

THE PELHAM SLATE



www.townofpelham.org

WINTER EDITION 2021, PAGE 1

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REMINDER FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

**Open Air Burning
Season
January 15th-
May 1st**

For more
information
call
(413) 253-3311
or visit
pelhamfd.com



FROM THE SELECT BOARD OFFICE

Town Meetings

We safely held our second Town Meeting during the COVID pandemic on Oct 24, 2020. It was attended by over 100 residents, which was better attendance than at most Fall Town Meetings. We were gratified that so many voters participated in this important exercise of democracy in action.

The planning and logistics for executing both the Annual Town Meeting in June and Fall Town Meeting in October required special considerations and effort by many people. We want to especially thank our former Town Clerk, Kathy Martell, for her work related to the Annual Town Meeting and our current Town Clerk, Sandra Burgess, for her work on the Fall Town Meeting. But it required many people working together to make both of these meetings safe and productive. Thank you to Highway Superintendent Rick Adamcek and his staff, Police Chief Gary Thomann and his officers, Fire Chief Ray Murphy and his firefighters, Town Moderator Dan Robb, and Select Board Administrative Assistant Susannah Carey. This was truly a team effort. And we are happy to report that all expenses related holding these meetings outdoors under a tent were reimbursed to the town with Cares Act funds.

A Safer Town Office/Rhodes Building

As we looked ahead to reopening the Rhodes Building we learned that adequate ventilation was important for making the building safe for both staff and the public. In fact, four to eight air changes per hour are recommended. One solution that would achieve this rate of air change is an energy recovery ventilator (ERV) system. We therefore decided to install an ERV system in the Rhodes Building knowing that the approximately \$16,000 cost will be fully reimbursed to the Town with Cares Act funds. The system is now fully operational.

Computers

Smith College regularly replaces their computers and offers the older units to qualified non-profits and municipalities. We surveyed town departments and were able to meet some of their needs by obtaining three PCs and two laptops. Special thanks to Select Board member David Shanabrook for making this happen. And of course, thank you Smith College.

Old Town Hall Refreshed

Next time you drive by the Old Town Hall at 376 Amherst Rd you may notice a freshness about the building. At the Annual Town Meeting in June, voters approved funds from the Community Preservation Historic Fund for restoration of the Old Town Hall, circa 1743. Exterior painting was completed in November by Northeast Painting Associates, Inc. of Northampton, MA.

Wishing you a safe and healthy New Year.

Bob Agoglia, Chair, Tara Loomis, Vice-Chair, David Shanabrook, Clerk

BOARD OF HEALTH

The Town of Pelham is planning to participate in the State sponsored PFAS private well testing program this spring. PFAS are a group of manmade compounds, sometimes called forever chemicals, used in manufacturing products such as Teflon coated pans. PFAS were also used in firefighting foam.

UMASS, in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection, will be performing analysis on well samples collected by residents. The initial program will sample 40 wells and there is no cost to the Town or participants. There are no obvious sources of PFAS in Town, so hopefully none will be found. The Board of Health is coordinating the program for the Town. We would like to sample wells throughout Town and are interested in sampling wells near heavily used roads and any past industrial use. If you are interested please contact the Select Board

Administrative Assistant, (413) 253-7129 or email townofpelham@comcast.net. Please include your name, address, phone number or email.

The Board of Health is reminding everyone to be safe during the upcoming winter months. We have had a number of Coronavirus cases in November and December after none reported since early Spring. Please wear a mask, wash your hands, and avoid socializing with groups. Hopefully by Summer 2021 everything will be back to normal, so please be careful.

COUNCIL ON AGING NEWS

A new Senior Survey will arrive in your mailbox in January. Please complete and return it so we can tailor activities to your interests. If you have internet access, check the Town website, www.townofpelham.org, for COA offerings and other news. We are working with Amherst Neighbors to provide additional services to Pelham seniors. We are all looking forward to a return to in-person gatherings once the pandemic ends. We miss you. Stay safe.

Members: Grace Dane, Kathy Martell, Tracy Osbahr, Isabel Ryavec, Nancy Rose Weeber

Greetings from Amherst Neighbors

Our mission is to build neighbor to neighbor connections in Pelham and Amherst, provide access to services and information, and empower older adults to maintain socially engaged lives while living at home. Linda Spink (North Valley Rd) and Sandy Roth (Butterhill Rd) serve on the Amherst Neighbors Board

of Directors, and of the 18 active members from Pelham, Tracy Osbahr and Nancy Rose Weeber, also serve on the Pelham Council on Aging. We will continue to work closely with the PCOA to more actively serve Pelham seniors, engaging with and expanding support to older adults in our community.

Membership in Amherst Neighbors is free and provides access to our services, educational programs, interest groups, and our list of member-recommended Professional Service Providers. State guidelines restrict in-person volunteer services at this time, but we anticipate offering some non-contact services in the new year. Amherst and Pelham citizens, 55+, are eligible. We offer a rich array of virtual programs on topics ranging from health, financial planning, to issues related to the civil rights movement. For info:

www.amherstneighbors.org or email: amherstneighbors@gmail.com / call (413) 345-2555



Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP) is a **state-funded lending program** that provides loans to homeowners and small landlords to fund necessary changes to keep disabled or elderly family members in their own homes and communities.

Possible Modifications:

- Bathroom & kitchen modifications
- Ramps
- Stair-lifts, and/or platform lifts
- Accessory dwelling units

Bridgit Johnson
Community Development Planner



Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
60 Congress Street – Floor 1
Springfield, MA 01104
413 • 372 • 9515
bjohnson@pvpc.org
www.pvpc.org

UPDATES FROM THE ENERGY COMMITTEE

After more than three years of studies, grant writing and Town Meetings, the Town of Pelham is moving ahead to replace the existing HVAC system in the Community Building with a highly efficient air-source heat-pump. The Community Building is the single largest energy consuming municipal building in town. The goals of this project have been to save money, energy, and pollution for the Town while minimizing the Town's investment costs by securing grant funding.



This new variable refrigerant flow (VRF) system is an all-electric heat pump system that will be able to both heat and cool the building. The VRF system is designed to provide heat down to temperatures of -25 F. Nevertheless, we will be keeping existing oil heating system as a back-up to both save on demolition costs and to ensure that there will be no interruption of heat in the winter. **The new system will cut building energy costs by 20%, carbon pollution by 40% and energy consumption by 50%.**

The project has officially begun! The contractors are ordering equipment, finalizing their construction schedules, and the official pre-construction meeting with all interested parties occurred on December 14th. Participants included Pelham town officials, representatives of the Library, Fire and Police departments, and engineers and contractors involved in the design and installation.

Pictured above right are participants lining up for the pre-construction meeting. From left to right: Michael Bianchini, R.W. Hall Consulting Engineers, Wes Daignault from Adams Plumbing & Heating, Inc., General Contractor, George Kicza, Town's Clerk of the Works, and Richard Adamcek, Pelham's DPW Superintendent.

Looking ahead, because the VRF is an electric system, it will now be possible to zero-out the carbon footprint of the Community Building, once solar can be installed at the site. If you know anyone interested in grant-writing or fundraising for a solar canopy to power the School, Library, Community Building, or if you think you might be interested serving on the Energy Committee, please reach out to us!

ANTI-RACISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The mission of the newly established Anti-Racism Advisory Committee is to examine the Town of Pelham's policies and bylaws through an anti-racist lens and provide feedback that both counters systemic racism and advocates for equity within our community. **Focus will be on the following goals:**

- ◆ *To advise the Pelham Select Board and other Town entities on ways to counteract or eradicate racist policies and informal practices*
- ◆ *To recommend actionable changes to make our community equitable for all*
- ◆ *To develop and promote the teaching of the Town's history with an antiracist perspective*
- ◆ *To create awareness of systemic racism and injustices within our town*

In naming and seeking to dismantle the institutional racism in our town, we must do more than strive to not be racist; we must be actively anti racist and promote antiracist policies as we seek to end injustices in Pelham and in our society. **Committee members have created working groups in the general topics;** Public Safety, Policy and Governance, Outreach, History, Housing and Education. We welcome Pelham residents to participate in working group meetings.



Members: Joseph Davis, Jessica Jean-Louis, Jake Klar, Charlie Lynch, Matteo Ramos-Mucci, Roy Regozin, Karen Willard-Ribeiro, Daniel Robb, Pat Schumm, and Anne Stoddard.

HOUSING COMMITTEE NEWS



At Fall Town Meeting a large majority of Pelham residents voted to support a non-binding resolution in support of affordable housing by committing Community Preservation Committee funds toward construction of Amethyst Brook Apartments.

The developer of Amethyst Brook Apartment, Home City Development Inc., is in the process of deeding over to Habitat for Humanity property that will give Habitat enough frontage on 8 Amherst Road to build two affordable houses. While the deed is being

sorted out, Habitat has marked out the footprints for the two three-bedroom homes, one single-level, one two-story.

The Pelham Tree Warden, David Hawkins, and the Planning Board have agreed with Habitat on removal of several street-side trees that either are dead or would obstruct the Habitat home driveways. Both Habitat and Home City Development are working with Kestrel Trust to assure that the land trail along the stream down the hill behind the buildings will be protected and preserved.

The pandemic inevitably has slowed the steps necessary before Amethyst Brook Apartments can be funded and construction can start. The immediate next steps required are Conservation Commission approval of the site plan that Berkshire Design is developing and approval by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. These approvals must precede a review by our Zoning Board of Appeals of the developer's request to waive or modify certain zoning regulations, as per the State's affordable housing law, Chapter 40B.

Members: Tilman Lukas, Chair, Barbara Cooper, Ruth Elcan, Gail Kenny, Jim Lumley, Amy Spalding-Fecher

GREETINGS FROM THE PELHAM LIBRARY

We're continuing to adapt and roll with it, finding new and creative ways to serve you. After 6 weeks of in-person visits by appointment we're back to curbside and digital service only because of rising COVID numbers in the area, but we'll be reassessing in mid-January.

We encourage you to sign up for **Wowbrary** at <https://www.wowbrary.org/signup.aspx>. It'll send you a weekly newsletter with all of our newest arrivals so you can request them. We're happy with vague requests, too! Looking for 5 mysteries featuring knitters? Just ask--we'll do our best to accommodate.

Interlibrary loan is back so we're able to get almost anything. Check the online catalog for materials availability at pelham.masscat.org and call (413) 253-0657 or email (library.pelham@gmail.com) to make your request. We'll contact you to arrange a pick-up time.

Pickup hours are currently a reduced to allow time for set-up and take-down.

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 3:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 1:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Friday: 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. &

Saturday: 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Notes: Please wear a mask & practice social distancing

when picking up your materials. Please return items in the drop box. All returns will be quarantined before being checked in.

Don't forget our wonderful online services, too. We have great programming, much of it in collaboration with other area libraries, including book group and Sing With Your Little One. Coming up will be programs on decluttering and finding easy walks. See our website, www.pelham-library.net and our Facebook page for all the latest news. Be sure to take advantage of Overdrive (e-books & e-audio), Kanopy (streaming movies, Great Courses, kids' content and more) and AcornTV (all your favorite British TV series). Feel free to contact us for help logging in.

Need something printed? Email us a file and we'll put it out on the curbside table when it's ready. Need to get online? **WIFI is always on** and reaches out to the parking lot. Connect to the PelhamLibraryPublic network, no password needed.

Have suggestions for virtual programming, resources, or services we can provide while we're closed to the public? Let us know. We're here to help and we miss you!

-Jodi Levine, Director



PLANNING BOARD UPDATES

The five elected members of Pelham's Planning Board have been quite active during the 2020 summer and fall despite the pandemic. Judy Eiseman-Chair, Lexi Dewey, Pete Wilson, and Leslie Laurie have become zoom proficient, but we count on our secretary, Anne Stoddard to set us up technologically.

In addition to regular monthly meetings, several additional meetings and public hearings were also held to deal with solar bylaw revisions and a request under the town's Scenic Roads Bylaw. The Scenic Roads Bylaw was passed in 2002, but was never added clearly to the list of non-zoning bylaws on the website. This resulted in many people not realizing we had such a bylaw to enforce until the power company came through and, retroactively, it was noted that required public hearings had not been held. Therefore, to our knowledge, the first public hearing under the Scenic Roads Bylaw was held in November to act upon the desire to cut trees in the town right of way for the Habitat for Humanity houses to be constructed at 8 Amherst Road. This situation was resolved to the apparent satisfaction of abutters, owners, and town officials involved. As a result of going through this process we discovered that some updating of that bylaw may be in order.

The Board has expressed unanimous support for the Habitat project as it is clearly within the scope of the zoning changes that created the Village Center in order to encourage more affordable housing to increase over time. The Board is keenly interested in the development of affordable housing to allow our older residents to remain in town when they need to "down size" as well to encourage new families to join our community. We await the initiation of the 40B process, information gathering, and hearings, for an affordable housing project proposed in the town center where the Board planned for other sorts of potential uses, but we hope that the infill permitted in the town in the Village Center Mixed Use and Neighborhood District around the school and library will begin to take hold whether or not this project succeeds.

As to the revised solar bylaw which passed at the Fall Town Meeting, the town bylaw continues to encourage individual residential solar development but limits large commercial solar development to five solar districts with the potential for six large scale solar developments if all criteria are met. This effort was especially challenging as a result of Pelham's special role in watershed protection and its topographical challenges.

REMEMBERING MARILYN M. BIGELOW (1937-2020)

Former Pelham School Board Member, Selectman, and Hampshire County Commissioner, Marilyn M. Bigelow, 83, passed away in St. Peters, Missouri on November 20, 2020 after contracting the virus COVID-19. She was predeceased by her husband Paul J. Bigelow who authored three books on Pelham's Quaker community, stone industry, and mills.

A highly informative obituary written by her children, Mark, Holly, and Beth can be seen by logging in to: <https://www.alternativefuneralcremation.com/m/obituaries/Marilyn-bigelow/memories>.

The family welcomes donations, in Marilyn's memory, to the Pelham Public Library, 2 South Valley Rd, Pelham, MA 01002.



DECEMBER CRAM-A-CRUISER EVENT

The Police Department's annual Cram-a-Cruiser toy drive was a huge success! Two cruisers and one pick-up truck were filled during the four hour event. Toys were distributed locally to Pelham School students and to the Springfield Rescue Mission.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED AND DONATED!

BUDGET SEASON HAS BEGUN!

The budgeting process for the coming 2022 fiscal year began in December and will end with the Town meeting vote on Saturday May 8, 2021. The following is an outline of the schedule:

December 2020: At the 4-Town meeting, representatives from the Regional School District's four member towns heard the preliminary budget numbers from the Region's officials and provided feedback on what the towns feel they can afford. The Finance Committee met and developed the guidelines for the all the Pelham Town departments, boards and commissions to help them develop their budgets. The representatives also heard about the Region's Capital requests. A Finance Committee representative participated as a member of the Capital Planning Committee to determine what changes were needed to the plan and what expenditures they would recommend for funding at the May Town meeting.

January 2021: Early in January there will be the annual Roundtable at which all the Town departments, boards and commissions will gather to discuss the guidelines presented by the Finance Committee and also advise of any special requests for money that they might have.

February 2021: The Finance Committee will hold public budget hearings with all Town departments, boards and commissions that will be requesting additional funding during 2022 except for the schools.

March 2021: During the first full week of March the Finance Committee will hold the budget hearing for the Pelham Elementary and Regional Schools. They also will complete and approve the recommended operating budget (Article 4 in the Town Warrant) and submit it to the Pelham Select Board by the required time. The Finance Committee will review and comment if necessary on all warrants that are finance related.

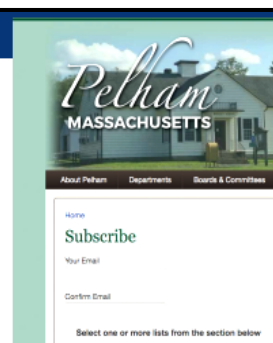
April 2021: The Finance Committee will meet with the Select Board and review the operating budget and all warrants that relate to finances. They also will attend the meeting with the Town Moderator to prepare for the May Town Meeting.

May 2021: The Finance Committee will attend the May 8, 2021 Annual Town meeting to present the operating budget and answer fiscal questions during the meeting.

WEB SITE FEATURE:

News Delivered To Your Inbox

Sign up today to receive electronic communications, including urgent alerts, town news, announcements, meeting agendas and minutes, for Pelham's boards and committees. Visit our web site at www.townofpelham.org and click on Subscribe to E-Alerts.





Town Office Schedules & Contact Information

Assessor's Office,

Lori Turati
(413) 253-0734
Wed. 9-12pm &
by appointment

Collector/ Treasurer

June Masee
(413) 253-2267
Mon-Thurs
8am-4pm

Select Board Office, Administrative Assistant

Susannah Carey
(413) 253-7129
Mon-Thurs
9am-3pm

Town Clerk

Sandra Burgess
(413) 253-0512
Tues. 9-2pm,
Wed. 9-2pm
Thurs. 9-1pm

WANT TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Positions open on:

- CABLE ADVISORY BOARD
- COMMUNITY HALL COMMITTEE
- COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMM.
- COUNCIL ON AGING
- CULTURAL COUNCIL
- HISTORICAL COMMISSION
- HOUSING COMMITTEE
- PERSONNEL BOARD

Contact: Select Board Administrative Assistant to
obtain Board/Committee contact information,
(413) 253-7129.

STAY INFORMED!

Go to Townofpelham.org
and click on the **CodeRed**
icon to be notified by your
local emergency response
team in the event of
emergency situations or
critical community alerts.



MEETING SCHEDULES

REGULAR MEETINGS

Assessors, Board of

3rd Tuesday
7:30 PM
Rhodes Building,
351 Amherst Rd

Cemetery Commission

2nd Tuesday
7:30 PM
Library, 2 South Valley Rd

Conservation Commission

2nd and last Thursdays
7:00 PM
Rhodes Building,
351 Amherst Rd

Community Preservation Committee

3rd Thursday
7:00 PM
Library, 2 South Valley Rd

Council on Aging

2nd Wednesday
3:00 PM
Library, 2 South Valley Rd

Energy Committee

1st Tuesday & as needed
7:30 PM
Library, 2 South Valley Rd

Health, Board of

2nd Tuesday 7:00 PM
Rhodes Building,
351 Amherst Rd

Historical Commission

3rd Tuesday
7:30 PM
Library, 2 South Valley Rd

Housing Committee

1st Tuesday
4:30 PM
Library, 2 South Valley Rd

Library Trustees

2nd Wednesday
7:30 PM
Library, 2 South Valley Rd

Planning Board

2nd Monday
7:00 PM
Rhodes Building & Library

School Committee

1st Thursday & as needed
6:00 PM
Library, 2 South Valley Rd

Select Board

1st & 3rd Wednesdays & as
needed
7:00PM
Rhodes Building,
351 Amherst Rd

Public Bodies that meet AS NEEDED:

- Cable Committee
- Capital Planning
Committee
- Community Garden
Committee
- Community Hall
Committee
- Community Hall
Accessibility
Committee
- Cultural Council
- Finance Committee
- IT Committee
- Regional School
District Planning
Committee
- Zoning Board of
Appeals

Please note that these are
only anticipated meeting
times and locations:
By law, definitive meeting
information is posted 48
hours in advance on
www.Townofpelham.org

Town of Pelham
Rhodes Building
351 Amherst Road
Pelham, MA 01002

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PELHAM SLATE

Winter Edition

Affordable Home Ownership Opportunity!

Apply now for ownership of a new
3-bedroom home in Pelham, MA



Pioneer Valley
Habitat
for Humanity®

**Home price
\$155,000 or less**

Info Sessions:

translation available upon request

Saturday January 23 @ 10am

Thursday February 4 @ 5:30pm

Wednesday February 24 @ 3:30pm

Join live via zoom or
watch a pre-recorded
info session on
YouTube.

To get an application, either print a PDF from our website, or retrieve
one from our office, the Pelham Public Library or request by email



**EQUAL HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY**

**The Deadline to apply is FRIDAY MARCH 12, 2021
Don't Miss This Opportunity!**

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity
apply@pvhabitat.org (413) 586-5430 x106 pvhabitat.org/apply