<u>ARCHIVES</u>

The town does ***not*** have a formal records retention program in place – ***no*** "customized" written retention schedule, ***no*** index or cross-reference system, ***no*** locator system, ***no*** destruction program.

Overall responsibility for the archives has not been delegated to anyone in particular. The individual departments are "more or less" responsible for purging and boxing up their own records, *as well as* for labeling the boxes. ***AND,*** there are <u>no</u> "standards" in terms of boxes *or* index33ing, and <u>no</u> procedures for either adding *or* removing records to and from the various storage areas!

Records are stored in a <u>wide</u> variety of boxes *and* "plastic bins", *many* 24 inches deep and *too* heavy, *several* "oversized" 3 cube boxes, <u>lots</u> of odd size/ some standard size boxes, *as well as* several assorted vertical *and* lateral file cabinets, few card files, *many* assorted 3-ring binders, **"lots"** of bound/metal post ledger books, *several* rolled/folded plans, and some *"loose"* documents, too! Indexing on the boxes, etc., *also* varies a <u>great</u> deal: title/date(s) *or,* title/year(s) *or,* title only *or,* department/title only *or* – <u>some of our favorite</u>! – *nothing at all!!*

If all of the above weren't bad enough, the indexing often appears <u>on the top *or* side of the box</u>, ***so you can't even see it when boxes are "stacked" or arranged on shelves/stored within "bins"!***

Having said that, the *worst* problem here is **"where"** the majority of the archival records has been stored for approximately the last *ten years* – a large **"rodent infested"** trailer in the town hall parking lot! Simply put, there are not only *mice droppings* everywhere **<u>but</u>,** *"BLOOD STAINS"* on at least *half* of the

boxes stored here *(some "fresh"!)* – **hazardous, to say the least!!** Obviously, masks and gloves *must* be worn in order to enter this space, <u>and</u> one corner of the trailer is *so* bad that a staffer from the DPW department had to remove boxes from the trailer and spread them out on the lawn outside in order for us to at least inventory these records – *many* of which are simply <u>not</u> salvageable!

Once the inventory of the trailer was complete, we were very happy to move inside the town hall where archival records are primarily stored between the office shared by the town clerk and accountant, and the office shared by the treasurer/tax collector/assessor. And, a file cabinet belonging to the building department is located right in the hallway between the two offices.

(A) <u>**TRAILER**</u> **–** Many of the boxes and bins are arranged on nine sections of Edsal *"flimsy"* steel shelving, 84"high x 36"wide x 18"deep/5 tiers (*several* tiers "bent") with remaining boxes just "stacked" *right on the floor* – often **"falling over"!** Boxes "piled" in one corner are simply **"unaccessible"** for reasons noted above, and there are also several boxes of supplies *blocking* aisle space as well as access to records on shelving!!

Our inventory throughout the trailer *(and the lawn outside!)* revealed the following records:

- 1 odd *plastic bin*: folded plans/plats "to be filed" (old PRC's)

- 2 24 inch *plastic bins:* 14 computer printout binders **(?)**

- approximately 8 assorted size bound books (approximately 26")/some metal post, 6 odd *plastic bins*/approximately 35 *more* books: valuations, 1861-69 *(at least!)*

- 6 24 inch boxes, 1 standard, 5 large: *more* assorted size bound books

(approximately 134…), some back to 1870-1889/early 1900's-1970's *(at least!)*

- 8 15x11 computer printouts (approximately 24"), "pile" (approximately 15") of *loose* sheets: some payroll/payroll registers, 1980's-1990's, etc.

- 1 odd *plastic bin:* Berkshire Region planning, purchasing, etc., FY'11-12; liquor renewals, 2002-2011; annual business licenses, 2002-2011, etc.

- 1 odd *plastic bin* (3-ring binders): selectmen plans/fax originals/bonds

- 1 odd *plastic bin:* ZBA correspondence

- 1 odd *plastic bin* (3-ring binders)*:* selectmen – *more* faxes

- 1 odd *plastic bin/*selectmen: tapes/meeting minutes

- 1 odd *plastic bin/*assessor: FOL's/personal property, 1994-2006

- 6 standard boxes: AP warrants, FY'15-17

- 1 odd *plastic bin:* **"Noel/Joel/Elaine" problems, 2007-"back"!**

- 1 standard box/treasurer: monthly proofs, FY'15

- 1 odd *plastic bin/*selectmen: copies of minutes, "up to FY'16"

- 1 standard box *("broken/bloody" lid!):* commitments, 1987-1998

- 1 standard box *("broken" lid!):* newsletters

- 2 standard boxes/treasurer: warrants, FY'15

- 1 standard box: journal entries, FY'17

- 7 odd boxes *("crushed"!),* 2 24 inch *plastic bins,* 19 standard *(some "broken" lids!),* 3 odd *plastic bins (some no lids!),* 5 odd *(1 "broken"/1 "crushed"!):* **?**

- 1 large box, 4 standard *(no lids!),* 2 "tall" plan boxes, 1 24 inch, *few* "loose: approximately 100-150 rolled plans *(some "bloody"!)*

- 1 standard box *("broken" lid!)*/selectmen: minutes (all boards), 1980-1990

- 1 standard box: "FY'11" **(?)**

- 14 standard boxes *(1 "broken" lid, 1 no lid, 1 "disgusting"!),* 5 odd *plastic bins,* 1 odd: warrants, 1980/FY'95-99/FY'08-09/FY'11-14

- 1 standard box: **"2008 – keep"!?**

- 1 odd *plastic bin:* wetland/water body construction & mitigation procedures, 2013

- 1 odd *plastic bin:* draft environmental impact report – CT extension project, 2014

- 1 odd *plastic bin: more* assorted reports **(?)**

- 1 standard box/treasurer: "FY'08" **(?)**

- 1 standard box: **"Morgan, 2016" (?)**

- 1 standard box: real estate/MVE commitments, 2003-08 *(at least!)*

- 1 standard box: paid bills, *2008/*drawer computer table

- 1 standard box: "FY'12 files" **(?)**

- 1 odd box: appellate board, 1996-97/FOL's, 1997

- 1 standard box/highway: chapter 90/bids/bridge inspections

- 1 standard box *("broken" lid!):* cultural council

- 4 standard boxes *("broken" lids!):* "FY'10-11" **(?)**

- 1 standard box: selectmen files/highway department, 2009

- 1 standard box: paid bills, *2009*

- 1 odd *plastic bin:* journal entries, FY'16/encumbrances/state tax, etc.

- 1 24 inch *plastic bin:* <u>lots</u> of wire bound reports/newsletters

- 1 standard box/selectmen: assorted files (budgets, *1994-2009/*veterans info, *etc.!*)

- 1 standard box/selectmen: "old" gravel/fire truck bids, RIP/RAP sheets

- 1 standard box: deferred compensation/bonds/W-2's, etc.

- 1 standard box/clerk: election materials, 1998-2007

- 1 standard box: "BOH" **(?)**

- 1 standard box: abatements/FOL's/exemptions, etc., FY'92; CY's, 1982-88

- 1 standard box: PRC/revaluations, etc., 1992

- 1 standard box: tax info, FY'93

- 1 standard box/treasurer: GL, 1988/1991-95; cash books, 1985-1990

- 1 standard box/*(no lid!):* assessor, 2002 **(?)**

- 1 standard box: voter lists/census

- 1 standard box *(no lid!)/*clerk: hunting & fishing, 1972-1993/reports; dog licenses, 1993-99; jury lists, 1987-1996, *etc.!*

- 1 standard box: treasurer, 2005-07 **(?)**

- 1 standard box *(no lid, "bloody"!)/*clerk: "old" licenses/copies of marriage intentions, 1937-2005; board of registrar record book, 1964-1974; index births/marriages/deaths, 1843-94, *etc.!*

- 1 standard box/selectmen: Athena Health Care/New Boston Nursing Home/special permits, 2014-15

- 1 standard box: FEMA ice storm, 2008 *("destroy 2013"!)*

- 1 standard box: strategic planning/master plan/new building permit

- 1 standard box: "FY'06-07" info **(?)**

- 1 standard box: storm Irene, 2011

- 1 standard box: payroll records **(?)**

- 1 standard box: "miscellaneous" insurance reports/Aflac

- 1 standard box: paid bills/check receipts, 2016

- 1 odd *plastic bin:* tax collector, 1985 **(?)**

- 1 standard box: conservation commission minutes, 1994-2012

- 1 odd *plastic bin:* "assessor" **(?)**

- 1 standard box: conservation, 1990's-2002 **(?)**

- 1 odd box/assessor: write-offs, 2009-10; FOL/ABC, 2003-09; abate-

ments, 2009

- 1 standard box: abatements, FY'95-99

- 13 odd *plastic bins/*assessor: property record cards, 1992-2008/2011-15

- 1 odd *plastic bin/*assessor: MV abatements/commitments, 1993-2001

- 1 odd *plastic bin/*assessor: real estate/personal property abatements,

2009-2012

- 1 odd *plastic bin:* bank statements/budget reviews, FY'16

-     1   standard   box: correspondence/deposits/bank

statements/affidavits/re-turned envelopes, ***1997-98***

- 1 standard box *("broken" lid!)/*clerk: used ballots

- 1 standard box *("broken" lid!):* valuations, 1988-1992

- 1 standard box *("disgusting"!):* planning/zoning/conservation **(?)**

- 1 24 inch box *("broken" lid!): more* 15x11 payroll reports, 1980's

- 1 standard box *(no lid!):* "old" GL/payroll/bank statements, back to

1990's *(at least!)*

- 1 standard box *("broken" lid!)/*treasurer: GL, 1975-1988

- 1 standard box *("crushed"!):* planning/zoning, FY'11 **(?)**

- 4 standard boxes *("1 broken" lid, 2 "crushed"!): more* commitments/ commitment pages, 1981-86/1991/1993-97

- 1 standard box *("crushed"!):* agreements, back to 1950's *(at least!)/*road officials time books/notes, etc.

- 1 standard box *(no lid!):* cancelled checks, *1990's;* balance sheets, unemployment health insurance, annual reports, deferred compensation, budgets, *etc., 1995*

- 1 standard box: treasurer, 1997 **(?)**

- 1 standard box: treasurer, 1976-78 **(?)**

- 2 standard boxes *(1 no lid!):* treasurer, FY'96/FY'98 **(?)**

- 1 standard box *(no lid!):* lots of **"damaged"** folded plans!

- 1 standard box *("broken" lid!):* receipts, *1997-98*

- 1 standard box/clerk: street listings, 1981-87/dog license reports, *1958-1971*

- 2 standard boxes *(1 "crushed"!)/*clerk: street listings, 1988-1996

- 1 24 inch box *("broken"!):* **?** (tax collector "miscellaneous", *back to 1990, at least!)*

- 1 standard box: warrants/papers, *1980's*

- 1 standard box: paid bills/deposits, *1997*

- 2 odd boxes *(1 "crushed"!): more* cancelled checks, *some 1981*

- 1 standard box: MVE commitments/payments, 1993-2002; address changes, 2007-08

- 1 standard box: *more* cancelled checks/real estate commitments, 1969

- 1 odd box: voter registration, ***1970's (at least!)***

- 1 24 inch box *("broken"!):* "old" property cards

- 1 standard box/tax collector: MV commitments, 1963-66

- 1 standard box: tax collector, 1980's **(?)**

- 1 standard box: warrants/bills, FY'91

- 1 standard box *("crushed"!):* census, ***1991-96/***dog licenses, 1982/ hunting & fishing licenses, 1973-1998

- 1 standard box *("crushed"!):* correspondence/deposits/warrants, 1998; turn-overs, 1991/1996; receipts

- 1 standard box/clerk: town reports, 1987-1995; bicentennial; subdivision books; government books, 1980-1995

- 1 standard box: "old" ballots, ***1972-1996***

- 1 standard box: draft environmental reports/conservation commission minutes, 1990-95

- 1 odd box: payroll vouchers, 1956-1961

- 1 standard box: payroll, 1975-76/town reports, 1980's/schedule A, 1980's, *etc.*

- 1 standard box *("crushed"!):* GL, 1960's/payroll…

- 1 standard box *("crushed"!)/*clerk: **"hodgepodge"!?**

- 1 standard box: *more* town reports, 1960's-1970's, *etc.*

- 1 standard box: town meeting, 1913-1989

(B) __TREASURER/ASSESSOR OFFICE__ **–** Some of the records here are arranged on a "built-in" wooden bookcase, but the majority of records is simply stored in *plastic bins* "stacked" in one corner of the office, right on the floor.

Our inventory here revealed the following records:

- 5 24 inch *plastic bins:* paid bills/packets/batches/*some* MLC's, 2017-20

- 1 24 inch *plastic bin:* write-offs, 2012-15; payments, FY'16; tax title "to do", 2017; tax attorney bills, 2008-2011; forest products warrants, 1998-2005; real estate, FY'08-12; MLC's, 2010-17; foreclosure, 2016; tax titles, FY'15; ter-minated employee files; budgets, ***2001-02;*** assorted bank files; COA assorted files, FY'17-18; chapter 90 contracts, 2017; end of year school financial report, 2003-2014; grant files; fire/police/library/COA, *etc.*

- 1 24 inch *plastic bin:* voided checks, 2017-19; payroll eoy, 2017; payroll replacement checks, 2019-20; bank statements, 2017-19; STAB funds, 2017/ FY'20; agency funds, 2017; trust funds, 2017-18; bank recons, 2017-20, etc.

- 1 24 inch *plastic bin:* demands, FY'17-18; Bolduc overtime – collection file; real estate commitments, 2017-19; Point Software batches/*more* MLC's/ batches, 2018-19

- 1 24 inch *plastic bin:* payroll (worksheets, warrants, deductions, etc.), 2016-19

- 1 odd *plastic bin:* tax refunds/issues/correspondence/etc., 2017-19

- 1 24 inch *plastic bin:* "to" control, 2016; bank statements, 2016-17; war-

rants/real estate exemptions, FY'15; abstracts/sale-deeds; abatements/MLC re-quests/tax payment "miscellaneous"/address changes/personal property recom-mitments/correspondence, 2016; tax title redemptions, 2005/*some* 2011; tax title "to" sheets, back to 1990's-2013

- 1 3 cube *plastic bin:* real estate/personal property commitments, FY'15; real estate, 2012-13; MVE commitments, 2014; payroll warrants/work-sheets, 2017

- 1 3 cube *plastic bin* (19 3-ring binders): MVE commitments, 2014-16; real estate/exempt/personal property, FY'16; real estate/excise/personal property, FY'14; excise tax, 2016; real estate, FY'14/2016-17

- 1 3 cube *plastic bin:* payroll deductions/treasury packets & receipts, 2017; payroll warrants/worksheets, 2018-19; 1 3-ring binder=cash book, FY'17; 1 3-ring binder=abatements, FY'18; *more* packets, FY'18

The following records are stored on the wooden bookcase:

- 15 metal post binders (approximately 43"): real estate commitments, FY'84-85/FY'87-FY'96

- 21 assorted 3-ring binders (approximately 70"): tax bills, FY'07-FY'19

Right next to the bookcase, there is one 5-drawer plan cabinet, 47x35: 3 drawers=plats A-P; 1 drawer=Carto maps, 1991-2017; 1 drawer=?

(C) **TOWN CLERK/ACCOUNTANT OFFICE –** Records here are stored in a combination of *plastic bins* and several assorted vertical file cabinets, etc., and our inventory revealed the following records:

- 1 3 cube *plastic bin:* AP warrants, 2019-20/journal entries, 2020

- 1 3 cube *plastic bin:* journal entries, 2019-20/AP, 2018-19

- 1 3 cube *plastic bin:* AP warrants/journal entries, 2017-18/GL, FY'16/tax collector reports/COA grant, 2017

- 1 4-drawer vertical cabinet (1 "empty" drawer): <u>1 drawer</u>=journal entries, 2019-20/receivables, FY'19/AP warrants, FY'21; <u>1 drawer</u>=AP warrants, FY'21; <u>1 drawer</u>=auditors, 2017/recaps, FY'16-18/monthly recons, FY'17/journal entries, 2021

- 1 4-drawer vertical wooden cabinet/selectmen "general files": <u>3 drawers</u>= A-M (A miscellaneous/Abrahmson property, 2002 – Town of New Marlborough (mutual aid agreements), 2006); <u>1 drawer</u>=budgets/encumbrances, FY'11-FY'20

- 1 4-drawer vertical wooden cabinet: <u>2 drawers</u>=selectmen "general files", N-Z (N miscellaneous/Nelson dba:Looking Glass, 2006 – Zeller, 2013); <u>1 drawer</u>= licenses/renewals, back to 1990's *(at least!)*-2021; <u>1 drawer</u>=**"hodgepodge"** (vehicle inspection reports, ***1990's.../***broadband procurement process, 2015, etc.)

- 1 4-drawer vertical wooden cabinet: <u>1 drawer</u>=chapter 90, FY'19/WPA forms orders of condition, 2018/street files, back to 1970's *(at least!);* <u>1 drawer</u>= DPW bids/bridge inspections, etc., 2013-2021; <u>1 drawer</u>=special permits (current); <u>1 drawer</u>=storm files, ***back to 2003***

- 1 4-drawer vertical cabinet (1 "empty" drawer): <u>1 drawer</u>=selectmen min-utes, back to 1990's-current; <u>1 drawer</u>=current; <u>1 drawer</u>=assorted permit books, 1960's-1980's *(at least!)*

- 2 standard boxes *(1 no lid/1 "crushed"!):* news articles, ***back to 1970's-1980's (at least!)***

- 2-door storage cabinet (records "mixed" with supplies!): 14 assorted 3-ring binders (approximately 30")=bank statements, ***FY'98-FY'12/***fuel storage tanks

vital records registered, back to 1844/census, 2014-2017 & 2020; 8 small box-es=alpha cross-reference cards by subject & vitals, etc.; 1 standard box *(no lid)/ "overflowing" hodgepodge!?*

- 1 4-drawer vertical fireproof cabinet: <u>1 drawer</u>=1 3-ring binder of election

results warrants, 2010-2021/1 3-ring binder of state tax forms, 1999-2020, etc.; <u>1 drawer</u>=3 3-ring binders/2 bound books (deaths, 2015-2021/BOS executive ses-sion minutes, 1998-2021/births, 2014-2021/2 bound books of births-deaths-mar-riages, 1894-1921/1 3-ring=burial permits, 2014-2021; <u>1 drawer</u>=motor vehicle equipment-titles/5 bound books=birth-death-marriage index, 1746-1850/town records-highways-vitals, 1800's/births-marriages-deaths, 1841-64/town records, 1842-72/kraft envelope=deeds, etc.; <u>1 drawer</u>=4 bound books, births-marriages-deaths, 1855-93/town proceedings, 1805-41/1 3-ring binder=proprietors records, 1735-61

- 1 4-drawer vertical fireproof cabinet: <u>1 drawer</u>/7 small books of vitals= births, 1859-2013/deaths, 1964-1983; <u>1 drawer</u>/7 small books of vitals=marriages, 1946-2018/deaths, 1946-1963 & 1984-2014/marriage intentions, 2000-2018; <u>1 drawer</u>/4 bound books=highways & vitals, 1762-1808/proprietors records, 1735-1764/1 3-ring binder=warrants & certified

articles, 2000-2009/1 expansion wallet= minutes (taxpayer association), 1940-1975; 1 drawer/3 3-ring binders=historical inventory, back to 1800's & 2015/cemetery listings/5 bound books=ATM warrants, 1970's-1990's/general registrar of voters, 1980-2000/board of registrars, 1975-2004/2 small notebooks=record of filings (ucc/vitals), 1997-2003/fees collected, 1996-2004

- 1 standard box: IG case file, 2016-18

- 1 standard box: AG case file, 2016-18

- 1 Mosler fireproof cabinet/4-drawer vertical "within": 2 drawers=town his-

torical info (schools/churches/etc.), 10 3-ring binders, **back to 1762;** 1 drawer= approximately 12 assorted bound books (selectmen, 1891/street district, 1800's/ church clerk's book, 1800's, etc.); 1 drawer=approximately 5 assorted bound books (selectmen, 1850/Acts & Resolve, 1911/register of voters, early 1900's)/ several manila folders=town report, 1966/laws, 1950, *etc./*1 3-ring binder= town meetings/proprietors records/road surveys, *etc.*

- 1 4-drawer vertical cabinet (1 "empty" drawer): 1 drawer=planning board files/transfer station files, 2013-current; 1 drawer=ATM/STM files, 2014-current; 1 drawer=current

- 1 4-drawer vertical cabinet: 1 drawer=6 *more* bound books (BOS meet-ings, 1967-1990/town records, 1841-1913); 2 drawers=A-Z, historical family rec-ords; 1 drawer=few ATM tapes, 2000-06 *(at least!)/*lots of annual reports, back to early 1900's-2018

We want to point out that the storage of vital records is continued in a glass wall cabinet along with more books of Acts & Resolve: 6 binders=marriage inten-tions, 1946-1999.

Last stop, "hallway" between the clerk's office and treasurer's office:

- 1 5-drawer 36"lateral cabinet (1 "empty" drawer): building department permit files (#201-421)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The establishment <u>and</u> maintenance of a comprehensive record retention program *is* an absolute necessity. Constantly changing laws and regulations, *as well as* new methods of automating records, all combine to "fog the air". No outside consultant can actually solve the problem.

We have reviewed the state record retention schedules ***AND,*** there are really <u>three</u> big problems: (1) schedules are <u>not</u> "all-inclusive" – some records discovered during our inventory are <u>not</u> even referenced; (2) terminology <u>and</u> indexing are ***often*** inconsistent; (3) you are <u>not</u> adhering to *many* of these guidelines!

The bottom line is that a proper retention schedule <u>should be</u> created *and* "customized" to include not only information that is covered by laws/regulations <u>but</u>, *additional* information that is actually reflected in your files.   ***AND,*** the terminology needs to be <u>standardized</u> – it is ***not*** unusual to find a record referenced by ***more than one name –*** CONFUSING! ***If*** you adopt our upcoming recommendations, then this step would be addressed as part of the labor. Our archives supervisors can be *extremely* helpful during any conversion, as they are trained to assist in "weeding through" the gray areas.   Necessary questions would be asked in order to determine the necessity of retaining certain documents and for how long, such as alternative "back-up" documents, level of reference, and so on.

Next topic, **microfilming.**   Simply put, any either ***semi-permanent*** <u>or</u> ***per-manent*** records *are* "<u>ideal</u>" candidates for filming!   *AND,* during our inventory, we discovered *several* <u>proper</u> film candidates located throughout the various storage areas:

- minutes to meetings

- payroll registers

- commitments

- tax titles/takings

- terminated employees

- building permits

- vital records

- property record cards

- historical bound books

- appointments

- *etc.*

Our suggestion is that you establish a yearly budget for microfilming to address the backlog, and turn the filming over to us, as <u>no one</u> on your staff has time to undertake such a project. Our costs for *regular* microfilming are $54.94 per thousand documents, and $20.58 per duplicate roll *(second original!),* which <u>should</u> be created for security purposes and stored <u>off-site</u>. The filming cost *also* includes the proper destruction of documents upon approval from the state. Any preparation work (removal of staples, paper clips, reordering of material, repairing tears, etc.) is billed at $212.00 per day. This last step can be eliminated by having your own staff prep the material <u>before</u> we take it to our lab.

Next, proper indexing should *always* be completed when filming is done. It is absolutely <u>imperative</u> that targets and indexing of rolls and boxes be done as a matter of routine. A history of transactions is totally <u>useless</u> if it is impossible to find anything! When we do microfilming for our customers, the camera operator feeds a target into the camera *every ten feet.* Thus, a "ten-point indexing system" is established. For example, the top of the box would be labeled with the roll number and the contents of the roll: "Roll #117 - Minutes to Meetings, 1991". The ten reference points would then be listed on the label applied to the side of the box as follows:

1.	1/91	6.	7/91
2.	2/91	7.	9/91
3.	4/91	8.	10/91
4.	5/91	9.	11/91

        5. 6/91   10. 12/91

Now let's talk about the <u>legality of microfilm</u> as it pertains to the storage of hard copy records that have been filmed. You will be happy to hear that there is a statute that has been adopted by *all* 50 states, which says that microfilm <u>is</u> legal, *with the exception of original loan notes* <u>and</u> with a few big "ifs":

1. filming is done in a business like manner

2. film is indexed, cross-referenced, and labeled properly

3. appropriate facilities are provided for preserving and inspecting filmed records

4. adequate equipment for viewing the records is available

Some of the "ifs" are rather vague, but the key point is that film must be <u>in-dexed</u>, <u>labeled</u>, and <u>stored</u> properly so that reference is fast and efficient. ***If*** this is the case, *then there is no need to keep both the hard copy records <u>and</u> the pro-cessed film of the <u>same</u> records!* We also want to point out that **you are much better off destroying records when you can as opposed to holding on to them in-definitely!!** <u>As long as you have the records</u> (hard copy, film, *e-mail,* fiche, *disk,* etc.), the records can be subpoenaed, and you could be subject to fines, and so on. In addition, *"unnecessary"* time is spent researching information that **you shouldn't have anyway!** All of these things can be avoided by adopting **and** following a for-mal schedule of retention.

Archival records should be stored in a <u>central</u> location whenever possible AND, with a <u>realistic</u> microfilm program along with an <u>honest</u> approach to **purging** the archives, the amount of shelving and the number of boxes required *could be* <u>somewhat</u> *reduced!*

However, there is *obviously* a series of problems with the manner in which records are currently being stored. Let us list some of the more *obvious* ones:

1. trailer is **NOT** conducive to proper archival storage

2. proper indexing is ***not*** done

3. there is ***no*** location index

4. destruction dates are ***not*** assigned

5. *many* boxes/bins are <u>too</u> long and <u>too</u> heavy to allow

    for easy access and reference

6. box numbers are ***not*** assigned

7. aisle space is *often* "blocked"

Now, let us look at some "step-by-step" solutions. Number one is to have our records supervisor and staffer re-box records ("as needed"), and index those items which need to be retained according to guidelines. Any candidates for microfilm will be identified, and what is "left over" will simply be set aside for destruction *(with your approval, of course!)*. This would include going through ***all*** of the records outlined in

the preceding inventory section!

Material to be saved should then be boxed in *standard records cartons,* which are "human-engineered". We *strongly* recommend a **15x12x10** box <u>with lid</u> for many reasons:

- lid type boxes make references *infinitely* easier

- boxes are much lighter *and* easier to handle, and *at the same*

    time, strong and durable

- ability to store both letter <u>and</u> legal size

- maximum space utilization

- when purchased in lots, they cost only a fraction

of what you pay for those <u>24 inch</u> deep boxes

A **"pat on the back"** here, as at least *some* of your records are already stored in the appropriate size box - approximately 135! All of these boxes will simply be incorpor-ated into the *new* archives system, "as is", only correcting indexing where necessary.

The next step is to establish **and** maintain a proper indexing system, *as well as* procedures for adding and retrieving records to and from storage. <u>AND</u>, based on the size of your archives, our **"computerized indexing and retrieval system"** <u>is</u> *definitely* the answer!   An alphabetical listing of records, cross-reference listing by box number, department listings, destruction schedule are only *some* of the reports included in our archival three-ring binder with a companion disk as an option. We have brought along a sample log as part of our demonstration.

We also want to mention that it is <u>not</u> necessary for boxes to be returned to the *same* place on the shelving from which they were removed. The archival log can actually be used as a "locator record", allowing you to place a box being returned in the <u>first available space</u>, thereby saving time. *The location is simply changed in the*

log!

In any case, it is <u>crucial</u> that either a person or "team" of people be delegated the responsibility of maintaining the archives system *– **someone** **needs to "own it"!*** Anyone needing access to the storage area, *or* who needs

to add material to the archives, must check with the person(s) responsible for the log book *before* access-ing the stored records in order for a proper inventory to be maintained.

Once boxed, material should be stored on "real" archives shelving for maxi- mum space utilization and ease of finding, 76"high x 42"wide x 30"deep. The amount of *new* shelving and the number of boxes required depends on how "ruthless" you are with **purging.** Since we could not possibly know just how much - ***if anything!*** - you intend to discard, or how much material will be microfilmed, we have outlined the equipment and supplies that would be necessary if you decided to retain everything, "as is".

Therefore, our recommendation is the purchase of **eight** sections of *stand-ard* archives shelving. Each of these sections will be able to hold four adjustable shelves, each with three boxes across/two high/two deep, for a total capacity of 336-384 boxes Total cost for the new equipment is $4,360.00, including install-ation *and* shipping.

You *obviously* have some decisions to make with regard to "where" you want shelving installed while you're waiting for a new town hall to be built! One option *could be* the senior center, **IF** they're willing to temporarily "share" their space – all eight sections of shelving could *easily* be installed in one corner of their large room, while still leaving plenty of room for them to function. Another temp-orary option is to simply "spread" the eight sections out throughout the town hall offices and hallway – it could be done with a little "reorganization"! One thing you simply ***cannot*** do is to continue to store records in that trailer!!

Now, the *really* **"GOOD NEWS"** is that <u>both</u> the shelving *and* the number of stored boxes could be **somewhat** reduced **IF** our recommendations regarding the <u>microfilming of records</u> previously listed, *as well as* the <u>destruction of old records</u> that have already *surpassed* the retention guidelines, are adopted! For example: paid bills, *back to 1990's;* jury lists, *back to 1980's;* budgets, *back to 1990's;* FEMA ice storm, **2008;** vehicle inspections, *back to 1990's;* ballots, *back to 1972;* bank statements, *back to 1990's;* cancelled checks, *back to 1980's;* address changes, *back to 2007;* census, *back to 1991;* general correspondence, *back to 1970's,* just to name a few! <u>Between filming and destruction, *at least* the equivalent of **75-100** standard size boxes of records are involved</u> - **WOW!!** A more precise count would be determined by our archives staff.

Labor to convert the records will require an <u>estimated</u> 13 days with our ar-chives supervisor (8 days), who is billed at $610.00 per day, plus expenses, and one of our staffers (5 days), who is billed at $495.00 per day, plus expenses. Such labor will include creating new boxes, indexing, incorporating approximately 135 *existing* boxes into the new system, reorganizing <u>all</u> boxes, etc. onto new shelving, and re-viewing <u>all</u> boxes for microfilm and destruction candidates. The computerized index-ing system will *also* be created, a locator record will be included for <u>each</u> box, and any costs for disposal, etc., will be on a "pay as you go" basis.

At this point, we need to stress that the work would *obviously* have to be done during "good weather", so that <u>your</u> staff can *empty* the trailer and spread boxes out on either the lawn *or* table *or* both for our staff to properly review.

Those records that cannot be salvaged due to contamination will ***not*** be handled

by our staff, but they will be included in the destruction report to be forwarded to

the state for approval.

You will also need to purchase several supply items: (1) 252 15x12x10

box-es at $3.85 each; (2) 5 10x10x30 boxes (rolled plans) at $3.75 each; (3)

200 box labels at $42.35 per C *(allows you to easily* <u>*re-use*</u> *boxes!);* (4)

computerized index-ing system/log, $1,250.00.

All staffers should be instructed on the proper packing and indexing of a

box,

and prior to a box being placed in storage, a log entry <u>must</u> be made. While on

the topic of proper packing, we *also* want to point out that only the *same*

categories of records should be stored together in the same box ***(no more***

"hodgepodge"!). Each record category "should have" its own specific retention

period, <u>*and unless the period is the same*</u>, the various records should ***not*** be

stored together!

Before the conversion is complete, our supervisor will conduct a meeting

for

your employees in order for you to be able to maintain and perpetuate the

system. Once the system is "up and running", our supervisor should then be

scheduled once every six months - a year to **"audit"** the system and keep you

"on track".

Lastly, we want to comment on the storage of maps/plans, which we noted

throughout the inventory. And, we know that there are more throughout the

depart-ments; therefore, we have included a small supply of boxes specifically

designed for such storage! To assist with the "challenge" of managing such files, we have created a *separate* filing system <u>and</u> database *specifically* to address maps and plans, which we would be glad to demonstrate for you! And, due to *all* of the variables involved in such a project, labor here is always quoted on a "per diem" basis.

In closing, we just want you to know that a *combination* of in-house and

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off-site storage is also an alternative! Therefore, we have included the list of all costs involved with *our* Records Center at the end of this report. By entrusting your records to us, you not only address the space issue **but,** our staff will be available to assist with storage issues such as purging and destruction, *as well as* microfilming, and so on - <u>**we provide *much* more than just space**</u>!

ARCHIVES PROJECT COST SUMMARY

1. **EQUIPMENT (8 SECTIONS SHELVING), INCLUDING IN-STALLATION & SHIPPING = $4,360.00.**

2. **SUPPLIES (BOXES/LABELS/DATABASE), INCLUDING SHIPPING = $3,080.00.**

3. **LABOR (SUPERVISOR/1 STAFFER), INCLUDING EX-PENSES = $8,023.00.**

PROJECT GRAND TOTAL = $15,463.00