

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

The Town of Newton accomplished many important tasks during what has been defined as a very complicated economy. It is the duty of the Board of Selectmen, as per RSA 41:8, “to manage the prudent affairs of the town”. The Board will assist departments in establishing policies and procedures, set the long term goals and direction for the provision of municipal services, review and authorize budgetary expenditures and other appropriations deemed necessary for the town and finally follow the Master Plan. The Board of Selectmen has adopted the following mission statement: “The Town of Newton is committed to finding ways to improve the quality of life of its residents, will constantly look for ways to develop smart growth policies and protect our natural resources. We will use four general principles for good planning, which include, but are not limited to prosperity, sustainability, mobility and livability. We will continue to provide services to our residents that will enhance the safety and general well-being of the community.”

Members of the Board of Selectmen are as follows: Ray Thayer, Larry Foote and Trisha McCarthy. We have had a very busy year. Our work has been demanding, controversial, and yet it was still enjoyable. We didn’t always agree, but we always acted in the best interest of the residents of Newton. We had 58 Selectmen’s Meetings, 5 Hearings, 6 Site Walks, 4 FEMA meetings, 2 Safety Committee Meetings, 3 Safe Route to Schools Committee Meetings, 4 Regional Selectmen Meetings, multiple meetings with town counsel, one meeting with the Department of Revenue Administration, two meetings with Health and Safety Council of Strafford County, 4 meetings at the Selectmen’s Institute and participated in over 37 meetings with other boards, committees and various social gatherings including a celebration to honor three of our own Newton Eagle Scouts. In addition to this we worked at the town’s first Hazardous Waste Day at the Transfer Station. We participated in the Memorial Day Parade and enjoyed the Annual Wine and Cheese Gathering for the Historical Society, and ended the year at the first Holiday Tree Lighting at the Primary School on South Main St. We had multiple weather related Town-wide Emergencies where we participated in well being checks and assisted the Emergency Management Department and the Emergency Operating Staff.

We spent a great deal of the year working with Department Supervisors on Policies, Job Descriptions and Procedures. This is an important area of Risk Management for a municipality. One of the policies the Board of Selectmen adopted this year was on “Social Media”. This is a great tool to get the word out, but our quandary seems to be when statements are posted that may not necessarily have the correct facts. This misinformation may damage the town. When this happens it creates a more difficult job for our Town Hall Employees, Department Heads and Selectmen in finding the source of the incorrect information, and then educating residents with accurate information. This can become a burden to our employees and adds stress to their job. Our employees are already understaffed and this only makes their job more difficult. We live in a world where social media seems to be the way to communicate, and we embrace that concept when it is used correctly. That being said, we would encourage your participation at meetings, so you will be educated on issues and decisions. We can only explain it to you, if we know your questions. New ideas may lead to new territory, and that’s a good thing. We promote positive thinking rather than negative. It’s okay to disagree, because often time’s differences of opinion can lead to creative solutions. We try to be positive, and when we need to say “**NO**”, we will be polite and respectful. We encourage you to share your ideas and hope you will sign up to be on a

board or committee. Remember that your attitude can be more important than your talent, so please join us on a committee. If you don't understand something, ask for clarification. We believe a good leader knows how to be a team player, and when someone is having a bad day, help them out. We remind our employees to do the right thing for the right reason.

In addition to participation in meetings, it is the Board of Selectmen's responsibility to stay informed on regulations and legislation that may affect our town. As you know New Hampshire is not a "Home Rule State", so paying attention to legislation is extremely important. A quick definition of Home Rule is as follows: "Home Rule means New Hampshire's cities and towns could assume all functions not previously allocated to the State. Currently, local voters only have authority granted them by the Legislature". This dictates how we operate as a Town. We are privileged to have a dedicated group of employees', volunteers and societies that bring a level of professionalism to our Town and keep us abreast of what is happening at the legislative level.

In an effort to preserve our rural character we will continue to search for feasible ways to develop our infrastructure and quality of life for our residents. In order to do this, we need your help. Please come to the polls and vote. We have very important warrant articles that need your "YES" vote to keep Newton a better place to live. You will be pleased to know that our 2012 Operating Budget is \$2,932,375 only \$57,620 more than the 2012 Default Budget. In an economy where everything is going up, our Department Heads sharpened their pencils to develop a budget without cutting services. We are asking you to approve this operating budget by voting "**YES**" on **Article #7**. .

See you on March 13<sup>th</sup> 2012 at the Newton Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,  
Raymond Thayer, Lawrence Foote and Trisha McCarthy  
Board of Selectmen