

Town Clerk's Report

Land Records

Recording fees increased on July 1 from \$8.00 per page to \$10.00 per page. The intent of the Legislature for the increase was to provide towns with more income to dedicate toward computerization of land records. We made a small start on this project in 2009, and plan to make substantial headway in 2010.

Home sales were down a little in Ripton however we recorded numerous mortgages due to refinancing – a popular activity when interest rates decline.

	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Property Transfers	24	18	18	26	28	50
# Pages Recorded	583	476	648	633	794	731

Vital Statistics

During 2010, the US Census Bureau will be completing their work. As it is in our best interest to have an accurate census, your cooperation is most appreciated.

Until the current census is completed, the population of Ripton remains estimated to be 586. Nine births, three deaths, and three marriages were added to our vital records in 2009. On September 1, the new Vermont marriage law took effect which replaced “marriage” and “civil union” with “civil marriage” defined as “the legally recognized union of two people”. Practically speaking, this simplifies recordkeeping at the Town Office – only one type of license to keep on hand, index, and archive! Another new law that affects marriages (effective a year earlier, July 2008) allows for anyone to officiate a marriage by obtaining a Temporary Officiant’s license from the Secretary of State’s office for a fee of \$100. The license is good only for a particular marriage and can be requested through the Secretary of State’s website at www.sec.state.vt.us.

	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Births	9	7	3	4	6	5	6	10	3	13
Marriages / Civil Marriages	3	5	9	10	3	4	7	3	3	6
Civil Unions	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0
Deaths	3	4	1	4	3	4	7	0	0	3

Records Restoration

An archival specialist reviewed the records in our vault and offered some observations and recommendations. Our land records are in rather good shape, due to the steady effort to restore volumes one at a time over the years. Other permanent records, such as minutes and grand lists, require some attention which we can work on a little at a time. The records that need the most attention are our eleven volumes of vital records, including the earliest books with fading handwritten entries. The total estimate for all volumes is \$5,011, and the plan is to spread the work and cost over two years.

Town Clerk’s Report (continued)

Dog Licensing

One hundred and fifteen dogs were licensed in Ripton in 2009. 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 increased in 2009 so the new rates are: \$8 for neutered or spayed dogs, \$12 for dogs that are not. (The fee increase of one dollar will be added to the State’s spay and neuter program fund.) 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

Being an odd-numbered year, the only election that took place in 2009 was our local election following Town Meeting. It was our first election to be held in the Town Office and it went very well. (The Ripton Board of Civil Authority decided in late 2008 that for low-attended elections, it is more convenient, efficient and cost-effective to conduct the election at the Town Office instead of the Community House.) In 2010, we will have three elections: Town Meeting, the fall primary, and the general. The first two are planned to be held at the Town Office, and the general election in November at the Community House.

Election Calendar 2010	Town Meeting	Primary	General
Date of election	March 2	September 14	November 2
Polling place	Town Office	Town Office	Community House
Last day to register to vote	February 24, 5:00pm	September 8, 5:00pm	October 27, 5:00pm
Last day to request an absentee ballot	March 1, 6:00pm	September 13, 6:00pm	November 1, 5:00pm

Ripton Voter Participation

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

Ripton received another 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. In 2009, we received \$3,341 for computer hardware and software, computer training, and IT support of which \$1,793 was spent in 2009 and \$1,547 is expected to be spent in 2010. Remaining unspent funds are returned to the State.

For further information about elections and election issues, contact the Town Office during office hours or the Vermont Secretary of State’s website anytime at www.sec.state.vt.us.