

Town of Royalston

Handbook of Boards and Committees

April 2019



Town Hall, PO Box 125, Royalston, MA 01368
978-249-9641

Know Your Government

How does town work get done in Royalston?

The Select Board is the executive branch of town government, with a paid administrative assistant at town hall. Town Meeting is the legislative branch, with the annual meeting held in May and occasional special town meetings held at other times. Anyone may attend town meetings; registered voters can vote.

The town has a number of working departments with paid employees – finance, public works, library, police, fire, health. Other aspects of town business are handled by various elected and appointed boards and committees, described in this guide.

Where do boards and committees meet?

Most meet at town hall, but the Board of Health, Board of Assessors and Sewer Commission meet in Whitney Hall, and the Trustees of the Public Library meet in the library.

Are meetings open to the public?

All meetings are open to the public. You are urged to attend one or more meetings of committees you are interested in. Most will have time in their agenda to answer questions.

How can I find out about a specific committee's meetings?

Find out when and where it meets by visiting the town calendar online at Royalston-ma.gov. Check out upcoming agendas or read minutes of past meetings by clicking the link at the top of the calendar. (Not all committees post minutes here.)

How do I run for public office?

Check with the town clerk at townclerk@royalston-ma.gov or 978-249-0493.

How do I volunteer for appointed committees?

Contact the Administrative Assistant to the Select Board at 978-249-9641.

What is the time commitment for members of boards and committees? Most boards and committees meet monthly, but some meet only as needed. Members usually serve three-year terms; those with different terms are noted below.

Does Royalston have a website? Yes, at royalston-ma.gov. Some boards offer a great deal of information on their pages. Explore!

Be Part of Your Government

Elected Boards & Commissions

Contact Select Board at bos@royalston-ma.gov or 978-249-9641 unless otherwise noted.

Select Board

Royalston's three-member Select Board is the chief executive branch of local government, and attends to the legal affairs of the Town. Working with town department heads, and in consultation with the Advisory Board, the Select Board draws up the annual town budget and presents it to town meeting voters. Additional responsibilities include calling town meetings and elections, setting public policy, setting certain fees, overseeing certain volunteer and appointed bodies, and creating basic regulations. *Email: bos@royalston-ma.gov*

School Committees

Royalston belongs to the Athol-Royalston Regional School District, and per the regional agreement, both Royalston and Athol voters vote for all members of the School Committee – three from Royalston, seven from Athol. This committee hires the superintendent of schools and works with the administration on budget and policy matters. Royalston also belongs to the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical District; the Select Board appoints our one representative to this 22-member committee. *Email: SchoolCom@royalston-ma.gov*

Planning Board

The five-member Planning Board writes, updates, and is the authority for the town's zoning bylaw. To ensure compliance with the bylaws, the board reviews plans for building lots so that they can be recorded at the Registry of Deeds in Worcester. The board also takes applications for special permits and site plan reviews for other projects, as required by the zoning bylaw, including subdivisions, cell towers, marijuana establishments and large-scale solar installments. *Email: PlanningBD@royalston-ma.gov*

Board of Assessors

The three members of the Board of Assessors are required by state law to value all real and personal property within the town and to annually determine the tax rate needed to cover state and local appropriations. Additionally, assessors consider requests for personal exemptions and for abatements for overvaluations. The assessors' office prepares certified abutters lists and provides assessors' maps, assessment lists, deeds, and property record cards for review. *Email: assessor@royalston-ma.gov*

Board of Health

The Board of Health manages the transfer and recycling center; enforces health and safety codes; oversees septic systems, wells, illegal dumping, and more; initiates programs to promote health and prevent disease; and participates in emergency preparedness. *Email: boh@royalston-ma.gov*

Cemetery Commission

This commission sells lots and directs burials in town-owned cemeteries and handles problems and concerns within their boundaries. It also tries to increase the size of cemeteries and develops and implements policies and procedures. *Email: CemeteryCom@royalston-ma.gov*

The John N. Bartlett Trustees

The trustees oversee the implementation of the John N. Bartlett Fund. This trust fund was established in 1899, through deed of gift to the Town of Royalston by John Bartlett to be used “for the benefit and support of the poor.” Four trustees are elected annually.

Email: BartlettTrust@royalston-ma.gov

Sewer Commission

The Sewer Commission oversees the operation of the sewer system in South Royalston. It sets policy and rates, enforces sewer regulations, issues initial connection permits, and communicates directly with rate payers. The commission works closely with Royalston’s Department of Public Works which is responsible for system maintenance and repairs.

Email: SewerCom@royalston-ma.gov

Trustees of the Phinehas Newton Library

The three trustees oversee all library operations, including hiring the director and approving the hiring of other employees. Working with the director, they develop library policies and oversee their implementation and enforcement, develop the annual budget and ensure it meets the requirements for state aid, and make and/or approve recommendations on capital and maintenance issues. Advocating for the library and upholding the library bill of rights, which promotes the freedom to read and the freedom to view, are central to the overall responsibility of each trustee. *Email: LibraryTrustees@royalston-ma.gov*



**Phinehas Newton Library
On the Common**

Appointed Committees

Contact Select Board at bos@royalston-ma.gov or 978-249-9641 unless otherwise noted.

24-Hour Dispatch/Public Safety Committee

This committee is led by the police chief, fire chief, and emergency management director – all heads of the departments that deal with public safety. It is currently going through a transition that may include a couple of residents appointed by the Select Board.

Advisory Committee (also known as the Finance Committee)

During the budget process, the Advisory Committee reviews budget requests and makes recommendations to town meeting voters about such requests. The committee consists of the chairs of the Select Board, the Overseers of the Poor, the Capital Planning Committee and the Board of Assessors. Additional members include a Royalston member of the School Committee, the town accountant, and five members-at large appointed for one-year terms by the town moderator. *Email: fincom@royalston-ma.gov*

Agriculture Committee

This committee serves as facilitators for encouraging the pursuit of agriculture in Royalston and promotes agricultural-based economic opportunities in the town. Three of the seven members derive their prime source of income from farming or agricultural-based enterprises in Royalston and four have an interest in farming. *Email: AgCom@royalston-ma.gov*

Broadband Committee

This committee was empaneled to investigate the options for providing broadband internet access to town offices and residents. Members were instrumental in planning and implementing the wireless broadband system in Royalston's South Village and winning a state grant for its expansion. They continue to work on that expansion. *Email: BroadbandCom@royalston-ma.gov*

Building Committee

This committee includes the supervisor of the Department of Public Works and four other members appointed annually. It studies public building and space needs, researches grant opportunities, oversees outside feasibility studies, and makes recommendations to the Select Board. *Email: BuildingCom@royalston-ma.gov*

Capital Planning Committee

This committee is tasked with assessing and prioritizing town departments' annual capital requests and then presenting their recommendations to the Select Board for approval. It meets one or more times a month to draft a ten-year plan for capital spending (defined as spending on equipment, other material items, or projects that cost at least \$5,000 and are expected to last at least five years). The plan development process involves all department heads, as well as the community at large. The plan will be reexamined annually and changed as necessary.

Email: capplan@royalston-ma.gov

Community Preservation Committee

When Royalston adopted the Community Preservation Act in 2008, residents accepted a surcharge on their real estate taxes. This money, bolstered by state matching funds, goes into a

fund dedicated to open space, recreation, affordable housing, and historic preservation. The committee evaluates proposals submitted for funding and makes recommendations to town meeting. *Email: cpa@royalston-ma.gov*

Conservation Commission

This seven-member commission is appointed by the Select Board to administer the Wetlands Protection Act. It has regular monthly meetings and schedules other meetings and site visits as necessary. No special expertise is required, though opportunities for training are available. A willingness to commit time and energy is the requirement for the job.

Email: ConsCom@royalston-ma.gov

Council on Aging

This committee serves as the “Area Agency on Aging” for Royalston. Through federal grant funding, the council provides a variety of services for residents aged 60 and over. Members are appointed annually. The goal is to make it possible for older adults to remain in their homes and communities as long as possible. The council provides a range of services to seniors, including the Wednesday Luncheon Club held at 11:30 am at town hall. *Email: coa@royalston-ma.gov*

Cultural Council

This council meets once a year to decide how to distribute the money received from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to local schools and organizations that have applied for grants. It also organizes events for the town: Open Mic, presenting a terrific variety of musical and other performances on the first Fridays of December through April; MusicFest, a day of music, food, fun in July; plus Blues Night, Royalston Follies, or the Blues Rock Party. Members are appointed annually; new ideas and volunteers are always welcome. Check out the Facebook page! *Email: CulturalCoun@royalston-ma.gov*

Events Committee

This group was formed in 2013 to plan for the celebration of Royalston’s 250th Anniversary. With that success behind them, annually appointed members continue to plan and sponsor events that bring the community together. Among these is the annual Royalston Country Fair held on The Common each fall. The committee welcomes new members with new ideas and energy. *Email: EventsCom@royalston-ma.gov*

Energy Committee

This committee was empaneled by the Select Board in 2009 to evaluate the energy efficiency of town government and promote energy efficiency, education, and alternative sources to the town and community. The committee was instrumental in obtaining a Green Community designation for the town, which brought significant grant funding for energy efficiency projects. Part of this money is earmarked for grants to homeowners and builders to help defray the cost of energy-efficiency upgrades to their homes. The committee oversees a community outreach effort to promote this program. *Email: energy@royalston-ma.gov*

Historic District Commission

Created in 1980, Royalston’s historic district includes the Town Common and some area beyond (map available on the HDC web page). The commission promotes the preservation of the

distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history or architecture of Royalston, the maintenance and improvement of settings for such buildings and places, and the encouragement of compatible design within the district. The commission has a maximum of seven members and three alternates. *Email: HistoricDistCom@royalston-ma.gov*

Memorial Day Committee

This committee organizes an annual ceremony to honor Royalston's veterans and those who have died in the service of our country. Held in alternate years at the World War II Monument On the Common and at the South Village flagpole, each ceremony proceeds to a cemetery and each includes a collation offered by the Ladies' Benevolent Society. The committee has a varying number of members, appointed annually. *Email: MemorialDayCom@royalston-ma.gov*

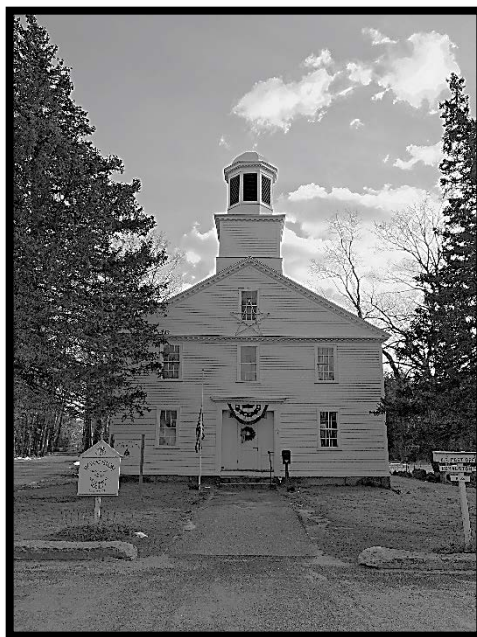
Open Space & Recreation Committee

This group aims to preserve and maintain the natural areas of Royalston and provide opportunities for its residents to enjoy those areas and other recreational opportunities. Every seven years it rewrites the town's Open Space & Recreation Plan, available online. The current members are eager for suggestions and feedback from all Royalston residents.

Email: openspace@royalston-ma.gov

Zoning Board of Appeals

This board consists of three members and two associate members appointed by the Select Board. The main responsibilities are to hear and decide building permit appeals, applications for certain special permits, and petitions for variances. The board meets as needed and is always looking for new members. *Email: ZoningBA@royalston-ma.gov*



**School House No. 1
On the Common
Home of Royalston Historical Society**



**Fire Station No. 1 and Police Station
On the Common**



**Fire Station No. 2
South Royalston**



**Raymond School
On the Common**



**Royalston Community School
Winchendon Road**



**Royalston Town Hall
On the Common**



**Whitney Hall
South Royalston**

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