

## **TOWN OF HINSDALE E-NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2016**

### **WELCOME MESSAGE**

Greetings!

In the interest of helping to keep residents informed of important “goings on” in town, we have begun producing a town-wide newsletter that will be disseminated by email on a regular basis (likely monthly) to all individuals who subscribe to the mailing list. Our hope is that the number of recipients on this list will continue to grow over time to ensure that most households receive these important updates. If you have friends or family that may be interested in receiving this newsletter in the future, please have them contact Ryan Aylesworth, Town Administrator, at 413-464-6534 or [town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov).

Thank you for being a part of our community and we hope you enjoy the newsletter!

### **HINSDALE LAUNCHES OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGE!**

The Town of Hinsdale has launched an official Facebook page (“Town of Hinsdale, Massachusetts”) that can be accessed at the following web link: [www.facebook.com/HinsdaleMA](http://www.facebook.com/HinsdaleMA)

This page will be maintained by town officials and be used to help disseminate important updates about community affairs and alert residents when new/detailed information is available on the Town’s official website ([www.hinsdalemass.com](http://www.hinsdalemass.com)). We hope you will “Like” this page and start receiving regular updates on your Facebook news feed!

### **VACANCIES ON TOWN BOARDS**

The Town is seeking applicants interested in filling vacancies on the following boards and committees: Mission & Vision Working Group, Cemetery Commission, Board of Health, Zoning Board of Appeals (alternates), and a designee to the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA).

Anyone interested in serving in any of these capacities should contact Ryan Aylesworth, Town Administrator, at 464-6534 or by email at [town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov)

## **BUILDING COMMISSIONER AND WIRING INSPECTOR VACANCIES**

The Town of Hinsdale is seeking qualified applicants for the positions of Building Commissioner (also serves as Code Enforcement Officer) and Electrical/Wiring Inspector. Interested parties can find additional information about each position's duties and required training/qualifications by visiting the Town's official website: <http://www.hinsdalemass.com/jobs-bids-notices>

Questions about these vacancies should be directed to Ryan Aylesworth, Town Administrator, at 464-6534 or by email at [town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov)

## **NEW VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER**

Phil Collins, the Town's Veterans Service Officer (VSO), retired this past month. We have decided to address this vacancy by entering into an inter-municipal agreement with the City of Pittsfield's Veteran Services Department. Under this agreement, James Clark, Director of Veterans' Services, will serve as our community's VSO. Hinsdale veterans will have access to a full-time VSO with significant knowledge and experience in the field of veteran aide. Office hours will be primarily administered in Pittsfield City Hall, but a limited amount of office hours will also be conducted at Hinsdale Town Hall on a monthly basis (those hours will soon be posted). Hinsdale joins the Town of Washington, the Town of Peru, and several other small Berkshire Communities who have elected to partner with the City of Pittsfield to reduce the costs associated with administering a Veterans Services program and ultimately gain access to additional institutional resources that promote better support for our veterans.

Questions about veterans services should be directed to James Clark, Director of Veterans' Services, at 413-499-9433 or by email at [jclark@pittsfieldch.com](mailto:jclark@pittsfieldch.com)

## **"LISTENING SESSIONS" ANNOUNCED FOR VISION PLAN**

As has been previously reported, the Town of Hinsdale is in the process of developing a "vision plan" that better enables the Town to identify and attain ambitious goals (spanning broad topics such as municipal services, economic development, transportation and public infrastructure, housing, land use, natural and cultural resource conservation, and recreation and tourism) and generally enhance community vitality.

A primary goal of this process is to promote citizen buy-in and support for the Vision Plan, and a series of “listening sessions” are being planned to share information about existing conditions, explore the values and perspectives residents hold toward our community, identify areas of potentially needed improvement, and generally obtain additional resident input that will help inform development of the preliminary draft of the vision, goals, and objectives. At least two of these listening sessions (both of which will be convened in the Community Room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Town Hall) are open to the general public and will be taking place on the following dates/times:

- Saturday, December 10 beginning at 10:00 AM
- Thursday, December 15 beginning at 5:30 PM

These sessions are anticipated to be up to 90 minutes in duration. Light refreshments will be available to participants. We hope you will participate!

If you have specific questions about the Vision Plan listening sessions or related opportunities for public involvement, please contact Ryan Aylesworth, Town Administrator, at 413-464-6534 or [town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov).

## **CENTRAL BERKSHIRE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (CBRSD) BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE**

CBRSD has been approved by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to proceed with the process of either building a new Wahconah Regional High School, refurbishing the existing building, or a combination of both. The process has just begun and could be 4 or 5 years in length. The Building Committee for this project is comprised of 26 individuals and each of the District's seven communities are represented. For additional information on this process, please click the below link:

[http://www.cbrsd.org/m\\_s\\_b\\_a\\_building\\_project](http://www.cbrsd.org/m_s_b_a_building_project)

## **UPDATE FROM THE POLICE CHIEF**

### **Notice to all Dog Owners**

All dogs owned or kept in the Town of Hinsdale shall be restrained from running at large 24 hours a day, each day of the year. Violations are subject to monetary fines.

All dogs owned or kept in Hinsdale for eleven (11) consecutive days in any calendar year shall be licensed.

- Licensed period April 1 through May 31 each year
- Licenses may be obtained through the Town Clerk
- Failure to license your dog(s) can result in a fine of up to \$50, plus applicable late-fees

### **License to Carry (LTC) and Firearms Identification Cards (FID)**

Applications for renewals can be found at the following URL:

<http://www.mass.gov/eopss/firearms-reg-and-laws/frb/firearms-forms-and-applications.html>

Completed applications must be turned in to the Hinsdale Police Station, where applicants can schedule a subsequent appointment with the Chief of Police to review their application.

Questions about PD-related business should be directed to Susan Rathbun, Police Chief, either in-person or by email ([police.chief@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:police.chief@hinsdalema.gov)).

### **UPDATE FROM THE HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT**

#### **Street Parking During Winter Months**

The Hinsdale Highway Department would like to kindly remind all residents that the Select Board has adopted a policy pertaining to parking on roads during winter snow events. More specifically, the new policy prohibits parking on a public way (including both town and state roads) or any private way open to the public, obstructing snow removal from November 1 to April 15 between the hours of 12:00 AM (midnight) and 8:00 AM. Towing costs and fines will be the responsibility of the vehicles registered owner as stated in the Town of Hinsdale By-Laws.

#### **Information Provided by Residents**

Although the Town's dedicated crew of Highway Department workers regularly monitors the condition of town-owned/town-maintained roads and other public infrastructure to identify and resolve any issues that could pose potential safety risks, we want to remind residents that informative calls are always welcomed and appreciated. Timely information provided by residents can help our Highway Department ensure that hazards are removed as quickly as possible. Please direct information and/or concerns to Rene Senecal, Highway Department Superintendent, at 413-655-2304 or [dpw.highways@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:dpw.highways@hinsdalema.gov).

## **EZ PASS REQUIRED BEGINNING OCTOBER 28TH**

Massachusetts will be requiring the use of an EZ-pass when travelling on the turnpike to avoid surcharges. You may receive a free transponder by going to: <https://www.massdot.state.ma.us/highway/TrafficTravelResources/EZPassMAProgram.aspx> or by calling customer service, toll free, at 1-877-627-7745.

All Electronic Tolling Activated as of October 28; Toll Plaza Demolitions Have Begun.

## **MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY SAFETY TIPS**

Visit [www.mass.gov/KnowPlanPrepare](http://www.mass.gov/KnowPlanPrepare). The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has set forth a statewide campaign to encourage Massachusetts residents, families and communities to make plans and prepare for public health and medical emergencies, threats and disasters.

A preparedness checklist is available on the DPH campaign website listed above, and it is posted as a fillable pdf. Individuals can enter the personal information for themselves and all family members. This includes relevant medical information, evacuation locations, family meeting places and important identification data.

Important themes of the campaign are:

- Build an emergency kit
- Create a family communication plan
- Plan for all medical needs
- Stay safe and well
- Include your pets in planning

Again, [www.mass.gov/KnowPlanPrepare](http://www.mass.gov/KnowPlanPrepare) is the campaign website that can provide information, tips and links for the public. Other useful websites on emergency preparedness are:

<http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/emergencies/hurricanes>

<http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agenciesmema/be-prepared>

<http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/emergencies/power-outage>

## **SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER**

The Fall 2016 issue of Central Berkshire Regional School District's quarterly newsletter can be accessed here:

[http://www.cbrsd.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_295441/Image/News/Newsletters/CBRSD%20Newsletter%20\(Fall,%202016\)%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.cbrsd.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_295441/Image/News/Newsletters/CBRSD%20Newsletter%20(Fall,%202016)%20(1).pdf)

### **NEED FOOD AND/OR FUEL ASSISTANCE?**

You may be eligible for financial assistance from your friends and neighbors right here in town. Contact the Berkshire Community Action Council at 413-445-4503 or visit their website at <https://bcacinc.org/>. All correspondence is strictly confidential.

### **PLEASE BE AWARE**

We have received notice that there is a new scam affecting towns across the county. Someone will contact you, posing as the Massachusetts Census Bureau and asking that you supply all kinds of personal information. DO NOT RESPOND – This is a SCAM! The Massachusetts Census Bureau does not exist (there is only a U.S. Census Bureau).

### **UPDATES ON PREVIOUS NEWS**

#### **ONLINE BILL PAY IS NOW AVAILABLE!**

We are very excited to announce that Hinsdale residents now have the ability to securely pay their taxes (real estate, personal property and motor vehicle excise taxes), water/sewer bills, and other municipal fees online via the town's official website - [www.hinsdalemass.com](http://www.hinsdalemass.com). This new payment method serves to accommodate those Hinsdale residents who want the convenience of paying their taxes and fees online, anytime day or night. It also benefits the town in that payments are processed automatically, allowing town employees faster balance reconciliation and more time to work on other town issues.

Local officials realize the importance of keeping with the times and offering this new online payment option. The Town of Hinsdale is fortunate to have found a banking partner, UniBank, who has years of municipal/government banking experience and who adheres to strict security methods to protect our residents' personal information. In fact, UniBank uses state-of-the industry encryption methods to safely handle these transactions so bank account information remains completely confidential (not even being shared with municipal employees).

The process for residents to pay online is simple: with your bill and checkbook in hand, 1) Go to: [www.hinsdalemass.com](http://www.hinsdalemass.com); 2) Click on the “UniPay – Online Tax and Fee Payment Portal” Button; and 3) Complete each screen to process your payment.

Residents are able to make payments via “e-check” (applicable check routing number and account numbers will need to be provided) or Master Card, Visa Card, or Discover Card. Payments by e-check will be assessed a flat fee of \$0.25 (less than the cost of a surface mail stamp), and payments by credit card will be assessed a variable fee (usually around 2.5% of the total amount due) depending on the monetary value of the transaction. In all cases, e-check and credit card transaction fees will be retained by Unibank and not the Town. Online payment is highly encouraged, but the town will continue to accept physical checks.

If you have specific questions about online bill pay, please contact Ryan Aylesworth, Town Administrator, at 413-464-6534 or [town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov).

### **ONLINE PERMITTING IS NOW AVAILABLE!**

Hinsdale residents now have the ability to file applications for building, electrical, and gas/plumbing permits online via the town’s official website - [www.hinsdalemass.com](http://www.hinsdalemass.com). Online permitting will allow Hinsdale residents to submit permit requests at any time and avoid unnecessary trips to Town Hall to prepare or deliver a hard copy permit application.

Applicants who register (this takes less than 5 minutes) will have the ability to do the following:

- Have some of the information auto-fill on the permit application
- View the status of their permits
- Edit the application before the permit is issued
- Add attachments (plans, pictures, specs, etc.) to the application
- Print the permit as soon as it has been issued
- View the inspection results

Permit applicants are able to pay for their permit online with an e-check or Master Card, Visa Card, or Discover Card. Online payment is highly encouraged, but the town will accept checks made out to Town of Hinsdale, 39 South Street, Hinsdale, MA 01235. Checks can be mailed or delivered to the Inspection Department at Town Hall.

If you have specific questions about online permitting services, please contact Ryan Aylesworth, Town Administrator, at 413-464-6534 or

[town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov), or Jonathan Flagg, Building Commissioner, at 413-374-4773 or [building@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:building@hinsdalema.gov).

### **FROM THE TOWN COLLECTOR**

The first-half real estate, personal property and sewer betterment bills for Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017) were mailed October 17<sup>th</sup>. These bills cover the period July 1 through December 31, 2016. Payment on these bills are due on or before November 18<sup>th</sup>. Interest of 14% will be added to all late payments. The Town Collector's office hours are: Monday 9:00 AM-12:00 PM, Tuesday-Thursday 8:00 AM-1:00 PM, and 5:30-7:00 PM on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month.

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles controls the names and addresses on motor vehicle excise tax bills. The Town cannot change this information on your behalf; that must be done by the taxpayer with the Registry.

ALL requests for (i) address changes for real estate personal property and (ii) abatements should be sent directly to the Board of Assessors at Hinsdale's Town Hall, not to the Town Collector. Similarly, address changes for water and/or sewer bills should be directed to the Water & Sewer Department.

Please contact Pauline Wheeler, Town Collector, at 655-2306 or [tax.collector@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:tax.collector@hinsdalema.gov), with any questions concerning payments. Questions pertaining to assessment, address and name changes should be directed to Dave Zagorski, Assistant Assessor, at 655-2300 or [assessors@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:assessors@hinsdalema.gov), if you have any questions.

### **FROM THE BOARD OF ASSESSORS**

The deadline filing real estate and/or personal property tax abatements is November 18 (the same day tax bills are also due).

Please contact Dave Zagorski, Assistant Assessor, at 655-2300 or [assessors@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:assessors@hinsdalema.gov), if you have any questions.

### **TRANSFER STATION UPDATE**

We have "punch cards" on sale at Town Hall for those who don't want to pay for disposal fees by check at the transfer station. \$20 and \$40 cards are available. The "punches" on the \$20 card are done in \$2 increments (10



punches per card) and the “punches” on the \$40 card are done in \$5 increments (eight punches per card). Cards do NOT have an expiration date and there is no limit on how many you can buy! Transfer station annual stickers (\$65) and punch cards are available for sale at Town Hall during regular office hours of the Select Board Admin Assistant. Any questions, please email Kathe Warden at [select.board@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:select.board@hinsdalema.gov).

### **UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS (SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

- November 14 @ 9:30 AM – Water & Sewer Committee
- November 14 @ 10:30 AM – Council on Aging (meets at Town Library)
- November 16 @ 6:30 PM – Board of Assessors
- November 22 @ 6:00 PM – Board of Health
- November 28 @ 9:30 AM – Water & Sewer Committee
- November 30 @ 5:15 PM – Mission & Vision Working Group
- November 30 @ 7:00 PM – Select Board
- December 6 @ 9:30 AM – Board of Assessors
- December 6 @ 6:30 PM – Planning Board
- December 8 @ 7:00 PM – Finance Committee
- December 12 @ 9:30 AM – Water & Sewer Committee
- December 13 @ 7:00 PM – Conservation Commission
- December 13 @ 10:30 AM – Council on Aging (meets at Town Library)
- December 14 @ 5:15 PM – Mission & Vision Working Group
- December 14 @ 7:00 PM – Select Board

### **UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS (SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

- December 9 @ 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM – Hinsdale Senior Christmas Party (sponsored by the Council on Aging; Hinsdale Fire Station; program will include a delicious turkey dinner and carols sung by the Kittredge Elementary school children; RSVP is needed by December 5; please direct questions/RSVPs to Marion Tinney (655-2292).