

HAMPSHIRE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL



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Five Towns, One School

June 7, 2021

To: Westhampton Select Board
Town Hall
1 South Road
Westhampton, MA 01027

Re: An Open Letter to the Westhampton Select Board regarding the Class of 2021 at HRHS

Dear Phil, Maureen, and Teri,

I felt compelled to write to share about the amazing support that Hampshire Regional High School's class of 2021 received from many members of the Westhampton community. After this particularly difficult year, I wanted to ensure that the seniors' last week was particularly memorable. That was made possible by the strong and constant efforts from these Westhampton community members.

- **Fire Chief Dave Antosz** supported my plan to host a bonfire for the seniors on June 1. Even when I contacted him late in the evening the night of the bonfire, he came right up to the library with his two sons to assist me. Additionally, he put hours of research and energy into ensuring that we could move forward with a licensed firework show for our Commencement Ceremony on June 4, including finding volunteers to supervise the fireworks for the entire day to comply with the permitting regulations.
- **Sgt. Floyd Fisher** and **Police Chief White** were instrumental in ensuring that there was order entering and leaving the school the evening of Commencement. Sgt. Fisher organized a team of six officers from our five towns to staff the event. There were no concerns or problems due to their organized facilitation of the event.
- The **Board of Health** (Tom, Robby, and Dave) met with me almost weekly for months leading up to our senior week. They had wonderful ideas to share, and we had thoughtful discussions about how to make the Commencement a success. Even as the state changed the guidelines as to what we could do multiple times during the planning process, The board was always willing to brainstorm and problem solve to ensure the students could have the best week possible.
- **Meagham Schwelm**, Westhampton Library Director, was a lovely host for the bonfire. She made the library accessible to us and was gracious when I had called her after setting off the alarm.
- Westhampton resident **Bill Willard** donated his time and expertise to ensure that our fireworks show was a huge success. He must have spent over 20 hours coordinating

everything for us and he didn't want anything in return. The fireworks are what tipped our graduation from being "wonderful" to "the best ever", and I am so grateful.

- Westhampton resident **Chris Butler** was the class advisor to this amazing group, and along with co-advisor **Kim Hallett** of Southampton, planned the events for our students.

In addition to these very special people who helped make everything possible, it is also important to acknowledge all of the Westhampton community members that were so generous with their understanding and time to make everything possible. I stopped by many houses along Stage Road to let neighbors know of the fireworks, and everyone was extremely understanding. Mr. Butler put a plea out for fireworks on the What's Up Westhampton Facebook page, and within hours, there was a stack of wood so high, we couldn't use it all. The Jenkins, Miller, Johndrow, West, and Picard family pitched in throughout the week to support these events in different ways. Steve Holt worked to put up the lights for the bonfire. I could go on and on about all of the amazing things that the Westhampton community did to come together to get behind the HRHS class of 2021.

I often think of how lucky Hampshire Regional High School is for being located in such a supportive community. All five towns that send students to our school prioritize education, which I appreciate. However, Westhampton is often charged with supporting the school in ways that the other communities are not. I cannot be more thankful for the incredible efforts from the town. Westhampton is a truly extraordinary place.

Sincerely,



Kristen Smidy, Principal

CC: HRHS Superintendent Michael Sullivan
HRHS School Committee
Westhampton Library Trustees
Fire Chief Dave Antosz
Police Chief Dave White
Sgt. Floyd Fisher
Westhampton Board of Health
Director Meaghan Schwelm
Mr. Bill Willard
Mr. Chris Butler
Principal Elect Lauren Hotz