

A photograph of a large tree with white blossoms in a grassy field. The tree's branches are covered in dense white flowers, and its trunk is thick and textured. The ground is covered in tall, dry grass and some fallen branches. The background is slightly blurred, showing more trees and foliage.

TOWN OF STERLING

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Town of Sterling

Incorporated in 1781

OFFICERS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

President Joseph R. Biden
Vice President Kamala D. Harris
U.S. Senators in Congress –
 Elizabeth A. Warren 202-224-4543
 Edward J. Markey 202-224-2742
U.S. Representative in Congress, 2nd District – James P. McGovern 202-225-6101

STATE OFFICIALS

Governor – Charles D. Baker Governor's Office: 617-725-4005
Lieutenant Governor Karyn E. Polito Governor's Office: 617-725-4005
Secretary of the Commonwealth – Will Francis Galvin 1-800-392-6090
Attorney General – Maura Healy 617-727-2200
Treasurer – Deborah B. Goldberg 617-367-6900
Auditor – Suzanne M. Bump 617-727-2075
State Senator – John Cronin 617-722-1230
State Rep., Precinct 1 – Kimberly N. Ferguson, 1st Worcester District ... 617-722-2263
State Rep., Precinct 2 – Meghan Kilcoyne, 12th Worcester District 617-722-2800
ext. 7309

COUNTY AND DISTRICT OFFICIALS

Worcester County District Attorney – Joseph D. Early, Jr. 508-755-8601
Sheriff – Worcester County – Lewis G. Evangelidis 508-854-1800
Register of Deeds – Worcester District – Kathryn Toomey 508-798-7717
Register of Probate – Worcester County – Stephanie Fattman 508-831-2200

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DEDICATION

Robert F. “Bob” Cutler, Sr.



Robert F. Cutler, Sr., 92, U.S. Army, passed away on September 17. Mr. Cutler lived his entire life on his family’s farm in Sterling. After graduating from Leominster High School in 1947, Bob enlisted in the United States Army and honorably served his country during the Korean War. Returning home from the service in 1953, Bob went to work as a self-employed contractor and later as an insurance agent for John Graves Insurance Agency in Princeton.



Bob spent most of his working career as the superintendent of the Sterling Department of Public Works, retiring in 1996. Bob truly loved living in his hometown of Sterling and felt blessed and honored in volunteering his time and talent to his community. He served two terms as a Sterling Selectman and eight years as a member of the Board of Assessors. He was a member of the Hiram O. Taylor American Legion Post 189 and proudly served as a former Commander.

He was a man of integrity and a "no nonsense" kind of guy, who is remembered as saying, "Say what you mean and mean what you say".

Bob was truly a great man whose impact will forever be felt. His ability to love sacrifice, provide, support and forgive will forever be lessons to all he knew. At the end of the day, Bob's favorite place to be was back at his family farm with his family and beloved animals.

IN MEMORIAM

Donald E. Wilson, 94, who proudly served in the US Army Air Force during the war, passed away on January 21. As a widower, Don joined the First Church in Sterling and became an active participant in the Voyagers Club, weekly watercolor classes and other church activities. He also joined the Sterling Senior Center and shared his "gift of the gab." He quickly became a beloved member of the Sterling community.

Samuel D'Angona, 97, passed away on February 2. Samuel served in the Navy during World War II as a Machinist Mate 1st Class aboard the USS Halsey Powell. He was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries suffered during a kamikaze attack.

James D. Temple, 61, passed on February 24. He was a lifelong Sterling resident and worked for the Sterling School System for more than 20 years. Jim was a member of the Eight-Point Sportsman's Club, Sterling Fire Department for more than 20 years, the Hiram O. Taylor Squadron of the Sons of the American Legion for 50 years, for whom he participated in the Memorial Day and Veteran's Day observances each year. He also enjoyed participating in the Wachusett Fireman's Muster for many years, playing pitch at the Legion Hall and following the Boston Red Sox.

Normand J. DesRoche, 81, passed away on June 8. Normand attended the Marist Prep Seminary School and joined the Army immediately after. His tour of duty took him to South Korea.

Patricia A. (Korp) Booth, 82, passed away on June 15. Patricia was a member of St. Richard of Chichester Church and the Sterling Senior Center. She enjoyed volunteering her time at the Sterling Senior Center, the Tower Hill Botanic Garden, and the Sterling Recreation Committee.

David N. Adoretti, 72, passed away on June 18. Dave proudly served his country in the United States Army during the Vietnam War where he was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal with 4 Bronze Service Stars and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm.

Ronald S. Thompson, 84, passed away on July 14. Ronnie was born in Holden and raised in Sterling. In 1951, as a young teenager, he began his life-long love of farming, taking over the family farm stand from his father, and growing the business – Thompson Gardens - over the years, along with the help of his wife and family.

Frank C. Heinemann, 90, passed away on July 20. Frank was an officer in the Navy and always loved the sea. He was an active member of the Sterling Land Trust and served on the Town of Sterling Finance Committee.

Roland A. Nelson, Jr., 88, passed away on August 2. Ronald lived in Sterling for the last 61 years, where he raised his four children and was an active member of the community. He proudly served in the U.S. Army as a cryptographer in the Korean War and would later serve as Veteran's Affairs Officer for the towns of Sterling and Lancaster. Roland was a long-time active member of Hiram O. Taylor American Legion Post 189, where he leaves many close friends. He was also a member of the First Church in Sterling where he served as a deacon for many years.

William Bird Jr., 83, a Lt. Col, passed away on August 13. His overseas service included assignments in Germany, Scotland, Italy and Vietnam and his military decorations include five Bronze Star Medals, two air Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, two Army Commendation Medals, plus numerous units, campaign and service medals. He served for many years as a member and chair of the Sterling Conservation Commission and the Sterling Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Bird was also a member of the American Legion Post 189.

Hector J. Lirette, 82, passed on November 11. Hector was a licensed electrician and worked for several electrical contractors before starting his own electrical contracting company in Sterling. He also served several years as Sterling's Electrical Inspector.



ELECTED OFFICIALS - TOWN OF STERLING

TERM EXPIRES

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Donlin K. Murray 2021
 Richard A. Sheppard 2022
 Robert F. Cutler (deceased) 2023
 Hannah E. Miller
 (appointed to fill vacancy)..... 2022

BOARD OF HEALTH

Anne Marie Catalano 2024
 Allen Hoffman 2022
 Catherine Martin 2023

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Maureen Cranson 2024
 Arden Sonnenberg 2022
 John F. Kilcoyne 2023

CONSTABLES

Nicholas J. Finizio 2024
 James E. Hartnett 2023

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS BOARD

Andrew Parker 2024
 Deane S. Day 2022
 Blaine Bershad 2023

LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Amanda Sayut 2024
 Matthew Scannell 2024
 Albert J. Carlin 2022
 Sara Petullo 2022
 Lisa Akerson 2023
 Heide Martin 2023

TERM EXPIRES

MODERATOR

Jennifer Scalise-Mullett 2024

PLANNING

Valmore Pruneau 2026
 Robert Protano 2022
 John J. Santoro 2022
 Kirsten A. Newman..... 2023
 Patricia Page 2024
 Carl Corrinne 2025

STERLING HOUSING AUTHORITY

Robert Kneeland 2023
 Carolyn Heimberg..... 2026
 Weymouth Whitney
 (State Appointee, 3 yr. term)..... 2022

STERLING MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD

Eric Darlington 2024
 Joseph Curtin..... 2022
 Brian Pierce 2023

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Linda Helen Woodland 2022
 Diedre Shapiro 2023
 Jean Derosa..... 2023

APPOINTED OFFICIALS - TOWN OF STERLING

A.D.A COORDINATOR

Matthew S. Marro

ANIMAL CONTROL ADVISORY BOARD

Ann Marie Catalano
Cynthia Miller
Theresa E. Sadler
Elaine Armstrong

Edith McNamara
Kathleen Nickerson
Frances Simonds

ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER

Kelly Jones

ANIMAL INSPECTOR

Emma Massa

BUILDING COMMISSIONER

Tony Zahariadis

CABLE TV ADVISORY BOARD

Richard H. Maki

Gregory Billings

CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE

Everett W. Heller
Ezequial Ayala, Jr.
Todd Chapman
Christopher Paquette

Lynn Sheppard
Robert Brown
Mary Cliett

CONSERVATION AGENT

Matthew Marro

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Michael E. Pineo
Scott Michalak
Steven Pavlowich
Christopher O'Neil

Connor Emsley
Barbara Roberti
Sue Valentine

COUNCIL ON AGING

Joseph LaGrassa
Kevin Beaupre
Nancy Castagna
Susan Protano

Debra MacLennan
David Cosgrove
Elizabeth Pape

DPW SUPERINTENDENT

Ryan Mouradian

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Paul Cathcart, Jr.
Maureen Cranson
James Patacchiola
Rosanne Mapp

Keith Cordial
Richard H. Maki
Michael Pineo

ELECTION OFFICERS

Bonnie Lee Alfke
Lisa Belmain
Jane Brunetta
Anne Marie Catalano
Judith Doherty
John Farrell
Laura Giard
Utahna Hallett
Cheryl Koleshis
Marjorie Long
Heide Martin
Anita E. McKenney
Kevin Moulton
Kristin Newman
Beth Stephenson

Jessica Baer
Blaine Bershad
Irene Camerano
Constance Cleary
Deborah Dupuis
Kevin Flannery
Judith Glasier
Carolyn Heimberg
Karen Leclerc
Rosanne Mapp
Arlene McGuirk
Marina Meehan
Judith Muckenstrom
Robert Nickerson, Jr.

ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR

(John) Gary Harrington

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR

David C. Hurlbut

ASSISTANT EMERGENCY MGMT. DIR.

James Emerton

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Everett W. Heller
Christina Lashua
Christopher Paquette
Ezequial Ayala, Jr.

Mary Cliett
Elizabeth Soutter
George Handy
Lynn Sheppard

GAS INSPECTOR

Robert Janda

HEALTH AGENT

David Favreau

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

David Gibbs
James Carroll
Lindsey Van Gieson

Catherine Harragian
James French

LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Betsy Perry

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Marion E. Larson
Robert Protano
James Wilkinson
Peder Pedersen
Paul Lekberg

Charles Plaisted
Geoffrey Caldwell
Jeffrey Keay
Sue Valentine (ConComm Liaison)

PLUMBING INSPECTOR

Robert Janda

POLICE CHIEF

Gary Chamberland

RECREATION COMMITTEE

Bonnie Pulda

Jo-Ann Cummings

Heidi Grady

Andrew Parker

Glenn Donaldson

Mark Hryniewicz

REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

Christine Arsenault

Melissa Chalmers

Richard Barriere

Kathleen Farrell

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (WRSD)

Darryll McCall, Ed.D.

TOWN ACCOUNTANT

Fred Aponte

TOWN CLERK

Kathleen K. Farrell

ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK

Michelle Boyce

TOWN COUNSEL

Kopelman & Paige

TOWN TREASURER / COLLECTOR

Victoria Smith

ASSISTANT TOWN TREASURER

Elizabeth Clemence

ASSISTANT TOWN COLLECTOR

Theresa Murray

VETERANS' AGENT

Richard Voutour

VETERANS' GRAVE OFFICER

Robert Temple

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (5 year appointment)

Matthew CampoBasso
Jerry Siver
Diana Baldarelli
Gail Bergeron

Joseph Curtin
Patrick Fox
Everett Pierce (Alternate)

1835 TOWN HALL COMMITTEE

Robert Barwise
Ronald Pichierri
John (Jack) Chandler
Christine McCarthy

Joanne K. Drown
Carol Stuart-Grinkis
Carl Corrinne

SPECIAL COMMITTEES**AGRICULTURE COMMISSION**

David Grinkis
Michael E. Pineo

Robert Nickerson, Jr.
Diane Melone (Alternate)

CULTURAL COUNCIL

Rosanne Mapp
Beth Stephenson
Patricia Ward

Margaret Spaulding
Diane Pedersen
Judith Doherty

REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Gary Chamberland
David Favreau (BOH Rep.)
David C. Hurlbut, Jr. (Emergency Management Director)
Peter MacDonald (Alternate)

James Emerton (CERT Rep.)
Donald Hamilton

WACHUSETT FUND COMMITTEE

Gary Chamberland
Peter MacDonald

David C. Hurlbut, Jr.

Select Board Annual Report 2021

We started 2021 with the ongoing challenges of the COVID pandemic, but as we look back, we see a town that has persevered and become more vibrant and excited about the future. Sterling's community of volunteers, employees, boards, and committees not only assured routine municipal services continued with little interruption but drove new and ongoing improvements and projects. The concern, dedication, and response to the well-being of neighbors, friends, residents, and businesses was remarkable. Thank you!

Sterling's Select Board goals and priorities have remained consistent over the past 5 years. As we move forward, these goals will continue to remain a priority. Many of the Board's goals are obviously ongoing endeavors that will require continuous focus and support and can *only* be completed with the aid of Sterling's boards, committees, volunteers, and our municipal employees.

Select Board Goals

- Provide exceptional service to taxpayers by improving communication between boards, committees, and departments.
- Increase tax revenue by pursuing grant opportunities and supporting the economic development of Sterling's industrial areas, downtown and beyond.
- Support of Master Plan Committee.

COMPLETED PROJECTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Successful Auction of town acquired property known as the Sterling Inn.
- Launched a compensation study for non-union municipal employees, as approved by citizens at 2021 Town Meeting.
- Support of new leadership appointments: Recreation Director, DWP Superintendent, and Conant Library Librarian.
- Outsourced Human Resource services to assist with Personnel matters in the absence of a Town Administrator/Personnel Director.
- Received \$ 2,443,264 in ARPA funding. Contracted ARPA consultants to assist in the proper management, disbursement, and reporting of eligible American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds.
- Senior Center Garage completed.
- 1835 Town Hall Renovation
 - ✓ Use Plan finalized and the facility opened to the public with limited use.
 - ✓ Recreation Department reoccupied offices with limited recreation use.

ON-GOING PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED:

- Town Center Renovation
 - ✓ SMLD, DPW, EDC and Citizens collaborative project.
 - ✓ Weston & Sampson Architects assisting with engineering, design, and implementation.
- SMLD Fiber Network expansion.

- Expansion of the town's water supply and water conservation efforts with our DPW, Water Department.
- Electric and Water Meter Upgrades.
- 1835 Town Hall Renovation
 - ✓ Septic System
 - ✓ Bathrooms
 - ✓ Great Hall
- Master Plan Initiative – 2022 expected completion with recent \$100,000 state funded support. The Master Plan is a fluid document. When completed it will be the task of Boards and Committees to carry it forward.
- Municipal Technology & Innovation Upgrades.
- By-laws Updates – The Select Board is committed to working with boards and committees to rewrite and improve town by-laws, and ultimately reducing/eliminating legal costs associated with existing and inefficient by-laws.
- Board and Committee Collaboration. The Select Board remains committed to building more cohesive groups through collaboration and liaison activity.

FINANCE & BUDGET ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- A balanced budget for the past four years with a COLA increase of 2% per year approved at Annual Town Meeting.
- *Overall municipal operating budget increase after final year-end adjustments was approximately 2.65%.*
- Maintained account balances in Free Cash, Stabilization, and the Capital Investment Fund as recommended by Financial Policies Manual.
- Continue support for funding the Stabilization of OPEB (Other Post-employment Benefits) to continue for the next five years
- Aa2 Moody's Bond Rating (third strongest rating), confirmed by independent auditors Roselli, Clark & Company.
- The average valuation increased to 8.62%, 4% from the prior year. However, the Tax rate will decrease to \$15.25 from \$16.52 per thousand of valuation, resulting in an "average" tax increase of \$18.00 or 0.288%, pending possible Department of Revenue changes.

In closing, we want to recognize Fred Aponte and Kama Jayne for handling transitional TA duties while we search for a new Town Administrator. We recognize, appreciate, and thank all employees for their leadership and support during the town's leadership transition.

To all our residents and businesses, we thank you for your continued support of the Select Board and in the future of Sterling's vitality. Sterling is a strong and welcoming community. We look forward to an exciting and bright future for all.

Maureen Cranson, Chair

Arden Sonnenberg, Vice Chair

John Kilcoyne, Clerk

THE OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK

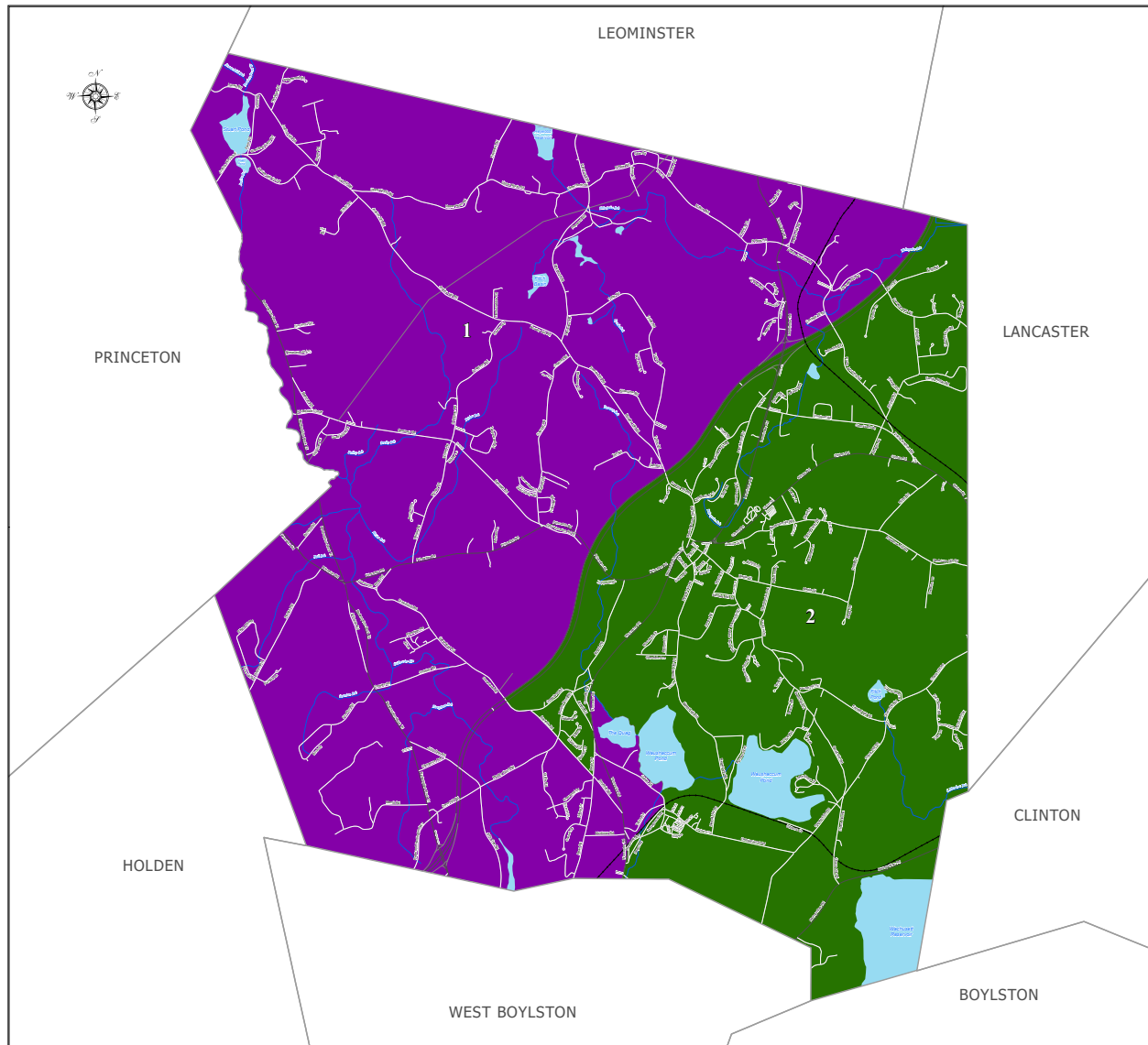
The Town Clerk's Office is staffed by Kathleen Farrell, Town Clerk, and Michelle Boyce, Assistant Town Clerk. We have several essential associate support staff, through the tax work off program, as well as a dedicated group of election officials who are trained and up to the task of insuring the integrity of our elections.

The Board of Registrars currently consists of Kathleen Farrell, Town Clerk, Christine Arsenault, Richard Barriere, and Melissa Chalmers. The Board is responsible for conducting voter registration sessions, certifying local and state petitions and nomination papers, checking in voters for Town Meeting among other duties.

The Annual Town Meeting was held at the Sterling Airport on Monday, June 14th, and was the only Town Meeting held in Sterling in 2021. The votes taken and minutes of that meeting, along with results of the Annual Town Election of Monday, June 21st, may be found in the following pages of this report.

Every ten years, the legislature and local governments must redraw boundaries that take into consideration population, communities of interest, and state and federal constitutional requirements, among other factors. Population is determined by the most recent Federal Census. Sterling's population per the 2020 Federal Census was 7,985 which represents an increase of 177 from the 2010 population (or 2.3%). We continue to have two precincts at the same polling place, the Houghton Elementary School 32 Boutelle Road. The precinct line has shifted slightly. The new precinct map is shown on the next page.

Town of Sterling



2020 Population - - 7,985			
Minimum 5%		Target Population	Maximum 5%
3,793		3,993	4,000
Precinct Boundaries Sterling			
Precinct		2020 Population	Variance
1		3,988	-0.13
2		3,997	0.10

Population is based on the official U.S. 2020 Census block-level data.
Boundaries effective December 31, 2021

Legend	
	Municipal Boundary
Geographical Features	
	Major Road
	Local Road
	Railroad
	Other Municipal Features
	Streams, Rivers
	Coastal Water, Lakes, Ponds, Major Rivers



Map Prepared for the Town of Sterling
Courtesy of William F. Galvin, Census Liaison
Secretary of the Commonwealth



We were able to carry out the functions of the Town Clerk's Office this year, despite the pandemic, thanks to our staff for their creativity and flexibility in dealing with the protocols and helping us meet our goals. The goals/ responsibilities of our office include:

- Conducting Elections; including registration of voters, testing of voting equipment, training of Election Officials, and compliance with campaign finance regulations
- Registering Voters at Town Meeting, Recording Minutes and votes taken, submitting bylaw changes to the Massachusetts Attorney General, as well as General Code updating
- Preparation and administration of the Annual Town Census, and production of the Annual Street List
- Swearing in elected officials and appointed board and committee members, posting meetings and agendas, annual distributions including the Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest information to all employees and board and committee members
- Recording and issuing vital records; birth, marriage and death certificates
- Filing applications and decisions by the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, and issuing certificates and information regarding appeals
- Responding to requests for public records, and fulfilling or coordinating the fulfillment, of these requests
- Maintenance of the Town website, vault storage, and official records
- Processing of Business Certificates, Fuel Storage Registrations, and Dog Licenses
- Provide Notary Public Services

Results of all 2021 elections are provided below followed by the Minutes of the June, 2021 Town Meeting

Kathleen King Farrell, Town Clerk

June 21, 2021 Town Election OFFICIAL RESULTS					
			PREC 1	PREC 2	TOTALS
Total votes cast in each precinct			246	228	474
BOARD OF ASSESSORS (3yrs)					
Donlin K. Murray			159	132	291
Lynda B. Kelly			70	75	145
Total Write-ins			1	1	2
Blanks			16	20	36
TOTAL			246	228	474
BOARD OF HEALTH (3yrs)					
Gary Charles Menin Sr.			104	67	171
Anne Marie Catalano			141	159	300
Total Write-ins			0	1	1
Blanks			1	1	2
TOTAL			246	228	474
SELECT BOARD (3yrs)					
Maureen M. Cranson			179	167	346
Total Write-ins			12	13	25
Blanks			55	48	103
TOTAL			246	228	474
DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS BOARD (3yrs)					
Andrew Douglas Parker			189	169	358
Total Write-ins			7	4	11
Blanks			50	55	105
TOTAL			246	228	474
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES (3yrs)					
Matthew J. Scannell			158	158	316
Amanda Sayut			138	126	264
Total Write-ins			1	2	3
Blanks			195	170	365
TOTAL			492	456	948
MODERATOR (3yrs)					
Jennifer Scalise-Mullet			183	178	361
Total Write-ins			4	4	8
Blanks			59	46	105
TOTAL			246	228	474
PLANNING BOARD (5yrs)					
Valmore H. Pruneau			179	176	355
Total Write-ins			4	3	7
Blanks			63	49	112
TOTAL			246	228	474

STERLING HOUSING AUTHORITY (5yrs)					
Carolyn Heimberg			176	176	352
Total Write-ins			4	3	7
Blanks			312	277	589
TOTAL			492	456	948
STERLING MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD (3yrs)					
Eric H. Darlington			188	180	368
Total Write-ins			2	1	3
Blanks			56	47	103
TOTAL			246	228	474
WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (3yrs)					
Dustin Halterman			12	20	32
Jeanne DeRosa			6	10	16
Total Write-ins			21	28	49
Blanks			207	170	377
TOTAL			246	228	474
Total Registered voters each PRECINCT			2,983	3,292	6,275
Total Votes Cast in EACH Precinct			246	228	474
Voter Turnout %			8%	7%	8%
All candidates are required to submit campaign finance forms 30 days after the election to the Town Clerk. The candidate may otherwise be subject to penalties.					



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF STERLING

JUNE 14, 2021

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

At 5:30 pm, on Monday, June 14, 2021, the Town Clerk, Kathleen Farrell, opened the Annual Town Meeting held at the Sterling Airport, 121 Greenland Road in said Town of Sterling.

Town Clerk noted inspection of the Return of Service on the Warrant to be in order, and called to order the Annual Town Meeting, the Legislative Body of the Town of Sterling.

Town Clerk, Kathleen Farrell noted the first order of business was to elect a Temporary Moderator to preside over the Town Meeting. She explained that if there is only one person nominated, only one vote will be required to “elect” the Temporary Moderator.

Town Clerk informed Town Meeting that Amrith Kumar had offered to perform the duties of Moderator for this Town Meeting.

Motion made by Maureen Cranson, Select Board Chair nominating Amrith Kumar to act as Temporary Moderator for the purposes of this meeting. John Kilcoyne, Select Board Member seconded the motion.

Town Clerk, Kathleen Farrell asked the Town Meeting if there were additional nominations. She declared hearing or seeing none, nominations were closed. Without objection, the Town Clerk declared Amrith Kumar as sole nominee for the position of Temporary Moderator for this Meeting and called for the vote.

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Town Clerk

Town Clerk, Kathleen Farrell declared the election of Amrith Kumar as Temporary Moderator for this Town Meeting, and administered the oath of office.

Temporary Town Moderator, Amrith Kumar thanked the voters and Town Departments for attending. He asked all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance and to remain standing for a moment of silence to honor fellow townspeople who are no longer with us, men and women in uniform and all the heroes on the frontline of the battle with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Moderator explained that Sterling Town Meeting is being recorded by Sterling Lancaster Cable TV, and is

governed by the General Laws of the Commonwealth, the General Bylaws of the Town of Sterling, and the guidelines established in “Town Meeting Time”.

Town Moderator, Amrith Kumar reviewed logistics of participation including practice with the vote counting devices. He explained the Consent Calendars used to save time, and how to address the meeting. The Moderator noted that all voters have copies of the motions, so there would be no need to read them unless there were substantive differences.

He began by calling for a vote on the long-standing history of dispensing of the reading of the Warrant.

DISPENSE WITH THE READING OF THE WARRANT AND THE CONSTABLE’S RETURN:

Motion Made by Maureen Cranson

Motion passed unanimously as declared by the Moderator

Finance Committee Chair, Todd Chapman gave a brief overview of the budget describing it as prudent and responsible.

ARTICLE 1. PAY BILLS OF A PRIOR FISCAL YEAR

Motion Made by Todd Chapman that the Town vote to transfer from **Free Cash** the sum of \$665 to pay outstanding prior fiscal year invoices. **FOUR-FIFTHS VOTE**

Motion Passed by 4/5ths majority as declared by the Moderator

VOTE FOR CONSENT CALENDAR ONE (I):

Motion Made by Todd Chapman

that the Town vote by unanimous consent to combine the Articles 2 through 8 into a Consent Calendar and to approve those Articles that have not been requested “held” in one vote as shown in the Warrant; And further, to fund any transfers from **Free Cash** in the dollar amount specified and as printed in the Warrant and in this Motion Book. **MAJORITY VOTE**

2. Snow & Ice Deficit
3. Elected Officers Compensation
4. Municipal Light Board Compensation
5. Wachusett Greenways & Sterling Land Trust
6. East Lake Waushacum
7. Stabilization Fund
8. OPEB Trust Fund

No holds were requested by the voters

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

***ARTICLE 2. SNOW & ICE DEFICIT** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, that the Town vote to transfer from **Free Cash** the sum of **\$57,952** to the Snow and Ice Account to cover any deficit in the snow and ice budget for the current fiscal year.

***ARTICLE 3. ELECTED OFFICERS COMPENSATION** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, that the Town vote to fix the salaries and compensation of all elected officers of the Town as printed in the Warrant under Article 3.

***ARTICLE 4. MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD COMPENSATION** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, that the Town vote to set the salary of the Sterling Municipal Light Board members as printed in the Warrant under Article 4.

***ARTICLE 5. WACHUSETT GREENWAYS & STERLING LAND TRUST** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, that the Town vote to transfer from **Free Cash** the sum of **\$2,700** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 5.

***ARTICLE 6. EAST LAKE WAUSHACUM** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, that the Town vote to transfer from **Free Cash** the sum of **\$13,000** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 6

***ARTICLE 7. STABLIZATION FUND** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, that the Town vote to transfer the sum of **\$75,000** from **Free Cash** as printed in the Warrant under Article 7.

***ARTICLE 8. OPEB TRUST FUND** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, that the Town vote to transfer the sum of **\$150,000** from **Free Cash** as printed in the Warrant under Article 8.

ARTICLE 9. FY2022 TOWN OPERATING BUDGET

Motion Made by Christopher Paquette that the Town vote to appropriate the total sum of **\$11,455,429** from the sources identified in the Warrant under Article 9 and to allocate said sums as shown in the municipal operating and Omnibus Budget as printed at the back of the Warrant within Attachment A and printed in the Warrant Book with updated lines 209 through 225 as shown in the table therein. **MAJORITY VOTE**

ATTACHMENT A							
(AS REVISED ON JUNE 10, 2021)							
Town of Sterling							
FY2022 RECOMMENDED OMNIBUS BUDGET, Continued							
		2019 Budget	2020 Budget	2021 Budget	FY22 Dept Request	FY22 \$ Change	FY22 % Change
196	DEBT SERVICE						
197	DEBT - LONG TERM PRINCIPAL	1,581,000	1,545,000	420,000	220,000	-200,000	-47.62%
198	DEBT - LONG TERM INTEREST	216,255	155,435	93,935	77,041	-16,894	-17.98%
199	DEBT - SHORT TERM INTEREST	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%
200	Department Total	1,797,255	1,700,435	513,935	297,041	-216,894	-42.20%
201	OPEB						
202	OPEB	0	0	25,000		-25,000	-100.00%
203	Department Total	0	0	25,000	0	-25,000	-100.00%
204	RESERVE FUND			FY21 Free Cash			
205	RESERVE FUND	100,000	100,000	0	100,000	100,000	
206	Department Total	100,000	100,000	0	100,000	100,000	0.00%
207	MUNICIPAL OPERATING BUDGET:			11,198,160	11,455,429	257,269	2.30%
208	WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DIST						
209	WACHUSETT RSD	9,011,589	11,696,595	12,089,494	12,102,930	13,436	0.11%
210	WRSD VOCATIONAL SCHOOL OUTPLACEMENT (Tra	0	0	78,318	78,318	0	0.00%
211	Department Total	9,011,589	11,696,595	12,167,812	12,181,248	13,436	0.11%
212	MONTACHUSETT REG. SCHOOL DIST						
213	MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL VOC TECH	847,677	821,969	905,635	939,069	33,434	3.69%
214	Department Total	847,677	821,969	905,635	939,069	33,434	3.69%
215	MUNICIPAL & SCHOOLS OMNIBUS BUDGET:			24,271,607	24,575,746	304,139	1.25%
216							
217							
218					Warrant Articles with Affirmative Vote		
219					Description	Amount	Article #
220					CLP/Borrow	150,000	19
221					Firefighter	62,286	27
222					Police Officer	31,200	26
223	PROPOSED OMNIBUS BUDGET PLUS APPROVED WARRANT ARTICLES:				24,575,746	547,625	2.26%

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 10. WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Motion Made by Linda Woodland, that the Town vote to **raise and appropriate** the sum of **\$12,181,248** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 10. **MAJORITY VOTE**
Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 11. MONTACHUSETT VOCATIONAL REGIONAL SCHOOL

Motion Made by Maureen Cranson that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$939,069** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 11. **MAJORITY VOTE**
Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

----- WATER ENTERPRISE FUND -----

ARTICLE 12. FY2022 WATER ENTERPRISE FUND OPERATING BUDGET

Motion Made by Blaine Bershad that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of **\$1,057,986** as printed in the Warrant under Article 12. **MAJORITY VOTE**
Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 13. WATER ENTERPRISE - HEALTH INSURANCE & PENSIONS

Motion Made by Blaine Bershad that the Town vote to transfer from Water Enterprise Retained Earnings the sum of **\$75,430** into the General Fund as printed in the Warrant under Article 13. **MAJORITY VOTE**
Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 14. STORMWATER MS4 PERMIT COMPLIANCE

Moved Made by Richard Maki that the Town vote to transfer from Water Retained Earnings the sum of **\$93,800** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 14. **MAJORITY VOTE**
Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 15. WATER METER REPLACEMENT

Motion Made by Blaine Bershad that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of **\$350,000** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 15; And further, to meet this appropriation, to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow said sum under G.L. c.44, §7(1), or any other enabling authority; that any premium received by the Town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payments of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved

by this vote in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws, thereby, reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount; and that the Select Board is authorized to execute all documents and take such actions as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this vote. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

Motion passed by 2/3rds vote as declared by the Moderator

----- **END OF WATER ENTERPRISE ARTICLES** -----

----- **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN** -----

ARTICLE 16. FY2022 CAPITAL BUDGET

Motion Made by Todd Chapman that the Town vote to transfer from **Free Cash** the sum of **\$470,300** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 16 and as printed in the Motion Book with updated references of “16A” to “16L” as shown in the table therein. **MAJORITY VOTE**

16A	Fire/EMS ALS Intercept SUV, purchase and equip	55,000
16B	Fire/EMS Forestry Pick Up Truck, purchase and equip	48,500
16C	Fire/EMS Jaws of Life Replacement	50,000
16D	Public Safety Radio Tower Site at Pratt’s Junction	40,000
16E	DPW Leaf Blower Ride On, purchase and equip	10,000
16F	DPW Truck Loader for Leaves, purchase and equip	12,000
16G	Butterick Roof Repairs	120,000
16H	Butterick Land Use Records Management System	29,000
16I	Butterick Building – Remove Oil Tank	20,000
16J	1835 Old Town Hall Rehabilitation & Improvements	67,800
16K	Chocksett Cemetery Improvements	8,000
16L	Sterling School House Rehabilitation & Improvements	10,000
	TOTAL:	470,300

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 17. TOWN COMMON IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Motion Made by Todd Chapman that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of **\$152,913.89** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 17; And further, to fund said appropriation by transferring unexpended balances from prior year appropriations as printed in the Warrant, and as listed in the Motion Book as shown in the table therein. **MAJORITY VOTE**

2021	FY21 ATM #7B	01999-58008	Underground Utilities Project	44,000.00
2021	FY21 ATM #6A	01999-58001	Animal Control Vehicle	2,970.14
2021	FY21 ATM #6B	01999-58002	1835 Building Cleaning	3,000.00
2021	FY21 ATM #7D	01999-58010	Ford 550 Plow Truck & Wing	2,174.04
2020	FY20 ATM #8D	01999-58037	1835 Building Sprinkler System	22,775.38
2019	FY19 ATM #13C	01999-58119	DPW Radio Repeater	196.95
2018	FY18 ATM #9C	01999-58092	UHF Radio Improvements	59.60
2018	FY18 ATM #10A	01999-58099	Paving Repairs Facilities	6,264.00
2015	FY15 ATM #31	01999-58044	Fire Grant	2,600.00
2015	FY15 ATM #20	01999-58045	Rehab of 1984 Grader	307.81
2013		01000-12314	Release of 2013 Overlay Surplus	34,600.06
2014		01000-12315	Release of 2014 Overlay Surplus	<u>33,965.91</u>
			TOTAL:	152,913.89

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 18. ASSETS MANAGEMENT & ROADS MAINTENANCE

Motion Made by Christopher Paquette that the Town vote to transfer from the Capital Investment Fund, the sum of **\$283,250** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 18 and as printed in the Motion Book with updated references of “18A” to “18E” as shown in the table therein. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

18A	DPW Road Resurfacing and Crack-Sealing	233,750
18B	Route 62/140 Traffic Intersection – Traffic Study	5,000
18C	Town Assets & Comprehensive Facilities Assessment	8,000
18D	Use & Feasibility Study for DPW Facility & Town-Wide Vehicle Storage	10,000
18E	Pavement Management Plan	26,500
	TOTAL:	283,250

Motion passed by 2/3rds vote as declared by the Moderator

At 6:00pm the Moderator called for two test votes of the wireless voter response system.

ARTICLE 19. MAJOR EQUIPMENT & LARGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Motion Made by Todd Chapman to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, **\$695,062** or any other sum, to be expended for the items listed below, as recommended by the Finance Committee and the Capital Planning Committee; and to meet this appropriation, to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board to borrow said sum under G.L. c.44, §7(1), or any other enabling authority; and that the Select Board is authorized to execute all documents and take such actions as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this vote.

19A	Public Works Tractor with Mower, purchase and equip	160,000
19B	Public Works Six-Wheel Dump Truck, purchase and equip	185,062
19C	Fire/EMS Rescue 1 Apparatus, purchase and equip	350,000
	TOTAL:	695,062

Said amounts shall be for the purposes stated and all costs incidental or related thereto. Appropriated funds to be administered under the direction of the requesting department; or take any action in relation thereto. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

Motion passed by 2/3rds vote as declared by the Moderator

----- **END OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN** -----

At 6:10pm the Moderator called for a test vote of the wireless voter response system

ARTICLE 20. PERSONNEL BYLAW & WAGE SCHEDULES

Motion Made by Maureen Cranson vote to amend certain provisions of the Town's Personnel Bylaw as written in the Warrant under Article 20, and as written and included Attachment B of the Warrant. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 21. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Motion Made by Arden Sonnenberg that the Town vote to transfer from **Free Cash** the sum of **\$50,000** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 21. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 22. CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION ANALYSIS

Motion Made by Maureen Cranson that the Town vote to transfer from **Free Cash** the sum of **\$25,000** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 22. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 23. RESERVE ACCOUNT FOR SALARIES & WAGES

Motion Made by Maureen Cranson that the Town vote to transfer from **Free Cash** the sum of **\$25,000** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 23; and further, that such funds be expended with the approval of the Select Board. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 24. SENIOR VOLUNTEER TAX RELIEF WORK-OFF PROGRAM

Motion Made by John Kilcoyne that the Town vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws as written in the Warrant under Article 24. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 25. COMPENSATED ABSENCE FUND

Motion Made by John Kilcoyne that the Town vote to accept Massachusetts General Law and establish a Compensated Absence Fund as printed in the Warrant under Article 25; and further, to transfer from **Free Cash** the sum of **\$50,000** for said fund. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 26. NEW POLICE OFFICER

Motion Made by Chief Gary Chamberland that the Town vote to **raise and appropriate** the sum of **\$31,200** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 26. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 27. NEW FIREFIGHTER/EMT-PARAMEDIC

Motion Made by Chief David C. Hurlbut Jr. that the Town vote to transfer from **Ambulance Receipts** the sum of **\$62,286** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 27. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

***** **SECOND CONSENT CALENDAR** *****

VOTE FOR CONSENT CALENDAR TWO (II):

Motion Made by Maureen Cranson that the Town vote by unanimous consent to combine Articles 28 through 41 into a Consent Calendar and to approve those Articles that have not been requested “held” in one vote as shown in the Warrant; those consent articles being printed in the Warrant and printed in the Motion Book as shown within the list below. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

- 28. Select Board Citation
- 29. Site Plan Review
- 30. Display Setback
- 31. Signs
- 32. Dimensional Controls – Mixed Use Building
- 33. Use Regulations – Special Permits “PB”
- 34. Definitions – Mixed Use Building
- 35. Free Standing Uninhabited Buildings
- 36. Rate of Development
- 37. Subdivision Phasing
- 38. Accessory Dwelling Unit Use
- 39. Performance Zone to Commercial Zoning District
- 40. Mixed-Use Building with Residential Unit(s)
- 41. Use Regulations – Family Child Care

Article 39 was held from the Consent Calendar to be voted separately.

Motion for Articles 28 through 38, 40 and 41 passed by 2/3rds vote as declared by the Moderator

***ARTICLE 28. SELECT BOARD CITATION** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar to amend the Protective Bylaws as printed in the Warrant under Article 28.

***ARTICLE 29. SITE PLAN REVIEW** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, to amend Article 6, Section 6.4 Site Plan Review as printed in the Warrant under Article 29.

***ARTICLE 30. DISPLAY SETBACK** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, to amend the Protective Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2.4.5. as printed in the Warrant under Article 30.

***ARTICLE 31. SIGNS** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, to amend the Protective Bylaws, Article 3, Section 3.1. as printed in the Warrant under Article 31.

***ARTICLE 32. DIMENSIONAL CONTROLS – MIXED USE BUILDING** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, to amend the Protective Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2.5.1 as printed in the Warrant under Article 32.

***ARTICLE 33. USE REGULATIONS** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, to amend the Protective Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2.2.1. as printed in the Warrant under Article 33.

***ARTICLE 34. DEFINITIONS – MIXED USE BUILDING** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, to amend the Protective Bylaws, Article 5 as printed in the Warrant under Article 34.

***ARTICLE 35. FREE STANDING UNINHABITED BUILDINGS** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, to amend the Protective Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2.5.4 as printed in the Warrant under Article 35.

***ARTICLE 36. RATE OF DEVELOPMENT** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, to amend the Protective Bylaws, Article 4, Section 4.3 as printed in the Warrant under Article 36.

***ARTICLE 37. SUBDIVISION PHASING** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, to amend the Protective Bylaws, Article 4, Section 4.3A as printed in the Warrant under Article 37.

***ARTICLE 38. ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT USE** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar, to amend the Protective Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2.3.5 as printed in the Warrant under Article 38.

***ARTICLE 40. MIXED-USE BUILDING WITH RESIDENTIAL DWELLING UNIT(S)** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar that the Town amend the Protective Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2.3.1.A as written in the Warrant under Article 40. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

***ARTICLE 41. USE REGULATIONS FAMILY CHILD CARE** *(Consent)*

It was voted, by Consent Calendar to amend the Protective Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2.3.1. as printed in the Warrant under Article 41. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

***** **END OF SECOND CONSENT CALENDAR** *****

ARTICLE 39. PERFORMANCE ZONE TO COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICT *(Held from Second Consent Calendar)*

Motion Made by Patty Page that the Town vote to amend the Protective Bylaws and Zoning Map as printed in the Warrant under Article 39. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

This Article was held from the Second Consent Calendar

Richard Sheppard, 5 Tanglewood Road, submitted a written amendment to the motion “by removing parcel 159-2 (Legg Cemetery) from the list of parcels being re-zoned”. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Motion to Amend Article 39 passed by majority vote as declared by the Moderator

Discussion on Article 39 as Amended. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

Motion did not carry, Article 39 defeated as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 42. USE REGULATIONS – COMMERCIAL KENNELS

Motion Made by Pat Fox that the Town vote to amend the Protective Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2.3.1. as printed in the Warrant under Article 42 and printed in the Motion Packet with additions shown in **bold/underline** and deletions shown in ~~striketrough~~ as shown below:

2.3 USE REGULATIONS

2.3.1 Table of Principal Uses.

PRINCIPAL USES DISTRICTS

	RR	NR	C	TC	LI		
C. COMMERCIAL USES			SP <u>N</u>	N	SP	SP	N <u>SP</u>
10. Commercial Kennel, Animal Hospital, Veterinarian's Office							
1. Nonexempt agricultural use, except fur farms and piggeries <u>and commercial kennels</u>			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

TWO-THIRDS VOTE

Pat Fox explained that the proposal was meant to limit the number of dogs in a household to four.

Anne Marie Catalano spoke on behalf of the Animal Control Advisory Board and submitted for the record a written statement from ACAB outlining their strong opposition to Article 42. They stated concern that their input and opposition was not considered during the public meeting process, and noted it would change the character of our Right to Farm Town.

Motion Made by Anne Marie Catalano on behalf of the ACAB to amend Article 42 by referring it to committee. This committee would be appointed by the Select Board and could consist of members of the ZBA, Planning Board, ACAB, a designee of the Police Department (presumably the ACO) and members of the general public of Sterling. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Select Board spoke in favor of the amendment to Article 42 to refer to committee.

Motion to approve Article as amended passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

----- **GENERAL & ZONING BYLAWS** -----

ARTICLE 43. PARKS GENERAL BYLAW - SHOLAN PARK

Motion Made by Barbara Roberti that the Town vote to amend Chapter 113 of the General Bylaws, relative to Parks, as printed in the Warrant under Article 43 adding back lines 885 and 886. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Ms. Roberti explained that adding back lines 885 and 886 would keep the \$50 fine to non-residents parked in violation.

Sterling Police Chief, Gary Chamberland, spoke in favor of the amended motion.

Motion to approve Article as amended passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 44. GROUNDWATER PROTECTION DISTRICTS

Motion Made by Joe Curtin that the Town vote to amend the Protective Bylaws as printed in the Warrant under Article 44. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

Motion passed by 2/3rds vote as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 45. GROUNDWATER PROTECTION DISTRICTS – CITATIONS

Motion Made by Joe Curtin that the Town vote to amend the Protective Bylaws as printed in the Warrant under Article 45. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

Motion passed by 2/3rds vote as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 46. GROUNDWATER PROTECTION DISTRICTS - OVERLAY MAP

Motion Made by Joe Curtin that the Town vote to amend the Protective Bylaws as printed in the Warrant under Article 46. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

Motion passed by 2/3rds vote as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 47. EARTH REMOVAL - GENERAL BYLAW

Motion Made by John Kilcoyne that the Town vote to amend the General Bylaw relative to Earth Removal as printed in the Warrant under Article 47. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 48. EARTH REMOVAL/QUARRYING OR MINING - PROTECTIVE BYLAW

Motion Made by John Kilcoyne that the Town vote to amend the Protective Bylaws relative to Earth Removal and Quarrying or Mining, as printed in the Warrant under Article 48. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

Motion passed by 2/3rds vote as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 49. EARTH REMOVAL PROTECTIVE BYLAWS

Motion Made by Pat Fox that the Town vote to table Article 49 as written in the Warrant. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Judge Fox explained the motion is to table Article 49 in light of the action taken on Articles 47 and 48.

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 50. LANDOWNER PETITION - ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

Motion made by the landowner, Tom Higgins 7 Princeton Road, that the Town vote to amend the Town of Sterling Zoning Map as printed in the Warrant under Article 50. **TWO-THIRDS VOTE**

Motion passed by 2/3rds vote as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 51. PLAYGROUND STRUCTURE AT HOUGHTON SCHOOL

Motion Made by the petitioner, Stacia Hemphill 20 Birch Drive, that the Town vote to transfer from **Free Cash** the sum of **\$130,000** to be expended as printed in the Warrant under Article 51.

MAJORITY VOTE

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 52. OMNIBUS BUDGET TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES

Motion Made by petitioner Jim Gettens 7 Shady Lane, that the Town vote to amend the General By-Laws as submitted by the petitioner and printed in the Warrant under Article 52.

MAJORITY VOTE

Motion defeated by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 53. CAPITAL PLAN CONSOLIDATED SPENDING ITEM TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES

Motion Made by petitioner Jim Gettens 7 Shady Lane, that the Town vote to amend the General By-Laws as submitted by the petitioner and printed in the Warrant under Article 53.

MAJORITY VOTE

Motion defeated by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 54. CITIZENS PETITION: ELIMINATE THE PUBLIC WORKS BOARD

Motion Made by petitioner, Patty Page 85 Lakeshore Drive, that the Town vote to authorize the Select Board to petition the General Court for special legislation eliminating the Board of Public Works in the Town of Sterling as printed in the Warrant under Article 54. **MAJORITY VOTE**

Motion defeated by majority as declared by the Moderator

ARTICLE 55. ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION

Motion Made by Maureen Cranson that the Town vote to elect by ballot on Monday, June 21, 2020 from 12:00pm to 7:00pm at the Houghton Elementary School Gym on 32 Boutelle Road, the officers as listed and printed in the Warrant under Article 55.

MAJORITY VOTE

Motion passed by majority as declared by the Moderator

8:19pm Annual Town Meeting Adjourned

FINANCIAL REPORTS

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

The tax rate came down again this year by \$0.29 per thousand of valuation. That represents a continued effort on the part of town departments to keep their budgets in check. Valuations are another matter altogether. Assessments must be maintained at or near their market valuation as per DOR guidelines. They are based on a "full and fair cash value" of the property as of Jan. 1st, preceding each fiscal year.

On our recommendation, the Selectboard also voted to maintain a single tax shift factor of 1.000 with a corresponding CIP shift of 1.000. In layman's terms this means we will continue to have a single tax rate for all property in town, including commercial, industrial, and personal property.

Our fellow assessor and longtime member of the board passed away in September of 2021. As a lifelong resident, Bob Cutler was many things to the Town of Sterling. He served for many years as the DPW superintendent, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, and finally as an Assessor. He was also a businessman and a respected farmer. His institutional knowledge of this town will be greatly missed by this board.

Probably the most important role of the Board is to generate equitable assessments. To that end we continually strive to maintain an accurate property database and refine valuation tables and formulas that reflect both impartial and justifiable assessments.

SUMMARY TABLES

<u>Tax Levy:</u>	20,331,571.49	<u>Tax Rate:</u> \$16.52 per thousand of value		
<u>Class</u>	<u>Levy%</u>	<u>Levy% in \$</u>	<u>Valuation by Class</u>	<u>Change from Prior FY</u>
Residential:	87.5683	17,804,011.52	1,077,724,502.00	+9.2%
Commercial:	3.9055	794,049.52	48,065,598.00	+6.1%
Industrial:	4.9973	1,016,029.62	61,503,100.00	+2.0%
Personal:	3.5289	717,480.83	43,431,467.00	+15.2%

Fiscal Year 2021 Overlay: \$99,782.49
Overlay Expended: \$60,462.02

Fiscal Year 2021 New Growth: \$227,918

Respectfully Submitted by:

Board of Assessors 2021

Donlin K. Murray - Chairman Richard A. Sheppard - Clerk Robert F. Cutler - Member

Finance Committee

The following is the Finance Committee's report and budget recommendations for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023.

As part of the Finance Committee's budget deliberations in this year of high inflation, the Committee recommended an entire budget of \$26,319,815, a 3.50% increase over the previous year. This year the budget continued to consolidate the school budgets of both districts, Wachusett Regional and Monty Tech, although they remain as separate warrant articles. We believe that the budget presented was both prudent and fiscally responsible.

Due to increased inflation, the Finance Committee recommended that the COLA for the employees of the Town be increased, on a one-time basis, from the normal 2% to 3%. In addition, the Finance Committee fully endorses the current Select Board project to normalize the salaries and wages paid to Town employees with those earned by town employees in area communities and in towns with like demographics. While the final cost of this plan has yet to be presented to the Select Board, the Finance Committee has set aside \$75,000 from Free Cash to cover any additional expense.

Other budget areas to draw your attention to are the following:

- **School District Assessments**

The Wachusett Regional School District increased their overall assessment by 2.82% to \$12,524,610. The WRSD also made a Capital Request to replace the 20-year flooring, both at the Chocksett and Houghton schools, at a cost of \$200,000 for both facilities. The Montachusett Vocational Technical School District increased their assessment by 3.91% to \$975,792.

- **Special Projects Requests**

After careful consideration and review of the non-reoccurring requests from all departments, the Committee recommended approval of a special projects budget of \$1,005,423 to be funded from a combination of our Capital Investment Fund, certified free cash, re-captured funds, and ambulance receipts. This is consistent with our "pay as you go" strategy and goal of minimizing year to year excessive tax bill increases. It is also reflective of our commitment to maintaining municipal services, protecting town assets, and supporting capital needs while guarding the town's financial position. Funding the town's one-time projects needs is a challenge each year and the Finance Committee and Capital Budget Committee work collaboratively to meet these needs now and into the future. For the current budget period, the Capital Budget Committee has set as a goal not to deplete the Capital Investment Fund below \$3,000,000, which has been successfully achieved.

- Capital Fund

It was recommended that in order to fund the town's non-recurring, special projects for FY2023, a portion of the required funds come from the Capital Investment Fund. That amount was \$516,000. These funds are scheduled to perform additional repair to the Butterick building roof, refurbish the DPW's 6-wheel drive vehicle, purchase of a pickup with plow for the DPW, purchase of new police vehicle and the associated equipment, repair/replacement of Campground Road culverts, purchase of SCBA bottles for the Fire Department, and the replacement of flooring at the Chocksett and Houghton schools. The Capital Budget Committee approved the Finance Committee's request for these funds. In addition, \$108,000 was "recaptured" from prior years' unused warrant articles and inactive accounts. The Capital Investment Fund had a balance of \$3,522,549.92 as of December 31, 2021.

- Other Post-Employee Benefits (OPEB)

The Town of Sterling provides post-employment medical benefits to town retirees and their covered dependents commonly referred to as OPEB. As such, the liability to fund these benefits in the future is estimated using an actuarial valuation. Based on these calculations, Sterling continues to have a substantial unfunded liability. Funding part of this large and growing liability with current contributions is a prudent step which will strengthen the Town's financial position in the future.

The Finance Committee recommends appropriating \$202,500 to be added to an investment account already established to fund this liability. This amount breaks down to our normal yearly contribution of \$150,000, with an additional \$52,500 as part of a pay-back agreed to by the Select Board and the Finance Committee, due to a short-fall in this investment in the past. As of December 31, 2021, the balance in this account was \$929,536.88.

- Stabilization Fund

Each year the Town of Sterling allocates money to its "rainy day fund". This fund can be used in specific emergency situations. This year the Finance Committee recommends that the town allocate \$225,000 for this purpose. As of December 31, 2021, the balance in this account was \$692,367.05.

We would like to thank the voters, departments, boards, and committees for their contribution and continued support of our efforts to provide a balanced budget to meet the needs of the town.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Town of Sterling Finance Committee

REPORT OF THE TREASURER/COLLECTOR

TAX COLLECTIONS 2021

Real Estate Taxes	TAXES COMMITTED	ABATE/ EXEMPT	TRANSFER to TAX TITLE	COLLECTIONS less Refunds	BALANCE
Levy of 2021	\$14,701,448.30	\$49,715.02	\$0.00	\$9,651,256.20	\$5,000,477.08
Levy of 2020	\$19,122,567.20	\$77,733.94	\$0.00	\$18,856,503.07	\$188,330.19
Levy of 2019	\$18,634,872.85	\$70,318.75	\$89,517.05	\$18,462,818.52	\$12,218.53
Levy of 2018	\$17,865,191.08	\$89,709.40	\$133,995.40	\$17,641,486.28	\$0.00
Levy of 2017	\$17,113,786.30	\$80,977.28	\$87,155.63	\$16,945,653.39	\$0.00
Levy of 2016	\$16,760,234.35	\$91,773.67	\$90,035.90	\$16,578,424.78	\$0.00
Levy of 2015	\$15,576,819.78	\$55,401.16	\$69,080.96	\$15,452,337.66	\$0.00
Levy of 2014	\$15,005,223.52	\$58,478.46	\$129,228.60	\$14,817,136.53	\$379.93
Levy of 2013	\$14,586,299.93	\$55,500.37	\$124,619.44	\$14,406,180.12	\$0.00
Levy of 2012	\$14,339,236.77	\$59,784.49	\$96,665.40	\$14,182,786.88	\$0.00
Levy of 2011	\$14,077,243.42	\$75,384.60	\$83,838.00	\$13,918,020.82	\$0.00
Levy of 2010	\$14,082,290.52	\$60,062.05	\$68,711.35	\$13,953,517.12	\$0.00
Levy of 2009	\$14,116,679.40	\$51,584.01	\$58,470.21	\$14,006,625.18	\$0.00
Levy of 2008	\$13,461,501.69	\$44,339.99	\$39,432.99	\$13,377,728.71	\$0.00
Levy of 2007	\$12,709,130.84	\$43,202.82	\$30,136.98	\$12,635,791.04	\$0.00
Levy of 2006	\$12,567,052.89	\$52,248.07	\$36,848.81	\$12,477,625.70	\$330.31
Levy of 2005	\$11,416,727.35	\$35,263.94	\$46,155.08	\$11,335,038.39	\$269.94
					\$5,202,005.98

Personal Property Taxes	TAXES COMMITTED	ABATE/ EXEMPT	COLLECTIONS less Refunds	BALANCE
Levy of 2021	\$358,744.25	\$287.54	\$2,436.37	\$356,020.34
Levy of 2020	\$742,451.56	\$1,146.97	\$739,245.43	\$2,059.16
Levy of 2019	\$727,334.61	\$1,439.36	\$722,772.69	\$3,122.56
Levy of 2018	\$731,389.21	\$3,208.06	\$725,583.01	\$2,598.14
Levy of 2017	\$768,382.98	\$580.53	\$765,208.27	\$2,594.18
Levy of 2016	\$799,941.37	\$1,479.13	\$795,825.96	\$2,636.28
Levy of 2015	\$727,451.88	\$2,182.96	\$722,681.16	\$2,587.76
Levy of 2014	\$722,268.09	\$3,670.85	\$715,969.83	\$2,627.41
Levy of 2013	\$604,838.65	\$8,928.11	\$591,168.34	\$4,742.20
Levy of 2012	\$592,766.33	\$9,140.67	\$583,328.30	\$297.36
Levy of 2011	\$538,892.36	\$10,300.06	\$528,409.80	\$182.50
Levy of 2010	\$455,688.60	\$6,989.49	\$448,331.17	\$367.94
Levy of 2009	\$422,388.42	\$39,637.34	\$382,564.91	\$186.17
Levy of 2008	\$372,158.68	\$5,216.71	\$366,809.99	\$131.98
Levy of 2007	\$307,746.94	\$966.10	\$306,660.55	\$120.29
Levy of 2006	\$301,777.76	\$787.52	\$300,884.55	\$105.69
Levy of 2005	\$352,972.23	\$947.97	\$351,989.08	\$35.18
				<u>\$380,415.14</u>

Motor Vehicle Excise	TAXES COMMITTED	ABATE/ EXEMPT	COLLECTIONS less Refunds	BALANCE
Levy of 2020	\$1,567,999.90	\$34,281.17	\$1,446,049.41	\$87,669.32
Levy of 2019	\$1,546,649.52	\$40,661.28	\$1,488,333.39	\$17,654.85
Levy of 2018	\$1,503,072.10	\$40,113.79	\$1,458,160.32	\$4,797.99
Levy of 2017	\$1,465,357.67	\$44,288.02	\$1,418,198.98	\$2,870.67
Levy of 2016	\$1,356,733.43	\$35,875.95	\$1,318,347.36	\$2,510.12
Levy of 2015	\$1,280,992.50	\$26,775.89	\$1,251,831.81	\$2,384.80
Levy of 2014	\$1,252,073.05	\$27,581.89	\$1,222,516.58	\$1,974.58
				<u>\$119,862.33</u>

Taxes Liens/Tax Title	\$479,375.44
Tax Foreclosure	\$90,803.71

**TOWN OF STERLING
REPORT OF THE TREASURER/COLLECTOR
DEBT - JUNE 30, 2021**

PROJECT	Year	Bond Matures	Rate	Original Bond	FY21 Interest	FY21 Principal
School Renovation	2006	2/15/2020	4.00%	\$9,365,000.00	\$39,600.00	\$990,000.00
Library Renovation	2011	6/15/2021	3.00%	\$455,000.00	\$3,600.00	\$45,000.00
Police & Fire Stations	2011	6/15/2021	3.00%	\$1,580,500.00	\$12,000.00	\$150,000.00
Fire Station	2005	5/15/2025	4.00%	\$1,950,000.00	\$23,797.50	\$95,000.00
Water Tank	2011	6/15/2021	3.00%	\$798,500.00	\$6,400.00	\$80,000.00
Water Disinfecting Plant	2004	2/1/2021	5.25%	\$451,269.00	\$1,750.00	\$35,000.00
Water Mains	2005	5/15/2025	4.00%	\$660,000.00	\$7,515.00	\$30,000.00
Water Well and UV #1	2007	7/15/2027	2.00%	\$806,740.00	\$7,660.50	\$41,352.00
Senior Center	2015	4/15/2035	3.00%	\$2,530,000.00	\$71,337.50	\$130,000.00
TOTAL					\$173,660.50	\$1,596,352.00

Victoria Smith
Treasurer/Collector

TRUST FUNDS - December 31, 2021

Account	Non-Expendable Funds	Expendable Funds
	PRINCIPAL	EARNINGS
JACOB CONANT (FUEL FUND)	\$2,200.00	\$3,714.90
EMILY WILDER (FUEL FUND)	\$1,500.00	\$2,923.69
CLARISSA A. FREEMAN (NEEDY)	\$5,000.00	\$3,020.44
MARTHA ROPER (NEEDY WOMEN)	\$500.00	\$1,269.38
ALBERT FARWELL (FUEL FUND)	\$1,000.00	\$933.96
HENRY STEPHENSEN (NEEDY)	\$2,000.00	\$4,382.27
ALBA COFFIN (ELDERLY)	\$1,000.00	\$1,769.87
TPA (NEEDY)	\$0.00	\$1,926.66
J. HOUGHTON (NEEDY WOMEN)	\$52,664.36	\$9,995.78
BUTTERICK (LIBRARY)	\$11,000.00	\$651.75
ELI KILBURN (LIBRARY)	\$3,250.00	\$361.28
CONANT (LIBRARY)	\$500.00	\$23.88
WAITE (LIBRARY)	\$3,000.00	\$337.12
PUTNAM (LIBRARY)	\$2,000.00	\$222.73
W. C. KENDALL (LIBRARY)	\$500.00	\$97.43
CHARLES PLACE (LIBRARY)	\$2,450.00	\$283.41
E. CONANT (LIBRARY)	\$1,200.00	\$165.14
MADALINE MILLER (LIBRARY)	\$1,000.00	\$113.92
HELEN HOUGHTON (LIBRARY)	\$5,726.87	\$376.23
JUNE WILLIAMS (LIBRARY)	\$76,198.95	\$5,203.31
ALLEN FUND (LIBRARY)	\$0.00	\$266,847.99
FLOWER FUND	\$4,530.00	\$6,724.16
ELI KILBURN PARK	\$1,300.00	\$1,956.69
FANNIE STEVENSON	\$1,000.00	\$1,823.65
PERPETUAL CARE	\$260,181.58	\$57,435.66
FLORENCE HOUGHTON TREE FUND	\$3,434.46	\$5,246.43
ROSAMUND FANNING (SCHOLARSHIP)	\$1,000.00	\$267.63
BUTTERICK SCHOOL FUND (SCHOLARSHIP)	\$10,000.00	\$775.14

BOARD, COMMITTEE AND DEPARTMENT REPORTS

ANIMAL CONTROL

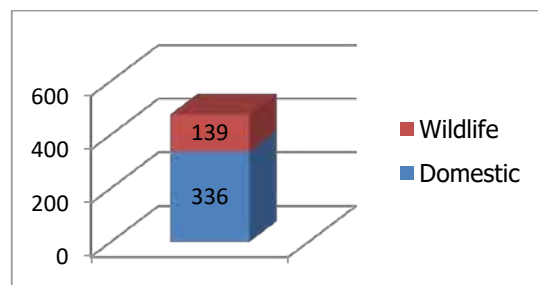
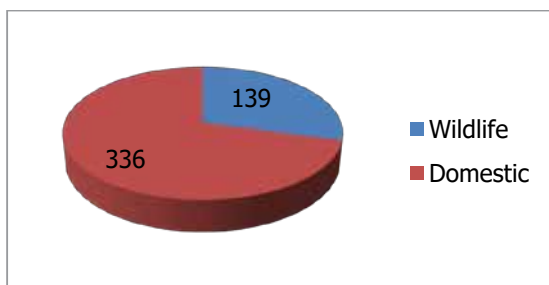
The Animal Control Division of the Sterling Police Department was divided in 2021 between now retired Animal Control Officer Louis Massa and new Animal Control Officer Kelly Jones. ACO Massa worked January to August and ACO Jones took over from August to December. Additionally, Emma Massa was hired as the Alternate Animal Control Officer and the Animal Inspector upon her father's retirement.

Call Volume

Animal Control receives the majority of their calls through the Sterling Police Dispatch, with some calls, reports, or information coming by email, social media, and the ACO's duty cell phone. All of these calls are logged through dispatch as well as through ACO records for statistical and logistical purposes. This ensures all calls are logged, responded to, followed up on, and resolved. This also allows for better identification of repeat incidents and habitual offenders. The main focus of identifying these situations is to address and correct the causes through action or education in lieu of issuing civil citations or criminal complaints.

Animal Control received three hundred and fifty eight (358) calls with four hundred and seventy five (475) total animals involved in these calls. We log and statistically track calls based on the animal type involved. The two animal types that we use are domestic animals and wildlife animals. Domestic animals are defined as any animal that is sufficiently tame to live with a family, generally referred to as pets, or one that can be used to contribute to a family's support, generally farm animals and the like. Domestic animals include pets, companion animals, support animals, service animals, and working animals. Wildlife animals are defined as undomesticated animal species, including game, birds and mammals that are hunted for sport.

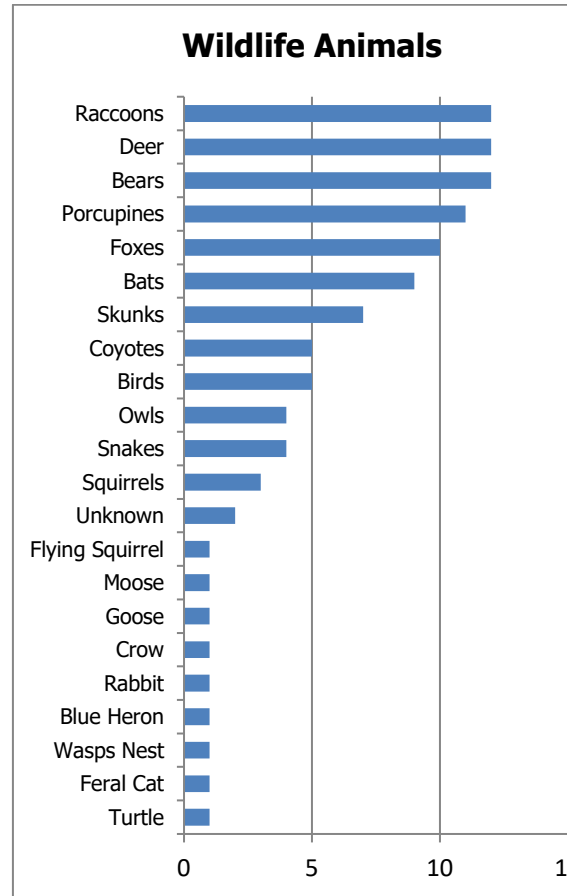
Of the four hundred and seventy five (475) animals involved in calls this year, one hundred and thirty nine (139) were wildlife animals and three hundred and thirty six (336) were domestic animals.



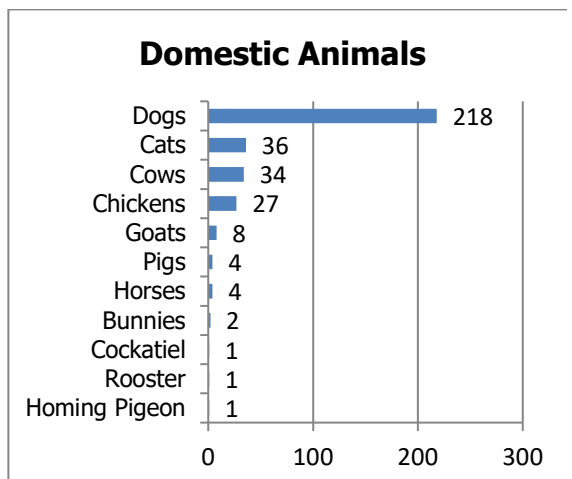
Animals

The four hundred and sixty six (466) animals involved in ACO calls included one hundred and thirty nine (139) wildlife animals and three hundred and thirty six (336) domestic animals which consisted of:

#	Wildlife Animals
12	Raccoons
12	Deer
12	Bears
11	Porcupines
10	Foxes
9	Bats
7	Skunks
5	Coyotes
5	Birds
4	Owls
4	Snakes
3	Squirrels
2	Unknown
1	Flying Squirrel
1	Moose
1	Goose
1	Crow
1	Rabbit
1	Blue Heron
1	Wasp Nest
1	Feral Cat
1	Turtle



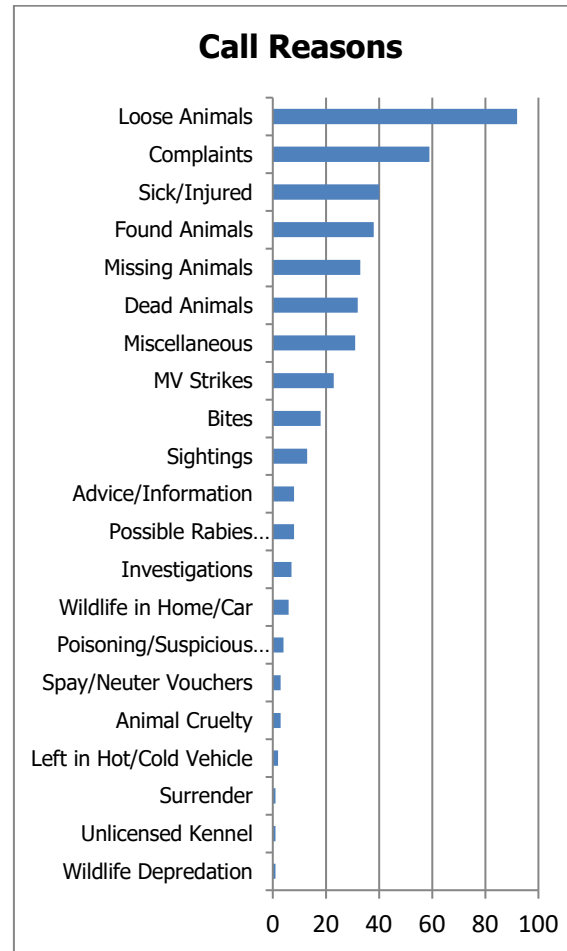
#	Domestic Animals
218	Dogs
36	Cats
34	Cows
27	Chickens
8	Goats
4	Horses
4	Pigs
2	Bunnies
1	Cockatiel
1	Rooster
1	Homing Pigeon



Call Reasons

The call reasons for the three hundred and fifty eight (358) calls were categorized as the following:

#	Call Reason
92	Loose Animals (Domestic)
59	Complaints, Concerns, Nuisance
40	Sick/Injured Animals
38	Found Animals (Domestic)
33	Missing Animals (Domestic)
32	Dead Animals
31	Other Miscellaneous calls
23	Motor Vehicle Strikes of Animals
18	Bites
13	Sightings (Bears & Bobcats)
8	Seeking Advice/Information
8	Possible Rabies Exposures
7	Investigations
6	Wildlife Inside Home/Vehicle
4	Poisoning/Suspicious Activity
3	Spay/Neuter Vouchers
3	Cruelty to Animal Cases
2	Dogs left in Hot/Cold Vehicle
1	Surrender
1	Unlicensed Kennel
1	Wildlife Depredation



Interagency Involvement

Throughout the year, the Sterling ACOs have worked with numerous Animal Control, Care, and Rescue Organizations and Law Enforcement Agencies. ACOs transported five animals to the Worcester Animal Rescue League (WARL) for temporary shelter while their owners could be identified. Two of these resulted in adoptions, two animals were reclaimed by the owner, and one remains at the shelter. Nine animals were transported to Tuft's Wildlife Clinic for evaluation and treatment of illnesses or injuries, or to be humanely euthanized. We have submitted five bats which had human or pet contact to the State Rabies Lab for testing, with one confirmed positive for rabies. We have

contacted and collaborated with the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) on three cases involving suspected Animal Cruelty. Each of these cases involved improper or unsafe shelter for the animals. Two were resolved, with one involving a surrender of the animal and the third is an open and ongoing case. We have contacted Mass Wildlife and Massachusetts Environmental Police on six separate incidents, these included deer struck by motor vehicles and an illegal trapping case. We have referred two cases to the Sterling Board of Health, with one resulting in a condemnation of a structure and the other being resolved. We have contacted and worked with at least seven other local Animal Control Officer's for assistance or notification on cases that cross jurisdictions. These ACO's included Clinton, Princeton, North Attleboro, Rutland Regional, Worcester, Leominster, and Holden.

Citations

Sterling Animal Control Officers have issued sixteen (16) Civil Citations and two (2) written warnings for nine (9) incidents of a Dog at Large/Loose Dog and nine (9) incidents of an unlicensed dog. One criminal citation was issued under M.G.L. c140 s174F for confinement of an animal in a motor vehicle with excessive cold or heat. This criminal citation came as a result of a guest at Davis Farmland leaving their dog inside their vehicle in the parking lot in July; the internal temperature of the vehicle was measured at 126 degrees. Police were able to remove the dog from the vehicle with assistance from Farmland Staff prior to the owner's arrival. The dog was taken back to the Sterling Police Department to cool down. It took the owner more than one and a half hours to realize their dog was no longer in their vehicle and for them to contact Sterling Police.

Total	Civil	Criminal	Written Warnings	Total Fines
19	16	1	2	\$805.00

Investigations

Investigations conducted by the Animal Control Officer have identified potential charges under Massachusetts General Laws for the following criminal offenses:

- M.G.L. c272 s80H Motor Vehicle, striking, injuring or killing dogs or cats (dog)
- M.G.L. c272 s77 Cruelty to animals (3 separate cases)
- M.G.L. c131 s79a Trap, net or snare; use restricted
- M.G.L. c131 s80a Leghold traps and certain other devices restricted
- M.G.L. c131 s80b Registration and identification of traps
- M.G.L. c266 s112 Domestic animals; malicious killing or injury (poisoning)

All of these charges are pending; all require additional evidence or identification of a suspect.

Rabies Clinics

Two rabies clinics were held this year through the VCA Sterling Animal Hospital. The clinics are staffed by VCA Sterling Animal Hospital Staff, members of the Sterling Animal Control Advisory Board, and both Animal Control Officers. The March clinic brought in twenty five (25) felines and fifty eight (58) canines, totaling eighty three (83) animals. The October clinic brought in sixteen (16) felines and twenty five (25) canines, totaling forty one (41) animals. A grand total of one hundred and twenty four (124) animals received rabies vaccinations through these clinics in 2021. The next rabies clinic is Saturday, March 19, 2022 at the VCA Sterling.

	Cats	Dogs	Total
Spring	25	58	83
Fall	16	25	41
Total	41	83	124

Dog Licensing

Dog owners registered and licensed one thousand, three hundred and eight (1308) dogs in 2021, leaving two hundred and twenty eight (228) dogs unlicensed. These “unlicensed” dogs are any dog that was licensed in 2020 but not in 2021. These consist of unreported deaths, residential moves, or changes in ownership, or those who failed to license in 2021. Licensing enforcement was reduced this year in part due to Covid and the change in ACO. Increased enforcement will commence in 2022. This enforcement will include direct contact with owners through phone, email, and postal mail and could progress to civil citations and even criminal complaints through the Clinton District Court. The importance of licensing dogs yearly and keeping up with rabies vaccinations cannot be overstated. Current licenses ensure accurate ownership records for both the Town Clerk and Animal Control. Other reasons to license your dog yearly include:

1. It’s the law! (M.G.L. c140 s137)
2. It proves your dog is properly vaccinated.
3. Your dog has a better chance of being returned home if lost (believe it or not, license tags identify dog and owner much quicker and more accurately than microchips!)

4. Your dog will be safer at the shelter (licensed animals are held longer and less likely to be euthanized at shelters).
5. It's cheap. Just \$8 for a spayed or neutered dog and \$12 for an intact dog (and it's free for seniors and service dogs!)
6. It's quick
7. Avoid Civil Citations and Criminal Complaints

ACO Training

The ACO's have attended numerous trainings this year to include: Animal Control Institute's Core Competencies Training through the Massachusetts Animal Fund (MAF), in which ACO Jones scored a "Pass with Distinction" on the final exam. Additional training included: Large Animal Rescue through the MSPCA Nevins Farm, Emergency Animal Sheltering through Central Mass Disaster Animal Response Team (CMDART), Farm Animal Investigations through the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), and Introduction to Disaster Animal Services through CMDART. ACO Jones also attended "A Day of Training with ACOAM (Animal Control Officers Association of Massachusetts)" which included presentations by Missing Dogs Massachusetts, the Turtle Rescue League, Birdsey Cape Wildlife Center, and Joe's Crazy Critters. This training allowed ACO's to get hands on experience with exotic animals and animals that are illegal to possess and own in Massachusetts, as many inevitably encounter them at some point in their careers. The ACO's learned how to safely catch, handle, and transport these animals. Lastly, the ACO completed Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) courses which included: Introduction to the Incident Command System, Introduction to the National Incident Command System, Animals in Disaster: Awareness and Preparedness, Animals in Disaster: Community Planning, and Livestock in Disasters. ACO E. Massa attended the National Animal Control Association Animal Control Officer 1 Course (20 hour course with National Recognition).

ACO Jones also joined the Central Mass Disaster Animal Response Team as a volunteer in October and deployed to Leicester with the team after a fire displaced over 40 people the day before Thanksgiving. Pet owners affected by the fire were provided with pet food, litter, toys, bowls, treats, cages, and other supplies for their animals at no cost.

Animal Control Advisory Board

The Animal Control Advisory Board (ACAB) is appointed by the Board of Selectmen on an annual basis. The Sterling ACAB meets monthly to review announcements and correspondence and to address old and new business on their meeting agenda. The Board gets monthly updates by the Animal Control Officer which include licensing

reports and Animal Control call reports for domestic and wildlife animals. Upon request from the Animal Control Officer, the Animal Control Advisory Board shall be charged to evaluate animal control problems by collecting necessary data, hearing expert opinion, holding public hearings, etc. and shall recommend solutions or actions necessary to resolve such problems. If resolution is not satisfactory at the level of the advisory board, the Animal Control Advisory Board will recommend the issue be brought to the Board of Selectmen for further review. It would also recommend appropriate rules and regulations for the care and control of animals and facilities covered by the Animal Control bylaws and review budgets and contracts for animal control. Additionally, the Board organizes two Rabies Clinics each year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Animal Control Officer Kelly Jones

BOARD OF HEALTH

Massachusetts Boards of Health are responsible and have statutory obligations under Mass General Laws, for state and local regulations, disease prevention and control, health and environmental protection, and promoting a healthy community. The main purpose of the Board of Health (BOH) has been to enforce Title V of the State Environmental Code, which is the minimum standard for the design and installation of subsurface disposal systems for sanitary sewage in the Town of Sterling. In addition, the Sterling Board of Health has issued supplemental regulations to the Title V Code (Sterling Board of Health Subsurface Disposal Regulations) as well as to local Well Regulations. The intent of these regulations is to protect and improve the public health and welfare of the citizens.

The Sterling Board of Health consists of a three-member board that meets the second Thursday of each month in the Butterick Municipal Office Building at 1 Park Street. The Department consists of the Health Agent, David Favreau and the Associate Health Agent, Kathleen Nickerson who, between them, handle the day-to-day activities. Additionally, Emma Massa performs the duties of the Animal Inspector, Robert Moore is an additional Food and Septic Inspector and Elaine Heller manages the Board Meeting Minutes, plus additional administration work. All are reached through the BOH office at 978-422-8111 X2305.

The Board would like to thank Louis Massa, Animal Inspector, for his 12 years of great service to the Town as well as the Board of Health. He will be missed. THANK YOU. The Board is fortunate to have Emma Massa carrying on his duties as Animal Inspector....and doing a great job of it she is.

In 2021, all operations of the Sterling Board of Health were carried out as required. Results from all permits and licenses issued include the witnessing of 64 percolation tests, 128 deep hole tests (soil testing), 115 Title V inspections, 32 food establishment inspections, 1 pool inspection, 2 camp inspections, 12 samples taken from the public beach for water testing and inspections, etc. Animal inspections in 2021 associated to rabies consisted of 24 (5 cats and 19 dogs) quarantines for possible rabies...all negative; 5 bats were tested...all negative; and barn inspections resumed in 2021 as they were suspended in 2020 due to Covid19. Twenty-five Stables were inspected along with 17 barns with farm animals. In addition, the BOH is also responsible for responding to nuisance complaints and housing complaints that amounted to 40 complaints in 2021.

Actual Permits/Licenses issued by the Board of Health for 2021 were Camp Permits 2; Septic Construction Permits 66; Food Establishment Permits 41; Stable Permits 25; Funeral Home Permit 1; Septic Hauler Licenses 15; Septic Installer Licenses 43; Pool Permits 3; and Private Well Permits 8.

With the Pandemic of Covid19 still upon us, there were many more complaints, approximately 100, pertaining to the virus along with a corresponding number of questions regarding the guidelines put out by the State of Massachusetts and how they were to be interpreted. Vaccines were a very large topic as to how, when and where one could obtain a vaccine along with the how, when and where to find testing. It was a difficult time for all.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Public Health Emergency Preparedness is a major part of the Board's responsibilities, working alongside the Fire Department, the Police Department and DPW to be prepared for emergency situations that have a health-related component. There were a number of related activities in 2021:

- The Board of Health is host to Massachusetts Department of Public Health regional assets: a satellite phone for emergency communications and an AM Advisory Radio Station. The latter is housed in the Emergency Operations Center at the Fire Station. This equipment is made available if requested by other local boards of health.
 - The satellite phone capability is tested quarterly.
 - The AM Advisory Radio station can be used to transmit emergency or advisory information to the public during emergency or public safety incidents. It broadcasts on AM radio channel 1670 (MHz).
- The Sterling Board of Health has a cache of pet crates and a pet-shelter set-up kit from the PHEP Coalition (Public Health Emergency Preparedness). The supplies are housed with the Sterling Fire Department and can be used when an emergency pet shelter is needed near a human shelter. Details of the cache have been shared with the Animal Control Officer and Animal Control Advisory Board.
- The Sterling Board of Health has a cache of emergency supplies and response equipment to be deployed in the event of an emergency. Some was deployed for COVID vaccination clinics.
- Sterling public health staff and volunteers participated in deployment call-down drills with the Wachusett Medical Reserve Corps, operated out of Hubbardston and the Worcester Regional Medical Reserve Corps out of Worcester.
- The Wachusett Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) operates out of Hubbardston and serves 17 communities in Northeastern Central Massachusetts. WMRC volunteers serve a vital role by assisting their communities with ongoing public

health needs. This is accomplished through community health profiles that identify needs, developing educational programs, providing screening clinics and working with the local health officials as a resource for public health initiatives that they may target as important to their specific community. The role of the healthcare community in disaster preparation is to identify resources applicable to physical, social and psychological effects of a disaster, to identify population groups that are at the greatest risk during a disaster, to provide disaster education in advance of the event, and to take responsibility for the health of the community following a disaster. Part of our role in disaster planning is to support community disaster planning, assist in determining community health hazards, and assist to determine existing measures and resources that aid and reduce the impact of a given hazard. The WMRC members are not the planners, they are a resource for the planners with volunteers who have been screened for skills and credentialed per MRC guidelines.

Health professionals (current, retired, or otherwise employed) and others with backgrounds such as clerical, childcare, legal, accounting, clergy are invited to join the Wachusett MRC to use their skills in many areas such as Clinical Medical Services, Counseling/Social Services, Education, Food and Board Services, Interpretation, Financial Assistance, Administration, Advisory Boards, and as Legal Consultants to help the organization to grow and shape its future to meet the needs of the communities of northern Worcester County

- Some Sterling BOH staff, board members, and Sterling volunteers participated in the following events, trainings and exercises:
 - Participate in monthly meetings of the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coalition Steering Committee and serve on ad hoc committees.
 - Participant in organizational meetings of Wachusett Medical Reserve Corps
 - Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person courses were not held this year.

Flu shots were provided by CVS at the Senior Center for 148 seniors/employees and public safety personnel.

The combined agencies of the Board of Health, Sterling Fire Department, Sterling Senior Center, Community Emergency Response Team and Wachusett Medical Reserve Corps conducted drive-through COVID-19 clinics at the Sterling Senior Center. See the Sterling Fire Department's report for details.

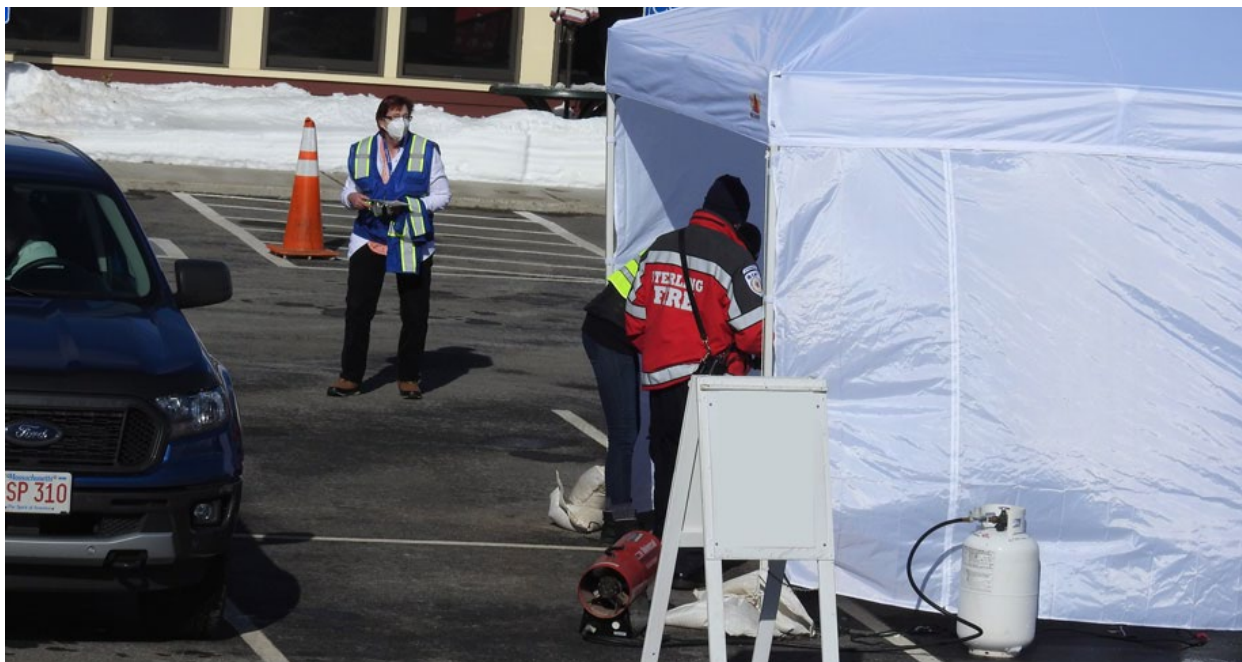


Photo: February 2021. COVID-19 drive-thru vaccination clinic at the Senior Center parking lot. Participating agencies include Sterling Fire Department, Senior Center, Sterling Board of Health, Sterling Police Department, DPW, and members of Community Emergency Response Team and the Wachusett Medical Reserve Corps. Photo by Barry Lein.

STERLING BOARD OF HEALTH



Town of Sterling

Conservation Commission

1 Park St, Butterick Municipal Bldg- Room 207.

Sterling Massachusetts 01564

Tel 978 422 8111 ext 2321

Email mmarro@sterling-ma.gov

STERLING CONSERVATION COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT for 2021

Respectfully Submitted By: Barbara Roberti, Michael Pineo, Sue Valentine, Steve Pavlovich, Scott Michalak, Connor Emsley, Brianna Smith Associate, Christopher O'Neill, Matthew S. Marro as Agent

The Sterling Conservation Commission is a seven-member municipal authority dedicated to the protection of Sterling's Wetlands and other natural resources. The Commission enforces the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act MGL. Ch 131 s 40 as amended. The Commission processed Notices of Intent, request for determinations as well as pursued enforcement and continued its efforts on storm water regulation. The onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic has presented challenges to serving the public, however, the commission has implemented emergency procedures to continue to serve the public in a seamless manner.

The Commission also was active on other agencies as well with members serving on the Earth Removal Board, The Open Space and Recreation Committee and the Chapter 40 B review Committee. The Commission works hand in hand with the Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Commission has provided technical assistance with the Planning Board in regulation review.

The Commission's office agent also conducted site inspections for building permit applications and compliance inspections for existing conservation permits. The agent is also providing technical assistance in grant applications and implementations of awarded grants and is implementing an awarded grant for an accessible trail and the placement of accessible picnic tables at Passive and active recreational facilities throughout the town of Sterling.

The Conservation Commission, in 2021, continues it's planning for the implementation of a trails system to promote the use of the land in a manner consistent with the goals of open space and recreation and is pursuing a second phase of trails work in the Swett Hill/Hall Ave area.

The Commission has enacted prior forest stewardship planning with the goal of managing conservation-controlled forest land for ecosystem health and examination as a sustainable source of some revenue via Timber harvesting. Planning and bidding for lumber management at the Commission property at Hall Ave and Park Street due to be implemented for calendar year 2022. This has been facilitated by the retention of Gary Gouldrup, certified forester to aid the commission in planning and bidding. The Park Street area was severely damaged during the ice storm of 2008 and the harvesting will also result in clean-up of storm damage and re-establishment and enhancement of the trail network.

The Commission looks forward to another productive year in working towards the continued implementation of the open space plan and the implementation of its recently completed forest stewardship plan.

Council on Aging

2021 Annual Report

2021 was year two of the pandemic. Constant review of COVID data and protocols spurred frequent adjustment to delivery of programs and services. This enabled the Sterling Senior Center to meet its mission to maintain the health and well-being of the Sterling seniors and to assist them in maintaining their independence.

February brought a welcome turning point in the pandemic with the availability of vaccines. In partnership with Sterling Fire Department, a major operation took place to set up drive-through COVID vaccination clinics at the Senior Center. Every resident over the age of 75 was contacted, advised of the clinics and offered assistance with the online enrollment. 430 residents received their first and second COVID vaccinations at the Center in February 2021. A drive-through clinic for the booster shot was organized for 403 residents in October 2021. Home visits were provided by Sterling EMS as needed as an alternative to the clinics.



Throughout the year, the Senior Center collaborated with the Sterling Fire Department and the Rutland Regional Emergency Communications Center to provide online enrollment assistance as residents' vaccination eligibility or booster eligibility arose.

Additional assistance in the form of outreach, education, technology, and transportation also was provided. 1139 residents received over 2600 units of service related to the COVID vaccination process.

Other outreach services, including well checks, telephone assurance, application assistance, case management, home care referrals, health benefit counseling, medical equipment loans, food pantry assistance and delivery, SNAP benefits, fuel assistance, Emergency Broadband Benefits, and more were provided to 543 seniors during the year.

Essential services such as the Elder Keep Well Clinic, Foot Care Clinic and SHINE continued in person at the Center throughout the year. The annual flu clinic was provided to over 200 residents in October utilizing the new and successful drive-through format. The newsletter, a 12-page color publication, was mailed or emailed to Sterling residents 60 years of age and older each month.

The COA/Mart accessible vans provided 2182 trips throughout the year utilizing strict COVID sanitation and social distancing procedures. The vans, with the permission of Mart, and the electric car were also used to transport goods such as food pantry, meals, pharmacy items, groceries and durable medical equipment. The Sterling Senior Center also entered into a pilot project with Mart to utilize regionalization of services and technology to provide more rides for more people. The pilot is ongoing.



Volunteers delivered 2631 Meals on Wheels to our homebound. Monthly Grab n Go's provided another meal option. Finally, those who needed assistance with food preparation were provided our home-cooked congregate meal delivery that continued until the dining room opened in July 2021. New ServSafe regulations were introduced to ensure a pleasant and safe dining experience. 7880 congregate lunch meals were provided throughout the year.

In terms of exercise and recreational programming, the year began with the continuation of an offering of online programming. Outside exercise classes resumed as soon as weather allowed; and with the growing availability of vaccines and declining COVID numbers, the Senior Center resumed limited onsite programs in June.





Onsite programming continued to grow through the second-half of 2021. While programming has not returned to pre-COVID levels, the Senior Center has been creative in introducing new and adapting traditional events. For the second year, the annual car show became a fun and successful rolling rally that the whole town enjoyed. The Sterling Strummers performed their holiday concert from within the new Senior Center garage. The art work of our volunteers donned the walls for many months until we were ready to resume our guest art displays and receptions in the fall.

Our volunteers continue to be the backbone of our organization. 111 individuals provided over 6700 hours of service in the kitchen, on reception, delivering meals, assisting with events, friendly phone visiting and programs. Our kitchen functioned without a kitchen manager and relied on volunteers to run the show for 6 months this year! The overwhelming number of calls to enroll eligible residents into vaccination clinics were primarily handled by 14 volunteers, often from their home or cell phones. Many of our volunteers worked nonstop from the start of the pandemic in March of 2020! This dedication prompted a volunteer appreciation trip to the WooSox in July, a very small way to say thank you to those who served our community during a pandemic. The Senior Center extends a heartfelt thank you to all of their volunteers who participated this year.



The COA Board worked with the Director to support strong COVID safety guidelines throughout the year. The support, recommendations, and guidance of the Board was invaluable in determining how to move forward each month. While the Friends of Sterling Seniors (FOSS) were unable to resume all their popular fundraising efforts due to COVID, they held two hugely successful raffles, Grab & Go events, and resumed the ever-popular Pancake Breakfast.



In 2021, the Action Plan for Age and Dementia Friendly Sterling was developed and accepted by AARP. Also, Dementia Friendly Massachusetts welcomed Sterling into their community. As a result, Sterling is now considered an active Age and Dementia Friendly community. The Take Me Home Program, a voluntary registration program for those with dementia, autism or any cognitive concern, was developed by the Sterling Police Department in conjunction with the ADF work group. The Senior Center and Recreation co-chair the ADF work group that meets monthly and is open to the public.

The Council on Aging / Senior Center would like to thank all the various organizations and businesses that partnered with us throughout the year with a special thank you to those that assisted in the vaccination efforts: Sterling Fire Department, Sterling Police Department, Sterling DPW, Conant Library, Recreation Department, Board of Health, FOSS, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Wachusett Medical Reserve Corp, Rutland Regional Emergency Communication Center, Wachusett Rotary, Veterans' Services, Grange, Garden Club, Sew What Club, Sterling Village, Sunrise Assisted Living, And Away We Go Travel. The Center would also like to thank all our local farmers, big and small, who donated fresh produce and more throughout the growing season and all the residents who generously gave donations to support our meals program.

Respectfully Submitted,

Veronica Buckley, Director

Sterling Senior Center



Sterling Cultural Council
One Park Street
Sterling, MA 01564

Where Art & Culture Meet the Community

Sterling Cultural Council

The Sterling CC strives to fund applications which will bring cultural events to as many residents of Sterling as possible. To this end, the council attempts to fund a broad spectrum of applications which appeal to all ages and interests.

Sterling Annual Report:

The Sterling Cultural Council (SCC) is the local extension of the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) and is responsible for administering grants to fund cultural activities that benefit Sterling and local residents. The SCC is comprised of 5 members; appointed by the Select Board of Sterling. In the past, the majority of the Council's responsibilities were accomplished between December and January. The Sterling Cultural Council meets and operates within the guidelines of the established by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

This year, 2022, we were able to fund most requests that met the State requirements. As a rule total funding does not meet the need for full funding of Grants submitted. We were able to support the Sterling requests, but not all.

We have received applications from: The Conant Public Library, Sterling Senior Center, Sterling Recreation Department, Sterling Arts Collaborative, Virginia Thurston Healing Garden, etc. 16 Grant requests in total, 11 fully funded. We are very pleased to see different submissions from previous years.

In 2021, we were able established the first "Art in the Park" event! A huge success. This year (2022) it is our intention to sponsor the 2nd Annual Art in the Park event and further boost the interest in the Arts in our community. As a result of this event, there has been substantial exposure of many local artists. Artists (from 5 years plus) submitted their art for judging and/or for sale to the general public. We were delighted by musical artists from various groups, refreshments by local eateries, and wowed by the many disciplines of art on display.

Respectfully submitted: Rosanne Mapp, Chair; Patricia Ward, Secretary; Christine Corff, Treasurer; Beth Stephenson, Member; Judith Doherty, Member

2021 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS ANNUAL REPORT

The Department of Public Works is responsible for the planning, design, operations and management of the Town's public works infrastructure and assets and provides professional technical and management expertise to other municipal departments and town officials. Sterling's infrastructure includes roads, sidewalks, bridges, guard rail and street signs; stormwater: road drainage, catch basins, culverts and outfalls; cemeteries, parks and playgrounds; the closed town landfill; town-wide fleet and equipment maintenance; public water supply including its storage, pumping and distribution; winter snow & ice operations; and management necessary to provide safe and reliable transportation systems for each of our municipal public safety operations, residents, businesses and visitors.

Personnel

2021 had several personnel changes that affected the Department of Public Works. Superintendent Paul Lyons retired after 14 years in total with the DPW. Thank you Paul for your service to the Town of Sterling. A number of other employees also retired or resigned from their positions for new endeavors. We welcomed five new employees to the Department, including Superintendent Ryan Mouradian who joined the Department in October.

General Operations

2021 was a challenging year for the DPW, as the department found themselves short staffed for much of the summer construction season. Jeff Nutting was brought in as an interim Superintendent in the Spring while the search was underway for a permanent Superintendent. The large sand pile at the DPW facility was hauled to the sand pit behind the landfill for storage. The DPW now uses straight salt to treat the roadways in the winter months which produces a better result, and actually reduces salt usage overall. The yard at the DPW facility was cleaned up immensely, with numerous old, small pieces of equipment and surplus materials being disposed of or auctioned off.



The relocated sand pile that was previously at the DPW yard

Roadside mowing and street sweeping did not receive its normal attention due to staffing shortages and equipment breakdowns. The purchase of a new roadside mower was approved at the June 2021 Town Meeting, and was received by the DPW late in 2021. We are excited to utilize this important piece of equipment in 2022 and thank the residents of Sterling for approving this purchase.



The DPW's new loader mounted roadside mower that is mounted on an existing Sterling DPW loader

Roadway Maintenance

The DPW responded to numerous requests for work along and adjacent to the Town's roadways.

Two culvert replacements were completed on Twine Road. The pipes were replaced in 2020, and the finish work including building head walls and paving were completed in 2021. Additionally, numerous work adjacent to the culvert replacements including tree removal, trimming, and edging were completed in order to re-open the road to through traffic after a two year closure due to the original failing culverts.

Seventeen catch basins were re-built at various locations. The re-builds typically include removing pavement around the grates and making necessary repairs such as replacing block, replacing frames and covers, adding proper backfill, re-cementing the frame and grate to the structure, and re-paving the area.



Installing a new catch basin on Clemence Ave

The DPW supported the roadway paving operations as usual, including replacing driveway aprons as necessary, and adding berm where required to direct the water to drainage areas.

Below is a list of the roadway paving completed in 2021:

2021 – Roadway Paving

Street	Pavement Treatment	Linear Feet
Bean Road	Mill & Overlay	1,900'
Redemption Rock Trail (RT 140)	Mill & Overlay	8,500'
Redstone Place	Reclaim & Pave	1,400'
Wiles Road	Reclaim & Pave	3,300'

In summary, the DPW completed a total of 2.85 miles of public road surface improvements, representing approximately 2.5-percent of the total miles of public roads in Sterling.

In 2021, Sterling contracted an engineering firm to create a pavement management plan for town-owned roads. The consultant drove all the streets to analyze pavement condition and distresses, curb type, sidewalk condition, and the number of castings (manhole covers, catch basin grates, water valve boxes) which all impact the re-construction of a road. These analyses create a "pavement condition index" or "PCI" for each section of road analyzed. The PCI is an industry standard method for assigning a score from 0-100 for each road, with different score ranges suggesting different pavement treatments which range from no action (score 90-100) to full reclamation of the asphalt and re-construction of the road (score 0-55). Sterling's overall average PCI was 71. Below is a breakdown of the Town's score:

Pavement Treatment	Score Range	Road Miles	Road Percentage
Defer Maintenance	Score 90-100	16.2 Miles	19%
Crack Seal	Score 75-90	22.6 Miles	27%
Mill & Overlay	Score 55-75	32.7 Miles	39%
Reclamation	Score 0-55	12.6 Miles	15%

Snow & Ice

Snow removal remains a top priority of the DPW, in order to provide the safest possible road and sidewalk conditions during the winter months. This task is undertaken by the combined efforts of all DPW employees including a small number of outside contractors.

To provide reliable, safe and timely snow plowing and salting services - the DPW reminds Sterling residents not to plow, shovel, or snow blow snow onto the public ways. Depositing snow onto a public way is a violation of a Sterling "by-law" and fines may be assessed to violators. To assist our equipment operators during plowing operations and to minimize damages to private property - residents are advised to install snow stakes at the edge of the street to identify walls, fences and/or other related private assets covered by snow.



Town trucks lined up to be loaded with salt prior to treating the roads

It is also recommended that mailboxes be secured and set back from the roadside to prevent damage from the snow that is displaced during the snow plowing operations. The majority of resident mailbox-related damage citizen requests can be avoided if residents make necessary repairs and secure their mailboxes prior to the commencement of the winter season. Similarly, it is the property owner's responsibility to clear snow in front of their mailbox and at the end of their driveways. Property owners are also advised to place snow on the roadside end of their driveways on the downward side of the travel lane of their driveway aprons to reduce large deposits of snow resulting from snow plowing operations.

Members of the DPW have many years of experience dealing with winter weather conditions. During snow events it is important to note that when traveling - residents and commuters alike - can assist our snow plow equipment operators and avoid collisions/minimize windshield damages - by keeping a safe distance of at least three hundred (300) feet behind Town-equipment at all times. Our trucks make frequent stops and turns to provide safe and reliable public roads (and sidewalks) for our residents and businesses. Your patience, courtesy, and stopping to think goes a long way in making winter driving safe for all.

Brush and Leaf Disposal

The leaf composting and brush chipping facility was staffed during various times throughout the year by DPW staff. This service is a very popular operation for the residents of Sterling. The materials generated from this program are processed by the DPW and used on numerous town-wide DPW projects. For winter use by residents, the DPW maintains a small quantity of winter sand/salt mix at our 171 Worcester Road facility.

Vehicle Maintenance

The DPW in-house mechanics maintain all DPW, and various Municipal Light, Fire, Police and general municipal vehicles– to assure that all equipment is ready, reliable and safe for day-to-day and emergency-related use. The work completed this year included numerous large scale repairs to various DPW vehicles in addition to providing day-to-day preventative maintenance and/or repairs.

The activities of the mechanics in 2021 included:

- Preventative maintenance of DPW, Fire, Police, Light Department and general municipal vehicles.
- Provide assistance to all Town Departments throughout the year on various projects.
- Went through all vehicles to ensure inspection readiness and completed inspections on both large and small vehicles.

Trash and Recycling

The DPW is responsible for managing the curbside trash and recycling contract with the contracted vendor. In April of 2021, the contract with Casella Waste Management was extended three years as the previous contract was set to expire on June 30, 2021. The DPW and Casella Waste Management have been working together to execute another new contract that would include automated trash pickup and wheeled totes for both trash and recycling at each residence in Sterling. We hope to have this contract executed in early 2022.

In 2021, Casella picked up and disposed of 2,302.20 tons of trash and 916.14 tons of recycling.

Sterling continued to be one of the top users of the Wachusett Recycle Center located off Raymond Huntington Highway in West Boylston. Residents are encouraged to use the center for bulk items and anything that is not accepted by the curbside trash and recycling program.

Cemeteries

The DPW maintains 6 cemeteries; Hillside Cemetery, Oakhill Cemetery, Chocksett Cemetery, Legg Cemetery, Fairbanks Cemetery and Cookshire Cemetery. These cemeteries are mowed frequently to keep a neat appearance and checked regularly for branches and downed trees.

In 2021, twenty eight (28) cremation burials and seventeen (17) full burials occurred.

The cemeteries received their usual special attention ahead of the Memorial Day holiday, with numerous flowers being planted and the beds being mulched. Regular mowing occurred as needed the rest of the year.

A new water line was started at Hillside Cemetery in anticipation of creating several new cemetery sections in 2022. Cemetery lots are selling quickly, and these new sections will add over one hundred new lots to the cemetery.

Parks and Fields

The DPW staff maintains the various parks and fields located around Town. Athletic fields include the Griffin Road Fields, Muddy Pond Fields, Redstone Hill Fields and the West Sterling Fields. Parks include Sholan Park at Lake Waushacum and Memorial Park located behind the fire station.

Memorial Park was mowed and trimmed as needed, and all beds in the center of town were mulched ahead of the Memorial Day holiday. Sholan Park received a full Spring cleanup, and the swimming ropes and dock were installed with the help of the fire department. Throughout the year maintenance was performed on an as needed basis at the request of the recreation department.



Some of the field maintenance equipment at the lower Griffin field

The fields were regularly maintained with the help of numerous seasonal laborers. The large amount of rain this season was challenging for the parks and field maintenance crew as wet conditions and quick growing grass were frequent week to week.

Water Department

Sterling produced 188.748 million gallons of water in 2021 from our own water sources. The breakdown of the sources are as follows:

Route 12 (Worcester Road) Wells

Well 2A	25.760 million gallons	14%
Well 2B	<u>13.366 million gallons</u>	<u>7%</u>
Total	39.126 million gallons	21%

Redemption Rock Wells

Well 3	52.690 million gallons	28%
Well 4	47.141 million gallons	25%
Well 5	<u>49.791 million gallons</u>	<u>26%</u>
Total	149.622 million gallons	79%

Total Produced 188.748 million gallons 100%

The Town currently operates five (5) groundwater wells and three (3) water storage tanks.

The Town's water supply sources include the Route 12 wells, also known as the Worcester Road wells and the Redemption Rock Wells, also known as the West Sterling wells. The Route 12 wells consist of wells 2A, 2B and 2C. Well 2C was found to have elevated levels of per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and was shut down for the entirety of 2021. Repeat and regular testing at wells 2A and 2B have shown minimal or no levels of PFAS. These wells are located on Worcester Road across from Muddy Pond Road.

The Redemption Rock Wells consist of wells 3, 4, and 5 and are the Town's largest water producer. These wells are located off Route 140 in West Sterling.

All wells are treated with potassium hydroxide that raises the naturally low pH of the groundwater to make the water less corrosive and UV light for disinfection which kills any naturally occurring bacteria. In the summer, sodium hypochlorite is also added to the water as an additional barrier for disinfection.

This year 17 new water customers were added to the system, bringing the total to 2,471.

The water department staff took on a number of projects during 2021 on top of the regular station checks and maintenance that occur 365 days per year.

Approximately 500 linear feet of new water main was installed on Flanagan Hill Road starting at the intersection of Pratts Junction Road. The intent of this new water main is to create a loop from Pratts Junction Road to the intersection of Flanagan Hill and Cynthia Lane to provide redundancy and improved water quality to that area. This project is expected to continue in 2022.

The staff also completed a unidirectional flushing program on the entire town. This program began in the Spring and continued through the Summer. The intent of the program is to flow water through the water mains out of the fire hydrants in one direction starting at water sources or tanks, flushing out anything that has settled in the mains over time and replaces it with clean water.

Engineering was started to replace the water mains owned by the Town of Sterling in the Washacum Village Homeowners Association neighborhood near Campground Road. The Town of Sterling voted to adopt these water mains in the 1970's, and the area has been frequented by water main breaks in the past. Construction of this replacement is expected to occur in 2022.

A new pipe storage shed was constructed by town forces at the Route 12 well site. This storage shed is used to store water pipes kept for emergencies and projects out of the sunlight and up off the ground which will help to protect the pipe and maintain its longevity.

The water department with the assistance of a consultant completed both a water system master plan and a corrosion control study on the town's water. The master plan looks at all the infrastructure in the water system, and prioritizes projects so the DPW can better plan and budget for future improvements to the system. The corrosion control study was a required study by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP) in an attempt to reduce the lead levels in the water. Both studies were completed in 2021 and submitted to MADEP for review.

In closing, we would like to thank the staff of this DPW for their hard work in continuing to make Sterling a great place to live.

Respectfully submitted:

Deane Day, Chairman, DPW Board
Blaine Bershad, Member, DPW Board
Andrew Parker, Member, DPW Board
Ryan Mouradian, P.E., DPW Superintendent

Sterling Economic Development Committee 2021

As with just about every Board, Committee and Town department the year 2021 was another challenging journey for the Economic Development Committee.

The Committee's mission, when formed in 2012, was to seek and attract new businesses. The intent was to include commercial, industrial as well as agricultural. The goal was, and still is, not just to attract new but support and retain existing entities.

Several Town departments participated in all efforts of the EDC. Representatives from DPW, SMLD, Police, Conservation, Planning, ZBA and Staff continue to be participants in all we do to move Sterling forward.

Zoning issues remain a priority. The EDC works closely with our Planning/Building Depts. to continuously review, revise existing zoning by laws to be presented to the taxpayers.

We carefully discussed and re-evaluated those that may be potential impediments to attracting new business.

In particular we are looking to accurately define the aquifer in the Route 12, Chocksett and Pratts Junction Road area. Not having this aquifer more appropriately defined has limited business to what we deem, our premier Industrial Area.

Our efforts to energize our business community continued, though in somewhat paltry fashion due to COVID 19.

That being said we remain committed to:

- advocating for Sterling and its assets which we highlighted in a brochure
- promoting existing businesses and their commitment to Sterling with a recognition program
- highlighting properties to the proper authorities for nuisance violations as well as potential health hazards
- soliciting new business to fill our downtown properties
- soliciting new business for our industrial areas
- developing a 'how to', where to' guide for potential businesses
- supporting a more robust Farmers Market
- working with the Master Plan Committee to complete the Town's antiquated plan

The Committee believes the ambiance and appearance of the Town itself is important when attracting, not just business, but the families those businesses may bring as well. To that end we involved ourselves in several potential community enhancements.

- We continue to support the efforts for our Downtown Revitalization
- The EDC will again sponsor/support 'Sterling Clean Up Day' which is an opportunity for all to show their pride in the Town. Trash bags, gloves, signage and maps will be provided to all that would aid and abet in the effort.
- The committee looks forward to supporting another day/weekend to 'Celebrate Sterling' it's businesses and assets.
- With the idea that our newly renovated 1835 building could be a revenue source as well as a cultural attraction, the EDC will continue to promote this asset for business and cultural usage.
- Beach Beautification at Sholan Park continues to be in the works. Funding at the 2020 Town Meeting allowed for designs for the 'first step' drainage issue. The design is complete. We are currently soliciting for the funding for its' implementtion.
- When speaking of 'beautification' we would be remiss if we didn't highlight some of our blights. Graffiti on our overhead bridges was a concern of some of our taxpayers. In collaboration with State, Sterling Police and SMLD, cameras were installed and seem to have abated the endeavors of these 'artists'.
- Though our traffic circles have been an impediment to accidents and more, the unsightly weeds and grasses have tended to be nuisance both in looks and safety. They do nothing to welcome visitors to our Community. There is an ongoing conversion with the Mass DOT, our DPW and the EDC to correct what was a planting 'error' on the contractor's part.
- EDC is also working on a unified destination signage program with monies acquired with grants.

As a Committee we are more than appreciative of the funding the taxpayers have afforded us. We are committed in continuing to seek more grant funding as we move forward.

And as we move forward, we anticipate needing 'matching funds' for some of those grants. However, with the current economic trends we will continue to operate with our reduced budget for the 2023 fiscal year. We have adopted a 'tightening of the belt' mentality for the time being just as our businesses have had to do.

For Sterling to have a robust economic base we need to continue to support and recognize all of our businesses in industrial, commercial and agriculture arenas.

Let's keep them in Sterling and in business!

Respectfully submitted:

Jim Patacchiola chairman
Keith Cordial treasurer
Michael Pineo member

Paul Cathcart Vice Chair
Richard Maki member
Rosanne Mapp member
Maureen Cranson BOS Rep

The Sterling Fair Committee

For the Sterling Fair Committee, 2021 was another year of 'No Fair'. On August 25th, 2021, the Sterling Board of Health voted not to support the 2021 Sterling Fair citing concerns over rising COVID-19 infection rates, and this vote canceled our 2021 Sterling Fair.

After a year of planning for the 2021 Fair, the hard-working volunteers that make up the Fair Committee were devastated to cancel for the second year in a row, and this time the Fair was canceled just 12 days from the start. However, this great committee did not just give up; instead, they continued to work with various town departments to ensure all monies were returned to every exhibitor that had turned in their entry fees and every vendor that had submitted their payments and permit fees.

The buttons and t-shirts for 2021 had a theme of a Sterling 'honey-wagon'. These buttons and t-shirts were sold with great success at the Sterling Farmer's Market, the Sterling Recreation Department's Town Concerts, and at local businesses. We owe much gratitude to the Fair Committee members who spent many hours selling these items to help recuperate a small part of the financial loss from the Fair being canceled so close to the start.

I am proud to say that once again the great Sterling Fair Committee decided to not let disappointment stop us from moving ahead. Planning for the 2022 Sterling Fair is well underway! We know how much our community enjoys the Fair, and we believe that in these difficult times the Sterling Fair is just what everyone needs to show that better times are ahead. We will work to ensure we have a safe Fair with all the fun that we have come to know from Sterling's premier event.

We hope to see all of you at our 2022 Sterling Fair. As always, we welcome anyone who would like to join our all-volunteer committee. We have needs for volunteers during the weekend of the Fair and year-round. If interested, please contact us at www.sterlingfair.org

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Downey

Sterling Fair Committee Chair

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021
Sterling Fire Department & Fire Department Ambulance
Sterling Emergency Management Agency

I am pleased to submit the annual report for the Sterling Fire Department and Sterling Emergency Management Agency for calendar year 2021.

The Department

The Sterling Fire Department is a combination department with both fulltime and on-call personnel. Currently the department has nine fulltime personnel including the fire chief, and the administrative assistant who manages the office, ambulance billing, incident reporting and scheduling inspections. We have a fire prevention and code enforcement lieutenant who works weekdays, four firefighter / paramedics who work alternating 24-hour shifts and two firefighter / paramedic that work alternating four 12-hour day shifts. The newest daytime position was added in August 2021. In addition to our fulltime staff, there are thirty-five on-call and per-diem personnel that provide response to the community throughout the year based on their availability with job, school, and family commitments.

We operate out of a single fire station built in 2005, located in the center of town. Our response apparatus includes, a command vehicle, two engines, one aerial ladder, one rescue, two advanced life support ambulances, one paramedic intercept vehicle, three forestry trucks, a boat, and three support trailers for hazardous materials, off road ATV, and emergency management response. We also have members that respond as part of the Fire District Regional Dive Team and Technical Rescue Response Team. Sterling is a member of Mutual Aid Fire District 8 which encompasses 33 cities and towns within Central Massachusetts.

Mission Statement

The Sterling Fire Department is committed to providing the highest level of public safety services for our community. We protect lives and property of our residents and visitors through fire suppression, emergency medical response, disaster management, fire prevention and public education.

Vision Statement

Deliver a quality, high level service to our customers. Promote the personal and professional growth of our members. Minimize the impact of loss through our prevention efforts including, inspections, code enforcement and pre-fire planning. Provide public safety education to our community and promote the health and safety of our citizens. Work seamlessly with our public safety partners.

Emergency and Service Calls

Fire Department personnel responded to a total of 1,953 incidents (*calls for service*) in calendar year 2021. This was an increase of 160 incidents compared to 2020. Of this, 1,197 incidents were medical emergencies (ambulance only), and 756 incidents were fire/service-related

incidents. This represents an 8.2% increase in call volume. The department responds to a variety of incidents including, medical emergencies, alarm investigations, brush fires, carbon monoxide investigations, motor vehicle accidents, chimney fires, structure fires, mutual-aid and service calls including house and vehicle lockouts. Our department responds mutual aid to our bordering communities, and we receive mutual aid from these same communities for fires, car accidents and medical emergencies as needed.



MVA with Entrapment
Rowley Hill Road



Brush Fire
Greenland Road

Additional staffing is provided throughout the year for major weather events, such as snowstorms, severe thunderstorm threats, and other severe weather.

2021 continued to be a challenging year in the way we responded to fire and medical emergencies because of Coronavirus pandemic. Crews were diligent in donning masks and other protective clothing to protect themselves as well as those we served. This added protective measure sometimes added several minutes to initial patient contact. We did see an increase in department members who contracted the virus so were posed with some challenges backfilling open shifts. Sterling was fortunate to stay well stocked with the necessary PPE required to protect our staff and effectively decontaminate equipment, and the fire station throughout the pandemic.

In addition to incident response, there are many hours spent conducting continuing education and training. We started the beginning of the year with conducting virtual training to limit large group exposure of department members. Once the warm weather hit and we were able to get back outside, we resumed our normal in-person training on the first, second and third Wednesdays of the month. This does not include the special skills training that our paramedics are required to attend annually. In addition, our dive and tech rescue team members participate in monthly skills training throughout the year.

It was good to see the return of some of our Fire and EMS details last year, after we saw a drastic reduction in 2020 due to the pandemic. Typical details include sporting event coverage, like Pop Warner Youth Football details, commercial welding details, and this year we saw a new and exciting detail, standing by for several movie filming requests.

Permits and Inspections

The Fire Department Inspection and Code Enforcement Bureau is headed by Lieutenant Thomas Kokernak. Inspections and permitting picked up in 2021 and the new online permitting system implemented in 2020, allowed that process to function smoothly during COVID restrictions. The department issued 809 permits in 2021 and conducted 398 inspections, including 36 quarterly commercial building inspections. Inspection types include smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, oil burners, oil tanks, LP gas tanks, tank removals, blasting, and fire suppression systems. Many of them require a minimum of one site visit to confirm that the work has been done properly and installed per fire and life safety codes, and to verify the equipment operates safely. In addition to daily permit inspections, annual inspections are conducted at commercial and industrial sites as well as annual liquor license inspections completed in conjunction with the building inspector.

There were several significant building projects in 2021 that required several inspections and code enforcement follow-ups. Projects included Northgate Meadows apartment building on Meadows Drive, Sterling Storage on Clinton Road, Little Ones Daycare on Leominster Road, several new homes on Justice Hill Road, and Turtle Way, the NEADS facility on Redemption Rock Trail and the reuse of the old Weetabix building on Industrial Drive.

Any questions regarding permits, fees, or for scheduling an inspection call the fire department business line or access the information on-line via our website.

Fire Prevention and Public Safety Education

Fire prevention and public safety education continues to be a large priority of the department. The year started out slowly due to the continued restrictions within the schools, however we were able to resume some of our activities in the new school year. Our team is coordinated by Firefighters Charlie Baker and Fil Santos and the programs are conducted for our grammar school and pre-school children.

The department conducts several educational programs supported by the S.A.F.E. (**Student Awareness of Fire Education**) program. In addition to the educational programs conducted in the elementary and pre-schools the department also provides station tours, and other public safety events as requested.

In 2021 the department received \$7,1722 in State Grant Funding. This program also supports Senior SAFE initiatives and provides training to local businesses and Civic groups. A fire extinguisher training prop was purchased through these grant funds.

Community Service Activities

We saw an increase in community service activities in 2021 that the department members and volunteers from our C.E.R.T. (Community Emergency Response Team) assisted with. These activities include medical standby and rehabilitation for road races, and other community and civic functions including the Davis Farmland Public Safety Weekend, and the Cub Scout registration day at the Town Beach.

Several members of the department are certified to teach Community C.P.R., first aid, and Stop the Bleed programs. Programs are provided to Little League coaches, town employees, local doctor's offices, and the schools just to name a few.

We assisted the Recreation Department with the annual deployment of the raft and buoys at the Town Beach.



Dock & Buoy Detail Town Beach

We held our annual 9/11 Ceremony at the fire station and this year there was an incredible turnout to observe the 20th anniversary of this tragic event.



9/11 20th Anniversary Ceremony

Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Detectors

The largest percentage of fire deaths in the home occurs at night while people are asleep. Therefore, a working smoke alarm can provide an early warning that can make the difference between life and death. A smoke alarm should be part of an overall home fire safety strategy that also includes preventing fires by adopting fire safe behavior and developing and practicing a home fire escape plan. In a fire, escape time may be very limited. Therefore, escape plans are a critical aspect of a home fire safety strategy.

Carbon monoxide (CO) alarms have been required since March of 2006. What is Carbon Monoxide (CO)? Carbon Monoxide is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless poison gas that can be fatal. CO can be produced when burning fuels such as gasoline, propane, natural gas, oil, or wood. Do you have an emergency generator at your house? There create high incidences of CO poisoning because of poor location and ventilation of a generator during use. CO is the

product of incomplete combustion. If you have fire, you have CO. A carbon monoxide detector is a device that detects the presence of the carbon monoxide (CO) gas to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Special consideration should be given to the fact that smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors have effective useful lives to them – like a car battery. It is recommended that a smoke detector be replaced every ten years and a carbon monoxide detector every five to seven years. Requirements for replacing your detectors can be found on our website or the manufacturers website of your detectors.

If you do not currently have a working smoke or carbon monoxide detector in your home and would like information on obtaining or installing them in your home, please contact the fire department. We continued to partner with the American Red Cross in 2021 to install smoke and CO detectors in homes with outdated or no working smoke detectors.

Emergency Management

Emergency Management continues to play a vital role in town, especially with the continued challenges of weather-related, Homeland Security, and most recently, pandemic related events. Often our emergency management functions are activated because of severe weather, but this year we found ourselves working with state and federal partners securing personal protective equipment for public safety personnel and managing grants and reimbursements to support those functions.

One of the busiest activities we saw in 2021 was the three COVID-19 drive-thru vaccination clinics. This was a result of an incredible collaborative of fire department personnel, Senior Center personnel, Board of Health personnel, Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) volunteers, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers, DPW and police department personnel, and cooperation from the school.

Clinics were held on February 4th (300 vaccinations), February 5th (140 vaccinations) and a Booster Shot Clinic was held on October 21st (407 vaccinations). In addition, dozens of home vaccination visits were made by Sterling Paramedics, and we assisted Sterling Village Nursing Home with vaccinations for both staff and patients.

These clinics were made possible thanks to a partnership with the Rutland Board of Health and Fire Departments who took the lead in the Wachusett Area for storage and distribution. Rutland continued to provide vaccinations throughout the year and volunteers and fire department personnel from Sterling helped to staff those clinics.



COVID Vaccine Drive-thru



Drive-thru Vaccination Station

One of our most active missions within emergency management is that of our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The CERT Program, managed and coordinated by Assistant Emergency Management Director Jim Emerton, educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact our area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and through conducting exercises, CERT members can assist others following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members consist of a group of volunteer citizens including students, teachers, retirees, ex-military, engineers, and business professionals. The team trains and responds on a regional level along with volunteers from Boylston, Holden, and West Boylston.

In addition to a regional CERT team, Sterling continues to be part of a Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC) along with Boylston, Holden, and West Boylston. The South Wachusett Regional Emergency Planning Committee has representation from all four communities and represents the major disciplines of emergency planning working closely with M.E.M.A. (Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency) regarding hazard mitigation. In 2021 work was completed to update the towns' Hazard Mitigation Plan, through a planning grant. This represents the towns commitment to reduce risks by identifying natural disaster risks and vulnerabilities that are common in our area (storms, flooding, wildfires, manmade) and after identifying these risks developing long-term strategies for protecting our citizens.

Social Media Notifications



To keep our citizens informed, the fire department issues posts of department training, incident response, and important information notifications through social media utilizing Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. It is important to us that the citizens we serve see the things that we do.

Fire Department Website



www.sterlingfd.net

Lieutenant Thomas Kokernak administers the Fire Department website. The website is linked to several sources of real time information. Please visit our website to learn more about the Sterling Fire Department, our history, our equipment or as a reference to fire codes and regulations. This is where you will also find the links to our online permitting systems.

Be Ready



Plan to protect yourself and your family. Your family may not be together when a disaster strikes so it is important to plan, how you will get to a safe place, how you will contact one another, how you will reunite with each other, and what you will do in different situations. For additional reference on personal and family preparedness you can log in to www.ready.gov.

Closing Narrative

In closing, I would like to thank town government and the citizens of Sterling for their continued support of the fire department. Because of this support, we're able to maintain the apparatus and equipment that is vital to our emergency response. In June, voters were gracious in approving an additional fulltime firefighter paramedic to join the department and in August, Robert Nickerson joined us fulltime. We were also approved for major capital expenses to replace our Rescue truck, pick-up truck, and paramedic intercept vehicle.

Most importantly, the members of the Sterling Fire Department should be recognized for their continued commitment and dedication to the department and the community. We are fortunate that our firefighters, EMT's and Paramedics are committed to providing dedicated service to our community. Our members are well-trained and outstanding at what they do. The citizens of Sterling should be proud of our dedicated responders.

We continue to maintain a strong on-call firefighting and E.M.T. force that is well trained and ready to respond to your needs in addition to our fulltime staff. To continue do this effectively, we need people who are willing to join the department and be trained as on-call personnel. Our success is based on the dedication and commitment of our call members who respond to incidents over and above their fulltime jobs and family commitments. Many of our call members have moved on to become fulltime firefighter's, emergency medical technicians and paramedics. This is a true testament to the dedication and training of our members.

We are lucky to have strong and valuable working relationships with all the public safety

departments in town and as a result work seamlessly at major incidents that occur. Several times throughout the year, incidents will require several of the public safety departments to work in a coordinated manner to manage the issue at hand.

In 2021 we added three additional per-diem firefighter paramedics to the department, who are fulltime in other communities, Ryan Casper, Conner Lyons, and Paul Pierce. One of our call members was deployed for several months with the Marines and we recognize Firefighter / EMT Connor Wilbur for his service to his country as well as the department.

The Sterling Fire Department is located at 5 Main Street in the center of town. The station is staffed 24-hours a day and general business hours are from 8:00AM to 4:00PM Monday through Friday's.

Wishing everyone a safe and healthy 2022!

Respectively submitted,

David C. Hurlbut, Jr.
Fire Chief / Emergency Management Director

Annual Report 2021 from the Sterling Historical Commission

The Sterling Historical Commission had an eventful year. The commission hosted two events dedicated to the preservation of Sterling's history. In July we opened the West Sterling's schoolhouse to the public with an art show, curated by member Lindsey Van Giesen. In preparation for the art show the building was repainted on the inside. The roof and chimney were also renovated this year. The art show highlighted the important connection between education, the community, and it's current situation. Artists with work inspired by the town of Sterling was the theme of the art show, 'Inspire Sterling'. The building served as a school and then continued as the West Sterling community center until the 1980's. The project was well received and supported by the public. A grant was procured from the Sterling Cultural Commission. More maintenance repairs and upgrades will continue in 2022 with a warrant from the 2021 town meeting.

A Chocksett cemetery talk was given by the Graveyard Girls. The talk was supported by a grant from the Sterling Cultural Commission. The graveyard walk was well attended by the public. The talk was to emphasis the cultural significance of our local cemetery. The unique early headstone engravers were highlighted. Many types and styles of headstones are significant in the Chocksett cemetery. Preparing for repairs of broken headstones progressed this year as a \$8000 town warrant was voted in by town residents. The repairs will take place in May of 2022. This work builds on restoration projects of Troop 1 and Troop 169 of Sterling. The historical commission continues working with the DPW to improve historical preservation through careful maintenance of the cemeteries.

This has been a unprecedented year for changes in the town of Sterling. The sale of the Sterling Inn to a local developer will hopefully preserve the character of the building and increase commercial use of this important historical property. The commission worked towards writing more grants for historical preservation, with the help of the town administrator. The proposed Sterling Masterplan indicates that the town is committed to expanding historical districts and updating and expanding historical inventories of the town's historical properties. With the town's support we will accomplish this task. In this year and in coming years, we will continue to protect Sterling's unique place in American history. Thank you to the town for it's continued support to preserve Sterling's historical footprint.



Annual Report 2021

Governance

The citizens of Sterling elect a 6-member board of trustees to govern the town free public library, as outlined in Massachusetts General Law. Two members are elected each year in rotation. The trustees meet the second Monday of every month and everyone is welcome to attend.

In May, Matthew Scannell and Amanda Sayut were elected to the board. At their June meeting, the board elected Sara Petullo chairperson, and Amanda Sayut secretary.

Michael Glavin, elected to the board in 2018, served as chair in 2020, retired from service to the town. Michael was a dedicated champion of excellent library service to the public, and his contribution is truly appreciated.

Mission

The Conant Free Public Library provides residents with broad access to library materials for enrichment and enjoyment in an environment that is welcoming to everyone. The library offers space and opportunities for people to gather and connect, knowledgeable and friendly staff to help, and the tools to grow and thrive in an increasingly digital world.

Services

The library is open 45 hours a week – Monday through Thursday from 10 am to 8 pm. On Saturday the library is open from 10 am to 3 pm. From July 1st to Labor Day, the library is open from 10 am to 1 pm on Saturday.

In addition to books in print form, the library provides audiobooks, popular movies and full-season TV series, magazines, newspapers, and high-speed Internet (direct and wireless) - all at no charge. The library also offers copy, fax, scanning, and printing services.

Working with the Sterling Senior Center, the library provides materials to Sterling seniors who are homebound. Interested town residents can call the Senior Center to get started with the service.

Our website, www.sterlinglibrary.org, offers online access to library services at any time. Patrons can order or renew library materials and download e-books, e-audiobooks, magazines and videos. New this year is the ability to register for programs through our website!

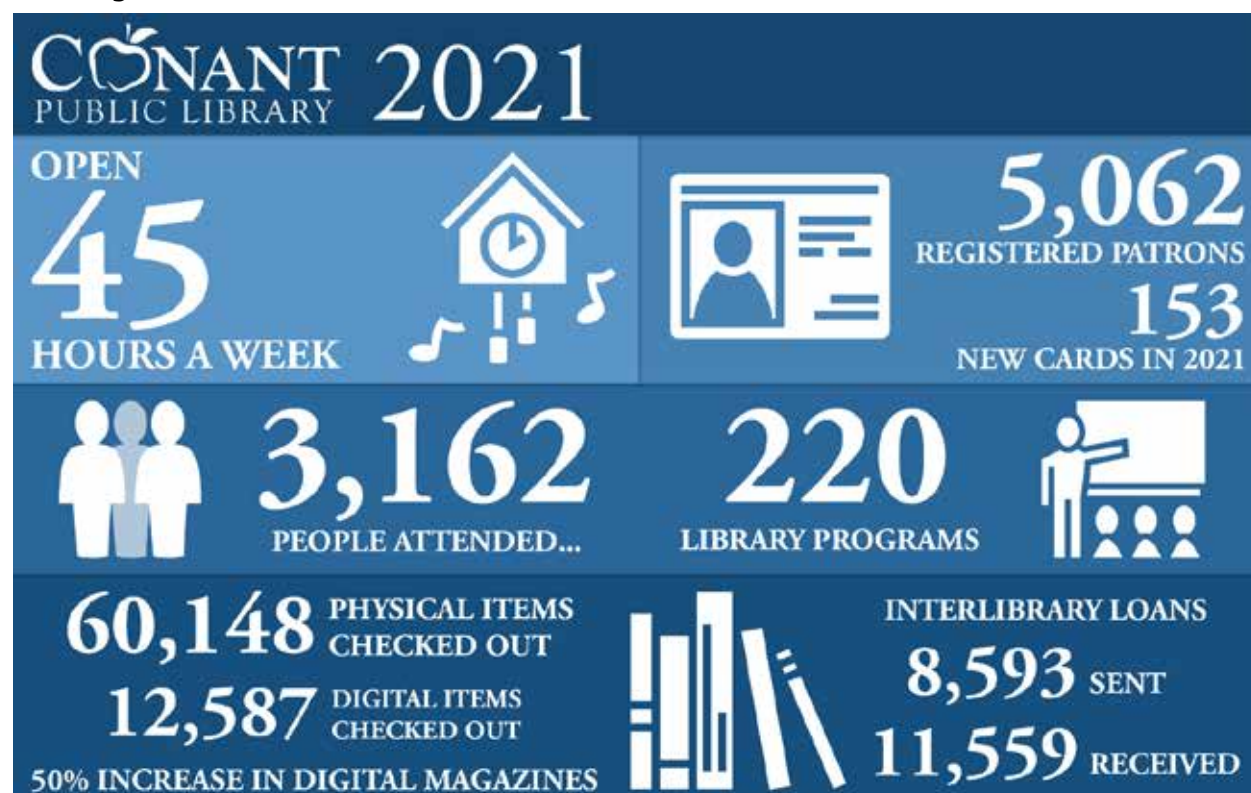
Working with the Sterling Recreation Department, the library again placed a Little Free Library, a reproduction of the original 1885 library, at the Town Beach so that families would have something to read while they enjoyed the sun.



*Our Little Free Library
Photo by Alex Grebinar*

Annual Benchmarks

Children's programming included weekly story hours, music circles and a Lego club as well as weekly crafts, half-day school and week-long vacation programs, book clubs for picture book fans, middle schoolers, and parents. Teen programs included Jeopardy, craft kits, and Zoom crafts. Adults participated in crafts, a weekly meditation group, a Cookbook Club, and a Coloring Club.



In 2021 we said farewell to Lizzy Gagliardi, Head of Youth Services through our pandemic closure and welcomed Alisa Iannucci to the position. Heidi Flynn left her position here for a job at another library closer to her home. In September Director Patricia Campbell retired after 23 years of devoted service to the Conant Library. She will be missed by everyone at the Library. The Board of Trustees hired Betsy Perry, formerly Director of the Sutton Public Library, as the new Director in October.



*Library Director Pat Campbell
Photo by Ken Cleveland, The Item*

The Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Conant Library continue to generously support many library programs and initiatives. This year those programs included a very popular Animal Adventures Summer Reading Kickoff program for families and gingerbread house building for the holiday season. The Friends supported the annual Summer Reading Program by providing prizes and gift books for every reader. The Friends added two new museum passes to the Library's collection this year: Animal Adventures in Bolton and the American Heritage Museum in Hudson. The Friends have also contributed thousands of dollars to add downloadable popular books and audio books to the Library's OverDrive collection.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Board of Trustees of the Conant Free Public Library

Sara Petullo, Chair
Lisa Akerson
Albert J. Carlin

Heide Martin
Amanda Sayut
Matthew Scannell

Betsy Perry, Library Director
Alex Grebinar, Assistant Director

Sterling Master Plan Committee

Sterling's last Master Plan was written in 1962. The Master Plan Committee Charter, outlining the role and composition of the committee, was approved by the Sterling Selectboard, who officially appointed the Committee in May 2019. The Sterling Master Plan Committee was charged by the Sterling Selectboard to

"Solicit and gather input from town residents, the business community, municipal staff, boards, commissions, and regional agencies that will result in a vision for the community and a specific action strategy for fulfilling that vision. The Master Plan Committee will work closely with the aforementioned to formulate revisions, recommendations, and drafts of a new Master Plan to update the 1962 Master Plan...Over the course of its work, the Master Plan Committee will ensure that the Master Plan remains a tool to guide the Town's growth and change, preserve its natural and cultural resources and maintain its public facilities and services."

The Sterling Master Plan Committee has been meeting regularly since June 2019. Our work has been guided by the vision statement in the Sterling Master Plan:

Sterling is a community that values its natural beauty, agricultural history, and can-do spirit. We envision a sustainable and equitable future that protects our town legacy, purposefully promotes growth and development, embraces our ages and abilities, and encourages community engagement to enhance the quality of life for our diverse residents.

During 2021, goals and recommended actions for the Master Plan were drafted and reviewed by the Master Plan Committee. Through public meetings, both in person and over Zoom, and online surveys, the following Master Plan goals were identified as of most importance to Sterling residents:

Land Use:

- Expand Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs) in Sterling.
- Consider adopting a bylaw to facilitate and regulate the development of ground or roof-mounted solar systems.

Housing:

- Expand housing options for Sterling's aging population.
- Adopt an Open Space Residential Development (or Cluster Development) Bylaw as a way to promote efficient land use for housing while preserving sensitive spaces.
- Update and revise the Protective Bylaws to permit senior, assisted-living housing and alternative housing types.

Economic Development:

- Revitalize the town center to include new or redeveloped dining establishments, bars, cafes, and ice cream shops. Provide and/or allow for more sidewalk and outdoor dining.
- Improve streetscapes: more pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, streetlights, landscaping, custom pavers.
- Focus on opportunities to unlock Sterling's industrial and commercial districts. Encourage the growth of "market clusters," where nearby businesses can complement and support one another and become greater than the sum of their parts. Advance strategies that promote large development opportunities with the potential for widespread economic benefits.

Natural Resources:

- Advance efforts to fix the dams that are designated as a significant hazard.
- Establish green corridors that would connect natural areas and areas of open space for the purposes of providing habitat for wildlife and enhanced mobility and recreational opportunities for the town's residents and visitors.

Cultural/Historic Resources:

- Support year-round arts and cultural programming.
- Assess the need to repurpose Town-owned facilities for community needs.

Open Space and Recreation:

- Plan a network of interconnecting hiking trails
- Create a maintenance plan for all town playing fields.

Public Facilities and Services:

- Work with the Sterling Municipal Light Department to deliver low-cost renewable energy to the Sterling community.
- Expand high speed internet access throughout Sterling,

Circulation and Transportation:

- Make neighborhoods, especially the town center, more pedestrian friendly.
- Develop a Pavement Management System.

Over 2/3 of survey respondents want Sterling's leaders to:

- Work with SMLD to deliver low-cost renewable energy to the Sterling community
- Revitalize the town center to provide and/or allow for more sidewalk and outdoor dining
- Make neighborhoods, especially the town center, more pedestrian friendly

Sterling survey respondents also support in large numbers some of the recommended actions that address the Master Plan goals. Two goals rose to the top, with five or more recommended actions garnering the support of over 33% of the respondents:

- **Implement effective strategies to preserve and protect the town's water resources and unique ecological habitats.**
 - Recommended actions included: fix dams, establish green corridors, maintain/improve biodiversity through forest management, assess level of conserved lands, reduce salt use on major highways, and addressing nutrient loading to Lake Waushacum.
- **Expand pedestrian, bicycle and trail networks inter- and intra-Sterling.**
 - Recommended actions included: make neighborhoods more pedestrian friendly, establish a Regional Trail Network and pursue grant funding for trail development, improve pedestrian mobility of rural roads, and fill in gaps in the sidewalk network.

Sterling and its residents are facing multiple challenges: changing demographics, the need to incorporate resilience and sustainability in our public services, the effects of climate change on our natural resources, and evolving to address multiple needs while maintaining what makes Sterling a livable and safe community. It is our hope that the goals and recommended actions of the Sterling Master Plan appropriately address those concerns and the priorities of Sterling residents. We also recognize that, should the Planning Board accept the Sterling Master Plan, the work is not complete. We all need to work toward the completion of the goals and recommended actions, by serving on committees, town boards, volunteering on town programs and activities, and most importantly, attending and voting at Town Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Page, Chair
Chuck Plaisted, Vice-Chair
Liz Pape, Clerk





2021 Annual Report

Open Space Implementation Committee

Current Board Structure: Chuck Plaisted, chair, Jeff Keay, secretary, James Wilkinson, treasurer, Peder Pedersen, Robert Protano and Paul Lekberg, at large.

Outreach

OSIC maintains the Sterling Trails Facebook page (with the assistance of Erin MacNeal Rehrig), a booth at the Sterling Fair, articles in the newspapers announcing public hikes on Saturday mornings and occasionally acting as guest servers at the Senior Center's monthly pancake breakfasts.

OSIC's trail brochures are available for download on the town of Sterling website. (sterling-ma.gov , About Sterling, Sterling Trails.) The Open Space & Recreation Plan Update is also available on the Town of Sterling website.

Participation in the Sterling Master Plan

Chuck Plaisted serves on the Sterling Master Plan as Vice-chair and chair of the Open Space & Recreation Topic subcommittee.

OSIC Activities - Hiking Trails

New Trails under development: Waushacum Overlook to Mudgett Orchard Trail, Pegs Pond Trail, a short, 1/3 mile ADA-compliant trail from the Sterling Senior Center around Pegs Pond and back to the Senior Center.

OSIC received a grant from the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts which was used to build-out the northernmost section of the Pegs Pond Trail.

Trail Sign Posts and trail blazes were installed on the Heywood Reservoir Trail, the Lynde Basins Trail and the Allenwood Trail.

Trail Clearing: This work is ongoing. Deadfalls and encroaching brush are removed as reports come in.

Open Space & Recreation Plan Update 2019 approved

In the fall of 2020 The Department of Conservation Services gave final approval to the Open Space & Recreation Plan Update 2019 , after which Sterling will be eligible to apply for PARC & LAND grants through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Department of Conservation Services. The updated plan is valid until 2026.

Respectfully submitted,
Chuck Plaisted
Chair

PLANNING BOARD

To the Honorable Select Board and the Citizens of Sterling:

The Planning Board consists of the following members:

Carl Corrinne (Chairman)
Patty Page (Vice Chairman)
Kirsten Newman (Clerk)
Val Pruneau
John Santoro

The responsibilities of the Planning Board consist of reviewing and endorsing Approval Not Required (ANR) plans, Site plan Reviews, various Special Permits and development/ review of various zoning bylaw amendments.

The Board approved five (1) Site Plan. See below for approved plan:

Address	Owner
104-106 Leominster Road	WPW Properties LLC

The Board endorsed six ANR plans (Approval Not Required under Subdivision Control Law). Lots were located on Justice Hill Road, Spratt Technology Way, Charles Patten Drive, Wiles Road and Chocksett Road.

Members Carl Corrinne and Patty Page are also members of the Master Plan Committee. The Master Plan Committee is in the process of updating the Town's Master Plan that is 60 years old! Having Planning Board representation on the Master Plan Committee ensures continued progress on updating the Master Plan. (Please see the Master Plan web page for more information and to review the chapters.)

Zoning Bylaw Amendments Reviewed and Public Hearings held:

- In February, a public hearing was held for several proposed zoning amendments.
 - a. Aquifer and Water Resource Protection District/Groundwater Protection Districts – Article 4, Section 4.6., Table of Contents and Article 2, Section 2.1.1.
 - b. Earth Removal/Quarrying or Mining: Article 2, Section 2.3.1.D.; Article 3, Section 3.3.2; Article 5 – Definitions; Article 6, Section 6.2.2.2.a.4.
 - c. Town Center and Mixed Use: Article 2, Section 2.5; Article 2, Section 2.3.1.A.; Article 5 – Definitions, Article 2, Section 2.5.4
 - d. Site Plan Review: Article 6, Section 6.4, Table of Contents, Article 4, Section 4.7.
 - e. Rate of Development: Article 4, Section 4.3 & Table of Contents
 - f. Subdivision Phasing: Article 4, Section 4.3A & Table of Contents
 - g. Use Regulations: Article 2, Section 2.2.1 General

- h. Zoning Map Amendment: Rezone 13 parcels, located on the southerly side of Dana Hill & Legg Roads, from Performance Zone 1 to Commercial zoning district
- In March, a public hearing was held for proposed zoning amendments:
 - a. Aquifer and Water Resource Protection District/Groundwater Protection Districts: Overlay Map, Article 4, Section 4.7.3, Section 4.7.5.2(b)(i) and Section 4.7.5.2(d)
 - b. Display Setback: Article 2, Section 2.4.5
 - c. Signs: Article 3, Section 3.1
 - d. Earth Removal/Quarrying or Mining: Article 2, Section 2.3.1.D.; Article 5 – Definitions; Article 6, Section 6.2.2.2.a.4.
 - e. Table of Principal Uses: Article 2, Section 2.3.1
 - f. Protective Bylaw, generally: Board of Selectmen/Select Board references
- In April, a public hearing was held for proposed zoning amendments:
 - a. Table of Principal Uses: Article 2, Section 2.3.1.C. Commercial Use #1
 - b. Accessory Apartment/Dwelling Use: Article 2.3.5.; Article 5 – Definitions; Section 3.2.3(a); Section 2.3.1.A.#4
 - c. Zoning Map Amendment: Rezoning Parcels 93-48.2, 93-48.3 & 93-48.4, which are currently split-zoned between Neighborhood Residential and Rural Residential & Farming zoning districts to be included entirely within the Neighborhood Residential zoning district.
- In October, a public hearing was held for proposed for a Special Permit application for a common driveway on Rowley Hill Road.

At this time, The Planning Board no longer has a Town Planner as the planner abruptly left her position. The Board continues to work closely with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission for technical assistance and grant opportunities.

Sterling Police Department & Dispatch Center



In preparation for compiling the 2021 Annual Report, I reviewed the 2020 report. Much of this report could have been copied and pasted from that, not much has changed. In the 2020 report I wrote, "As this report is being written, a vaccine is being rolled out. There seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel and we look forward to returning to a sense of normalcy." Boy was I wrong! Covid-19 and all its variants continue to impact the way we work, in fact as of the writing of this year's report, cases are rising and we are reverting back into more lock downs, isolation and masks mandates.

We were also hopeful that Detective Johnson could return to duty during the year. While he has made great strides in his recovery, unfortunately he has not been medically cleared to return to duty. We are certainly hopeful he may do so in 2022.

Personnel:

There were several personnel changes throughout the year. Officer Brian Ryder resigned to take a position with the Worcester Police Department. We replaced Officer Ryder with veteran Princeton Police Officer John Chase. John brings years of experience and has been a great asset to our department.



Officer John Chase newly hired and motor certified

The town voted to increase to the staffing level of the police department. In October we filled that position with former Sterling dispatcher, Benjamin Dame. Ben was appointed as a police officer after graduating from the Boylston Municipal Police Training Academy.



Officer Dame



Chair person of Select board appoints Ben Dame.

In August long time Animal Control Officer Louis Massa retired, packed up his family and moved to Colorado. Louis served the citizens and animals of Sterling for seventeen years. He was the "go to person" for all things animal related in Town. We are going to miss his expertise and knowledge.

Kelly Jones was hired as Lou's replacement. Kelly has adapted well to the position and has big shoes to fill. We know that she is up to the challenge.



Lou displays his retirement plaque

Robert Sargood was hired as a full time dispatcher to replace Ben Dame who resigned to attend the police academy. We were fortunate to get Rob on board; he is an experienced dispatcher and required very little training to get up to speed. Our full-time dispatch staff remains constant with little turn over. Michelle Braconnier and Garrett MacArthur have each been here approximately fifteen years. The dispatch supervisor, Debra MacArthur is the senior employee in the Town of Sterling, with over thirty years of service. She is not only highly competent and experienced; she is the most dedicated employee I have ever had the pleasure to work with.

Training:

Each year officers are required to complete forty hours of State mandated training on various topics. The topics change each year except for first aid and CPR. This year the mandated topics were; human trafficking, legal updates, cultural competency, escalation and use of force, mass gatherings, officer wellness, critical incident stress management, suicide prevention, longevity in law enforcement, responding to emergencies of those with a mental illness.

Officers also undergo annual training and certification on both our lethal and non lethal weapons. These include our .45 caliber handguns, AR-15 rifle, Remington 12 gauge shot guns, Taser X2, expandable baton, and chemical irritants.

In addition to those requirements officers undergo advanced trainings on various topics. Some of those trainings are listed below:

Search warrant technology, Massachusetts fusion center training, managing the field training officer program, certification of child passenger restraints, evidence room management, behavioral recognition, search warrant preparation, ethics, narcotics investigations, certification in health wellness and defensive tactics, internal affairs, field training officer certification, school resource officer, interrogation techniques, information gathering, police motorcycle operation certification, stress resiliency coordination course, use of force reporting and more.

Not only are our officers highly trained, we ensure our dispatchers are as well. All dispatchers undergo mandated and advanced training annually. Some of those trainings completed by our staff this year include:

Screening for infectious disease, courtroom testimony, gathering information, rural firefighting, 911 anonymous callers, bias for dispatchers, verbal calming techniques, human trafficking, civil unrest, leadership, entrapment, bleeding and shock, radio communication fundamentals, conflict in dispatch center, school emergencies, civil hazardous, active listening, bullying and harassment, criminal justice information system and national criminal information system certification.

Grants:

We obtained a number of grants this year. We received \$34,404 to be used to enhance and support our dispatch center. We also received \$9,658 to be used to fund training and back fill overtime for training cost for our dispatch staff.

We received a grant of \$2,524.90 to support our certified occupant protective specialists. We have two trained child safety seat officers who conduct inspections and they use the funds to purchase child car seats for residents who cannot afford seats. Officers Ryan Ferguson and Steve Mucci conducted approximately thirty car seat installations during the year.



Officer Steve Mucci installs a child safety seat.

We received a grant authored by Sergeant Steve Fugere for \$14,000. The grant will be used to fund the acquisition, training and implementation as well as outfitting all Sterling officers with body worn cameras. There are a number of tasks that need to be accomplished before the cameras become operational; a policy and procedure needs to be implemented and union bargaining is required. I anticipate that will happen sometime during early 2022.

Investigations

Forcible Rape-----	1
Forcible Sodomy-----	1
Robbery-----	3

Aggravated Assaults-----	2
Simple Assaults-----	18
Intimidation-----	6
Burglary, Breaking and Entering-----	5
Shoplifting-----	2
Theft from a building-----	5
Theft from motor vehicle-----	1
Theft of motor vehicle parts-----	1
All other larceny-----	7
Motor vehicle theft-----	4
Stolen Property offenses-----	18
Property damage, vandalism-----	9
Drug narcotics investigation-----	3
Statutory rape-----	1
Weapons Law violations-----	1
Animal cruelty-----	1
Bad checks-----	1
Disorderly conduct-----	4
Driving under the influence-----	10
Drunkenness-----	8
Liquor law violations-----	2
Runaways-----	1
Trespassing-----	12
All other offenses-----	40
By-law offenses-----	166

Custodial Arrests

Thirty-seven individuals were taken into physical custody this year. That is a 37% increase from 2020. Taking a person into custody and restricting the free movement of an individual is always a potentially dangerous situation for both the officers and the individual. Occasionally, an individual taken into custody is held at the Sterling police station for an extended period of time, up to four days if the arrest takes place on a long weekend. This year the Worcester County House of Corrections opened its Regional Safe Keep Location. This facility will take persons arrested by our department and hold them at their facility and transport them to court for us. This service offered by Sherriff Lew Evangelidis has reduced the hours prisoners have to stay at our facility, thereby reducing cost associated with housing prisoners as well as potential liability issues.

Domestic Assaults/Assaults-----	6
Operating under the influence-----	10
Protective Custody/Intoxication-----	6
Warrants-----	10

Disorderly Conduct-----	1
Trespassing-----	1
Drug possession-----	1
Indecent exposure, open and gross-----	1
Breaking and Entering-----	1

We had a significant increase in cases referred to court; people were not taken into custody, but rather referred by summons or complaint. We referred 102 people to court in 2021, a 102% increase from 2020.

Operations

I am happy to report that for the third year in a row we have had a reduction in motor vehicle crashes. In 2019 we responded to 154 crashes, in 2020 we responded to 123 and in 2021 we responded to 106 crashes.

With the modification of the State wide E-911 system, our dispatch center experienced a staggering increase in 911 calls. In 2020 we answered 433, in 2021 we answered 2159, almost a 400 percent increase. Many of these calls were redirected to other agencies; primarily the state police for calls pertaining to route 190.

The computer chip shortage has left us unable to take delivery of a police cruiser voted at the last town meeting. We hope to be able to get that vehicle into the fleet soon to replace one of our aging vehicles.

As a service to town residents we house a drug drop off kiosk and needle kiosk in our lobby. Residents can drop off prescription drugs that are no longer wanted in their homes. There is no charge for this service. These kiosk keep unneeded drugs and used needles out of the wrong hands while protecting our environment.

For the third year we offered our anti porch pirate program. Residents can have their packages delivered to the police station where we will securely hold your package until it's convenient for you to pick them up.

Our Toys for Tots program was another success. We delivered a trailer full of toys to the Marine Corps for distribution to needy families.



Det Ferguson, Officer S. Johnson, Admin Dawn Metcalf and Officer Chase

While we may not have returned to 100% normal, we were able to participate in some activities that had been suspended in 2020. Unfortunately the Sterling Fair was not one of those.

We were able to participate in the Memorial Day Parade and Veteran's Day parade.



Sterling Police officer and Select board at Veterans Day Parade.

We launched a new program this year entitled "Take Me Home". The program is designed to assist us in reuniting people who may have wandered and may have

cognitive issues and reuniting them with their loved ones. It can also be used to assist us by providing crucial information when responding to homes where there may be mental health issues and methods we can use to assist.

These programs all demonstrate the dedication off the staff of the police department. I cannot overstate how the members of this department step up time and time again. The pandemic challenged the staff in both their personal and private lives. They had to balance issues at home while still being required to report for duty. Several of our staff was diagnosed with Covid and this required officers and dispatchers to work additional shifts to maintain adequate staffing.

I offer my sincere appreciation to the entire staff, the officers, dispatchers, animal control officers, and administration; they all make up a team of dedicated professionals.

We also appreciate the support we have received from all the other town departments. We work closely with the Light Department, DPW and especially the Fire Department; all who are supportive of our mission. I would also like to recognize the town Hall staff, the Select Board and especially the citizens of Sterling for all your support during the past year.

Final Word:

This will be my final annual report for the Town of Sterling. Mandatory retirement forces me to leave a position I have been privileged to serve in for the past 18 years. I would love to be able to individually thank all the people who have supported me and the department these past years, but that would take pages. Let me just say, thank you and it's been an honor to serve. I sincerely hope that I have in some small way made the Town of Sterling a better place.

Most sincerely,

Gary m. Chamberland

The Recreation Departments Report: Highlights for 2021

Throughout the year the Recreation Department has remained committed to its mission of providing affordable, quality recreational programs that enhance the quality of life for all residents. Again this year with Covid-19, our year continued to look a little different.

The community had an opportunity to participate in over twenty-five programs which were provided year-round and are self-funded. Child oriented programs included, basketball, music, science, swimming lessons, yoga and skiing/snowboarding. Adult residents had the opportunity to participate in fitness and tennis classes. The community came together over music at the Summer Band Concerts and at the Town Beach.

Our programs were hindered during the winter months but, many residents enjoyed skiing/snowboarding with friends at Wachusett Mountain. As the weather got warmer and we could open the windows, we were able to gather again at the 1835 Old Town Hall. More than thirty residents from the ages of 9-25 received home alone, babysitting, first aid and CPR certification. Ten young local residents were Red Cross Lifeguard certified and employed by the Town.

Utilizing some of our town's beautiful outside spaces, the Easter Bunny hopped in for a day of pictures in the rain at the gazebo in Memorial Park and small parade through town. Memorial Park was also the perfect setting for our infant to five year old Music Together class. More than forty residents participated in our annual Road Race virtually, running our marked course on their own schedule and uploading their time to the website. On Saturday mornings, our youngest residents enjoyed multi-mini sports at the Houghton fields. Beach Yoga was offered free of charge from June to mid-October at the tranquil setting of our town beach.

The Recreation Department was able to offer, with great success, the *Summer Concert Series 2021*. This event offered town residents the opportunity to gather safely and enjoy music, family and the beautiful summer evenings. ***Sterling Lancaster Cable*** filmed some of the concerts and ran them on the local cable channel for viewers to enjoy all year long. In addition, the Sterling Recreation Department received a grant for \$2,000.00 from ***The Sterling Cultural Council*** for the Summer Concert Series 2021. The Cultural Council is committed to building a central place for the arts, sciences, and humanities in the everyday lives of communities across the Commonwealth.

We were lucky enough to see one of our most popular programs, the Summer Lake Program, still able to provide summer fun to our younger residents. We had to limit our registration, but were still able to run two, 3 hour sampler sessions, a day of our usual summer camper experience. We also provided separate swim lessons by swim level,

which were very well attended. Our Recreation Tennis program was able to expand by an additional week this summer giving our younger players and opportunity to gather safety and work on their skills. Our adult residents were able to get into the action with lessons twice a week for a month. Both Basketball camps where filled to capacity and the gym was full of competitive energy!

We added some new programs this year for our more artistic residents. Summer Dance sampler was offered to give your budding dance a sampling of different dance styles and Lets' Get Crafty offered to different age groups of arts and crafts.

We appreciate the time and dedication of other town departments, program instructors, summer staff, lifeguards, volunteer ski chaperones, school administrators, school custodians, and sponsors. With this network of supporters we are able to provide top notch events for the community. Close to 1,700 individuals participated in the Recreation Department's events and programs in 2021, and we thank you for your constant support throughout the year.

The Recreation Department will continue to work to improve the quality of Recreational facilities, programs, and services. Your feedback is important to us, please contact the Recreation Department at 978-422-3041, e-mail recreation@sterling-ma.gov or stop in at our office currently located at 1 Park St. For listings and descriptions of programs and events, visit the web site: SterlingRec.com or sterling-ma.gov/recreation

Respectively submitted,

Jo-Ann Cummings- Chairperson Recreation Committee

Heidi Grady

Mark Hryniewicz

Andrew Parker

Bonnie Pulda

Glenn Donaldson

Deidre Shapiro

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Montachusett Regional
Vocational Technical
School District

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MONTY TECH

When schools across the country shuttered in March of 2020, no one could imagine the long-term effects the pandemic would have on our school systems. The summer of 2020 was spent purchasing and installing air filtration systems and plexiglass barriers, sourcing mass quantities of PPE and working with local departments of public health to determine how to safely bring students and staff into the building. When guidance from the state's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education was released, school leaders were faced with rolling out a learning and instruction model that had never been attempted before. We would offer a Hybrid Learning Model, and a rotating daily schedule that would allow half of the student body to come into the building, while the other half would learn from home.

Still, the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year was fraught with concern for student, faculty and staff safety and a deep-rooted knowledge of how students learn best – in-person. School leaders worked tirelessly to develop a schedule that would bring as many students back into the building as possible, safely, while attempting to balance academic and vocational in-person learning time. Instructors were provided with additional technology supports and added professional development days, to write and create curriculum that could be delivered remotely. This, in itself, would be a challenge. How do you teach a student how to prepare and present a meal, or demonstrate fine-motor skills required to give a haircut, in a virtual learning environment? How do you assess a student's understanding of residential electrical wiring, without having the ability to observe and manipulate his/her work? How can you teach students to safely restrain an animal, with no pet interaction? I am proud to say that the Monty Tech instructors rose to this incredible challenge, and for much of the 2020-2021 school year, delivered an effective educational program, using the resources that were available to them.

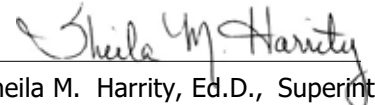
While face-to-face instruction was provided, that, too, looked and felt different to students and staff. On those days when students were scheduled to attend in-person lessons, they found things had changed. Traffic patterns were rerouted, and signage on floors, hallways and doors reminded them to wear a mask and maintain distance. Seating on busses and in the cafeteria was assigned and closely monitored. A place that had always encouraged connection with fellow classmates was now insisting on distance. Though it may have been uncomfortable for both students and staff, the school wide adherence to these new rules seemed to be a quiet demonstration of their understanding. And on May 3, 2021, their compliance was rewarded - Monty Tech was allowed to return to full, in-person learning. With just over a month remaining in the 2020-2021 school year, students and staff welcomed the change, anxious for the halls and classrooms to return to a more normal capacity. While masks, social distancing and numerous hand sanitizing stations were still present, the return of students into the building was a welcome sight for all.

In 2020-2021, it was disappointing that so many traditional annual events had to be cancelled, including VIP, Tour Day, College Fair, and Career Awareness Night; however, where possible, the district continued to operate at a high level. Examples include:

- To help our faculty and staff return to work, daycare issues had to be addressed, and, as a result, an important relationship with the Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster developed. The club provided daycare and homework help, Monday through Friday, to school age children of Monty Tech faculty and staff.
- Thanks to more than \$670,000 in competitive grant awards, Monty Tech was able to renovate and expand the welding/metal fabrication shop and retrofit one science lab. The school launched an all new evening training program that provided no-cost training and job placement to qualified participants. With grant funds, we also established a Safe and Supportive Schools Team to review school policies and procedures and target those in need of improvement, with an overarching goal of providing all students with safe and appropriate learning environments.
- In an effort to build connections with our school supporters and to "show off" the talents of our students, we held our first Holiday Sale, which quickly sold out! More than 400 charcuterie trays, designed and handcrafted by our Cabinetmaking students were sold, and all proceeds went to the Class of 2021 Scholarship Fund.

The 2020-2021 school year was unexpected, challenging, and at times, disappointing, yet there were so many moments to be proud of. I remain humbled and honored to lead such an outstanding organization, and thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,


Sheila M. Harrity, Ed.D., Superintendent-Director

**SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

January 2022

Dear Residents of Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, and Sterling

It has been another year where our community, the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world has had to adjust to the ever-changing circumstances in which we all live. The continual upheaval that we have experienced during the past year has led to a degree of fatigue and a desire to have life return to normal. This is especially true for our students, families, and staff who have shown great resilience and an ability to adapt to challenging circumstances. We are all deeply grateful to everyone who has helped to keep our schools safe and open, enabling our students to take advantage of in-person learning.

The Fall started with many mitigating measures in place to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in our schools, including face masks for all students and adults, contact tracing, and on-site testing at all of our schools. To this point in the school year, we have not had to close a grade level or a school due to COVID-19 cases, which says a great deal about the work being done behind the scenes to make each school as safe as possible. With the financial support of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), we have established a robust COVID-19 testing program that includes surveillance and responsive testing in our schools. Although we are currently experiencing a significant surge in cases, as are our five towns, we are hopeful that cases will begin to decrease so we can return to a level of normalcy this Spring. I am confident that whatever challenges the coming months may present, the education of all Wachusett students will continue to be outstanding thanks to our talented and dedicated educators. The resilience and resourcefulness our teachers have shown over the past two years has been remarkable.

Despite the challenges that the pandemic has brought, there have been opportunities for us to leverage lessons learned to enhance opportunities for our students and staff. Enhancement of our district technology and increased use of educational software has been a notable improvement in the district. Last year, the district was able to expand our 1:1 Chromebook program to include all students in grades 6 - 12. This has allowed us to also focus on personalized learning programs such as IXL, Lexia, and common assessments including the STAR assessment.

The addition of three elementary school counselors has bolstered the district's capacity to respond to the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students. School counselors are important members of the school's support team, and their training and expertise provide an important foundation for building school cultures that promote social-emotional learning skills for both students and staff.

As we have done over the past several years, the District and Member Town officials held the annual Budget Roundtable on December 9, 2021. This meeting is an important opportunity to discuss key budget issues associated with the upcoming fiscal year. This year's Roundtable was held in person and was well-attended by town representatives, officials from the state, members of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee, and community members interested in learning more about the budget process. As I have shared numerous times in the past, I am grateful to our state representatives for their continued support of increased funding for all schools in the Commonwealth.

For the fourth consecutive year, the five towns that comprise the Wachusett District supported a budget that permitted us the opportunity to increase support for our students. We very much appreciate the support of the Member Towns, and we look to continue forward progress, including emphasizing the social and emotional health and well-being of our students in the coming school year.

I would like to thank all parents/guardians, teachers, staff, and community members for their continued support and dedication to the education of the children in the Wachusett Regional School District. We will continue to work together to provide our students with a quality education that will prepare them for success in the future.

Sincerely,

Darryll McCall, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

DM;rj



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2021 Annual Town Report

Respectfully submitted is the one hundred and eleventh report of the Sterling Municipal Light Department (SMLD).

Staff Changes

In 2021 there were some changes to our staff. The SMLD hired a Fiber Network Coordinator, Bill Underhill, in January 2021, who has over 35 years of Network Coordinating experience. Bill previously worked the last six years for the Concord Municipal Light Department as their Fiber Network Coordinator. In June of 2021 the LAMB Department hired two new employees, Kalyn Stapel and Gavin Duhamel. Kalyn was a co-op student from Monty Tech working at the SMLD for the last two years. In June, she was hired full-time as the Customer Service Representative. Gavin was originally hired as summer help, but since transitioned into the position as the Apprentice Fiber Installation Technician. In July, the LAMB also hired Josh Hallen as the Fiber Installation Technician who has many years of fiber installation and splicing experience. Lastly, in May, Sean Hamilton, our General Manager retired after serving for 42 years in the public utility sector with the last 10 years at the SMLD. We truly miss his leadership and progressive ideas, making Sterling a leader in public utilities. Our best wishes to him in his retirement. In May, the SMLD Board voted to appoint Darren Borge as General Manager, in a six-month probationary period. In December, completing the six-month probationary period, Darren was appointed the new SMLD General Manager. Darren has been with the Light Department since August of 2008. In that time, he has taken over the Engineering, Metering, and Operations Department Supervisory roles. He has played a key role in several different SMLD and town projects that included both our large-scale solar interconnections in 2011 and 2012. Darren has managed our first-generation AMI in 2012, as well as our second generation in 2020 and played a key role in the installation and certification of both large-scale battery storage and our Community Solar with Battery Storage Project. In 2020, the Town of Sterling received Federal Grant for Town INET Broadband which would connect and supplies all Town of Sterling and SMLD facilities with Fiber Broadband internet supplied from Shrewsbury Electric and Cable Operations (SELCO). The Town of Sterling, working with the SMLD and the SMLD Line Crews, Shrewsbury Electric and Cable Operations (SELCO), Boylston Municipal Light Department (BMLD) and the West Boylston Municipal Light Department (WBMLD). The crews installed 23 miles of 432 fiber cable from Shrewsbury to Sterling. This project began a projected annual savings of \$62k/year savings for the Town of Sterling. With the fiber internet being provided from SELCO for the Town of Sterling INET through the SMLD. This created a unique opportunity for the SMLD and the Sterling Ratepayers to have the SMLD become an Internet Service Provider (ISP), thus, creating a new department under the SMLD, the Local Area Municipal Broadband (LAMB). This business opportunity will be able to provide the businesses and residents of Sterling's next generation internet through a fiber optic system, offering faster speeds and highly competitive pricing.

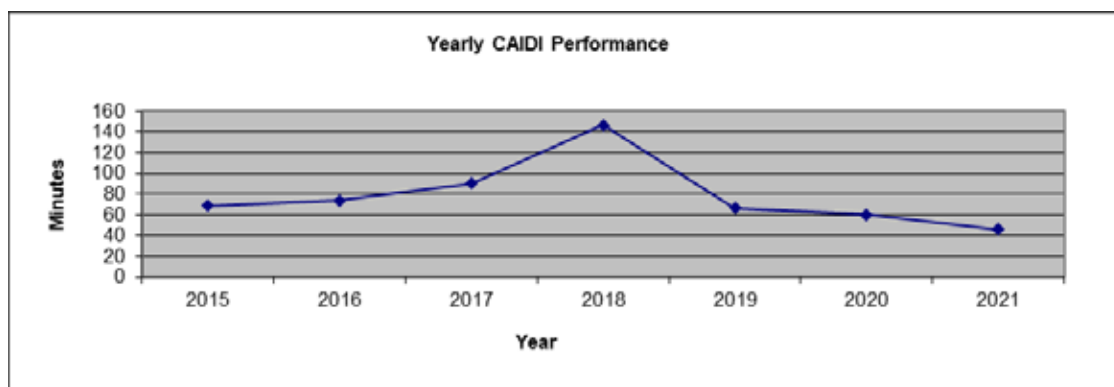
Power

As of December 31, 2021, the SMLD's customer base has 3,991 accounts

3,551 Residential, 13 Large General Service (LGS), 135 Medium General Service (MGS), 290 Small General Service (SGS), 1 Wholesale and 1 Streetlight.

A total of **64,071,034 kilowatt hours (kwhrs) of electricity were sold** during the calendar year 2021. This represents an increase of 1,215,790 kwhrs from calendar year 2020. Sterling's hourly peak demand was 12.741 MW set in August of 2021.

The SMLD uses reliable indices to monitor the performance of our distribution system and measures our response time to system interruptions. The 2021 **Average Service Availability Index (ASAI)** of electricity for Sterling residents was 99.998%. The 2021 **Customer Average Interruption Duration Index (CAIDI)** numbers represent the average time required to restore service to a customer per sustained outage was 45.757 minutes. This shows a 25% improvement, from the time of the outage occurs to when the power is restored. In 2020, was 60.248 minutes.



We have been able to mitigate any transmission increases with the use of our battery storage systems by using locally produced (and stored) solar energy from the **E.H. Perkins** on Wiles Road, as well as our **Community Solar with Storage Project** on Chocksett Road. To date, these facilities combined have provided us with **43,747,263 kwhrs** which is enough energy to **power all the average residential customer's homes in Sterling for two years**.

The **1 MW Community Solar Project** with 1mw/2mwhrs of energy storage was the first of its kind in Massachusetts and is fully subscribed by over 400 Sterling residents who receive 25% of their energy needs from this facility. The ratepayers in Sterling share in savings generated by using the batteries to avoid transmission costs.

Energy Storage

Our **Battery Storage Projects** continue to provide tremendous benefits to our customers. Besides the resiliency value it was designed to provide, in just five years of operation we have saved over \$2 million dollars in avoided transmission cost.

Operations Department

In 2021 the SMLD Operations installed 51 new poles and pulled 21 old poles. We responded to 5 different motor vehicle accidents involving SMLD poles or pad mount equipment. The SMLD crews replaced 6,825' of overhead primary bare wire with tree protection covered wire. This helps in reducing incidental outages, caused by tree or wildlife contact. We replaced 890' of primary underground cable due to life span, cable faults or emergency motor vehicle accidents. In 2021 an additional 7,175' of primary underground cable was added for new residential homes, developments or commercial buildings being built in Sterling. We installed 96 new meters and 6 new transformers throughout the SMLD distribution system totaling 355KVA. The SMLD has completed the second generation of AMI deployment, with our new EATON AMI Metering System that will benefit not only the ratepayers but the Light Department as well. Unlike our older original AMI system that only worked with meters, this system will allow the SMLD to tie into the radio RF system with capacitor banks and reclosers. This helps the Department by giving us the ability to expand the Distribution SCADA (System Control and Data Acquisition) System. This brings the SMLD one step closer to a "Smart Grid" style system that will reduce outage restoration times and limit the number of exposed areas in the event of a major outage. The SMLD has continued with the LED floodlight conversion and has changed a total of 139 of the 216 floodlights in town to 85W LED, contributing to better lighting at lower cost. It is expected to take about another year to convert all floodlights to 85W LEDs. When complete, this will reduce our stock from a high of 32 different types of lights and wattages of bulbs to only 3 types of lighting. The SMLD has also continued to change underground utility (URD) lighting or cul-de-sac lighting to LED as well.

We have changed all town and private cul-de-Sac lighting to LED lights throughout the SMLD distribution territory. We will continue to work on the secondary handhole box replacements in certain underground developments. The older style flush mount (sub-surface) handhole boxes are being replaced with above ground secondary pedestals. The new style pedestals allow cables to be attached to upright busbars inside the pedestal. The benefits to the upright busbars are getting the service connection point out of the bottom of the handhole and water, this reduces the deterioration of the cables and connectors that service the house or handhole. This also allows for better trouble shooting capabilities and quicker restoration times in the winter months when flush mounts are frozen underneath snowbanks. In 2022, the SMLD Operations Department will continue to prioritize tree trimming, system hardening, safety and reliable electrical system. ***The SMLD continues to provide high system power and quality, as well as maintaining excellent customer satisfaction.***

Fiber Project

In 2020, upon completion of the 72-strand fiber in and around the center of Sterling made possible by a **\$150,000 Community Compact IT Grant received by the Town of Sterling**, we also installed a 432-backbone fiber from the Shrewsbury town line to the Leominster town line in Sterling. The fiber was placed along Route 140, Muddy Pond Road, Worcester Road, School Street, Leominster Road, Chocksett Road, Pratts Junction Road, Leominster Road. This will provide internet service to the Municipal buildings, Fire, Police and the DPW and will also provide improved communication capability to the radio towers, as well as access to SMLD equipment and renewable power supply assets. This new access to higher bandwidth will provide greater speeds and tremendous savings to the town with a 4.6-year payback. In 2021, the SMLD/LAMB continued the Fiber Phase two deployment, which started offering fiber internet to Sterling Businesses and Residents along the Phase 1 route. Also, in 2021 the SMLD and the Town of Sterling joined together to expand the Town's INET system to different Town facilities and locations. Thus, expanding the LAMB fiber network to more businesses and residents of Sterling. We currently have our fiber network from Maple Steet to Kendall Hill Road, all the way to the town beach. This will help get the current emergency radio systems for SPD, SFD, DPW and the SMLD off the current ISP system and onto the LAMB fiber network. The system will also allow us to add a VoIP phone system at the town beach for an emergency call box that will connect direct to SPD/SFD dispatch centers and will also offer free town Wi-Fi at the town beach.

In 2022, with the joint project with the Town of Sterling, we will continue with the installation of the fiber cable from Leominster Road to North Row Road, to Heywood Road, to Osgood Road, to Princeton Road all the way down to Route 140. With no debt to the Sterling ratepayers, this project will expand the LAMB fiber network availability from just 17% to 42% of businesses and residents.

Awards

The most important award that we received in 2021 was our **safety award**. For the eleventh consecutive year the SMLD had **no workers' compensation claims or lost time**. This not only lowered our workmen's compensation insurance premiums but also qualified the SMLD to receive the **American Public Power Safety Award**. This award recognizes the Public Power Utilities across the country who achieves this milestone.

Our improved safety record and reduced premiums also provide additional savings to our ratepayers. The SMLD also received two national and 2 state awards for 2020.



Continued Awards.

The SMLD also received another **American Public Power Association** award in 2021, the **RP3 Platinum Certification**. This national award recognizes utilities that demonstrate high proficiency in reliability, safety, workforce development and system improvement.

Power Supply

In effort to diversify our power resources and stabilize purchased power costs, we buy electricity through fixed contracts and the open market. These costs reflect the generation and delivery of electricity to the Town of Sterling. There are many circumstances beyond our control that make the cost of electric energy fluctuate, such as, periods of peak power demands during extreme temperatures, unexpected plant shutdowns and spikes in fuel prices. Changing costs are triggered by unpredictable events from the fluctuating fuel commodity markets to global unrest. Natural gas prices have declined over the last few years, but we remain challenged with the uncertainty of the delivery during cold spells. Energy produced from natural gas has risen from 5% in 2000 to over 55% in 2021. With the new legislation for the 2050 Roadmap, the SMLD will be required to have at least 50% of our power supply coming from non-carbon emitting resources by 2030. Will then be required to have 75% by 2040 and 100% by 2050. This will be accomplished by continuing to use renewables such as solar and offshore wind projects as well as new hydro power that is being brought down from Canada. We support the reduction in carbon emissions and will continue to monitor this legislation and projects to be sure they are in the best interest of the Sterling ratepayers and that it does not supersede local control.

Our transmission and capacity costs continue to rise even while energy prices decline. The driver behind these costs is a combination of things; the capacity market in New England that does not provide the lowest possible rate to the consumers and the continued build out of transmission lines with projects running 34% over budget with no recourse. At the same time, transmission owners are receiving large returns (between 11-14%) on their multi-billion-dollar investments in transmission line upgrades in New England. The SMLD along with other municipal light plants and associations continue to contest these charges in Washington with our Legislators and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

As a result of these meetings various bills were filed that did bring some relief as the returns were lowered from 11.4% down to 10.54%. We will continue to contest that the returns be closer to the industry average of 9.2%.

Power Portfolio

Our power portfolio is over 55% from non-carbon emitting resources. We receive **hydro power** specifically from **Baltic Mills, Mechanicsville Hydro, Energy Stream Hydro** and **Public Authority State of New York Hydro (PASNY)**. In 2021 **over 20%** of our power was received from **renewable energy sources** that includes the **Berkshire Wind Project** in Western MA, the **Hancock Wind Project** located in Hancock ME, the **Princeton Wind Project** on Wachusett Mountain in Princeton, MA and **three large scale solar facilities** in Sterling.

Solar Projects in Sterling

- **E. H. Perkins Project** is a 1 MW solar array located on Jewett Road
- **Wiles Road Project** is a 2-mw solar array
- **Origis Energy** 1 mw solar with storage project on Chocksett Road.

We also receive power from the **Millstone III Nuclear Plant** in Millstone Connecticut and the **Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant** in New Hampshire. Other sources of our power supply come from the **MMWEC Stony Brook** Plant (combined cycle units I & II)

We continue to offer the following assistance programs to our residents

- Next Zero Energy Audit (no cost to residents)
- Energy Star® Rebate Program, <https://nextzero.org/sterling/>
- Electric Vehicle Rebates / Charging Rate
- Kill-A-Watt™ Electricity Usage Monitor
- TESCO Surge Arrester
- Multiple Payment Options
- EV Chargers
- Virtual Peaker Residential Demand Response Program.
- Connected Homes Program, <https://nextzero.org/sterling/connected-homes/>

Other community activities/contributions sanctioned by the SMLD Light Board

- Our Annual Open House will be held Thursday June 23, 2022.
- Installed LED holiday lights on the Town Common.
- Annually we Install pole, cable and lighting needed to power the Sterling Fair (not 2020 or 2021).
- Provide funds for annual inspection and maintenance for all town owned generators.
- Offer the round-up program to our customers to benefit the Sterling Neighbor-to-Neighbor (N-2-N) Program. Since the program began in June 2014, your generous contributions have raised over \$18,000.00 for the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Fund.
- Work with the Energy Committee providing funding for energy efficiency projects in Municipal Buildings including LED lights that use up to 67% less energy to operate.

SMLD CHANGES IN 2021

Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) In 2008 using the Mueller Systems, we began installation of the first AMI system in the region. However, over the past years the system has experienced complications and started to fail. Mueller Systems indicated they were shifting away from supporting the electrical metering system and will only be supporting the water metering systems. We then partnered with Groton Electric Light Department on an RFP to replace the Mueller AMI system. After review of the eight systems that responded to our RFP, three were brought in for presentations and interviews. Eaton Industries was the vendor of choice and in April 2020 our agreement was signed for \$675,616.00. This system will return \$375,000 in software support savings over a 15-year term. In June of 2020 the communication equipment (some communicating through our new fiber backbone), and 3,940 new replacement meters were ordered. In December 2020 we began the ***Meter Replacement Program***. And in 2021, completed all 4,025-meter changes in Sterling.

Tree trimming services continued throughout 2021. By using a ***competitive bid process*** for tree trimming the work is ***primarily performed by outside contractors***. Additional tree trimming is also performed by the ***SMLD line crew that involves a 5-year rotating cycle*** in areas that we see an increased growth or system problem.

Utility Scam Be aware of utility scams that continue taking place in our area. Scammers are making calls after business hours at night and throughout the weekends. They identify themselves as a “utility” and demand that a payment be made over the phone, or the service will be disconnected. ***Do not make a payment to this request.*** Hang up and call our office at 978-422-8267 (Monday through Thursday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Friday 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) or call the Sterling Police Department at 978-422-7331. Also, if anyone stops by your home claiming to be an SMLD employee and you do not have a pre-arranged appointment, ***do not let them in.*** All SMLD employees have photo I.D.’s and will only be at your home for a scheduled appointment. Again, call our office or the Sterling Police Department if this incident should occur.

Residents who rely on life supporting medical equipment should contact our office to be put on our ***Power Priority List***. This list is shared with our Police and Fire Departments for follow up in emergency situations.

COMING IN 2022

CUSTOMER PORTAL

With the completion of the Eaton AMI Meter System rollout and the advancement of technology and multi-speak functionality, the SMLD will be rolling out an APP based and web-based Customer Usage Portal. This portal will allow our customer to link one or multiple meters to a single login and track and view their usage data down to a 15-minute interval. Customers who sign up for ebill will also be able to view their bill.

FIBER INTERNET

The SMLD and LAMB Departments continue to expand the fiber network. As we expand our network, we will continue to be able to offer this excellent service to more and more business and residents of Sterling. We currently only cover approximately 20% of Sterling and with a joint project with the Town of Sterling we plan to expand to 42% by the end of 2022. Although this is a large undertaking and building of a completely new system, our staff and line crews are up for the task. We believe that this service better supports the needs and services of our great community. It will provide improved communication, safety and security for town departments, as well as businesses and residents with the best service possible at great competitive pricing.

We thank the DPW personnel for their assistance throughout the year by providing maintenance to our vehicles and assisting us during roadway excavations.

We thank the Water Department for their contribution in lowering our peak power demand by shedding loads during peak periods. This helps to reduce our transmission costs which benefits all ratepayers.

We would also like to thank the Police, Fire and Dispatchers for their continued support throughout the year. While most of the work by your departments is performed behind the scenes, it does not go unnoticed. Standing by to keep our crews safe at accident sites, monitoring our crews while out on trouble calls or keeping our communication equipment operating at peak efficiency, all contribute to the safety of our employees and for that we are most grateful.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Darren Borge
General Manager

For the Sterling Municipal Light Board Members:

Joseph Curtin, Chairman
Brian Pierce, Vice Chairman
Eric Darlington, Clerk

Wachusett Greenways 2021 Annual Report

27 Years of Sharing Community Connections

Sharing smiles is a year round joy on the Mass Central Rail Trail. Here visitors can find solitude and community, rest and strength, harmony and victory, healing and compassion in the outdoors. Wachusett Greenways' mission is to connect the community through regional trail building. Partnerships among every one of our dedicated volunteers, members and donors, town and state government, local foundations and businesses are key.

Amazing Volunteers!

Open the door and come join us. Renew your strength, help advance our mission, and inspire others by volunteering for trail clearing, photography, surveying, trail planning or outreach. Or share your own special skill. Here's the message from one new 2021 volunteer: "Just wanted to say how thankful I am to have joined your 'crew'! It's so cool being a part of all of you and giving some love and work back to the trails that have been a huge part of my family's' lives." Another 2021 arrival expressed delight after helping with clearing ditches: "I had a great time mucking with all of you! And I'm sure I've told anyone who will listen how happy and grateful I am to have found this group and to be doing this work."

In 2021, with small teams, we concentrated on upgrading trail stewardship by mowing, removing dead tree and ditch clearing. One volunteer replaced a bulletin board and built two beautiful new picnic tables. We tackled the Springdale Mill Historic Site to clear brush and clean signs. Community and school groups began returning during the time when Covid cases decreased.

Partner Town Support

All eight Towns--Barre, Holden, Oakham, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling and West Boylston--contributed toward Wachusett Greenways' annual operating expenses. Towns also helped with some mowing and special maintenance projects.

Charnock Mural

The long-imagined Charnock Tunnel Mural came to life in 2021. Artist Margaret McCandless engaged several other volunteers to join her in painting a mural of four seasons including local plants, and wildlife. Now trail visitors are delighted to find this beautiful surprise when they visit the rail trail in Rutland. Margaret described her vision for the mural, "By painting local scenery on the tunnel walls, the mural will help passers-by notice and appreciate aspects of the natural world outside the tunnel." Wachusett Greenways is grateful to Margaret for initiating this project and for sharing her gifts as an artist, educator and mural painter.

In 2022 the project will continue with painting on the second wall of the Charnock Tunnel and engagement of more community volunteers. Massachusetts Cultural

Council Grants from the towns of Rutland, Paxton and Holden all supported the mural project. Thank you, also, to Clayton Johansen and Nal's Paint for contributing to priming the wall and paint supplies.

Mass Central Rail Trail Reaching Across the Commonwealth

Wachusett Greenways and partners are working to fill the gaps in our thirty mile section of the MCRT. Across the Commonwealth others are building more of the 104 mile MCRT between Northampton and Boston. In 2021, Wachusett Greenways, in partnership with the DCR Watershed Division, advanced construction of two new miles of trail in Holden between Mill and Princeton Streets to be completed in 2022. WG construction is in progress on the MCRT in West Boylston on the new Pleasant Street section; upgrading the Thomas Street section; and in Sterling replacing the bridge at West Lake Washacum. The DCR Recreational Trails Program and the MassTrails Program provide fundamental support with matching grants.

WG Annual Meeting

The annual meeting ordinarily scheduled for May was held on December 2, 2021 to review the prior year 2020. The next annual meeting in May 2022 will review and celebrate the year 2021. All are welcome!

Let's do it!

Sadly, we said farewell to Eric Johansen, longtime WG and community supporter, par excellence. In 1994, Eric posed for *The Landmark* kick-off photo with a new trail development group sporting bicycles, snow shoes, cross-country skis, hiking and running shoes and strollers. Eric continued to encourage Wachusett Greenways, originally spun from Wachusett Earthday, to make the Mass Central Rail Trail and open spaces accessible to all. Continuing in the family tradition, Clayton and Bennett, sons of Eric and Lois Johansen, are also engaged with WG. In 2021 Clayton and this team from EJ's Painting primed the Charnock Tunnel wall in Rutland for the new mural, and Bennett snowplowed the rail trail parking lot at River Street in Holden.



THANK YOU to Every Supporter!

Thank you to each and every donor who contributed to Wachusett Greenways in 2021. New donors and loyal members are key. The total number of donors for the year reached 864 including 40 new members. Donors came from 122 different towns in 17 different states.

A gift in *any* amount counts you as a member, and you will receive the *Wachusett Greenways* guide, which includes a map for the regions' trails and greenways. In addition to membership, Wachusett Greenways has three special Mass Central Rail Trail Funds: MCRT Construction Fund, Dr. Edward P. Yaglou MCRT Maintenance Fund, and the MCRT Stewardship Endowment Fund. Donors are invited to designate gifts to any of these Funds to help complete the trail, carry out regular maintenance, and protect the trail for the future. In 2021 donors expressed gratitude to be among the first to give to the Fund honoring Ed Yaglou, our long-time dedicated volunteer.

We invite you to sign up to volunteer and to contribute at www.wachusettgreenways.org or phone 508-479-2123 or by mail at Wachusett Greenways, P.O. Box 121, Holden 01520.

Wachusett Greenways Board of Directors:

Colleen Abrams, Chair	Troy Milliken, Treasurer
Christy Barnes	Mike Peckar, Secretary
Stephen Chanis	Christopher Ryan

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

To the Honorable Select Board and the Citizens of Sterling:

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) has the authority to hear appeals of the Zoning Enforcement Officer, to grant Variances when zoning requirements cannot be met, and to grant Special Permits based on use where required by Sterling's Protective Bylaws.

In 2021, the Zoning Board of Appeals received 7 new applications and 1 continued hearing for Northgate Meadows.

January	Northgate Meadows (Cont.) 58 Mellon Hollow Road	40B Modification of Permit Special Permit	Granted Denied
April	4 Belmont Drive	Special Permit for Accessory Apartment	Granted
June	22 Woodside Drive	Special Permit for Accessory Apartment	Granted
July	104 Lakeshore Drive Extension	Special Permit	Continued
August	104 Lakeshore Drive Extension	Special Permit	Granted
September	15 Hall Avenue	Special Permit	Granted
November	64 Leominster Road	Special Permit	Granted
December	185 Pratts Junction Road	Variance	Continued

The Board would like to thank Mr. Jerry Siver for his many years of service to the community and wish him well on his future endeavors. The Board would also like to welcome Ms. Gail Bergeron who will be filling the vacant seat and Mr. Everett Pierce who will serve as an alternate.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Fox, Chairman
Joseph Curtin, Vice Chairman
Diana Baldarelli, Clerk
Matthew CampoBasso
Jerry Siver

Notes:

[illegible]

TOWN INFORMATION

www.sterling-ma.gov

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

At the Butterick Municipal Building: 978-422-8111

Assessors..... ext. 2313
Board of Health ext. 2305
Select Board ext. 2316
Bulding/Inspections ext. 2301
Planning & Zoning Boards ext. 2320
Recreation ext. 2323
or 978-422-3041
Town Administrator..... ext. 2315
Town Clerk..... ext. 2307, 2308
Treasurer ext. 2311
Collector ext 2310

Other numbers:

DPW & Water Dept. 978-422-6767
Municipal Light Dept. 978-422-3049
Senior Center 978-422-3032

STERLING SUMMER CONCERT SERIES 2022

**6 PM to 8 PM Mondays and Wednesdays in July and August
Memorial Park, behind the Fire Station**

JULY 6: L.S.N.

11: HOLDIN' BACK

13: THROW BACK TO THE 60's

18: WACHUSETT COMMUNITY BAND

20: CROSSROADS

25: THE BAND FROM U.N.C.L.E.

27: STRICTLY OVER TIME

AUGUST 1: ILLUSIONS

**3: WORCESTER COUNTY
BLUEGRASS ALL-STARs**

8: THE RAINFLOWERS

10: RAMPAGE TRIO

15: JIM ATKINS BAND

17: BORELLI OCTET

22: P.T. PICKERS

SPONSORED BY THE STERLING CULTURAL COUNCIL

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THESE LOCAL BUSINESSES

**Don-Jo Mfg.
Groundwater Supply Co. Inc.
Leominster Credit Union
Favreau Forestry
Hendrickson Advertising
Rota Spring Farm
Mulligan's Miniature Golf**

**Kitchen Associates
Century 21 CHT Sterling
Live Automation
Chris' Barber Shop
Chocksett Inn
StartPoint Realty
Pandolf-Perkins
L.R. Favreau Septic**