

TOWN of TOLLAND COUNCIL on AGING

WINTER / SPRING NEWSLETTER

241 West Granville Rd.
Tolland, Massachusetts 01034

March 9, 2023

Hi Neighbors,

After a mild and long fall we have had a relatively easy winter, although the freeze thaw cycles are gifting us with additional mini mud seasons. It's been relatively snow free and for the first time in my memory (which isn't as good as it used to be) Otis Reservoir did not completely freeze over. The ice fishermen were very disappointed. The selectmen have started working on next years budget and, hopefully, we can all attend the Budget hearing (April 17) and Annual Town Meeting (May 8). In February the COA sponsored a Chili Day in Tolland where several folks brought chili and it was tasted and voted on by everyone who attended. The winning Chili came from the Fire Department and was prepared by Selectman Patrick Barrett.

The Broadband installation is complete and sure nice to have A final **Broadband Update** by Kevin Donovan is on the inside pages. Kevin and his committee surely deserve our thanks for shepherding this program through to completion

A **DPW Update** by Kate Donovan, Tolland DPW Superintendent, is on the inside pages

The Tolland Council on Aging's "**Rides For Seniors**" program provides rides for Tolland's full and part time senior residents to doctor's appointments, lab work or therapy appointments, grocery or drug store shopping or other transportation needs that our senior residents might have. To reserve a ride, call 413 258-4794 x 129 at least 72 hours before you need a ride. Leave a message containing your name, phone number, when you need a ride and where you are going to. You will get a return phone call confirming the appointment. There is no charge for this service. All of our drivers have received the Covid 19 vaccine. All our passengers must also be fully vaccinated against Covid 19. If you would like to be a volunteer driver call this same number, leave a message and we will get back to you. You can also call Mary Ann Deming, the COA outreach worker, at 413 427-5532.

Police News – The January Newsletter from the Tolland Police Department is inside this newsletter. There were 103 calls for service during the month. Chief Carrington and his three officers, all part time employees of the town, keep very busy. One area where they need your help is on telephone communications. If there is an emergency call 9-1-1 for Police, Fire and EMS assistance. This will put you through to Berkshire Dispatch, who will contact the correct agency/personnel. If it is a police emergency or medical emergency, they will immediately contact Chief Carrington. Either the Chief, who lives in town, or one of his officers will respond to the call. If you need assistance from police, fire, or EMS and it is not an emergency, call 413 442-0512; this is the Berkshire Dispatch non-emergency number. They will contact the correct agency/personnel who will be promptly dispatched. Calling Berkshire dispatch will generate a quicker and more consistent response than calling folks on their cell phones.

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A **Foot Care Nurse** is available for Tolland Seniors at the Foot Care Clinic in Southwick at the Senior Center; the fee of \$40.00 must be paid directly to the nurse. Dates: November 15 and December 20. You must make an appointment by calling - (413) 569-5498. The Otis Senior center also has a Foot Care nurse visit the first Wednesday of every month. Call 413 269 0100 x 131 to make an appointment.

Every Monday at 9 AM the COA is hosting **Coffee at the PSC**. Everyone is invited and welcome. It is a very informal chance to chat with some of your neighbors.

Also inside is a thought provoking piece about discussing your health care wishes with your family.

Another item inside explains the state's **home loan modification program**. This program is open to all homeowners on an income based basis. The income limit for a family of 2 is \$224,400.

Public Health Nurse – After years of trying Tolland finally has a Public Health Nurse, Tricia Sedelow. We share Tricia with Southwick and Granville. She maintains her office in the Southwick Town hall and visits Tolland on a regular basis. She will be at the PSC complex for Blood Pressure checks on Monday March 20 from 9-10am. Stop in, get your BP checked and join us for a cup of coffee.

Finally, for a bit of humor - **Vaccine Warning ... Very Important**

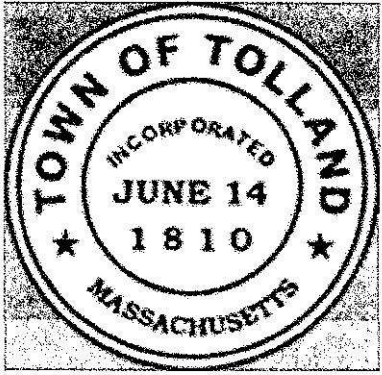
It happened yesterday and is important information for our age group, especially those of us over 65. A friend had his 3rd dose of the vaccine – the “booster” at a pharmacy, after which he began to have blurred vision on the way home. When he did get home, he immediately called the pharmacy for advice about seeing a doctor or to be hospitalized.

He was told NOT to go to a doctor or hospital, but to immediately return to the pharmacy and pick up his glasses.

The COA is looking for new Board members. If you would like to know more about the Council call 413 257-4794 X 129, leave a message, and we will get back to you.

That's all for now, enjoy the Spring !

Your Friends at the COA



TOWN OF TOLLAND

Department of Public Works

162 Colebrook River Road

Tolland, MA 01034

Office: (413) 258-4531

Work Cell: (413) 389-3818

DPW@tolland-ma.com

Kate Donovan

Superintendent of Public Works

March 3, 2023

Although a mild winter, the Highway Department has been occupied with winter road operations while maintaining the trucks and equipment. The new Western Star single axle plow truck has been a great asset for winter storms.

The gravel roads have gone through an early freeze-thaw cycle and the mud season has come early. Crushed stone has been added to sections of Schoolhouse, Rivers, and Jeff Miller Road. The DPW will continue to improve the gravel roads throughout this coming spring.

The Town has purchased a new Hyundai loader using Chapter 90 funds. This loader will replace the used loader bought after the fire about five years ago.

Spring operations include chipping storm debris across Town, grading gravel roads, complete ditching, drainage and roadway improvements to the gravel portion of Clubhouse Road and the South end Schoolhouse Road. Both are scheduled to be reclaimed and paved this coming summer.

Burt Hill Road, Colebrook River Road and various places throughout the road network are also scheduled to be crack sealed this spring.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kate Donovan

Comcast/Xfinity service is now available to almost every home in Tolland. The service includes TV, Internet, and Phone. Additionally, as a Comcast/Xfinity Customer you can purchase Mobile phone service too. Comcast has completed the build of the Tolland fiber optic network, in mid-October. Home were connected beginning in mid-July. If you wish to get service from Comcast, you can visit www.xfinity.com.

Some Broadband History - It's been an eleven-year journey to get FTTH here in this rural town of 525 homes in Western Massachusetts. After moving here, I wanted to make a phone call and get hooked up to the Internet in 2011 when a fast Internet speed was 100 Mbps, but the town was unserved, with no cable, no internet save for hotspots and satellite with poor bandwidth, data caps, and latency issues. In 2011 I joined the Tolland Broadband Committee, chaired by Gloria Gery and have worked intentionally and persistently to provide Broadband to the town. I became the Chair of the committee in 2013.

Fast forward to 2019, after many fits and starts with solutions from building our own (expensive and unsustainable) network, hybrid fiber and wireless, wireless, several companies who never built a network but thought they could, and a cable company that offered but later went into bankruptcy.

In 2019 Comcast, Massachusetts Broadband Institute, and The Town of Tolland, MA entered a Public, Private Partnership where we all had skin in the game and we were on our way to the best FTTH network we could ask for, saving the town over \$1,000,000. The agreement required 96% coverage, Comcast is close to 99%. This project was done during the pandemic and will be completed ahead of schedule. Kudos to Comcast's Ray LaBorde and his team.

In December 2022, Governor Baker and his team celebrated the completion of Broadband networks in the previously unserved/underserved 50+ Western Mass towns. The celebration took place in Ashfield, MA where there were 100+ attendees from Western MA and the folks involved with this project.

There are many people to thank, Office of Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Peter Larkin, Deval Patrick, Cornell Roberts, Alicia Matthews, Eileen Lahey, Ray LaBorde, Henchey Dave, Selectman Eric Munson, Jr, Steve DellaGuistina and Patrick Barrett, Gloria Gery, Danny Duval, Myles Trachtenberg, Mark Orenstein, Hannah Gangaware, all the folks in the Tolland Town Hall, all the townspeople who voted to support and believed in this project. Thank you!!

Tolland Police Report



January 2023 Edition

Welcome.... To the Tolland Police Department's monthly newsletter. Here you'll find our department's monthly statistics, initiatives and trainings we're conducting, upcoming events with our department, and job postings when applicable.

January 2023 Monthly Stats

Total Calls of Service- 103

Motor Vehicle Stops -10

Citations Issued¹- 8

Erratic Operator- 1

Arrest²- 0

911 Calls – 2

Site Check – 24

MV Accident- 1

Targeted Patrol³- 39

Suspicious Activity – 1

Residence/Business Checks – 11

Well Being Check – 1

FD Calls- 2

Burglar Alarm-1

Animal Calls-1

Medical Calls – 3

LTC/FID Application- 7

¹Citations include all written and surchargeable citations for all CMVI violations

²Arrest are counted for custodial arrest and criminal summons

³Target Patrols are designed to focus on specific areas of the town for additional presence

Department News

In January Officer Chirs Sariol assisted with R.A.D women Instructor Course that was held in Fitchburg State University. The R.A.D. Systems of Self Defense offers programs for women, children, men and seniors. These offerings provide a truly holistic approach to self-defense education, supporting the necessity of continuous learning in order to provide realistic options for each population as they go through life. Each of these programs includes educational components comprised of lecture, discussion, physical resistive strategies. All of which are facilitated by certified R.A.D. Instructors supported by a network of dedicated professionals who honor one another's student through our unique Lifetime Return and Practice Policy. Stay Tune to Tolland Police Facebook Page for Upcoming Classes For R.A.D Women.

Take Time to Talk About Your Health Care Wishes With Your Family

WHAT IS A HEALTH CARE PROXY?

A Health Care Proxy is a legally binding document, which allows the "principal" to choose another person and alternates to be the "agent" and make health care decisions when the principal is incapacitated or unable to communicate their wishes. Only one person may act as a health care agent at a time. I always recommend that the principal name an agent, an alternate agent and a second alternate agent, if possible. Select trusted people who will follow *your* wishes as to what medical care you want and do not want. It is important to include all agents' contact information, including their cell phone numbers on the Health Care Proxy document so the agents are easy to reach.

Every person has the right to accept or decline medical care, and, so long as they can communicate their wishes to a medical authority, those wishes must be honored. If unable to communicate their health care wishes or give informed consent, the physician "invokes" the Health Care Proxy and the agent's authority becomes effective. The agent often needs to be proactive and discuss with the medical provider on whether it is appropriate to invoke the Health Care Proxy. Once the Health Care Proxy is invoked, the agent will be able to make medical decisions for the principal. To the best of their ability, the health care agent makes the decisions the principal would have made if able. If the principal regains the ability to communicate their health care wishes, the authority of the agent ceases.

HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT YOUR WISHES.

Make sure to have a conversation about your health care wishes with your agents and alternate agents. We give our clients a health care questionnaire that they find helpful when discussing their health care wishes with their agents. The agents will often take notes during the conversation that helps them later, if they have to make health care decisions for you.

HOW DO I CREATE A HEALTH CARE PROXY?

Massachusetts law requires that a Health Care Proxy must be in writing and witnessed by two people, who are 18 years of age or older. The Health Care Proxy document can be obtained from an attorney, a hospital or health care providers. Once the Health Care Proxy is signed, give copies to everyone named, all immediate family members, all medical providers, and any person with whom medical authorities would confer if there were a medical emergency. Read the law at M.G.L. Chapter 201D, it's written in plain English and not lawyer-eze.

WHAT IF I DO NOT HAVE A HEALTH CARE PROXY?

If an individual becomes incapacitated and is unable or does not have the capacity to communicate health care wishes with medical providers and they do not have a signed Health Care Proxy, it may become necessary for your family members or a health care facility to file a petition with the Probate Court in order to have a legal Guardian appointed to make medical decisions for you. The petition for Guardianship is a lengthy and expensive process and is open to the public. With a Health Care Proxy in place, the medical authorities would have taken instructions from your agent or alternate agent, just as if those instructions were coming from you. So, the bottom line is sign a Health Care Proxy now.

A Health Care Proxy is a very important component of your overall estate plan and generally avoids the need for a Guardian, just as the Durable Power of Attorney for Asset Management avoids the need for a Conservatorship. Take action. While we all wish for the best, we never know what's ahead so be prepared.

Paula Almgren, Esq. ©
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HOME MODIFICATION LOAN PROGRAM

Over the past 20 years, the Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP) has helped over 3,000 households finance home accessibility improvements to make it possible for individuals with disabilities and older adults to remain in their own homes and communities.

For more information, please call Susan Gillam at 1-866-500-5599.

Established by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1999, HMLP is a state funded loan program that provides financing to homeowners and small landlords for necessary home modifications such as:

- Ramps and lifts
- Kitchen and bathroom adaptations
- Sensory integration spaces
- Fencing
- Hand rails
- Brighter lighting
- Widening of doorways
- Flooring renovations
- Creation of additional living space, including accessory dwelling units or in-law apartments

LOAN INFORMATION

- Loans up to \$50,000 for property owners and \$30,000 for owners of manufactured or mobile homes
- 0% interest rate
- No monthly payments required
- Repayment is required when the property is sold or transferred
- Landlords with fewer than 10 units may be eligible for a 3% interest rate loan for a tenant

This is an income eligible program. The income limits are:

1	\$196,400
2	\$224,400
3	\$252,400
4	\$280,400
5	\$303,000
6	\$325,400
7	\$347,800

Ambulance Service in Tolland

One of the issues that is becoming more difficult in Tolland and the surrounding communities is the availability of residents who wish to become trained volunteers and join our Fire Department and area ambulance services. This is particularly acute during normal working hours when many of the trained volunteers are at their jobs, often in other towns. The Tolland Fire Department has done well in recruiting and retaining an adequate number of members.

When there is a 9-1-1 call for an ambulance the police, fire department and ambulance are all notified and dispatched. The Tolland Police and/or Fire Departments respond to medical emergency calls and are often the first responders on site. All members of these departments are trained First Responders. This is a lower level of training than EMT but they can help stabilize the situation until the ambulance arrives. For many years we have relied on the Sandisfield ambulance to provide EMT services to most of Tolland. North Tolland has been covered by the Otis Ambulance. Per state law, an ambulance is not allowed to respond to a call unless two certified EMTs and on board. Unfortunately, over the last couple years, both Sandisfield and Otis have been having trouble responding to calls due to the staffing requirements. Cost has also become an issue. Medicare Medicaid, and insurance reimbursement are available to the ambulance services but some folks do not have any of these coverages. Smaller ambulance services do not have a great number of calls so this limits their income and it must be subsidized by the municipalities. To insure Tolland is helping solve some of the problems, several years ago at Town Meeting Tolland voted to pay the local rescue squads \$500 for each call they respond to in Tolland.

The availability of the Sandisfield ambulance has continued to be an issue. In many instances Granville's ambulance ended up responding to calls. But when one service is trying to man an ambulance and can't, it causes a delay in the response while waiting for the second squad to respond.

The Selectmen, Fire Department and Emergency Service Director in Tolland started investigating shifting our reliance on Sandisfield to some other service. Ultimately it was decided to enter into an agreement with Granville. The distance to reach Tolland is about the same as for Sandisfield and Granville has two paid EMT's manning the ambulance on weekdays from 9 to 5. They also have several other EMT's who answer calls on weekends and nights when the regular EMTs are not on duty. Southwick, will serve as backup to Granville. They have career Firefighter/Paramedics & EMTs that are scheduled to keep the station staffed 24/7, 365 days a year, this is in addition to their roster of on call Paramedics & EMT's. Otis will continue to cover North Tolland. They currently have two EMTs on duty Sunday to Friday from 6 AM to 6 PM and Saturday from 6 AM to 2 PM. They have adequate manpower to cover the other hours. Becket, who is licensed at the Paramedic level, is staffed with two EMTs/Paramedics 24/7, 365 days a year, will serve as Otis's back up.

With our aging population emergency response is a growing concern to many of our residents and our town is making an earnest effort to address these issues. With a population of just 471 full time residents, it is not feasible to own, operate and staff our own ambulance. Obtaining these enhanced services may have some additional costs associated with them, but reliable, timely ambulance service will be well worth the cost.

This article was written by Pat Storey based on conversations he has participated in and information he has gathered.

SOME GREAT DAD JOKES

I was walking down the street and a man offered to give me a free guitar. However, I just couldn't believe it. After a long conversation with the man, I learnt that there were indeed strings attached. In the end, I didn't fret about it.

My wife gave me a list of jobs to do. So, I hired a handyman. To her horror, he had only completed tasks 3, 5, and 7 by the end of the day. I told her that she shouldn't be so surprised: a handyman usually only does the odd jobs. After all, he used to be a prime contractor

Have you seen the media lately? Everyone is fussing about all the smart home devices. They're worried that the devices are listening to our private conversations. But the way I see it, there's nothing to worry about. I mean, our vacuum cleaner has been gathering dirt on us for years!

I always feel very claustrophobic whenever I go to the Apple store in town. There are just no windows there!

Child: "Dad, can we get a pet dog?"

Dad: "Why don't you get a pet tree instead?"

Child: "Why would we get a pet tree?"

Dad: "It's just like a pet dog, but the bark's quieter"

Did you hear? Somebody broke into the pet store the other day. Apparently, they stole all the dog accessories! The police say they haven't got any leads.

My wife told me to sync her phone. She was upset when I told her I threw it in the river. Not sure why she's mad at me!

I went to a restaurant the other day. I arrived 5 minutes early. The owner asked if I didn't mind waiting. I said I didn't mind. He was very confused when I put an apron on and started taking orders.

My friend thought that drinking beer would make him smarter, but I don't think any amount of beer would make my Budweiser.

I had a great childhood. My father would put me in a tire and roll me down a hill. Those were the good years. My brother, on the other hand, never appreciated such a tiring activity.

My boss just rang. He said, "Where the hell have you been? I've been trying to find you all day!" I told him that good employees are hard to find.

Vegans give butchers a hard time and call them gross. But from what I gather, a person who sells fruits and vegetables is grocer.

Wife: "Honey, look outside, all the bus stop signs on our street have been stolen!"

Husband: "Where do these people get off?!"

I just found out that my neighbor fell off the roof while playing peekaboo. He is currently in the ICU.

Important Dates Coming Up

March 17 – St. Patrick's Day

March 20 – First Day of Spring

March 22 – Ramadan Begins

April 6 – First Day of Passover

April 9 – Easter Sunday

April 17 – Town Caucus and Budget Hearing

May 8 – Annual Town Meeting 7 PM

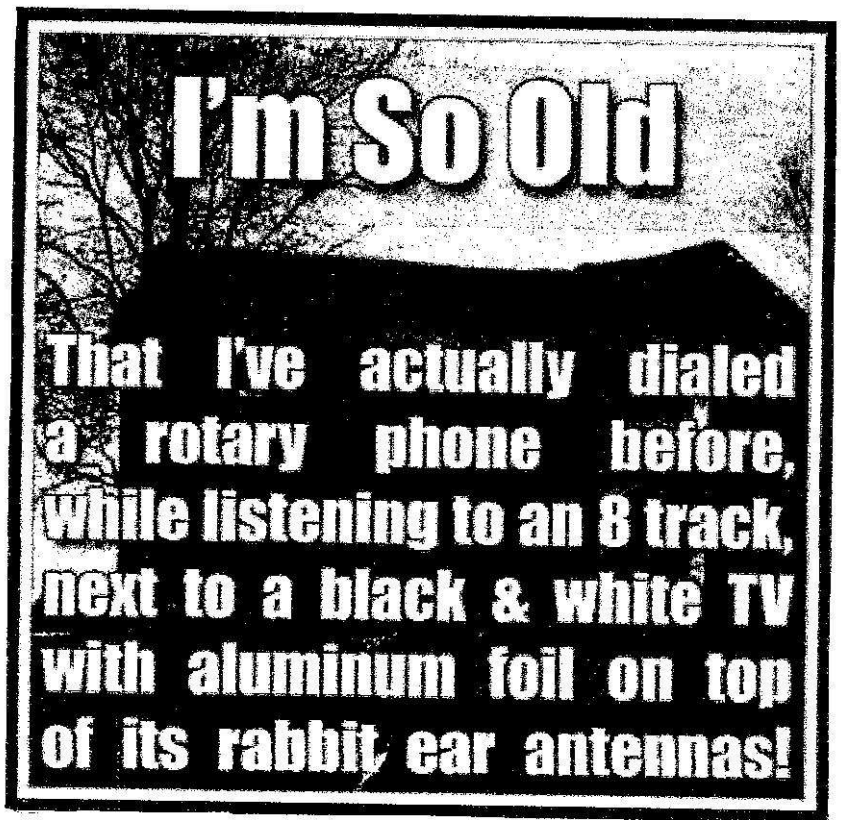
May 14- Mother's Day

May 23 – Town Elections

May 29 – Memorial Day

June 18 – Father's Day

June 21 – Summer begins



Tolland Council on Aging

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