



The GAZETTE

The official newsletter produced by the Town of Starksboro

FEBRUARY 2018

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

TOWN OFFICE CLOSINGS:
Closed Monday, Feb 19th

TOWN MEETING NEWS p 1
TAX INFORMATION p 1

WORSHIP SERVICES p 2
TAI CHI CLASSES p 2

Thursdays at 9:30 am
BONEBUILDERS CLASSES p 2
Tues & Thurs at 8:30 am

SHARE ON, p 2
Each Sunday at 2:30, Baptist
Church

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TOWN MEETING NEWS: Town Meeting will be on March 3, 2018, Robinson School multipurpose room, 9:00 a.m. You have to be present to vote on the town budget. Voting by Australian Ballot is on Tuesday, March 6, 2018, 7-7 p.m., at the Robinson School multipurpose room. All of the school budgets will be voted by Australian Ballots this year. We will also be voting on town and school officers and the Hannaford Career Center budget on Tuesday.

Absentee Voting: A voter who expects to be an absent voter, or an authorized person in his/her behalf, may apply for absentee ballots no later than 5:00 pm on the closing of the Town Office on the day preceding the election (March 5, 2018). A voter may have ballots mailed to them, or can come in to the office to vote or pick up ballots. Call the town office with questions – 453-2639.

Town Reports: Remember that town reports will not automatically be mailed out to everyone, unless you have gotten your name on the mailing list in the past couple of years. You can still call the office to check if your name is on that list, or, reports will be available online, and at the following locations: Town Office, Robinson School, Jerusalem Store, and Starksboro Public Library.

4 Ways to Get Your Vermont Income Tax Forms:

- 1) Download fillable PDF forms from the web <http://tax.vermont.gov/tax-forms-and-publications>. *Free, unlimited downloads!*
- 2) Order forms online. <http://tax.vermont.gov/form-request>.
- 3) Order forms by email. tax.formsrequest@vermont.gov.
- 4) Order forms by phone – 802-828-2515 or (toll free) 855-297-5600.

For a faster refund, e-file your taxes! For information on free e-filing and tax assistance for qualified taxpayers, visit www.tax.vermont.gov.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (60 years and older) – Find out more at www.irs.gov. Search for “Free tax help”.

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program – For taxpayers with low and moderate incomes, giving special attention to those 50 years and older. Go to www.aarp.org for more information. Search for “Tax-Aide”.

Select Board News

The following is a summary of the most significant information from SB meetings. It is not a complete or official record of the meetings. For more information read official meeting minutes on the Town website. Submitted by Rebecca Elder, Selectboard Assistant.

Dec. 19, 2017 meeting

- **Road report:** Tom distributed a proposed budget for expenses and purchases. A new plow truck is needed; equipment rental expenses are up; salt costs have increased; current available funds can be used to acquire some tools to replace items Tom has provided; new one ton truck needed.
- **Listers:** Errors and Omissions – a list of 12 properties was presented; SB approved the list. Current Use values on some properties in town changed.
- **Board of Abatement:** The board met to discuss one item: Lot #16, Hillside Manor Mobile Home Park (Paul & April Parent property); Addison County Community Trust (ACCT) went through the abandonment process. Town stopped accruing taxes in 2015 when informed of the process. The board voted to accept the abatement on the amount owed.
- **Land swap/transfer with school district:** Jim Runcie sent a draft P&S to begin the conversation with the school board. The SB hopes to present information for Town Meeting.
- **ZA hiring:** Jeff Keeney and Dennis Casey reviewed next steps with the SB. Interviews to be conducted end of December/early January. Four applications were received.
- **Energy Committee:** Digger Faesy attended along with four other town residents to discuss the possible formation of an Energy committee. The group will come back to the SB with a proposed structure, mission and vision, and list of potential areas for work. The group advocated for an independent committee rather than an ad hoc group or sub-committee.
- **Animal Control Report:** Heather Ragsdale updated the SB on a few active cases. One issue has risen to a public safety concern and a certified warning to be issued.
- **Budget:** Additional information provided by Tom Estey and Celine Coon will be added to draft budget. Proposed cost of living increase to be included for employees. Current Use expenses increase. Another draft of budget to be reviewed for the 1/2/18 meeting.
- **Jerusalem Schoolhouse committee:** submitted draft language request for an article for town meeting to seek approval for funds for a survey and preliminary architectural work.
- **Selectboard Chair update:** Susan Jefferies is completing 12 years of service and is not running for another term. One 2-year term and one 3-year term are up for election in March.

January 2, 2018

- **Road report:** grader tires were ordered; new one-ton truck requested for road crew use.
- **Fire Dept:** new pumper will be needed in next couple years; new tanker chassis arrived.
- **Animal Control report:** notice of violation sent to animal owner after multiple complaints.
- **Land swap with school board:** to be added to town meeting agenda for consideration and discussion.
- **Jerusalem Schoolhouse:** continue to monitor heat system if winter use is desired. CO detector(s) needed.
- **Website:** a new calendar feature was added to the home page for easy access to meeting schedules and events; site has been reorganized for easier access to information. More upgrades are planned for 2018.
- The board discussed other methods of communicating with town residents including an electronic newsletter (free) and more integration with the website and social media.

- Budget development: the board continued to review budget adjustments for 2018-19 including projections for road expenses, equipment, and improvements. See minutes for more details.

January 16, 2018

- **Road report:** last storm produced a lot of ice, frozen culverts and some flooding; Brown Hill W is having some water flow issues; heat pump maintenance occurred at town garage; utility truck and pick up truck requests to be included in Articles at Town Meeting; two upcoming bike races were approved.
 - **Animal control report:** see minutes – two cases were discussed and ordinances reviewed.
 - **Town meeting planning:** Dan Dubenetsky discussed timing and procedures with the SB; this year's meeting is different due to the changing structure of the unified school district under Act 46; planning for discussion of land swap (town to retain land with solar trackers); Louis DuPont explained the school board and district representation will attend and be prepared for discussion with residents. Robinson Principal Edorah Frazer will give an update too.
 - **Palmer grievance:** case is proceeding through discovery with town represented by attorney Jim Carroll.
 - Personnel policy was reviewed and updated pertaining to new employee waiting period and clarification of the health insurance coverage for town employees.
 - **Budget review** continues. A special meeting will be held on Tuesday, 1/23/18 at 4:45 pm at the Town Office to finalize the budget for the town report publication.
 - **Zoning Administrator update:** The Selectboard offered the position Rebecca Elder with the Planning Commission's recommendation. She was appointed on 1/16/18.
 - **Food shelf:** a petition was circulated and a request for \$2000 will be presented at town meeting.
 - **Maintenance updates:** various repairs in the library and town office; town office painting scheduled for summer; lighting updates still needed at post office; generator maintenance and training for school use to be scheduled.
- **NEXT MEETING: February 6, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Office**

WORSHIP SERVICES

The FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF STARKSBORO:

www.Starksborobaptistchurch.org

The First Baptist Church of Starksboro, 2806 VT Route 116., P.O. Box 12, Pastor Larry Detweiler – 802-989-2679 (cell) or revdets@gmail.com. Church phone 453-5577, (pastor home) 802-434-6715.

Sunday Morning Schedule:

- 10:00 a.m. Chat, Chew and Renew adult small group bible study and fellowship
- 11:00 a.m. Worship weekly with communion on 1st Sunday of every month
- 2:30 p.m. Share On - New Community Project's food re-distribution

STARKSBORO SENIOR MEAL, served at 11:30 on the 4th Thursday of the month, January-October. Meal held in the Community Room of the Church, 2806 VT 116. Donations to defray costs are gladly accepted. Senior meal contact Brenda Boutin, 453-6354 & mtgazette@earthlink.net.

BONEBUILDERS EXERCISE CLASSES: Every Tuesday and Thursday at 8:30 am at the Jerusalem Schoolhouse in South Starksboro. This class is to help prevent osteoporosis. Questions? Call Susan at 453-5537.

TAI CHI CLASS: Every Thursday at 9:30 am at the Jerusalem Schoolhouse. This class is for those that already know Tai Chi for Arthritis 1 & 2. Questions? Call Vera at 453-3597.

"FOOD FOR ALL - SHARE ON..."

Greetings Starksboro friends and neighbors,

Please join New Community Project (NCP) each Sunday for our community food (re)-distribution program also known as Share On. The program is held at the Starksboro First Baptist Church – the doors open 2:30 PM.

Come "shop" for free fresh organic produce, dairy, meat, and bread. Trader Joe's and the gardens of NCP are our main contributors. The amount and variety of food items change weekly. Please join the many local families that benefit from this blessing. For more information contact Pete at 434-2333 or pantosketcham@newcommunityproject.org.

Notice of New Food Shelf Hours:

The Food Shelf is now open on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. The hours are 9:30 - 6:30.

The Starksboro Cooperative Preschool is now accepting applications for the 2018 - 2019 school year ***from Starksboro residents and current families only.***

SCP's mission is to provide a positive first school experience, and a high quality, affordable childcare option for all local children. We are a five-star program, licensed by the state of Vermont, and a prequalified pre-kindergarten program. Our goal is to meet both the preschool and full time childcare needs of all children aged 3-5 and their families. Morning preschool runs from 7:30 AM until 12:30 PM, with an afternoon program available every day of the week.

Please note that ALL CHILDREN who are at least 3 years old by Sept. 1, 2018 are eligible to receive ten free hours of preschool for 35 weeks during the 2018-19 school year, which translates to two mornings each week.

You are encouraged to come visit us (with or without your child), on any preschool day to see our program in action. You may also call or email for more information. Contact us as follows: email: starkscoop@gmail.com or phone: 802-453-4427

Starksboro Public Library
Monthly News for February 2018

Hours: Mon. 10-6, Thurs. 10-5, Sat. 9-2

Catherine Goldsmith, Librarian, 453-3732 - starksboropl@comcast.net

2nd Saturday Story Time at the library **February 10th at 10am**

Join us for a casual, fun storytime, geared for ages 0-5 with a craft. We will sing a little, read and visit. Meet other Starksboro families at the library and give your kid a library habit!

Internet Privacy Toolkit – smart appliances/passwords/Internet tracking **Sunday, February 11th 3pm**

Jessamyn West is a veteran librarian and technologist who speaks widely on Internet issues including the digital divide and privacy. Almost everybody loves being online, right? But what information do we want to share and how do we protect ourselves? Bring your questions and concerns to this very special opportunity.

Fiber Arts Saturday! **February 3rd at 10am**

Savor time with fellow knitters, weaver, and sewers. Coffee and tea on tap.

WINTER FILM SERIES “The Women “ (2008) **Friday, February 23rd, 7pm**

Funny all-star film with all women cast including Carrie Fisher, Jada Pinkett Smith, Bette Midler and Candice Bergen! This is the remake of the 1939 film we watched in January. See which version you prefer!

Landscape painting in Acrylics: **Saturday, February 17. 10 am-noon**

Cynthia Guild Kling leads these “make and take” art sessions using acrylic artist paints. Materials provided by the library. Suitable for ages 12 and up. No experience needed. Please register as space is limited.

Preschool Story Time: “A book is a special friend”

The Starksboro Preschool visits the library every week, alternately between Monday and Thursday and following the public school schedule. Join this happy group as we enjoy books together.

RSVP Bone Builders: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 at the library. Friendly group! All ages. Prevents and Reverses Osteoporosis • Improves Balance • Enhances Energy and Well-Being!

New Books in the Library:

Youth: *The Book of Dust: La Belle Sauvage* – Philip Pullman; *The Gladiators* – Tomas Tuma; *Asterix & Obelix’s Birthday Book* – R. Goscinny

Picture Books: *Rain* – Sam Usher; *Red* – Michael Hall; *A Possum in my Pantry*- Carol Talmage; *Hobbes goes home*-Tami & Bruce Zeman; *Snow* – Sam Usher.

Adults: *Points North* – Howard Frank Moshier; *Murder wears Mittens*-Sally Goldenbaum; *Enchantress of Numbers* -Jennifer Chiaverini ; *Innkeeper of Ivy Hill* –Julie Klassen ; *Miller’s Valley* - Anna Quindlen; *Story of Arthur Truluv* – Elizabeth Berg; *Rules of Magic* – Alice Hoffman.

FRIENDS OF JERUSALEM SCHOOLHOUSE: The Jerusalem Schoolhouse is sitting beautifully amidst the white snow of the season. If you happen to go by as snow is falling, take a moment to look at the building standing tall in the "snow globe" flurry...and if you happen to go by when the sun is setting, the glow on the big paned windows is stunning. That old building is a treasure in our town and we long to see it restored/renovated so many more community events will be held there. For the winter, the die hard bone builders group continues to meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 8:30am (all are welcome to join in...just stop by!) and those that love Tai Chi gather on Thursdays at 9:30am. If ever you want to use the schoolhouse for an event, please call Edie Sears at 453-3183 regarding availability. Keep in mind that while the building can be heated during the winter months, the water has been drained so there are no "facilities".

Another month to share stories from local folks as to why they moved to South Starksboro, why they stay and what they love most about this community. This month we have the pleasure of reading the story of Vera Ryersbach who lives on Route 17 with her husband, Peter. They have 3 grown children, all of whom grew up in our community. We are pleased to have her share some thoughts for us to enjoy. Thank you Vera!

If you would like to share YOUR story, please contact Nancy Orvis at 453-4573 or norvis1113@gmail.com ~~ we would be happy to include it in an upcoming issue of the gazette.

VERA RYERSBACH:

Peter and I moved to South Starksboro in 1975. We bought the house we still live in because it had an established asparagus patch and a lovely creek at the bottom of the property. We began to fix up the house and are still fixing it, but it's a keeper. At the time I worked in Burlington and Peter was either in Montpelier or the Burlington area so it was hard to meet people, however, Peter joined the Fire Dept. and was first to get to know local people. Once our oldest child was in school, I, too, got to know people in our town. All 3 of our children attended the local elementary school. Later, I worked at Robinson Elementary School for 22 years and appreciated the rare opportunity to teach and live in the same community. Now, after retirement, Peter works as one of the town auditors as well as health officer, thus, keeping in touch with people in our community.

Our oldest son belonged to the local 4-H and was introduced to the great outdoors. He made birdhouses, learned about finding your way in the woods and participated in community service projects. Meetings took place at the Jerusalem Schoolhouse and so we became connected with this last non-residential school building. After retiring I began attending Bone Builders and Tai Chi in the Schoolhouse where I connect with other local folks as we exercise.

We have made many great friends over the years in this community and I can only imagine leaving when one of us can no longer go up and down the stairs and need specialized care.

RABIES CLINIC: Sat, March 17th, from 9:00 – 11:00 am at the Starksboro Town Office - \$15 per animal - Cats and dogs welcome. Please bring a leash. Out of towners also welcome.



THE GAZETTE is published monthly and mailed to all Starksboro residents. Articles and advertisements must be submitted by the **15th of each month** to the Town Clerk. If the 15th falls on Fri, Sat, or Sun, than it is due the following Monday by **NOON**. **Anything not received by the 15th will not be included in the Gazette.**

COMMUNITY EMAIL GROUP: WWW.FRONTPORCHFORUM.COM

TOWN WEBSITE: www.starksborovt.org

TOWN OFFICE: 453-2639

Open Mon – Thu, 8:30 – 4:30

Town Clerk: Cheryl Estey starksboro@madriver.com, 453-2639

Treasurer: Celine Coon starksborotowntreasurer@gmavt.net

Zoning Administrator: Rebecca Elder starksborozoning@gmavt.net
(Hours - Mon & Wed 9-4; Thu 1:30 – 4:30) – 453-2768

Del. Tax Collector: Amy McCormick-Tues & Thurs @ 453-2639
starksborotaxes@gmail.com

Listers – 453-2778

SELECT BOARD

Meetings 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 5:30 at Town Office.

Please call at least one week in advance to get on the agenda.

Susan Jefferies – 453-3611

Peter Marsh – 453-3478

Tony Porter – 989-5096

Keegan Tierney – 777-9431

Koran Cousino – 453-4352

SCHOOL BOARD

Every other month at 5:30 pm at Mt. Abe

Louis DuPont – 453-5538

Nancy Cornell – 453-2681

Caleb Elder – 434-4805

Mt. Abe: Meetings 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 6:30 at Mt. Abe Library

Supervisory Board – Nancy Cornell, Louis Dupont, Caleb Elder

LIBRARY: 453-3732 or starksboropl@comcast.net

Open Mon 10-6; Thurs 10-5, Sat 9-2

Library Board Meetings 2nd Monday @4:30 pm at Library

REPRESENTATIVES

Fred Baser – 453-4391

David Sharpe – 453-2754 / dsharpe@leg.state.vt.us

NEW POST OFFICE HOURS:

Mon – Fri, 7:30 – 11:30; 12:30 – 2:30

Saturday – 7:30 – 11:00

Closed each day 11:30 – 12:30

ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER:

Heather Ragsdale – 453-6485

ROAD FOREMAN: Tom Estey – 453-2319

FIRE WARDENS: Please call ahead for burn permits.

Tom Estey-453-4511, 453-2319, or Tony Porter-989-5096

PLANNING COMMISSION:

Meetings 1st and 3rd Thursdays at the Town Office

Development Review Board meetings 2nd & 4th Thursdays

CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Matt Witten-434-3236 or

mwitten@gmavt.net or Jan McCleery-453-3755 or

mccleery@norwich.edu. Meetings: 4th Monday @ 7 pm at the Starksboro Public Library

HEALTH OFFICER: Peter Ryersbach – 453-3597

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR: Charlene Phelps

363-4276

RECYCLING: 1st & 3rd Saturdays from 8-11 at the new Town Garage-3904 Vt Route 116. Trash fees: \$5/bag. Recycling – by donation.

HUB TEEN CENTER & SKATEPARK:

www.bristolskatepark.com

Ryan Krushenick – 453-3678 / thehub@gmavt.net

STARSBORO VILLAGE WATER COOPERATIVE: 453-5200

Meetings: 3rd Wed of March, June, Sept and Dec at 7:30 pm at the Starksboro Public Library

SENATORS

Claire Ayer – 545-2142 / cayer@leg.state.vt.us

Chris Bray – 453-3444 / cbray@leg.state.vt.us



The Scoop

Produced by the School Board to help keep
Starksboro residents informed of news
relating to Robinson Elementary School

February 2017

Town Meeting Farewell

In This Issue:

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FY19 School District Budget
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With no money issues for the Robinson Elementary School Board to present to the voters at the Starksboro Town Meeting on March 3, the format for the school agenda that has been the norm for many years will be very different this year. The work of putting together a budget for all 6 schools and the superintendent's office in our unified district is now handled by the new Mt. Abraham Union School District (MAUSD). In this new format, the decision to accept or reject the single budget takes place in the voting booth instead of on the floor of Town Meeting.

For advocates and devotees of Town Meeting as a form of direct democracy, this is a tough loss. Up until this year, out of the 5 towns in our district, only Lincoln and Starksboro voted their school budgets from the floor of Town Meeting. Only in these two towns could the budget be amended up or down.

In an attempt to make the best use of our Town Meeting going forward, the Select Board has placed an article on the agenda to address school business. Town meeting attendees will have a chance to learn about school matters, concerning both our elementary school and our middle and high School, in a non-binding discussion. After discussions among our Moderator, Select Board and Town Clerk, we will have a time set aside at the close of town business, to hear from our Principal as well as board members. This format is new and will be a work in progress shaped by experience. The Robinson Elementary Board, soon to be sunsetted (June 30 2018), would like to continue the tradition of open inquiry and self-governance exemplified by Town Meeting. This is with the understanding that the MAUSD will be following the letter of the law by holding a separate, warned budget informational meeting on February 27 to educate the broader public on the budget and its impact on our schools.

On behalf of our Robinson Board, and of the many Robinson Elementary School Board members who have served over the years, we thank you for your trust. The new MAUSD Board, like any public school board, will need the active attention, trust and involvement of the citizens of the district in order to succeed.

School Board Members	
Chair	
Louis duPont	453-5538
Vice Chair	
Nancy Cornell	453-2681
Clerk	
Caleb Elder	434-4805

Robinson Principal	
Edorah Frazer	453-2949
Superintendent	
Patrick Reen	453-3657
Scoop Editor	
Evelyn Bushey	453-6943



FY'19 School District Budget

Edorah Frazer, Robinson School Principal

At this writing (mid January) the Mt. Abraham Unified District (MAUSD) Board is currently developing its first district-wide budget proposal. Combining the budgets of six schools and the superintendent's office into one comprehensive budget is a considerable challenge. A consolidated district budget is much more than an interplay of numbers. Each number represents a person, a program, a service or a material resource (from buildings to pencils) with which we educate our students. Sorting out the highest priorities, finding efficiencies and making significant reductions, all while planning ways to improve the quality of our work – this is our task. Superintendent Patrick Reen shared details of the changes that the draft proposed budget would represent at the community forum held at Holley Hall in Bristol on January 3rd. The complicated and troubled state fiscal environment, coupled with the district consolidation, have resulted in many days of complex discussion on the parts of the current ANESU administration and the MAUSD board. In preparing their initial draft of this new MAUSD budget proposal, the administrative team (superintendent, principals and additional central office administrators) has consulted several studies of staffing and funding models in Vermont (listed below). We have made thorough analyses of the current staffing, services, programs and needs of each of the schools. We've also been discussing which aspects of the schools should be standardized and which might best remain idiosyncratic to each school.

In October, the MAUSD Board directed Superintendent Reen to draft a budget that represented zero increase in spending per equalized pupil over the current year's budget. Due to contract obligations that include pay increases for most staff as well as unavoidable increases in other areas, meeting that budget goal required decreasing staff and other line items totaling \$1,177,814. Subsequently, the Board asked the Superintendent to draft another budget reflecting a 2.5% increase in spending per equalized pupil for comparison's sake. He presented this new budget to the Board on January 23rd, and the Board settled on a 1% increase in spending per equalized pupil requiring reductions from this year's budget of \$932,801.

In mid-December, 20-30 staff members in a range of roles were informed that their positions may be eliminated or reduced at the end of this year. The exact number of positions that will be eliminated is not yet known due to fluctuating numbers in the state funding formula. A "career change incentive" was extended to staff members, and a number of people across the district have submitted letters of resignation. All of this will result in some changes here at Robinson and in each of the MAUSD schools.

Vermont has seen a decrease in student enrollment at a rate of 1% a year since 1995. Below are the current and projected enrollment numbers for Starksboro.

Robinson Elementary School Enrollment 2017-2018
(as of January 1, 2018)

K	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	20	13	25	21	27	14

Anticipated Robinson Elementary School Enrollment 2018-2019
(as of January 1, 2018)

K	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	18	20	13	25	21	27

Robinson Elementary School Enrollment History & Projections
(as of January 1, 2018)

2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2010
156	155	140	138	140	132

While budget work has consumed much energy over the past month, staff, community members and administrators of our schools are nearing the finish of the development of our new Strategic Plan. We look forward to our growth and development as MAUSD.

Studies that provide guidance on staffing, spending and programming for Vermont Schools, used by the ANESU Administrative Team in developing a proposed 2018-2019 MAUSD budget:

- **Education Quality Standards** (Amended April, 2014) - A set of rules designed to ensure all students in VT public schools are afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality and enable them to achieve or exceed the standards approved by the State Board of Education
- **Using the Evidence-Based Method to Identify Adequate Spending Levels for Vermont Schools** (January, 2016) Report prepared for the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office by Picus Odden & Associates
- **Expanding and Strengthening Best-Practice Supports for Students Who Struggle** (November 2017) Report prepared for the Vermont Agency of Education by District Management Group