

Letter from the President

Dear Neighbors,

For the second year in a row, Truro faced a challenging winter in many respects. While the weather here (and throughout the northeast) was simply a slog to get through, many changes in the Town leadership also made it a hard season for the Town. These included the unexpected and untimely deaths of the Town Administrator, Rex Petersen and longtime Reference Librarian, Sharon Sullivan. The Town has begun but has not yet concluded the search for Rex's replacement at the time I write this letter. Charleen Greenhalgh has provided great leadership as Interim T.A., and will [happily, for her] return to her Assistant TA position when the new T.A. is selected.

In a "musical chairs" movement of building inspectors, Truro lost our near-decade-long Building Inspector, Tom Wingard, who has assumed the same position in Eastham. Russ Braun, the [former] Provincetown Building Inspector, succeeds Tom effective on June 2. Mr. Braun is a Truro resident and has been a long-time advocate for the development of the fragile and important Beach Point area. School Superintendent and principal, Brian Davis, has retired and Michael Radone has assumed the Superintendent's position. Davis' other responsibilities are now divided up among other staff, with related budget impact. The Town also anticipates numerous retirements in the near future, effecting both staffing and town financial planning going forward.

On the Board of Selectmen, Breon Dunigan concluded her term while first-time selectman Maureen Burgess was elected to fill the position. The Planning Board lost two long-term and experienced members - Karen Snow and John Pendleton - and gained three

new members: first-timer Mike Roderick (for a five year term) and a renewed second (one-year) term for Lisa Tobia. No one ran for the three-year term, which was won by write-in candidate Steve Sollog. We thank all those who have served and welcome those who have come on board!

Another major shock to the Town was the loss of the Town's 40+-year contract to run the Highland Links Golf Course. The National Park Service awarded a ten-year contract to Johnson Golf Management. Among other factors, Johnson offered more than twice the percentage of gross profits that Truro offered in its renewal bid.

At All Town Meeting on April 29 (and April 30), voters quickly and for the most part, easily passed a budget of \$16.73 million (compared to \$16.83 million and \$15.9 million for FY2014 and 2013, respectively), representing a 0.87% decrease over last year's budget. The apparent decrease is an artifact of the loss of the golf course contract, and is a "one-off" aberration. The cost of school operations increased this year, representing a more than 15% increase over two years. Voters also approved increases for the staffing of the Fire Department (to cover two additional shifts) and Police Department (to add two officers), restoring the officer count to twelve. Other departments' achieved an essentially flat budget. The long-term impact of school budget increases on the operating budgets of other departments is of concern, since either the true impact of school budget increases will have to be passed on additively over other department's normal increases, or they will result in reductions in other departments' operating expenses to keep tax rates down overall.

TNRTA ANNUAL MEETING

July 5, 2014 10AM

MEETING HOUSE

First Congregational Church

Town Hall Rd, Truro

Five budget articles adopted at ATM were subject to Town vote; all were approved at the elections on May 13. These are detailed within, but the total of extra-budget expenses represents an additional tax increase of \$148.73 for a property owner with a property value assessed at \$500,000. Actual tax rate increases resulting from the passage of the Omnibus Budget (i.e., not including the balloted items) may not be known until September, when the State is expected to approve assessed property values.

On a substantive level, Town voters approved an important set of articles related to zoning by-laws, the most significant of which was the replacement of the entire section on Site Plan Review (Section 70). This now wisely distinguishes site review processes for residential and commercial sites, making the process easier and less expensive for residential properties. Along with voter-approved changes to the definitions and use table in the zoning bylaws, these also advance the conversation on needed definitions of "commercial" and "residential" and we continue to encourage the Town to adopt clear definitions of these terms. We were disappointed that a contentious debate in March and April erupted over an important and needed article proposed by the Planning Board to define "heavy" and "light" industry, and define the extent to which these can be undertaken in Truro. Despite participation in developing the language of the proposed article, one

PB member later broke from the Committee to actively work behind the scenes against its inclusion in the Town Warrant. This effort succeeded, but at a great cost to the civility of Town discourse and to the detriment of Town residents. We hope the PB will propose this article for voter consideration in the future. As always, we will help in the public information process, aiming for passage next time.

The matter became even more pronounced almost immediately with the efforts to seek approval for the already-operating (for four years) but unapproved “heavy industry” sand/gravel/landscaping materials business at 1 Noons Hts. Road, and for the addition of a construction debris collection operation and a proposed

“ABC” (asphalt/brick/concrete) crushing and reconstitution facility. None of these activities were approved in the 2009 Site Review, which allowed only for the construction of a large shed to store cranes and other large construction equipment. After failing to abide by two cease and desist orders, facing challenges by abutters, difficult questions raised by the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals, and serious hurdles posed by the State and two towns (Provincetown and Truro), the application was withdrawn without prejudice on May 19. Simply put, had this been approved, it would have been worse than the Stop & Shop (proposed for the same area in 2000), for its adverse impact on water, air

and soil and its harmful economic, noise and “quality of life” effects on abutting and nearby residential and business properties.

So, whew! All in all, the late arrival of a very short Spring was much needed relief from a difficult passage through many losses, changes, and challenges in Truro this winter. It is why I remain grateful for the power of Truro’s beauty to restore us all. Have a wonderful summer! Join us at our Annual Meeting on July 5th. Please feel free to contact us anytime at tnrta@tnrta.org with your views, concerns, and questions and check our website occasionally for updates at www.tnrta.org.

Best Wishes,
Regan McCarthy, President

Town Meeting / Town Vote

Truro’s Annual Town Meeting was held on April 29, 2014. Due to a lack of a quorum for the vote on the last few articles, a second night of ATM was held on April 30. The highlights of Town Vote on the 35 articles proposed follow here:

The Omnibus Budget for FY 2015 : Voters passed the budget in the amount of \$16,726,393.14, representing a **0.874% decrease** over FY 2014 (closing at \$16,873, 951.85 last year). This modest decrease is an artificial effect of the availability (for the last time) of Golf Course revenues from FY 2014 without associated expenses of operating the Golf Course in FY 2015. This eliminated a need for an anticipated **\$240,000** override to balance the operating budget, but voters **approved this override anyway**. This will NOT be charged to the budget this year, but will serve as a base for FY 2016. This essentially flat operational budget masks significant increases in the school budget. Voters at ATM again flew through the budget and related articles this year. Only a few budget items merited any discussion: Questions were raised about a new customary article for the “OPEB Trust Fund” (to transfer **\$600,000 from free cash**) which requires the Town to set aside funds for pension obligations and the justification for the addition of two police officers and the addition of two shifts at the Fire/rescue Dept. There was extensive debate over the proposed use of Community Preservation Act funds to develop an improved walking trail at Snow’s Field. While this represented a minuscule portion of the overall budget (less than 6/10 of one percent), the debate lasted early 45 minutes, focused on the use of Truro’s open space and the availability of trails within the CCNS. Voters approved this article by only a slim margin. The total amount requested by the BoS, as amended to reflect the loss of the Golf Course contract, was approved.

Capital Items in Omnibus Budget: Voters approved five articles for capital expenses that were part of the omnibus budget and do not require approval at the ballot box:

Community Preservation Act funds (**\$474,361**, see below); **Approval to borrow** in anticipation of receiving State Highway Aid, a customary article (**as/if needed**); **transfer from the Stabilization Fund** to an **employee retirement account** first created last year to cover unused sick/vacation time of retiring employees (**\$50,000 as/if needed**); **transfer from the Capital Improvement Trust** to purchase an **air conditioner system** for the Truro Elementary School (**\$95,000**), while the purchase of a generator for the Library was indefinitely postponed; **completion of the construction at Old North Cemetery** of the pipe and granite fence (**\$10,000**).

Re-Allocation of Free Cash in Omnibus Budget:

Voters approved moving **\$1.6 MM** of existing funds in free cash to other categories within this year’s budget: **\$1MM** to stabilize the tax rate; and **\$600,000** to the new “OPEB [Open Post-Employment Benefits] Trust Fund”

Voters approved the creation of a stabilization fund for Cape Cod Regional Technical High School. No specific allocation was requested or required.

Historic and Community Preservation in Omnibus Budget: As noted above, voters approved another **\$474,361** for three projects: for design and development of an improved walking trail at **Snow’s Field (\$112,000)**;

completion of Phase III of the restoration of the **First Congregational Parish Historic Meetinghouse (\$300,000)**; a reservation for **affordable housing (\$50,361.18)**; and **\$12,000 for administrative costs** of the Community Preservation Committee.

Six Override Articles (not in Omnibus Budget) on the Ballot for May 13; **Five were voted in and one was N/A** Voters considered six extra-budget expense items at ATM and at the ballot, approving five and indefinitely postponing one. Voters approved by post-ATM ballot another **\$590,115** total override. This included three permanent increases are:

Q1: Adding two **police officers (\$136,590)**; **Q2:** two additional **Fire/Rescue shifts (\$88,525)**; **Q6:** increased **general operations (\$240,000)** which will not be used in FY 2015, as noted above. Three one-time expense articles were also on the ballot: **Q3: for acquisition of a** transfer station trailer (**\$75,000**); **Q4:** to refurbish a **tanker** for the Fire/Rescue Dept. (**\$50,000**) and a request for a mower for the Golf Course, which became moot with the loss of the golf course contract.

Voters also approved specific articles of interest, including:

Room Occupancy Tax: Voters approved the BoS seeking the State legislature to grant Truro the ability to apply a room rental tax (which motels/guest houses must now collect from renters) to visitors who rent homes and condos for 90 days or less. The current 9.75% tax is split between the State and the Town, with 4% going to Towns. This tax is applied to the visitor's costs and is pass through tax. The State Legislature has not taken this issue up in other towns, and it may be years before it considers Truro's request.

Personnel Bylaw Changes: Voters approved amendments to give Town Administration greater flexibility in setting salary grades for new staff and to apply longevity bonuses on a stated schedule commencing after 6 years of service. Voters approved combining the position of Shellfish Warden and Harbormaster, to make changes to the Library staffing plan, and to convert the Building Inspector/Commissioner positions from union to non-union positions.

General and Zoning By Laws: Voters approved several important articles, including a full revision of Section 70, on **Site Plan Review**, now differentiating site review processes for residential and commercial sites, making the process easier and less expensive for residential properties. **Voters approved** a revision to **Section 30.2 on the "Use Table"** to allow for *Working* and *Habitable Studios* (which were not previously defined) as accessory structures, and to add three new definitions: *Retail Business Service*, *Retail Sales*, and *Wholesale Trade*; a revision to **Section 2 and 11 of the Truro Sign Code**, to tighten terms and conditions for temporary signs, and reduce unnecessary proliferation of same; and to update **Section 30.5 on the Flood Plain District to adopt FEMA Flood Maps**. This article presented complexities since the maps themselves are under challenge and may be revised, but in order to preserve homeowners' ability to continue to obtain Flood Insurance for properties in this Flood Plain district, it was necessary to adopt these FEMA maps at this time. See below.

Charter Revisions: Voters approved several articles related to the Town Charter: to approve requiring notice of official acts and documents of the Selectmen be **posted on the Town website; to delete the term "Commissioner of Public Safety"** since it no longer exists; to **add a Budget Task Force** to the Charter; to **require an annual audit**, which is now done in any case; to create a **standing Charter Review Committee**, and delete any obsolete multi-member bodies; to delete the outdated "Transitional Provision" and to **change the date for the Finance Committee Public Hearing on the budget** from a fixed date to no less than 10 days before Annual Town Meeting.

Truro Scholarship Winners 2013

For the first time, **The Citizens Scholarship** has been awarded to three deserving students. The three recipients are **Anna Milliken** (who will attend Fairfield University in the fall), **Leslie Travers** (headed to Emmanuel College) and **Kirby Nichols** (going to University of Massachusetts, Amherst). All three are scholar/athletes and community volunteers from Truro. TNA/TEEA, gratefully acknowledge the ongoing contributions of TNRTA members. Thank You!

Town / Regional News

FEMA Flood Maps: Earlier this year, the State Congressional delegation had asked FEMA for a delay in implementing the new FEMA Flood Maps for Massachusetts, based upon questions raised by experts and regional organizations about use of simplistic technology and reliance upon flawed data based upon Pacific Coast conditions. U.S. Rep William Keating's office is leading the effort, and called on FEMA to use more sophisticated methods based upon actual data for the mid-Atlantic and New England regions. It also asked for newer and correct "water level" benchmarks to be applied throughout Massachusetts to avoid overestimation of flood events in the area. The matter is still under review. During this period, Towns along coastal MA adopted the current version of the new FEMA Maps to preserve property owner's ability to acquire flood insurance.

Truro Open Space/Recreation Plan Update: Thanks to all of you who responded to the Town's request to participate in a survey of the Open Space and recreational space use and needs in the Town. The Truro Open Space Committee is spearheading the update of the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan and has a target completion date of early June 2014. Successful updating of this plan will render Truro eligible for important state open space and recreation grant funding. We expect the committee's report in June and will keep you notified. Thanks for making your views known.

**Please Contribute Your Experience and Skills!
Join and Become an Active Member of TNRTA**

RENEW your membership today or become a NEW MEMBER. Send a completed membership form (enclosed below) with dues to TNRTA. Dues are \$35 per household annually. Contributions appreciated.

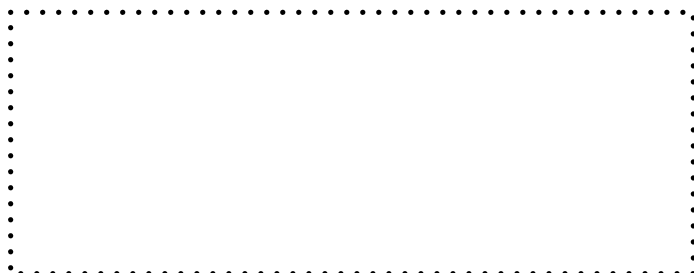


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NON-RESIDENT
TAXPAYERS'
ASSOCIATION

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Name(s)					
Permanent Address					
City		State		Zip Code	
E-mail			Phone		
Truro PO Box			Dues	TNRTA Dues Enclosed:	\$35
Truro Zip Code			*Contributions	To TNRTA: \$	
Truro phone				To TEEA Scholarship Fund: \$	
			Total Enclosed:\$		

*All contributions designated for the Truro Citizenship Scholarship Fund will go in full from TNRTA to TEEA



Spring/Summer 2014

NEWSLETTER

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