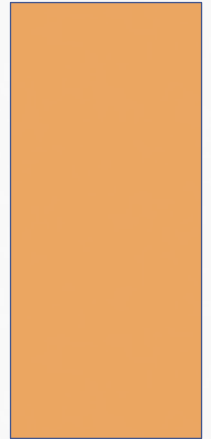


# WHY SHOULD HANOVER HAVE A FULL TIME ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK?

WHAT LEVEL OF SERVICE DO RESIDENTS WANT TO  
PAY FOR?



# MOTION TO AMEND ARTICLE 10

- I move to amend Article 10 by adding \$25,000 from the Undesignated Fund Balance (Free Cash) to the Finance Department budget, and to direct the Town Manager and Finance Director to use said funds to re-hire and maintain a full-time Assistant Town Clerk's position.

# PROFESSIONAL ELECTIONS – SERVICE TO RESIDENTS

- Elections are considered “essential services” according to Massachusetts, and part of the country’s “critical infrastructure” according to the Department of Homeland Security
- Ran **4 elections** in 2020: March 2020 Presidential Primary, (the postponed to) June 2020 Annual Town Election, September 2020 State Primary, and November 2020 State Election
- Current Town Clerk has run 24 elections over 8 years, for an average of 3 per year
- Vote by Mail and in-person Early Voting requirements have increased dramatically since 2016
- **Due to demands of today’s elections, the Town Clerk is out of the office 30 – 60 days per year.**

# HISTORY OF STAFFING IN TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

- **Full-time Assistant Town Clerk and full-time Town Clerk in office when current Town Clerk started in 2013.** Assistant helped with passports initially, but the office was getting too busy and that function was removed in ~2016
- Also – a **series of temporary part-time helpers** – Life Skills students, volunteers, stay at home moms looking to get back in the workforce, student interns, Senior Tax Work-off employees, etc. from 2013 to today
  - They are great, but constant re-training also takes full-time staff's time
- **Office was “caught up” with 2.5 FTE's as of August 2018**
- **.5 FTE removed as of September 2018**
- **Have been “falling behind” ever since**

# LOSS OF STAFF = LOSS OF SERVICES

- Full-time (35 hours) Assistant Town Clerk retired in late August 2020; 20 hour temporary ATC worked mid-September – mid-November, **position left completely open since mid-November until new part-timer started two weeks ago**
- **Negative impact on customer service, office and phone coverage, and revenue**
- **Increase in complaints from residents**

# EXAMPLES OF THE LONG-TERM IMPACT OF REDUCTION IN STAFF

- **New birth and death records are not being processed** – unless there is a request from a resident; this is not sustainable in the long term
- Database regarding newly sworn in members of boards and committees is not consistently updated (paper records are merely filed); **conflict of interest and open meeting law records not being updated**
- **Budget planning and revenue reconciliation discontinued** – where are the checks and balances on the accounting office?
- Campaign finance records are only complete if candidate files; **no follow-up from office regarding campaign finance reports**
- **Historic record preservation of Sylvester-based records stalled**
- **Same day turnaround of records requests are now 10 day turnarounds**
- Dog licenses issued 4-6 weeks after receipt during height of winter

# BUSINESS CERTIFICATES

- **Same day turn-around has become 10 day turnaround due to lack of qualified staff – unacceptable reduction in customer service due to staff reductions**
- Unable to send business certificate renewal letters due to reduction in staff time
- Loss of revenue = \$4-7 thousand dollars per year

# VITAL RECORDS ACCESS

- Same day service discontinued (rare exceptions for emergencies) due to reduction in staff
- **10 day turnaround quoted now – even despite reduction in volume due to pandemic – unacceptable customer service**
- What will happen as volume returns in 2021 and 2022?



# NOTARY SERVICE DISCONTINUED

- Temporary Assistant Town Clerk from Fall of 2020 refused to bring her notary supplies in to assist
- Notary service subsequently reluctantly **discontinued** because of demands of early voting in October 2020

# DOG AND KENNEL LICENSES

- Issued 1,060 dog licenses in 2018, 1,250 in 2019 (sent “unregistered dog” letters that year), and 1,179 in 2020. **Unable to send “unregistered dog” letters in February 2020 due to impact of elections on staff time, or in February 2021 due to reduction in staff**
- **Unable to do kennel inspections or follow-ups in 2020 due to COVID and election demands; grandfathered existing kennels from 2019; related loss of revenue (<\$1K)**
- **Unable to issue same-day licenses in 2021; licenses were issued 4-6 weeks after application due to reduction in staff in 2021 – unacceptable customer service**
- **Unable to do e-mail reminders to owners in January – March 2021; related loss of revenue (\$1-\$3K)**

# DOCUMENT PRESERVATION

- Long-term goal – to preserve the Town's historic records for all to appreciate, research and enjoy
- Contents of Town Hall basement moved to Sylvester School in April of 2019
- **Unable to take next steps** (i.e. apply for CPC funds for re-boxing sub-standard records as needed, indexing items that need to be retained according to retention guidelines, identifying records to be microfilmed) **due to reduction in staff and election demands**

# THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE

- The reduction in staff hours in the Town Clerk's Office is directly responsible for the reduction in services; the Town Clerk worked longer hours than ever in 2020
- Complaints from residents have increased
- Why is the Town Clerk's Office being targeted?
- **This can be resolved by restoring the full-time Assistant Town Clerk's hours to 35 (NOT just 20) and the use of temporary per diem staff and Senior Tax Work-off employees equaling 14 hours per week**
- Backlog is significant; will take time to restore records and service

# STAFFING IN TOWNS CLOSEST IN POPULATION TO HANOVER

Town	Population	# staff	Titles of staff
Belchertown	15,005	2	Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk
Swampscott	15,002	2	Town Clerk / Administrative Assistant
Holliston	14,724	3	Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk / Town Clerk / Administrative Assistant
Wilbraham	14,638	2	Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk
E. Bridgewater	14,466	3	Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk / Principal Clerk
Hanover	14,459	1	Town Clerk
Raynham	14,196	2	Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk
Mashpee	14,148	4	Town Clerk / Administrative Secretary / 2 Administrative Assistants
Bedford	14,142	4	Town Clerk / Administrative Assistant / Archivist / Department Assistant
Uxbridge	13,993	3	Town Clerk / 2 Assistant Town Clerks
Oxford	13,974	3	Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk / Senior Clerk

# STAFFING IN SOUTH SHORE TOWNS CLOSE TO HANOVER'S SIZE

<u>Town</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u># staff</u>	<u>Titles of staff</u>
Scituate	18,720	3	Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk / Records Clerk
Rockland	17,953	3	Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk / Admin. Assistant
Duxbury	15,812	2	Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk
Whitman	15,056	3	Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk / Admin. Assistant
Norwell	11,054	3	Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk / Registrars' Agent
Hanson	10,777	2	Town Clerk / Assistant Town Clerk

- Population data is from the US Census ([https://www.massachusetts-demographics.com/cities\\_by\\_population](https://www.massachusetts-demographics.com/cities_by_population))
- Staffing levels and titles taken directly from Town's website

# THE NEED TO REINSTATE THE FULL-TIME ASS'T TOWN CLERK IS CLEAR

- To avoid further erosion in the maintenance of records
- To return service levels to same-day service
- The Town Clerk is advocating for you, the residents of Hanover, as always!
- Please vote to amend Article 10, the budget