

Incorporated in 1643, the Town of Wenham is celebrating its 375<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2018. That means our archives contain 375 years of birth, marriage and death records as well as 375 years of town meetings and lists upon lists of public officials who have served the Town. According to the Town Record Book Vol. 1:1642-1706, the first town meeting in 1642 discussed land grants and it was on the December 4, 1644 Town Meeting that the first clerk and constable, William Fiske and Phinehas Fiske respectively, were named. Over the 375 years, there have only been 52 clerks, some serving as many as 36 years, like Wellington Poole whose portrait is currently hanging in the Town Clerk's office.

Over the years, Town Meetings have decided on all things that make the Town of Wenham what it is today. Decisions on Bylaws, budgeting, planning and organizing for every Town necessity were debated and decided. While there has been much chatter online about doing away with the town meeting model, it can't be disputed that it is the most inclusive form of government and should really be valued. Understanding that people are very busy, it is important to understand that Town Meeting is not an entity unto itself but is just one step in the process. It is incumbent upon the voters to be aware of the topics that are on the warrant prior to the Meeting. With that said, Wenham residents do not need to attend each and every meeting to be in tune with the key issues of the Town, because all the meeting agendas and minutes are available 24/7 on the website, [www.wenhamma.gov](http://www.wenhamma.gov). Being aware of Town matters is as easy as glancing at the website regularly to read over meeting minutes, Board of Selectmen's packets and/or the Town Administrator's updates throughout the year.

Town Meeting does encourage intelligent, thoughtful, and hopefully informed discourse among residents but with all this awareness, it would just be the forum for the votes to be taken. Throughout history Wenham residents have made that commitment not only to Town Meeting but to the Town in general and it has proven very successful because, here we are, 375 years in existence.

Regardless of your opinion on Town Meeting, 375 years old is something to appreciate. There are so many upsetting, divisive and difficult things in the world today that being able to celebrate 375 years as a community should be valued. The committee charged with organizing Wenham's 375<sup>th</sup> has many plans to celebrate this accomplishment that include honoring the past, learning about our Town, and enjoying the Town as a community. We will engage our residents of all ages with contests, historical happenings and community events. Let's all make a new year's resolution to become more cognizant of all aspects of our Town and commit ourselves to making it the best it can be for all of us and our future generations, especially in our 375<sup>th</sup> year.

*Dianne Kaplan Bucco was elected the Wenham Town Clerk April 11, 2014 and has achieved the designation of Certified Municipal Clerk in 2017. For more information on the clerk's office, please go to [www.wenhamma.gov](http://www.wenhamma.gov) or follow the Wenham Town Clerk on Facebook.*