



Letter from the President

Dear Neighbors,

Where the winter of 2012 in Truro was mild, the winter of 2013 was wild: hardly any snow of consequence, but several wicked storms that changed the actual and imaginary shorelines of Truro. This winter saw the Pamet River run from bay to ocean for a short while, making the Outer Cape north of the Pamet an island, for a bit. The breach at Ballston Beach was awesome to behold and daunting after: Mother Nature wins. It was a sobering wake-up call regarding changes in climate, the power of wind and water, and how they have and will affect our small spit of land some fifty miles out into the ocean. Nonetheless, what seemed like a tear in the physical fabric of Truro in February was hardly visible by April - the Town had done a great job cleaning up and restoring the beaches, paths and commons we love to a recognizable state, albeit changed in some places. Yet Spring arrived gloriously, with some new "storm" birds in Town, vivid colors, and fresh, dry air. It is, as always, good to be here.

At the time of writing this, Town voters face elections on some key positions for office and some key ballot questions that determine the coming fiscal year budget. We know who is leaving office, but not who is entering office: Gary Palmer, longtime member and former chairman of the BoS (and a town expert on water and hydrology) has decided not to run for office again. Bill Golden, a member of the BoS who also served many years as Planning Board Member, sadly, made the same decision. We are grateful for their long and generous service. The Planning Board will likely see changes as well. Though no seats are contested at this point, we will notify folks of the outcome of the elections once they are known to

us. In the meanwhile, thanks and congratulations to all!

On May 2 at All Town Meeting, voters quickly and easily passed a budget of \$16.38 million (compared to \$15.9 million for FY 2013), representing a 2.64% increase over last year's budget. As in FY 2013, the school budget increased substantially and new proposals for the staffing of the Fire Department represent a substantial but needed increase in departmental expenses. Other departments' achieved an essentially flat budget. Debt service had decreased for the Town, dropping over \$180,000 in the past two years. This year a number of substantial, one-time expenses were "articled" for vote at the All Town Meeting (ATM). Six require approval on May 14 at the ballot box, others were approved on May 2. These are detailed within, but the total represents an additional \$887,809 in projected expenses for FY 2014. We expect voters will pass these at the ballot box. Actual tax rate increases may not be known until September, when State approvals of assessed property values are expected to be complete.

The new leadership who came to Town offices in FY 2013 are now seasoned hands: Rex Petersen, (Town Administrator), Belinda Eyestone (Assessor), Tricia Ford (Library) and Chief Kyle Takakjian are well settled in, joining a really capable staff already in place. The Transfer Station has some new faces this year (and they are pretty serious about stickers, fyi).

Major issues facing the Town in the coming months include the continuing re-organization of the Fire Department, the Town's evolving waste water management

TNRTA ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING
July 6, 2013 10AM
MEETING HOUSE
First Congregational Church
Town Hall Rd, Truro

initiatives, coastal dune management and erosion mitigation, and the need to develop new definitions within the Town's Zoning Bylaws to address the issue raised by recent court decisions. These led TNRTA to urge the Town to propose new definitions for "alteration" and "road" and the Planning Board worked hard to develop workable definitions of these terms. Voters approved new definitions for "alteration" and for clearances needed for safety vehicles on Town ways over 50 feet in length, (including driveways fyi).

Voters rejected proposed new definitions for "street" and "street adequacy," in part due to the complexity of the "street" definitions and to lack of preparation of the community to understand its meaning and impact. But the definition was, in our view, a good basis to continue the process and to begin to educate property owners on the importance and necessity of such a definition. We need to continue this work, as these also affect all alterations, new construction and septic requirements in Town as well. We hope the Town will define "commercial" to better distinguish this from "residential." As always, we will help in the public information process, aiming for passage next time.

Please feel free to contact us anytime at tnrta@tnrta.org with your views, concerns, and questions and to check our website occasionally for updates at www.tnrta.org.

Best Wishes,
Regan McCarthy, President

The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.

Ralph W. Sockman, top preacher on *NBC Radio Pulpit* (1928-64)

Town Meeting / Town Vote

Truro's Annual Town Meeting, held on May 2nd, presented 34 articles for vote. Highlights follow here:

The Budget for FY 2014: Voters passed the budget in the amount of \$16,384,368.85, representing a **2.64% increase** over FY 2013 (approved at \$15,915,854 last year). This modest overall increase remains an essentially flat operational budget, but substantial capital expenses were "articled" and approved in addition, adding \$887,808.50 in one-time expenses. Voters again flew through the budget and related articles this year and the Omnibus Budget passed without contention, although one voter remarked that in the past 10 years, the Town budget has increased by 60% - a figure he proposed was "not matched" by taxpayers' income increases. Only a few budget items merited any discussion: Questions were raised about the use of Community Preservation Act funds for a professional survey of "Mid-Century Modern Houses" in Truro [*indefinitely postponed*]; whether it was appropriate to purchase an SUV for the Fire Chief in light of pending structural re-organization of the Dept. [*passed*]; whether the price was reasonable for fencing the Old North Cemetery [*passed*]; seeking clarification on the allocation of the difference between projected and actual fees and revenues in any given year [*no action needed*]; about the sufficiency of the re-allocated funds to correct "grounding" problems at the Safety Facility cell tower, which has caused extensive lightning-related damage on multiple occasions to the Facility (and to neighbors' properties) - [*passed*]; and about the timing of adding a health/conservation agent to the staff roster [*indefinitely postponed*]. The total amount requested by the BoS in the published Town warrant was approved.

Capital Projects: Six capital expense articles are on the ballot for May 14; Four passed requiring no additional vote - Voters passed and will have to confirm or deny by vote on May 14th ballot six articles presented at ATM, having approved five and postponed one. The include: Increased hours for the **Council on Aging staff (\$12,194)**; an enhanced **staffing plan for the Fire Department (\$141,367**, see below); acquisition of **major equipment** - a transfer station trailer (**\$75,000**); an unmarked police cruiser (**\$28,000**); and an SUV for the Fire Department (**\$42,000**). Voters have on the ballot the question of adding a Health Agent (\$14,538), a matter that the voters postponed at ATM. If this passes on the ballot, it could trigger a special Town Meeting. Four articles approved capital expenses that do not require approval at the ballot box: *Community Preservation Act* funds (**\$243,267**, see below); **Approval to borrow** in anticipation of receiving State Highway Aid, a customary article (**\$256,000, used 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**); and completion of the construction of the pipe and granite fence at Old North Cemetery (**\$20,000**). These total **\$887,808.50**, as noted above, including overrides.

Voters APPROVED specific articles of interest, including:

Fire Dept. SUV and Staffing Plan: Last year, voters approved an historic change in the structure and oversight of the Truro Fire Department to authorize **the Selectmen** (rather than the Board of Fire Engineers) to hire and oversee the Fire Chief. It further approved to eliminate the Board of Fire Engineers, a change that can only be put into effect this year on the ballot. Consequently, the voters anticipated this vote and approved a staff plan that would have two Fire/EMS staff full time 24/7 in season and two full time for two shifts per day off-season. This increases staff by 1 person for each shift worked. Voters also approved the purchase of an SUV for the Department, as it is responsible for beach rescues and has no four-wheel drive vehicles. The larger question remains about the structure and size of the Fire Department assuming the new organization in in place post-ballot.

Voters approved amendments to the Personnel Bylaw in an effort to bring them into conformity with the Fair Labor Standards Act. This created an alternative work period for police and safety personnel; simplified overtime regulations; applied longevity rules to union and non-union personnel; and clarified the basis upon which an employee tasked with work in a higher staff classification gets paid.

Land Use/General and Zoning By Laws: Voters approved two articles, partially approved another & rejected one article related to land use. The latter - Article 32 - was the only seriously debated article at ATM. **Voters approved** a revision to the "**Public Safety Clearing Guidelines**" which as approved, stipulate that all traveled roadways (including driveways) of 50 feet or more in length must be at least 8 feet wide with minimum clearance free of vegetation no less than 14 feet wide; have height clearance of 14 feet; and must conform by May 1, 2014. Voters also approved a Zoning Bylaw change to the definition of "**Alteration**" to cover and construction or reconstruction of the exterior of an existing building, any relocation of an existing building or any combination of these. The Planning Board also recommended **removal of seven "antiquated" terms**, two of which were not approved by voters ("Barn" and "Established Road" will remain in definitions) and five of which voters approved for removal: "Bathroom Facility", "Cooperative", "Manufactured Home", "Manufactured Home Park or Subdivision" and "Shed." Voters **rejected** the Planning Board's recommendation to redefine "**Street**" and "**Street Adequacy.**"

Re-Allocation of Free Cash: Voters approved **moving \$412,582** of existing funds to other categories within this year's budget to cover these costs: **\$235,000** for the **grounding mechanisms to protect the Safety Facility from lightning damage resulting from the cell tower** on its property. The Safety Facility has been struck by lightning 7 times in recent years, causing extensive damage and exposing

staff to harm; abutters have also been struck by referred lighting on several of these same occasions. This work will cover the design, engineering and construction of exteriors/interior grounding as well as a stand-alone generator (unconnected to the cell tower) for the Safety Facility; **\$76,000** to fund Phase II of the **Comprehensive Water Resources Study**, including development of sentry and monitoring wells, evaluations and recommendations on nitrogen level management, and conceptual design for Rt. 6 drainage; **\$65,000 for police overtime**; **\$30,000** to study and propose **re-classification of all employees** except public safety staff, to be done in collaboration with Provincetown; **\$60,000** for a study to propose the organization of the Fire Dept.; **\$22,582** for a variety of small projects or costs (e.g., excess elections costs).

Historic and Community Preservation: Voters approved another **\$263,247** for three projects: for restoration of historically significant maps at **Cobb Library (\$26,045)**; completion of Phase II of the restoration of the **First Congregational Parish Historic Meetinghouse (\$50,202)**; purchase of a **buildable lot for affordable housing (\$180,000)**; and **\$7000** for **administrative costs** of the Community Preservation Committee.

Petitioned Articles: Voters passed two such articles, the first calling on all **State pension funds to divest of fossil-fuel related investments and to adopt energy-efficiency and conservation practices within Truro**; and the second calling the Governor to require the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission to **shut down Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station for the safety of Cape and Islands residents**.

More Town News

Regional Wastewater Management Plan - This past year has seen a significant shift in the debate on water resource management. An important summit of 32 Cape environmental organizations ratified a statement on this issue in the Fall, 2012 (posted on the TNRTA website) and a follow-on conference brought together engineers, activists, and regional planners to tackle the issue of nitrogen loading and other challenges to Cape water. Truro has been especially active and progressive on this matter, anticipating both regional action on sewer systems - which is not appropriate for Truro - and continuing progress in developing innovative and sustainable water treatment processes. **At TNRTA's Annual Meeting this July 6, the chair of Truro's Water Resources Oversight Committee will make a presentation on this Town's integrated plan.** We urge you to join us.

Two Steps Forward/One Step Back on Homeowner's Insurance - While we successfully gained passage of legislation requiring insurers to use "actuals" for wind incidents on the Cape, and defeated last year's proposed 7.2 rate increase for the FAIR plan, nonetheless, both the FAIR Plan and private insurers reportedly seek higher rates this year in "Territory 37" (i.e. the Cape). In April, the FAIR Plan sought a 6.7 % increase statewide but a whopping 9.9% increase for the Cape. Private insurers have also sought increases. TNRTA has opposed both. We urge you to follow the site at www.homeownersinsurancereform.org and to register your concerns on the matter directly to the MA Attorney General and Commissioner of Insurance.

Bike Paths Survey - Truro residents responded actively to the request to complete a "Bike Path Master Plan Survey" conducted by the Cape Cod Commission last summer regarding bike paths in P'town, Truro and Wellfleet. Full results of the 2013 report can be found on the TNRTA website. Responses showed a keen interest in cycling for recreation and for in-town transportation, a need for adequate "share the road" opportunities, and identification of off-road paths for permissible cycling. This is part of a larger master plan to develop Cape-wide bike trails, including expansion of trails within the CCNS. The location of such trails within Truro has not yet been determined. Thanks to all who responded!

Safety Access/House Number Audit This Year - The Truro PD will conduct an audit of "house numbers" as posted on our properties. Safety vehicles should be able to quickly locate our homes in emergencies. This summer, please take a look at your house numbers to make sure they are plainly visible from every vehicular entry point to your property, and can be seen above a snow line - assume 2 feet above ground - off season.

Truro MEETINGHOUSE - At ATM this year and last, voters approved funds for the restoration of Truro's historic Meetinghouse at the First Congregational Church next to Town Hall. This important building served as a true gathering place for the citizenry, and for this reason, we are proud to announce that TNRTA will hold its Annual Meeting 2013 at this newly restored site. Come see this simple tribute to the voice of the people and enjoy it as a testament to the past and the future of Truro. We thank the Friends of the Meetinghouse for making this opportunity available to TNRTA.

Truro Scholarship Winner 2013

TNRTA members again contributed generously to the TEEA Scholarship. The 2013 winner, **Ryan Golding**, is an honors student at Cape Cod Regional Technical HS. Ryan's interests and talents mix the academic and the active: he learned to fly planes before he started at CCRTHS. Using the same sharp focus, eagerness to learn, mastery of complex skills and material, and ability to plan and anticipate, Ryan has been a highly successful participant in the State Trooper Training Program run by the MA State Police Academy. He has already decided that his life will be dedicated to community service in law enforcement, and he plans to attend Westfield State College to major in criminology. He has been active in community service already, volunteering at school & church events, the school recycling program and elderly homebound services. We are pleased to recognize his discipline, enthusiasm, intelligence, and generosity to the community. Thank You!

**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.

 TRURO NON-RESIDENT TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION P.O. Box 324 • Truro, MA • 02666 www.tnrta.org • info@tnrta.org	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 2013
NEWSLETTER
 TNRTA

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