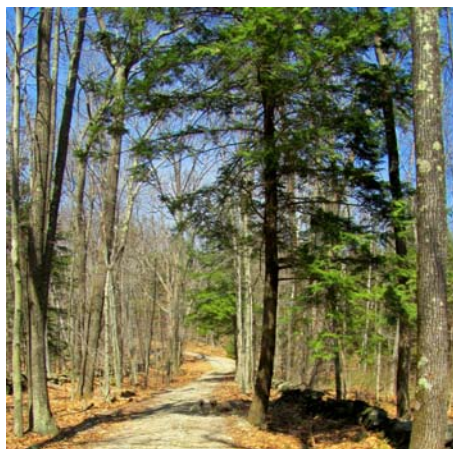
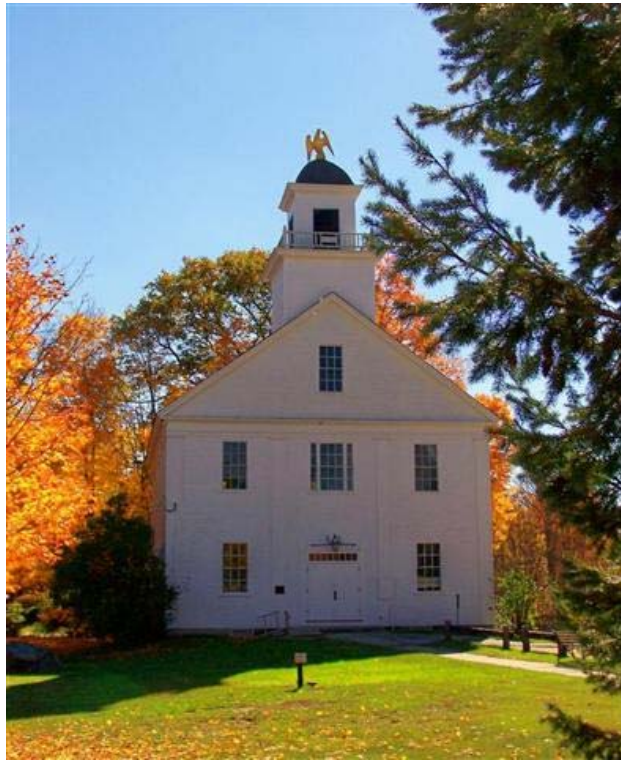


Francestown Community Facilities

The Francestown Master Plan
Chapter Adopted June 16, 2015



Community Facilities Analysis

One of the most important functions of local government is the timely provision of certain public facilities and services required by residents, taxpayers and businesses. The type and degree of public services greatly influence the quality of life as well as the general character of the Town. Quality of life in Fracestown is also augmented by a number of other public or quasi-public facilities, such as the church, the Old Meeting House and the post office, as well as by several prominent private facilities, including the Crotched Mountain Resort golf course and Crotched Mountain Ski & Ride.

Overview

In the past twenty years, since the last full Master Plan update, all of the 1995 recommendations have been addressed and most implemented with the result that the town's infrastructure has been significantly upgraded. The town has a new elementary school; an enlarged and refurbished library that doubles the original building's footprint and creates nearly three times the usable space; a new highway garage and salt storage shed; new town offices in the renovated former "Red School"; a reconstructed Main Street with a new sidewalk; a new heritage museum complex funded by the Fire Department, the Fracestown Improvement and Historical Society and private contributions; an entirely new highway fleet and 4 new fire trucks; and an approximately \$900,000 project to renovate the Town Hall, which was unavailable for use between 2011 and 2013 due to structural problems, is under way.

Concurrent with these advances has come the realization that over half of the town's bridges are in failure or near-failure and that the cost of road re-construction has doubled.

In addition, approximately 1,900 acres of conservation land that are open to the public have been protected, and the Crotched Mountain ski area has reopened. The monthly Fracestown News and the Town's website have greatly improved residents' access to information and news. On the downside, the pre-school, other daycares, Maitre Jacques restaurant and Kingsbury Hill Riding Camp have all closed; the Masonic lodge on Main Street has disbanded and the building has been given to FIHS; D.H. Hardwick & Sons has relocated to Bennington; and a former computer business relocated to Hopkinton. The Community Theater is inactive. Milfoil has invaded Scobie Pond, and Japanese knotweed is spreading aggressively along roadsides and into wetlands, both presenting financial challenges to the town.

In the following pages, we will review the current status of community facilities and endeavor to identify specific areas where improvements or modifications are still needed. Where appropriate, we will recommend project priorities. And, finally, we will report on the public opinions we received in response to the 2012 Master Plan Questionnaire.

Evaluation of Community Facilities and Operations

Like the 1994 Master Plan Questionnaire, the 2012 Master Plan Survey asked residents to rate basic community services on a scale from 'very good' to 'very poor'. Although a majority of townspeople rated town facilities and services as good or very good in both surveys, there are some interesting changes in areas highlighted in this section of the Master Plan.

Satisfaction with summer and winter highway maintenance have improved significantly reflecting perhaps new leadership and operations as well as improved infrastructure related to sustained capital expenditures over the period. Ratings of cemetery maintenance improved a similar amount, perhaps reflecting professional grounds keeping services and the new stone wall and gates. Conservation ratings went up 8 percentage points, possibly reflecting a more active board and greatly improved open space resources; the percentage of respondents who rated conservation 'very good' doubled from 26% to 50%.

Satisfaction with the public schools declined the most – nine percentage points. Since the town has a new elementary school, dissatisfaction may now reflect high costs (although this is always a complaint), the threat of school closures or staffing changes among other factors.

Table 1
Performance Rating of Community Services¹

	2012 Very Good	2012 Good	2012 Average	2012 Poor	2012 Very Poor		2012 VG & G total	1994 VG & G total
Conservation Commission	50%	28%	18%	2%	2%		78%	70%
Rescue Services	47%	40%	11%	1%	1%		88%	85%
Fire protection	46%	39%	13%	2%	1%		85%	87%
Transfer station	46%	40%	11%	2%	0%		87%	87%
Library	40%	36%	19%	4%	1%		76%	77%
Snow plowing	38%	39%	17%	6%	0%		77%	67%
Cemetery maintenance	26%	53%	21%	0%	0%		79%	63%
Road maintenance	23%	41%	27%	5%	5%		64%	50%
Police presence	17%	44%	28%	5%	5%		61%	60%
Public recreational facilities	14%	45%	32%	7%	3%		58%	63%
Public Schools	11%	42%	31%	12%	5%		53%	62%

¹ 2012 question #12. 1994 results were based on a total of 751 returns. 2012 had 194 returns. 1994 numbers reflect residents only. 2012 include all respondents who answered the particular question with other than 'no opinion' in order to be compatible with 2012 numbers.

Fire, rescue and the transfer station were steady with satisfaction in the range of 85-88%². Police was also stable but at a much lower 60% level.

All of the key operational areas included above were found to be ‘average’ or better by at least 84% of those who did the rating. While these results are similar to the earlier ones, there is generally less enthusiasm about more services. As measured by the change in percentage points of respondents wanting ‘more’, ‘less’ or the ‘same’ emphasis², people want ‘less’ of everything. More analysis will have to be done to determine if ‘less’ refers to cost or to the level of service. However, voters at town meeting continue to support their departments and infrastructure improvements.

Table 2
Change in Percentage Points of Emphasis Wanted from 1994 to 2012³

	More	Less	Same
Public schools	-14	15	-1
Police presence	0	8	-6
Road maintenance	-20	8	14
Cemetery maintenance	-12	6	7
Snow plowing	-13	6	6
Library	-9	6	3
Public assistance	-3	6	-4
Fire protection	2	4	-7
Environmental protection	-16	3	13
Rescue services	-2	2	-1
Transfer station	-3	0	3
Public recreational facilities	-8	0	8

The decline in support was greatest for the public schools:

Table 3
Emphasis Wanted for Public School Services

	More	Less	Same
2012	27%	22%	51%
1994	41%	7%	52%
Change	-14%	15%	-1%

² Because of the difference in sample sizes between 1994 and 2012 a change of a few percentage points may not be meaningful.

³ Based on responses to 2012 question #18. Note also that the 1994 survey used the word ‘protection’ after ‘police’ while the 2012 survey used ‘presence’.

Municipal Buildings/Services

Town Common, Town Hall and Horse Sheds

One of the focal points of Fracesttown, the Town Hall is located on the southeast side of Route 136 across from the Old Meeting House. Adjacent to the Town Hall are the Horse Sheds, a gravel parking lot, a common area with the Town's Christmas tree, and a small triangular island with a water trough and old scales.

"Over the decades since it was erected as a town hall and academy⁴ building in 1847, the building served these two principal functions until the academy disbanded in 1921. The town meeting room on the first story was shared for use as a vestry for the church across the common for many years, until the town asserted full ownership of the hall in 1881. The room also began to serve as a hall for Oak Hill Grange around 1885. The cloak room to the left of the front door was used by the Academy as an art studio in the early 1880s, may have served as a kitchen in the early 1900s, served as the town post office between 1964 and 1968"⁵ The hall itself has been used for a variety of public and private functions including Town Meeting, elections, plays, fund-raisers, exercise classes and auctions and other special events.

The 2+ story building is of wood frame construction, 41' x 68' with 5,576 usable square feet. The first floor is taken up primarily by a meeting/dance hall with a 10' x 16' stage. There is also a ticket office/coatroom off the front foyer and non- ADA compliant rest rooms located up a set of stairs and behind the stage to the rear of the building. The second floor consists of a large function room, an antiquated kitchen and pantry area, and smaller storage rooms located in the front. There is a dirt-floored basement with limited storage space and an attic that is not in use.

The Horse, or Carriage, Sheds, which were built around 1800, consist of a long wood-frame structure - about 2,992 square feet - with 18 stalls, 4 of which are enclosed and used for limited storage. The Sheds are the focal point, housing the many sale booths, of Fracesttown's annual Labor Day celebration sponsored by the Fracesttown Improvement and Historical Society.

There has been no major work done on either structure, other than general maintenance, since 1980. In 2009 the second floor of the Town Hall was deemed unsafe for public

⁴ ¹ The Fracesttown Academy was "in fact, if not in name, the local high school serving students from the various district primary schools." Started in 1801, it was housed in several other buildings before the current structure was built by a community action project after a fire. Although the building was relinquished to the town in 1945, the Academy still has an endowment, the income from which is still used for the purpose of "rendering assistance to the youth of Fracesttown in securing educational advantages in such a manner as the . . . trustees may deem most beneficial." John Schott, *Frances' Town*.

⁵ "Fracestown Academy and Town Hall, Fracesttown, NH, Character Defining Features", June 9, 2014, James Garvin, former State Historian and current consultant.

gatherings; in 2011 an architectural review of the structure declared the first floor unsafe, and the entire building was closed to the public. Since 2012, voters have approved or the Selectmen have authorized the expenditure of approximately \$125,000 for structural repairs to the building (~\$100K in roof truss work and ~\$25K for structural work in the basement). Repairs to the roof trusses and floor structures have made the first floor usable but have required the installation of temporary posts in the main assembly hall to support the second floor. The posts impede the full usage of the main floor, particularly for dances and large assemblies. The building lacks a heating system, adequate bathrooms and ADA accessibility.

The 2014 Town Meeting, in a 132-46 vote, approved a warrant article to raise and appropriate a sum not to exceed \$350,000 to finance a capital project for design, engineering, rehabilitation, reconstruction, repair, improvement and equipping of the Town Hall and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$350,000 of bonds or notes as are necessary to accomplish the financing and completion of such a project. In December of 2014, the Town was awarded a \$200,000 Land and Community Heritage Investment Program grant. In the spring of 2015 an Owner's Representative was engaged to oversee the project as it moves forward. Architectural plans and fundraising are underway. Along with the Board of Selectmen, the Heritage Commission has taken a leadership role in moving this project forward over the past several years and continues in its role as primary fundraiser, with assistance from The Friends of the Town Hall.

Repainting and structural repairs to the horse sheds have been tentatively scheduled for 2015/2016 at an estimated cost of \$15,000 - \$20,000.

Work is also currently under way by James Garvin, former State Historian, to prepare an application for the Common and its buildings along with the "Beehive" owned by the Francetown Improvement and Historical Society (FIHS) for inclusion on the National Historic Register. FIHS is also engaged in fundraising to renovate and restore the "Beehive" which it purchased in 2004 to house the historical collection and serve as the FIHS office. The "Beehive" provided lodging to Academy students and is an important part of the historic complex.

The Francetown Heritage Museum: The Thulander Building

In early 2013, the town accepted a donation of a rebuilt historic barn structure (ca. 1800), which was erected on land owned by the Francetown Improvement & Historical Society adjacent to the Town Hall. The building and the work to reconstruct the building was donated to the town by volunteers of the Francetown Fire Department. The museum houses the town's collection of antique vehicles. Other than the most famous piece, the Concord Coach, the collection includes a hand tub and tender, once part of the Village Fire Brigade's equipment; a sleigh hearse; a wheeled hearse, a hay rack (wagon), and a snow roller, as well as various tools and pieces of farm equipment donated by a number of individuals and groups over the years.

In August 2013, the Selectman dedicated the building to O. Alan Thulander, who provided the vision and a considerable amount of time and resources to bring this museum project to fruition.

It is hoped that, once FIHS completes its renovation of and relocates the town's historical collection to the Beehive Building, the two buildings, in conjunction with a rehabilitated Town Hall, will serve as the Town's Heritage Museum.

Two curators appointed by the Selectmen have succeeded the Thulander Building Advisory Committee as overseers of the facility. The museum is open during special events and by arrangement with the committee.

Town Hall Annex

The Annex is located on the east side of the Village between Route 136 and Poor Farm Road, on a small lot that was originally occupied by a brick schoolhouse. The building was converted to a fire station in 1940 - after the then new Red School was constructed. In 1962 the building was demolished and the current structure - described by the most recent town history as "egregiously nondescript, but serviceable" and as "an eyesore on the Common"³ - was erected. Initially used by the Fire Department, the two-story building was converted to 3,240 square feet of town office space in 1983.

At present the building houses the Francetown Police Department, occupying a suite of rooms (3+) on the first floor, including a rest room and a storage closet. The Francetown Improvement and Historical Society occupies two showrooms and a rest room on the first floor and the single "meeting room" on the second floor, which is accessed by a steep staircase.

On-site parking is limited, partly by the size of the lot and partly because the Selectmen granted an easement to the telephone company in the late 1980s. Overflow parking is available on the Common.

FIHS moved into the building in 2001 after the 2nd floor of the library was closed to the public for lack of adequate emergency exits. The organization plans to be out of the building in 2016 when the new facility is expected to be ready. Recent reassessment of the police department and its facilities suggests that expansion into some of that space is necessary.

If the police do not need the entire first floor, other Town officials, such as the Public Welfare Director or possibly the Animal Control Officer, who do not require ready access to other town files and records, might also utilize this space. Providing handicap access to the second floor would be cost-prohibitive. A municipal use of the space that does not require public access, such as archival storage, is one possibility.

The Town Offices

History

By the mid 1990's the Board of Selectmen had determined that the Town Hall Annex, located at the corner of Poor Farm and New Boston Roads, had insufficient space to accommodate the business of the town. At the time, the building housed the Selectmen's and Town Clerk's office in approximately two-thirds of the first floor; the Police Department utilized approximately one-third of the first floor; and the Planning and

Zoning boards had a meeting space and file storage in the Bradbury Room on the second floor. The second floor was accessible only by a set of very steep and narrow stairs.

When the Conval School District voted to build new elementary schools in each of its seven member towns, they offered the existing schoolhouses for sale to each respective town. In 1997, Town Meeting voters approved the expenditure of up to \$130,000 for the purchase and renovation of the “Red School” building on Main Street for use as Town Offices. It took several years and many more dollars to complete the project:

- June 1998: the property was transferred to Town of Francetown for approximately \$115,000.
- March 1999: Voters approved an additional \$52,116 and the carry-over of \$14,365 of funds approved in 1998 for “site improvement and remodeling of the interior of the Red School Municipal Office space.”
- March 2000: Voters approved an additional \$135,000 for the renovation of the building.
- August 2000: The town offices moved into the new space.
- March 2004: Voters approved the expenditure of 14,200 for the installation of air- conditioning and granite steps at the Town Offices (the former Red School).

The town offices moved in in 2000. In total, the Town appropriated \$331,316 over six years for the purchase, site work (including a new septic system) and renovation of the building: \$301,325 was expended.

Table 4
Table of Appropriations and Expenditures: Town Offices

Year		appropriation	expenditure
1997	Purchase and Renovations	\$130,000.	\$130,000.
1999	Renovation	52,116.	41,080.
2000	Renovation	135,000.	116,045.
2004	Install air conditioning	9,000	9,000.
2004	Install granite steps	<u>5,200.</u>	<u>5,200.</u>
		331,316.	\$301,325

The Physical Plant

The Town Office Building houses the offices of the Selectmen, Town Clerk and Tax Collector, and all town boards and committees.

The upper floor consists of two large offices, one (20'x30') used by the Board of Selectmen and their two-person staff, the other (20'x30') by the Town Clerk/Tax Collector and her assistant. All current files associated with the work of each office are also housed in this office space. There is a small (10'x14') alcove, adjacent to the selectman's office, that is shared by the Town Treasurer, visiting assessors, and the building inspector; a 10'x15' ante/waiting room; and non-ADA compliant men's and ladies' rooms. The upper level of the building is not handicap-accessible.

The lower level is primarily a large (20'x60') meeting room, used by all other town boards and committees and for any meeting of the Board of Selectmen at which a large number of participants or of the public is expected. The space is scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis by means of an on-site paper calendar. There are two small offices used primarily for file storage -- one of which can accommodate, and occasionally serves as, a small secondary meeting room. There is one unisex, handicap-accessible bathroom and a utility room with janitorial storage.

With some limitations, the lower level of the town office building is ADA compliant. For patrons of the offices of the Selectmen, Town Clerk or Tax Collector needing accessibility, there is a doorbell at the back of the building, and the staff has been instructed to meet patrons at the back door and serve them in the large meeting room. (Any needed files or materials must be brought from the upstairs offices to this area.)

Planning for the Future

The Town Clerk/Tax Collector believes that the current office space is sufficient for the current and anticipated needs of the office and staff.

The Selectmen have stated that, in the near future, they foresee a need for additional space. The small office shared by the Treasurer/Building Inspector/Assessors is inadequate for their needs. There are limitations in the amount of file storage space the building has to offer; both for the files of the Selectman's office and the town boards. Adequate storage space for archives needs to be found, and there are statutory requirements as to accessibility of the archives that must be followed. (RSA 41:59 Care and Preservation).

ADA Compliance: Although there are established work-arounds for ADA compliance at the Town Offices, the primary floor of this building -- the Office of Selectmen and the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's Office -- is not ADA compliant. The installation of granite steps leading to the main entrance of the building in 2004 compounded the accessibility issue. Priority should be given to solving public access to the municipal services of Francetown.

Fire and Rescue Department⁶

Founded in 1937, the Francetown Volunteer Fire Department has origins that date back to 1829 when the Francetown Engine Company was incorporated under the laws of the State of New Hampshire. Although supported financially by the town, it is a private organization.

Physical Plant

Originally housed in the "old precinct house," the southern end of the Village Store, then in other buildings in the Village center, the fire station moved to its present location on the

⁶ Sources for this section include the Francetown Fire Chief, Town Reports and "KCO 366 The Francetown Volunteer Fire Department".

Second New Hampshire Turnpike South in 1982. The first floor houses the Chief's office, three bays for trucks, a storage/maintenance area and rest rooms. The upstairs provides a large meeting room and a kitchen. The kitchen, remodeled in 2010, is used by both department members and the Fire Department Auxiliary. In the early 1990s a training tower was erected adjacent to the parking area and a fire pond was created on site in 2003. In 2005 the Kullgren Annex was erected next to the firehouse, using funds donated by the Mount Crotchet firefighters and with all-volunteer labor. The annex serves as storage for the fire boat, ATV, EM generator, brush truck, and miscellaneous equipment. The approximately 5,000 square foot fire station is a neat, attractive, well-designed building which received a Governor's Energy Award for passive solar heating.

The firehouse was used as a base of operations for coordinating emergency management during the town's last two severe weather incidents. The Director of Emergency Management would like an independent office if space should become available elsewhere in the future.

The main building is starting to show its age. In 2014 sections of the building were repaired and repainted. New heating systems were installed in the offices and bays at a cost of \$17,000. In 2015 an exhaust system for the bays will be installed at an estimated cost of \$75,000. The Chief believes that the solar wall will need to be refurbished or replaced within the next 5 years.

Equipment

Today's inventory includes:

- 1968 Kyser Jeep Pick-up/Forestry Truck
- 1983 Chevrolet Brush/Utility Truck
- 1989 Pierce Lance Pumper
- 1991 Rescue Boat
- 1995 Mack Tanker-Pumper
- 2006 KME Pumper
- 2010 International KME Tanker
- Base Station Radio (2004)
- Thermal Imaging Camera (2004)
- Power Generator (2010)
- Defibrillators
- Mobile Radios (upgraded/replaced on a rotating basis)

The Town's Capital Improvement Program has served as an essential tool for managing the cost of purchasing and refitting major equipment. For the past three decades, the department has planned equipment replacement on a rotating schedule: each vehicle is deemed to have a useful life of 30 years: 15 as a first-line vehicle and 15 as second-line. Due to the shift from debt financing to reserve funding for capital improvements in the late 1980s, increases in annual capital outlays have increased on a more gradual basis.

Despite significant inflation in the cost of fire equipment, fire department expenditures as a percent of total town spending has actually decreased over the last two decades.

(Table 1) The Chief cites federal regulations, EPA emissions requirements, and guidelines and recommendations from the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) as a contributing factor for the increase in the cost and complexity of vehicles.

Taxpayers have continued to overwhelmingly support the purchase of vehicles as recommended by the department. However, without sacrificing safety – most importantly the safety of firefighters -- the scale of our vehicles must be weighed against the rural nature of the town roads and driveways in determining appropriate purchases for the department. The Planning Board, at the urging of the Conservation Commission, has begun to consider the rural quality and character of a site as well as the need for access and turnaround of emergency vehicles in its consideration of site development plans.

Table 5
History of Budgeted Fire Department Expenditures, 1980-2015 Actual Dollars (\$000)

Budget Category	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015
Gross Operating Budget	10.79	27.10	26.87	53.11	58.3
Capital Expenditures ⁷	39.21	38.45	40.5	45.0	32.5
Total Fire/Rescue Outlays	50.0	65.55	67.39	98.11	90.8
Ambulance	-	-	2.5	19.1	22.6
Total Fire/Amb. As % Total Town (net ⁸)	34.4%	10.5%	9.6%	8.3%	7.1%

Department Resources, Personnel

Despite a marked increase in the numbers of calls for service over the last three decades, the size of the FFD has remained constant at around 30 members, of which 12 to 15 are highly active, responding to the majority of calls. 80% of FFD members have served on the department for 10 years or more, 30% have served 20 years or more. Recruiting is done on an informal basis, with members of the department charged with keeping an eye out for potential new members.

Of the 35 current members of the department, only 5 work locally and can be available to respond to an emergency on a regular basis during normal work hours:

- 14 members are trained EMTs
- 27 members are trained firefighters
- 10 members are both EMTs and trained firefighters
- 8 members of the company are female.

The department has continued to maintain an Explorer Troop -- which now has the minimum 5 members under the age of 21 and is, according to the chief, “running at the bare minimum.” The troop serves to encourage interest at a young age. Two of the members who joined the department this year came directly out of the Explorer program.

⁷ : Appropriations to capital reserves have fluctuated in the past few years in response to cut backs in the plan related to the economic downturn in 2008. In 2015 capital expenditures are artificially low. 2016 appropriations are projected at \$100,000

⁸ Town appropriations after application of revenues and other offsets.

Table 6
History of Response Calls⁹

	History of Response Calls - 5 Year Averages			
	<u>Avg. 1980-1984</u>	<u>Avg. 1990-1994</u>	<u>Avg. 2000-2004</u>	<u>Avg. 2010-2014</u>
Structure Fires	2.4	1.4	1.6	1.4
Chimney Fires	9.6	5.4	3.2	2.2
Brush Fires	2	2.2	3.2	2.6
Car Fires	1	1.4	2	1
Other Fires (dumpster, appliance, electrical)	0.2	0.5	0.5	0
Alarm/Investigations	3.8	7	6.4	15.4
Vehicle Accidents	n/a	1.2	n/a	14.2
Mutual Aid	9.4	6.2	13.20	23
Rescue	19.4	38.8	62.4	58.4
Other	8	6.7	18.7	10.8
Total	55.8	70.8	111.2	129

Note: "Misc" category reported in annual reports was excluded because until recently it wasn't consistently reported.

Source: Town Report

Two trends stand out: the increase in rescue services and the increase in mutual aid. Over 80% of all emergency calls in the last five years have involved EMTs, although not exclusively (up from 50% in 1995). The trend among residents towards calling for municipal services rather than handling a situation themselves (e.g., calling for an ambulance rather than driving to the hospital, even when ambulance service is not necessarily indicated) has, and is expected to, continue.

Francetown provides more mutual aid than it receives and it provides assistance to towns outside the mutual aid compact. The Chief attributes this to the fact that other towns are now more aware of the high level of training and day-time availability of Francetown's volunteers as well as of the quality and extent of the town's equipment. The Chief believes that the opportunity to fight more fires improves morale and helps with retention: firefighters like to fight fires.

The Chief estimates that, due to a marked increase in reporting requirements and regulations, administration of the department is now a 20-hour-per-week job. The most significant increase is due to the paperwork involved in Emergency Services reporting, but there are also additional demands on time for review of new regulations and fire code inspections.

⁹ These numbers do not reflect the thousands of hours spent by all volunteers in training, drills, details, meetings, inspections of town buildings and elevator, etc.

Ambulance

In a medical emergency, the regional Dispatch Service notifies Fracesttown EMTs and Peterborough Ambulance. First responders on site (FFD-EMTs) work to stabilize and prepare the patient for transport by ambulance service to Peterborough Hospital or, in more severe cases, DART air transport is available for transport to a trauma center.

Ambulance Service is provided via the Peterborough Ambulance. For several years, area towns have contributed to the purchase price of an ambulance in order to participate in the shared service. The current funding for the ambulance service is done by assessing each member- town's portion of the total cost of participating towns. In 2014 Peterborough changed the formula with the result that Fracesttown's cost went from \$13,400 in 2014 to \$22,600 in 2015 and are expected to increase significantly again in 2016. This dramatic increase in cost has caused the Department to review other options for ambulance service including providing our own service.

The Ambulance service is now a private/public company in a period of transition. Because the ambulance service has trended toward fee-for-service billing and now offers paid transport of non-emergency clients (like nursing homes), the Chief hopes that the profit-making aspect of the service will defray the cost of emergency services to the member towns.

Fire Ponds

Two attempts have been made to install a fire pond on Todd Road. The most recent involved an appropriation of \$18,000 in 2003. When project costs proved to be much higher, the project was abandoned.

In 2005, a capital reserve fund for the "Future Replacement and Repair of Dry Fire Hydrants and the Establishment and Maintenance of Fire Ponds" was established with a balance of \$2,500. Funds were added to the reserve through 2010. The reserve balance at fiscal year end 2014 was \$26,216.

In 2007, a joint Fire Department/Planning Board committee inventoried existing water sources, including public waters and private ponds; detailed available or easily developable water resources; and identified areas where there are no or limited water resources. With a goal of providing a comprehensive, cost-efficient, plan for the provision of ample water supplies for firefighters in Fracesttown, the committee looked at three options:

- Installing dry hydrants in existing water sources
- Creating fire ponds with dry hydrants
- Installing cisterns

The committee prioritized the need for water resources in various areas of town and made the following recommendations:

High Priority

- The installation of dry hydrants, at an estimated cost of \$4,500 each, in the following locations (listed in order of priority):

Greenfield Road at Willow Bridge
Greenfield Road, between Udall and Spenser Roads
Second NH Turnpike South at Caskie Bridge
Scobie Pond Road Boat Landing
Old County Road North at Town Land (off Fisher Hill)
Wilson Hill Road

- The creation of fire ponds with dry hydrants, or the installation of cisterns in three areas of town where there is little or no water available for firefighting:

Dennison Pond Road/Candlewood Hill Road
Bible Hill Road/Poor Farm Road
Journey's End Road

Moderate Priority

- Install dry hydrants at the following locations. (listed in order of priority):

Woodward Hill Road at bridge (Map 3, Lot 38)
New Boston Road at Whiting Brook (Map 6, Lot 76)
Pleasant Pond Road at Boat Landing
Russell Station Road near Woodward Hill (Map 3, Lot 42)
Pleasant Pond Road at Map 5, Lot 64
Russell Station Road at Map 2, Lot 10
South New Boston Road at Map 3, Lot 73.4
Pleasant Pond Road at Map 8, Lot 90
Old County Road South near Map 3, Lot 20
Red House Road at Map 3, Lot 95

The Fire Pond Study Committee also made the following policy recommendations:

- A plan for the installation of hydrants and the construction of fire ponds should be incorporated into the town's Capital Improvement Plan
- Installation of a dry hydrant should be considered as part of all town bridge construction or reconstruction projects.
- The town should adopt an ordinance requiring sprinkler systems in all new construction
- Subdivisions approved in areas identified as having low or limited water sources should require fire protection measures: preferably fire ponds
- The creation of additional water resources should help improve the town's ISO rating with insurance companies, currently a 9. The Selectmen should establish an ISO study committee.

A map of Fire Department resources and areas of limited resources follows.

Map 1

Firefighting Water Resources

In 2008 and 2009 the town voted (and re-voted) \$15,000 for hydrological studies to determine the reliability of existing sources of water for fire suppression and to identify viable locations for new fire ponds. The main reason to conduct a hydrologic study of water sources, beyond potentially improved decision-making, is to improve the town's fire insurance rating, thereby lowering the cost of fire insurance for homes and other structures. The ratings are determined by ISO (Insurance Services Office, Inc.), a private, for-profit company based in New Jersey. In 2009, after further research into the ratings process and a meeting with ISO representatives, several things became apparent:

- ISO ratings depend on a number of factors. Certification of water supplies alone would not improve the town's rating.
- Storage at the Franeestown Village Water Company, although potentially of use for firefighting, is of insufficient capacity to improve insurance ratings, even within the Village.

- Certification of individual water sources can potentially improve the rating only within a fixed radius of the source (nominally 1,000 feet), but will not improve the overall town rating.

For these reasons and at the suggestion of the ISO representatives, it was decided to pursue documentation of the other factors (communications, personnel, training, and equipment) that would improve ratings for the whole town. Once these factors are documented, certification of individual water supply points will improve the rating further for structures within the fixed radius.

Trends and Public Opinion

In part because Fracesttown has transitioned to become more of a bedroom community (over 80% of working-age residents are employed out of town), and in part because of a decrease in the percentage of young families willing to give their time, a decline in volunteerism has continued to provide a challenge to all parts of town services that rely on volunteers. The FVFD has not been immune to this trend. Over the last two decades, there have been periods where the available staff of the FFD has been less than ideal. In 2014, the department was training five new volunteer firefighters, two of whom will also serve as EMTs. The current level of staffing is, according to the chief, sufficient to meet the needs of the community. Despite increased pressures on time and resources, department members continue to support maintaining their volunteer status.

Fire and rescue, along with the transfer station, remain the highest rated departments in town. Close to 90% of those who rated the department in the 2012 Master Plan survey found it to be 'good' or 'very good'; 85% rated EMT services good or very good¹⁰. 81% believe that the town devotes the correct amount of resources to the department.

Table 7
Performance Rating of Fire and Rescue¹¹

		<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Very Poor</u>
Fire	2012	46%	39%	13%	2%	1%
	1994	46%	41%	12%	0%	0%
Rescue	2012	47%	40%	11%	1%	1%
	1994	45%	40%	14%	2%	0%

Recommendations

THE FIREHOUSE: One maintenance problem that remains unaddressed is the solar wall on the south side of the house. It is aging and, at minimum, will need to be resurfaced in the near future.

VEHICLES: The current system of an expected 30-year life cycle for FFD vehicles appears to be effective for meeting the needs of the town. A transition to purchasing newer, state-

¹⁰ See Table 1.

¹¹ Percentage of those answering the specific question. 'No opinion' and failure to respond are excluded from the calculations.

of-the-art vehicles has been very well received by department members. However, given the number of undersized and rural roads in town, as well as a reluctance to create large turnaround areas on private lots, the size of new vehicles should be factored into any purchase decision. Federal guidelines for fire equipment should be viewed as guidelines, not requirements.

AMBULANCE: With the re-purposing of the Peterborough Ambulance service, the Selectmen should work with the Fire Chief to determine if the needs for available ambulances are being met – and met cost-effectively.

FIRE PONDS: Although additional fire ponds in specific areas of town where natural water sources are unavailable are recommended by the department town-wide, it should be considered a long-term spending priority.

Police Department

The facility includes three small rooms all open to each other. In addition, there are a restroom, a storage closet and a small overhead attic storage area. There is no controlled access and there is little ability to close off any area¹². Lockup facilities are currently available at the Hillsborough County Jail (Valley Street Jail) in Manchester. On-site parking is limited. There is one bay to accommodate one of the two cruisers at the highway garage half a mile away.

Between 2007 and the spring of 2015, police coverage was provided by a full-time Police Chief and 4 -6 part-time officers. The cumulative work hours of the part-time staff totals approximately 40 - 44 hours per week. A regular patrol schedule was in effect 8 hours a day, Sunday through Thursday, and 16 hours a day on Fridays and Saturdays. In addition the police check vacant houses at the owner's request, and patrol the town beach and other recreational areas for disorderly parties and other types of disturbances. Additional traffic control measures are taken when Crotched Mountain Ski and Ride is in operation.¹³ Coverage is provided by the New Hampshire State Police during off hours and for certain specialized resource cases such as untimely deaths.

Beyond regular patrols, members of the Police Department pursue investigations, handle special events where traffic control is necessary, attend court proceedings and maintain records. All members of the force are also on call to answer special alerts and emergency calls, such as burglar alarms.

In March 2015, the Chief and 4 of the 5 officers resigned. Selectmen engaged a transitional part time staff: an administrative officer, an officer-in-charge and 4 new part time officers¹⁴. Shortly thereafter, the town's insurer, Primex, conducted a limited risk assessment review of the department. Facilities related recommendations are as follows:

¹² Comment from 2015 Primex report referenced below

¹³ Francetown's officers are occasionally hired by Crotched Mountain Resort on an individual basis.

¹⁴ The administrative officer and officer-in charge are retired, or about-to-be retired, chiefs from other towns. Neither can work full time and the administrative officer must be recertified before acting in a paramilitary role.

- “Conduct an audit of the facility and determine priorities for access control and security.”
- “. . . under no circumstances should any prisoner be detained, booked, processed or interviewed within the Francetown Police Station”
- “A more secure process and facility should be created for the storage of evidence”.

In the next few months, the Selectmen plan to hold public forums to receive community input on regionalization, optimal amounts of coverage and the pros and cons of full versus part time chiefs and officers.

The department currently has two vehicles: one 4-wheel-drive Chevy Tahoe SUV, and a smaller Ford Explore/Interceptor SUV, purchased in 2014. The vehicles are on a 6-year replacement schedule staggered every 3 years. The vehicles are equipped with moving radar and laptop computers. There are also several portable radios and one mobile radio, and a recently approved (2014) traffic data collection device to aid the department in making best use of their patrol hours. In addition, a number of officers have their own radio equipment in their personal vehicles.

Police services continue to receive the lowest combined ‘very good’ and ‘good’ rating of all the primary operating departments – only 60% - but at the same time 77% want the same or less emphasis placed on the department¹⁵.

Recommendations

The opportunity to get what will essentially be an all new department off on the ‘right foot’ combined with a new appreciation of safety concerns make the expansion and remodeling of the police facilities a higher priority. These issues were first raised by then Chief Woodbury in the early 2000’s.

Table
History of Budgeted Police Department Expenditures, 1980 - 2015

Expenditures	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015
Police Operating Budget	16.5	43.0	55.6	136.4	146.9
Capital Expenditures	1.0	8.0	7.2	10.0	15.0
Total Police Expense as % of total town expense (net of revenues & other adjustments, excluding County/school)	12.1%	8.2%	8.7%	10.4%	10.5%
Gross Salaries (non-clerical, actual/budget) ¹⁶	12.7	34.4	42.3	90.9	99.3
Professional Prosecutor	-	-	-	6.5	6.8
Gross Salaries as % of Police Operating Budget	77.0%	80.0%	76.1%	71.4%	72.2%

(Source: Francetown Annual Reports)

¹⁵2012 question #s 17 and 18.

¹⁶ Salaries exclude benefits and social security. Typical retirement/health/vacation/sick benefits for a full time officer/chief making \$50,000 are in the range of \$30,000.versus \$3,800 for a part time coverage at the same rate of pay. These costs are reflected in the Personnel line of the budget. The town has paid full time benefits since 2001.

Highway Department

In recent years, several notable changes have taken place involving the operation and equipment of the Highway Department:

- In 1982 the Road Agent position changed from an elected to an appointed one, reporting to the Board of Selectmen.
- In 2000 the position of Director of Public Works, responsible for the Highway Department, Transfer Station and various town building maintenance, was created.
- In 2006 when the DPW director resigned the position was not filled.
- In the early 2000s the Board of Selectmen changed its philosophy from purchasing used equipment, primarily at the NH DOT auction, to purchasing new equipment.

Equipment

The following inventory reflects the change in the equipment purchasing philosophy.

Table 9
Highway Department Capital Equipment Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Approp. Cost</u>	<u>Description</u>
2014		New Ford F-550 1-ton w/dual rear wheels, dump body/poly sander
2013	280,000.	New John Deere Road Grader
2012	4,000.*	Dual-axle trailer w/brakes
	N/C	40' shipping container converted to storage space
2011	3,000.*	Chevrolet tanker (converted/retrofitted fire equipment)
2010	185,000.	New Mack 10-wheel dump truck w/live body, power angle plow & wing
2007	165,000.	New Mack 10-wheel dump truck w/live body, power angle plow & wing
2006	122,676.	New Freightliner 6-wheel dump truck w/power angle plow & wing
	24,000.	New Kubota 24 hp tractor w/snow blower and sweeper
2005	136,000.	New International 6-wheel dump truck w/power angle plow & wing
		New Ford F350 1-ton truck w/dual rear wheels & plow
2001	100,000.	John Deere front-end loader
1999	12,000.	Computerized fuel monitoring system
		Wood chipper
		Road rake

*Paid out of operating budget.

Between 2000 and 2003 the town appropriated a total of \$775,000 to construct a new highway department facility. It was completed in 2003. The facility has drive-through bays with 6 doors, 3 accessing from the west and 3 from the east. In addition it contains a parts and equipment mezzanine level, a break/lunch room, locker room, mechanical room, handicap accessible rest rooms and a shower. The road agent has a separate office with computer and Internet access.

The facility also houses a separate bay for use by the Police Department to park the second cruiser. The facility is heated by liquid propane gas, and a new heating system was installed in 2008 at a cost of \$6,500. In 2005 a salt/sand shed was constructed at a cost of \$85,000. The shed is capable of storing an estimated 400 tons of salt and 300 yards of sand. An additional 3,000 cubic yards of sand is stored outside on-site. Two 2,000-gallon tanks for gasoline and diesel fuel are enclosed in a 17'x17' enclosed fuel containment building. Various amounts of crushed rock and gravel are also stored on-site.

The town currently does not have a local source of earth materials, either town or privately owned. The department hauls sand and gravel from the former Tri-town landfill site located in Bennington and owned 40% by Bennington, 40% by Antrim and 20% by Fracesttown. Mineral rights are allocated on the same basis. The arrangement is governed by a contract which is reviewed periodically by Selectmen and road agents from all three towns. Because Fracesttown uses much more material than either of the other towns, it is going to have to begin compensating the partners for its usage. Options for payment are under consideration.

At present, in addition to the Road Agent, the Highway Department employs 1 full-time heavy equipment and grader operator, 1 full-time, heavy equipment operator 1 part time generalist and several seasonal snow plow drivers. It is a non-union shop. All full-time employees receive medical and pension benefits from the town and the State of New Hampshire.

64% of those rating town services considered road maintenance to be 'good' or 'very good' compared with 50% in 1994. Snow plowing ratings improved from 67% to 77%. 16% indicated they would like more emphasis placed on snowplowing while about twice that want more emphasis on general road maintenance.¹⁷

Table 10
Performance Rating of Highway Services

		<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Very Poor</u>
Road Maint.	2012	23%	41%	27%	5%	5%
	1994	18%	32%	32%	14%	4%
Snow Plowing	2012	38%	39%	17%	6%	0%
	1994	30%	37%	24%	6%	3%

¹⁷ 2012 question #s 17 and 18. See Tables 1 and 2.

Infrastructure

Primary attention is now being given to maintenance and repair of the town's road and bridge infrastructure. Road reconstruction of the Second NH Turnpike South, Poor Farm Road to the bridge at the base of Bible Hill, and Pleasant Pond Road from Route 47 to just past the bridge over Collins Brook has been accomplished since 1995. Pleasant Pond Road has been reconstructed to just past the boat landing in 2013.

The State of NH inspects bridges on a regular basis and flags – or red-lists – bridges with potential problems. If the problems become serious enough, closure will be recommended. The State also has a bridge aid program through which the state pays for 80% of the cost of a bridge, the design and engineering of which must be approved by the State. The program is underfunded and new projects are being scheduled 7 years out. Generally, state financial assistance is critical to a town like ours. On occasion the design specifications seem inappropriate for the setting and present/future traffic demands. However, as in the case of Juniper Hill Road, the cost of the town going it alone exceeds the town's share of participating in the bridge-aid program.

In 2011 the more critical of the two red-listed Rand Brook bridges on Russell Station road was replaced with the help of a FEMA grant at a total cost of approximately \$800,000. In 2013 the red-listed bridge on the 2nd NH Turnpike South was replaced through the State bridge aid program at a cost of \$1 million (after a \$58,000 temporary fix the year prior to keep the bridge open) and in the fall of 2014, at a cost of \$105,000, the town replaced the one-lane Scoby pond bridge a week after NH DOT indicated it should be closed.

That leaves 7 bridges still on the state's red-list (tied for third place for the most red-listed with 3 other towns, after Keene and Hillsborough). The first five are on the State Bridge Aid List:

- Woodward Hill Rd Bridge over the Piscataquog River (closed to traffic Dec. 2012)
- Juniper Hill Road Bridge over Brennan Brook (serving area with no other outlet)
- South New Boston Road over the Piscataquog River
- Old County Road North Bridge over Collins Brook
- Russell Station Road Bridge (gravel portion) over Rand Brook
- Cressey Hill Road Bridge over Rand Brook
- Clarksville Road Bridge over the Piscataquog River

In 2015 the Woodward Hill and Juniper Hill bridges are scheduled for replacement at a total cost currently estimated at \$1,250,000.

Despite the increase in infrastructure cost, spending on highway operations has been decreasing as a percentage of annual net town expenditures.

Table 11
History of Budgeted Highway Department Expenditures 1980-2015¹⁸ \$(000)

<u>Budget Category</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2015</u>
Town Maintenance (incl. gravel)	113.75	217.0	293.05	387.08	421.5
Resealing		47.0	58.5	70.0	78.5
Bridges (small, wooden)	-	-	10.0	7.0	5.0
Street Lighting	2.0	3.0	4.2	3.0	3.6
Total Operating Budget	115.75	267.00	365.75	467.08	508.6
Capital Expenditures (net)	20.85	64.99	185.0	306.1	330.0
Total Highway Expenditures	136.60	331.99	550.75	773.18	838.6
Total Highway Expenditures as % of Total Town Outlays (net of revenues and other offsets, excluding County/school)	94%	53%	76%	55%	52%

Source: Town Reports

Table 12
Performance Measurements 1980 – 2015

<u>Measurement</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2015</u>
Estimated Population	830	1217	1480	1562	1562
Estimated Mileage	50.7	50.7	50.7	50.7	50.7
Operating Budget Cost/Mile	\$2,318	\$5,662	\$7,214	\$9,213	\$10,032
Total Hwy Expenditure/Mile	\$2,695	\$6,546	\$10,863	\$15,250	\$16,540
Total Hwy Expenditure/Per	\$165	\$273	\$372	\$495	\$537

Recommendations

For the last couple of years, the town has funded high-priority bridge projects in part by reducing the annual commitment to road repair and improvement reserves. While a necessary adjustment, the result has been an inadequate funding level for road repair and reconstruction. It is recommended that the town return to the \$200,000/year level of commitment to road repair in order to keep up with ever-deteriorating town roads. Among the paved town roads that will need attention in the near future are: (in no order of priority) Bible Hill Road, Red House Road, Woodward Hill Road, the last mile of Pleasant Pond Road.

The Town has and will continue to benefit from our participation in the State Bridge Aid program. However, minimum size and scope requirements for a bridge built with funding from the State Aid Program are significant and may not be suitable for some of the town's more modest bridges on smaller, less traveled roads. It is recommended that, when

¹⁸ Highway operating Budget does not include payroll related costs such as retirement, health, etc.

considering placing a bridge on the list for state aid, in addition to consideration of the bottom line dollars required for bridge replacement the Town should review the suitability of the location for a bridge of scope required by the state.

Solid Waste Disposal

History

The disposal of solid waste is currently handled through the Transfer Station located on an 8-acre site on Todd Road. Fracesttown's solid waste operations have changed significantly over the past 25 years. In the 1970s and early 1980s Fracesttown relied solely on a landfills to handle its solid waste. By the 1990s and the beginning of this century, the landfills were closed and waste was hauled to various facilities in New Hampshire; as a result, recycling then became a major part of the disposal program.

The Todd Road Transfer Station lies directly over the town's second-largest aquifer. Although the transfer station was originally a landfill, to date, no well monitoring has been done on the site.

Operations

In 2007, the Board of Selectmen reinstated the Waste Disposal Committee as a 5-member board, appointed by and reporting to the Selectmen, to assist with the oversight of the Transfer Station. Over the past 5 years, a committed and rejuvenated Waste Disposal Committee has recommended a number of policy changes; introduced a quarterly newsletter, Talkin' Trash, which is mailed to all Fracesttown households; and, with the Selectmen, established a fee schedule for the disposal of certain large or bulky items. The fees were established to help defray the additional disposal costs of these items and are not a net revenue-producer.

Recycling has become the buzzword of the Transfer Station. WDC members believe their newsletter, read by over 75% of residents, has helped promote the benefits and cost savings of the recycling program. In 2005, 74% of the waste generated by residents of Fracesttown was collected in the dumpster. By 2010, that number decreased to 62%, and in 2011, 55%. In 2009 and 2010, Fracesttown received an award for most recycled tonnage per capita in the state (towns of 1,000 to 5,000 population). A new plastic bag recycling program started in 2013 and has removed over 100 pounds of plastic bags out of the waste stream.

The method of collection is by individual drop-off. Commercial waste pickup firms and local businesses may not use the facility. Property owners must display a sticker on their car. Fees are charged only for the disposal of appliances, furniture and mattresses, e-waste (TVs and computers), tires and construction/demolition debris. 61% of residents have paid a disposal fee in the last year. 80% believe the fees are reasonable.¹

The following recyclables are collected and transferred to appropriate destinations: aluminum, tin cans, all plastics (1-7), clear glass, brown glass, green glass, motor oil, newsprint, scrap metal, magazines and corrugated cardboard. A Salvation Army donation container is also available.

A swap shop is also offered, and is a very popular vehicle for “recycling” gently used items: children’s toys, assorted household items, and books. In 2015 a needle collection program was started to protect employees

The transfer station recycling program has generated significant income to the town:

Table 13
History of Transfer Station Cost Offsets¹⁹ (\$000)

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Customer	\$8.50	\$7.40	\$8.90	\$7.90	\$6.70
Vendor	0	\$17.60	\$13.50	\$12.10	\$12.90
Total	\$8.50	\$25.00	\$22.40	\$20.00	\$19.60
% of Operating Budget (Customer/Vendor)	7.6/-%	6.6/15.7%	8.2/12.4%	7.0/10.7%	6.3/11.6%

Source: Town Reports

More competition among vendors has reduced hauling costs as a percent of the total operating budget over the past 10 years.

Table 14
Transfer Station Disposal Costs

year	payroll	hauls compactor	total hauls of other**	total Transfer Station	cost as % of annual operating budget***
1980 Actual*	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$13,222.00	5.7%
1990 actual*	\$15,082.00	n/a	n/a	\$62,330.00	9.0%
2000 actual	28,952.00	34,513.00	8,226.00	84,694.00	9.8%
2005 actual	29,054.00	59,812.00	21,361.00	123,204.00	10.2%
2010 actual	30,440.00	44,332.00	26,266.00	107,391.00	8.2%
2015 budget	37,850.00	36,750.00	23,800.00	116,050.00	7.5%

*through 1991 this was a ‘dump’, with some hauls made to Bennington.

**other hauls include C&D, hazardous waste, and e-waste but excluding hazardous waste

*** excluding debt service and prior to application of revenues and other adjustments

Hours: For the past 35 years or so, the transfer station has been open on non-holiday Wednesdays (1-6 PM winter/1-8 PM summer), Saturdays (8:30 AM-4:30 PM), and Sundays (8:30 AM-1 PM). 92% of residents are satisfied with the hours of operation¹.

¹⁹ Revenue and expense may be mismatched at year end causing minor distortions year to year. Prices of recyclables can be volatile. 2011 was an unusually good year.

The operation is staffed by three part-time employees: two working 16 to 28 hours per week, one approximately 9 hours per week.

Facility & Equipment

Equipment:

- 24' enclosed container for cans (owned)
- Compactor: (owned-new in 2007)
- Three roll-offs/containers (leased) for MSW, Glass and CD
- Two roll-offs/containers for paper and co-mingled recyclables (incl in contract price)

Buildings:

- 40' by 60' recycling shed
- 10' x 10' office
- 20' x 40' storage building

Separate open piles are used for stockpiling scrap metal, appliances, brush, and yard waste.

In 2012, a perimeter fence was added around the collection areas, bringing the transfer station into compliance with state regulations. Buildings were repainted in 2013. A cement pad under the metal pile is tentatively scheduled for 2016 at a cost currently estimated in the range of \$10,000.

On-Site Fire Pond: In 2003, voters approved \$18,000 to build a fire pond on-site. Further exploration of the site revealed wetlands and unstable soils that would render the creation of the pond significantly more expensive. The project was abandoned.

Future

The WDC has indicated there are a number of changes they would like to make to the Transfer Station's physical plant and traffic pattern, but, due to budget constraints, they have tabled all discussions of improvements. In the 2012 Master Plan Questionnaire, 85% of residents consider the traffic pattern to be easy or adequate. 59% believe there are no improvements needed to the transfer station. Of the residents identifying a need for improvements, 18% identified the cardboard/paper area; 15% the general trash compactor; and 10% the cans/plastics recycling area. 10% would like to see improvement to the swap shop²⁰.

The transfer station continues to receive good grades from the public. Over 85% of residents rated the transfer station operations as 'good' or 'very good'. Only 2% rated it as poor, 0% very poor. 11% would still like to see some improvements²¹.

Current planned improvements focus on increasing recycling efforts by education and new recycling avenues.

²⁰ 2012 question #42.

²¹ 2012 question #s 17 and 18. See Table 1.

George Holmes Bixby Memorial Library

The Building

The Library is located on Main Street just north of the Common. Built in 1827 by Titus Brown as a private residence, the 20' x 40' building was given to the Town by Allison Bixby Hill in 1923 for use as a public library and a repository of "anything of historical interest and importance relating to the town." The building had no ADA access at any level. Until the spring of 2001, the second floor was used as exhibition space for the Francetown Improvement and Historical Society. At that time the second floor was closed for safety reasons.

A capital reserve fund for the expansion of the library was established in 1975, but regular funding was abandoned in 1982. Limited funding was restarted in 2001 and a Library Building Committee embarked on a serious planning and fundraising program. The first concept, projected to cost in excess of \$1 million, was rejected by voters for a variety of reasons, including aesthetics, location and cost. A more modest plan and a donation in the range of half a million dollars from Allison Bixby Hill's daughter-in-law Esther allowed the project to move forward in 2007. Erica Gees of Kuhn Riddle was the architect and Baybutt Construction of Keene the general contractor. During the 16 months of construction the library operated out of the front room at the Town Hall. Furnishings were moved to a storage facility in New Boston, while valuable items went to the FIHS space in the Town Annex. The library reopened on August 25, 2009. The addition, along with the substantial renovation of the existing building, provided ADA and other code compliance, nearly doubled usable space, and included the first geothermal HVAC system and first elevator to be installed in a Francetown building.

The geothermal system which cost \$170,000, is still plagued with problems. Ongoing maintenance needs include chimney, roof and window repairs.

At the completion of the project, the second floor was made available for the non-fiction and classic books as well as for audio books, videos, oral histories and artifacts about Francetown. The main floor houses the circulation desk, public access computers, books of fiction, large print books, cookbooks, periodicals, audio books and the Harwood reading room. The lower floor is devoted to young readers, with a space designated for quiet reading and study: the Schott Room.

The Library has wireless Internet capacity, a copy machine and computers available to patrons. Librarians are now in the final stages of electronically cataloging the library's entire collection. When complete, the library will then transition from card catalog to a computer-based data system, whereby patrons will have the option to access library information and make requests on-line.

Staffing and Hours

The Library is staffed by the Librarian/Director, the Children's Librarian (each for 25 hours per week), and an assistant (8 hours per week). All of the staff are paid on an hourly, part-time basis and receive no benefits.

There has been no change in the hours of operation in the last 20 years. The library is open 5 days a week: Tuesday (1-5 PM); Wednesday and Friday (10-12, 1-5); Thursday (1-6) and Saturday (9-1).

The Collection, Usage and Budget

The expansion of the Library created much-needed space to house the collection. Current numbers for the collection (as of December 31, 2014) are: Books, including reference (18,267); Periodicals (28); National Geographic Collection: (791); Audio Books (874); Audio/video music (54); DVD (579) and VHS (88). In 2014 the project of converting from a card catalog to an automated system was completed.

Table 15
Circulation History

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2014</u>
Books – Adult	3,206			3,847	2,594
Books - Children	4,560			3,565	2,644
All Books	7,766	10,583	9,863	7,412	5,238
Magazines	819	1,725	2,711	1,261	780
Audio/Tapes/Video	-	183	1,324	895	1,169
Interlibrary Loans	-	n/a	53	155	298
Interlibrary Borrowed ²²	479	n/a	n/a	238	413

Source: Town Reports

Factors suspected to be behind the decline in circulation include the relocation of the Elementary School which used GHBML as its library, expansion of school libraries, use of digital devices to access books, newspapers and other information; increased television viewing by older Americans; and an increase in competitive entertainment options.

The Library building is a valuable community resource. Beyond the traditional, expected use, the Library is used for exhibits, lectures, book discussions and special programs for children and adults. Young people also use the building for after-school study. It is used by Town boards and committees for small meetings. The Library Trustees aim to expand these activities and increase the Library's role as a center for learning and knowledge by using and embracing rapidly changing electronic, web-based and other new technologies, even as many patrons continue to enjoy traditional printed books.

Table 16
Library Budget History (\$000)

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2015</u>
Operating Budget	\$13,370	\$31,000	\$48,667	\$70,514	\$75,925
Oper. Budget as % of Net Town Spending	9.2%	5.0%	6.7%	5.0%	4.7%

Source: Town Reports

The Library's Board of Trustees is elected by the townspeople. In 2006 the town voted to allow 2 additional library trustees, bringing the allowable total to 5. Up to 3 alternates

²² Including bookmobile

are recommended by the Library Trustees and officially appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

Satisfaction with library services has remained fairly constant since 1994 with roughly 75% of those rating the service finding it to 'good' or 'very good'. A similar percent would like to see the 'same' or 'less' emphasis placed on the library.²³

Public Assistance

Francetown has a Public Assistance Administrator who currently works without an office or private space in which to meet clients. The Administrator can meet with applicants at the town offices meeting room or, in extreme circumstances, at the applicant's residence. Public assistance is provided by various state, county and regional agencies, by local churches, groups and individuals in town. The Administrator acts as a facilitator between these sources of assistance and those persons seeking help. The bureaucratic assistance program operates under state guidelines and is designed to make the town the "lender of last resort." The town expects to be repaid and, if the applicant owns real property, takes a lien on that property. It also expects all applicants to make application for employment in order to provide for their own needs. Most applicants request one-time rent relief between \$600 and \$800. The town's budgeted amount for assistance was in the range of \$5,500 between 1995 and 2004. In 2005 actual outlays began to increase and to fluctuate more widely. With the start of the economic downturn in 2007 and cuts at the federal and state levels, assistance more than tripled with peaks in 2010 and 2013. In 2014 actual costs fell back to \$6,000 but budgeted amounts will remain high until a new pattern is established.

In 2009 the town created a Public Assistance expendable trust to be administered by the Trustees of the Trust Funds with the Public Assistance Administrator as agents to expend. The 2014 FYE balance was \$1,906.

In 2013 Francetown Friends, a 501©(3) non-profit, was created by a group of residents to assist the welfare administrator. Its goal is to provide assistance to those who don't qualify for public assistance but who need help making ends meet, or those who do qualify but are awaiting final approval.

Cemeteries

Francetown has three accessible public cemeteries that are managed by three elected Trustees²⁴. Cemetery #1 is the oldest of the three and is located behind the Old Meeting House and borders Main Street. It is 1 acre in size and has no burial sites available. Cemetery #2 is located on the south side of NH Route 136 (New Boston Road) between the Village center and Mill Village (Potash Road). It is 1.26 acres in size and has no burial sites available. Cemetery #3²⁵ is located on the Second New Hampshire Turnpike

²³ 2012 question #s 17 and 18. See Table 1.

²⁴ There is an inventory of veterans from the American Revolution to the present interred in all three cemeteries prepared in 2008 by two local high school students.

²⁵ The original 5 acres on this site was purchased in 1860.

approximately three-quarters of a mile south of the Village. The only active cemetery, it is approximately 16 acres, roughly 6 of which is utilized²⁶. Much of the balance is believed to be unsuitable for expansion. In 2015 the town accepted/did not accept an offer from the Taylor family to donate a 7 acre, stone wall enclosed, lot across the road for use as a cemetery.

Annual maintenance costs, most of which is spent on grounds-keeping, over the past 5 years average \$13,000. These costs are included in the town's annual operating budget.

There are additional 3 sources of funds for cemetery maintenance.

- The interest from non-expendable private trusts, the first of which was created in 1896, is used to defray annual maintenance costs on certain plots. Combined principal value of the trusts was \$38,864 at the end of 2014. The unexpended income value was \$4,886.
- In 1983 the "New Cemetery Sales" capital reserve, created in 1958 apparently to fund the purchase of a new cemetery area, was changed to the "Improvement of New Cemetery Lands". Regular funding of this reserve does not appear to have occurred until 1999. In 2006 Town Meeting voted to raise \$42,840 to erect a "stone wall fence" around Cemetery #3, \$25,000 from reserves and accepting a donation of \$17,840. The Commission logged part of the property to raise a funding shortfall. With the exception of a gate which was added in 2010, the work was completed in the summer of 2006. The balance in the reserve at the end of 2014 was \$36,369.
- In 2004 the Town established an expendable Cemetery Maintenance Trust Fund to be administered by the Trustees of the Trust Funds with the Cemetery Trustees as agents to expend. After several years, the Trustees decided to allocate 50% of lot sales to the Capital Reserve and to retain the balance for on-going smaller maintenance improvements. The balance in the Fund at the end of 2014 was \$16,588.

The Trustees have proposed a restoration and repair program, including replacing the water lines, improving drainage, landscaping and headstone and antique wrought iron repairs.

Satisfaction with cemetery maintenance has gone up a since 1994 from 63% to 79% who rated the service finding it to be 'good' or 'very good'. There is no support for more emphasis on the department.²⁷

Table 17
Performance Evaluation of Cemetery Maintenance (Percentage)

	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Very Poor</u>
2012	26%	53%	21%	0%	0%
1994	19%	44%	31%	5%	2%

²⁶ Total acreage is from the tax cards. Utilized measurements and calculations done by Ethel MacStubbs and Henry Kunhardt.

²⁷ 2012 question #s 17 and 18.

Open Space and Recreational Facilities

The oversight of open space and recreational facilities is shared by two Selectmen-appointed Commissions: Recreation and Conservation. Both have enjoyed solid support over the past fifteen years.

Since 1994 a hard court, walking track, grass volleyball court, horseshoe pit, swingset and jungle gym, skateboard park, and mud volleyball/outdoor skating facility with night lights have been added. Reported usage of almost all recreational facilities remained the same or increased. However, the most dramatic increase in household usage parallels the increase in the resource. Over the last 20 years town owned acreage open to the public for recreation (hiking, riding, hunting, fishing, birdwatching, skiing, etc.) increased by 1,400 acres²⁸ while reported usage increased from 19% to 60%, making open space the most used facility.

Percentage of Households Using Recreational Facilities²⁹

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2012</u>
Town Forest(hiking/equestrian)	19%	60%
Town Beach	45%	34%
Pleasant Pond Boat landing	n/a	32%
Bixby Pond	9%	27%
Scoby Boat Landing	14%	21%
Tennis Courts	19%	19%
Ball field	16%	16%
School Playground	n/a	12%
Hard Court	n/a	78%
Soccer Field	12%	7%
Rec Field Skating	n/a	6%
No Response	41%	23%

Publicly Owned Recreational Facilities (non-conservation)

The town owns or is responsible for the following recreational facilities:

- A recreational area at the intersection of the Greenfield Road and Old County Road South which includes two tennis courts, with night lights, a baseball field, a soccer field and a hard court. In the last few years, several improvements have been made to this area, mostly through volunteer efforts/contributions by members of the Rec Commission. Among the improvements are: dugouts were added to the baseball field,

²⁸ Open space, some of it abutting town lands, open to the public and protected/owned by 501(c)(3) conservation groups increased from zero to 898 acres between 1999 and 2014..

²⁹ The 1994 Master Plan Survey had over 700 respondents; the 2012 Master Plan survey had slightly under 200. The difference in sample sizes could cause some 'static' in the numbers. The 1994 MP makes note of the fact that the town soccer field had not been completed at the time of the survey and that there may have been some confusion about which soccer field was being referenced. The 1994 'non-use' response was explicit. The result of the 2012 survey reflects the number of respondents who did not answer the question.

drainage measures were put in place to increase the time the fields are useable, an equipment storage shed was constructed, a walking track was added around the rec fields, and Village Water was brought to the ball field area. This facility is leased from the Francetown Improvement and Historical Society (FIHS) for \$1 per year. The town's long term lease expired in 2004 but provides for two ten year automatic renewal periods provided the lessor is in compliance with the terms of the lease. This area is overseen by the Recreation Commission.

- A .331 acre, leased, town beach on Scoby Pond. The lease was renewed in 2015 for a term of 5 years, with a provision to extend 4 times in 5 year increments. Current cost is \$3,000/year. The beach is small with a fairly steep, rock access to the shoreline. For this reason and because parking is available only along the road, usage is limited to town residents and property owners. Beach programs and facility management are handled by the Recreation Commission. A capital reserve for the purchase of recreational lands/town beach was funded annually from 1995 through 2006. Pessimism about the likelihood of a suitable lot becoming available combined with other financial pressures led to a suspension of funding of the reserve. The 2014 year-end balance was \$119,585.
- The 2.6 acre Bixby Mill, or Creamery, Dam³⁰ area (aka "kid's pond") behind the village was donated to the town by FIHS in 1970 reportedly as a fire protection water source and a recreational area for children (non-deeded purposes). Dam repairs were made in 1974-1976 with a state administered Land and Water Conservation Fund grant which requires public access. Major reconstruction was done between 1996 and 1998 at a cost that increased from an initial estimate of \$51,000 to approximately \$180,000, \$100,619 of which came from a hazard mitigation grant from FEMA. The Recreation Commission sponsors a May fishing derby, sometimes with matching grants from Fish and Game, at the pond in memory of Tim Samuelson who died in an ATV accident in 1999. The pond is also used for ice skating and potentially swimming.
- A state owned, .54 acre paved boat landing on Pleasant Pond is maintained by the Town³¹. 3 years ago the Town placed a seasonal port-a-potty on the ramp. In addition to boats, the area is used by swimmers although there is no beach. The Pleasant Pond Association runs a boat monitoring program at the ramp to guard against milfoil and to which the town has begun contributing \$2,500/year.
- A state owned boat landing for Scoby Pond exists on paper only³². Next to the town beach, it is steep and good only for portage. The public has used private land for trailer access for many years apparently with owner consent.
- The playground at the elementary school located on the 2nd NH Turnpike South and owned by the Conval School District is used by the public in off-hours.

Since 1996 the Recreation Commission has had one paid staff member who coordinates a number of volunteers and supervises a seasonal teen-age staff. The supplemental staff

³⁰ State dam reference: D-085003

³¹ A privately owned and operated dam controls the water level of Pleasant Pond, an important recreational resource used by residents and non-residents alike. The dam is in need of repair and/or replacement. No formal studies have been done but guestimates range from \$100,000 to \$500,000. If the dam fails, the water level could drop by as much as 5 feet on certain parts of the pond. The owner would like to transfer title to the town or a non-profit organization but a willing and acceptable recipient has yet to be identified.

³² A description this "road to public waters" can be found at NHRD 1839/316. The history of this strip is complicated apparently dating to 1931 and continuing through 1970.

includes 3-4 lifeguards, two of which are certified to teach swimming, a varying number of employees who run special classes and clinics. Historically, the management and coaching of recreation programs has been by parents of the participating children. A recent trend by parents to use programs as “babysitting” sessions has Commission Members concerned for the future viability of recreation programs.

Commission sports programs are designed for younger children – pre-school through grade 8. The number of children in this age group has decreased sharply with a negative impact on traditional programs³³. For example, the Commission sponsored 6 baseball teams with over 75 players in 1994. Recently, due to this decrease in participation, Francetown has combined forces with adjacent towns to field a sufficient number of teams. There are also 2 T-ball teams. The Commission reports that interest in soccer is in decline but is being supplanted by an interest in lacrosse. Over the years, interest in activities for older teens has failed to produce results.

In addition to the swim programs and management of the town beach, The Commission sponsors a Halloween event with hayrides on Main Street and a haunted house at the FIHS lodge; a fishing Derby in May; as well as Zumba, Yoga, and Aerobics classes for adults (and young adults), family Ice skating nights. Two 2-week sessions of Summer Camps for kids, this year to include Art and Tennis Camps. Monthly contra-dances have been abandoned.

Recreation facilities continue to receive relatively low ratings compared to other key operations – around 60% in 1994 and 2012. Those wanting more emphasis on recreation has also remained fairly constant around 30%.³⁴

Milfoil was discovered in Scoby Pond in the early 2000’s. Untreated, it can make a water body unsuitable, even hazardous, for swimming. Between 2005 and 2015 \$127,000 will have been spent on milfoil treatment. Beginning in 2009, with the assistance of the Scoby Pond Association, state grant funding of \$37,000 has supplemented town funds. In light of the high costs of treatment, the town began contributing to the boat host program operated by the Pleasant Pond Association. Between 2011 and 2015 the town will have added \$10,400 to grants from the NH Lakes Association and private donations.

Budgeted Recreation and Related Expenses 1980 – 2015 (\$000)

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2015</u>
Rec. Operating Budget	\$2.0	\$9.5	\$22.60	\$27.70	\$33.00
Reserve for Purchase of Land	-	-	\$5.00	-	-
Milfoil Treatment - Scoby (net)	-	-	-	\$12.50	\$18.00
Milfoil Prevention - Pleasant Pond	-	-	-	-	\$2.50
Total	\$2.0	\$9.5	\$27.60	\$40.20	\$53.50
% of Net Town Expense (after revenue and other adjustments)	1.4%	1.5%	3.8%	2.9%	3.3%

³³ Statistics for the number of children from kindergarten through grade 8 are not readily available. Enrollment in the Francetown Elementary School has dropped by more than half since the mid 1990’s.

³⁴ 2012 question #s 17 and 18.

The addition of salaried staff accounts for a third of the increase over the past 20 years. The balance is a combination of the rental toilet at Pleasant pond, the fishing derby and rate increases in items like landscaping and beach rental.

Open Space Facilities

The Conservation Commission was established in the 1960's, over a decade before the Recreation Commission. Immediately it became pro-active, organizing annual road-side clean ups and other Earth Day observations, promoting re-cycling programs at the Transfer Station, sponsoring attendance of students at various conservation/environmental programs, applying for soils mapping along the Piscataquog, soliciting support for scenic road designations.

The Town's first conservation land was donated by Caroline Lord in 1974. The Piscataquog Land Conservancy transferred its interest in 6 acres along the Piscataquog River abutting the then land-fill in 1984.

Table 20
Town Owned Conservation Lands

	<u>Approx. Date</u>		1994	2012
<u>Name/location</u>	<u>Date of Acquisition or Easement</u>	<u>Class VI and/or Trails</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Crotched Mountain Town Forest	1990-2004	yes	630	888.5
Fire Tower Town Forest (Crotched Mt.)	1984-2004	yes	1	52.4
Other Crotched Mt. Conservation Land	2011	yes	-	232.9
Shattuck Pond Town Forest	2003-2006	yes	-	418
Dinsmore Brook Conservation Area	2007-2010	yes	-	302.7
Piscataquog/Rand Brook Confluence	2010	no	-	52.8
Driscoll Hill Town Forest	1989	yes	53.6	53.6
Wharton Lot Town Forest (Route 47)	2007	no	-	39
Lord Town Forest (Ferson Road)*	1974	yes	27.9	27.9
Old County Road North (2 lots)	1998	no	-	26.2
Journey's End Black Gum Swamp	2003	no	-	10
Piscataquog/ Cilley*	2005-2006	no	-	10
Piscataquog River (abutting transfer sta.)*	1984	no	-	6
Total Acreage			712.5	2120

* Donations

It was not until 1987 that the Commission began the first of two periods during which it focused on land conservation. Over the next three years the town was successful in obtaining two grants from the short-lived Land Conservation Investment Program that helped fund the purchase of nearly 700 acres of land.

The second period of land conservation ran from 2005 through 2011. During this time, working with the Francetown Land Trust (FLT), the Piscataquog Land Conservancy and the Russell Foundation, the town added to the Crotched Mountain Town Forest, acquired the

720 acre Shattuck to Dinsmore Brook conservation areas and purchased 52 sensitive acres along the Piscataquog River³⁵. It also contributed to the conservation of 70 acres along Rand Brook and in 2014 to FLT's purchase of 150 acres on Bullard Hill Road near the Crotched Mountain Town Forest and 37 acres abutting the Dinsmore Conservation area³⁶.

The Commission also has conservation easement interests in 8 parcels totaling 814 acres for which it has primary stewardship responsibility. It has an executory (secondary) interest in 9 conservation easements totaling 466 acres. Easements must be monitored on an annual basis

In 1989 and 2001 the town voted to designate 6 tracts as official "Town Forests" under RSA 31:110 and to authorize the Conservation Commission to manage those forests. The forests are managed as mixed use with the Commission trying to balance recreational interests with wildlife management, protection of water quality and other related factors.

The 1994 Master Plan noted that "arguments by opponents to future – if not past – land acquisition include: the town already has enough town forest; conservation lands are a discretionary expense item the town cannot afford and; protected land, whether purchased by the town or by private organizations and funding programs reduces the value of the tax roll³⁷." The same arguments are made in 2015.

At present the all-volunteer Commission believes it is at capacity in terms of its ability to manage town owned properties and to monitor its easement interests. It does see a role in partnering with other conservation organizations in projects that further the objectives of the Conservation Plan, prepared with grant funds and the assistance of the Monadnock Conservancy and adopted as part of the Master plan in 2014.

In addition to its land management responsibilities, the Conservation Commission works closely with the Planning Board: it participates in site inspections of development proposal as well as public meetings related thereto; it is represented on the Road Improvement Sub-committee and works closely with the Planning Board in developing land use related regulations and in updating and expanding the Master plan³⁸. It continues to sponsor the annual road clean-up, gives out seedlings to elementary school students, partners with the library, FLT and the Fracesttown News to sponsor the Joan Hanchett Nature Series and handles its statutory responsibilities. The percentage of respondents rating the Commission's performance as 'very good' increased from 26% in 1994 to 40% in 2012, ranking at the top alongside the transfer station, fire and rescue.

³⁵ Grant sources included the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund, Land and Water Conservation Fund and Fields Ponds.

³⁶ Other conservation organizations have also protected land in Fracesttown through purchase or easement. See the Land Use Section for more information.

³⁷ Most lands acquired for conservation by the town are under current use and the value of 'lost taxes' is negligible. All but one of the non-profit conservation organizations that own land in Fracesttown continue to pay property taxes.

³⁸ In addition to the recently adopted Conservation Plan, the Commission worked with Southwest Regional Planning Commission in developing the town's Water Resource Management Plan adopted in 1989 and, over the years, has participating in updates to the Overlay District provisions on the zoning ordinance.

The Conservation Commission's annual operating budget is now \$1,400 compared to \$1,000 in 1995³⁹. Other sources of funding, include, or have included:

- Grant sources such as LCIP, LCHIP, LWCF and the Russell Foundation.
- Appropriations to the Conservation Fund as authorized by RSA 36-A.5. Between 1987 and 1991, the town appropriate \$45,000. Between 1996 and 2010, with 3 years off between 2004 and 2007, the town appropriated \$359,000. The 2014 FYE balance in the fund was \$14,989.
- 50% of current use change taxes, by vote of the town in 2001
- Proceeds from timbering in accordance with a Forest Management Plan in Town Forest
- \$1 million bond approved by voters in 2005

Approval of the Conservation Commission increased from 70% to 78% between 1994 and 2012. The percentage rating it as 'very good' approximately doubled to 50%.⁴⁰

Other Local Facilities and Services

This section focuses on private organizations and businesses that provide either supplementary governmental facilities, are in the recreation industry, or have achieved a sort of institutional status. In addition to these private businesses and institutions, there are numerous other small businesses and home occupations based in Francetown that are not listed in this section, but which nonetheless contribute greatly to the community.

Francetown Community Church

The church was built in 1883 as a Congregational Church and remained so until 1959, when it became a non-denominational community church affiliated with the United Church of Christ. The building is located on Main Street just north of the Old Meeting House. A sanctuary and two vestibules comprise the first, or ground floor and can comfortably accommodate approximately 150 people. Down a steep set of interior stairs is the basement level, which houses the fellowship hall or vestry, a large kitchen and two lavatories. This level is not handicapped-accessible; however, it is currently used for a variety of meetings, community events and monthly community suppers.

The church has a part-time pastor who until the spring of 2015 lived in the church-owned parsonage located in Mill Village immediately adjacent to Cemetery #2. The parsonage needs repairs which the church cannot afford. The church is reviewing its options.

Services are held on Sunday mornings and other Christian religious holidays. There are currently 41 active members of the church, although a larger number of residents continue to rely upon it periodically for major events such as funerals.

At-large community support seems to ebb and flow over the years. The church has on-going budget concerns that constantly jeopardize its viability, and it is constantly in a fundraising mode.

³⁹ The Commission typically spends less than its budget.

⁴⁰ 2012 question #s 17 and 18.

Fracesttown Improvement and Historical Society (FIHS)

Initially called the Village Improvement Society, FIHS was founded in 1911 with the principal objective of promoting “an interest among the people toward the improving and beautifying of the town.” In 1961, it merged with the much less active Historical Society (est. 1923) and added to its charter the preservation of the Fracesttown Historical Collection.

Probably best known for its Labor Day Celebration, the annual fundraiser which raises approximately \$10,000 each year, FIHS has made innumerable contributions to various town improvement projects over the years. The Town’s recreation fields and tennis courts are located on land owned by FIHS and leased to the town for \$1 a year. Colburn Park, located across Main St. from the library, is owned and maintained by FIHS⁴¹.

FIHS currently rents a portion of the Town Hall Annex to house their archives and the historical collection, which includes memorabilia of Fracesttown families, items from the Fracesttown Academy, a collection of articles made from locally quarried soapstone, military memorabilia and textiles. The historical rooms are open on Labor Day and on a limited basis during the rest of the year.

In 2004, members approved the purchase of the Butterfield Block or “Beehive” building, an historically significant structure that once served as a dormitory for the Fracesttown Academy, to house the Society’s historical rooms, archives and offices. A building study committee has completed work on plans for renovation/restoration and usage of the space, and their fundraising efforts are ongoing. FIHS plans to move to this new home, which is located next to Town Hall, when restoration is complete.

Over the last decade, FIHS volunteers have computerized a reference of the collection and made a significant effort to increase membership. As of the end of 2013, the Society membership numbers 135 regular active members and 134 lifetime members; an additional 136 members are currently in arrears. (In 1995, there were 41 dues-paying family memberships, 15 single memberships and 18 life memberships.)

The Old Meeting House

The Old Meeting House, literally located at the center of Fracesttown, was raised in 1801-03 as the gathering place for civic and religious purposes⁴². Originally it was constructed from parts of an earlier adjacent meetinghouse and paid for with pew sales and town taxes. The building became a private religious facility in 1833, although the Town reserved the right to use the building and its bell and agreed to retain the

⁴¹ The property was sold to FIHS at a nominal fee after the Colburn store burned in 1964. A deed restriction against any structure, temporary or permanent, conflicts somewhat with another restriction that the property be used as a park. The lack of picnic tables or benches mean the lot is under-utilized.

⁴² “This geographical center dates back to the very first Town Meeting in 1772 when John Quigley, James Dickey and David Lewis were charged with responsibility for ‘centering the town’ and thereby deciding where the town’s first meeting house would be built. In fulfilling this commission they selected a site close to where the meeting house is located.” John Schott, *Fraces’ Town*, 1972. Today’s Old Meeting House is near the original facility.

responsibility for maintaining the building's exterior. The Town also retained the land surrounding the building.

In 1987 the town voted to terminate its obligation to maintain the exterior of the building, but retained its rights and responsibilities to the clock and bell. This vote coincided with the transfer of the building's ownership from the Unitarian Universalist Church, the last of several religious societies to occupy the premises, to the Old Meeting House, Inc., a non-profit corporation responsible for the ongoing preservation, restoration, maintenance and management of the building, as well as retaining its historical and architectural integrity and ensuring its continuing usefulness to the town. The Old Meeting House of Francetown was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999. Today the Old Meeting House remains what one historian has called "an architecturally magnificent building" in our New Hampshire Historic Landmark Village.

The structure is approximately 90' x 48' with three large doors that open into the vestry. On the sloped main floor there are 54 separate pews, seating 300 people. An organ and a piano sit on either side of the front of the room. While the overhanging balconies have 18 pews on each side that hold a total of 200 people, this section is closed to public use because of its limited access. The steeple contains a clock installed in 1912 and a larger bell installed in 1855, replacing the 1809 bell.

Major repairs were made to the building in the late 1980s, and there is a current 10-year capital drive to raise \$70,000 for additional improvements, including window glazing and painting. In 2014 the septic system was replaced with contribution of all labor and equipment by a local contractor.

Funds are provided by contributions, memorial gifts, memberships and proceeds from weddings and cultural events. While there have been and are still many lifetime memberships, there are only 93 active family memberships, 69 of which are held by residents.

One of the main objectives of the OMH Board of Trustees is to ensure that the building is utilized as fully as possible. Typical functions now held in the Old Meeting House include the traditional Labor Day Vespers and other activities, annual meetings of the Francetown Improvement and Historical Society and the Francetown Land Trust, weddings, memorial services, Monadnock Music concerts, classical, jazz and folk music, storytelling and NH Humanities Council programs.

Post Office

Since 1967 the Francetown Post Office has been housed in the upper floor of a privately owned building located just south of the Village on the Second New Hampshire Turnpike South. Space is divided between a customer mailing vestibule with access to lock boxes and a workroom/service counter for employees. The building is handicapped-accessible with a ramp leading to the front door. There is considerable paved parking. The parking lot also serves as a driveway to Map 12, Lot 1.1.

The U.S. Postal Service uses a formula calculating the amount of annual revenue generated and the work hours used to determine the size of the office relative to all

others and the pay level of the postmaster. In 1995 there were 220 vestibule lock boxes and 370 rural free delivery (RFD) stops. In 2013 there are still 220 lock boxes, but RFD stops have risen to 506 and are divided into two routes. The workroom floor is crowded and there is no room for expansion.

Currently the office is staffed with a full-time postmaster, a full-time rural carrier and a part-time rural carrier. A part-time clerk position is authorized but is currently unfilled due to a temporary detailed assignment elsewhere. A substitute part-time rural carrier position is authorized but vacant.

The mailing vestibule is open from 7 AM to 5 PM daily and 7 AM to 12 PM on Saturdays. The service counter is open from 8 AM to Noon and 1 to 5 PM weekdays and 8:30 AM to 12 PM on Saturdays. The office is closed on Sunday.

Water Company

The Francetown Water and Electric Company was first organized in 1880, re-established in 1922 and re-organized as a cooperative venture known as the Francetown Village Water Company in the late 1970s.

The company operates a small community water system EPA ID# 0831010 and meets all requirements of the EPA and the NH Department of Environmental Services. In 1978, the water company embarked on a \$190,000 improvement project to upgrade its water transmission system. It built a 30,000-gallon water storage tank, lay 9,000 feet of 6-inch steel, non-corrosive pipe and installed water meters and four fire hydrants. Prior to the Route 47/Main Street reconstruction the water lines were extended to the Town Recreation Fields, adding fire hydrants, two additional residential connections and three small hydrants providing drinking and irrigation water for the athletic fields. At the time of the Main Street construction an additional fire protection service was added for the library. Currently there are two wells, one on Perley Road and one on Oak Hill Road, which provide the water for the system. Recent improvements include the deepening and hydrofracking of one of the wells and remodeling the control and blending building, adding new electronic controls and upgrading the piping. The new piping will accommodate future water treatment if necessary. Water is sampled and tested on a regular basis for the presence of bacteria and for chemical contaminants by the Operations Officer of the company. Current water usage is 65,000 to 70,000 gallons per week in the summer and 30,000 gallons per week during the winter months.

The cooperative services 60 residences in the immediate Village area and provides hydrants for fire protection. There are no plans to expand the existing lines or add services. Well production is adequate for current usage levels; the cooperative has considered additional sources of water, but there are no plans to exploit them at the present time. Participating members are responsible for maintaining connections between the sidewalk and the premises.

In 2014 the Board of Tax and Land Appeals found the water company to be a charitable organization exempt from property tax.

The major concern of the water company relating to town planning is protection of their source water. Keeping to a minimum the number of additional Potential Contamination Source Sites in their wellhead protection area would be helpful.

Cable Television and Telecommunications/Personal Wireless Services

In June 2004 the town granted a cable franchise to Harron Communications, d/b/a Adelphia Cable Communications. Subsequently Adelphia entered bankruptcy and part of its assets were acquired by Comcast in July 2006. The initial period of franchise ran to June 6, 2013, but by terms of the agreement this was automatically extended for an additional five years, until 2018.

Fracestown receives a quarterly franchise fee from Comcast amounting to 3% of gross revenues, and is entitled to increase this fee to not more than 5% of gross revenues. Although this fee fluctuates, it has amounted in recent years to around \$2,000 per quarter, or roughly \$8,000 a year. In addition, Comcast provides a public access channel for the town's use, which, however, has rarely if ever been utilized since 2004 either by town government or individuals.

Cable service for TV and telecommunications services is available to property owners along most of Fracestown's major roads. In addition, the terms of the agreement provide for cable connection to the Fracestown Elementary School, the Bixby Memorial Library, and all town administrative buildings, including the fire, police, and highway departments and the town offices.

In 2007-08 FairPoint Communications acquired Verizon's landline assets in northern New England and now offers landline phone and broadband DSL service to customers in Fracestown.

Several wireless companies currently provide service to Fracestown residents and visitors. Tower facilities are operated on or near the summit of Crotched Mountain by Verizon and U.S. Cellular. Under the town's telecommunications ordinance, no new facilities can be sited on or near the summit of Crotched Mountain unless they are co-located on an existing facility. In 2010 the town's land use boards approved a new 100-foot tower to replace the old tower on the summit of Crotched.

New Cingular Wireless/AT&T Mobility also operates a wireless facility off of Dennison Pond Road consisting of a 110-foot "monopine" structure. This project was approved by the Planning Board in August 2010, but due to court challenges the project was not finished and put into service until 2013. AT&T has expressed interest in completing its local network coverage by siting another facility near the center of town to provide better coverage to the Village and Route 47, but no specific plan has as yet come before the Planning Board.

An old freestanding tower near Bible Hill Road was used at one time as a microwave receiver, but it is currently inactive and unpowered, and has thus far been considered less than useful as a possible co-location site for additional wireless antennas.

In the 2012 Master Plan Questionnaire, 82% of respondents reported access to the Internet at home, and 74% of respondents said they use it on a daily basis⁴³. (Percentages increase significantly when those who did not answer are excluded: 97% report access and 90% use it daily.) In terms of connections, the majority of people (66.5%) who indicated they have internet connect via cable, while 20.3% connect via DSL, 12% via cellular network and 4.4% each reported having a satellite or dialup connection.

Although most of the reported Internet use was for emails, web browsing and entertainment, 39.6% of respondents also said they telecommuted via computer. This may reflect a trend that would have future implications for town traffic and commerce as well as increased use of local resources and services, as well as volunteerism.

Roughly 80% report owning a cellular phone (97% if surveys that did not answer the question are excluded). The majority of cell phone users reported using Verizon as their carrier (61%), with fewer customers for U.S. Cellular, AT&T and other providers. Only 13.3% of respondents described their cellular reception as “excellent.” Nearly half (47.5%) described their service as “adequate,” and nearly as many (39.2%) described it as “poor.”⁴⁴ These numbers may improve after the new AT&T facility comes on-line in 2013, but it points to the difficulty of balancing the number of towers/monopoles with regional topography and local aesthetic concerns. It is also a consequence of one carrier’s stated interest in the quality of service for vehicular traffic rather than for stationary residences and businesses. It seems likely that, for the near future, cellular providers will continue to focus on coverage for the main routes through town (NH 47 and 136) to capture commuter traffic.

The Long Store/Francesttown Village Store

The Long Store (Francesttown Village Store) has been in continuous operation since it was built in 1814—a time when Francesttown boasted a great variety of commercial enterprises. Research indicates that the Long Store is one of the four or five oldest continuously operated general stores in the United States, and it is the second oldest in New Hampshire. In 2010 the store was added to the State Register of Historic Places.

In 2014 the store marked its bicentennial as the center of commercial and daily social activity for many residents of Francesttown. It currently employs 3 hourly employees besides the proprietors. Over the years the store has housed a number of different businesses—banks, a jeweler’s shop, the post office. Since at least the 1940s, the building has been used almost exclusively as a general store and periodically as a residence for the owners/proprietors. In 1997, a failed septic system was replaced with two new septic tanks. Two gas pumps which were in the right-of-way and an underground storage tank were moved and replaced in the fall of 1995. (Subsequent owners have continued to work with the state’s Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) to monitor and remediate pollution due to tank leakage that occurred before their tenure.)

⁴³ Questions #93 -95. Roughly 16% of respondents didn’t answer these questions.

⁴⁴ Question # 100-103

The store has no official off-street parking, but the reconstruction of Main Street (NH Route 47) in 2004 widened the shoulders on both sides of the street, allowing for safer parking in the vicinity of the store. In the 2012 Master Plan Questionnaire, 80.1% of respondents did not feel that parking on Main Street was a problem, and 65.9% were in favor of creating municipal off-site parking for Main Street businesses.

The site and structural limitations of this large historic building have greatly complicated the operation and expansion of business ventures for various owners over the past few decades, and ensure that virtually any proposed use of this building will be nonconforming based on modern zoning standards. So long as the business remains a general store, that use is grandfathered. Other restrictions, including a 1992 Hillsborough County Superior Court decision, have hampered the ability of the owners to use the entire building or bring in other businesses that might contribute to its financial viability.

In 2003 the retail and commercial space inside the store was expanded by 20 percent (as allowed under Section 3.1.1 of the town's Zoning Ordinance), converting the first-floor residential area (two rooms) into office space and a retail/display room. In 2010, with approval of the Planning Board and ZBA, a significant portion of the upstairs residential space was converted into a USDA-licensed and -inspected commercial kitchen. In 2013 the septic system was replaced but capacity was not increased.

As was stated in the 1996 Master Plan, the store is in an economic quandary similar in some respects to that facing the Community Church. That is, while most residents want, need and use the store on an emergency or convenience basis, few support it to the degree needed to ensure its survival. The business has benefitted seasonally in recent years from the reopening of the Crotched Mountain ski area. It also attracts a significant "carriage trade," including commuters from neighboring towns and people who travel from out of town to purchase specialty beers, which have become a mainstay of the business.

Also like the Community Church, the Fracesttown Village Store meets a number of broader town needs. It is a place to catch up on local news and gossip. It is an advertisement center for all town activities and many private services. In addition, with no handling costs, it sells tickets for local organizations, holds messages and accepts packages for town residents, provides food at cost for the annual fireman's supper and other local fundraising activities, etc. The store is a facility which the town has no obligation to support, but without which Fracesttown would be less of a community.

In the 2012 Master Plan Questionnaire, nearly half (49.7%) of the total 194 surveys felt "an active Village center" to be "very important" in contributing to "the Town's unique character and quality of life"⁴⁵; 10% rated it the most important resource, the third highest ranking behind "clean water" and "peace and quiet"⁴⁶, each of which received a top ranking from about 20% of surveys. A majority (51%) were in favor of relaxing

⁴⁵ Of the 10 resources respondents were asked to rate in terms of its contribution to the community, 8 were more important factors: clean water, scenic qualities, peace and quiet, abundant wildlife, recreational land/waters, working farms, working forests and historic features.

⁴⁶ Question #67

setback restrictions in the Village District⁴⁷. 55% favored creating a commercial district, “possibly on Main Street”⁴⁸. Coupled with the opinions about parking and traffic on Main Street cited above, it appears that there is support for site-appropriate commercial development and expansion in the central area of the Village. For this to occur, it will be crucial in coming years to resolve the long-standing limited use of the Fracesttown Village Store, to ensure that it will remain a viable business and the heart of the Village as it enters its third century.

Crotched Mountain Ski Area

Although the base lodge of the current Crotched Mountain Ski and Ride ski area is located in Bennington, the equipment shed and the majority of the ski slopes are located in Fracesttown.

Originally opened in 1962 on 500+ acres which had been part of the Winslow Hob & Nob Dairy Farm,⁴⁹ in the 1980’s the Crotched Mountain Ski Area was merged with the Onset Ski area in Bennington and became a significant regional ski area, averaging over 100,000 skier visits per year. Primarily a day-trip area, Crotched attracted skiers from all over southern New England. In 1989, plagued by declining snowfalls and burdened with debt from real estate ventures, including the development of condominiums at Eastside and Onset, the ski area closed in bankruptcy. The closing had a serious effect on the local community: jobs were lost, businesses closed, and local tax rates went up to compensate for the loss of revenues. In the 1990’s a number of groups attempted to get the ski area opened and viable again but, in part due to a lagging economy, were unsuccessful.

In December 1999, the west side of the ski area was purchased at auction by a local investor. The portion of the ski area originally known as Eastside (tax map 7, lots 3 and 3.1), now owned by US Cellular, was given to the town in June of 2000 in lieu of back taxes.

At Town Meeting in March 2001 voters directed the Selectmen to retain the former Crotched Mountain East property and to raze the abandoned lodge and other unsafe structures. In 2003, Town Meeting voters approved a conservation easement on portions of the two lots, with provisions to allow for passive recreational use and to allow for potential future development as a commercial ski area.

In September 2002, Peak Resorts began site plan review with the towns of Bennington and Fracesttown to redevelop and reopen the former west-side ski area. The company

⁴⁷ Question # 52

⁴⁸ Question #57

⁴⁹ The Winslow estate, which had owned most of the land on both sides of Mountain Road, as well as acreage on the south side of Crotched Mountain, was broken up in the early 1960s. The main brick house was originally part of the ski area and was operated first as a base lodge and then as an inn; it was spun off in the 1970s during one of the area’s many financial reorganizations, and is now known as the Inn at Crotched Mountain. Accessory farm buildings/residences and land along the lower part of Mountain Road were sold off. The buildings known as Granny Ketch became a restaurant and ski lodge until becoming first Grandmother’s and then Maitre Jacques restaurants (now a private residence). The rest of the property went to the venture capital group that started the ski area—many of whom were local property owners.

maintained that limited water resources made it impractical or impossible to guarantee 100% snowmaking capacity on both the east- and west-side trails. The two town boards held separate and joint public hearings, and the Fracestown Planning Board granted Peak conditional site plan approval in January 2003. In December 2003, Peak Resorts opened the west-side area, with a new base lodge and parking area in Bennington and a new maintenance building and trail improvements in Fracestown.

Having been out of business for 13 years, the return of skiers to Crotched Mountain happened slowly. In 2005 the area reported only 88,000 skier visits, about half the traffic of nearby Pat's Peak. But following a challenging, low-snow winter season in 2011-12, Crotched Mountain Ski & Ride was granted approval by the Planning Board to expand and reclaim old ski trails and implement other improvements. A new high-speed quad chairlift was installed and trails and lifts were extended to the true summit of Crotched. In the 2012-13 season, partly due to these improvements and partly due to heavy natural snowfall, Crotched Ski & Ride reported its best season in its nine years of operation.

Crotched Ski & Ride currently operates 17 trails and 7 lifts, as well as two terrain parks. Like other areas it offers after-school and group programs. 100% lighted slopes facilitate late-night skiing ("Midnight Madness"), occurring mainly on weekends and during winter school vacation. Crotched boasts of having the "most open hours of any area in the eastern US," though in its 2003 site plan approval the Planning Board limits the regular hours of operation to 8 AM to 10 PM daily, and limits the number of late-night skiing days to 24 per season.

The return of the ski area has undeniably benefitted businesses in the greater Monadnock Region. The ski area's hiring of local residents, especially young people, during the ski season is also an important benefit. Yet the presence of the ski area also affects Fracestown and neighboring communities in negative ways. The Second NH Turnpike South, a town-maintained road, has seen a marked increase in traffic. And, although Bennington is responsible for first-response police and fire/rescue calls, Fracestown also shares the burden, particularly as regards traffic control and speed limit enforcement on Main Street and the Second NH Turnpike South. Also in recent years, several ongoing issues related to operations at the ski area have come before the towns of Bennington and Fracestown. The ski area's nighttime lighting, which is extremely bright and visible from many local residences and neighboring communities, including Antrim and even as far away as Nelson. In 2014, after the town issued a formal "notice of violation", the area installed shields on the new trail lights installed in 2012.

The Inn at Crotched Mountain.

The Inn, located on a 27.5 acre parcel on Mountain Road just below the base of the former east side ski area, is a seasonal inn and recreational facility. Originally built as a homestead around 1822 and rebuilt after a fire in the 1930's, the facility includes 13 rooms, dining and common rooms, and a swimming pool. The tennis courts have been abandoned and the bar, serving light fare, is now open on Saturday nights only. The Inn is currently on the market at \$2,300,000.

Crotched Mountain Resort

The site of the present Crotched Mountain Resort has a long history of commercial use. The Georgian-style mansion, known as the Gibson Tavern after its first owner, was built in 1800 to accommodate travelers on the newly opened Second New Hampshire Turnpike. After the tavern closed, the site was used for farming until 1927, when it was purchased for use as the Mount Crotched Country Club. Well known in the area, the Club, with its nine-hole course designed by famed golf course architect Donald Ross, operated through the 1930s, until the Great Depression, gas rationing and other precursors to World War II led to its closing. The property then reverted to agricultural use for the second time.

In the 1970s, about ten years after the opening of the ski area, the property was again purchased for use as a golf course/club, originally called the Hall of Fame. Immediate improvements were relatively modest: The original nine holes were reclaimed and an additional nine holes were added. In addition, in an apparent effort to develop the area as a destination resort and to capture some of the overnight ski business, the large cattle barn was converted into a motel.

Expansion plans grew more ambitious with a change in ownership in the 1980s. The facility was renamed Tory Pines and a driving range was added. The Gibson Tavern was gutted to create two restaurants, banquet facilities and conference rooms. The motel was shut down in favor of a more upscale hotel, planned as 16 separate buildings with one- and two-bedroom suites, which were marketed as time-share condominium units. A maintenance facility was built, along with a fire pond and a massive sewage lagoon system designed to accommodate solid waste. An additional 200 acres of raw land were purchased and a cross-country ski program was added in an effort to create a four-season resort. Plans were approved for a large-scale conference center, a sports complex, and a small lake for trophy fishing. Although the decline of the real estate market contributed to its problems, the over-leveraged operation was involved in the Savings & Loan scandal and the principle was found to have diverted borrowings for personal use and unrelated projects. Tory Pines followed Crotched Mountain ski area into bankruptcy. Only 32 of the hotel units were completed⁵⁰; the remaining units/buildings were left standing as shells.

Since the 1980s a succession of owners have acquired, operated and subsequently resold the golf course/resort and tavern. In 2007 the Russell Foundation and the Fracestoun Land Trust acquired from then-owners TPR Development the Dinsmore Brook Conservation Area, a 219-acre tract of land that was identified as having prime wetlands, wildlife habitat and conservation land in the Dinsmore Brook/Shattuck Pond protection area.

In 2008 Shell Vacations LLC purchased the resort from TPR Development and received approval from the Town's land use boards for a three-phase plan to demolish the unsafe old shells of buildings and construct a number of new two-story buildings, to bring the total number of time-share units to 112. The 2010 collapse of real estate and lending markets and the economic recession that followed prevented the owners from constructing more

⁵⁰ 32 total bedrooms in sixteen 1 and 2 bedroom configurations.

than four new units, bringing the total number of rentals to 24⁵¹. In 2012 Shell Vacations' resorts was acquired by Wyndham Vacation Ownership, as of this writing the new owners have not indicated whether or when they intend to build out the remaining hotel units.

Around the same time, Shell divested itself of the actual golf course and tavern/club property, For the first time in its history, the golf course/tavern and the time-share/hotel are under separate ownership. However, since the course is the chief amenity of the resort and sewage facilities are shared, they continue a close association. Crotched Mountain Operations, LLC purchased the golf course and Gibson Tavern and renamed the restaurant the Toll Booth Tavern. In March 2012 the town's land use boards approved plans for a one-story, 4,000 square foot addition to the existing tavern, intended to host golf outings, banquets and other functions.

The main issue of local concern at the resort remains the build-out of the time-share hotel units. The existing ruins of building shells, constructed hastily in the 1980s, remain an eyesore and a liability, and their demolition is a preliminary requirement for any construction of new buildings on the site. If the 112 units are ever in fact built out, the effect on both the local and regional economy could be significant.

In the 2012 Master Plan Questionnaire, a small percentage of total surveys either favored more resort development in town (10.3%)⁵² or opposed more resort development (6.2%). A majority favored, in the abstract, the creation of a Recreation zoning district (50.5%)⁵³. A similar number (50.5%) favored additional recreational development overall⁵⁴. 37.6% favoring more hotel or inn development in town, though only 12% wanted more residential condominiums. This would seem to favor the model of Crotched Mountain Resort, where guests stay for a few days or a week, but do not add to the permanent population or school enrollment, etc. in Franeestown⁵⁵.

The Franeestown News

Prompted in part by the 1994 Master Plan questionnaire, three local residents formed the Franeestown New in 1996. A small, all-volunteer non-profit organization, the News has published promptly every month since its inception. A current issue costs \$.75 and an annual subscription is \$15/year. Any surplus funds are donated to local organizations that promote 'education'. The 2012 Master Plan survey found it to be by far the news source most used by respondents. Despite this important addition to the community and the creation of a town website that provides a calendar of events, forms, ordinances, etc. only 57% of the 194 respondents considered themselves "adequately informed about local issues"⁵⁶, up only slightly from 50% in 1994.

⁵¹ 24 units with a total of 36 bedrooms. Donald Ross with 4 one bedroom and four 2 bedroom units; Mt. Crotched with four 1 bedroom units, Pinehurst with four 2 bedroom units and Dornach with eight 2 bedroom units.

⁵² Question #19

⁵³ Question #60

⁵⁴ Question #61

⁵⁵ This was not the preferred model of the developer but was forced upon it by the town.

⁵⁶ Question #24

APPENDIX I

(INCLUDE SURVEY Q AND RESULTS)