

## Who's Who in Local Government

### Local Office Descriptions

**Agent to Convey Real Estate (appointed)** – executes the deeds on behalf of the town.

**Auditor (elected)** –Review and audit all town accounts and prepare the annual town report. Should be very detail oriented. Good writing skills are a plus.

**Cemetery Commissioner (elected)** –Responsible for the care and management of the town's cemeteries. If no cemetery commissioners are elected, the selectboard fulfills this role.

**Collector of Current Taxes (elected)** – Collects the taxes for the town. In many towns this function is performed by the treasurer or town manager. Should be detail oriented and good with numbers.

**Collector of Delinquent Taxes (elected)** – Collects delinquent taxes for the town. Should be good with numbers and also able to work with people who are in difficult circumstances. Should also have a thick skin.

**Constable (elected)** –In some towns the constable is the town's local law enforcement officer, with all powers of search, seizure, and arrest within the town. In other towns, the constable only has the power to serve civil process, assist the health officer in the discharge of his or her duties, destroy unlicensed dogs, kill injured deer, remove disorderly people from town meeting, and, if the first constable, to collect taxes, if no tax collector is elected. Should be good at de-escalating and resolving conflicts.

**Emergency Management Director (appointed)** –Responsible for the organization, administration, and operation of the local committee that is formed for emergency management in the town or city. The emergency management director is under the direct control of the selectboard but may coordinate his or her emergency management efforts with neighboring towns and cities, and with the state emergency management division and the federal government.

**Fence Viewers – (appointed)** –Three viewers are appointed by the Selectboard each year. When called upon, they examine fences and other boundaries within the town.

**Grand Juror (elected)** –Helps to prosecute criminal offenses that occur in the town by giving information to state and local law enforcement. (Generally not a very active position.)

**Health Officer (appointed)** –Appointed by the Commissioner of Health to a three year term after recommendation of the town selectboard. Enforces the rules and regulations for prevention and abatement of public health hazards.

**Inspector of Lumber (appointed)** –Appointed, upon request, to examine, measure, and classify the quality of lumber, shingles, and wood sold within the town.

**Justices of the Peace (elected)** –Although elected by a town, justices of the peace are actually county officers. The duties of justices of the peace can include:

a. Elections. Justice of the peace are members of the Board of Civil Authority (BCA). Members of the BCA serve as election officials at town elections by Australian ballot and statewide elections. Justices also are responsible for delivering absentee ballots to voters at election time.

b. Tax Abatement and Appeals. Justices of the peace sit as members of the town board for abatement of taxes to determine whether a taxpayer's tax obligation should be forgiven under certain circumstances. Justices of the peace also serve an important role in the town's tax appeal process. As a member of the board of civil authority justices sit and decide appeals when citizens do not agree with the final decision of the listers.

c. Marriages. Justices of the Peace may also solemnize marriages.

d. Oaths and Notary – Justices of the peace may also administer oaths in all cases where an oath is required, unless a specific law makes a different provision. A justice of the peace is a notary public ex officio and has all the acknowledgment powers of a notary public. However, the justice of the peace must file with the county clerk in order to act as a notary public.

**Listers (elected)** –Appraise property within the town for the purpose of property tax assessment. Should be able to be polite, yet firm and not be oversensitive to criticism.

**Moderator (elected)** –Runs the annual and special town/school meeting. Should have a good sense of humor, be good at group process, and have experience following Roberts Rules of Order.

**Planning Commission (appointed)** – Appointed unless town votes to elect. Duties include preparing a municipal plan; making recommendations on matters of land development, conservation, and preservation; and participating in a regional planning program. Makes site plan and subdivision permit decisions unless there is a development review board in town. Should have a good working knowledge of all aspects of the town and be able to listen to many sides of an issue.

**Regional Planning Commission Representative (appointed)** – Helps develop the regional plan and assess municipal land use plans.

**Road Commissioner (elected or appointed)** –Can be elected or appointed. Has no independent authority, but can assist the Selectboard in overseeing town highways at the request of the board. Should have experience with town highways and be a good communicator.

**Selectboard Members (elected)** –General supervision and control over town; enacts ordinances, regulations, and policies for town; oversees town property and personnel; prepares, presents and manages budget, and oversees roads, including laying out, discontinuing, and reclassifying roads. Sits as local board of health and liquor control commission. Should know the town well, be able to understand all sides of complex issues, and have a very thick skin.

**Town Agent (elected)** –The town agent used to prosecute and defend suits. The Selectboard now has that authority. Thus, the town agent’s duty consists merely of assisting when litigation is in progress, at the request of the Selectboard. Generally not a very active position.

**Town Clerk (elected)** – Records, preserves, and certifies the public records of the town. Issues dog, marriage licenses. Runs the local elections, serves as clerk of the board of civil authority, and hears tax abatement requests and tax appeals. Should have the patience of a saint and be a good ambassador for the town.

**Town Forest Fire Warden (appointed)** –Appointed by the fire commissioner with the approval of the selectboard. Prevents forest fires in the town by enforcing the laws designed to prevent forest fires.

**Town Service Office (appointed)** –Appointed on or before April 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. Assists individuals within the town who require emergency food, fuel or shelter assistance when the Vermont Department of Social Welfare is not available.

**Town Treasurer (elected)** –Keeps the towns and school’s accounts, invests money (with the approval of the legislative body), keeps a record of the taxes voted, and pays orders drawn on him or her. Should be very precise, detail oriented and good at math.

**Town Tree Warden (appointed)** –Plans and implements a shade tree preservation program for the purpose of shading and beautifying public places. Removes diseased, dying, or dead trees; which create a hazard to public safety or threaten the effectiveness of disease or insect control programs.

**Trustee of Public Funds (elected)** –Manages, invests, and reports on real and personal property held in the trust by the town. This includes cemetery trust funds. Should like investing money.

**Weighers of Coal (appointed)** – Serves as a referee over weights of contested loads of coal.