

Selectmen's Report

The Selectmen wish to present this report to the citizens of Penobscot for the year 2015. We are grateful to those of you who help us accomplish the work of town administration.

The year was uneventful until early July when Mary Ellen (Cupe) Gross became ill and was unable to perform her many duties. Since she started working for the Town in 1997 she assumed the work of Tax Collector, Treasurer, Town Clerk, Register of Voters and, in her spare time, secretary to the Selectmen. It soon became clear to the Board that we were going to be unable to perform these duties in her absence, both because it is illegal under Maine law and our Municipal Charter, and no one on the Board had the knowledge or time to do them. Our first consideration was to enable Cupe to concentrate on her recovery without constantly worrying about what was not getting done at the Town Office. To that end, her resignation at the end of July was a relief to her and forced the Board to look for a person or persons to take on these duties. Elizabeth Hutchins was interested in taking on the jobs until she (and we) became aware that the manual and very time consuming bookkeeping system that worked so well for Cupe for so many years was no longer viable in this computer age.

It became very clear to all that a new computer system and additions to our Trio Municipal programs would be necessary. A Special Town Meeting in early fall agreed, and we were able to get started. With help from the Town's auditor, Jim Wadman, we hired Ann Stadden as a consultant to help train Elizabeth and set up the new municipal accounting system, as well as retain the previous manual system until the books closed at the end of the year. Her past experience and familiarity with Trio municipal system has been essential to successfully finishing the year, completing and reconciling both the old and new systems.

In the interim, Sally Bridges agreed to be appointed Town Clerk and Registrar of Voters, and both she and Elizabeth have been able to attend training sessions in their respective offices. The Selectboard offer our sincere thank you to Ann, Elizabeth and Sally for all their help. We also offer our sincere thank you to the Town Clerks and Treasurers of Orland, Castine and Blue Hill for their assistance during this time.

As Cupe continues to struggle with her illness, she has nevertheless assisted us in this transition in every way requested. Many thanks and our best wishes to her from all of us at the Town Office.

In closing, all of us on the Selectboard are very grateful to all the residents of Penobscot for your patience and good will during these difficult past few months. While there is still much work left to learn and do, we at the Town Office will continue to provide the best service possible to everyone.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Bowen, Stanley Shorey and Harold Hatch