



Powder House News

Jan./Feb. 2022

COA Mission

Our mission is to enhance the quality of life of seniors in the community by providing services, which include nutrition, health screening, education, and other programs to meet their needs.

COA Board Meetings

Board meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m., January 25 and February 22.

Office Location

The Council on Aging office is located at the Town Offices, 23 Linden St., bottom floor, Room 118.

COA Members

Bob Blair, *Co-Chair*
Pat Wheeler, *Co-Chair*
Kate Bliss
Rachel Boyer
Wes Durant
Lori Fearebay
Karen Schultz

Phone

978-838-2750

Medical Equipment

The COA has a supply of medical equipment available. We accept donations of thoroughly clean equipment in good condition. Please consider donating your clean, used equipment so we can pass it on to someone in need. Contact Victoria Flynn at coadirector@townofberlin.com, or the COA phone 978-838-2750.

Transportation Services

Transportation is available Monday through Friday. Rider information forms are available on the Berlin town website under Boards & Committees / Council on Aging / Bus Services. Call 978-838-2750 for assistance.

From Victoria:

Hello everyone. I hope that you all have a safe holiday season and Happy 2022 to you all. It continues to be a pleasure and an honor to serve all Berliners.

I wanted to let you all know that I am now full time with the Town of Berlin and my role has expanded to COA and Social Services director. I am a licensed independent social worker and I am available if any of you just need to reach out to speak to someone. The past couple of years have been rough on everyone and I don't want anyone to feel that they need to suffer in silence. Mental health and wellness is a major focus of my work and I want to make sure that people feel that they have someone they can reach out to privately.

There is no pressure to do this but consider the offer extended to all. If you have any questions or think that you would like to speak to me for any reason, please feel free to email me at coadirector@townofberlin.com or call 978-838-2750.

Elder Law Attorney

End of life decisions and conversations are difficult even in the best of times. These discussions become even more emotional and important once a diagnosis or sudden life circumstance comes into light.

On December 1st, the COA was able to meet with Attorney Kristine Romano to discuss the importance of elder law. Romano has been an attorney for about 20 years. She decided to focus on elder law when learning more about the topic. Romano reports that her practice completes paperwork for adults including: wills and living wills, guardianships, health care proxies, durable power of attorneys, trusts, MassHealth applications, and homesteads.

- **Healthcare proxy** — can designate people over 18 to make your medical decisions
- **Durable Power of attorney** — can designate people over 18 to handle your finances
- **Will** — designating people to receive property once you pass away (living will can be created but discusses your wishes in medical care)
- **Homestead** — protection of your residence up to \$500,000, cannot be forced to move out of your residence (state issues automatic \$125,000 of protection)

Healthcare proxies, durable power of attorney, and wills can be changed as long as someone is still deemed able to make their own decisions. If someone is getting a surgery and is unconscious or if medical doctors have concern about someone's cognition, these documents may be activated.

For those who may need to enter into a nursing home, Attorney Romano does complete MassHealth applications. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts does a financial lookback of 5 years for those who apply. Attorney Romano mentioned that those who have a trust established, it can help keep assets in a family.

Attorney Romano reports that having these conversations and creating these important documents gives you the opportunity to choose or designate what you want. Being related to someone (spouse, siblings, parent, child) does not guarantee that you will be able to just take over any medical or financial decisions if a crisis arises.

A worksheet on documents you should have is on the Town of Berlin COA website. Any questions about elder law? Attorney Romano can be reached at 508-393-0800. Attorney Romano has offices in Northborough and Natick and is accepting new clients.



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PHN Online

Past issues of the PHNs are available online at the Town of Berlin COA site under the PowderHouse News tab.

Berlin Public Library Update January 2022

The library re-opened its doors to the public in June 2021 after having been closed due to the pandemic. We have a few adult programs tentatively planned for March 2022 that will be held at the 1870 Town Hall. One will be a concert by the popular group "Too Human" and the other a pastel painting program with Greg Maichack.

The library is continuing to offer curbside service to anyone retrieving a requested item. We will place the item in a bag with the patron's name and leave it on a table outside the front door. Also, the library will deliver to patrons' homes if they are unable to come to the library. We can also provide a library card to patrons who cannot make it to the library.

Please contact us with any questions about these services or with any other questions you may have.

Bob Hodge
Director, Berlin Public Library
rhodge@cwmar.org
978-838-2812

Gone But Not Forgotten

Anthony Valchuis October 21
Bill Schwartz October 28
Frederick Wheeler October 31
Margaret Bergen November 3
Deran Bacon November 20
Frances Barry December 2
Warren Brown December 10



Nashoba Neighbors

BERLIN • LANCASTER • BOLTON

Nashoba Neighbors Event January 12, 7-8 p.m.

Nashoba Neighbors is hosting an in-person meeting on Wednesday, January 12 from 7-8 p.m. at the Lancaster Community Center for anyone who is interested in volunteering for the new nonprofit to help older adults age at home. Members of Nashoba Neighbors live in Bolton, Berlin, and Lancaster. We accept volunteers from any location. In case of snow or changing Covid protocols, the meeting will be held on Zoom. Please register at www.nashobaneighbors.org/events or call 978-226-8844.

Northbrook Senior / Northbrook Village II 135 R Pleasant St., Berlin: Affordable Rental Opportunity

Affordable Rental Opportunity for households with one or more members who are aged 62 years or older.

We are looking for applicants to fill our current vacancies and expand our waiting list.

Maximum Income per Household Size at 30% AMI (Area Median Income)

HH Size	30% AMI
1 person	24,650
2 persons	28,150

HUD published data effective 4/1/2021. Subject to change.

About Northbrook Village II

- 39 One-Bedroom Apartments
- 8 Units are accessible/adaptable
- Heat, Hot Water and Electricity Included
- Rental Assistance provided through HUD PRAC Program
- Residents will pay 30% of their income for rent
- There is no minimum income requirement

Building Amenities:

- Elevator Access
- Several Community Spaces
- On-site Laundry Facilities
- Ample Onsite Parking

Applications can be requested by phone or picked up in person with a scheduled appointment by calling the onsite management office (978) 415-0577.

For more information or if you or a family member has a disability or limited English proficiency, and as a result needs assistance completing the application and/or require any assistance during the application process, including participating in the informational meetings please call (978) 415-0577/Relay711.

Meet Your Town Movers

Eric Schartner is Berlin's newly-appointed Police Chief. Sondra Pendergast has been hired as Manager of Berlin's 1870 Town Hall. Here are introductions to both new

leaders penned in their own words. We welcome them to their vital new roles in our community.

Meet Eric Schartner, Berlin's Newly-Appointed Police Chief



Thank you for letting me introduce myself in this issue of the "Powder House News." I am no stranger to the Town of Berlin, but have just had the honor of being appointed the Town's new Police Chief.

I started my career in law enforcement when I was 21 years old. I was a part-time officer as well as a dispatcher for the Town of Bolton while attending college. I was hired as a full-time officer in the Town of Berlin starting on January 1, 1996. I felt myself beyond fortunate for the opportunity Chief "Buster" Spaulding gave me, not foreseeing that I would be the Chief 26 years later, Although my parents were concerned that I wouldn't finish college, leaving, as I did, halfway through my senior year, I did finish my undergraduate work and then continued on to graduate school, obtaining my Master's Degree in 2004. Even though there were other job opportunities for me, I always considered Berlin to be the place where I would stay for my career.

As some of you may be aware, I'm not from Berlin, having grown up next door in the Town of Bolton. I grew up on my family's farm where three generations had worked the land and made their living from it. In the past twenty years, I have been taking on the task of running the farm. We have changed it a bit, from making it our sole source of income to running it as a successful "hobby" farm. We still grow apples and for the last eleven years have included a corn maze, as well. You can find me, during my "off time", usually on a tractor or a mower somewhere on the farm. In the fall, you will see my children, Julia (17) and Jack (15) alongside me on the weekends when we open to the public for apple picking and corn maze adventures. Kristen, my wife of 19 years, is active in making the crafts we sell in our farmstand.

My office is always open for visits and I look forward to my continued service to the residents of the Town of Berlin.

Meet Sondra Pendergast, 1870 Town Function Hall Manager



Hello, I am Sondra Pendergast, I have been a resident of Berlin for 28 years now. I have recently taken the position as the 1870 Town Function Hall Manager. Berlin has been more than just a home for me. It has been a place to raise my four children, participate in town happenings, and make friends. Raising my children has been my greatest joy and biggest accomplishment. Being home with my children allowed me the opportunity to give back to my community in many ways. I have been lucky enough to hold and still hold many positions in this town, such as a substitute teacher at the elementary and high schools, President of both Link PTO at BMS and STAAGS PTO at Tahanto, finance secretary at Saint Joseph's Church, Assistant Treasurer for the Berlin Food Pantry, and more volunteer positions throughout the years.

In my spare time I enjoy turning old pieces of furniture into something new again. It's fun to just freshen up an old piece or turn it into something completely different. I am very creative and love using my talents to help others in any way I can. I have always loved organizing celebrations for my family and friends, and I am happy to be able to take on this position for the town where I will be able to help the public organize functions of their own. I am looking forward to helping others use the 1870 Town Function Hall as a place to gather and celebrate important events.

Durable Medical Equipment

The COA has been glad that we have been able to receive and give out various equipment to our residents and neighboring residents. We continue to receive equipment that has been dropped off **without knowledge and approval** of the COA.

The COA **only** accepts walkers, wheelchairs (non-electric), crutches, commodes, raised toilet seats and rollators that are **thoroughly cleaned**. Please call 978-838-2750 or email coadirector@townofberlin.com to see if any equipment that you may have can be donated. The COA will throw out anything that does not get pre-approval.

COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

For a complete listing of the meeting times and places of all Berlin town boards, commissions and committees, go to the "mytowngovernment.org" website and click on "berlin, ma"

COA

January 6

Blood Pressure Clinic, 10-11 a.m. run by Nashoba Associated Boards of Health in the COA Room 118 on the lower level of the Town Office Building at 23 Linden Street

February 3

Blood Pressure Clinic, 10-11 a.m. run by Nashoba Associated Boards of Health in the COA Room 118 on the lower level of the Town Office Building at 23 Linden Street

Tuesdays from 1-2 p.m. Tai Chi with Jeff Cote in COA room 118 on the lower level of the Town Office Building at 23 Linden Street.

Saturdays from 9-11 a.m.

Senior Yoga with Sharon Santello via Zoom or in the COA Room 118 on the lower level of the Town Office Building at 23 Linden Street

XIX CARTER

Activities going on at XIX Carter during January and February of 2022 may be found below in a separate article.

SCHOOLS

February 6 at 6:30 p.m.

Public budget hearing for the Berlin/Boylston Regional School District will be held on February 8 at 6:30 p.m. See the separate announcement below about attending it in person or by livestreaming it.

LIBRARY

See separate article in this issue of the PHN.

BERLIN CHURCHES

First Parish Church

Sunday worship service: 10 a.m. in the church except for the FOURTH Sunday of the month which is by ZOOM.

Bible study: THIRD Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the yellow building at 24 Central St.

St. Joseph The Good Provider Catholic Church

Daily mass: Mon.-Fri. at 7:30 a.m.

Weekend masses: Sat., 5:30 p.m., Sun., 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

Regional School Committee Budget Hearing

All members of the public are invited to attend the budget hearing of the Berlin/Boylston Regional School District on February 8 at 6:30 p.m.

Attendance may be in person at the Tahanto Regional Middle and High School Conference Room or remotely

by going to the district home page, www.bbrsd.org, and clicking on the budget hearing livestream link.

If you have questions, wish to share your feedback or offer your opinions, contact School Committee Chair Susan Henry at: shenry@bbrsd.org

XIX CARTER

Open Hours:

Stop by anytime ...

Mondays 1-4 p.m.

Tuesdays 12-4 p.m.

Wednesdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Thursdays 1-4 p.m.

Fridays 9 a.m.-Noon

Weekly activities:

Mondays 2-4 p.m.

TeaTime

Tuesdays Noon-1 p.m.

Box Lunch starts on Jan. 18

Tuesdays 1:30-3 p.m.

History Matters **New Program!** Starts Jan. 18.

Our History Matters sessions will be back in January on Tuesday afternoons from 1:30-3 p.m.

Masks are required. Please join Historical Commission Chair June Miller to ask questions and find out the when and where of something "old".

Our special theme for the month of January is old bottles ... how to date them and research their

manufacture. Bring along a bottle or two ... let us know where and how you acquired it.

We'll be remembering Sylvia Wheeler in Berlin who was an avid bottle collector and passed on her knowledge to many of us.

Opportunities over the winter and spring to share your stories about people and places in Berlin and learn strategies for preserving family papers and photos will be welcomed.

Learning about the past informs the present and helps us make better choices for the future.

Wednesdays 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Community Coffee

Thursdays 1-4 p.m.
Cribbage and other games, puzzles, read a book, visit ...

Fridays 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Community Coffee

For more info please see 19Carter.org or check our facebook page at [facebook.com/19CarterCommunity](https://www.facebook.com/19CarterCommunity).

The Five W's

The reporter's Five W's (Who, What Where When and Why?), are addressed here in Barry Eager's deeply informed narrative about the history of Berlin's 1870 Town Hall.

THE NEW TOWN HOUSE OF 1870

In the years following the Civil War there were moves toward providing a new building for town government. In those days the town officers worked out of their homes. Only meetings of boards and Town Meetings were held in the small Town House of 1831, located on the Meeting House Common behind the present First Parish Church. That was a larger version of the one-room school houses of its time. (The building survives as a dwelling house at 8 Linden Street.)

Berlin lost some 20 of its soldiers in the Civil War. There was a move to memorialize them. In 1869 the Town Meeting voted to build a new town house of larger size, and to include a hall dedicated to the memory of its lost soldiers. Choice of a location was made easy when Artemas Barnes of Worcester, a native son of Berlin, offered a building lot facing the Common, which he had purchased for a possible commercial use.

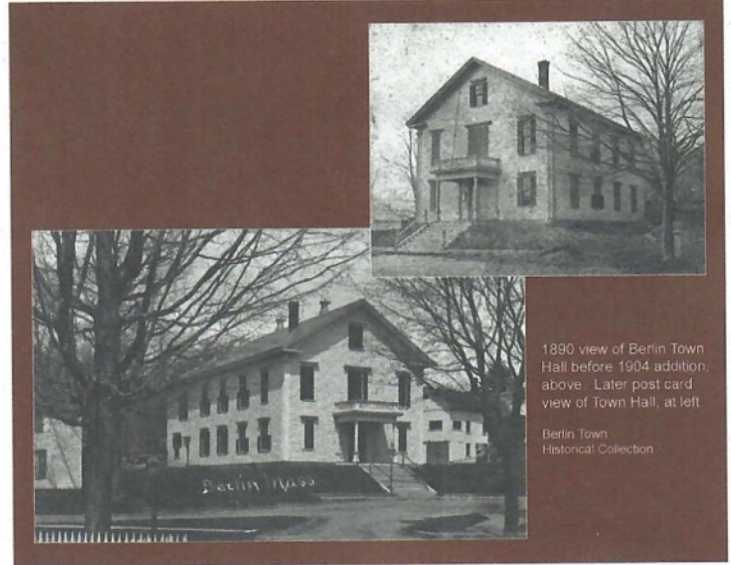
The building was built in a simplified Italianate style with Greek Revival details incorporated as well. Three local carpenters got the contract to build. The citizens were pleased that the building was constructed at a very reasonable cost. The building was originally painted a dark gray, the "color of the Trowbridge Shop in Hudson

The building was dedicated on March 1, 1870 with appropriate exercises honoring Mr. Barnes, for whom the downstairs social room was named Barnes Hall. The major part of the dedicatory address by Rev. Wm. A. Houghton was devoted to the service of those lost soldiers of the Civil War. Four marble plaques were installed in Memorial Hall listing their names. Photographs of the men were hung there as well. The hall became the meeting place for the local Grand Army of the Republic post. A dedication ball was held on the evening of the dedication, the first of many dances and social gatherings held there over the years.

The Selectmen's Room on the first floor housed most government functions. In the next few years improvements were added, including the formidable flight of granite steps, the entrance porch with its balustrade above, and a portrait of Mr. Barnes, which still hangs in the upper hall.

The new Town House housed many community activities over the years. Among these were the meetings of Berlin Grange # 134, which met here for a century. Three local churches held their first meetings here: the Unitarians in 1871, the Methodists in 1880, and the Catholics in 1950. Many other organizations met here and put on plays and entertainments.

The Public Library was started here in 1891, utilizing a corner of the Selectmen's Room. This led to an addition to the building in 1904, providing a separate room for the Library



1890 view of Berlin Town Hall before 1904 addition, above. Later post card view of Town Hall, at left.
Berlin Town Historical Collection

(in the present coat room), a kitchen, an enlarged Barnes Hall, and the theatrical stage in the Grand Hall. The building was painted white at that time. (The present Victorian era paint scheme came in the 1980s.)

Town Meetings were held in the Grand Hall from 1870 through 1995, with very few exceptions. State requirements for handicapped access ended that run. A ramp was built on Bullard House land to provide wheelchair access to the first floor. Town Meetings were then held in the first Berlin Memorial School until the new Memorial School was available in 1999.

When town government moved to the Town Offices in 2000, the 1870 Town Hall was left for community uses. After much work by many volunteers, as well as some funds from the State and Town, the building was reopened for public use in 2007. An accessible toilet room was provided and new general use toilets were built, replacing the ones from the 1930s. The heating system was made to function more efficiently and a fire alarm was installed. Other dedicated volunteers promoted the traditional uses and attracted various new activities.

This led to further understanding of the need for handicapped access. Utilizing local fundraising, mitigation funds from local commercial developments, a grant of state funds for arts venues, and town appropriations, a major addition was made with a new entrance and a public elevator to access the second floor and stage. Completed in 2018, this made the building practical for public use well into the future.

The current pandemic closed the Town Hall for many months. Happily, it is now available again, with regulations to mitigate the spread of COVID 19 in its various forms.

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Powder House News

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Conservation Commission Looking for Volunteers

The Conservation Commission is organizing a Trail Committee, headed by our newest member, Kyle Tucker. The Trail Committee, a sub-committee of the Commission, would be responsible for maintenance of the trails. The Conservation Commission is also hoping to get volunteers to begin the task of dealing with the abundance of invasive plants that are taking over our native habitat. Volunteers would receive training in safely removing and disposing of the invasive plants without any infringement on our wetlands. We are also exploring opportunities to hold Nature events for children, such as field trips on our many trails. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact us by email conservation@townofberlin.com.

NEED SERVICES? CALL THESE NUMBERS.

- 1) **ALL EMERGENCIES** (health, fire, accident) DIAL 911. This reaches a dispatcher who will connect you to Berlin Police, Fire Department or Emergency Medical Services, as needed.
- 2) **NASHOBA ASSOCIATED BOARDS OF HEALTH** Fact and science-based information on health issues, including the Corona virus and its variants. DIAL (978) 772-3338. Berlin's public health nurse, Tammy Bedard, can be reached at extension 340.
- 3) **HELP GETTING TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS.** Berlin's Council on Aging van is available, by appointment, for a ride to and from medical appointments. DIAL (978) 838-2750.
- 4) **HELP GETTING GROCERIES OR PRESCRIPTIONS,** for those who can't drive themselves. Call for a ride in the Council on Aging van. Dial (978) 838-2750.
- 5) **NUTRITION NEEDS.** If financial hardship keeps you from buying adequate amounts of food, call the BERLIN FOOD PANTRY at (774) 245-8320.
- 6) **MEALS ON WHEELS** program, which delivers packaged meals twice weekly to residents who need help with regularly preparing nutritious meals. Call the MONTACHUSETT OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL at (978) 345-8501, extension 2.
- 7) **COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS** at 211 for help with food, housing, workman's comp, family counseling or other personal worries.