

# EXECUTIVE SERVICES

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

The Board is pleased to submit its annual report for 2015 to Arlington residents. The Board is composed of five elected residents who set policy and oversee the management of municipal functions of the Town.

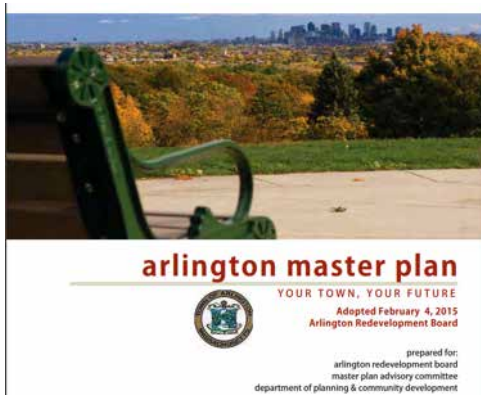
In 2015 Joseph A. Curro Jr. and Steven Byrne were elected to the Board of Selectmen for their second consecutive term. During 2015 Kevin Greeley served as Board Chair, and Diane M. Mahon as Vice Chair.



Arlington Board of Selectmen clockwise, left to right: Diane M. Mahon (Vice Chair), Joseph A. Curro, Jr., Steven M. Byrne, Daniel J. Dunn, Kevin F. Greeley (Chair).

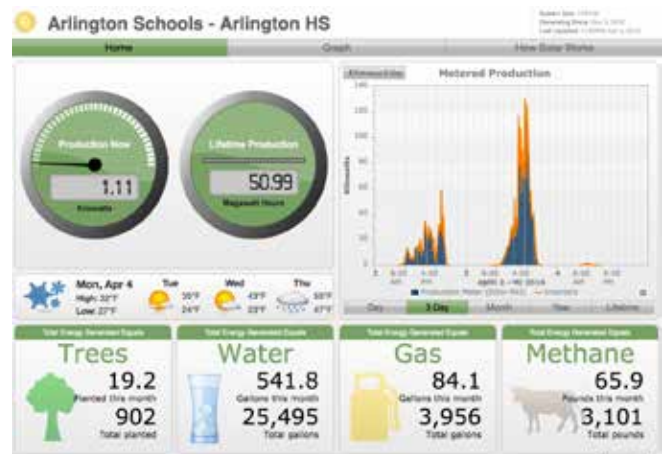
## Year in Review

The Master Plan Implementation Committee and the Housing Plan Advisory Committee have been active since the Master Plan was adopted by the Redevelopment Board and Town Meeting in 2015. Some early accomplishments by these committees supporting the Plan include Design Guidelines for commercial development areas such as the Mill Brook Study Area, Mass. Ave. Corridor, and Broadway, new parking management in Arlington Center, and development of a Complete Streets policy which will promote a transportation network which improves access and safety for all users - pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, transit riders, and freight



carriers. In future years the Plan will guide the Town in land use and physical development as intended. The Plan may be read at [arlingtonma.gov/planning](http://arlingtonma.gov/planning).

Designated as a “Green Community” in 2010, Arlington continues to move forward in its energy and conservation initiatives and has been awarded \$938,000 in grant funding to date, including \$240,000 in 2015 for numerous efficiency upgrades at the following schools: Bishop, Brackett, Peirce, Ottoson and AHS. The Town is preparing to apply for another round of Green Communities grant funding in 2016 for further energy efficiency upgrades. In June, the Town signed a power purchase agreement with Ameresco for the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on six school roofs. The panels started delivering power in December and the power purchase agreement anticipates Town savings of nearly \$2,000,000 over the next twenty years. The panel’s energy production may also be viewed at each school entrance and online at [arlingtonmagov/energy](http://arlingtonmagov/energy).



Arlington’s Central Fire station, pictured on the cover of this report, was renovated in 2015. While preserving many historic details, the building is the Town’s third Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) certified building and its first Gold certified. The updates and modernization efforts put into this building will improve safety services to Arlington residents. The new station is also beneficial for educational programs, such as Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE).

## Volunteerism

Arlington’s many volunteer committees continue to provide valuable contributions to the community by helping those in need, participating in Town governance, and educating the public on important issues.

One such example of volunteer participation is EcoFest. Co-sponsored by Vision 2020’s Sustainable Arlington, the Arlington Garden Club, and Public Works and held at Town Hall. The theme in 2015 was *Energy-Wise: Sparking Local Energy Solutions*.

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At the event local vendors and environmental groups focused on energy, how we make it, use it, measure it, and conserve it.

Another example of volunteerism is Arlington Alive's Summer Block Party. The event promotes and



celebrates Arlington's creative economy and is co-sponsored by the Arlington Committee on Tourism and Economic Development (ATED), Arlington Cultural Council, and local businesses.



## Town Day Celebration

Arlington Town Day was another successful event. Resident and vendor participation was at an all-time high. Again, the Town Day Committee is grateful for the strong community participation that has become well-known as a source for Arlington's strong and thriving community spirit. The Board would like to extend its thanks and congratulations to the Town Day Committee, and especially the Co-chairs, Marie Krepelka and Kathleen Darcy. The Board also wants to extend the same thanks to the many businesses and tireless volunteers whose loyalty, dedication, and hard work made this celebration a success again. All Town Day activities are privately funded and this event continues without any Town funding.

These are just a few of the highlights in Arlington this year. More highlights are included in this report.

## Acknowledgments & Recognitions

The Town experienced a great loss with the passing of Roland (Roly) Chaput. Mr. Chaput served in Town Meeting for 44 years and served on the Redevelopment Board, Conservation Commission, Friends of Robbins Farm Park, the Dallin Museum, and the Tourism and Economic Development Committee (A-TED). Mr. Chaput will be sorely missed, however he has left a legacy of civic enhancements that Arlington will benefit from for years to come.

The Town also experienced a great loss with the passing of Ken Simmons. Ken served on the Finance Committee for 38 years and was also very active in the Arlington Rotary Club. Ken provided many years of valuable service to the Town and his efforts will be sincerely missed.

The Town's Comptroller, Ruth Lewis retired with over 25 years of distinguished service to the Town. In August we welcomed Rich Viscay who previously served as the CFO/City Auditor for the City of Everett. We look forward to working with Mr. Viscay.

Arlington's Deputy Town Manager Andrew Flanagan was appointed the Town Manager of Andover, MA in October 2015. Andrew brought tremendous energy and dedication to his duties while in Arlington. Andover is fortunate to have him. In January of 2016, the Town welcomed Sandy Pooler to the position. Previously, Sandy was the Finance Director in Amherst.

In October 2015 Arlington's Director of Planning and Community Development, Carol Kowalski, was appointed Assistant Town Manager for Development for the Town of Lexington, MA. Carol brought professionalism and thoughtfulness to the role and the Board would like to thank her for her many efforts, especially her collaborative efforts in developing Arlington's Master Plan. In early 2016 we welcomed Jennifer Raitt, who previously served as the Assistant Director of Land Use Planning and Chief Planner at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC).

The Board of Selectmen would like to thank all Town employees for the work they perform to make Arlington a special place to live, work, and enjoy. We also thank the volunteers who spend thousands of hours each year performing a labor of love for their community; Arlington would not be the same without them. We particularly thank the staff of the Selectmen's Office for their tireless and intelligent work on our behalf: Marie Krepelka, Board Administrator, MaryAnn Sullivan, Frances (Fran) Reidy, and Ashley Maher.

## TOWN MANAGER

I am very pleased to deliver what will now be my fourth Annual Report to the Town of Arlington in the capacity of Town Manager. I am honored to serve the Town of Arlington in this capacity and I am thankful to the Board of Selectmen for continuing to entrust me with this role. Arlington has a long tradition of professional management, and I am proud to be able to continue this tradition. I also feel very fortunate to be working in a Town that is made up of so many dedicated, committed, and talented residents. Without the contributions of volunteers, many of Arlington's successes would not be possible.

My goal in making this report is to provide an overview of the financial, organizational, and community based efforts that took place during 2015.

2015 greeted the Town with a series of extraordinary snow events, which resulted in six-consecutive weeks of parking bans and taxed patience. However, I was impressed with the resilience of staff and residents to work together to weather the storms. Renovations of the Central Fire station were completed this year and the result is a LEED Gold certified building. Renovations to the Community Safety Building continue, and both of the projects are providing necessary modernization for public safety operations. Our Information Technology Strategic Plan continues to guide our technology use. The Town also initiated the creation of a joint Facilities Department with the School Department, an effort focused on maintaining the investments made in both Town and School facilities over the past decade. Significant updates to the Town's website made in 2014 are bearing fruit by improving access to residents and building capacity for staff. Finally, 2015 saw the beginning of discussions regarding the Town's growing school enrollment and the space needs prompted by this growth. This issue has garnered tremendous public interest and has once again demonstrated Arlington's high level of civic engagement and participation.

These initiatives and more are included in this report. They are part of the Town's ongoing commitment to seek efficiencies and improvements in service delivery while providing transparency and information that is both relevant and timely. It is my hope that through this report, residents will learn about this commitment. Residents can also receive information about Town activities year-long by visiting the Communications Center at [arlingtonma.gov](http://arlingtonma.gov) and signing up to one of our many communication methods. Please also note that in several sections of this Annual Report, we have included a link to a webpage where more information about a project or effort can be found.



*Adam Chapdelaine, Arlington Town Manager*

### Town's Financial Outlook

FY2016, the current fiscal year, is the second year beyond what was initially intended to be a three-year plan that incorporated the Proposition 2 ½ override of 2011 designed to carry the Town's budgets through FY2014. The key commitments along with updates on the status of meeting the commitments of that three-year plan are listed as follows:

1. Override funds will be made to last at least three years (FY2012-FY2014). No general override will be sought during this period. – Current projections have extended the plan to cover FY2012-FY2020.

2. If the override passes there will be no Pay As You Throw (PAYT) fee implemented in FY2012, but the placement of a ballot question regarding a revenue neutral PAYT option will be considered in FY2013. - This ballot question was not advanced due to the Town's implementation of a mandatory recycling program in FY2013 which has stabilized both hauling and waste disposal costs.

3. Town and School operating budget increases will be capped at 3.5% per year. An additional allowance of up to 7% shall be allowed for documented special education cost increases. Should actual special education cost increases exceed this amount, the remaining School budget shall be decreased by the difference. – This commitment has been maintained and this year's Town operating budget proposes a 3.24% increase. Due to continuing enrollment growth, a school funding increase above 3.5% is proposed.

4. Health care cost increases will be programmed at 7%. Should actual increases exceed this amount, the Town and School budget totals shall be proportionately decreased by the excess amount. Should actual increases be less than this amount as a result of negotiated health care savings, the extra savings will be:

- a. Deposited into the override stabilization fund to extend the three year override period;

- b. Used to preserve services; and

- c. To satisfy any and all negotiated items between the Town Manager, employees, and retirees. – The override period has been extended to nine years from the original three-year period based to a large degree on health care savings and the first year health care



savings also supported FY2012 wage settlements with employee bargaining units. For future planning purposes, health care premiums are projected to grow at 5.25%, which more accurately reflects the historical average annual growth of Group Insurance Commission premiums.

5. An additional \$600,000 shall be appropriated for the School Department in FY2012 and \$400,000 shall be appropriated each year in addition to the amount currently appropriated in the capital budget for road improvements. – This commitment has been met.

6. Reserves shall be maintained in an amount equivalent to at least 5% of the budget. – This commitment is being maintained.

For in-depth information about the Town's financial condition please refer to the Town Manager's Annual Budget & Financial Plan online at: [arlingtonma.gov/budgets](http://arlingtonma.gov/budgets).

### **Dedication to Efficiency, Innovation & Transparency**

In 2015 multiple IT Strategic Plan projects were completed or brought very near to completion. Inspectional Services received custom development support for their permit tracking system. The Police Department received support in identifying and implementing Coplogic, a system for reporting minor crimes online. The IT Department is nearing completion of three projects that improve the overall health and speed of the Town's network, through hardware upgrades and reconfiguration, as well as installation of wireless Internet access in Town buildings. The IT Department is also developing a new IT request portal for staff, and Human Resources received development support for an online job application portal. Both are expected to be launched in spring 2016.

Additionally, two long-term projects kicked off in 2015. The Town began its effort to replace the Town's cash management and billing system and implement a new accounts receivable system. These projects will help modernize the architecture upon which the Town finances are managed and allow for improved resident services related to billing.

In FY2017, and beyond, the Town will also remain committed to finding other means of reducing costs, which may include, but will not be limited to, regionalization of services.

### **Sustainability/Energy Conservation**

In 2010 Arlington was named a Green Community by the State's Green Communities Division in recognition of the work that Arlington has done in the past to reduce energy usage, and the plans it has to further reduce energy use in the future. In 2013, based on significant fulfillment of these plans, the State's Department of Energy Resources (DOER) honored Arlington with



the "Leading By Example" award. This award is given to only four municipalities on an annual basis, and Arlington is proud to have earned the designation. More recently, Arlington was one of seven communities statewide that was honored by the Green Communities Division for having reached its 20% energy reduction goal within a five-year time span. Arlington has substantially benefited from its cooperation with the Green Communities Division, having received four grant awards over the past four years, totaling \$938,000. The most recent grant award of \$240,000 came in 2015 and provided funding for numerous efficiency upgrades at various elementary schools, the Ottoson Middle School, and Arlington High School.

Also, this past year, the Town installed solar photovoltaic panels on six school roofs via a power purchase agreement with Ameresco. This installation, which has recently been completed, is estimated to produce 850,000 kWh in its first year of operation. Over the course of the 20-year agreement, the Town estimates a costs savings of approximately \$2,000,000. A web application demonstrating the real time electricity generation of these solar panels can be viewed at [arlingtonma.gov/energy](http://arlingtonma.gov/energy). And, of course, the renovation of the Central Fire Station, which, as mentioned, earned LEED Gold certification. Looking forward, the Town will continue to focus energy efficiency efforts and begin to focus discussion on issues regarding climate change preparedness.

### **Around Town**

The MassDOT reconstruction of Massachusetts Avenue in East Arlington achieved full beneficial completion in the fall of 2015. Some elements of the project, such as sidewalks, landscaping, and remaining overhead utility work remain and will be completed in the spring. MassDOT's Arlington Center Safe Travel Project is expected to start the first week of April 2016. The project area is around the intersection of Mass. Ave. and Pleasant Street. The primary goal of the project is to provide a safe connection for the Minuteman Bikeway through Arlington Center, improve roadway safety and mobility for all users, plus upgrade infrastructure (roads, signals, and curb ramps) in the project area. The length of the project is estimated at one construction season.



### NLC Prescription Drug Card Program Savings

The Town continues periodic outreach on the National League of Cities (NLC) Prescription Drug Card Program (launched Dec. 2009). At the end of calendar year 2015, Arlington leads the state in cumulative savings to residents with \$252,488, with \$32,468 saved this year. The free program offers residents an average savings of 30% on non-insured prescriptions. Residents can obtain the free card online at [arlingtonma.gov/prescriptioncards](http://arlingtonma.gov/prescriptioncards).



### Communications & Customer Service

The Board of Selectmen and I continue to make improving public communications and customer service one of our priority goals. This annual report is one such communication vehicle in which we put a great deal of effort to make it informative, easy to read, and attractive. In 2015 the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association (MMA) awarded Arlington third place for its 2014 report. The Town also makes these reports available online at [arlingtonma.gov/annualreports](http://arlingtonma.gov/annualreports).

In September Arlington Visual Budget (AVB) was awarded the Center for Digital Government's Digital Government Achievement Award (DGAA) for Driving Digital Government Local Government Category. The DGAA highlights outstanding agency and department websites and apps. AVB is an online tool intended to provide the public with a visual representation of the Town's financial history and outlook, as well as illustrate key trends. Launched in 2014, AVB was developed, gratis, by former Selectmen Annie LaCourt and Finance Committee member Alan Jones in partnership with Arlington-based Involutions Studios.

In April of 2015 the Town launched Arlington Open Checkbook. Open Checkbook provides up-to-date financial information about the Town's expenditures to help residents better understand how the Town allocates resources. This new online service provides deeper accounting information including vendor and payroll data by linking directly to the Town's accounting software.

In late 2014 the Town launched its Facebook and Twitter channels and accumulated approximately 200 new likes/follows, respectively. At the end of 2015, the

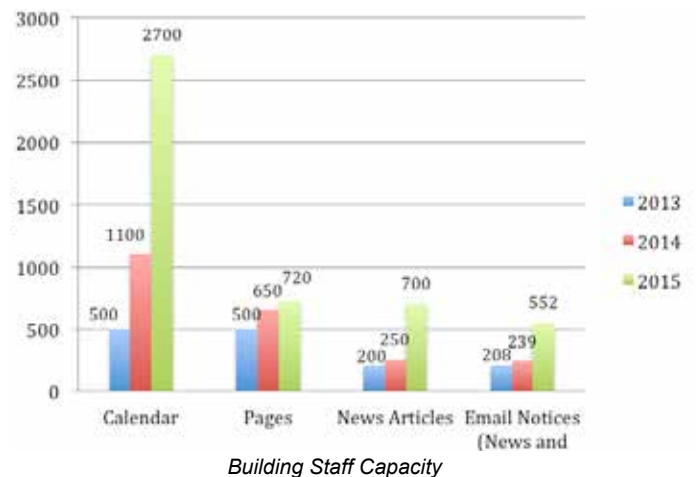
Town's Facebook account had 780 likes and 840 followers on Twitter. These numbers continue to climb.

We strive to inform the public about general Town activities and during emergencies, plus build a stronger relationship with our residents and improve efficiencies for our staff. To meet these needs and increasing demand for them, we utilize the following information channels in conjunction with local media.

### Arlingtonma.gov

Arlingtonma.gov is the Town's communication hub supporting one of the priority goals of the Board of Selectmen: enhance public communication and customer service and leverage technology to build staff capacity. The site serves a population of approximately 43,000 residents, surrounding communities, and beyond. The site supports the online communication and outreach activities of fifteen departments, and over sixty-five boards, committees, and commissions. Since the revision of the Open Meeting Law (OML) in July 2010 approximately 1,000 documents are added to the site annually.

We are already seeing improvements in both building staff capacity and user engagement since the website launch in July of 2014. For staff there was a significant increase of calendar postings (145%), news articles (180%), and email notifications (131%). This is in addition to the increase in documents posted (19%) shown in the previous chart. Pages represent long-term content and is not expected to increase significantly over time, though there is certainly a trend to adding more of this content type as well (11%).



This year [arlingtonma.gov](http://arlingtonma.gov) recorded over 1.5 million Page Views and 558,672 Sessions, both increases from the previous year. There was a 17% increase in user loyalty (Frequency and Recency) by those Users who visited the site more than 200 times during the year, from 16,992 in 2014 to 19,898 in 2015.

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Website Traffic (arlingtonma.gov)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Page Views	1,354,141	1,399,333	1,381,574	1,316,919	1,538,050
Visits/Sessions	547,114	573,288	586,584	496,936	558,672
Frequency & Recency: Over 200 visits to website	24,157	18,810	17,637	16,992	19,898

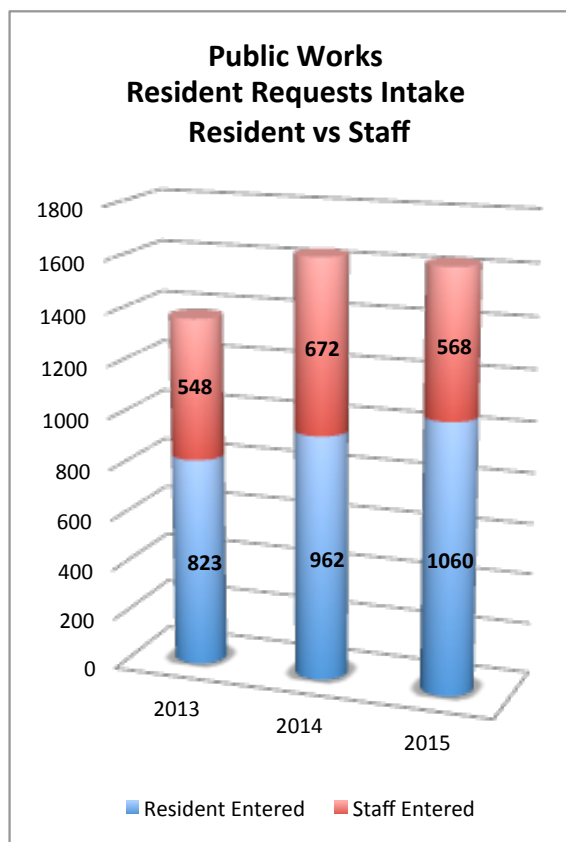
## Request/Answer Center

The Request/Answer Center is Arlington's online customer service center where residents can make requests of Town services (and track them), ask questions, and find answers. 2015 marked the eighth year for the service. In 2015 the service adopted Responsive Web Design (RWD) and new features that make it easier for staff and residents to submit requests regardless of what device they use. The system continues to be heavily utilized by both staff and residents.

A major feature of the service is the ability for residents to easily search an extensive database before calling staff for an answer (Find Answers). If they cannot find the answer online, their question is forwarded to staff for a response. Since launching the service, over one million answers have been viewed, yet less than 1% of Questions were submitted for staff to respond. This service continues to enforce the self-serve method of providing easily accessible information so residents can find the information they need at their convenience. One way to measure how productivity might be preserved in this self-service model is to estimate the time of phone calls to staff members. If an average phone call takes 5 minutes to answer then 24,838 productivity hours were preserved, or the equivalent to 13.6 full-time employees (35 hour work week).

Measuring the self-service model in how requests are submitted, we compared the last three years of DPW requests made by the public to those enter by staff. We are seeing moderate increases in residents directly submitting their requests into the Request/Answer Center with 59% of requests entered by residents in 2014 and 65% in 2015.

It is important to note that Public Works reports that not all requests are entered into the system as they



continue to struggle with the challenge of multiple intake methods available (online, email, phone, walk-in, etc.) and lack of resources necessary to enter them all, especially during storm events. Although staff challenges remain, these results show growth in resident use of this service. The Town continues to work on solutions to improve its internal functions and technology to bridge these gaps. Visit the Request/Answer Center at: [arlingtonma.gov](http://arlingtonma.gov).

Request/Answer Center: System Stats	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Answers Viewed on Portal	203,484	196,393	188,367	267,392	298,054
*Productivity Preserved in Hours/Answers Viewed	16,957	16,366	15,697	22,283	24,838
**New Customer Registrations	3,071	2,338	2,373	2,251	2,067
Requests Created	2,868	2,951	2,772	2,988	3,355
Requests Closed	2,616	2,731	2,811	2,543	3,209
% Questions/Requests Remain Open System	11%	22%	24%	27%	5%

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Receive time-sensitive notifications  
Phone \* Text \* Email



Register at  
[www.arlingtonma.gov/subscribe](http://www.arlingtonma.gov/subscribe)  
or call 781-643-1212



## *Arlington Alerts, Town Notices, Social Media*

Since 2012 Arlington Alerts have been notifying residents via phone, text, and email before, during, and after emergencies or to relay important information. When initiating a Town-wide phone call the system reaches approximately 19,000 phone connections. In 2015 the system was heavily utilized for the extended parking ban due to snow. It's worth mentioning that 203,899 Arlington Alert calls connected during the snow season.

Town of Arlington Notices are official notifications sent by the Town via email to subscribers. This opt-in email distribution list delivers information on Town activities including: public health and public works alerts, election information, and special Town related events. Notices are one of the most helpful and effective tools to communicate to the public.

In 2015 the Town rebounded from the last two years of subscription losses with a 13% increase of subscribers to just shy of 5,000. There was a 13% increase in Arlington Alert email subscribers and a 93% increase in text messaging subscribers.

Although we are pleased with the subscription rate for Arlington Alerts, we are watching the subscription rates to Notices and the website closely as we want to ensure residents are aware of all the Town's activities and not only when there is an emergency.

We invite residents who are not subscribed to these services to do so in the Communication Center at [arlingtonma.gov/subscriber](http://arlingtonma.gov/subscriber).

Arlington continues its efforts to improve communications and customer service while cultivating positive relations with residents. The Town also strives to maximize technology for efficiencies and will continue to build upon these valuable Town assets. We put a lot of effort into making sure our website is timely and accurate, the Request/Answer Center is responding to resident needs, and keeping residents up-to-date through all our communication channels. We constantly evaluate all our channels so we can maximize service delivery and staff efficiency. It is important to note, none of the success can be realized without skillful human intervention and collaboration. From the many content contributions from staff, boards, and committees, to residents utilizing these channels, we continue to help residents 'get connected' and 'stay connected' to Town Hall.

## **Dedicated Team**

Arlington is very fortunate to have so many talented citizens willing to volunteer their time to serve the Town in various capacities including Town Meeting, Boards and Committees. Together with our elected leaders, management team, and staff, they make Arlington a special community. I would like to thank the Board of Selectmen for its leadership and support throughout my fourth year as Town Manager. It's been a year of significant turnover. The departure of Arlington's Deputy Town Manager, Andrew Flanagan to become the Town Manager of Andover, MA and the Director of Planning and Community Development Carol Kowalski appointed as the Assistant Town Manager of Development for Lexington, MA left key roles vacant at the end of 2015. Their contributions were significant. Andrew brought fiscal knowledge and fostered new technology. He spearheaded important updates to the Financial Plan that resulted in award winning budget documents. He also guided the launch of the Town's new website, Arlington Visual Budget, and Arlington's Open Checkbook. As an Arlington resident, Carol brought special care along with her rich experience to Planning activities in Town,

Email & Emergency Communications	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Town of Arlington Notices Subscribers</b>	<b>4,141</b>	<b>4,573</b>	<b>4,422</b>	<b>4372</b>	<b>4944</b>
% of Growth from previous year	27%	9%	-3%	-1%	13%
% Compared with # of households (19,000)	22%	24%	23%	23%	26%
<b>Arlington Alert Emails Subscribers*</b>	<b>1,543</b>	<b>2,149</b>	<b>3,795</b>	<b>3,981</b>	<b>4,507</b>
% of Growth from previous year		72%	57%	5%	13%
% Compared with # of households (19,000)		11%	20%	21%	24%
<b>Arlington Alert Text Subscribers*</b>	<b>1,188</b>	<b>2,688</b>	<b>3,310</b>	<b>973</b>	<b>1,875</b>
% of Growth from previous year		44%	81%	-340%	93%
% Compared with # of households (19,000)		14%	17%	5%	10%

*\*Arlington Alert service launched in January 2012. 2011 numbers reflect beginning of 2012 and are included for comparative purpose.*



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culminating with the development of Arlington's Master Plan adopted last year. I thank them both for their distinguished service to Arlington.

I would like to welcome Sandy Pooler as Arlington's new Deputy Town Manager. In his brief time with Arlington he has already shown deep knowledge of municipal finances. I would also like to welcome Jennifer Raitt. Jennifer has also made a positive impression in her new role as the Director of Planning and Community Development. I would also like to welcome Andrea Nicolay as the new Director of Libraries. Andrea served as the Assistant Director and brings expertise and enthusiasm to one of Arlington's treasures. Finally, I would like to welcome Ruthy Bennett, who transitioned from the role of Energy Manager to the newly created position of Facilities Director.

In early 2016 my Executive Assistant, Eileen Messina moved on to the newly formed Facilities Department. Eileen was an exemplary member of my team and the loss is buoyed by the success she will bring in shaping the new Facilities Department.

Arlington is fortunate to have a talented, dedicated, and hard-working management team that is second

to none in the Commonwealth, and I feel privileged to be able to work with them day in and day out. Going further, Arlington is lucky to have a great team of Town employee across all departments.

I would like to welcome new Executive Assistant, Kristen DeFrancisco, who has been an asset to the office since the first day she arrived. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not express my warmest appreciation for my office staff, Eve Margolis and Domenic Lanzillotti. They are exceptional public employees dedicated to providing the best possible service to each and every person interacting with the Town Manager's Office.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Joan Roman for her tremendous efforts serving as the Town's Public Information Officer, and in particular, for her work on this Annual Report. Joan's attention to detail and design capabilities make her a great asset to the team and result in the compilation of this excellent report.

