

Town of Preston



ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

JUNE 30, 2020

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FINANCIAL INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

In April 2021, the Town’s auditor, King, King & Associates, P.C., Certified Public Accountants completed its audit of the Town’s financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2020 (FY2020) and shortly thereafter met with the Board of Finance to present and explain the results of that audit.

AUDIT SUMMARY

The Town ended FY2020 with an available Unassigned General Fund Balance (surplus) of \$2,911,851. The fund balance is 17.78% of FY2020 expenditures and provides a healthy reserve for unanticipated needs. The Board of Selectmen, Board of Education, and every Town department should be congratulated for their contributions to making FY2020 another fiscally positive year for Preston.

The following pages present more detailed data extracted from that audit report. The full audit report is available for review in the Town Hall and can be downloaded on the Town website at

<https://ct-preston.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/2370/Preston-CT-Combined-Reports-2020>

BOARD OF FINANCE AUDIT

TABLE 1

Table I is a budget summary of the actual revenue and expenses for FY2020. FY2020 results were favorable for both revenues and expenditures versus the budget. Both the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education returned unspent budget funds to the Town. The budget anticipated using \$650,000 from the surplus (Unassigned Fund Balance) to balance the budget. However, as Table 1 shows, surplus funds were not required, and in fact the surplus balance increased by \$283,038.

TOWN OF PRESTON, CONNECTICUT
Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance
Budget and Actual (Budgetary Basis)
For the Year Ended June 30, 2020

	Budgeted Amounts		Actual	Variance
	Original	Amended	Budgetary Basis	
Revenues				
Property Taxes, Interest, and Lien Fees	\$ 11,603,091	\$ 11,603,091	\$ 11,748,032	\$ 144,941
Intergovernmental	4,413,474	4,413,474	4,505,917	92,443
Licenses, Permits, and Charges for Services	209,300	209,300	256,805	47,505
Investment Income	25,000	25,000	25,832	832
Other	34,166	34,166	119,800	85,634
Total Revenues	16,285,031	16,285,031	16,656,386	371,355
Expenditures				
Current:				
General Government	1,586,052	1,585,552	1,482,295	103,257
Land Development and Control	64,456	64,456	59,602	4,854
Public Works	606,368	606,368	505,352	101,016
Public Safety	1,074,015	1,074,015	1,016,214	57,801
Health Services	180,838	180,838	180,006	832
Public and Social Services	408,715	408,715	337,164	71,551
Miscellaneous	181,990	182,490	192,725	(10,235)
Education	12,026,999	12,026,999	11,794,392	232,607
Debt Service	805,598	805,598	805,598	-
Total Expenditures	16,935,031	16,935,031	16,373,348	561,683
Excess of Revenues Over/(Under) Expenditures	(650,000)	(650,000)	283,038	933,038
Other Financing Sources (Uses)				
Use of Fund Balance	650,000	650,000	-	(650,000)
Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	650,000	650,000	-	(650,000)
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ -	\$ -	283,038	\$ 283,038
Fund Balance, Beginning of Year			3,320,925	
Fund Balance, End of Year			\$ 3,603,963	

Source: Town of Preston Audit Report Year Ended June 30, 2020, page 16.

BOARD OF FINANCE AUDIT

TABLE 2

TOWN OF PRESTON, CONNECTICUT
Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances
Governmental Funds
For the Year Ended June 30, 2020

	General Fund	Capital Projects Fund	Preston Redevelopment Agency Fund	Small Cities Fund	Nonmajor Governmental Funds	Total Governmental Funds
Revenues						
Property Taxes, Interest, and Lien Fees	\$ 11,748,032	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,748,032
Intergovernmental Revenues	5,740,793	-	1,970,231	-	453,606	8,164,630
Licenses, Permits, and Charges for Services	256,805	-	-	-	183,629	440,434
Investment Income	25,832	13,325	2,072	-	315	41,544
Other Revenue	119,800	-	-	-	39,692	159,492
Total Revenues	<u>17,891,262</u>	<u>13,325</u>	<u>1,972,303</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>677,242</u>	<u>20,554,132</u>
Expenditures						
Current:						
General Government	1,519,601	30	725,172	-	-	2,244,803
Public Works	512,608	-	-	-	25,113	537,721
Public Safety	1,019,557	-	-	-	8,186	1,027,743
Health Services	180,006	-	-	-	-	180,006
Public and Social Services	337,164	-	-	10,730	94,106	442,000
Education	12,920,585	-	-	-	484,212	13,404,797
Debt Service	805,598	-	-	-	-	805,598
Capital Outlay	121,420	888,743	-	-	40,574	1,050,737
Total Expenditures	<u>17,416,539</u>	<u>888,773</u>	<u>725,172</u>	<u>10,730</u>	<u>652,191</u>	<u>19,693,405</u>
Excess/(Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenditures	474,723	(875,448)	1,247,131	(10,730)	25,051	860,727
Other Financing Sources/(Uses)						
Transfers In	-	-	-	-	42,772	42,772
Transfers Out	(42,765)	-	-	-	(7)	(42,772)
Total Other Financing Sources/(Uses)	<u>(42,765)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>42,765</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Change in Fund Balances	431,958	(875,448)	1,247,131	(10,730)	67,816	860,727
Fund Balances at Beginning of Year	3,368,038	2,558,291	(581,920)	41,826	758,937	6,145,172
Fund Balances at End of Year	<u>\$ 3,799,996</u>	<u>\$ 1,682,843</u>	<u>\$ 665,211</u>	<u>\$ 31,096</u>	<u>\$ 826,753</u>	<u>\$ 7,005,899</u>

Source: Town of Preston Audit Report Year Ended June 30, 2020, page 14.

BOARD OF FINANCE AUDIT

TABLE 3

TOWN OF PRESTON, CONNECTICUT
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Governmental Funds
For the Year Ended June 30, 2020

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Source: Town of Preston Audit Report Year Ended June 30, 2020, page 14.

ASSESSOR

The **Assessor** is responsible for discovering, listing and valuing all taxable and non-taxable property located in town.

Connecticut law requires the town to list and value all real estate, motor vehicle and personal property. This is an annual cycle with an assessment date of October 1.

THE NET TAXABLE 2020 GRAND LIST	
Real Estate	376,564,000
Personal Property	34,512,254
Motor Vehicle	45,438,845
Total Taxable Grand List	456,515,099

It is the Assessor's responsibility to ensure all values are properly and uniformly made and that the Grand List is a true and accurate report of all taxable and tax-exempt property in the municipality.

Assessed values in the state of Connecticut are based on 70% of fair market value. All Connecticut towns are required to perform a State-mandated revaluation every five years.

The Assessor's office is responsible for:

- ☞ Updating ownership of real estate upon transfer of title.
- ☞ Adjusting motor vehicle accounts.
- ☞ Maintaining tax relief programs for the elderly, disabled, blind, farmers and veterans.
- ☞ Maintaining the Renters Rebate program.
- ☞ Applying the PA 490 statute to preserve farm and forest land.

2020 GRAND LIST COMBINED TOP TEN TAXPAYERS	
Top Ten Taxpayers	Net Assessment
Covanta SE Connecticut Co.	\$33,764,700
Connecticut Light & Power	\$21,294,360
Julia Tate Holdings	\$10,125,000
Strawberry Park Resort	\$2,554,350
Yankee Gas Services Co (AU71)	\$1,363,870
Migliaccio, William	\$1,016,540
SE CT Regional Resources Rec.	\$907,410
Firstlight Power Services, LLC.	\$889,790
Pollock, Shane	\$819,700
PAF Commercial Realty, LLC.	\$751,400
*Based on Net 2020 Grand List as reported to the State of Connecticut.	



Crary Barn Old Jewett City Road

BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS

The **Board of Assessment Appeals** conducted two public hearings in fiscal year 2020—one in September and one in March. Of the three applications received three were real estate and zero automobiles. The results of the hearings are to the

Number of Appeals	Number of Assessment Adjustments	\$ Value of Assessment Adjustments
3	3	(\$86,400)

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Fiscal year 2019 to 2020, Robert Congdon, Lynwood Cray, and Mike Sinko were the elected officials serving on the **Board of Selectmen** (BOS) from July 2019 through the election in November 2019. From November 2019 to June 2020, the newly elected Board of Selectmen are Sandra Allyn-Gauthier, Jerry Grabarek and Ken Zachem. This annual report from the Board of Selectmen highlights the accomplishments during both tenures Complex. Unfortunately, the fiscal year 2021 ended with the citizens still dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The budget of the General Government for the Fiscal year of July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 had challenges being passed and took several referendums. The major increases were due to additional per diem shifts for the fire department, health insurance and pension as well as an increase for the two resident troopers. At the same town meeting, the discontinuance and abandonment of Indiantown Road was passed for which the Town received \$50,000. At the July 2019 meeting, the BOS also authorized the Treasurer to spend \$5,000 from the Open Space Fund for the Avalonia Land Conservancy which was supported by both the Preston Conservation and Agricultural Commission and the Preston Planning and Zoning Commission. One of the last acts of the prior BOS in October 2019 was to approve the legal notice to call a Town Meeting on October 10, 2019 to amend the PRA ordinance from a ten-member agency to five.

At the first official BOS meeting on November 26, 2019 under the new BOS administration, the establishment of a Strategic Plan was discussed. The initial step was to gather information by listening and learning about internal departments. The intent with these department manager meetings was to open conversations about our culture, mission, values, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. During this process, policies and procedures as well as job descriptions and career development, goals and evaluations would be reviewed. The next step would be meeting with Boards and Commissions for their input as well as seeking community involvement through a variety of forums and tools. Unfortunately, COVID-19 became a pandemic and the Strategic Plan needed to be put on hold but will be readdressed as soon as possible. There were many Executive Orders and Stay at Home Orders starting in March 2020 one of which concerned our budget process. At the start of the budget cycle, each department manager was asked to examine their actual costs, look for cost efficiencies, “wants versus needs” as well as forecasting needs out over the next several years. The BOS had hoped this year’s budget would be one that focused on strategic planning, analysis and building for the future—as under normal circumstances our budget is a reflection of our values, our hopes and what we want to accomplish. Then, the world was drastically different and we were confronted with difficult decisions especially with such financial uncertainty. With all of these things in mind while

trying to balance the needs of all—taxpayers, services and programs provided to residents, employees and the ability to at least maintain most operations and services—adjustments were made by looking at actuals which are not necessarily

indicative of the future as well as what could be decreased and put on hold. The General Government budget for fiscal year 2020 to 2021 was passed by the BOF because of the inability to go through our normal budget adoption process. The budget ended up being flat because of these unprecedented times.

Lastly, another Executive Order was the selection of a Tax Deferral program that was adopted by the BOS. During the period of March 10, 2020, the date that the Governor declared the public health and civil preparedness emergency, through and including July 1, 2020, municipalities participating in the Deferment Program shall offer a deferment by ninety (90) days of any taxes on real property, personal property or motor vehicles, or municipal water, sewer and electric rates, charges or assessments for such tax, rate, charge, or assessment from that time that it became due and payable. The BOS also approved to extend eligibility for the deferment program to all categories of taxpayers without a certification or application required to help the Preston community during this crisis.

The financial accounting software was purchased in January 2020 and provided us the opportunity to use the State Office of Policy Management’s Uniform Chart of Accounts. From January through June, the training and ultimately the conversion was completed almost entirely virtual.

There isn’t one aspect of our lives that hasn’t been impacted by this virus and pandemic. However, we as a community are resilient and strong. We will find ways to stay connected even though for now we need to do this differently in order to minimize the spread and reduce our risk of exposure for the protection of all. It is hopeful that by the time the next Annual Report is due, this pandemic will be long forgotten and we will have returned to our normal routines and interactions.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier
First Selectwoman



LAND USE, PLANNING AND ZONING AND BUILDING

The **Building Department** is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Connecticut State Building Code (CSBC) and Demolition Code. The Building Department accepts and reviews construction documents for all construction projects within the Town with the exception of those on state and federal property. Permit Applications are reviewed to determine compliance with the CSBC. Staff also coordinates and directs applicants to other applicable Town departments. During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, permits were issued with a total construction value of \$7,795,927 and permit fees collected totaling \$67,242.

The **Planner** provides recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission and other land use boards and commissions (upon request) regarding the review of the various land use applications. In addition, the Planner prepares drafts of various town plans such as the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision regulations, oversees the Geographic Information System and prepares maps, prepares grant applications and manages approved grants received from the state and federal government.

The **Zoning Board of Appeals** heard a total of two appeals. In hearing these appeals, the board is charged with taking into consideration the conservation of the public health, safety, welfare, convenience, and property values of the residences and businesses of the town.



FY 2019-2020 BY THE NUMBERS	
Permit Applications	
Description	Quantity
Accessory Structures	10
Additions/Alterations	48
Building	367
Commercial	21
Demolition	1
Electrical	*33
Mechanical	*6
New Homes	14
Plumbing	*4
Roofing/Siding/Windows	42
Single Family	13
Solar (Residential)	19
Swimming Pools	10
* Does Not Include Trade Permits As Part Of Single Family Permit	
Land Use Applications	
Description	Quantity
Gravel Renewal Permit	1
Subdivision	2
Zoning Board of Appeals	2
Zoning Permits	8



Amos Lake Association

PARKS AND RECREATION

The Town of Preston Parks and Recreation offers year-round recreation programs, activities, field trips, and community events for all ages. Additionally, the Parks and Recreation department is in charge of overseeing the scheduling and maintenance of Preston Community Park, located at 13 Route 117. The Park Pavilion is available for rental and is the ideal location for birthday parties, family reunions, graduation parties, baby showers, and much more!

The Preston Parks and Recreation department budget for the year was \$109,351 and, in addition, our department brought in over just over \$90,000 in program registration fees for the fiscal year of July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. Our biggest programs continue to be summer camp and youth basketball league.

July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 was certainly an unprecedented year for the Preston Parks and Recreation Department forcing us to think creativity almost all year long. The year started out with the challenges of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in the early fall and ended in the spring with COVID-19 pandemic—which affected two of our biggest events of the year, Trunk or Treat in the fall and Preston Palooza in the spring. Trunk or Treat had to be moved indoors to avoid nighttime mosquitoes and became Trick or Treat Door to Door. Our Preston townspeople are awesome and we quickly had community members stepping up and thinking creatively how they could decorate doors and entry ways to a classroom at Preston Veterans Memorial School to make it a fun night for the Preston kiddos.

Preston Parks and Recreation holds a number of fundraisers throughout the year which included: 911 emergency signs and the ever popular Preston event of cow patty bingo, which raised \$700!! Unfortunately, Preston Palooza, our biggest fundraiser of the year had to be cancelled because of COVID-19.

In addition to our traditional summer camp program, we also held specialty camps which included: archery camp, mini hawk camp, multi-sport camp, and summer slam basketball camp.

We offered the following kid programs: field trips on half days, babysitter training, middle school fitness conditioning program, dance classes, and pre-k basketball skills.

Preston Parks & Recreation offered the following adult programs: men's basketball, co-ed volleyball, core de force class, and yoga basics.

We expanded our senior activity offerings for the year, including trips to see The Carpenters and Elton John tribute shows at the Log Cabin in Holyoke, Massachusetts. We teamed up with Lisbon Seniors for both of these trips.



Cow Patty Bingo

Seniors also enjoyed traveling to the Providence Performing Arts Center to see Fiddler on the Roof (and yes, that trip was via school bus!!). We offered senior open swim at Preston Hilton Garden Inn as well as the always popular chair yoga class.

Preston Parks and Recreation offered family bus trips including going to see Radio City Christmas Spectacular in person as well as attending the play of How The Grinch Stole Christmas at Providence Performing Arts Center.

Community events included Summerfest, fall community yard sale, Trick or Treat Door to Door, Holiday Light Contest and Tree Lighting ceremony. We received a Manafort Family Foundation Grant for \$5,740 and we were able to put all new Christmas lights up at Preston Community Park.

Then COVID came in March and totally affected our department. We were forced to cancel many programs and activities. However, we thought creatively and were able to roll out several online classes including yoga basics, chair yoga and core de force. We also had a "Bear Hunt in Preston" and an Egg Hunt which consisted of residents driving around town and searching for bears and paper eggs in house windows.

In April, we had Clean-Up Weekend as well as our Playground Community Build scheduled both of which we had to cancel. The Playground Community Build was postponed to the fall.

Preston Parks and Recreation looks forward to continuing to serve the residents of Preston and adapting to the needs of the community.

PRESTON FIRE DEPARTMENTS

The fire and emergency response in the Town of Preston is provided by members of the **Poquetanuck and Preston City Volunteer Fire Departments**, the Poquetanuck Ambulance, the Preston Fire Marshal's Office and the Preston Office of Emergency Management along with a full-time career Fire Chief/Fire Marshal, Chief Thomas Casey and a paid staff made up of one full-time career firefighter/EMT, Captain Michael Guiher and a complement of part-time paid firefighter/EMTs. During the past year, part time paid staffing was increased to improve coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week in an effort to try to provide an adequate response to all emergencies.

The Department operates with a rescue pumper, an engine, a tanker and an ambulance responding from the Poquetanuck station and a rescue pumper, a tanker, an EMS/service truck and a recently relocated ambulance responding from the Preston City station. The emergency services responded to 125 fire calls, 31 service calls, and 448 rescue/ EMS calls for a total of 604 emergency responses during the fiscal year of 2019-2020. In addition, there were two major storms in which personnel responded to many separate incidents within those storms that are not separated into individual calls. The department currently has approximately four active volunteer firefighters, EMTs and fire police. **The Fire Marshal's Office** conducted:

- 69 Fire investigations
- 100+ Code enforcement inspections

And issued

- 117 Burning permits
- 21 Blasting permits \

Both of the Volunteer Departments and the paid personnel respond to the majority of calls together and work co-operatively to provide the best possible public safety service to the residents and visitors of Preston. Personnel also provide traffic control and stand-by service at many community events throughout the year including the Scarecrow Festival, Palooza, Fire and Ice, Holiday parades in Town and Safety Days at the schools. Staff also conducted tours of the fire stations, offered CPR certification training and provided public fire education in the schools and at various events in town.

Training takes up a large part of the time provided to the town by the emergency services. They attended 12 monthly drills, EMT and EMR re-certification classes and walk-through tours of target hazards. The Fire Marshals attended more than 270 hours of continuing education classes and the Post Blast Investigation Class held at the Riverwalk property.

CALLS FOR SERVICE	
Description	Quantity
Fire—Building	17
Fire—Other	19
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incident EMS Calls, (Excluding Vehicle Accidents)	398
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incidents—Other	49
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)—Other	22
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)—Power Line Down	15
Service Call—Assist Invalid	29
Service Call—Other	3
Good Intent Call—Smoke Scare	12
Good Intent Call—Other	6
False Alarm & False Call—Alarm System Activation, No Fire	19
False Alarm & False Call—No Fire	15
Emergency Response Total	604

PLEASE HELP US TO LOCATE
YOUR HOME
BY INSTALLING YOUR ASSIGNED
HOUSE NUMBER TO YOUR
MAILBOX OR
POLE NEAR THE STREET.

DON'T FORGET TO CHANGE
THE BATTERIES IN YOUR SMOKE
DETECTORS EVERY YEAR.

PRESTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The year 2019-2020 has been a year of transition for the library. We welcomed new staff with professional experience and training in the library field, many with strong skills in the area of customer service and a dedication to move the library forward in the 21st century as a community center. Facing the challenges of a pandemic, our staff turned their talents towards upgrading the collection through a major weeding project, working on new funding sources, upgrading the website, and introducing programs based on more diverse material. Services such as curbside pick up, digital cards, and digital libraries for youth were introduced to provide patrons with service while meeting COVID-19 safety restrictions. Initially closed to the public during the first few months of the pandemic, the library re-opened by appointment in order to expand service during the pandemic. Fines were waived and due dates on material were extended when needed for patrons. Interest in our social media sites grew significantly as the public turned towards these outlets as sources of education, information, and programs to meet their needs. Despite the challenges of operating during a pandemic, the library managed to successfully fulfill its mission as a center of information by providing enrichment opportunities for the residents of Preston. Community Programs and Activities:

- Story Times (Virtual)
- Book Club Materials
- Museum Passes
- Computer Instruction Sessions
- Summer Reading Program
- Family Programs (Virtual and Make and Take)
- Friends of the Library Book Give Away

“Where the Past Meets the Future”



FISCAL YEAR 2020 BY THE NUMBERS

Service	Number of Transactions
Numbers of citizens that are registered library card holders	1,110
Physical items in the Library collection (books, movies, periodicals and more)	31,686
Total loaned physical items	4,490
Total Circulation	9,358



PRESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Mission of the Preston Public Schools, a partnership of schools, family, and community, is to instill in each child a passion for learning, a life-long quest for knowledge, and the skills to become a responsible and contributing global citizen.

This is the year that COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) struck our community and the world. Through the first half of the school year until March 12, 2020, things were relatively calm and routine. On March 12, 2020, schools were closing and challenged to begin the transformation to virtual instruction. When the shutdown first occurred, many thought it would take just a few weeks to resolve. We know now that schools did not return to full face-to-face instruction for the rest of the school year. During this time period, many changes and modifications occurred. We learned much about how to implement the basics of virtual instruction. We worked to ensure that teachers and students had access to vital technology and each other. Families had to make significant changes in the homework areas, their family routines, and their use of technology. During the spring we served over 30,000 meals in a Grab 'n' Go style pick up. Anxiety and worry steadily increased. The symbolism of the end of the year 8th-grade transition ceremony outside in a drive-in movie style ceremony was not lost on anyone.

The district was required to create a reopening plan for the following September 2020. After the plan was created and submitted in June 2020, over 15 Amendments were made to the plan and the Governor issued almost 90 Executive Orders. Throughout this process, we learned to conduct rigorous contact tracings, and we implemented extensive mitigation strategies, including mask-wearing, hand washing, proper signage, intensive cleaning, and social distancing strategies.

Our staff learned to pivot on a dime and reconstructed their entire teaching modality. Every employee in the district stepped up and redefined the way they worked. Our students demonstrated determined-flexibility and adjusted with us in many areas. The social construct of school was reshaped into a unique partnership of families, teachers, staff, and community members all focused on safety, wellbeing, and providing the best education available. To our entire learning community, thank you for all of your past support and all of your future advocacy for quality learning experiences both virtual and face-to-face for all of our students.

Roy M. Seitsinger
Superintendent of Schools



PRESTON YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

The Preston Youth and Family Services Bureau is funded jointly by \$14,000 from the Town and a \$14,000 grant from the State of Connecticut. Preston Youth Services works closely with our community partners to enhance the lives of youth and families in Preston.

Preston Youth Services' mission and reach extends beyond the public schools and serves all youth in town. Our "Presents for Preston" program sponsored 18 Preston children in need and provided them with Christmas presents. The program goal is to make sure every child in Preston has a Merry Christmas. To further supplement this program, we organized our first "Stuff a Cruiser & Fire Truck" event in conjunction with Preston Resident State Troopers Armando Bettini and Kalen Brown, which was a HUGE success and truly heartwarming to see!! Additionally, once schools shut down on March 13th due to COVID-19, Preston Youth Services found creative ways to engage the youth of Preston: creating online programs for kids' art classes and kids' yoga.

COVID-19 has forced Preston Youth Services to change what we do and how we do things, but our goal is to adapt in order to continually meet the needs of the Preston community. For the 2020-2021 year, Preston Youth Services looks forward to developing more community partnerships as well as creating joint collaborations with our local Youth Service Bureaus. One thing is for sure, Preston Youth Services is an essential service and department to the Town of Preston.



FISCAL YEAR 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- ☞ We partnered with New England County 4H, Niantic Children's Museum, as well as The Children's Museum of West Hartford. We were able to bring a variety of programs to students including goat milk soap making, yoga, cookie decorating, 4H STEM, and many science programs like polymer power, all about frogs, rock on and more!!
- ☞ Preston Youth Services provided academic support through a homework club for students in grades three through five at Preston Veterans Memorial School and students in grades six through eight at Preston Plains Middle School.
- ☞ The D.A.R.E. program was offered again to 5th grade students at Preston Veterans Memorial School, which is taught by Preston Resident State Trooper Armando Bettini. This outreach continues to be a very worthwhile program and a great collaboration between the school, Resident Trooper's office and Youth Services .
- ☞ At Preston Plains Middle School, Preston Youth Services sponsored the Safe Futures' "Violence is Preventable" program, which consisted of 26 sessions spread out among the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. This program works with students to provide them with the social-emotional skills they need to be successful in life socially and academically.
- ☞ Preston Youth Services sponsored a school-wide assembly for Preston Plains Middle School students. It was presented by Patricia Dahl, a Public Educator on the Dangers of Adolescent Vaping from Yale University School of Medicine.

PRESTON REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

The Preston Redevelopment Agency, (PRA) spent months developing a “detailed remediation engineering plan”. The approved detailed plan allowed the PRA to submit for Town, State and Federal permits. Approval from the Town’s Planning & Zoning (PZC) and Inland/Wetlands commissions was received along with the State’s and Army Corp approvals. Final clean up, which comprises abatement (buildings) and remediation (soil), began during the summer of 2018.

The remediation work is primarily focused on the removal of the ash/cinder sub-base material and pesticide contaminated soil. In many states, the ash/cinder material can be mixed with asphalt for new roads or with concrete for new building foundations. CT-DEEP, however, treats this material as hazardous requiring that it be excavated and consolidated even though the material does not leach.

During the remediation work, significantly more ash/cinder material was encountered than identified during our assessment work or reported by the previous owner.



For example, we expected such material to exist below the known paved roadways (with depths anywhere between one foot and four feet below the road surface). However, the clean up work uncovered a number of situations wherein the base was forty feet wide versus the typical twenty-foot wide road. We also ran across utility trenches where ash/cinder material was used to cover and fill around these utility trenches, some more than eight feet below grade. These new findings identified the need for additional dollars to complete the clean up work.

In addition to working with our contractors to flesh out this information and to test the validity of the new findings, a number of discussions were held with both the Tribe and the State to find a path forward to complete the clean up and transfer the property to the Tribe.

The final clean up cost was estimated at \$9 million which includes a previously approved forgivable State \$2 million loan; which was included in the approved agreement

between the Tribe and the Town (PDDA). The CT General Assembly approved a new bond package in March 2020 that included our request for \$7 million to finish the clean up at the site. Governor Lamont signed the bond package that same month. In July 2020, the State Bond Commission approved the \$7 million grant.

We began working with CT-DECD (Department of Economic & Community Development) in August 2020 to finalize the Assistance Agreement (AA). This agreement must be completed before we can re-start our efforts. We engaged the Tribe as we worked through this agreement to ensure alignment with their needs and timing as our ultimate goal is to convey the property to the Mohegan’s.

The following contractors worked with the PRA to advance our remediation efforts: Tighe & Bond (environmental; LEP), MBI (remediation), CSG (clerk-of-the works), CLA ((CLA Engineers; third party engineering firm), and AHS (archaeological firm).

With less activity on the site, we have seen an increase of illegal activities (trespassing, motor bikes, etc.). Should you observe these activities we ask that you call the State Troopers office immediately.

A Town Meeting was held in October 2020 to amend the 2009 Ordinance, that established the PRA, seeking approval to reduce the size from a 10-membered agency to a 5-membered agency. Over time the agency has seen a reduction from ten to six active members. Over the years whenever someone resigned, we were able to replace openings. This has not been the case since 2016 even though the openings were posted in both the local newspapers and the Town web site. Also, by State Statute, a 10-membered agency requires six (6) members as a quorum to conduct both formal meetings and to take action (e.g. approving minutes, approving expenditures, going into Executive Session, and so forth). We ran the risk of not being able to conduct PRA business and had, in fact, experienced this a number of times. In addition, it was always the PRA’s plan to request the BoS to reduce to a 5-membered agency following transfer of ownership to the Tribe. These collective reasons led us to ask the current BoS to move forward with amending the 2009 PRA Ordinance. This change was recommended by the BoS and approved at the October 2020 Town Meeting.

It is important to thank and acknowledge the residents who have given their time and expertise to this effort since May 2009; specifically: Roy Beaugard, Kent Borner, Allyn Brown, Kerry Gentry, Merrill Gerber, Joe Biber, Sandy Ewing, Mike Clancy, Linda Riegel, Jim Bell, John Harris, Frank Ennis, Frank Matovic, Mike Lavoie, Bill Legler, Bill Cummings, and Andy Depta. A special thank you and recognition goes out to Bob Congdon (former 1st Selectman), Sandra Allyn-Gauthier (current 1st Selectwoman), and Roberta Charpentier (recorder) as all have provided valuable perspective, insights, and support.

Sean Nugent
Chairman

PUBLIC WORKS

Fiscal Year 2020 was marked by the initiation of a concerted effort to incorporate new approaches to infrastructure management and maintenance, while appropriate attention continued to be applied to the essential needs of the Town's roads, buildings, and waste management. To that end, a comprehensive review of **Public Works** was initiated to assess department operations and maintenance and capital planning and provide recommendations for improvements. A summary report will be available next year.

With respect to routine maintenance, nearly five miles of roads were chip-sealed, including important prep work. Additionally, all striped roads were restriped, seasonal roadside mowing was accomplished, most roads received their seasonal sweeping, removal continued of hazard trees killed by recent widespread gypsy moth defoliation, and a number of minor drainage repairs were attended to.

Concerning facilities, an important project was begun to update the fuel station at the Highway Garage. The existing dispensers and buried fuel tanks will be replaced with a state-of-the-art fuel station with above-ground tanks.

An engineering road survey was started, which will yield important detailed information about our entire road network that will be used to establish a

comprehensive road resurfacing plan. This would include the implementation of an approach to road surface management that leverages a more diverse array of alternatives that are now available.

The Transfer Station has maintained its vital role as the primary disposal location for various types of waste and recyclables. Through the Town's membership in the Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resources Recovery Authority (SCRRRA), residents now benefit from free disposal of many types of items, with an estimated savings of nearly \$75,000. For particular information about this and other details about fees and operations, we encourage you to visit the Town's website at <https://www.preston-ct.org/248/Transfer-Station>. Also, there was an important development this year concerning the disposal of our waste. The SCRRRA contract with COVANTA, who runs the Preston Waste-to-Energy (WTE) Plant, ends December 31, 2020. Based on the most favorable terms negotiated by SCRRRA for a new 10-year contract, our disposal location will change to the Wheelabrator WTE Plant in Lisbon starting in 2021.



REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

In fiscal year 2020 the **Registrars of Voters** conducted a local primary and election and three referenda. We worked closely with the Office of the Secretary of State to ensure the voting rights of Preston citizens. The Registrars also performed voter registration, maintained active and inactive voter registry lists, completed two annual canvasses of voters to ascertain residency, appointed and trained poll workers and maintained all voting equipment.

The Registrars also worked closely with the Town Clerk to ensure that absentee ballot procedures were followed and that Moderator Reports and voter registry lists indicating who voted were available to the public. The Registrars worked together with the Town Clerk when performing ballot ordering and certification of the ballot order as required by law.

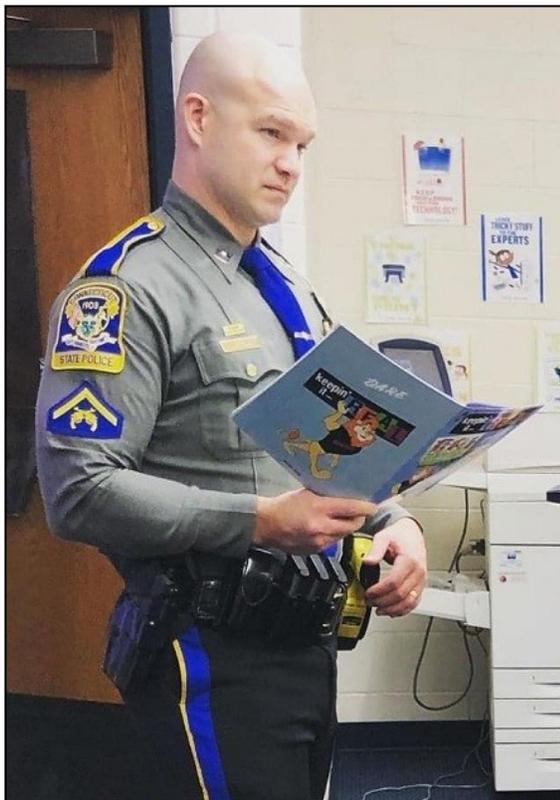
During FY2020 the Registrars posted announcements in local newspapers for mandated voter registration sessions. They also posted announcements for tabulator testing and dates by which voters must change their party affiliation if they wanted to vote in a primary election. They also provided voter registry lists to the Town Committees in support of party caucus activities.

In response to the pandemic, the Registrars applied for a Safe Polls grant from the Secretary of State's Office and received over \$4,000 to cover costs related to the pandemic. This funding was used to cover the following expenses:

- Crowd control stanchions to manage social distancing
- Plexiglas sneeze guards
- Labor for the processing of a twenty-fold increase in absentee ballot requests in FY21
- Hiring of additional poll workers to sanitize the polling place in FY21

Affiliation	Voters
Democratic	866
Republican	976
Unaffiliated	1,475
Minor Parties	79
Total	3,396

RESIDENT STATE TROOPER



*DARE Class with
Resident State Trooper Bettini*

CRIME STATISTICS Fiscal Year 2020	
Description	Quantity
Accidents (Ten with Injury, Two Fatal)	118
Alarms	138
Assault	1
Burglary	1
Criminal Mischief	4
Disturbances	20
Domestic	6
DUI	21
Homicide	1
Larceny	7
Medical Assistance	70
Missing Person	1
Sexual Assault	2
Untimely Death	4

SENIOR AFFAIRS

The **Preston Senior Center** is nestled in a tranquil setting; in close proximity to a creek (with occasional visits from beavers and turtles), historic meeting house, small cemetery and distant neighbors. Although the center has fiscal constraints and operates on a limited schedule, we do provide services and activities to Preston residents who have attained the age of 60 years and older. To that end, we continue to offer an Annual Flu and Pneumonia Clinic. In 2019, we administered 51 Influenza Vaccines, 13 Pneumonia shots and were one of the few/fortunate sites able to provide Shingles injections to over 20 individuals. Our service provider for this event was Walgreens Pharmacy in Jewett City. TDAP injections were made available through a grant from the Edward & Mary Lord Foundation and were administered by nursing staff from Uncas Health District with 26 individuals in attendance. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we offered a COVID-19 screening to local residents and had 97 individuals tested in our drive-thru screening. We offered monthly blood pressure screenings to town residents at Lincoln Park Housing until the pandemic made it no longer feasible.

Our Senior Center schedule includes hours of operation on Mondays in which we participate in the weekly TVCCA Café program serving between 18-20 individuals. Guests are welcomed between 11:00 am to 1:00 pm to enjoy good food and more importantly to socialize with friends. Tuesday and Thursday afternoons are geared to cards, games day, classes such as AARP Safe Driving sessions with 21 individuals in attendance; celebration events offering food and entertainment draw 20-25 participants for each event and guest speakers discussing nutritional needs. One of our most successful endeavors was to cosponsor AARP Tax Assistance to our community. IRS Trained and Certified Tax Councilors Vicky Connor and Pat Biggins work meticulously, tirelessly and enthusiastically for hours on end to provide free tax preparation to 69 individuals. These ladies volunteer to take on the headache of your tax documents, find some semblance of order within the bags of documents furnished, assist in retrieving necessary information, calm

your anxiety and ultimately file your return. Awesome volunteering!



Lincoln Park Easter Delivery

The Town of Preston joins with eleven other towns to participate in a medical transportation grant designed for seniors and/or disabled individuals. Eastern Connecticut Transportation Consortium arranges transportation for registrants within the New London County area. In 2019 the normal \$24.00 registration fee was waived and participants were entitled to 24 one-way trips per year. The Town of Preston owns and operates a 16-passenger bus and two mini vans to provide transportation, free of charge, to persons sixty years of age and older for medical and shopping trips.

TAX COLLECTOR

The **Tax Collector's** office is responsible for the annual billing and collection of real estate, motor vehicle and personal property taxes. All taxable property levied on the Grand List of October 1, 2019, Executive Order was the selection of a Tax Deferral program that was adopted by the BOS. During the period of March 10, 2020, the date that the Governor declared the public health and civil preparedness emergency, through and including July 1, 2020, municipalities participating in the Deferment Program shall offer a deferment by ninety (90) days of

any taxes on real property, personal property or motor vehicles, or municipal water, sewer and electric rates, charges or assessments for such tax, rate, charge, or assessment from that time that it became due and payable. The BOS also approved to extend eligibility for the deferment program to all categories of taxpayers without a certification or application required to help the Preston community during this crisis.

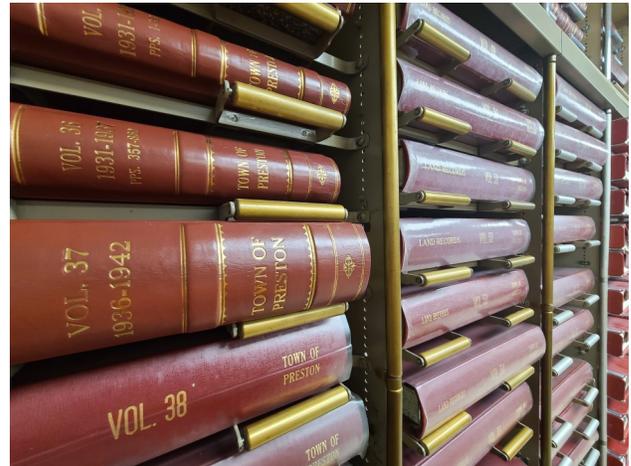
The Collector of Revenue's office is responsible for pursuing the collection of all delinquent taxes and placing liens on all unpaid real estate.

TOWN CLERK

The **Town Clerk's Office** maintains all records. We Receive and record a variety of documents and archive them accordingly. All of these valuable records are up to date and have been preserved. We recorded a total of 32 documents and 27 mylars maps during the 2020 fiscal year.

In addition to maintaining land records, we keep records of minutes and agendas for all boards and commissions. We store and maintain annual fiscal reports and town ordinances.

The Town Clerk also works with the Office of the Secretary of State ensuring that state statues are followed for all municipal and federal elections. We received 32 absentee ballots during this fiscal year.



FISCAL YEAR 2020 BY THE NUMBERS

Service	Number Processed	Revenue Received	Town Revenue	State Revenue	Additional Information
Land Recordings*	832	68,059.00	27,754.00	40,305.00	
Land records copies					
• In person	5,526	4,444.25	4,444.25		\$1.00 per page in office \$1.25 per page online
• Online		1,158.75	1,158.75		
Hunting and Fishing Licenses	106	3,391.00	106.00	3,285.00	Included free licenses issued (not included in last year's figures)
Dog Licenses*	434	2,949.50	433.50	2,516.00	
Kennel License	1	51.00		51.00	
Liquor License	9	180.00	180.00		
Maps Filed	27	540.00	540.00		
Military Discharge—DD214	14	-	-	-	
Notary Services	11	220.00	220.00	-	
Conveyance Tax	90	42,404.74	42,404.74		
Trade Names	9				
Vital Records issued				-	Issuance of a vital statistic is \$20.00 Cremation and burial permits are \$5.00
• Burial and cremation	4	20.00	20.00		
• Birth,	30	600.00	600.00		
• Marriage	72	1,440.00	1,440.00		
• Death certificates	81	1,620.00	1,620.00		
*indicates revenue is shared with the State of Connecticut					



Town of Preston

389 Route 2, Preston, CT 06365

Main Number: 860-887-5581

Fax—Tax Collector/Town Clerk: 860-885-0171

Fax—Selectmen's Office: 860-885-1905

Fax—Building Department/Assessor/Land Use Office: 860-204-0021

Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9:00 am to 4:30 pm, Thursday 9:00 am to 6:30 pm

Selectmen's Office

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier, First Selectwoman 860-887-5581 allyngauthier@preston-ct.org
Leigh Pappas, Administrative Assistant.....860-887-5581, Ext. 101..... lpappas@preston-ct.org

Assessor's Office

Millie Peringer, Assessor.....860-887-5581, Ext. 115..... peringer@preston-ct.org
Cindy Palmer, Administrative Assistant..... 860-887-5581, Ext. 107 cpalmer@preston-ct.org

Building Department

Thomas Weber, Building Official 860-887-5581, Ext. 130 building@preston-ct.org
Karen Krol, Administrative Assistant 860-887-5581, Ext. 103 buildingassistant@preston-ct.org

Finance Department

Cynthia Varricchio, Director of Finance & School Business Operations,
Preston Board of Education and Town of Preston 860-889-6098 varricchic@prestonschools.org
Erin Gizio, Treasurer860-887-5581, Ext. 110..... egizio@preston-ct.org
William Merrill, BOE/Town Fiscal Assistant 860-887-5581 merrillw@prestonschools.org
Rosemary Rheaume, Town Fiscal Assistant 860-887-5581
Victoria Schwery, BOE Fiscal Assistant 860-889-6098, Ext. 1420 schweryv@prestonschools.org

Land Use Offices

Kathy Warzecha, Town Planner..... 860-887-5581, Ext.109..... kwarzecha@preston-ct.org
Rebekah Little, Administrative Assistant.....860-887-5581, Ext. 118..... blittle@preston-ct.org

Parks and Recreation

Amy Brosnan, Parks & Recreation Director.....860-887-5581, Ext. 117..... recreation@preston-ct.org
Miranda Fabre, Parks & Recreation Assistant860-887-5581, Ext. 113..... mfabre@preston-ct.org

Resident State Trooper

Trooper Kris Fisher860-848-6500, Ext. 5039
Trooper Sean Bresnan..... 860-848-6500, Ext. 5127
State Police: Troop E 860-848-6500

Registrar of Voters

Andrew Stockton (D)..... 860-887-5581, Ext. 116 registrar.dem@preston-ct.org
Charles Raymond (R)860-887-5581, Ext.116 egistar.rep@preston-ct.org

Tax Collector's Office

Jill Keith, Tax Collector 860-887-5581, Ext. 111 townclerk@preston-ct.org

Town Clerk's Office

Jill Keith, Town Clerk..... 860-887-5581, Ext. 111 townclerk@preston-ct.org
Renee Wucik, Assistant Town Clerk..... 860-887-5581, Ext. 106..... rwucik@preston-ct.org
Linda Hopkins, Assistant Town Clerk..... 860-887-5581, Ext. 102..... lhopkins@preston-ct.org

Uncas Health District

Patrick McCormack, MPH, Director of Health 860-823-1189, Ext. 112 doh@uncashd.org
Albert Gosselin, Jr., R.S., Sanitarian 860-823-1189, Ext. 113 agosselin@uncashd.org
Christopher Madden, Environmental Inspector..... 860-823-1189, Ext. 117 cmadden@uncashd.org

Public Works Department

Fax: 860-873-6014

Public Works

Jim Corley, Public Works Manager..... 860-887-5581 Ext. 150 jcorley@preston-ct.org

Town Garage..... 860-887-5581 Ext. 150 Hours: Monday through Friday
7:00 AM to 3:30 PM

Transfer Station..... 860-886-1836..... Hours: Friday and Saturday
8:00 AM to 4:15 PM

Other Departments

Animal Control

Patti Daniels, Animal Control Officer..... 860-887-8091..... animalcontrol@preston-ct.org

Fire Department

Keith Wucik, Fire Chief 860-222-5970 firechief@preston-ct.org
Michael Guiher, Deputy Fire Marshal 860-917-1342 deputyfiremarshal@preston-ct.org

Library

Diane Deedy, Library Director..... 860-886-1010 Ext.389..... prestonreads@gmail.com

Senior Services

Fran Minor, Senior Center Director 860-887-5581, Ext.104 seniors@preston-ct.org

Visit our Website at www.preston-ct.org

Please visit the town's website:

www.preston-ct.org



Where you can...

- ↻ Sign up for town emails or the town's news feed (including emergency alerts).
- ↻ View meeting schedules, agendas and minutes for town boards and commissions as well as town meetings.
- ↻ Pay your taxes.
- ↻ Print out tax information for preparing your income tax.
- ↻ Learn about and sign up for parks and recreation programs.
- ↻ Read past Annual Reports and annual Audit Reports.
- ↻ Learn about community events.
- ↻ View your property assessment.
- ↻ Learn about building and land use permit requirements.
- ↻ Access land records and view GIS maps.
- ↻ Obtain Fire Department address marker order form.
- ↻ Learn about general information regarding road closures, construction, emergency situations and much, much more.



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