Nuisance Ordinance.

**Staff:**

The Inspection Department current staff is George Medeiros, Building – Zoning Official, Denise Davis, the Inspection Clerk, Ray Antaya, the part time Zoning Enforcement Officer and Henry Rodrigues, on call Electrical Inspector.

**Accomplishments:**

The Inspection Department issued and inspected the following in fiscal year 2014-2015:

- 640 building permits issued, 549 inspections made
- 411 electrical permits issued, 554 inspections made
- 463 mechanical permits issued, 354 inspections made
- 148 plumbing permits issued, 253 inspections made
- 84 zoning complaints logged, 300 inspections made
- 1,662 total permits issued
- 2,010 total inspections

# Recreation Department



During fiscal year 2015, the Portsmouth Town Council voted to re-establish a Recreation Department. The Recreation Department has one part-time employee, Bob Campion, whose first task was to take an inventory of the variety of groups using the town's fields and the revenues derived from the groups.

Portsmouth has always prided itself on being a family first type of town and the Recreation Department strives to reflect that philosophy with all that we do. Revenue generated will help support family friendly events such as the recent movie night presented by the Recreation Department. E.T. was shown on the big screen to a delighted audience of about 125 town residents of all ages. Our goal is to have more events such as this that will bring the town together as we forge symbiotic relationships with local businesses that consider Portsmouth "home." As the Recreation Department gains footing in its reemergence, we hope to slowly and steadily begin to sponsor town events, town trips and school vacation and summer programs regularly that will include Portsmouth residents of all ages.

# Juvenile Hearing Board

Karen Gleason, Chair

Nanci Smith, Vice-Chair

Linda Nalle, Clerk

Number of Meetings 7

Number of Cases 11

Number of Reviews 0

## Gender:

Male	7
Female	4

## Race:

Black	1
Hispanic	1
Asian	1
White	4
Other	1

## Juvenile's Age

10 & Under	1
11	1
12	1
13	1
14	4
15	1
16	0
17	2
17+	0

## TYPES OF OFFENSES

Trespassing	0
Simple Assault	1
Shoplifting	0
Possession of Weapon	1
Malicious Damage	4
Larceny/Possession SG	0
Disorderly Conduct	1
Alcohol & Drug Offenses	0

## SANCTIONS

Community Service	6
Curfews	0
Alcohol/Drug Testing	0
Essay	3
Letter of Apology	2
Refer to Counseling	0
Report from School	0
Restitution	0
Other (list)	0

# Conservation Commission

The Portsmouth Conservation Commission was, at first, part of the Green Acres Program. In approximately 1960 the State established enabling legislation for municipalities to establish conservation commissions. It is not known when the local commission was established, but under the Green Acres Program, Ruth Earle was believed to be involved in the donation of a portion of land near the High School from Mr. Jacob Menzi on March 20, 1970, recorded on January 4, 1975.

Mr. David Feinman was Chair in 1992 when the Town Council requested that the Conservation Commission research public rights-of-way (ROW). The report was given to the Town Council by Mr. Feinman.

I, Claudette Weissinger, later replaced Mr. Feinman as Chair. The Conservation Commission set up a committee of seven, established the motto "Dedicated to preserving Portsmouth's heritage and environment for posterity," and held regularly scheduled meetings on the third Thursday of each month. Our meetings were held wherever we could find space and we are pleased to now meet in the Planning Board room. The Portsmouth Conservation Commission Charter was adopted by the Town Council in September 1992.

The Commission has been involved in various ROW issues. For many years the Commission has sponsored April (Earth Day) beach clean-ups. We initiated a Stone Wall Ordinance to preserve scenic beauty. This has been Town Council approved. We submitted the initial draft of the Tree Ordinance to provide responsible tree planting. The Town Council initiated a Tree Committee to finalize it. We worked long and diligently to preserve the Bristol Ferry Town Common from over development and to ensure the preservation of the public ROW to the water. A portion of the area was deeded to the Town to ensure water access. We also maintained the Common with clean-ups, whiskey half barrels with flowers and other décor, and established granite boundary posts with attached plaques. The Commission had concrete benches installed. The Bristol Ferry Town Common Committee has now taken over the maintenance of this area.

The Commission initiated the need for a ROW inventory. We review CRMC agendas that are received. We attend various DEM meetings. The Conservation Commission also worked with the Historical Society to create the brochure "A Driving Tour of Portsmouth Rhode Island," which is in the process of being updated. We have overseen the care and cleaning of Heritage Park. We have planted many flower seeds, trees, plants and rhododendrons and installed a water catch area. We had many autumn leaf collections at Heritage Park to avoid hauling fees and create mulch. The Commission applied and received a Merritt Grant from Aquidneck Land Trust to improve landscaping, signage and the view at Heritage Park. The Tree Commission is helping us to accomplish this task.

Over the years we have attended many Planning Board, Zoning Board and Town Council meetings to address our town-wide concerns. We are still trying to complete 2014 goals at Heritage Park. The horrendous winter was certainly a handicap. Shrubs have been removed from the overlook site. I have talked with Mr. Kehew at Public Works regarding road and direction signs to Heritage Park. The need for clarification of signage installed by Carnegie Abbey was also discussed. This is one of the most panoramic areas in this state and should be enhanced. We also organized the International Coastal clean-up in Pheasant Hill in September.



## CONSERVATION COMMISSION NEEDS:

**Membership increase of three members. Current members are Claudette Weissinger, Chair, Abigail Brown, Robert Gessler, and Nancy Tanner.**

**The Town Council recently gave the responsibilities of the defunct Open Space Committee to the Conservation Commission but fails to carry through on its assignment.**

**Our hope is all can work together to make our Town "Dedicated to preserving Portsmouth's heritage and environment for posterity."**

*Preserving Portsmouth's heritage*

# Tree Commission

**Mission:** Established in 2006 with the adoption of the Tree Preservation Ordinance, the Portsmouth Tree Commission is charged with advising the Town Council on the planting, maintenance, protection, and removal of trees on public property. Duties also include fundraising, the coordination of volunteers and public education to protect, preserve and enhance town trees.

**Meeting Schedule:** July 10, 2014, September 4, 2014, October 2, 2014, December 4, 2014, February 5, 2015, March 12, 2015, June 4, 2015

**Members:** Scott Wheeler, Chair, Leslie Costa, John Fitzgerald, James Garman, Herbert Hall, Jim Jordan, Sanford Lansing, Warren McNeilly, Teresa Pinto, Howard Schlesinger, and Rick Taylor.

### Highlights

**America the Beautiful (ATB) Tree Planting Grant:** The Commission in coordination with the DPW facilitated the planting of 9 street trees utilizing the grant of \$1,750 for the planting of trees.

**Commemorative / Memorial Tree Planting Program:** The commission refined and distributed a brochure to solicit sponsorship donations.

**School Tree Evaluation:** Coordinated with the School Department, the Commission completed evaluating the trees at the two elementary schools and the middle school. Three reports with recommendation and corresponding maps were provided to the School Department.

**Annual Tree Seedling Program:** On Saturday, April 11, 2015 the Tree Commission members distributed free tree seedlings to town residents. There was a total of 5 tree species for residents to choose from. The program continues to gain popularity.

**Arbor Day:** On Thursday May 7, 2015 students from the Hathaway Elementary School participated in the planting of Portsmouth's official Arbor Day tree. The tree was dedicated by students in the memory of a retired teacher, Emily Stenning.

**Tree City USA:** The Commission successfully applied for and received re-certification as a Tree City USA community. This designation is an acknowledgement of a community's commitment to protect and enhance their community forest.

# Dog Park Planning Committee



To establish an off-leash dog park for the Town of Portsmouth that is accessible to all residents and will promote education, training and safe recreational activities that facilitate responsible dog ownership and well-behaved dogs through the use of volunteers and with the support of the community.

**Volunteer Membership:** Bunny Miller – Chair, Sheila Collins – Vice Chair, Julie Sweeney – Treasurer, Liz Pedro – Town Council Representative, Mary Brakenhoff, Kim Cipolla, Joan Eline, Mike Hiener, Neal Hingorany, Grace Kinnunen, and Jim Medeiros. Additional volunteers have been Judi Smith, Mary Steele, and Nancy Bixby. Animal Control Consultant is Ariel Fisher. New members are welcome.

**Primary Focus:** This year we have been in Phase II of our task, which is publicity about and fundraising for the construction of the dog park, as well as determining the condition of the soil and topography of the Melville Park site in preparation for a final design and RFP for construction when the fundraising is complete. While Phase II is not yet complete, the committee has been busy and productive all year.



## Activities:

1. Selected full color logo, printed and distributed brochures, and designed a large banner for use at fundraising activities.
2. A restricted receipt account for the Town of Portsmouth Dog Park Fund was established for funds collected. Account balance on 30 June was \$7,323.
3. Established a link to the Town of Portsmouth website (residents>parcs>proposed dog park) with Paypal capabilities for local donors.
4. Expanded Facebook pages (Portsmouth RI Dog Park) (Portsmouth Loves Dogs) to include photos, maps, activities, information updates and more.
5. Chairperson was interviewed for Portsmouth This Week public access TV broadcast in November.
6. Domina's Agway "Pet Photos with Santa" project: we gave out brochures and were one of the recipients of proceeds from the event.
7. Newport Yogis Holiday fundraiser benefited the Dog Park fund with proceeds from their raffle.
8. We produced Counter Containers for cash donations and distributed them to many local businesses.
9. Applied for 6 grants: 4 applications were not funded, 1 – Aquidneck Land Trust's Merritt Neighborhood Fund application - was funded, and 1 other is pending until fall.
10. We placed an information page about the dog park in the Town's dog license renewal letters to dog owners in February.
11. Drink and Dabble fundraiser was held at Aquidneck Pizza in March. 40 attendees painted a beach scene with umbrellas.
12. 5K Fun Run/Walk at The Glen in April. 50 individuals participated. Girl Scout Troop 691 helped with pre-event publicity and at the event in various capacities. 8 scouts earned their Bronze Award for 20 hours of community service to the Dog Park Planning Committee.
13. Swaths into the Melville site were cut in April allowing access for soil sampling and topographical assessment for grading requirements for the road in and parking. Final design for the park is still pending.
14. Participated unsuccessfully in Petco's nationwide "Bark For Your Park" on-line contest in May.
15. Were the beneficiaries of Clement's Marketplace "Change for Charity" during May and June.

# Melville Park Committee

**Mission Statement:** to monitor, maintain and improve the trails and ponds within the park for passive recreation, including fishing, hiking, dog walking, and appreciation of Portsmouth's natural beauty for residents, campers and the general public.



## Activity During the Year:

- The Park Committee maintained the five-trail system, removing fallen trees, trimming encroaching brush, spreading mulch to control weed growth, building bridges over water prone trails, marking trails and clearing refuse. We patrol and clear trails on a monthly basis and used a grant from the Aquidneck Land Trust Merritt Fund to install walkways over wet areas on the Red and Green trails. Committee work days were held in the summer, fall and spring. New trail markers have been installed on all five trails, including embedding marked 4x4 posts in concrete where no trees are available.
- We assumed equipment maintenance from the Campground and assigned members responsibility to maintain the equipment according to a recommended schedule.
- The Committee has continued to pursue a permit from RIDEM to remove silt buildup and restore capacity in Pond 8, the first of a planned program of pond restorations to protect fishing and wildlife habitat. We contracted with Natural Resource Services to satisfy RIDEM requirements. We plan to use the silt to build up the bayside into a level, treed picnic area.
- We supported the Town in dealing with a Pond 9 Notice of Violation, noting that the notice misunderstood the valve structure and was unaware of the concrete core within the dam that obviates possible penetration.



- The Committee assisted Melville Elementary School in their '5K Walk' June fundraiser.
- Three Scout projects were supported this year: two new walkways on the Green Trail, one new walkway on the red trail, a reinforced ramp on the Blue Trail permitting heavy equipment to access the dam, and a Tree and Plant guide depicting and describing Park flora.
- We continue to work with the Clock Tower developer to control extensive water runoff from the Clock Tower water retention pond into the Park. A defective valve causing water to flow into the Park has been purported to be fixed but has not been tested. This issue has been active for over two years and continues to be a major concern.
- We used our new brush mower to clear an access trail to the proposed Dog Park area, allowing that committee to access, survey and plan their activity.
- The Park received help from the Campground, mowing park roads and access to trails. Public Works provided gravel to fill holes in roads to combat road and trail erosion.
- Finally, we requested that the Town Planner ask the Navy to transfer a parcel of land bordering Tank Farm 1. This will permit easy access to Pond 9 by RIDEM for fish restocking and by emergency vehicles should problems arise. Removal of two gates and relocation of the fence is anticipated should the Navy concur.



# Lower Glen Farm Preservation Committee

It is the mission of the Town Council to support Lower Glen Farm in providing local residents with open spaces and adequate park facilities while supporting Glen Farm equestrian sporting and social events,

as well as other events, as the town may require.

Glen Farm is an important historic feature of the town's natural and built environment.

Activities at the Farm should preserve and enhance that feature, while sustaining the cost of operation of the Farm to support and provide facilities for equine activities and management. The Lower Glen Farm Preservation Committee and its Charter was established by the Portsmouth Town Council on September 15, 2004. The Portsmouth Town Council delegated its authority to The Lower Glen Farm Preservation Committee to act as liaison between the Town Council and the Glen Farm Stables tenant, and also for the purpose of seeking grants in order to obtain funds for the preservation of the barns and landscape. Final authority and responsibility rests with the Portsmouth Town Council.

The following is a list of accomplishments and on-going projects that the Lower Glen Farm Preservation Committee has been working on:

- The committee continues to advocate for permanent conservation with Aquidneck Land Trust, recognizing that they, at present, have discontinued active pursuit of such an agreement. We believe it would be in the best interest of the town to consider this approach, as it would provide much needed funds for facility improvements.
- Subsequent to the approval of the Town Council to allocate \$125K from the recreational bond for barn repairs, the committee has been active in the bidder interview process and work prioritization. The cupolas and curb boards were designated as number one and two priorities, with work hopefully commencing in August.
- Discussion is ongoing with respect to repairs and preservation of all structures at Glen Farm including the "Ice House," the "Phelps House" and the crumbling indoor riding ring.
- The committee has continued its involvement and collaboration with representatives of Preserve RI to arrive at an acceptable plan of action for repair and preservation of the historic "Phelps House" located near the entrance to the farm complex. The Town Council approved funds for roof and fascia repairs and this project is nearing completion. This effort was urgently needed to weather proof the structure.



# Glen Park Working Committee

The Glen Park Working Committee currently consists of Grace Kinnunen, Chair, Alexandra Bonome, Rosemary Davidson, and Herbert Nichelson.

Glen Park is a parcel of land on Glen Road that was purchased with surrounding property in 1973 as the result of a vote at the polls by the residents of Portsmouth. It was purchased for recreation and open space. Today, people reserve the Park for events by filling out an application and coming before the Committee for approval at the monthly meeting held on the second Thursday of the month.

There are several buildings on the grounds that were once maintained by volunteers. The grounds are in need of work. Stone walls need repair, bushes need trimming and trees need trimming and if dead, to be removed. At one time volunteers did all of this but that is no longer an option in today's world. A new "Glen Park" sign was installed last year at the front of the Park.

## CIP Funding

The Committee was told that \$60,000 would be allotted to Glen Park rehab. To date only the Riding Ring has been replaced with those funds. DPW has a list of all the necessary repairs that need to get done. The Committee is frustrated.

## Events and Fees

Over the years, it was decided that nonprofit groups in the Town would not be charged for use of the Glen. That idea needs revision as it is costly to maintain the park. Our fees have been given to the New Revenue Working Group for update.

## Number of Events this Season

An average amount of events at the Park in season are between 30 - 35. In addition, Soccer uses the field for practices and games in the spring and fall and Softball uses the softball field for practices and games in the spring and fall. PHS Cross Country meets are also held.

## Hours of Operation

Glen Park is open from dawn to dusk from April 1 – November 1. However, the Park is open for people to walk through and enjoy every day of the year.

Glen Park is a beautiful, pastoral setting that should be preserved for open space and for the enjoyment of the Town's people forever.



# Glen Manor House Authority

The Glen Manor House Authority is chartered by the Portsmouth Town Council to operate in an advisory capacity to the Council regarding the operation of the Glen Manor House. The Glen Manor House Authority shall exist and receive its sole authority from the Town Council. Its purpose is to restore, maintain, and preserve the Glen Manor House for the enjoyment of current and future generations of Portsmouth residents; manage the operation/rental of the House for approved functions thereby obtaining the funds necessary to accomplish the restoration, maintenance, and preservation and, when possible, return a portion of the proceeds to the Town General Fund.

The 2014-2015 period was a highly successful year for the Glen Manor House. The House returned to full operation and schedule after the 2013-2014 year of major changes and schedule uncertainties due to the demolition of the Elmhurst School on the adjacent property. Resuming our full schedule, the House enjoyed a very successful year of bookings to capacity and increased sales due to the aggressive marketing of our Resident Managers. The table below shows our increased sales over the prior year.

	2014-2015	2013-2014
House rental and fee income	\$521,761	\$444,075
Table and chair rentals	\$ 15,355	\$ 8,495
Total Revenue	\$537,116	\$452,570
Budgeted expenses	\$225,853	\$205,294
Gross profit	\$311,263	\$247,276
Return to Town General Fund (75%)	\$233,447	\$185,457
Add to Capital Improvement Acc't. (25%)	\$ 77,816	\$ 61,819

\$36,578 was expended from the Capital Improvement Account during the past year. With the addition of \$77,816 from this year's profit, the balance of the Capital Improvement Account as of July 1, 2015 is \$216,698 which will allow us to address future needs.

From a business standpoint, the Glen Manor House was tasked with increasing revenues to generate more income to return to the Town General Fund. The House increased total revenue this year by 18% from \$452,570 to \$537,116. This is the first year revenues have reached and exceeded \$500,000. This is due to the highly professional Resident Managers, Katie and Don Wilkinson who manage all the sales, marketing and events and oversee the upkeep of the House and maintenance of the grounds.

To meet the demand of more and more customers renting more elegant chairs from outside vendors, the decision was made to purchase 300 gold ballroom chairs. This expenditure was \$16,657 from our Capital Improvement Account. Table and chair rental income has increased 81% over last year,



evidence that the chairs will easily pay for themselves within one year.

The Glen Manor House Authority is working closely with the Town Planner on the future plans for the development of the Elmhurst property for which the Town received a grant. The Authority reviewed the immediate needs of the Glen Manor House and prioritized the top three items that may be considered with this grant. The emphasis was on additional parking, the development of some type of buffer, fencing with trees and or shrubs to prevent access during events, as well as future plans for a tent site. The Authority will continue to work along with the Town Planner during this process.

From a community relations standpoint, Glen Manor House Authority continues to assist the Friends of the Glen Manor House, a private organization chartered to support the Authority by conducting social activities that are open to the public. The very popular Holly Ball was recreated and renamed this year to become Mistletoe Madness, held in December 2014. The event was sold out and a highly successful fundraiser. Friends of Glen Manor House also hosted the annual Holiday Open House in December, Fairy Tale Tea in May and the American Band Concert in July. All these events were well attended and the Band Concert had the largest crowd to date. The Holiday Open House and Band Concert are free and open to the public. The Friends also took on the rebranding of their logo, letterhead, and marketing materials. Through an aggressive membership campaign with the rebranding, membership has increased substantially.

The Glen Manor House Authority is comprised of 15 members:

Barbara Chase, Chairperson/Contact, Brenda Doran, Vice Chairperson, Lynn Galvin, Secretary, Judy Elste, Treasurer, Nancy Hall, Corresponding Secretary, John F. Brady, Margaret Brady, Claudia Divoll, Coleen Raposa, Deare Warren, Frank Wyatt, Andrew Kelly, John McMahon, Beverly Dowty, and Karen Menezes

# Bristol Ferry Town Common Committee



The Bristol Ferry Town Common, located at the northern end of Bristol Ferry Road, was established on March 12, 1714 in a list of “Rhodes, Ways and Lanes in Portsmouth” promulgated by the Portsmouth Town meeting as determined by a committee “... of Free Inhabitants of the Town of Portsmouth ...empowered to lay out all the undivided land in the Township.” This document is available in Town archives. The Town Common was used by farmers and others to keep their livestock and other goods while waiting for the ferry to Bristol.

Over the past several years, the Town Common grounds have been tended by local residents living in the area, with support from the Town. In December 2008, a Town Common Committee was created by the Town of Portsmouth to formalize this arrangement and to establish guidelines for the maintenance of the gardens and open areas of the Common. As a first order of business, this Committee requested that a survey be conducted by the Town to firmly establish the boundaries of the Common, to be followed by the installation of additional granite boundary markers along its borders. This was accomplished in early 2009.

The next step desired by the Committee was to develop and install an informational sign on the Town Common that described its boundaries and unique history. To this end, a grant was applied for and approved from the Merritt Neighborhood Fund Committee of the Aquidneck Land Trust in the Spring of 2009, which allowed us to purchase and install the sign.

For the past several years, members of the Bristol Ferry Town Common Committee and other local residents have continued to clean debris and conduct maintenance of the garden areas of the Common twice a year and as needed. The Common is currently in good condition, is clearly marked by stone boundary markers and is regularly mowed by the Town’s Department of Public Works.

## Solid Waste / Recycling Committee

The Committee, which consists of Alan Corcoran, Chair, Judi Staven, Vice Chair, Paul Barandiaran, Secretary, Michael Eyre, Bob Gessler, Tom Gorski, and Claudette Weissinger, serves at the pleasure of and in an advisory capacity to the Town Council in conjunction with the Town Administrator. The Committee shall completely examine Portsmouth’s solid waste disposal and recycling programs and make recommendations for their improvements.

### Activity During the Year:

Portsmouth maintained a recycling rate above 30% for the past fiscal year. However, the town failed to meet the state mandated 35%, which had been achieved the previous year. For the fiscal year ending June, 2015, the town delivered 4,327 tons of solid waste to Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) and 2,009 tons of recyclables to RIRRC’s Municipal Recycling Facility (MRF) for a recycling rate of 31.7%. This represents a 9% increase in solid waste and a 3.4% decrease in recycling from the previous year.



The major focus of the committee was the development of a comprehensive Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) proposal. The committee presented the PAYT proposal to the Town Council on February 18, 2015. The Town Council voted against the proposal.

The town accepted a recycling profit sharing check from the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) for \$30,597.01 in September, 2014. The recycling profit sharing income helped support the following activities:

- Recycling Coordinator: Recommended hiring a recycling coordinator using RIRRC recycling rebate funds. Participated in the development of a list of bonus incentive projects that are aimed at increasing Portsmouth’s recycling.
- Earth Day: Participated in the Earth Day celebrations held at Portsmouth High School in April 2015.
- High School Recycling Station Pilot Project: The Portsmouth High School Green team proposed a pilot project to construct several recycling stations for the high school cafeteria. The Committee recommended, and the Town Council approved, \$3,300 of recycling funds towards the pilot project.
- Education Outreach: Used Internet, social media and print media to encourage recycling.
- Recycling Drop-off Events: Provided the general public information about recycling drop-off events and coordinated the delivery of large containers used to collect large plastic recyclables during the events.
- Transfer Station Operations: Worked with transfer station operator to improve operation and signage, ongoing effort.

# Harbor Commission

The objective of the Harbor Commission is to provide structure to the operation and regulation of the town's coastal resources by creating and helping to implement the Harbor Management Plan and the Harbormaster Ordinance. This is done in compliance with RIDEM and CRMC regulations, and with the guidance of the Town Planning Department. The plan and ordinance is reviewed annually and must be updated at least once every five years.

The Commission makes annual recommendations on mooring fees and the Harbormaster budget to the Police Department and the Town Council.

The Commission inventories and monitors town coastal resources such as docks, bulkheads, ROW's and boat ramps. It annually makes recommendations to the Town Administrator and Town Council for the maintenance, repair, and improvement of those resources.

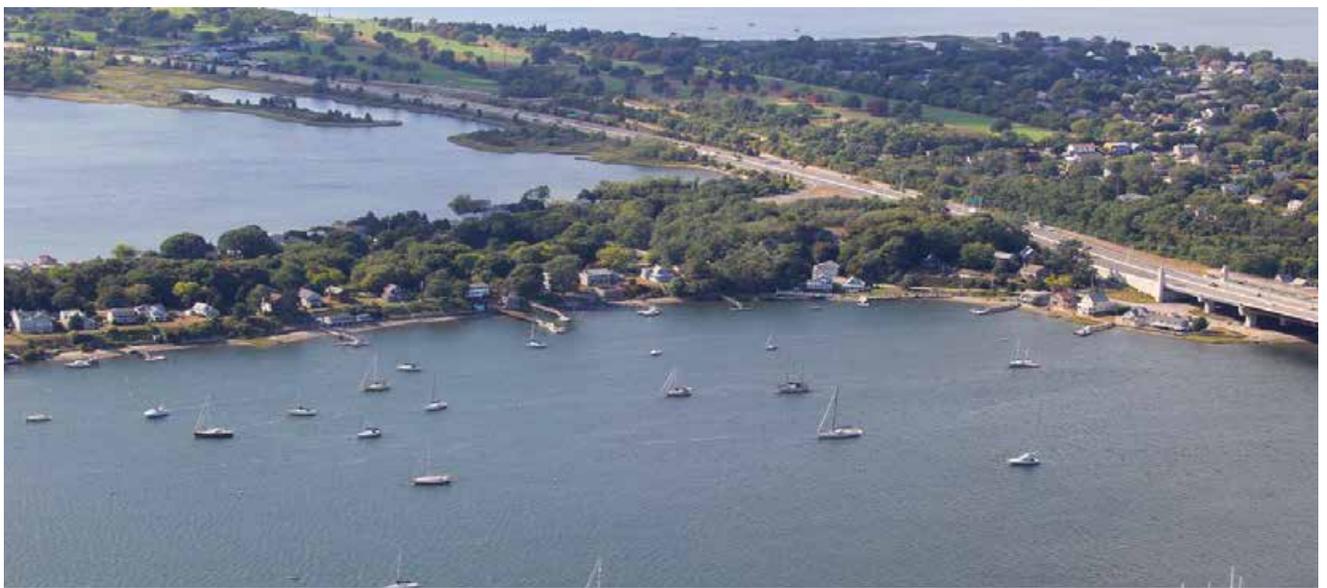
The Commission also provides operational and clerical support to the Harbormaster as he requires during high load periods.

The Commission also works with state regulators and the Town Planning Department to assure the Harbor Plan and operation complies with the changing state regulations.

The Harbor Commission presently consists of 13 members with very diverse related experiences. The membership includes an oceanographer, a maritime lawyer, a retired licensed captain, several people in the marine industries as well as riparian property owners, mooring owners, and environmental advocates.

This year saw the establishment of a budget supported by mooring fees that will defray the costs of having the Harbormaster on the water for a much greater amount of time. This was economically done by establishing a part time clerk position to do the clerical functions for the Harbormaster and allowing him to use that time on the water. Even with the new increase, Portsmouth still has the lowest residential mooring fees of any town in Rhode Island.

The new Harbor Management Plan received provisional approval from the Town Council this year and is presently being revised to better meet the requirements of DEM for water quality. This new plan is expected to be implemented next season.



## Mooring Assignment Appeals Committee

The Mooring Assignment Appeals Committee only meets when a Mooring Holder or Applicant appeals a decision made by the Harbormaster.

During the past fiscal year the Harbormaster did not forward any appeals to the committee so no meetings were scheduled.

# Portsmouth Emergency Management Agency



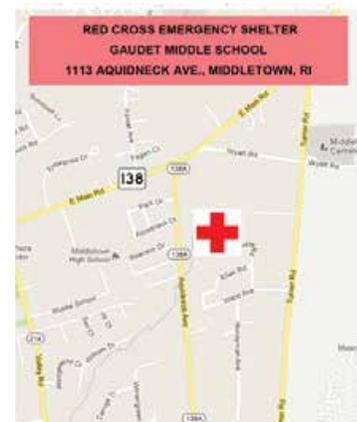
Portsmouth EMA (PEMA) maintained a very active regimen of training and exercises throughout the 2014-2015 fiscal year. All-hands Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation exercises were held in each quarter of the year, with the exception of the first quarter of 2015 when the EOC was activated in a real-world emergency (more below). The EOC was opened for public tours during the Portsmouth Fire Department's Open House in September 2014. Over two hundred hours of classroom training time were accrued by PEMA personnel, augmented by further independent study. Portsmouth EMA, in conjunction with the American Red Cross and The RI Department of Health, conducted a seven-week Emergency Communications course during April and May 2015.

The Portsmouth Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated at Level 1 (full around the clock activation) in preparation for, response to, and recovery from Winter Storm Juno in late January 2015. The EOC remained at Level 1 activation status for 3 days, serving as a centralized location for Town government and department leaders to plan and coordinate storm response activities. The EOC maintained constant contact with the RI Emergency Management Agency, adjacent towns' EMAs, and The American Red Cross before, during, and after the storm. A representative from National Grid was resident in the EOC throughout the duration of the storm. Portsmouth EMA's Internet Public Information (IPI) Unit kept the public informed of storm conditions and events through Portsmouth EMA's web site, Facebook, and Twitter accounts. Continuous social media monitoring assisted in rumor control and contributed to the common operating picture in the EOC. One member of Portsmouth EMA's Emergency Communications (EmComm) Unit was diverted to Middletown's Gaudet Regional Shelter to provide communications at the shelter. The all-volunteer IPI and EmComm Units performed their duties in the EOC flawlessly and professionally during Winter Storm Juno. This is the result of the volunteer members' commitment to ongoing training and exercises with Portsmouth EMA.

Portsmouth EMA began work on a comprehensive Tsunami Emergency Action Plan in February 2015. An east coast tsunami is a low risk, yet high impact threat.

Prudent emergency management requires that we have a plan in place to prepare for, respond to, and recover from an east coast tsunami. PEMA Planning Chief Captain Ray Perry (USCG ret.) is leading the tsunami plan development effort. This is necessarily a multi-jurisdictional planning effort because we share bridges, roads, and resources with our surrounding communities who would be simultaneously impacted by a tsunami event. An initial plan kickoff meeting was held in June 2015 in the Portsmouth EOC. The meeting was attended by EMA, fire, and police representatives from Portsmouth, Bristol, Middletown, Newport, and Little Compton. Tsunami Emergency Action Plan development is expected to continue throughout the 2015-2016 fiscal year. As the planning progresses, PEMA's intent is to use a Whole Community approach, reaching out to community groups and the public at large to develop and implement an effective plan.

Your Portsmouth Emergency Management Director is John King.



# Portsmouth Prevention Coalition

The Portsmouth Prevention Coalition is a coalition of community members interested in coordinating and designing strategies addressing tobacco, alcohol and other drug abuse with the primary goal of reducing youth substance abuse and overall substance abuse rates to help create a healthy, responsible and safe community.

The Portsmouth Prevention Coalition (PPC) consists of Ray D. Davis, Coordinator, 20 hours a week, all other members are volunteers comprised of community members and professionals working in Portsmouth with a vested interest in substance abuse prevention and are as follows: Marianne Raymo, Chair; Elizabeth Morley, Vice- Chair; Marcia Blackburn, Secretary; Anne Burns, Treasurer (school department employee); Lt. Steve Hoetzel, Lisa Coldwell, Sue Garvey, Jay Ha'o, Bob Bledsoe, Donna Darmody, Kelly O'Loughlin, David Croston, Kathleen Melvin, Nicole Pascoe, Fran Faria, Marcy Shyllon, Rebecca Elwell, Catherine Alexander, Kyle McGovern, and Jessica Lineberger.

The PPC meets at a minimum 9 times a year on a monthly basis from September through June with December as an optional meeting month and other meetings as deemed necessary according to circumstances. All meetings are open public meetings and conducted as such with agendas and notices filed with the Secretary of State's office and posted at Town Hall.

The major accomplishments of the PPC this past year have been:

During the course of the last year the Portsmouth Prevention Coalition has made its goal to raise the community's awareness of our substance abuse issues and to help introduce and support recognized effective prevention programs and strategies into Portsmouth by working closely with the Portsmouth School Department, the Portsmouth Police Department and the Town.

## Outcomes achieved by your Coalition

- a. Accurate data collected and disseminated Community awareness of the actual substance abuse issues with our youth and recommended prevention tactics/programs advocated for
- b. Life of Student/Athlete adopted by Portsmouth schools and joint student interaction with Middletown and Tiverton
- c. Chemical Health Polices overhauled and updated for students and faculty
- d. Health Curriculum overhauled to reflect ¼ of the content on current substance abuse related issues for Portsmouth students
- e. Greater community support from public and private funding sources to expand our efforts
- f. Creation and support of Portsmouth Committed student lead program
- g. Joint outreach with Tiverton, Little Compton and Portsmouth faith communities, all bus drivers and Class alcohol vendors involving them in prevention practices
- h. Project Purple Week Celebration coordinated on a wider scale and supported entirely by community donations raised by the coalition and coordinated with the entire community
- i. Rhode Island and Portsmouth prevention efforts and issues communicated directly to Senators Reed and Whitehouse as well as Representative Cicilline on Capitol Hill
- j. Federal Drug Free Communities grant applied for with a possible award of \$125,000 a year for five years for substance abuse prevention targeting building the capacity of the Portsmouth Prevention Coalition and reducing the indicators for underage drinking and marijuana use by Portsmouth youth
- k. Receipt of a \$5,000 Legislative grant from RI Representative Dennis Canario
- l. Presented a Town Hall meeting on the state of Prevention in Portsmouth
- m. Attended Little Compton Prevention Coalition meetings to form a closer working relationship with that town and parents of children attending Portsmouth High School
- n. Purchased impaired driving goggles set for the Portsmouth Police Department to use in training and workshops provided for Coalition members to build the capacity of the coalition
- o. Advocate for Portsmouth's prevention needs at the local, state and federal levels
- p. Expanded the makeup of the Portsmouth Prevention Coalition
- q. Supported the Student Assistance position at the High School by contributing \$19,000 out of the \$19,196 federal block grant money that the Rhode Island Behavioral Health Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals contribute to Portsmouth for prevention funding
- r. Secured private donations to the Prevention Coalition from community members and businesses
- s. Community awareness through press and social media utilized to promote activities and issues
- t. Have referred many community members to treatment resources for adults and adolescents
- u. Developed and funded a Portsmouth Prevention Social Media Project in cooperation with The Harrington School of Communications Director, Renee Hobbs and URI, Portsmouth Faculty, community and students to develop student designed and targeted substance abuse prevention messages in 2016

# Prudence Island Planning Commission

The members of the Prudence Island Planning Commission (PIPC) are: Ed “Hap” Aldrich, Chair, Gene Cardin, Peter Henry, Catherine Homan, Ann Marie Lockwood, Mike Sheehan and Theckla Snell.

The purpose of the PIPC is to provide a public and open forum that will generate frank and open discussions and exploration of comprehensive and important island-community issues, and be useful as a sounding board for ideas, plans and expectations of island residents and land users. Through collective discussion, equitable solutions can be reached.

The Commission may make advisory recommendations to the Portsmouth Town Council.

During fiscal year 2015, the PIPC worked with the town in an effort to resolve road paving issues on Prudence Island.



# Portsmouth Economic Development Committee



During the later half of 2014, the EDC concentrated on the EDS of the Comprehensive Community Plan and tried to address future projects and areas of interest.

The general consensus of these meetings was a push towards “Agri-tourism” and ideas to expand the current tax base as well as restructuring the zoning ordinances to streamline the process for businesses and residential properties.

At the start of 2015, the committee was hampered by expiring terms.

J. Lane McMahon became the Acting Chair and the committee has been “reformed.” The committee is now moving forward. At present, we have an excellent working relationship with the New Revenue Group, and are jointly working on several projects.

We would also like to explore the concept currently in use at the campground for all town owned venues. That is, to employ a “value add” model of using outside contractors that bring something more to the table than just plain revenue.

I hope to report in the near future on some of these ideas and goals.



# New Revenue Working Group



The NRG was initiated by former Town Administrator John Klimm in July 2014 at the request of the Town Council to help close an expected FY 2016 revenue gap of \$300,000 – without raising taxes. He encouraged the NRG to “think outside of the Box.” In March 2015, Mr. Emil T. Cipolla was nominated and accepted the chair of the group.

## New Revenue Working Group Guidelines

1. The NRG is an ad-hoc advisory group of volunteer townspeople. Its mission is to identify, evaluate, and recommend to the Town Administrator changes of selected town owned assets that have the potential to generate additional revenue to the Town. NRG has no decision making authority of these Town owned assets—only the Town Council can make the decisions. Non-economic (e.g., cultural, historical, political) aspects are outside the scope of the NRG.
2. “Revenue” could include recommended cost savings or charges for services associated with these assets.

NRG first developed the decision criteria for evaluating and categorizing the assets:

1. Initial focus will be on high potential, near term possibilities.
2. Minimum or no capital investment by town.

During the period from August 2014 through March 2015, the NRG analyzed and recommended to the appropriate Town organizations the following:

- Mr. Dick Erwin, the Harbor Commission chairman, recommended that the mooring fees should be raised such that the Harbor management program be revenue neutral and self-supporting and provide for capital improvements.
- Mr. Tim Dunbar, the Sandy Point manager, recommended that the Beach be self-sustaining. As a result of a sample of beach users, he recommended a minor increase in fees, and additional services and facilities.
- Finance/Personnel Director Jim Lathrop issued an RFP in the fall of 2014 that resulted in new management of the Melville Campground with a guaranteed minimum income to the Town of \$25,000 annually for five years.

Since March 2015, the NRG had five meetings during which it categorized all of the town assets according to the above criteria. Major recommendations to the appropriate Town departments included:

- Ms. Beth Carroll completed a detailed and comprehensive review and comparison with other Towns of fees and all Town ordinances with fines and recommended modifications.
- Town Council Vice-President Jim Seveney reviewed and recommended changes to the Municipal Court fee structure.
- Fire Chief Cranson recommended an increase in the Fire Alarm radio box fee beginning in 2016.
- Mr. Emil Cipolla is leading a feasibility study regarding the installation of solar panels on selected Town properties (e.g., “unproductive land” and roof tops). The goal is to recommend to the Town Council a Power Purchase Agreement in which the Town would lease these properties to a third party which would sell the generated power to National Grid, and the Town would receive a share of the net revenue.



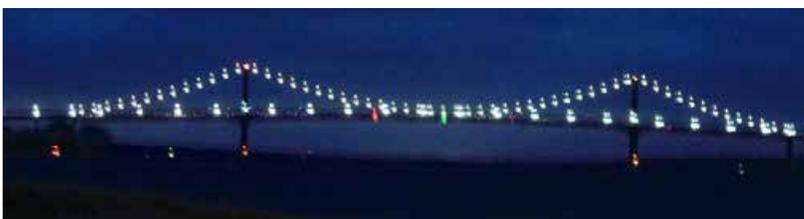
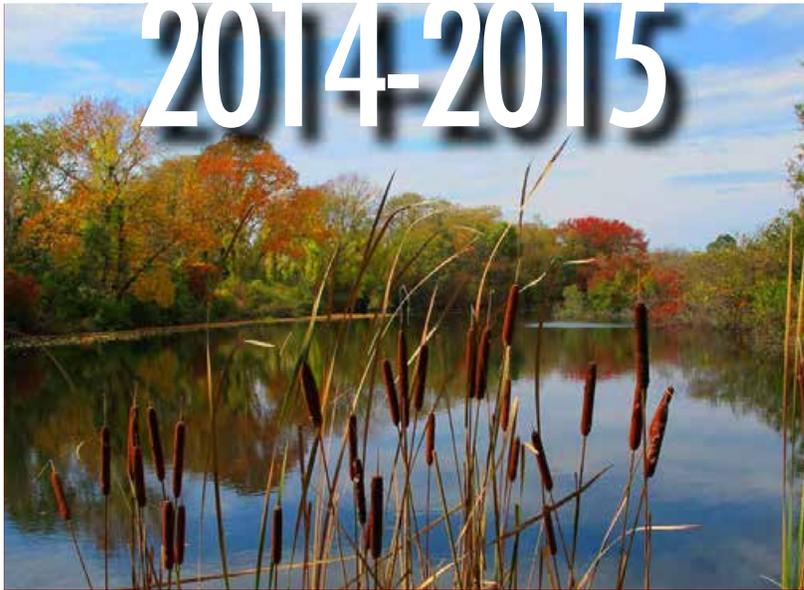


# PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND

2200 East Main Road

Portsmouth, RI 02871

## Annual Report 2014-2015



## Future planned initiatives for FY 2016

- Keep moving forward with relationship building and consolidation efforts between school and municipal activities.
- Engage more closely in the West Side land use issues/initiatives: Master Plan, USN concerns, interaction with Middletown, and Burma Road.
- Finish the review/update of our Comprehensive Community Plan.
- Continue to develop the organizational concept for a Recreation Department, identify funding requirements, revenue expectations and citizen expectations.
- Deliver a master plan on utilization of Glen Farm activities.
- Establish new financial targets for expanded business operation/utilization of Glen Manor House.
- Conduct a space needs and use study at Town Hall.
- Prepare voter referendum on new police station.
- Study the feasibility of a salt shed for Public Works.
- Complete the design phase for renovation of the Brown House.
- Prepare a strategic plan for utilization of all town property. Begin renovations on town buildings.
- Continue open space purchase program.
- Establish broadband services for Town Hall and departments.