

Town Clerk's Report -- Donna Berry

As I begin writing this report I was suddenly awestruck in the realization that I have been in the Town Clerk's Office for 18 years; 19 years in January, 2016. My thought wandered to the way "things use to be done" versus the process to complete them today. While the primary office tasks (recording of land records, filing of vital records, dog licensing, elections and bookkeeping) are still performed, they have become more complex and detail oriented. I must admit that technology has provided for much efficiency. However, any time saved has been gobbled up complying with the more complex rules and regulations.

Keeping on top of the ever changing legislation in Montpelier that keeps all municipal officials awake (without the benefit of coffee); new responsibilities relevant to open meeting laws that translate into more information being put on websites and posted around town, and changes in election rules and deadlines come to mind. Sometimes, these changes are big news; others slip in and we learn about them through the Vermont Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Association.

Elections seemed never ending this fiscal year (August, November, March, April, May and June). Each election consumes a large amount of our time and can be expensive. The average cost of an election is in the range of \$1000 to \$4000. However, with the Presidential Election and our local school closing elections the cost is greater due to a higher voter turnout. Work for each event begins at least 30 to 45 days prior to the voting day and continues for an additional week after voting.

Can't make it to the polls to vote? Think it takes too much time? Just request an absentee ballot! For local elections absentee ballots are available 30 days prior to each election. A request can be made by contacting the Town Clerk's Office by telephone, email or regular mail.

As Town Clerk, I have been able to attend the New England Municipal Clerks Institute for the past two summers. This is a three-year program of one-week intensive training that covers a variety of topics for clerks in municipalities of all sizes. So far, we have had courses in Excel, PowerPoint, public speaking, letter writing, working with the media, administration, legal documents that might appear for recording in land records, community outreach, and interpersonal skills. This has been a wonderful experience and I especially appreciate the voters approving my budget that allows me to attend. I am looking forward to the third and final year. I had also received my CVC designation this year with a pin and a plaque. I am now a Certified Vermont Clerk and will be going for my Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC).

The Town Clerk and the Assistant Town Clerk are here for you 24 hours a week, as has been the case for the past 9 years. A heartfelt and special "Thank You" to Cynthia Gaboriault, Assistant Town Clerk, for her assistance, dedication and moral support throughout the year. A BIG thank you to all the elected/appointed officials. The Town wouldn't run as smoothly as it does if it wasn't for all of you. To so many of you who during the year have called or stopped by just to say "Hello", thank you. It's always a pleasure to visit with you all. Cindy and I look forward to being of service and assistance for you in the coming year.