



Town of Rockport, Maine

Town Manager's Office

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Town Manager's Report & Update October 12, 2021

Town Clerk:

This is quite obviously the busy season for our clerks with so many due dates all hitting around the same time on the calendar.

The first half of our property taxes are due on October 15th. Town Clerk Linda Greenlaw reports an increase in residents using the postal service to send in their tax payments. I would also remind all of us that the Town does have a drop box at the side entrance to the building where residents can drop off their tax payments without the cost of a stamp.

Secondly, dog licenses are available on October 16th for the 2022 season. Traditionally many residents wait to tackle their licenses later in the year, but they can beat the rush now. Also, if your pet is in need of a rabies booster, now is a good time to make that appointment with your vet.

Lastly, preparations are underway for the November 2nd election. Once again residents will be entering and exiting through the Richardson Room, and we will be keeping a limit on the number of individuals in the room at a given time. Absentee ballots are available now so feel free to make your request of our clerks. An absentee ballot must be requested the week before the election but can be turned in up until the closing of the polls on Election Day. The Town Office will be closed to business that day to preserve as much parking and space for the election as possible though staff will be working in their offices.

Also, I would note the new fire suppression system has been installed in the vault. Previously we had a sprinkler head in that space which would have only compounded damage to our records. At this point we are only awaiting the return of the installer to turn on the system, now that our fire alarm is connected to the system, and we will be prepared. The installation also provided our clerks with an opportunity to get into the vault and remove several items which were not necessary to be stored in that space. Unfortunately, the needs for additional vault space remain and

Committees:

A Public Hearing was held on September 27th at the Rockport Opera House for all our Town Boards and Committees to adopt the Town of Rockport Remote Participation Policy. Three

quarters out of all the Town's committees were able to be present and adopt remote participation policies that evening. The committees which have yet to adopt the policy and hold a public hearing are making plans to meet independently and complete this task.

Finance:

Finance Director Megan Brackett successful garnered a CDBG grant award in the amount of \$10,363.92 to defray down costs related to the pandemic.

Fire Department:

The second week in October is Fire Prevention Week (October 13th through 17th) but unfortunately due to the pandemic the usual events which occur at Camden Rockport Elementary School will be limited. However, Chief Peasley will be visiting with the school kids next week outdoors where he will be able to provide a truncated message on the importance of fire safety.

Harbor:

The Harbor has been busier later this season than in past years, but this is in keeping with the trend seen throughout the season. The preparation for winter will begin on the 15th as the lines will be pulled. Conversations with Prock Marine concerning the replacement of the pier are ongoing with a potential date for work to begin on November 1st.

Additionally, the repairs to the Lime Kiln #2 and the Vulcan locomotive are underway. With many thanks to Legacy Rockport, these projects will greatly help to preserve our community's history for future generations and visitors to enjoy. Legacy Rockport is still accepting donations in support of completing these projects and those who wish to contribute may use the link on the town's website to contact them for more information.

Library:

Among the groups in need of adopting a Remote Participation Policy, the Library Committee will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, October 19th at 3:30.

Library Director Ben Blackmon successfully won a grant award from the Maine State Library which will fund replacement of all public computers in the library. With the increased foot traffic at the library, this should be a very helpful addition to our new space.

Lastly, we are transitioning our library employees onto the rockportmaine.gov email addresses. If residents are seeing an unfamiliar email address from what they are accustomed to from our library staff, that may be the very good reason!

Police Department:

Officer Jeta Bixhaku is on her 7th week at the Maine Criminal Justice Police Academy, she will graduate in December. Thankfully, our other officers are stepping up to fill the void left with Officer Bixhaku's departure, and, on occasion, Camden Police have assisted as well. Officer Antonio Del Vecchio is now an approved Firearms Instructor and Armorer.

Public Works:

Last week paving commenced on Grove Street, Mt. Pleasant Street, Limerock Street, Spear Street and the lower portion of Camden Street by Hager Enterprises. I am hopeful our paving

will be completed by October 15th. The paving in this year's budget is still significantly short of the amount the Town must meet to follow a consistent 10-year cycle of road maintenance. All of us are aware of many town roads that require pavement immediately, but it will take careful planning and additional investment to meet the needs of our infrastructure. Sadly, delaying investments in infrastructure only worsen our long term costs.

Safety:

We were just awarded a Risk Reduction Enhancement Grant to cover 100% of additional cameras totally \$2243.04, and a Safety Enhancement Grant to cover \$564.80 toward Rain Pants for the Fire Department. Also, our Workers Compensation rate has reduced for the third straight year. We went from 1.5, to .77 to .68.

Assessing:

Assessor Kerry Leichtman is once again kicking off the Assessors Food Campaign which where municipal assessors through the State of Maine will be hosting a "thanks for giving" food drive through election day. Those who wish to contribute may drop off goods on Election Day or when they drop off their absentee ballot.

Recreation:

Chief Peasley has ignited an effort to boost involvement by the community in the Marge Jones Recreation Field. The field was established over 25 years ago and many of the structures on site are now requiring of significant maintenance or outright replacement. A Town of Rockport Recreation Fields Facebook Page was just created and is managed by Town Staff to give updates on our fields. We are currently accepting donations to help meet these needs and in addition to the many businesses and residents who have already stepped forward to contribute, the groups who use these fields such as Five Town Little League, Pen Bay Soccer, American Legion baseball, and Babe Ruth baseball have pledged to support these efforts. Those with questions or wish to contribute should contact Chief Peasley.