

Clerks Corner January 2016
2016 is here!

The 2016 presidential election year has begun! Whether involved in politics or merely an observer, you will be hard pressed to avoid an overload of political activity, advertising, robo-calls and grandstanding. In Massachusetts, the Presidential Preference primary election will be held on Super Tuesday, March 1. Voter registration for this election closes on Wednesday, February 10. Voters wishing to change their party affiliation for this primary election must do so by February 10 also.

The Wenham Town Clerk's office is bustling with activity. Every household and family should have received a census and dog registration form. Please return them as soon as possible if you have not already done so. State and Federal representation and funding depend on our population. Also, the listing of all residents is very important to our Police and Fire Departments for safety reasons. If you have not received a form, please contact the clerk right away.

The Annual Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 2. The warrant, or outline of that meeting, is being developed now. If you want to know what may or may not be discussed and voted on at that important meeting, please be aware of the Tuesday night Selectmen's meetings which are posted on the town's website and in the clerk's office. Residents wishing to submit their own warrant articles should contact the selectmen's office for guidance on the proper procedure.

Wenham is also preparing the ballot for our Annual Town Election on April 7 where 15 seats are open for this election. To be placed on the ballot, residents must be registered voters, take out nomination papers and obtain signatures of registered voters. Nomination papers for all positions except the school committee are available from the Clerk and are due back with at least 20 signatures by February 18. (School Committee papers can be obtained from the school department office and returned there with 40 signatures by February 22.)

The following positions are on the ballot; 1 member of the following boards; Assessors, Health, Library Trustees, Planning, Selectmen, Water and Housing Authority. In addition, the Town Moderator and 4 seats on the HW School Committee are also up for election. Last year, Wenham Town Meeting approved changing the Cemetery Commission and Tree Warden to appointed positions but for this to happen, residents vote this change in via ballot questions at this year's election. Accordingly, these positions are still open on the ballot and candidates should get their names on the ballot if interested.

Each and every one of these positions is essential to governing the Town of Wenham. Without residents stepping up and running for these positions, the Town will not be able to accomplish all that needs to be done.

As exciting as running for election can be, it is important to do some background work before you throw your hat in the ring. Learn more about each position, the term length, time commitment and its mission by looking at the town's website, talking to those already in the positions or reading through the HW League of Women Voter's newest pamphlet, "Guide to Running for Election in Hamilton and Wenham". Once you find that a position is do-able for you, go for it. Take out the nomination papers and take the risk.

Speaking from personal experience, I can attest to the fact that stepping out of your comfort zone and doing something different especially when it affects the community in a positive way like running for election, serving the community and even being chosen Mrs. Essex County, is both empowering and exhilarating.

Dianne Kaplan Bucco was elected the Wenham Town Clerk April 11, 2014. For more information on the clerk's office, please go to www.wenhamma.gov or follow the Wenham Town Clerk on Facebook and Twitter.