



The Rockport Resource

Volume 1, Issue 1

www.rockportmaine.gov

September & October 2020

Welcome to the Rockport Resource 1st Edition!

By William S. Post

I am pleased to introduce you to the new Town of Rockport newsletter that will be printed and mailed every two months to all Rockport residents and businesses.

The goal of this newsletter is to provide information to you from the Town of Rockport about ongoing projects, Board and Committee meetings, elections, town budget information, events and general information from the various departments that make up your town government that we believe will be helpful to you.

With today's technology, we often forget that not everyone receives or seeks out information through the Town's website (www.rockportmaine.gov) or social media (such as Facebook) or has access to reliable internet or a computer to access the internet.

Therefore, I have started this newsletter to better inform the residents and businesses of Rockport.

The creation of this newsletter is accomplished by the Town's staff writing, editing, and assembling articles and formatting the newsletter into a readable document before it is submitted to the printer for printing and mailing.

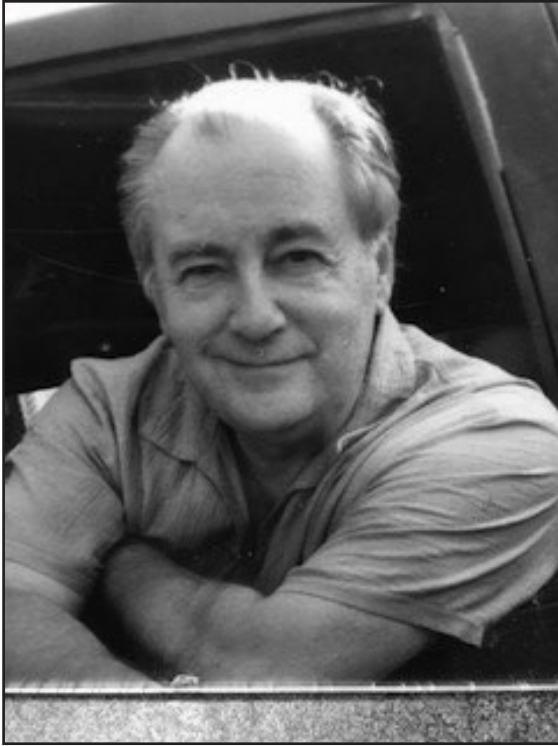
I hope that you will find this newsletter appealing and informative.

We are open to your suggestions as well for articles and information you would like to see.

Please contact Diane Hamilton at dhamilton@rockportmaine.gov or 236-0806 or Molli Bennett at mbennett@rockportmaine.gov or 230-0180 with comments and/or suggestions.

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**TOWN OF ROCKPORT
TOWN REPORT MEMORIAM
JAMES ALDEN LEA**

He wanted the town and its residents to prosper while remaining a small Maine village.

James was instrumental in the initiatives to restore the Rockport Opera House and the lime kilns on the harbor. Working closely with Mary Cramer and the Historical Society, they instituted the date plaques now seen on many Rockport homes. In 2002 James founded the Midcoast Maine Sports Car Club and was an active member of the Owls Head Transportation Museum. Having been inspired by the game boards he had seen in Switzerland, James installed a life-sized chess board that sits above Rockport Harbor. James was involved in town politics and was a fierce defender and advocate for zoning restrictions to maintain the integrity of Rockport.

Well known in town, James called everyone “friend.” He prided himself on the fact that his post office box was 25—a low number that he felt indicated he had been around a while. His family knew that he secretly wished he held a post office box in the single digits. He had many passions and interests and lived a full and fascinating life, enjoying scuba diving, rock climbing, spelunking, sailing, birding, archaeology, antique collection, and British car racing.

James was a true man about town, a community member who contributed so much. He passed away right where he wanted to be, at his home in Rockport, and is greatly missed by the many good friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues he leaves behind. Rest easy James, you left your mark on the town you loved so much.

Long-time resident James Alden Lea was born on September 30, 1936 in Warren, Ohio, and passed away on August 9, 2018. James saw the beauty and the specialness of Rockport from the moment he and his wife Barbara stumbled upon it in 1972, returning to the Midwest from a trip around Nova Scotia. Within six months they had packed up and moved the family to what James knew was the most beautiful little town ever to sit beside a Maine harbor. Although he was a world traveler, James was a small-town man at heart. An avid antique collector and gifted craftsman earning his living making reproduction furniture and period clocks, James respected, and valued history and he was devoted to the town of Rockport and the preservation of its past. He and Barbara purchased the 17th century sea captain’s home on the corner of West and Pascal and spent 10 years painstakingly restoring it. Upon that project’s completion, they purchased the home on the opposite corner and began its restoration. Both are beautiful stately homes today. Although an intellect and progressive innovator who looked to the future, James wanted to preserve the past and never met an older anything, or anyone, he did not want to nurture and coax back to its full glory. At the same time he delighted in the influx of young families moving to the area, the summer tented events at the harbor, the concerts where the old elementary school had been, and the new and thriving businesses that appeared.



**TOWN OF ROCKPORT
TOWN REPORT DEDICATION
DAVE JACKSON**

Dave and his twin brother, John, were born in New York City in 1931. He lived in Westport, Connecticut for about 10 years, then moved to the north shore of Massachusetts, living in Byfield, Ipswich, Marblehead, and even Children's Island. After graduating from Marblehead High School, he joined the United States Marine Corps and was stationed for two years at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, then went on to attend Brown University, graduating in 1956 with a degree in psychology. Brown is where he met his wife, Nancy.

For 15 years Dave was Assistant Publisher of National Fisherman and President/CEO of the Fish Expo trade show.

In 1982, Dave started his own business as co-founder of the North West Flower Garden Show and founder of the Rhode Island Spring Flower and Garden Show. He also enjoyed a part-time role in advertising sales for Down East Magazine and has had a long association with Ocean Navigator magazine and the Ocean Navigator School of Seamanship. Working part-time as Sales Manager for McNabb Marketing Resources, Inc., in Camden, he is also Director of the Camden Amphitheater and Harbor Park, managing the day-to-day operations. Dave persevered to obtain National Historic Landmark designation for the Amphitheater and Camden Public Library in 2013.

Dave's many volunteer activities include being an incorporator of Sea Education Association, an institution that offers hands-on experience in sailing at sea to college and high school students, and a participant in the Community Rowing Project with Atlantic Challenge in Rockland. He's a two-time Paul Harris Fellow of the Camden Rotary Club, a member of the Camden Downtown Business group, and has spent many hours helping Coastal Mountains Land Trust and Merryspring Nature Center.

Dave has also spent many volunteer hours helping people with developmental disabilities, having served on the board of the Pine Tree Society for Crippled Children and, more locally, as a board member of Coastal Opportunities in Camden for more than 30 years.

Dave has three children who all attended Camden-Rockport schools, and he has served two terms on the School Committee and was an active member of the Strom Auditorium Committee. Dave has been an active member of the First Congregational Church of Camden, taking on the unsung task of scheduling ushers for church services for many years. He's a past member of the Rockport Boat Club.

While living in the Town of Rockport for the past 30+ years, he has held and continues to hold many active roles in town government, including Budget Committee, Parks Committee, Elementary School Building Committee, and the Rockport Opera House Committee. Dave is one of those people who make life in the towns of Rockport and Camden better for all of us.

Committee Openings:

Do you want to be involved in your Town? These committees are looking for Volunteers!

Board of Assessment Review –
1 regular, 3 alternates

CR Pathways Committee –
3 alternate vacancies

Capital Improvement Committee 3
alternate vacancies

Cemetery Committee -
1 regular,
3 alternate vacancies

Conservation Commission –
Associate Members

Investment Committee –
1 regular vacancy,
3 alternate vacancies

Opera House Committee –
1 regular,
3 alternate vacancies

Ordinance Review Committee – 2
alternate vacancies

Pesticide Advisory Board -
3 regular vacancies

Planning Board –
2 regular,
1 alternate vacancy

Recreation Committee -
3 alternate vacancies

Rockport Parks and Beautification
Committee -
1 alternate vacancy

Zoning Board of Appeals –
3 alternate vacancies

If you have any questions or are curious about another committee, please contact the Town Office for more information.

Town of Rockport Livestream

Did you know there is a way to participate in the town's boards and committee meetings without actually having to be there? Look no further!

Most meetings are livestreamed from the Geoffrey C. Parker Meeting Room at the Rockport Opera House.

Simply follow the link: (<https://livestream.com/Rockportmaine>) and choose the meeting you would like to watch live.

Use the comment section to ask any questions pertaining to the subject being discussed and have your questions answered.

It is an easy way to be keep current and be involved without having to be present at all meetings.

Burn Permits available online:

<http://wardensreport.com/index.php#!/frontPage>

Boat, ATV, Snowmobile, Hunting and Fishing Licenses available online:

<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fishing-boating/boating/index.html>

Vehicle and Trailer Registration can be done online at:

<https://www1.maine.gov/online/bmv/rapid-renewal/>



Brown Tail Moth Update:

Treeworks of Rockport removed the brown tail moth nests from the trees at the Marge Jones Recreational Fields and Walker Park.

In addition, Treeworks injected the trees at Walker Park with an insecticide that should have eliminated any remaining caterpillars.

The trees at the Marge Jones Recreational Fields were also been injected with insecticide by a MSAD #28 employee loaned to the Town.

Because we had insecticide remaining, we did injections at Seaview Cemetery as well. While these efforts will help reduce the number of caterpillars and moths in these locations, please keep in mind that trees that are located on abutting private parcels are not treated and are infected in all these areas. This will lead to migration

from private property onto public property.

We urge everyone to continue to take precautions.

The Town has plans to continue injections in trees at these sites in the future years.

Census 2020

Please complete the 2020 Census Survey

As of mid-August, 55.4% of Maine residents, 53.1% of Knox County residents and 27.2% of Rockport residents have completed their 2020 U.S. Census survey. While Rockport residents are ahead of the state and county, there is room for improvement. Please complete your Census survey today.

Responding to the Census:

The 2020 Census asks a few simple questions about you and everyone who was living with you on April 1, 2020. Each home should have received a survey in March. If you have not completed the survey, threw it away with the junk mail, lost it because you were going to do it later, or just plain forgot, you still have time – until September 30, 2020.

You can easily complete your form online by visiting www.my2020census.gov, by phone at 1-844-330-2020, or by mailing in your survey.

Why the Census Data is Important:

The 2020 Census will provide a snapshot of our nation—who we are, where we live, and so much more. The U.S. Constitution

mandates that the country count its population once every 10 years. The results are used to adjust or redraw electoral districts, based on where populations have increased or decreased.

The results of this once-a-decade count determine the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives. They are also used to draw congressional and state legislative districts.

Over the next decade, lawmakers, business owners, and many others will use 2020 Census data to make critical decisions. The results of the 2020 Census will inform decisions about allocating hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding to communities across the country—for hospitals, fire departments, school lunch programs, and other critical programs and services.

The results will show where communities need new schools, new clinics, and more services for families, older adults, and children. The results will also inform how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding are allocated to more than 100 programs, including Medicaid, Head Start, block grants for community mental health services, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP.



Do you worry about a loved one who wanders? Wanderer's Program

The Wanderer's database provides a critical network of real time information including a photograph to Law Enforcement, which assists in locating individuals prone to wander due to Autism, Alzheimer's or other mental/medical conditions.

Registration is simple and takes just a few minutes.

Come to the Town Office, Police Department or our website to fill out a Client Intake Form.

Good Morning Camden and Rockport Program

Do you live away and worry about a loved one living alone?

Join the Good Morning Camden and Rockport program and have a peace of mind.

The coordinator will call between the hours of 8 AM and 10 AM and check on your loved one for you and assist anyway they can. If your loved one does not answer the phone for any reason, an officer will be sent out to their residence to ensure everything is okay.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jeff Sukeforth at the Camden Police Department for more information.

The participant applications are available at the Rockport Town Office and the Rockport Police Department.

Have you heard about the Town's Tax Club Program?

- Membership is available to any individual or business that has a tax obligation on real estate property with the Town of Rockport;
- The taxpayer's account(s) must be current, i.e., no balances due on prior year taxes. Tax Club enrollment period begins no earlier than May 1st of each year and no later than July 5th of each year.
- Tax Club payments begin in July and end in June.
- The first payment is due July 1st. Tax Club payments are due on the 1st of each month.
- The last payment and any remaining balance must be paid no later than June 5th.
- Payments may be made in person or by mail. A 5-day grace period will be allowed for receipt of timely payment.
- Monthly payments are calculated on the previous year's tax bill(s), divided by 12 equal monthly installments. Once the new tax rate has been established for the year (usually in August or September), the increase/decrease shall be calculated and apportioned over the remaining tax club payments.
- Tax payment coupon books shall be issued on each account enrolled in the Tax Club;

Late payments will cancel

enrollment in the Tax Club on all accounts owned by the individual and/or business, thus applying interest to the unpaid balance(s), and may prohibit enrollment in future Tax Clubs. Please see the Town Clerk's Office for more information or call 236-9648.

Town Board and Committee Meetings

September:

2nd - 5:30 p.m. CR Pathways
8th - 5:30 p.m. Select Board
9th - 5:00 p.m. Rockport Parks and Beautification Committee
10th - 9:00 a.m. Conservation Commission
10th - 3:30 p.m. Opera House Committee

21st - 4:00 p.m. Legacy Rockport
22nd - 3:00 p.m. Library Committee
23rd - 6:30 p.m. MCSWC Board of Directors
24th - 5:30 p.m. Planning Board
28th - 5:30 p.m. Select Board

October:

7th - 5:30 p.m. CR Pathways
8th - 9:00 a.m. Conservation Commission
8th - 3:00 p.m. Opera House Committee
13th - 5:30 p.m. Select Board
14th - 5:00 p.m. Rockport Parks and Beautification
19th - 4:00 p.m. Legacy Rockport
22nd - 5:30 p.m. Planning Board
26th - 5:30 p.m. Select Board
27th - 3:00 p.m. Library Committee
28th - 6:30 p.m. MCSWC Board of Directors

For a complete list of events, visit the Town's Calendar at www.rockportmaine.gov

Town Clerks Office

By Linda Greenlaw, Town Clerk

Dog Licenses

Available for 2021 on October 16, 2020. All dog licenses expire on December 31, 2020. The fee for a spayed or neutered dog is \$6.00. The fee for a dog that has not been spayed or neutered is \$11.00. There will be a \$25.00 late fee charged if the fee is not received by the end of the day on January 31, 2021. This fee is mandated by the State. If your dog is 6 months or older it is required by law that you license your dog.

Real Estate Taxes

Due on October 15, 2020. You can pay by mail, in person or over the phone with a credit card.

The Presidential Election

November 3rd is ramping up. Application are available to request a ballot by mail or in person. We have received several requests for ballots to be mailed and will do so as soon as the ballots are delivered to us. You may also vote in person on election day. Happy voting!

ELECTION 2020

How is Your Tax Calculated and Where Does the Money Go?

By Kerry Leichtman, Assessor

You are reading this in September or October, and I am writing it in August. At this point I do not yet know what this year's mil rate will be, but Caitlin and I are working hard to finish our work to figure it out. So I thought I'd take this opportunity to tell you how the

rate is established.

On the macro level, we divide the combined appropriations of the town, county, and schools by the town's taxable value to establish the tax rate. Rockport's 2019/2020 tax rate was .01705. Multiply that by 1000 to get the mil rate: \$17.05. Therefore, the tax is \$17.05 for every \$1,000 (mil) of taxable value. The town's share in 2019/20 was 24.92% of your bill, the county 6.61% and the schools 68.47%. How does that translate? For each \$1,000 on your tax bill, the town received \$249, the county \$66 and the schools \$685. As you can see, Select Board decisions are not the driving force behind how much you are required to pay.

While all our responsibilities are geared to determining taxable value, the most important is assessing the value of property: developed parcels and raw land. We do this by studying real estate sales and apply mass appraisal systems to extrapolate our findings to all properties in the town. We do not predict where the market might go to establish value, we study sales activity over the recent past – typically no further back than the past two years.

Our most important tool is the Sales Ratio Study. We list the sales by commonality – single family homes, for example. Only good, market sales are qualified for inclusion in the studies. These are, generally speaking, arms-length transactions.

We divide the assessed value by the sales price to determine a sales ratio. A property assessed at \$300,000 that sells for \$325,00

will have a sales ratio of 92.3%. We average all the ratios in three ways – mean, median and weighted mean giving the median ratio the most weight as it is least affected by outlier sales.

The closer our average is to 100% the better. If the ratio gets too low, we have to raise property values. If the ratio gets too high, we have to lower property values. Why? Because Maine's Constitution says we must assess at just value and the Supreme Court has said just value is synonymous with market value. The statutes and rules that dictate how we assess trickle down from those two mandates.

In carrying out those directives our purpose is to ensure fairness and equity in the system so that no one pays any more or any less than their fair share of the tax burden. In addition to valuing property, we approve or deny exemption applications. We administer and enforce current use programs. We issue abatements and defend values in assessment review hearings. Everything we do is intended to discover and protect the integrity of Rockport's value.

Almost no one likes paying taxes, whether to the town, state, or the federal government. We take very seriously the responsibility entrusted to us to make sure you are dealt with honestly and openly, and we thank you for that trust.

Code Enforcement - Here to Help

By Scott Bickford, CEO/LPI

The Code Enforcement/ Local Plumbing Inspector of the Town of Rockport is always here to assist

you with general inquiries, complaints and Code Enforcement and Land Use Ordinance questions. 2020 has brought with it many challenges to all, and Code Enforcement has been no exception. While commercial construction slowed during the dog days of the pandemic, many homeowners chose to use the down time for home improvement projects such as small additions, decks, and patios.

We were also busy working with the Select Board to approve and issue several Peddler's Permits as many of our favorite foodies mobilized their business to conform with current CDC guidelines and social distancing standards. Several permits were also issued for vegetative clearing and timber harvesting. From January 1st through August 5th of 2020, we issued a total of 176 permits bringing in a total of \$32,205.65 of revenue to the Town of Rockport.

We are always happy to help you with an application or assist you with any other Code Enforcement questions you may have. Give us a call at 207-236-0989 x2 and we will be happy to talk. We would much rather work with businesses and residents to do things right the first time, rather than issue notices of violation which takes up everyone's time, patience, and money.

Going into the second half of 2020 we would like to issue a few reminders:

Subsurface Wastewater Disposal systems – These systems require an application in order to issue a HHE-200 permit. We will need

three copies of the application submitted to our office.

These systems require a minimum of two inspections.

Plumbing permits- internal fixtures and plumbing require a permit from our office. Three copies of the application must be submitted. The work must be done by a Master Plumber unless the work is being done by the homeowner on their own dwelling.

Water meters – Many residents are calling us inquiring about water meter installation. We are happy to help. First thing that you need to do is bring your meter into the office for inspection and to fill out a special form for our records. You will need a plumbing permit if you plan on installing the meter within the infrastructure of your house. If the water meter is installed outside onto your faucet than no permit is needed but you will still need to come in and have it registered with us. It's a very simple process and we appreciate everyone's cooperation thus far.

This past summer, Rockport's two inaugural solar power farms have earned Planning Board approval. We look forward to working with the developers, as well as Rockport's Planning and Community Development Director William Najpauer, to issue them the permits needed so they can start making renewable energy on a larger scale right here in Rockport. The Ordinance Review Committee has just completed the town's first Solar Energy Farm Ordinance to help guide the Planning Board in reviewing future Solar developments in accordance with the heart of the Town's Comprehensive Plan and Charter.

Rockport Opera House

By Drew Weber, Manager

The Opera House continues to follow the protocol for performing arts venues in Stage 3 of the State's Reopening plan. Under the current plan we are permitted to hold gatherings of fewer than 50 people provided we follow the guidelines for social distancing, masking, cleaning, and sanitizing.

While our calendar has been cleared of events these last several months, our video technicians have been navigating all Town meetings on Zoom and Livestream from the tech desk in the Opera House meeting room. The current plan is for some meetings to take place in-person. Remote meetings will continue to be held on Zoom, and all in-person meetings will be setup in the Auditorium to allow for appropriate social distancing. Meetings are Livestreamed to the Town website.

In addition to the many meetings taking place we are hoping to begin hosting some public meetings and small events in the coming months. In the interim, we are taking this time to do some maintenance and cleaning projects in and around the Opera House as well. The Rockport Garden Club continues to maintain the flower beds and shrubs along the exterior of the building.

While the timeline for Stage 4 remains undetermined we remain committed to providing a clean and healthy environment for our patrons and staff at each stage of reopening. With much of our focus now on plans and bookings for 2021, we are hopeful that we will continue to see more restrictions

lifted by the end of the year.

All Opera House updates/information/events will be listed on the town website at rockportmaine.gov.

We will no longer have a separate website for the Opera House.

Public Works

By Michael Young, Public Works Director

Public Works has been focusing on continued road repair throughout town. In conjunction with the Infrastructure Bond that was approved by voters last year, Beech Hill, Mill St, Park St, Gurney St, and South St. are undergoing maintenance and repairs by Public Works to be prepared for repaving. The road repaving has been contracted to All States Asphalt out of Richmond, who won the public bid in June. Repaving is expected to start the last week of August and continue into September.

Old Rockland St. is also scheduled to undergo extensive reconstruction repairs and repaving due to its size and complexity this has been separated from the other projects. This project went out to bid early August. The bid offered an alternative bid for completion in the spring to allow for additional bidders to respond who wouldn't be able to complete the work this year. This was offered in an effort to obtain the best price for the Town.

South St. will be repaved from Rockville St. to Beech Hill and Beech Hill will be repaved starting from South St. approximately 9,000 feet up with work on the

conjoining intersection of the two roads. We are also working on drainage issues on Park St. as well as ditching prior to repaving it. Park St. will be repaved from Meadow St. to Brandy Brook and also from White Tail Dr. to Rt. 90.

Gurney St. will be paved up in its entirety from Old Rockland St. to where it meets Meadow St., with Rockland covering the cost to repave their portion. This will allow for a consistent pave and prevent any unnecessary seams in the road. Mill St. will be repaved from Gurney St. up, approximately 8,500 feet to the hill.

The Public Safety Building parking lot is undergoing a full reclaim and repaving job.. This includes some drainage work as well to help alleviate problems the existing parking lot has experienced.

Although it feels like we just put the plows away, winter prep is also expected to start in the coming weeks. This will be starting with 2,000 yards of sand being delivered to Public Works as well as additional road salt. Vehicle maintenance is a constant at the garage especially as we start getting the sanders and head gear prepped for the season's use. We are also continuing to work on brush and tree limb removal in the right of ways to help alleviate post-storm clean ups and hopefully prevent power outages and downed trees blocking the road ways.

The Glen Cove Rest Area is now a carry-in/ carry-out park, meaning the Town no longer is providing trash cans or dumpsters there. We ask that you take any trash with you as you leave.

Police Department Happenings

By Randy Gagne, Police Chief

To the citizens of Rockport, I respectfully submit Rockport Police Department's inaugural submission to the Town's newsletter. 2020 has brought a busy and unique start of the year for everyone and the Police Department has been no exception. Despite a quiet spring due to COVID-19, Rockport Police Officers have responded to 2813 incidences between January 1st, 2020 and July 29th, 2020. The nature of these occurrences range between 911 hang up calls to our very own "catch a thief - COVID style" in which the Officers asked for the public's assistance in finding a "masked" burglar using our Department's Facebook page.

2020 has brought new staffing changes and new hours of operation for the office hours at the Police Department. Mandy Marriner-Everett took over as Administrative Assistant after the retirement of longtime former assistant Craig Cooley. The department was fully staffed for most of 2019. In August, Officer Chris Taylor resigned from the department and took a position with the Knox County Sheriff's Office. Taylor was replaced by Jonathan Poole who stayed five months before moving on to explore other career options. In June of 2020 we welcomed Officer Jeta Bixhaku who has brought a wonderful new energy to the Rockport PD. We are now fully staffed and ready to take on whatever challenges that 2020 brings to us

while protecting our community in the process.

We also offer the Drug Take Back program. If you have old Prescription drugs that you no longer need, you can either bring them to the Police Department or drop them off in the Drug Take Back box at the Camden Police Department. If you are leaving your home for a period of time, you can get your property on our vacant property check list. If your property is on our vacant property check list, an officer will check on your property while you are away as a peace of mind. Please reach out to the Police Department for more information on how to get your property on the vacant property check list while you are away.

The new office hours are as follows:

Monday: 2 PM – 5 PM

Wednesday: 2 PM – 5 PM

Friday: 10:30 AM – 5 PM

Mandy shares a full time position in the Planning and Assessing Departments and is available outside of these hours by email MMEverett@rockportmaine.gov, or by calling (207) 236-2026 and leaving a voice-mail.

Police Officers include:

Chief Randy Gagne - rgagne@rockportmaine.gov

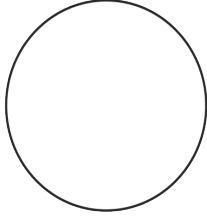
Sgt. James Moore - jmoore@rockportmaine.gov

Travis Ford - tford@rockportmaine.gov

Antonio Del Vecchio - adelvecchio@rockportmaine.gov

Jeta Bixhaku - cbixhaku@rockportmaine.gov

"Like" Rockport Maine Police Department on Facebook



9 1 1

AWARENESS ARE YOU NUMBERED?

Each property owner in the Town of Rockport is responsible and required to place a **designated house number on their residence**. This will assist emergency services in locating you if the need arises.

The Town of Rockport requires the numbers to be at least:

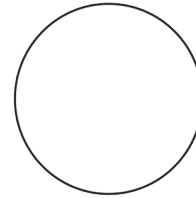
- 4" in height with a contrasting background color
- Houses 50' or greater from the road will place their number on a mailbox or at the end of their road, facing both directions, minimum of 4' off the ground
- Please call the assessor's office to verify your designated house number at 207-236-6758 Ext. 5
- To receive assistance with the placement of the number, please call the fire department at 207-236-4437

Fire Department By Jason Peasley, Fire Chief

We want to inform the citizens of Rockport the Town has an E-911 ordinance that everyone needs to comply with.

We will be checking all the homes and business throughout Rockport and placing these door hangers on your door with a brief description of what needs to be completed.

The ordinance is on the Town's website or you can reach out to the Fire Chief directly at 207-446-8620 cell or 207-236-4437 Office.



YOUR ADDRESS:

West Rockport Fire Station Updates

By Jason Peasley, Fire Chief

The West Rockport Fire Station is an integral part of the community that has over 75% of the current volunteer firefighters leaving near its current location and has begun its initial phases of development of a new fire station.

A Building Committee was formed on June 8th by the Select Board that included the list of stakeholders who will hold the committee seats. The West Rockport Fire Station Building Committee is comprised of the following stakeholders: Jason Peasley – Fire Chief, Todd Philbrook – Deputy Chief, John Wickenden – Assistant Chief, Bill Lane – Lieutenant/ Gartley Dorsky Engineer, Greg Rollins – Lieutenant, Allen Mitchell – Firefighter, Kris Kangas – Resident, Tom Cox – Resident, Bill Post-Town Manager and Mark Kelley as the Select Board Liaison.

This is just the beginning of the process and initial rough draft plans are being designed. The Town has contracted with 2A Architects of Rockport to work with the building committee to put forth a presentation to the Select Board and the community so there is substantial opportunity for public input. The new fire station must account for future growth as it is imperative this fire station is able to house all the equipment and apparatuses we need to provide the residents of Rockport with the best service possible.

Rockport Public Library

By Benjamin Blackmon, Director

The Rockport Public Library is open to the public again! While we are excited to be able to offer our patrons the opportunity to safely visit the library, there are certain restrictions such as patron limit, mask requirement, social distancing requirement among other safety measures being implemented.

Even when we were closed to the public, we were still working behind the scenes to make the library as resourceful as possible by continuously ordering books, DVD's, audio books and video tutorials on how to use our databases for patrons to enjoy upon the reopening of the library. We were still doing other general duties, and even maintaining a weekly story-time that was streamed live through Facebook.

We are anxiously awaiting the opening of the new library excited for everyone to have the opportunity to visit the beautiful new building in the heart of Rockport.

General Assistance

By Diane Hamilton

The purpose of General Assistance (GA) is to provide necessities such as food, shelter, utilities, fuel, and certain other items, it is not intended to provide total support to people. GA is the program of last resort, meaning people should have exhausted all other programs before they are assisted by the Town.

Please call for an appointment. The application is on the Town's website. www.rockportmaine.gov

Camden Area Christian Food Pantry

128 Mt. Battie Street Camden, Maine
Tuesday 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. and
Thursday 4 p.m. - 6.p.m.

AIO Food Pantry

70 Thomaston St., Rockland, Maine
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Wednesday 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
One visit per month.
Email[@aiofoodpantry.org](mailto:Email@aiofoodpantry.org) - 207-596-1043

Rockport's Wastewater System: History, Rate Calculations and Billing

By Megan Brackett, Finance Director

The History of the System

In the 1980's, the Town of Rockport addressed a serious environmental issue. Many homes and businesses were discharging their sewage directly into Penobscot Bay, both into Rockport Harbor and into Clam Cove. Under state and federal mandates, the Town constructed a wastewater collection system (the sewer) in two parts - one to service Rockport Village and surrounding areas, and another to service the Glen Cove portion of Town. Agreements were secured with Camden (for the Village system) and Rockland (for the Glen Cove system) to send the collected wastewater to their treatment plants, which meant that Rockport did not have to construct its own treatment plant.

The construction of the two separate systems was financed with a combination of state and federal grants and by borrowing money

through bonds that were to be paid back over several years by the users of the wastewater systems. Since the original construction of the system, we have increased the number of road miles that is serviced by the system. Extensions to the original system to serve Camden Hills Regional High School and properties along Commercial Street (Route 1) from West St. (Route 90) south to Elwood Avenue were constructed between 1988 and 1989 funded in part by a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) established for that purpose. As the Comprehensive Plan was developed in 2003-2004, the issue of expanding the wastewater system was addressed. One of the highest priorities noted in the Comprehensive Plan is the linking of the two wastewater systems by extending the sewer system along Commercial Street from Elwood Ave (the southern terminus of the "Village" system) to South Street (the northern terminus of the Glen Cove system).

In the summer of 2014, the Wastewater Commissioners undertook engineering and the feasibility studies for one section of this area, from Elwood Avenue to Sea Light Lane. In 2019 the voters of Rockport approved a 4.5 million-dollar bond that will be used to continue the system and finish the connection between the Southern and Northern ends. This extension is now known as the Sea Light Lane to South Street extension. Much of this project will be funded using TIF revenues and state and federal grant money. Our current plan is to send this project out to bid this fall and start construction next spring.

The additional construction that the Town has undertaken has two major components to it that benefit the Town as a whole. The first being that access to public sewer and public water have proven to increase development in the areas in which it is available, the more development we have in Town, the more value there is to spread the tax commitment to, thus potentially lowering your property tax bills. The second major component is that it allowed property owners of failing septic systems and option to discharge of their waste that did not involve huge upfront expenses on their part to construct a new septic system.

How Rates are Established

The Debt Service Fee - In or around February of each year the capital improvement plan for the system is updated. This plan includes items ranging from pump replacements at our pump stations, to placing motorized cameras in the pipes to check for cracks or leaks, to replacing full pump stations. This is a very important step as we want to make sure that we are maintaining the system the best way we can so that we do not end up with costly breakdowns or repairs. The initial list is condensed into a list of immediate needs and what can be accomplished within budget constraints. One of the items that the Town has been saving funds for is the Camden Wastewater Plant upgrade which will be costly, and Rockport is responsible for a portion of that upgrade.

Once the capital improvement plan is finalized, the debt service fee is calculated. This is calculated by adding the total estimated cost

of capital maintenance and debt payments and subtracting the budgeted use of the Capital Reserve Fund. In the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 wastewater original budget, the Town allocated \$279,000 to above ground capital maintenance, \$75,000 to below ground capital maintenance and an annual capital reserve deposit of \$40,000, for a total capital investment of \$394,000. The Town also budgeted using \$104,000 from the Capital Reserve, making the net amount billed to users \$290,000. In addition, \$276,142 is due in principal and interest payments with \$212,591 of this amount funded by Tax Increment Financing revenues, leaving a net amount of \$63,551 making the total debt service budget \$353,551. This amount is then divided equally to all users of the system, and anyone that owns property where sewer is located but has not connected to the system. There are currently 1,194 equivalent users of the system, which means each equivalent user is being charged \$296.11 per year. On August 10, 2020, the Wastewater Commissioners met and approved reductions to the capital budget to decrease the debt service fee. The new quarterly fee per equivalent user is \$68.58 a quarter.

The Usage Rate

The usage rate is comprised of everything else that is not listed above including contracted services to maintain the system, costs from the Town of Camden and City of Rockland to treat our wastewater, administrative services for wastewater billing, record keeping and lien processing, as well as additional Town of Rockport staff time to conduct other

Wastewater related business. Usage is directly correlated to how much water you bring into your house. The system does not have separate meters for the outgoing wastewater, so Maine Water's meters record the incoming water and that reading is used for wastewater billing purposes, which is the standard practice. If you do not have access to public water, Maine Water will estimate your usage based on your house and family size and you are charged an estimated usage amount.

If you do not have access to public water, Maine Water will estimate your usage based on a formula in the sewer ordinance which is based on your house and family size and you are charged an estimated usage amount. Depending on your living situation, this might result in an overcharge of what you are actually using for water and the only way to get a more accurate water usage is by installing a meter on your well. You would be responsible for calling Maine Water with the actual readings from the meter so you would only be charged for the amount of water that is actually entering the wastewater system.

If you are using water through water faucets that are outside for watering plants, filling a pool or any other outside activities, you can also purchase the meter and report that reading to Maine Water so you are not being charged for that water usage because that water is not entering the wastewater system. If you are interested in installing a meter on either your well or any outside water faucets, please reach out to the Code Enforcement Officer, Scott Bickford for more information.

Some major changes that effected this year's usage rates are as follows:

1. The system has an inflow/infiltration problem somewhere in the system. This could be from users connecting sump pumps and/or roof drains to the system. This is a problem because this additional water is not metered, and we have no way of billing customers for this. Last summer the Town spent a significant amount of time and resources trying to locate the sources of additional inflow. There may also be a crack in an in ground pipe that we are not aware of, which is why the Town is dedicating resources to send motorized cameras through the pipes to inspect them. There is an issue because the system is being billed from Camden and Rockland for more waste then what is billed out to customers. All users should know that we are taking this issue seriously and we are doing everything we can to try to mitigate the problem.

2. We are projecting increases from the City of Rockland and Town of Camden for the costs associated in treating Rockport's wastewater. It has been asked of us many times why don't we have a low usage rate like Camden? This answer is twofold, one being that Camden is charging us the same usage rate as their customers are being charged, which is reasonable as it is costing them the same amount to treat our waste as it is theirs. The other part of this is that Camden has 1,880 users (not including the Town of Rockport users) and Rockport has 1,194. This means that Camden has more users to share in the expenses. Rockland has 4,600 users

on their system, a difference of 3,406 users. Another driving factor for keeping Camden usage rates low is that in the past per their Town Charter, the entire tax base paid for sewer projects instead of just the users of the system.

3. We are processing more accounts for nonpayment of sewer bills. This means that we have customers that are not paying their sewer bills in a timely manner. Our only recourse is to start the lien process on those accounts that are more than 90 days past due. This process has a cost for staff time and processing costs, and we are reimbursed only a portion of these expenses.

How the Billing Works

As I am sure everyone on the system knows, wastewater customers receive quarterly bills from Maine Water as they perform the wastewater billing for the Town. As stated above, the wastewater usage is based on the amount of water that is brought into your home. Maine Water has a meter on the incoming water, and we assume what water goes in must come out through the wastewater system, which is the standard practice. If you live in a house that is not connected to public water, then Maine Water has a way to estimate your usage based on the number of people living in the house and the size of the house. Once your usage has been determined the usage rate is applied. For example, if your normal usage is 14 units a quarter, this would equate to a charge of \$269.50 for the quarter (14 units multiplied by the usage rate of \$19.25), or \$89.83 a month. At the meeting held on August 10, 2020, when the Wastewater

Commissioners lowered the debt service fee, they also reduced the usage rate to \$18.10 per unit after adopting reductions in the operating budget.

Also included in your quarterly bill is the debt service fee, this fee is based on how many equivalent user(s) you have assessed to your home or business. The number of equivalent users is determined by the Code Enforcement Officer when you get the permit to connect to the sewer system. The current rate is \$74.03 per quarter per equivalent user.

In Summary

It is our hope that the Town will be able to reduce wastewater rates in the coming year, hopefully the inflow/infiltration problem will be solved. We also ask that all homeowners and businesses do what they can to resolve this issue. If you know you have a roof drain or sump pump, or other items connected to the system that should not be connected, please remove it, and find another way to discharge the water.

All wastewater items, including approving and adopting the annual wastewater budget are discussed at open Select Board/Wastewater Commissioner Meetings, all agendas are posted prior to the meetings, which you are welcome to attend or watch the meeting on livestream.

If you have additional questions please feel free to email me at mbrackett@rockportmaine.gov or call 207-230-0180 x6.

Broadband - Maine's Bridge to the Future

By Debra Hall, Chair, Rockport Select Board

Rockport was forward thinking when it became the first Maine community to build a municipally-owned fiber optic network that serves the Town's offices, Maine Media and certain businesses. But it was unsuccessful in bringing this high-speed broadband to Rockport homes and many other businesses. Although the Select Board at the time supported the expenditure of \$300,000 for the next step in the effort, that initiative was defeated at an annual meeting in June 2016.

Just a few short years later, the technology is still the gold standard and is still what Rockport should be striving to deliver to its residents, but we can now do so much more for so much less. The Rockport and Camden Select Boards just approved a proposal from Mission Broadband that will result in a high-level design and RFP process to find out precisely how much it will cost both towns to build a high-speed internet network. Each town is paying only \$10,000 to Mission Broadband for this work.

Once we get the proposals back from the internet providers, we can then engage in an informed discussion about how to pay for such a network and how to structure the ownership of it. I am personally committed to doing this without raising taxes. That's what Calais and Baileyville have done – and Millinocket and East Millinocket are doing down a similar path. Other New England

towns and states have pursued similar creative approaches.

Using Calais and Baileyville as an example, the towns formed a regional utility commission which then obtained various sources of funding including low-cost municipal loans to fund the commission. Other towns have issued revenue bonds. The bottom line is that towns have pursued innovative approaches to build high-speed internet networks without raising taxes and without recourse to the taxpayers in the event of failure. These efforts are typically so successful that surrounding towns jump on board to join the effort, which I would hope will be the result of Rockport and Camden's efforts too.

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is the need to have telehealth so that we can access health care from not only the comfort but the safety of our own homes. It has taught us the need to have strong educational opportunities available to our children, whether they are learning from home or in a classroom. And for every one of us still working – it has taught us how critical it is to keep the economic engine of our nation and our communities going, strong and vibrant, whether we are working in an office or from our homes. A wave of new residents is coming our way because employers have now realized that they don't need to maintain expensive city buildings. At the same time, executives and workers at all levels are realizing that they can work where they want to live – instead of living where they have to work. This is what economic growth looks like for Maine – a prosperity that will

benefit us all.

I urge you to visit the Maine Broadband Coalition website at <https://www.mainebroadbandcoalition.org/>. See for yourself how Albert Carver, owner of A.C. Inc. seafood company in Beals Island, Maine expanded his employees from 12 to 40, and grew his business from \$2 million to \$40 million – both of which he attributes to the availability of high-speed internet. Albert says this would not have been possible without broadband – because it has opened his company to the entire world.

Also check out Scott Bailey, a senior with congestive heart failure who has been able to stay out of the hospital and other medical facilities through high-speed internet that allows his medical professionals to monitor and care for him from his own home. Not only has it improved his quality of life, it has actually improved his health.

Just as past centuries required railroads, navigable rivers, and adequate roads to grow the economy that has made this nation what it is today, we must have reliable high-speed internet connections to the world in order to improve our economic prospects for today and tomorrow. The benefits of high-speed internet are real – for every one of us – and they are a generational investment that we cannot afford not to make.



Conservation Commission

Dear Rockport Neighbor,

The Rockport Conservation Commission (RCC) requests your participation in our 2020 Survey.

We are a voluntary board appointed by the Town of Rockport Select Board to promote the protection, conservation, and enhancement of the natural resources of Rockport.

The RCC is responsible for conducting research, educating the public and making recommendations to appropriate town bodies.

The harbor, rivers, lakes, wetlands, forests, and conserved lands are a major draw to our community. We are interested in gathering data from residents about the work of the Commission.

This survey will be used to gather Rockport residents' opinions on a wide range of conservation concerns. We will use the results to help inform strategy in the coming years and data will be shared with municipal leaders and the comprehensive planning committee.

The survey is anonymous and contains ten questions.

For more information on the RCC mission and goals, see the RCC's strategic plan on the Town website (www.rockportmaine.gov).

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,
Rockport Conservation
Commission

Scan with your phone's camera to open survey link or type <https://bit.ly/RCCSurvey2020> into your browser.

If you want a paper copy of the survey, please email conservation@rockportmaine.gov.



Honorary /Memorial Bench Program

The Town of Rockport has established an Honorary/Memorial Bench Program to create a lasting tribute for family and friends while enhancing our community.

The dedication plaque that will be affixed to the bench backs and will feature the headline "In Honor Of" or "In Memory Of", or words of your choosing not to exceed 28 characters. The application and policy is listed on our website, www.rockportmaine.gov.

Once the application is received, it will then be forwarded to the Rockport Parks and Beautification Committee for review; you will be notified if your request is approved.

The number of benches in each park or open space will be limited as determined by the Rockport Parks and Beautification Committee. New dedicated benches will in

many places replace existing benches to provide a consistent bench program throughout the town.

The current limits determined by the Committee are:

Marine Harbor Park: 14

Mary Lea Park: 4

Goodridge Park: 2

Memorial Park: To be determined

Walker Park: 2

Library Open Space: To be determined



Employees Years of Service Awards

Russell Fuller
Public Works – 20 years

Scott Bickford
Code Enforcement – 15 years

Kerry Leichtman
Assessing – 10 years

James Moore
Police Department – 5 years

2020 Annual Town Reports

Now available at the Town Office for pick up or you can view on line at www.rockportmaine.gov

Upcoming Holidays

September:

7th - Town Offices Closed

October:

12th - Town Offices Closed

Rockport Town Office:
101 Main Street
Rockport, Maine 04856
207-236-9648
Fax: 207-230-0112

Like us on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/rockportmaine>

Town Office Hours

* Open to the Public 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

* 3 customers in the Lobby at one time.

* Stay 6 feet apart to maintain social distancing.

* YOU MUST wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth.

Town of Rockport
101 Main Street
Rockport, Maine 04856

Permit #

POSTAL CUSTOMER