

WINTER  
2022

# THE BOXBOROUGH Bee



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# Select Board's Corner

## ***A message from Select Board Chair Diana Lipari***

It was with great sadness that we accepted Jennifer Campbell's resignation from the Select Board. Jennifer was a wonderful Chair who worked really hard. We will miss her tremendously. I think it's important at this moment for all of us to reevaluate how we conduct ourselves when dealing with Town issues. There is a big difference between being passionate about ideas and bullying someone to get your point across. The pushback that Jennifer experienced simply because she was serving as Chair of the Select Board created a situation that resulted in the Town's loss of a valuable volunteer.

I understand that people are frustrated about the perceived "lack of transparency" on the part of the Select Board regarding some difficult issues in Town. I get it; I would be frustrated too. But please understand - the Select Board must operate under the restrictions of Open Meeting Law and concerns about other legal issues. Allegations against employees or Town volunteers require protecting an individual's privacy rights and avoiding legal ramifications for the town. Balancing these concerns with the public's right to know is difficult.

I would ask you all to consider that we, sitting on this Board, are residents and taxpayers just like you. We are just volunteers. I have served with the members of this Board now for a year and a half. I know that our decisions are based on the facts presented, not on personal vendettas or agendas. I now look forward to serving you in the next months as the Select Board Chair. Please be patient with us. We are all trying to do our best for our Town.

## **About the Boxborough Bee**

The Boxborough Bee is sponsored by the Well-Being Committee. If you would like to share ideas for articles, share feedback on this publication, or get involved please email the team at [boxboroughbee@gmail.com](mailto:boxboroughbee@gmail.com).



## **Do you wish Boxborough had a newspaper?**

Do you think the town would benefit from a newspaper and/or a digital newsletter? With the loss of The Beacon and the absence of a local news publication, a group of Boxborough residents is exploring how to communicate town news in a timely manner. If you are interested in joining the conversation, email [boxboroughbee@gmail.com](mailto:boxboroughbee@gmail.com).

*Cover Photo Credit: Simon Bunyard, Boxborough resident*

# New Faces at Town Hall

## Natalie Steele - Department Assistant, Community Services and Recreation

**Commission** I believe in the ability of local government to make a real difference for local people. Local government service is inherently meaningful because the work is about improving the community for its residents. Living locally, I want to spend working hours doing something that makes the community a better place to live or visit. Every day presents new challenges, new problems, and lots of stimuli. We get to see the effects of the work in the community every day. In times of crisis, local government workers pull together and collaborate on how to manage the crisis and rebuild their community.

I have a background and skills in integrated marketing communications and graphic design. I like to play golf and tennis. I swim, hike, bike, practice yoga, read, garden, draw and paint, and cook/bake. I'm involved in social justice programs for domestic abuse victims and animal rescue/training. I also like to drive around in 1971 VW convertible bug!



## John Szewczyk

### - Interim Chief of Police

I am excited to come to Boxborough as the Interim Chief of Police. I grew up and have resided my entire life in a similarly sized town and believe the strongest communities are ones that have a town meeting form of local government where most citizens know and converse with their neighbors. I am most excited about supporting the Officers

and fellow town employees/volunteers and ensuring every citizen and visitor is treated with the utmost respect while being given the highest quality public safety services. Some fun facts about me are that I am a dual citizen of Poland and a huge Boston Celtics fan. I look forward to meeting everyone and am sincerely appreciative of how welcoming the Boxborough community has been so far.

## Alexander Wade

### - Director of Land Use and Permitting, Town Planner

I will be serving the Town of Boxborough primarily as its Town Planner. A Planner supports several boards and committees, most regularly the Planning Board, Economic Development Committee, and Zoning Board of Appeals. Beyond working with boards and committees, residents can expect to see me out in the field conducting a variety of public engagement activities. This will all be complimented with behind the scenes grant writing, in an effort to bring-in outside funding to support local projects in the community. Most recently, I completed three successful years with the Town of Orange, where I held a similar position. I'm most excited to get to know the people of this community and the team I'll be working with. As Director of the Land Use and Permitting team, I'll be working hand-in-hand with multiple departments, and interfacing with a greater public. I place high value in becoming a member of the community I work with and I'm very excited to become a part of Boxborough. I grew up a stones throw away in the Town of Acton, where my family still lives. I graduated from the Acton Boxborough Regional High School in 2012 and went on to receive my degrees at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I'm excited to come back home, to work with the Regional School District and the Planning Departments of the neighboring communities.



## Kelli Pontbriand

### - Town Accountant

I am most excited for the interaction with the employees and getting to know them. I really enjoy helping make everyone's jobs easier not harder, so hoping to make that impact. My favorite thing is going to the beach, there is something so healing for your soul hearing the waves crash. I have been singing since I was

5 and used to sing in a gospel band. I am married to my wonderful husband Rich and have two dogs Brandy and Lucky.



# MICHAEL JOHNS SWORN IN AS BOXBOROUGH'S



On November 7th, Michael Johns was sworn in as Boxborough's new Town Administrator. He takes the reins from Interim Town Administrator Carter Terenzini, who has served since July 2021.

His first day on the job began with his swearing in by Town

Clerk Becky Harris, followed by a meet-and-greet session open to the public.

The Select Board voted unanimously to appoint Johns as the new Town Administrator after interviewing him and the three other finalists in September. The finalists were selected by the Town Administrator Screening Committee chaired by John Fallon.

"The Select Board is thrilled to welcome Mr. Michael Johns as our new Town Administrator," said Select Board Chair Diana Lipari. "We are sure Mike will provide wonderful leadership for all our departments and employees and support for our many volunteers who serve on committees and boards which are so vital to the quality of life in our Town."

Johns comes to Boxborough from Foxborough, where he served as Assistant Town Manager and Director of Human Resources for the last four years, as well as Director of Veterans Services for eight years. He is also involved in his hometown Wrentham, serving on the

Finance Committee and as Chair of the Economic Development Commission.

Prior to his municipal government positions in Foxborough, Johns served as a U.S. Navy pilot, ran Victory Construction Corporation specializing in historical masonry restoration, and worked at the Hull Lifesaving Museum's Maritime Apprentice Program for adjudicated Boston youth. He has an undergraduate degree from Norwich University and masters degrees from University of Massachusetts at Boston and Suffolk University.

In his free time, he enjoys beekeeping, cycling, fishing, backpacking, skiing, snowshoeing, and wooden boat building. He has three children and one grandchild.

Johns' first observation of Boxborough is that "dialogue and debate at public meetings focuses on the issues thoughtfully and respectfully, centered on constructive solutions versus personal attacks." He appreciates that "the residents and Town are very confident and comfortable with who they are, and what they want to be in the future."

As Town Administrator, his objective is to "continue learning about the Community, resident interests, and priorities, and to collaboratively work with and lead the organization in pursuing the Town's long range vision, and accomplish its strategic goals."



# NEW TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

## Two Weeks In: A Mid-November Q&A with TA Michael Johns

### **1. How did you go about preparing for this job? What did you do to learn about the town of Boxborough?**

I've spent the last 35 years in senior level leadership positions in various military, private, nonprofit and volunteer organizations. The most recent 12 years have been in municipal government within various roles including department head as director of veteran services, director of economic development, director of human resources and assistant town manager.

From the time I first learned that Boxborough was searching for a new town administrator, I made several trips to and around the Town; read everything I could get my hands on, including studying the website thoroughly and reading the master plan, reports on water resources, and economic development; studied financial reports from the Department of Revenue; reviewed several years of revenues and budgets for the town; watched all three nights of the May annual town meeting and read the minutes; watched the previous year's televised public meetings; and read many of the minutes from Boxborough's elected and appointed boards, committees, and commissions. I also studied zoning maps, GIS, history of the town, and learned about Luther Blanchard and his role in the Revolutionary War. And I read all of the issues of the Boxborough Bee and the Boxborough Buzz that I could find. Through my thorough research, I found that Boxborough was a highly desirable town for me to work in and for.

### **2. How was the meet-and-greet session on your first day? What was the rest of your first day like?**

It was such a pleasure to meet the many residents (including many members of boards, committees and commissions) and employees. I met at least as many people at the meet-and-greet as there were in total at town meeting. Everyone was so friendly, welcoming, and informative. I selected Boxborough quite intentionally, and I'm so glad I did; likewise, I'm very grateful that Boxborough selected me to serve in this wonderful town.

I spent the remainder of the day meeting with employee groups; visiting the Town's facilities; and asking questions of Select Board members, department heads, and staff to gain a deeper understanding of the inner workings of the town's operations and procedures.

### **3. After two weeks on the job, what do you see as a challenge for the town? What do you see as a strength of the town?**

Quite honestly, I see one of the greatest strengths of the Town as also being one of the challenges for it; and that is the sincere passion that people have for this charming, small New England Town. My observation - not just here in Boxborough but in many communities - is that we can get so enthusiastic and passionate about what we believe in, that it can sometimes keep us from appreciating other people's passionately held perspectives and priorities that may be different from our own.

I have experienced this in every organization I've been a part of, including the last town where I worked and the one where I currently live... passionate people with differing but closely held priorities. My question always is, "How do we come together to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts?" And I think it comes down to active listening, trying hard to understand thoughts that may differ from one's own, and working hard to collaborate and build a team. I look forward to the opportunity to collaborate and be a part of this team, working through differences and making Boxborough even greater!

### **4. What are you most looking forward to in this new role?**

Where there is challenge, there is opportunity; and I love to meet and overcome challenges. I'm passionate about building teams, problem-solving, and overcoming community & organizational challenges. I had an exhilarating meeting on my second Tuesday here with the Town's entire Department Head Team; and I am so impressed with the caliber of professionals leading the Town's departments and the enthusiasm with which the department managers and directors speak of their department teams. It's obvious they are very proud of this Town and the municipal teams they each lead. So getting back to the question of what I'm most looking forward to in this new role: It's leading this team of dedicated leaders!



# Boxborough Special Town Meeting Held November 15th

On November 15th, as the first snowflakes of the season came down outside, Boxborough residents and visitors gathered at the Blanchard Memorial School gymnasium for a Special Town Meeting to consider thirteen warrant articles. A total of 173 registered voters attended. The meeting was presided over by Town Moderator Dennis Reip, who was elected to the position in May.

"The Special/Fall Town Meeting was by all measures a success. The long tradition of civil and thoughtful debate on the Motions prevailed, and the business of the Meeting was concluded in one night," said Moderator Reip. "For my first Town Meeting as Moderator I was most pleased with the overall cooperation and conduct of all involved, showing that democracy is alive and well here in Boxborough."

Ten articles passed, one passed in part and failed in part, and two were "passed over." The articles that generated the most debate were Article 4 (Amending the FY23 Operating Budget) and Article 11 (Amending the Zoning Bylaw Relative to Calculating the Gross Floor Area of a Building).

## Summary of November 2022 Special Town Meeting Votes

- Article 1, Payment of Prior Fiscal Year Bills - Amended to total \$9,529.84; carried by a 9/10 majority
- Article 2, Funding of Collective Bargaining Agreements - Carried by a majority
- Article 3, Amending the Personnel Administration Plan - Motion to pass over carried unanimously
- Article 4, Amending the FY23 Operating Budget - Votes 1,2,3, and 5 carried by majority; Vote 4 failed
- Article 5, Funding for Assessing Services and Software - Carried by majority on consent agenda
- Article 6, Funding for Capital and Special Articles - Carried by majority on consent agenda
- Article 7, Funding (Supplemental) for Liberty Field - Held out of consent agenda; carried by majority
- Article 8, Funding (Supplemental) for Sargent Road Acquisition - Amended to \$10,000, carried unanimously
- Article 9, Funding for the Economic Development Committee - Motion to pass over carried unanimously
- Article 10, Amending the Zoning Bylaw Relative to Recodification - Carried by a two-thirds majority
- Article 11, Amending the Zoning Bylaw Relative to Calculating the Gross Floor Area of a Building - Carried by a two-thirds majority
- Article 12, Amending the Zoning Bylaw Relative to Aligning it With the Stormwater Bylaw and Regulations - Carried by a two-thirds majority
- Article 13, Amending the Zoning Bylaw to Align the Definition of Lot Coverage With the Requirements in the Dimensional Table - Carried by a two-thirds majority

## From the Desk of the Finance Committee

First, we would like to welcome our new Town Administrator Michael Johns to Boxborough. The Town's finance team is now in place with the following members:

- Interim Town accountant is Kelli Pontbriand
- Town accountant assistant is Liz Hoenshell
- Treasurer/Tax Collector is Jared Aponte
- Treasurer/Tax collector assistant is Thida Long
- Assessor is Kelly Szocik
- Assessor department assistant is Kyungae Lim

By the time you read this issue the Boxborough FinCom will be deep into budget season and reviewing the Town's capital needs for the capital plan. We will be meeting with department heads to review their proposed budgets and their expected capital needs. As we do each year, we compare the required capital items against the capital plan as outlined at the Annual Town Meeting. There are always ongoing modifications to the capital plan as items are reviewed and either moved in by a year or two or moved out by a year or two.

As most of you know we held a fall Special Town Meeting on November 15. This article is being submitted prior to STM so the results are not known, but thank you to those of you who attended in person. A number of items were covered at the STM including unpaid bills from last year that needed to be paid, zoning updates presented by the Planning Board, personnel updates, amending the Town budget approved at Annual Town meeting (ATM) and an updated budget for Liberty fields. The Town agreed to purchase land on Sargent Road at the Spring ATM. The Town was notified by the Conservation Commission at ATM that there was a potential of a LAND grant. The funds for the LAND grant were recently approved, but do require some up-front funding for signage, parking, etc. If approved, then the Town will receive \$200,000 towards the purchase of the land.

The FinCom members are representing the Town on various committees including the Boxborough Building Committee, the AB Regional School Building Committee for the new boardwalk campus in West Acton, the Personnel Committee, the Housing Board and the Cable Advisory Subcommittee. We were also involved in the Town Administrator Screening Subcommittee.

### Your Finance Committee

*Maria Neyland (chair), Becky Neville (past Chair), Priya Sundaram-clerk, Keshava Srivastava, Antony Newton, Gary Kushner*

## Boxborough Tree Lighting To Be Held December 3rd



The annual Boxborough Tree Lighting will take place at 4:30pm on Saturday, December 3rd at the top of Middle and Hill Road.

Join friends and neighbors in the historic Boxborough center for winter cheer and a highly-anticipated appearance by a very special guest. Festive music will be performed by the Blanchard BrassWind ensemble and Blanchard Chorus.

What could be better than small town tradition and some holiday magic? See you there, neighbors!

### Blanchard Music Announcements

The Blanchard Chorus under the direction of Margie Callaghan and the Blanchard BrassWind Ensemble under the direction of Chris Baird will perform at the town's annual tree lighting on Saturday, December 3rd at 4:30pm at the corner of Hill and Middle Roads.

Other events in the Blanchard Gym:

- Blanchard Band Winter Concert: **Tuesday, December 13th at 7pm**
- Blanchard Chorus Concert: **Thursday, January 19th at 7pm**

## Message from the Fire Department

Save the date! Santa is coming back to town Saturday December 17th starting at 3 PM.

Santa will be making stops around town. Schedule will be posted closer to that date. Santa intends to get out of the truck this year at each stop.

As a reminder, we are already collecting Toys for Tots at our station. Last day for drop off is December 9th.



## Boxborough DPW Talks Snowplowing



It's dusk and the flakes have been coming down hard and fast all day. You look out at the blanket of drifting snow covering the road -- you haven't seen a soul go by in hours. You hear the low rumble before you see the lights coming around the corner, fuzzy through the snow. As the truck lumbers by, you wonder: who is driving that thing?

Boxborough's roads are plowed by the Department of Public Works (DPW), a team of ten led by Director Ed Kukkula. In the winter season, Kukkula explains, DPW's responsibilities include "plowing the roads to keep them passable and safe for the motoring public."

The DPW is responsible for plowing about 30 miles of roads throughout Boxborough. The team is sent out whenever there is about two inches of accumulation. There are ten vehicles that plow during snow storms, including pick-up trucks, one-ton trucks, and six-wheel dump trucks. Roughly 800-1000 tons of salt are used, depending on the number of snow storms.

"One pass on a plow route takes roughly three hours to complete," says Kukkula, "and they will keep repeating the route until the snow stops and all roads are clear." Kukkula reminds residents to "be patient" this winter. "The plows cannot be on every road at once. Some roads are first and some are last in the three hour plowing cycle."

The Boxborough Bee asked Kukkula and his team a few questions about what it's like plowing Boxborough's roads:

- **The best part of plowing?** The drivers mentioned "keeping the roads safe for the public," "extra overtime pay," "the end of the storm," and "plowing at night when no vehicles are on the roads."
- **The toughest roads to plow?** The drivers agreed that the toughest roads are Patch Hill and Windemere because of the steep hills.
- **Favorite song for plowing?** The drivers all listen to music to help pass the time. Some favorites are "Let it Snow," "Highway to Hell," and "Ride like the Wind!"

## Boxborough Grange Program for Home Gardeners Get Your Hands Dirty!



Boxborough Grange supports agricultural education, and is presenting a program for all new, long-term, or just curious home gardeners. The program and presentation will be on **Friday, February 10 at 7 pm** in the Grange Room at Town Hall. It's open and free to the public.

Whether you are just beginning a home garden or have had a home garden for years, this program is for you. Judith Taylor, garden coach and speaker, will give a talk full of "tips and tricks" that will help you get the most out of your gardening efforts, both flower and vegetable. Judith is a graduate from the UMass Green School and the Seed Savers Exchange School. Her passion is to share knowledge with new gardeners as well as exchange ideas with those more experienced. The power point presentation will last an hour and questions about gardening during and after the presentation.

The Grange seeks to take the mystery out of home gardening, and encourages you to get your hands dirty. Even if you don't garden, you will enjoy this informative presentation, just in time for the Spring garden season. As part of the program a member of Boxborough's Agricultural Commission will explain the options available for those without gardening space at home to rent space at Boxborough's Community Gardens either at Flerra Field, which is strictly organic; or on Middle Road, which is more flexible about garden choices. For more information, contact Arden Veley, Program Chair of Boxborough Grange at 978-263-8151.

# Campanelli to Maintain Public Access at Former CISCO Property



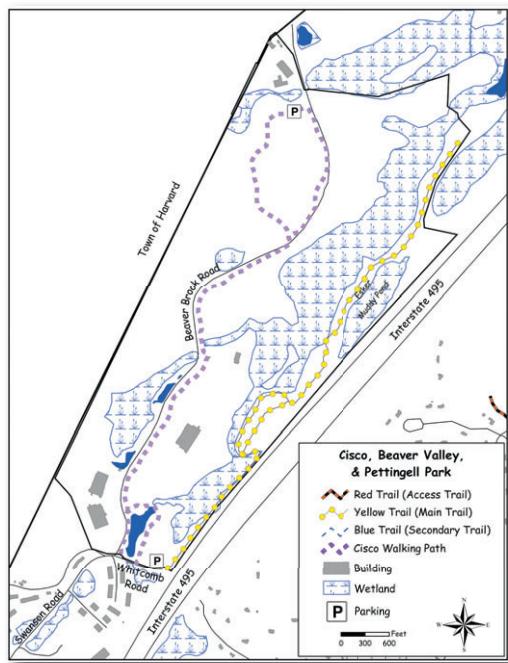
Real estate development and construction firm Campanelli has confirmed that the change in ownership of the former CISCO campus - now known as The Park at Beaver Brook - will not change existing public access rights.

Campanelli bought the CISCO property in July 2021. In June 2022, Campanelli came before the Boxborough Planning Board seeking permitting for the construction of a new building at 400 Beaver Brook Road. According to the Site Plan Approval Application, Campanelli proposed "to construct a 64,000 SF single story research & development / office facility with parking, loading, and associated site improvements" for new tenant TUV Rheinland, a German company that provides testing, inspection, and certification services.

As many Boxborough residents know, the former CISCO campus has historically been open to pedestrian recreation. A pedestrian easement runs along the sidewalk of Beaver Brook Road, and is marked on the Conservation Commission's Beaver Brook Valley Preserve Trail Map as the "Cisco Walking Path."

News of Campanelli's acquisition of the property last year and rumors about construction plans left residents wondering whether the property will remain open to pedestrians.

At an August 29th Planning Board hearing regarding the 400 Beaver Brook construction project, a Campanelli representative confirmed that public access will be maintained.



In response to a comment by Boxborough resident and Conservation Commission Chair Liz Markiewicz during the public comment portion of the hearing, Campanelli partner Russell Dion acknowledged that public right of access is recorded in the deed.

"I do want to remind people that there is a pedestrian easement along the entire length of Beaver Brook Road along the sidewalk... a public way for the residents to use," said Markiewicz. "It is a well-used property and we do have that right of way along the sidewalk."

"Well-noted," responded Dion. "All of that public access has been built in and recorded in the Registry of Deeds, and we're happy to continue to maintain that, plow it, sweep it, and make it a safe travel. ... This property is shared with all the citizens of Boxborough and others."

"Many residents enjoy the natural resources and passive recreation at the Beaver Brook campus," said Planning Board Chair Mark Barbadoro, when asked to comment. "The recorded easements allow for the continuation of its use for these purposes. The Planning Board has recommended to the developer that any future amendments to the Open Space Special Permits be accompanied by additional amenities for the benefit of Boxborough residents."

On November 7th, the Planning Board voted to approve the special permit and site plan for 400 Beaver Brook as amended and subject to further review. At that same meeting, Campanelli expressed intent to come before the Planning Board again regarding a larger "Master Plan" for The Park at Beaver Brook.

Campanelli's publicly available "Master Plan" shows existing buildings leased by CISCO and Intel, an existing building available to lease at 200 Beaver Brook Road, the build-to-suit project at 400 Beaver Brook Road, and additional build-to-suit opportunities at 100, 600, 700, and 800 Beaver Brook Road. The buildout of the campus is subject to future discussions between Campanelli and the Planning Board.

# What CPA Has Meant for Boxborough

Have you ever wondered what that "CPA charge" on your quarterly property tax bill is all about? It is a small amount per household, but has a big impact on the quality of life in Boxborough.

CPA stands for Community Preservation Act, enacted by the state legislature in 2000. It is a tool that enables cities and towns in Massachusetts to raise funds for open space acquisition, recreation, affordable housing, and the preservation of historic records and structures. The Act allows municipalities to create a Community Preservation Fund with monies raised through a small surcharge on local real estate taxes -- which is what you see on your bill -- supplemented by a partial match from the State. Boxborough adopted CPA by a vote at Annual Town Meeting in May of 2014, and a subsequent vote at an election, with a surcharge of 1%.

In the eight years since, the Town has committed over \$1.8M in CPA monies, including nearly \$300K in State matching funds, to preserve historic town records, make renovations to Town Hall, stabilize the foundation of the farmhouse at Steele Farm, and make restorations to North and South Cemeteries among other items.

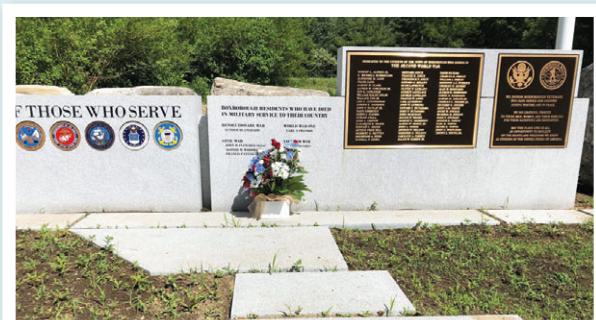
Before the passage of CPA, the Town struggled with allocating enough funds for maintenance projects. For example, we have records dating back to the late 1700's such as birth, death and marriage records, tax records, and Annual Town Meeting documents. They are all paper records and required by law to be saved and preserved. Over the course of the past eight years, starting with the oldest and most fragile, we were able to have the records restored and rebound so they will last another 100 years. The Grange Hall was given a new floor and ceiling, as well as lighting and audio-visual capability improvements, so the Town has a more functional meeting space. The Steele Farm property on Middle Road, also known as the Levi Wetherbee Farm, is on the National Registry of Historic Places. Unfortunately, the barn was in bad shape. CPA provided a source of funds to restore its exterior and its roof. The farmhouse was also in a state of disrepair and CPA money helped to fund phase I of the stabilization project which included the foundation and other immediate needs.



Boxborough has few affordable housing options. Access to CPA funds allowed the Housing Board to get creative and put together a successful rental assistance program (BRAP) to provide a monthly rent subsidy for up to three years to qualifying Boxborough residents. Since its inception, BRAP has helped many Boxborough households.

Other important projects might never have gotten started without CPA funding. The Hager Bridge, which connects Blanchard School to the trails on the Hager property, was partially funded by CPA, as was the Veterans' Tribute at the library. At our most recent Annual Town Meetings, we voted CPA funds to be used to make significant capital improvements to Liberty Field and to purchase land for conservation purposes on Sargent Road.

It is possible that Boxborough would not be enjoying the benefits of CPA were it not for the combined efforts of residents Jeanne Kangas and Rita Grossman. After initially failing at Town Meeting in 2001, it looked as though efforts to get CPA passed had been abandoned. Through a lot of grass roots organizing and educating, Jeanne and Rita raised awareness and support among town residents leading to its successful passage in 2014. As in so many respects, Boxborough depends on its community-minded residents to get things done.





## News From the Library

Dear Readers, did you make it to the Diwali Fest in October? Did you get a chance to appreciate the beautiful Rangolis, enjoy the wonderful dance and music performances, and visit the different vendor booths? It was an amazing day celebrating Diwali with our Indian and Hindu neighbors. If you were not able to come, we hope you can make it next year!

Did you come to any of the Art Talk presented by Jane Oneail from Culturally Curious? They were so enjoyable, weren't they? If you missed them, no worries, Jane graciously allowed us to record the sessions. They are now available on the Library's Youtube channel (search for Sargent Memorial Library).

We are still in the planning stage for this Winter's programming, but we've got a couple lined up already.

**Superfoods 101, Saturday January 28, 2023 at 1pm** – Kim Larkin will be presenting a culinary workshop celebrating the powerhouses of nutrition. Fun, colorful presentation that highlights the powerful properties of popular Superfoods and how best to incorporate them into your life. Registration required. Details to come.

**Craftivism 101, Saturday February 11, 2023 at 1pm** – Learn to embroider, stitch, and make something brilliant among old and new friends with Shannon Downey, a leader in the modern craftivism movement. Shannon will introduce participants to the history of craftivism and ways you can get involved in the modern movement and teach you how to hand-embroider and have you stabbing it out in no time. All materials will be provided. Registration required. Details to come.

And now, we would like to highlight some of our newer regular programs. This, however, is not the whole of the Library's offerings. Please make sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram (@boxlib), subscribe to our digital weekly newsletter Wowbrary, and check our website for the complete listing.

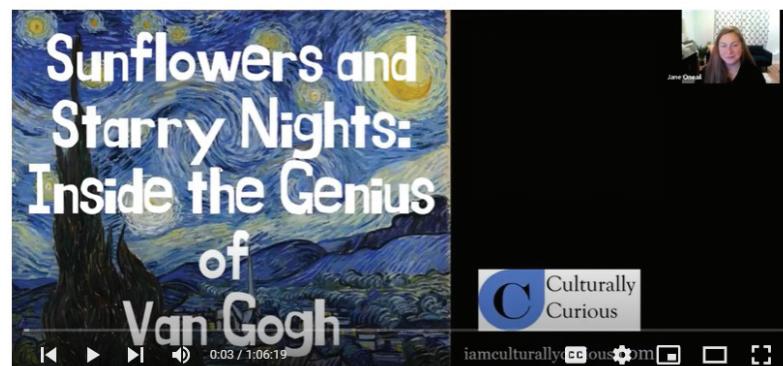
- Readers Club for kids 3rd to 6th grade, 2:30pm on every 2nd Wednesday of the month –

Since you are reading the Library's entry, I am going to assume that you are a book lover. Knowing that you are a book lover, I am going to assume that you know what it feels like to finish a great book and be bursting at the seams with feelings and thoughts that you would happily (perhaps a tad too enthusiastically, and even too loudly) share with others. We understand that feeling, and would love to give our young fellow book lovers a platform to do just that. Our new Readers Club for kids meets once a month to talk about books. But this is no ordinary book club. Instead of having the members read the same book, everyone will be picking their own titles within a given theme. At the meeting, we will share what we read, what we think about the book, and if we would recommend it to others! If you know any young readers between grades 3 to

6, please encourage them to join us at the Readers Club that meets the second Wednesday of the month. In December, we'll share the books we read about explorers and/or survival stories. In January, we'll focus on books about facing fear. And in February.... We're still deciding on the theme. Check our Event Calendar for details!

- Evening Storytime at 6pm on Wednesdays, and Baby lap sit Storytime at 3pm on Tuesdays – You may already be familiar with the two morning story times that we offer on Mondays and Tuesdays for preschoolers. Do you know we also have an evening story time at 6pm on Wednesdays, and a story time specifically for babies on Tuesday at 3pm? We know different families have different schedules, so we are trying out different times and offerings to see what works best for the community.
- Lego club for kids, 2:30pm on every 3rd Wednesdays of the month – Lego club is back! On every 3rd Wednesday of the month at 2pm, a challenge will be issued, and a theme announced to our young Master Builders. They are invited to let their imaginations run wild and build! In the past, the builders have shown how they Build the Best Playground You Can Imagine, and demonstrated how to Build the Tallest Free-Standing Tower You Can. And boy, you should see what the participants come up with.
- Adult Craft Time, once a month – Crafting is not just for kids. We would like to invite any adults and young adults to come make something fun with us! You don't need to be crafty to come hang out. Crafts will vary monthly and supplies are provided. See our Event Calendar for details.

That is all we have for now. Who knows if anything would change between the writing of this entry and your reading it. To stay up to date, please go to the Library's website (boxlib.org) for news and announcements, or sign up to our digital newsletter, or follow us on Facebook and Instagram. Happy reading!



Culturally Curious - Starry Night and Sunflowers

# Volunteer Profile: Francie Nolde and Hugh Fortmiller

Francie Nolde and Hugh Fortmiller are thoughtful about what it means to be a volunteer in a small town with limited resources. "You get things done that otherwise wouldn't get done," says Hugh.

Francie and Hugh moved to Boxborough in 1999, landing here when they found a unique historic home on Sargent Road that could accommodate visits from their large combined family. Their "commitment to the town came quickly" after they moved in; longtime friend and Boxborough resident Frank Coolidge had recently founded the Boxborough Conservation Trust (BCT) and immediately recruited Francie and Hugh to join the Board. Hugh went on to spend 8 years on the BCT Board.

Francie soon turned to her passion for sustainability, starting a journey that would lead to her creating and chairing the Boxborough Sustainability Committee. She began by founding a Sargent Road "neighborhood network." Initially designed for emergency communications in anticipation of Y2K, the "neighborhood network" brought together a number of residents similarly interested in creating community. A smaller sub-group gathered to teach one another about energy conservation and protection of the environment, and they called themselves EcoPath.

Francie then led EcoPath members to the Select Board to voice concerns and ideas about town energy policies. The Select Board appointed EcoPath as an ad hoc energy committee to report back in one year. After a year, the committee was formalized and the Boxborough Energy Committee, later renamed the Sustainability Committee, was born -- with Francie as the Chair.

For years, Francie and the Sustainability Committee have worked tirelessly to implement environmentally-conscious programs and policies for the town. Recently, Francie and her team won a critical victory in their years-long campaign to facilitate the designation of towns served by municipal electric light companies to become a "green community," which would make the town eligible for state grants to support sustainability-related projects.

The Green Communities Act, originally passed in 2008, creates a path for municipalities to apply for a "green community" designation. When a municipality meets certain state-mandated criteria, it can become a "green community" and will become eligible for certain state grants. However, per the original Act, towns served exclusively by municipal electric companies could not meet the "green community" criteria.

After concluding that it was impossible for Boxborough to become a "green community" because every building in town is served by a municipal electric company, Francie worked with State Senator Jamie Eldridge and



State Representative Dan Sena to change the state eligibility requirements so that towns serviced by municipal electric companies could also take part in the "green communities" program. The legislation to fix the Green Communities Act passed in October, making towns like Boxborough eligible for the designation and related funding. Now, Francie and her team will work with the Select Board, Town Administrator, and Town Planner to try to meet the additional requirements and apply for a "green community" designation after seeking approval at May Town Meeting.

While Francie has focused on sustainability issues, Hugh has also served on a number of town boards and committees, including the Personnel Board, the Community Preservation Committee ("the most fun because you get to support great projects for the Town," says Hugh), and is currently on the Building Committee. He has also served on study committees, including the Government Study Committee which examined the role of Town Administrator, a study committee regarding Boxborough's relationship with the vocational schools, and the recent Town Administrator screening committee. Hugh also served for seven years on the Board of Indian Hill Music (now Groton Hill Music). Rep. Niki Tsongas appointed Hugh to her Veterans Advisory Committee as an interviewer of high school students applying to military schools.

Hugh and Francie like to joke about their respective roles; "Francie is the firebrand, and I carry the hose" says Hugh. But the pair are serious about the power of volunteers to make change, and they appreciate fellow residents who are similarly committed to bettering the town - even when they don't necessarily see eye to eye.

"People who volunteer in Boxborough are smart, energetic, and contribute experience and knowledge," says Francie. "People feel passionately about the issues. There is always a need for compromise, goodwill, and good humor." Hugh recalls that the town's solar bylaws started out as a "battle" between the Sustainability Committee and the Planning Board, each with opposite

points of view. But after they "spent time listening to each other, they came up with something each could live with. It's a good example of something the town needs to apply in other situations."

When not volunteering, Hugh is an editor and writing coach, and enjoys photography. Francie is a licensed grief counselor, a student of Tibetan buddhism, and was recently trained as an end-of-life doula. They both enjoy theater and concerts, and playing cards. They were awarded the Golden Fife in 2017 for their service to Boxborough.

Most recently, Francie and Hugh self-published "She Looked to the Sky," the story of Francie's mother, a pilot and colonel in the World War II Civil Air Patrol. Francie had always hoped that her mother would chronicle her own story, she explains, but when neither her mother nor her siblings were interested in doing so, Francie took it on herself with the help of Hugh as her editor-in-chief. The story follows the arc of Frances Dean Wilcox Nolde's life -- from early acting career, to pioneering Civil Air Patrol pilot and advocate for women in aviation, to her role as wife and mother of seven. After spending the past two years on the project, Francie is enjoying promoting the book locally and in her home state of Pennsylvania. The book is available at Silver Unicorn Bookstore, Amazon, and the Sargent Memorial Library.

## How to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

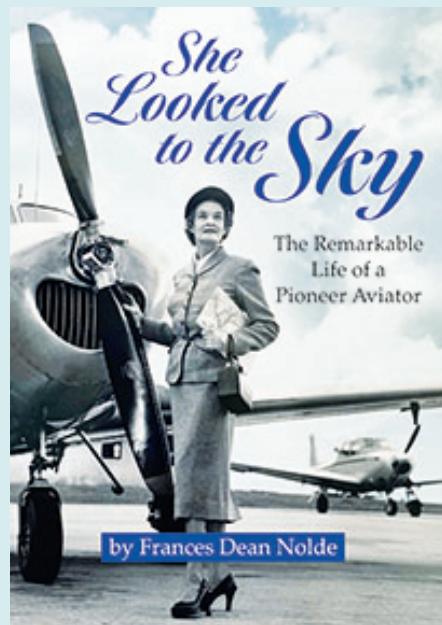
If you're thinking about what YOU can do to stem Global Warming, you are invited to join a small group to address ways to reduce your carbon footprint. Using books, discussion, and videos, we will learn that by taking simple, small steps we can all help with climate change. Boxborough resident, Marjorie Kamp, will guide a free, five-session Carbon CREW group. Using the book, 2040 (available from Sargent Memorial Library or from Amazon), you will:

- Test your Climate Knowledge
- Measure the impact that your personal habits have on the planet
- Share ideas and gain access to knowledge via the book, movies, Youtube
- Determine habits to change or engage in that work for you
- Document better habits in your Personal Climate Action Plan
- ACT – Execute your plan to save the planet
- Be Counted - Add your plan to EnergizeBoxborough.org carbon reduction community effort

The next Zoom session is planned to begin in December or January. Best day and time for the five 1-1/2 hour sessions will be determined by the preference of participants. Sign up now and give "one month for the planet."

More information about the program's approach at [www.carboncrew.org](http://www.carboncrew.org). If you're interested, please respond to Marjorie Kamp at [marjoriek@comcast.net](mailto:marjoriek@comcast.net); please put "2040" in the subject line. Please indicate your preference for start month, a daytime or early evening time.

## Author Francie Nolde To Read From "She Looked to the Sky"



Boxborough author Francie Nolde has written "She Looked to the Sky," a biography-memoir about her mother who had a remarkable life as a pioneer aviator during WWII and the Cold War. Francie will give a reading at the Sargent Memorial Library on **Wednesday December 7th, at 7pm**. Bring a book from The Silver Unicorn Bookstore at 12 Spruce Street in West Acton for signing.

Francie writes:

*She dreamed of becoming an opera star. She did perform in a Gershwin musical with Fred Astaire, and she did become the star of a 1930s radio serial. But after Frannie married a wealthy textile manufacturer and became the mother of seven children on his Pennsylvania estate, she looked to the sky.*

*Frances Dean Wilcox Nolde became a pioneer pilot, World War II Civil Air Patrol (CAP) commander, winner of an early transcontinental all-women's air race, and eventually a colonel in the CAP in charge of the women's program. After moving to Washington, she became responsible for planning how America's civilian airplanes would defend the country should the Cold War become hot.*

*A glamorous, ambitious proponent of women aviators, Frannie challenged male dominance at a time when home, career, motherhood, and personal success created both joy and trials in her life and the lives of those she loved. Her public life demonstrated her capabilities while her personal life revealed her flaws. In She Looked to the Sky, her youngest child, Frances Dean Nolde, tells her mother's story – and her own.*

# December at UCC Boxborough

Ongoing on church lawn in December until sold out:  
**Christmas Trees for sale.**

Hours: M-F 5-7pm Sat-Sun: noon to 6pm. Pricing (apologies for price increase at wholesale level): Trees-\$25-\$140 Wreaths: \$25

Sunday, December 4th at 4:00 pm, in person, outdoors:  
**A Living Nativity**

We'll gather outdoors on the side lawn to tell the Christmas story and sing together. Snacks, songs and a petting zoo at the manger!



Saturday, December 10th at 7 pm:  
**Christmas in New England Bluegrass Concert**

Tickets \$15 at the door. This one of a kind uplifting Christmas show features a seasonal blend of traditional, contemporary and original Christmas music performed with acoustic instruments and vocals. These are

some of the most talented musicians in New England who put together a lively upbeat concert with simple moments to treasure and a chance to slow down and savor the season.

Wednesday, Dec. 14th at 7 pm: **The Longest Night service, hybrid (see link below)**

The season of light and joy can also be a time of loneliness and grief. This time of commercialism and busyness can leave us hungry for meaning. Join us for a simple service that provides an opportunity to center in and experience the sacred presence. This gathering is designed especially for those dealing with loss or having a difficult time, but all can find comfort in this peaceful service.

Christmas Eve, Dec. 24th at 7pm: **Christmas Eve Service, hybrid (see link below)**

All are welcome for this service with lessons and carols and to welcome Christmas! We'll circle the sanctuary with candlelight and the singing of Silent Night. We will take a special offering to support the Community Support Fund, which provides grants to our neighbors in times of financial stress.

We are "mask friendly" – you are invited to mask or not depending on your individual circumstances and comfort level.

Please note: worship services are streamed live via Zoom and Facebook, and recorded for posting on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCh1ayswOH7Ta7LYVK-BcAyA>). Facebook offers closed captioning (subtitles) for those who find that helpful.

Zoom link with Passcode embedded

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84586884054?pwd=aFR1NkR6ZnViUXRKRMZGR0dEQlVdz09>

Phone in: 929-205-6099 Meeting ID: 845 8688 4054 Passcode: 7387

[boxboroughucc.org](http://boxboroughucc.org)

723 Mass Avenue

978-263-7387

[boxborochurch@verizon.net](mailto:boxborochurch@verizon.net)

# Senior to Senior



## Senior-to-Senior Conversation at ABRHS

On Thursday November 17, 2022, fifteen senior citizens from Acton and Boxborough were picked up by school bus and driven to Acton-Boxborough Regional High School for a visit, lunch, and conversation with high school seniors. Wendy Abetz, Boxborough Community Services Coordinator, accompanied the group.

The concept for the visit was initiated by Superintendent Peter Light, with the goal for senior citizens and high school seniors to join in a conversation over lunch about school now and then. The senior citizens were also given an informative tour of the high school by the AB Principal Joanie Dean, including the chemistry labs, swimming pool, gym, cafeteria, radio station and more.

Phyllis Priest of Boxborough and a 1951 graduate of Acton High School spoke about the differences in school dress between the 1950s (e.g., girls in dresses or skirts with neat hair and boys in suits and ties) versus today. Another major difference noted was the technology available to today's students.

The four senior citizens from Boxborough were George Krusen, Phyllis Priest, Taryn Light, and Helen Berry. The high school seniors who participated in the program were Eliza Straayer, Rohan Ravindran, Avery Mathews & Phoebe Abadi. The group was also treated to a look at the new school mascot – the Revolution or Revs.



## Message from the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health

Tis the season for... respiratory illness! Yes, unfortunately the time of year that heralds the holidays also brings with it a slew of germs, particularly seasonal respiratory illnesses (such as flu, RSV, COVID, and the common cold). Fortunately, we have some handy tools at our disposal to fight these germs and help keep ourselves, our families, and our communities healthy!

Practice hand hygiene frequently with soap and water or hand sanitizer. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or if a tissue is not available, cover them with an elbow, but not a hand. Clean high touch surfaces in your home frequently with household disinfectants. Anyone who is sick should stay home and not attend work, school or activities until symptoms have resolved or a doctor provides clearance.

Most importantly: stay up-to-date on your vaccines, like flu and COVID. Vaccines are the most effective tool in our toolbox to prevent severe illness and hospitalization. If you haven't gotten your flu shot yet, be sure you get to your doctor, pharmacy or clinic! Many of you took advantage of the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health annual flu clinics (202 people got vaccinated at the Boxborough clinic this year, out of 2,012 total flu vaccines administered across all of our clinics in the region!) Special thanks to the folks at the Blanchard Memorial School and the Boxborough Medical Reserve Corps for their help executing the Boxborough flu clinic- we appreciate their partnership.

Wishing you and your community a happy, healthy winter season!

## Minutemen Christmas Tree Pickup

The Boxborough Minutemen, with help from the Boxborough DPW, will be collecting and chipping Christmas trees from Boxborough residents this year on **Saturday, January 7, 2023**. In late December, look for the sign up forms on the Boxborough Minuteman website: <https://boxboroughminutemen.org>. Hard copy forms will also be available around the same time at the Town Hall if you prefer to use mail. The cost for pickup is \$15; deadline for all payments is January 3rd. If you prefer not to sign up for tree pickup, you can also deliver your tree for disposal to the "old" Boxborough DPW facility located at 577 Mass Ave (Rte. 111) on Saturday, January 7th between 10 am and 2 pm. A disposal fee of \$10 will be collected on site when you drop off your tree. For questions email [captain@boxboroughminutemen.org](mailto:captain@boxboroughminutemen.org)



## The Boxborough Minutemen Company Wants You!

The Boxborough Company of Minutemen will hold a Company meeting on **Sunday January 15 and Sunday February 26** at the Boxborough Community Center at 30 Middle Road starting at 8 pm. For information please contact Captain Tony Newton at [captain@boxboroughminutemen.org](mailto:captain@boxboroughminutemen.org), or 617 448 5931

The Boxborough Minutemen Company is open to anyone of least 18 years of age who is interested in service to the Town and/or perpetuating the memory of the Minutemen of 1775. Our members may participate in any number of the Company's activities including marching in parades, organizing the annual Fifer's Day town festival, performing seasonal clean-ups on Route 111, sponsoring the Boy and Cub Scouts, providing volunteers to the Blanchard School and other service organizations, and participating in our various social functions. The Company also provides financial support to a variety of service organizations and sponsors a number of annual scholarships to Boxborough students who are continuing their education after high school.

Both old and new residents of the town are welcome to come and make new connections with others in town.

For more information visit  
[www.boxboroughminutemen.org](http://www.boxboroughminutemen.org)

## Come See Boxborough's Treasures

The Boxborough Museum at 575 Middle Road will be open from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm on **SATURDAY December 3 and Sunday January 8 and February 12**. Come see Boxborough's historic treasures including the 1850's scale which is sensitive enough to weigh a penny and strong enough to calibrate a 50 pound weight, the "new" hearse built in 1881, and the "old" hearse (come and see how old is old). Admission is free and all are welcome. For more information or if anyone wishes to arrange a private tour for a small group at a different time please call John Fallon at 978-264-0069.

## RESOURCES

# Holiday Support Needed

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Donate Gift Cards for Market Basket, Roche Brothers, Target, Walmart, Amazon, Gas Cards, Visa  
OR Sponsor a Family

#### IF YOU:

- ARE IN NEED OF HOLIDAY ASSISTANCE
- WOULD LIKE TO SPONSOR A FAMILY
- NEED TO DELIVER GIFT CARD DONATIONS

contact Wendy Abetz  
[wabetz@boxborough-ma.gov](mailto:wabetz@boxborough-ma.gov) or 978-264-1735

**DEADLINE December 12th**

### Fuel Assistance Program

Fuel Assistance (the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program) is one of many programs administered by the Southern Middlesex Opportunity Council. This program helps low-income residents with heating costs between November 1 and April 30. The heating sources covered by the program include oil, natural gas, coal, kerosene, wood, propane, and electricity. Please call Boxborough Community Services Coordinator Wendy Abetz at 978-264-1735 to request an appointment with our trained liaison and experienced Council on Aging volunteer, Rob McNeece. He will contact you to arrange a time to assist you with the application process.