

Opinions

Office of the Vermont Secretary of State



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A Message from the Secretary

What crazy weather we are having! The first snow of the season caught us all by surprise. In the valley where I live (Montpelier) we had only recently had our very first hard frost of the year. The leaves were still on the trees – and some of them still green!

The afternoon when the snow began we slipped and slid over roads in tires not meant for the conditions. There were many fender-benders blamed on the early storm, and power went out for tens of thousands of Vermonters. However, the most serious and lasting consequence of the storm is the damage to our trees.

We don't often think about our trees until something goes wrong. Perhaps a large branch snaps, or the tree inconveniently grows to block a favorite view. Yet, trees are essential to a character of an area. Whether it is a row of old maples lining the side of a country lane, or a particularly large, old oak, or a well-placed apple orchard, very often the trees around us affect our sense of the place where we live.

Vermont law recognizes the importance of trees in our communities. Indeed, selectboards appoint tree wardens whose sole job is to protect the town's public shade and ornamental trees from being harmed or removed; and before the trees alongside our roads can be cut down the law ensures that landowners have an opportunity to weigh in.

Sadly, it was our trees that were hit the hardest by the early storm. In the days following the snow we heard from many people about beloved trees turned into fuel for the wood stove. While we can protect our trees from unnecessary human destruction, we cannot easily protect them from the

weather. It seemed that the long and heavy rains of October made the ground so wet that it could not hold the roots of the trees when the heavy snow fell on branches and leaves. Many trees simply tipped over, others split, and still others lost large branches. Many of our orchards were hit badly, and the sound of chainsaws filled the air as crews worked overtime to clear the roads.

The power is back on now, and the snow has melted away. Yet, whether we depend upon trees for our livelihood or simply enjoy their shade and beauty, we will long remember the October snow when we look out and see the trees that no longer stand. This year at town meeting when we thank our town officers, let's remember the tree wardens who work so hard to protect our trees.

Deborah L. Markowitz, Secretary of State

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The New Work Place: Interruptions and Systems

According to a recent study of work patterns within two high-tech firms each employee spends only eleven minutes on a project before being interrupted. Within those eleven minutes the work may be further fragmented into three-minute intervals as the employee responds to an e-mail, reads a Web page, or switches to work on a spread sheet. It takes, on average, twenty-five minutes for the employee to get back to the original task. These interruptions, often associated with the new office technologies designed to make us more productive, have given rise to “interruption science” as a new field of study (Clive Thompson, “Meet the Life Hackers,” *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, October 16, 2005).

The Archives has become enmeshed in work pattern studies as well. Our look at how government entities conduct their work is associated with a series of legislative mandates to develop strategic plans for managing records. Our particular interest lies in how business activities generate records and on how information flows across these activities and entities. The goal is to develop tools to help understand how we conduct business and thus develop systematic approaches for managing information from the point of creation to ultimate disposition.

While the immediate impetus is the legislative mandates, the approach reflects changing emphases within archival management. Archivists no longer have the luxury or ability to look at or evaluate records; there are just too darn many of them. Instead archivists are beginning to look at the systems that produce, store and transmit records and information and then support incorporating recordkeeping rules and needs into those systems.

Of course “system” may be too optimistic a term for how recordkeeping has evolved. Too often decisions are made in isolation, various technologies are implemented without understanding long term opportunities and consequences, and, as a result, the potential value of both records and technology are not realized.

Legislative committee records provide an example. In 1917 the Vermont house and senate changed their rules to require the clerk of each committee to “keep a record of reference of each bill considered, of the persons requesting to be heard, of the notice, if any, of the dates when the bill is considered, and the vote of each member of the committee thereon.” Prior to the adoption of those rules (now found as Rules 29 of the house and senate) there were no committee records (nor do there appear to have been committee clerks). While there is no record of the rules’ intent the requirement that the records “be open to the inspection of the people” suggests transparency of legislative deliberations was at least one goal. Interestingly the senate, but not the house, specified that the committee records be preserved after the session by the secretary of state; by 1919 the house rules added this requirement.

By the 1920s committee clerks moved beyond the bare bones recording requirements of the rules and began to take minutes of committee testimony and discussion. These minutes ranged from sparse, even cryptic scrawls, to in-depth, type-written notes. The committee clerks were legislators (and as noted in my March 2005 column, primarily women legislators).

In the late 1960s-early 1970s legislative support services, including some clerical support, were added through the creation of the Legislative Council and Joint Fiscal Office. The clerical support services began to take over some of the requirements of Rules 29, notably the notice of committee meetings and the list of people testifying.

The 1970s also saw tape recorders introduced to capture committee testimony and deliberations. This was a relief for the legislator-clerks who felt their recording duties prevented full participation in committee deliberations. The committee minutes, which already reflected the clerks’ ambivalence about recordkeeping, became even sparser. Legislators logically decided that if everything was being recorded, why take minutes.

The clerical staff kept a log of the tapes and, until 1985, routinely transcribed the tapes. This created a complete, verbatim record of committee activities. By 1985, however, routine transcribing, which was labor-intensive, ended. In the 1990s cassettes replaced the old reel to reel recorders and, by the end of the decade, the move began to digitally record committees. The moves to

cassettes and then CDs were made because the older technologies were becoming obsolete and the newer technologies were seen as more efficient recording devices. At the same time, in the senate, the clerical staff took on greater roles in taking minutes.

By the 1990s the schedules and other records generated by the clerical staff were increasing captured through computers and the Council also began to post some of the records on the legislative website.

Back in the early 1980s the Legislative Council realized that it had to do something with the growing volume of records it was creating. Though this involves some speculation, it appears that the problem was approached as a space issue—what to do with the reams of transcripts, tapes, and other records filling up office space—rather than a record/information issue. It also appears that the problem was approached from the perspective of who created the records (the Council in this case) rather than the role of the records as part of the legislative process. Therefore the decision was made to store the records at the state record center. While this solved, at one level, the space problem, it accelerated the diffusion of legislative records, complicating access (remember that Rules 29 required minutes, as kept by the committee clerk, to go to the secretary of state; now minutes, transcripts and tapes kept by the Council went to the record center).

The consequences of this history include a physically and intellectually fragmented set of records related to a single function (legislating) that are extremely difficult to access; a growing gap between certain recordkeeping mandates (such as Rules 29) and actual practice; and, though not touched on above, a mounting preservation problem as recordkeeping technologies are superseded without addressing records captured on the legacy technologies. Though they are all related to a single process, records generated by Legislative Council draft persons, legislative committees, Council clerical staff, study committees, etc. are treated as unique to whichever entity created them. Those records are captured on one or more of the following medium or formats: paper, analog reel to reel tapes; analog cassette tapes; CDs, databases, word documents, spread sheets, Web documents, etc. Taking just one use of the records—researching legislative intent—one has to visit up to four different government units, in two different towns, without reference to a single “finding aid” explaining where any particular record is or how it relates to other records germane to the research.

These consequences are the not the result of a conspiracy of dunces. Indeed, throughout the 88 year history of legislative committee records, each individual action shaping recordkeeping was based on a rational business decision. It was a rational decision by legislators, who wanted to legislate rather than take notes, to record testimony. It was a rational decision, given expenses, to stop transcribing everything. It was a rational decision to move recording to emerging technologies as the older technologies were no longer supported. It was a rational decision to find a way to free up valuable office space by moving the records to off-site storage. Etc.

What was lost was an overall context for making those decisions or a mechanism for evaluating not only why or how activities were performed, but also for evaluating the long term consequences of each decision (and remember, the legislature works on two-year cycles, with legislators serving, on average, around six years).

This, in turn, illustrates the value of a systems approach. Such an approach would identify the function (to legislate), all the activities associated with legislating regardless of who performed that activity (committees, Legislative Council, etc), how those activities were done, and the relative value, to whom, of the records generated by each activity. That system would include a continuous process of re-evaluation as work process and mandates changed. System-based views can guide decisions over what technologies, managed how, best support record creation, preservation, and use.

This is why the Archives is interested in a systems approach, even if it involves a lot more front end work than simply looking for technological solutions to undefined problems. But this is more than an Archives perspective or an issue with state records. It recently was our pleasure to work with Colchester officials on a scanning project. On their own these officials decided on a functional approach and are designing their computer systems to reflect how records flow among town officers and how the public uses those records.

It is exciting, and daunting, to re-think long established practices. But Albert Einstein got it right when he said, “We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used to create them.”

NOTE: I was going to be clever and keep a log of the interruptions I experienced once I started writing this column. After logging three separate meetings, 30 different e-mails and an equal number of phone calls, and a variety of staff and researcher questions, I gave up. The log was interrupting my work too much.



Opinions of *Opinions*

1. **Town ordinance can require sewer hook-up.** If a town or city extends its sewer system, it can adopt an ordinance to require that all adjacent property owners connect to the public system and abandon private septic systems. 24 V.S.A. §3509. The Sewage commissioners may require the owners of buildings, subdivisions or developments abutting a public street to become connected to the municipal sewage system.
2. **A “special assessment” may help a community provide services which benefit a limited area of a municipality.** A town that wishes to provide special services to a particular area of town, such as water or sewer services, may use either a special assessment or may create a fire district. The creation of a fire district under 20 V.S.A. § 2481 et seq. may allow more flexibility for ongoing operation of systems, but when there is a specific public improvement which needs to be made that will not have significant operating costs or whose costs are predictable and stable over time, a special assessment may be a much simpler approach. 24 V.S.A. § 3251 – 3256. It makes sense for the selectboard and interested residents to explore both options, before selecting the one that best fits the specific project.
3. **Interest on overdue water bill can be charged only if voters approve.** Water or Sewer Commissioners can charge interest on delinquent payments for water and/or sewer **ONLY** if the voters of the municipality have approved an article in the warning to collect interest on overdue water or sewer bills. 24 V.S.A. §5151 and 32 V.S.A. §5136. The article must be voted in the same manner as the vote to collect interest on delinquent taxes, and likewise stays in effect until voted otherwise at a subsequent meeting.
4. **Some local officials do not have to be residents.** In most cases, in order to be elected or appointed to serve in local office you must be a voter in that municipality. However, the law does not require assistant treasurers or assistant clerks to be residents of the communities where they serve. In addition, the town clerk or treasurer can serve as clerk or treasurer of a village or fire district even if they are not a resident of that municipality. A town tax collector can serve as an incorporated school district collector even if not a resident of the district. There is also no residency requirement for appointment to town planning and zoning boards. However, for the planning commission, at least a majority of the members must be residents of the town.
5. **Vermont law does not require that a local health officer must be a resident of the town or city.** The selectboard can recommend any person to the commissioner of the health department for appointment as the local health officer of the town. The commissioner makes the appointment based on the selectboard’s recommendation. The health department suggests that, even though the law does not require it, whenever possible, it is a good practice for health officers to be a resident of the town in which they serve. 18 V.S.A. § 601.
6. **Planning commissioners can be removed by selectboard.** Except in towns that elect members of the planning commission, a member of a planning commission may be removed at any time by the

unanimous vote of the selectboard. 24 V.S.A. §4323(a) In contrast to the statute governing the removal of zoning board of adjustment or development review board members, Vermont law does not require that planning commissioners only be removed for cause. 24 V.S.A. §4460(c).



7. **Clerk may serve both the town and village.** Vermont law permits the same person to be elected to serve as Town Clerk-Treasurer and also as Village Clerk-Treasurer. There is no statutory conflict and in many situations each municipality benefits from the knowledge and experience of the candidate who has already served in one of the positions.
8. **Board cannot prevent social service agencies from submitting petition that combines requests for town meeting support.** The law permits social service agencies to join together in circulating a petition signed by 5 percent of the legal voters to ask to have an article or several articles placed on the warning for town meeting. Although we strongly suggest that each agency present its request in a separate Article in the petition so that the votes for each agency will be taken separately at town meeting, no law requires this.
9. **A majority of a board must concur in order for a board to take action.** A Selectboard must have a majority of the full board vote in favor of a motion in order to pass the motion even if some members of the board are absent or have recused themselves. 1 V.S.A. §172. For example, if you have a five-member selectboard, at least three members must vote in favor of a motion for it to pass. If only three members are present and voting, then all three members must vote in favor of the motion in order to take action.
10. **Quorum rule for school boards is different than for other boards.** School boards operate under a special statute, 16 V.S.A. §554, that changes the general rule for board voting so that a School board needs a quorum (majority of the board) to be present, but then only requires the majority of those present to vote in favor of a motion for the motion to pass. For example, on a union high school board composed of 15 total members, if only 9 members are present at a meeting, only five members need to vote in favor of a motion for it to pass.
11. **Executive session can include people who are not board members.** Vermont law permits a board to go into an executive session to discuss a variety of matters. 1 V.S.A. § 313(b) provides that “attendance in executive session shall be limited to members of the board . . . and in the discretion of the public body, its staff, clerical assistants, its legal counsel and persons who are subjects of the discussion or whose expert information is needed.”
12. **Board cannot eject member from executive session.** In one town a dissenting member of the board routinely informed the public and press about what was discussed during their executive session. There is no way the board can prevent this from occurring. Although the board can publicly express its displeasure, the law does not permit the board to exclude or eject one of its members from a meeting. 1 V.S.A. § 313(b)

13. Local candidate petitions for office for town meeting must be specific. Vermont law requires candidates to petition to get on the ballot for local office in municipalities that use the Australian ballot system for election of officers. These petitions must clearly indicate the office and the term length for the office the candidate is seeking (particularly when there is more than one position open with different terms of office.) 17 V.S.A. § 2681(b). **A candidate cannot circulate a petition for signatures without a term length and then add or change the term length after signatures have been obtained.** For example, a candidate cannot circulate a petition for selectboard without indicating which term he or she is seeking. However, it is o.k. for a person to circulate two or three different petitions for selectboard, one petition for the one year seat, one for the remaining year of a three year term, and one for the three year term, and then wait until the filing deadline to decide which petition to submit to the Town Clerk.

14. The Selectboard must pass a resolution of public necessity to begin the process for a bond vote. 24 V.S.A. §1755. All bond votes require special and additional notice and warning to be provided as directed in 24 V.S.A. §1756. The ballots must be prepared as directed in 24 V.S.A. §1758. Selectboards and town clerks must provide copies documenting the various steps to bond counsel. It is wise to confirm that you have covered all the necessary steps for warning with bond counsel before the final time for posting of the warnings.

15. Record custodian does not have to fax records or do research. The public records law in 1 V.S.A. §315-318 provides that custodians of public documents must make documents available to the public for inspection and copying during reasonable hours. The law does not require that the custodian fax copies of documents to anyone, or require that the custodian conduct research to find documents.

16. Travel trailer may be taxed if it remains in one place for too long. Generally, motor vehicles that are registered for use on the highway cannot be taxed as real property. An exception exists for trailer coaches (a trailer or semi-trailer designed to be towed by a motor vehicle and equipped or used for sleeping or living quarters). A trailer coach may be taxed as real property by the town in which it is located if it stays on the same trailer site or camp site for more than 180 days during the 365 days prior to April 1. A trailer coach is not taxed as real property if it is stored on property on which the owner resides in another dwelling as a permanent residence. 32 V.S.A. § 3692.

17. Town arranges for burial of indigent residents and the state reimburses town for some expenses. 33 VSA 2301(c) provides that when a person who is not a recipient of public assistance, or is a veteran or died while an inmate of a state institution “dies in the town of domicile without sufficient known assets to pay for burial, the burial shall be arranged and paid for by the town. The department [of human services] shall reimburse the town up to \$250.00 for expenses incurred.” Note that the law continues and says “ for the purpose of this chapter, ‘burial’ means the act of interring the human dead and the ceremonies directly related to that interment at the gravesite; and ‘funeral’ means the ceremonies prior to burial of the body by interment, cremation or other method.”



18. Town is responsible for burial grounds when cemetery association dissolves. A cemetery association, which is not owned and operated by a church or religious society may be dissolved. Upon dissolution, all lands owned or held by it for cemetery purposes and all perpetual care funds, trust funds, and all other property held or owned by it, less dissolution expenses, may be transferred to the town in which the lands are located, and thereafter these lands may become public burial grounds. When a cemetery association dissolves, the town is required to hold the perpetual care funds and trust funds in trust for the care, improvement and embellishment of the lots in the particular cemetery, according to the same terms upon which they were held by the association. 18 V.S.A. § 5439.

19. Burial records are public. All cemeteries, community mausoleums or columbarium must make, and safely keep and preserve the records and files of the organization. The law provides that all record of burials, interments and cremations must be open to the public at all reasonable times. 18 V.S.A. § 5313.

20. Clerk appoints and removes assistant. The law provides that after his or her election, a town clerk must appoint one or more assistant clerks. The clerk is held responsible for the acts of the assistants, and these assistants retain their appointment until the clerk revokes it or a new clerk is elected. 24 V.S.A. § 1170. This means that the assistant serves at the will of the Clerk and is generally not subject to the personnel policies of the town – particularly insofar as they cover the hiring and firing of employees of the town. (To prevent unnecessary suit the personnel policies should reflect this special legal status.)

21. Clerk who is temporarily absent is still responsible for her office. In one town a clerk will be unable to work for a month or more. This temporary absence is not, alone, a resignation from office. Rather, the law provides that in the clerk's absence the assistant clerk should be responsible for performing the duties of the office. 24 V.S.A. § 1170. Note that unless the clerk's salary is voted as an hourly rate she is entitled to her entire salary even if she is out of work for an extended period of time.

22. Out-of-state justices of the peace cannot perform weddings in Vermont. Although other states may permit Vermont justices to perform weddings in their states, Vermont does not have reciprocity. This means that only Vermont justices of the peace, clergy or judges or clergy who get special permission from our probate court can perform marriages in Vermont.

23. Selectboard oversees cemeteries unless board of cemetery commissioners is appointed. When a town neglects to place one or more of its public burial grounds under the charge of a board of cemetery commissioners, the selectmen shall have power to sell and convey lots in such burial grounds. They shall apply the proceeds of such sales and accept for the town and use legacies, bequests and gifts for improving and embellishing the grounds. 18 V.S.A. § 5367.

24. Cemetery commissions must report to the auditors on the conditions and needs of the public burial grounds. The board shall submit annually a written report to the town auditors as to the condition and needs of the burial grounds under its charge and of its doings, including a detailed statement of its receipts and expenditures and of the amount and disposition of the funds in its hands or subject to its control. 18 V.S.A. § 5379. The town auditors shall audit such statement, file it in the office of the town clerk and include the whole or a summary thereof in their annual report. 18 V.S.A. § 5380.

In our monthly Opinions we provide what we believe the law requires based upon our legal judgment, years of observing Vermont's local government practices, and Vermont Court decisions. This information is intended as a reference guide only and should not replace the advice of legal counsel.

Does Your Town Need a Tune-Up? Part 4



(Excerpted from *Tune Up for Towns*, a publication of the Office of the Secretary of State. To obtain the full publication, visit www.sec.state.vt.us or call Kathryn at 802-828-2148)

You go to the dentist twice a year for a checkup, usually not because you have a known problem but because you want to know if there is one you haven't noticed. Some annual checkup is also probably done on your furnace, your car, and your dog. So why not the town? Give your town a legal tune-up by review the checklist below.

Last month we provided a checklist of items related to the various legal requirements that affect the town clerk. This month we are looking at Town Meeting and the Town Report. As with last month's list, some of the items are not the law; they are simply recommendations based on experience. The list below is just the start. Next month we will look at the Board of Civil Authority.

Town Meeting:

- ☒ Are minutes of annual and special town (and school district) meetings completed and approved by two of the necessary officers (moderator, selectboard or JPs) within seven days of the meeting? Have they been recorded or placed on permanent retention by the clerk? See 24 V.S.A. § 1152.
- ☒ If the town and school district hold separate meetings, is a moderator elected separately for each meeting? It may be the same person, but a separate election is required unless the meeting is a joint town/school district meeting. Do the town and school district confer before setting their meeting in order to avoid conflicts?
- ☒ Does the selectboard confer with the moderator when it drafts the warning to ensure that the articles are properly worded? Has the board checked to be sure that it is properly voting every article – and that it is using Australian Ballot only for those articles required by law or by earlier vote of the town?
- ☒ Does the moderator take time at the beginning of the meeting and throughout the proceedings if necessary to explain to voters how the process works?
- ☒ Is the moderator familiar with the law authorizing reconsideration of articles before the assembly begins work on the next article? See 17 V.S.A. § 2661.
- ☒ Is a pre-town meeting held to educate voters on the issues that will arise at town meeting? The law only requires this for Australian Ballot votes, but many towns find it useful, even when town meeting is of the traditional character. Sometimes it unites a town behind its officers by giving voters a forum to ask for longer explanations of policies and choices made.

Town Report:

- ☒ Has the report been assembled with full consideration of the standards (nonbinding but still useful) recommended by the UVM Extension Service? Does it have a good index? Can things be found quickly, using their common names?
 - ☒ Does the report contain a superintendent's, supervisory union treasurer's and school district treasurer's report, and a summary of the public accountant's report (during the years when such an audit is done), as required by 16 V.S.A. § 563(10)? In a town where the school report is printed separately from the town report, only the former needs to contain these reports.
 - ☒ Is the report mailed or otherwise distributed to the voters at least 10 days prior to the annual meeting? Too often the town opts for no distribution at all, except to those who stop by the town clerk's office, a practice that doesn't satisfy the statutory standard. If the report isn't mailed or otherwise distributed on schedule, does the town publish newspaper notice of the town meeting at least five days before the meeting, as required by 17 V.S.A. § 2641(b)?
 - ☒ Has the town treasurer or trustees of public funds reported on the condition of cemetery trust funds in the report? See 20 V.S.A. § 5385. Have the auditors reviewed the accounts of all officers who handle money, including the zoning administrator, the health officer, the constable or police department, and petty cash accounts kept by other officers?
 - ☒ Although there are no legal standards, is the selectboard's proposed budget comprehensive? Does it include all expenditures and revenues? Is it readable? Do all the selectboard members understand it? Are the lessons of the debate over the budget from last year's meeting apparent from this year's effort?
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Tip of the Month

This month's tip comes from VMCTA President, Clyde Jenne:

"If your town has a website, make sure you keep all the important dates on it. Like dog license dates, election dates and any time your office may be closed."



To submit a tip, please email Clyde Jenne (VMCTA President) at hartlandvtclerk@vermontel.net or mail it to: Clyde Jenne, Town of Hartland, P.O. Box 349, Hartland, VT 05048



Addison

John Baker
Bruce Barnes
Larry Blacklock
Dave Briggs
Bradley Clark
Erwin Clark

Art Danyow II
Bernard Dubois
Millard Flint
Jane B. Grace
Phillip A. Grace
Howard Grant
Scott Grant
Beatrice Jochum
Chris Mulliss
Todd Reed
Tom Spencer
Joyce Vincent
Mark Torrey
Steve Torrey

Bristol

Mark Bouvier
Peter Bouvier
Gary Clodgo
Peter Coffey
Arman Compagna
Sharon Compagna
Carol Eldridge
Sheila Henderson
Ed Hilbert
Fred Jackman
Darwin Kimball
Robert Kimball
Roy Larose
Loren Lathrop
Richard Lathrop
Peter D. Ryan
George Smith
Edward Shepard
George Tighe
Hartland Wendel
Ken Weston
David Winborn

Cornwall

Charles Bearor
David Bearor
David Berno

Paul Berno
Vaughn Berno
Joan Bingham
Michael Bingham
Robert Brinkman
Francis Broughton
Rodney Cadoret
Junius Calitri
Lew Castle
Margaret Clark
Doug Fenn
Arlyn Foote
Sheila Foote
William Fuller
Leo Gorton ,Jr.
Stu Johnson
Maurice Laframboise
Kenneth Manchester
Cynthia Peet
Edward Peet
Leighton Riley
Lisa Roberts
James Ross
Charles Rowe
David Sears
Doris Severy
Judson Severy
Robert Williams

Ferrisburgh

Donald Bicknell
Dave Bowles
Tony Caruso
Carl Cole
Chuck Donnelly
Mike Donnelly
Earl Fischer
George Gardner
Chester Hawkins
Paul Hoffman
Bob Jenkins
George Marcotte
Paul Sisters
Dave Trueman
Bill Wager

Leicester

Frances Monroe
Carol Morrison
Robert G. Oliver

Addison County

Lincoln

Lawrence Masterson

Middlebury

Margaret Martin

New Haven

George W. Apgar
Earl Bessette
Paul Bolduc
Tim Bouton
Stephen Dupoise
James Ford
Dean Gilmore
Richard Higbee
John McKinley
Alan Meyer
Allen Noble
Charles W. Paine
John Palmer
Amos L. Roleau III
Kenneth Sawyer

Ripton

Freeman Allen
Laureen M. Cox

Salisbury

Barbara Andres
Robert Birchard
William Casavant
Ernest Coburn
Lionel Cloutier
Arthur Doty
Gerard Gagnon
Douglas Goodrich
Peter Langrock
Susan Mackey
Richard Naylor
Thomas Plumb
Foster Provencher
James Provencher
Doris Shedrick
Lois Sullivan

Starksboro

Dennis Casey
William Coon

Eric Cota
Norman Cota
Cheryl Estey
Fenwick Estey
Tom Estey
Charlene Phelps
Leslie Rublee
Charles Thibault
Roger Thibault

Vergennes

Marlene Bedard
Jim Breur
William Brown
Leslie Champine
Donald Clark
Peter M. Collette
Mike Daniels
Joan Devine
John Dugan
Edward Gebo
Melvin Hawley
Ralph Jackman
James Larrow
Carroll O'Connor
Michael Sullivan
Thomas Theiss

Weybridge

Claire Ayer
Wilfred Bilodeau
Arthur Bradley, Jr.
Jim D'Avignon, Sr.
Murial Harms
Gale Hurd
Peter James
Stanley James, Jr.
Joan Jordan
Glenna Piper
Millicent Rooney
Robert Warner

**We will publish winners
from other counties in
upcoming issues of
*Opinions!***

November 2005-January 2006 Calendar

2005

November 11 Veterans' Day. 1:371

November 24 Thanksgiving Day. 1:371

December 1 Last day to pay property taxes in towns that voted to collect interest on overdue taxes. 32:5136(a)

December 14 Last day for Listers to notify persons of omissions from inventory. 32:4086

December 25 Christmas Day. 1:371

December 27 (70 days before Town Meeting) First day to warn the first public hearing if a charter adoption, amendment or repeal is to be voted on at Town Meeting. 17:2641(a), 2645(a)

December 30 Last day for Listers to correct real or personal estate omission or obvious error in grand list, with approval of Selectboard. 32:4261

December 31 Town fiscal year ends, unless voted otherwise. 24:1683(c)

2006

January 1 New Year's Day. 1:371

January 3 Legislature reconvenes (*second year of biennium*).

January 6 (60 days before Town Meeting) Last day to warn the first public hearing if a charter adoption, amendment or repeal is to be voted at Town Meeting. 17:2641(a), 2645(a), (3)

January 15 Last day for Tax Collector to deliver unpaid real and personal property tax lists to Town Treasurer. 32:5162

January 15 Last day for Town Clerk to remit to State Treasurer an accounting of dog and wolf-hybrid licenses sold and remit the license fee surcharge for an animal and rabies control program. 20:3581(f)

January 16 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday. 1:371

January 25 State Withholding Tax Return is due (*actual date by which return must be postmarked is shown on the printed form*) if reporting less than \$2500 per quarter. More than \$2500 requires monthly report; more than \$9000 requires semi-weekly report. 32:5842

January 26 (Not less than 40 days before Town Meeting) Last day to file petitions signed by at least five percent of voters with Town Clerk for articles to be included in Town Meeting warnings. 17:2642(a)

January 26 (40 days before Town Meeting) The legislative body has its first opportunity to warn the meeting, post the warning and notice in two public places and in or near the Town Clerk's office. 17:2641(a), 2642

January 26 (40 days before Town Meeting) Last day for Board of Civil Authority to designate polling places and, if necessary, divide the checklist according to geographic boundaries. 17:2501

January 26 (10 days before first public hearing) Official copy of proposed charter amendments must be filed in Town Clerk's office if vote is to be taken on Town Meeting Day. 17:2645(a)(2)

January 30 (Sixth Monday before election) 5:00 p.m. deadline for filing with the Town Clerk nominating petitions for town offices to be voted on by Australian Ballot. 17:2681(a)

January 30 Last day for Town Clerk in municipality with fiscal year ending December 31 to publicly disclose fees kept as compensation for that fiscal year. 24:1179

January 31 Last day for Auditors to post 10 days' notice of their meeting to examine town accounts. 24:1681

January 31 (Within 24 hours of receipt) Town Clerk must return nominating petitions found not to conform, stating in writing the reasons why they cannot be accepted. 17:2681(e)

January 31 Last day to mail W-2 Withholding Forms to employees.

January 31 Last day to file Form 941 (*Quarterly Withholding Return*) with the IRS.

Quote of the Month

There are many wonderful things that will never be done if you don't do them.

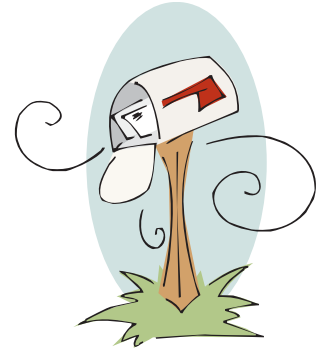


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