

GLOSSARY OF DEPARTMENTS, BOARDS & COMMITTEES
Check the Town Website for Meeting Dates, Times and Locations.

ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER - Responsible for responding to complaints ranging from nuisance dog barking to lost or injured animals. The Animal Control Officer works with the Douglas Police Department and the Douglas Board of Selectmen to resolve disputes and maintain public safety in relation to the animals in Douglas.

ANIMAL INSPECTOR responds to all dog bites and investigates and quarantines. Makes sure that rabies shots are up to date. Performs yearly Barn Inspections. The Massachusetts Bureau of Animal Health appoints the Animal Inspector each year.

BOARD OF ASSESSORS - Composed of three elected members and is required by Massachusetts General Laws to value all real and personal property based on "full and fair cash value" within their community. Every three years, the Board of Assessors must submit these values to the Department of Revenue for certification. Property sales must also be reviewed on an annual basis and the values adjusted if deemed necessary to maintain "full and fair cash value". The Board of Assessors is required to annually assess taxes in an amount sufficient to cover the state and local appropriations chargeable to the Town, and subsequent to the determination of the total assessment. The Board of Assessors must annually fix the tax rate. All maintenance of the real and personal property databases, the processing of commitments of real and personal property, and motor vehicle and boat excise taxes are performed by two full-time and one part-time staff members under the direction of the Board of Assessors. Taxpayers have a formal right to file for an abatement of taxes, once the tax bills have been distributed. Certain taxpayers are also allowed exemptions from their property tax bills. Taxpayers having questions relative to a bill, the abatement process, or statutory exemptions are advised to contact the Assessors' Office as soon as the bill is received.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT - Responsible for all building permits that are reviewed by numerous departments depending on the project. A building permit is required for new construction, reconstruction, alterations, repairs, demolition, change of use, and change of occupancy. Along with the building aspects, this department is also responsible for zoning enforcement. Although the Building Department does not have the authority to grant waivers to any code, law, bylaw, or regulation, they may be granted through various appeal boards.

BUILDING FACILITIES AND CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE – This committee was created under the provisions of Article 10 of the Town of Douglas General Bylaws. It is comprised of an appointed 7 member committee with 3 members being appointed by the Board of Selectmen, 3 members by the Town Moderator, and 1 by the School Committee. The Town Engineer also serves on this committee as a non-voting member. The Committee is intended to be used as a resource for various Town Construction Projects with a cost of \$10,000 or greater and/or as requested by the Board of Selectmen.

CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE - The Douglas Cable Advisory Committee is charged with negotiating the license with cable providers and running two of the town's local PEG channels (Public and Government) as provided through a grant with Charter Communications. As appointed by the Board of Selectmen, the Cable Advisory Committee is a group of volunteer residents who handle the charge of overseeing the general operation of the station, as well as making policy decisions and answering any challenges that arise.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE - Composed of five (5) department heads or their representatives and four (4) Douglas residents. The Committee's Charter is to identify capital projects for the six years (current year plus the next five years) and consolidate those projects into an on-going capital plan. The Plan will be updated on an annual basis with the current year's plan to be included in the overall annual budget. The Committee's goals are the identification, prioritization and proposed funding sources of capital projects.

CEMETERY COMMISSION - Responsible for maintaining the Town Cemeteries and works to ensure future availability of burial plots in Douglas.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT - Comprised of the Town Engineer, the part-time Conservation Agent and an Administrative Secretary. The Community Development Department provides assistance and is a liaison primarily to the Planning Board and Conservation Commission and also performs Special Projects within the Town under the direction of the Board of Selectmen. It is also available to provide support to all the Departments, Boards and Committees within the Town. This department is also happy to assist the public in navigating through the local and state permitting processes regarding land development in the Town of Douglas.

COLLECTOR OF TAXES - Responsible for collecting and turning over all real estate, personal property, and excise taxes for the Town. The Collector also collects payment for town water bills.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Responsible for the administration of the Douglas Wetland Bylaw, the Wetlands Protection Act, Chapter 131, Section 40 of the Mass General Laws and the Rivers Protection Act created by Chapter 258 of the Acts of 1996. There are additional conditions for land use found in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations: 310 CMR 10.00 et seq. There are also various laws relating to open space, environmental policy, agricultural issues and water and land conservation regulations. The Conservation Commission is charged with keeping abreast of not only changes to all these laws, but the results of litigation brought on behalf of communities or land owners which is a priority. The Commission regularly conducts site walks to view potential projects and advise builders if changes in plans need to be made to satisfy various regulations. Hearings are scheduled with as much convenience to the applicants as time would allow

COUNCIL ON AGING - Provides information, education, and recreation for the elders, sixty years of age or older, in Town. The Director works with outside agencies in order to provide a range of services to those elders who are in need of them. The Outreach Coordinator works with seniors at risk and their families to provide information counseling and referrals.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION - Created by Town Meeting vote in 1999. Its purpose is to create programs that will enable existing businesses in Douglas to expand in the Town and attract new businesses.

FINANCE COMMITTEE – According to MGL Chapter 39, S16, this committee maybe established by town bylaw for any town whose valuation exceeds one million dollars. This committee shall consider any or all municipal questions for the purpose of making reports or recommendations to the Town. While the statute receives varying interpretations, the Town of Douglas established the Finance Committee in 1992 at an Annual Town Meeting eliminating the need for Selectmen to act impartially on financial matters

FINANCE DEPARTMENT - The Finance Director is responsible for the administration of the Accounting Department as well as the coordination and oversight of the activities of the Accounting, Treasurer/Collector and Assessor's Departments. The Finance/Accounting Office is responsible for record keeping of all financial transactions of the Town; processing of all bills, warrants, receipts, payroll and ledgers; and supplies departments with financial reports and payroll information. The Accounting Office ensures the Town is in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, Federal and State laws, and Town Meeting authorizations.

FIRE DEPARTMENT - In addition to traditional firefighting and rescue duties, the Douglas Fire Department is responsible for issuing permits and completing inspections. The staff and call firefighters/EMTs also partake in various training sessions throughout the year. The S.A.F.E. (Student Awareness Fire Education) program is taught in the elementary school and is vital to the education of children and their families in the prevention of fire and burn safety. Station tours upon request.

HEALTH, BOARD OF Deals with all aspects of Title 5 concerning the installation of new or repairs to private septic systems and private drinking water supplies. The Board of Health manages the Transfer Station. Permits for the Transfer Station can be purchased at this office. The Board of Health is charged with the inspection and licensing of food service establishments, campgrounds, commercial swimming pools and the licensing and inspection of garbage and septage vehicles. The Board of Health deals with rabies and mosquito control. A Board of Health is a statutory board created pursuant to the Mass. General Law C III, s26 and C. 41, sl. This Board consists of five (5) members who are appointed by the Selectmen. Each member serves a three (3) year term. Each year the Board appoints a Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Health Agent, Nurse, Administrative Supervisor, Animal Inspector, Food Service Inspector and Sanitation Agent. The Board meets the first Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Health Department office. All meetings are open to the public and minutes of past meetings are kept in the Health office. The Board of Health is charged with the protection of the public health and to fulfill these duties by developing, implementing and enforcing health policies. Local health policies are available at this office.

• **HEALTH AGENT** can be contacted when there are housing deficiencies between a landlord and a tenant. The Board of Health agent handles complaints such as landlord/tenant disagreements, noisome trades, trash complaints, etc. The Agent also performs bathing beach water testing during the summer months.

• **SANITATION AGENT** is a Professional Engineer who reviews all septic system plans and performs all installation inspections. This person does not do Title 5 inspections for the re-sale of a home as these are done by State Certified inspectors.

• **FOOD SERVICE INSPECTOR:** Inspects all food establishments twice a year and in accordance with the Massachusetts Food Code.

• **PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE** holds yearly flu clinics. Blood pressure clinics are open to residents of any age. The Public Health Nurse holds flu clinics at the Senior Center and at Riddlebrook Apartments. The Public Health Nurse is charged with reporting all communicable diseases to the State Department of Public Health and to perform any follow up work. The Nurse is available every Thursday.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT - Responsible for maintaining safe, passable roadways and sidewalks. This is achieved by cutting brush, patching roads, sweeping streets, painting lines, and snow removal. The Highway Department also provides basic repair and maintenance of guardrails and bridges. During warmer months, the Highway Department maintains and cuts the grass at the town commons and public squares.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION - Responsible for promoting and preserving the historic resources of the town including buildings, structures, streetscapes, historic and scenic roads.

HOUSING AUTHORITY - The Douglas Housing Authority (DHA) has no public housing units in the Town of Douglas to administer and until it does the responsibilities are extremely limited in scope or non-existent.

LIBRARY, SIMON FAIRFIELD PUBLIC - Provides access to a myriad of books, magazines, audio books, play-alongs, DVDs, CDs, adult and children programming, and free wireless access to the internet.

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES MAINTENANCE MANAGER - Responsible for the daily, general preventative maintenance of the municipal buildings, custodial duties, landscape and yard duties, the occasional hiring of contractors, and overseeing special projects within the facilities.

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE - The Committee works on land preservation projects to preserve open space and important habitats throughout Town. The Committee also works to educate the public on the benefits of Open Space and how it enhances our quality of life. Every acre of Open Space actually brings Douglas net revenue in taxes because it does not require additional and extensive services to support it.

PERSONNEL BOARD - The Personnel Board is an advisory board that makes recommendations to the Town Administrator relative to the adoption of rules and regulations and/or policies and procedures that are necessary for the proper administration of the Personnel Bylaw and the administration of the classification and compensation plan, subject to the approval of the Town Administrator, and final approval by the Board of Selectmen.

The Bylaw shall apply to all employees, except those positions filled by popular election, those under contract, those covered by a collective bargaining agreement, and those under the direction and control of the School Committee.

PLANNING BOARD - One of the most significant functions of this Board is subdivision control and issuance of special permits for, as well as the supervision of gravel removal. It also serves as the permit granting authority for certain special permits as outlined in the town's first zoning bylaws. Most of the Board's time is taken up with subdivisions: checking plans submitted for proposed subdivisions, implementing inspections for subdivisions being built, or having a background supervisory role until the roads of a particular subdivision are accepted as town roads.

POLICE DEPARTMENT - In addition to traditional police and rescue duties, the Douglas Police Department provides various programs to the Douglas School System and the Town of Douglas such as DARE, Citizen Police Academies, bicycle safety, boat patrols, RAD (Rape Aggression Defense) program, and RAD Kids program.

RECREATION COMMISSION - Sponsors recreational programs throughout the year and works arduously to create and maintain recreational areas and facilities in Douglas.

REGISTRAR, BOARD OF - Responsibilities include registering voters, certifying nomination papers and petitions, processing absent voter applications and administering election recounts. Any party enrollment status required for appointment must have been maintained continuously for two years.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE - Works closely with the school department administration to improve educational quality by acting as the bridge between the educational process and the community at large. Responsibilities include the creation of policy, approval of the school department budget, and employment of the Superintendent. Five (5) elected members make up the committee, each serving a three-year term.

SELECTMEN, BOARD OF - Operates as the Executive Board of the Town and is charged with setting policies for the Town as well as calling town elections and town meetings. The selectmen are the Local Licensing Authority, issuing licenses and permits which include but are not limited to the sale of alcohol, automobile dealers, restaurants, and entertainment. The selectmen appoint many key town officials and members of boards and committees. The selectmen are also charged with being the town's Road Commissioners as surveyors of public ways, monuments, guide posts, sidewalks and shade trees.

TOWN CLERK - Works as a liaison between residents and town offices. Traditionally, this office is where people first come when they need information. The Town Clerk serves the residents as Chief Election Officer which oversees polling places, election officers, and the general conduct of all elections, consisting of preparation of ballots, voting equipment, voting lists along with voter registrations. The Town Clerk also records and certifies all official action of the Town, including town meetings, Planning and Zoning Board decisions. Registers all vital events occurring within the community, such as, recording and preserving all original birth, marriage, and death records. The Town Clerk is also the Public Records Officer. Administers the oath of office to all elected and appointed members of local committees and boards, posts meetings of all government bodies, provides access to public records in compliance with State Public Records Law, provides certified copies of all vital records and conducts or assists with genealogical research, maintains records of adopted municipal bylaws, appointments, petitions and submits general bylaws/zoning bylaws to the Attorney General for approval. The Town Clerk is also a licensing officer. Issues state licenses and permits, including marriage licenses, and permits for raffles and bazaars. Issues local licenses, permits and certificates as mandated by statute or bylaw, which include burial permits, business certificates, dog licenses, fuel storage permits and burning permits. The Clerk's Office is also responsible for conducting a yearly census and publishing the annual street list.

TRANSFER STATION is for use by residents of Douglas. The site collects household waste and offers recycling of glass, paper, cardboard, tin and plastic. There is a box on site for used clothing, books, games, TV's and computer monitors. Permits are sold twice a year. During summer months the site collects automotive batteries and 5 lb. propane tanks.

TREE WARDEN: Cares for all of the shade trees on public property in town including parks, town commons, public streets and schools.

VETERANS' SERVICES - Douglas is part of the Southern Blackstone Valley Regional Veterans' Services District which consists of the towns of Douglas, Northbridge, Sutton and Uxbridge. The District is a local one-stop aid station for veterans, their dependents and widows/widowers of veterans. Here they can receive benefits such as financial aid, medical expense reimbursement, and forms to file VA claims and in some cases, just someone to talk to. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts returns 75% of the monetary aid provided by the Town of Douglas. It has been found that the veteran or recipient of this aid, most likely spends 100% of this monetary benefit within the local community. This type of aid benefits everyone. Veterans' benefits are not automatic and must be applied for in accordance with Federal and State laws, rules and regulations. Therefore, the Director must keep abreast of the latest changes in these rules pertaining to Veterans' rights. The Veterans' Services office is now located at 21 S. Main St., Uxbridge, MA, where veterans can be assured of private and confidential service. Office hours are Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Wednesday 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. The office is closed on Fridays.

WATER/WASTEWATER DIVISIONS – Responsible for testing, operation and maintenance of the town water supply, sewer lines and facilities. They are also responsible for maintaining and repairing hydrants, checking meters, and performing relevant repairs.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS - Created under the provisions of MGL Chapter 40A as a necessary part of the establishment of zoning regulations in a community. Chapter 40A empowers the Board of Appeals to; 1) Hear appeals taken from decisions of any administrative official or board of the Town acting under the

provisions of the law; 2) Hear variance requests from terms of the Zoning Bylaw; and 3) Hear special permit requests as provided by the Zoning Bylaw