

# Town Clerk/Treasurer's Report

## Website

We now have a town website which is being managed by the town clerk, and so far so good! Please visit it at [www.riptonvt.org](http://www.riptonvt.org) and get familiar with the information you now have access to when coming to the office is not convenient. There are forms, maps, meeting minutes and much, much more. The cost of maintaining the site is shown in a new budget line; \$294 a year covers the website hosting fee and domain fee. This is *our* site and your input is welcome.

## Land Records

Every year, I report that we plan to make headway toward the computerization of land records – a project that has been waiting in the wings since before I took office – and every year I report making baby steps. Well, I really mean it this year! The increase in the 2011 budget for assistant town clerk will help us get this project off the ground.

Beginning in 2010, we are scanning each document that we record so that we will have an image to attach to the electronic record, and this provides one type of backup as well. Microfilming is still the best practice for long-term backup; our latest complete land record volumes were recently microfilmed, so we are up to date with that effort.

We added 630 pages to our records in 2010. Of the 44 property transfers recorded only 10 were sales. The river mitigation project necessitated the town to purchase work easements from 6 property owners which added up to over 30 pages of recording for which the recording fees were waived (the town is exempt from paying fees to itself). Refinancing continued to be a popular activity.

	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Property Transfers	44	24	18	18	26	28
# Pages Recorded	630	583	476	648	633	794

## Vital Statistics

The US Census Bureau completed the decennial census though we do not yet have a new population figure for our town; it remains estimated to be 586. Five births and two marriages were added to our vital records in 2010. There were four deaths of Ripton citizens, though two were not living here at the time.

	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Births	5	9	7	3	4	6	5	6	10	3
Marriages / Civil Marriages	2	3	5	9	10	3	4	7	3	3
Civil Unions	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2
Deaths	4	3	4	1	4	3	4	7	0	0

## Records Preservation

As reported last year, we received an estimate in 2009 of over \$5,000 to restore our old vital records and planned to spread the work and cost over two years. Our oldest volumes were restored in 2010 and the results are fantastic; these precious handwritten documents can now be easily handled without causing further damage. The remaining volumes that need attention will be restored in 2011.

I have written a draft records management policy that addresses how public records are created, received and maintained by an agency. Adopting this policy would ensure the integrity of our town's legacy as expressed in the records we produce and preserve. The draft will be reviewed by all town officers and considered for adoption in 2011; a copy is available at the town office for public review.

## E-Tax Bills

In 2010 we offered the option of receiving your property tax bill by e-mail (either in lieu of or in addition to USPS mail) and got quite a few takers. It reduces paper-use and postage costs for the town somewhat, but the advantage is primarily for you in that you will have a copy that you won't so easily lose track of – hopefully! If you want to add your name to the e-tax bill list, contact me at [townoffice@riptonvt.org](mailto:townoffice@riptonvt.org).

## Town Clerk/Treasurer's Report (continued)

### Dog Licensing

One hundred and five dogs were licensed in Ripton in 2010. State law requires that all dog owners license any dog over 6 months of age with the town clerk between January 1 and March 31 of every year. Fees are: \$8 for neutered or spayed dogs, \$12 for dogs that are not. We need to have a copy of your dog's rabies vaccination certificate on file to issue the license. If your dog's rabies certification expires later in the year, get your license now based on the current certification and send us a copy of the new one when you get it. Dog licenses issued after the deadline will include a late fee.

### Elections

In 2010, we had three elections: town meeting, the fall primary (which due to mid-year state legislation ended up being a summer primary!) and the general. Voter turnout for the primary was higher than usual and turnout for the general a little lower than average for our town. Town meeting election day for 2011 is March 1. See the cover page in this report for important deadlines regarding voting. For further information about elections and election issues, contact the town office during office hours, visit the town website at [www.riptonvt.org](http://www.riptonvt.org) or the Vermont Secretary of State's website at [www.sec.state.vt.us](http://www.sec.state.vt.us).

### Ripton Voter Participation

Town Meeting			State & Federal Elections		
Year	Total Voters	Voted	Election	Total Voters	Voted
2010	446	125(28%)	General 2010	451	291(65%)
2009	433	137 (32%)	Primary 2010	447	167 (37%)
2008	424	269 (63%)	General 2008	444	355 (80%)
2007	424	172 (41%)	Primary 2008	431	48 (11%)
2006	450	110 (24%)	General 2006	453	316 (70%)
2005	436	107 (25%)	Primary 2006	428	92 (21%)
2004	405	152 (38%)	General 2004	444	332 (75%)
2003	410	140 (34%)	Primary 2004	438	87 (20%)
2002	375	138 (37%)	General 2002	412	300 (73%)
2001	390	93 (24%)	Primary 2002	381	71 (19%)
2000	352	174 (49%)	General 2000	385	305 (79%)
			Primary 2000	363	123 (34%)

In 2009 Ripton received a round of funds distributed through the state, originally received via the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) passed in 2003. These "HAVA Funds" (as we call them in our budget) may be requested by town clerks to be used for specific items which improve their ability to use the statewide voter checklist. Up to \$6,000 may be applied for by each town to be spent over a two-year election cycle. We applied for and received \$3,341 for computer hardware and software, computer training, and IT support of which \$1,793 was spent in 2009 and the remaining \$1,547 was available to spend in 2010. We ended up not doing some training that we had applied for, so only \$220 was spent in 2010. The remaining \$1,327 was returned to the state where it goes back into the pot to be available for the same purposes in the future.

Not to be confused with HAVA "funds", Ripton also received a HAVA "grant" in 2010. These monies (up to \$5,000) are applied for in a more formal grant process and may be used to improve accessibility at polling places. Since Ripton uses the town office as a polling place for primary elections (which are federal), and because the town office is considered a polling place for early/absentee voting for all federal elections, we were able to apply for this grant to improve accessibility to the town office. Oddly enough, the town office bathroom is handicap accessible, but the entry door to the office building was not. We received \$3,866 to remedy that by widening the doorway, installing a new door, and rebuilding the ramp to the door to meet accessibility specifications.