

In 1957, then Senator John F Kennedy said "The Senate is the most interesting job in the country." Jimmy Fallon commented that he was the luckiest person when he took over as host of The Tonight Show. Both my father and father in law went to work every day with a smile. Many people love their jobs; however, not many professions can rival the multifaceted, challenging, rewarding position of the Town Clerk.

One of the first duties of the Town Clerk enacted by the colonists in 1620 was to record births, marriages and deaths in their community. The Clerk soon became the face of their community and the person who worked for their residents. This is still true but over time, the responsibilities of the Clerk have evolved and expanded. As recently as 2014 and 2016, the Massachusetts Legislature amended the election laws and the public records law that have changed the menu of tasks within the Clerk's office.

Many of the statutory jobs are time specific while others can occur at any given day or time of year. Local, state and federal elections and Town Meetings have their own timetables requiring certain action on the part of the Clerk before, during and after. The Clerk is responsible for all Town Meeting minutes and vote certifications. Any new or change to a bylaw accepted by Town Meeting must be submitted by the Clerk to the Attorney General within 30 days. Once the approval or disapproval comes through, it must be posted and the bylaws updated as needed. In Wenham, we are in the process of reviewing and recodifying our bylaws to make them more searchable and resident friendly. This project will hopefully be brought to Town Meeting 2018 for acceptance by the Town.

The Clerk's Office is always available for residents and Town Officials for any variety of requests. Posting agendas within the confines of the Open Meeting Law (OML) is a constant responsibility of the office as is maintaining many Town records; vitals, minutes, cemetery deeds to name a few. Over the years, the amount of records maintained by the office has also increased to include records of compliance of the OML and Conflict of Interest Laws for all Town officials.

The Town Clerk is "guardian of the Town's past and the link to its future". It is a position that has been described as multidimensional, variable, interesting and rewarding. To keep the Clerks abreast of all that needs to be accomplished within the office, there are Clerk

organizations such as the North Shore City and Town Clerks Association, the Massachusetts Town Clerks Association, the New England City and Town Clerks Association and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks who offer trainings, workshops and conferences throughout the year. The constant intellectual stimulation of new responsibilities and/or new processes keeps the Clerks on their toes day in and day out combined with the feeling of service to the community makes it “the best job ever!”

Dianne Kaplan Bucco was elected the Wenham Town Clerk April 11, 2014 and re-elected on April 6, 2017. For more information on the clerk's office, please go to www.wenhamma.gov or follow the Wenham Town Clerk on Facebook.

