

Maine Town & City

The magazine of the Maine Municipal Association

August-September 2020



84th Annual MMA **Virtual** Convention

Highlights on Page 18.

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COVID Update: New Residents, Masks
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Maine Town & City

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The Magazine of the Maine Municipal Association

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Times Are A-Changin'



Many municipalities adopted new ways of holding town meetings and elections during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

2020 Convention highlights: Our eight-day training event will be held primarily online this fall, with many "can't miss" educational offerings. **Page 5**

Maine Town & City offers the best statewide town meeting and election roundups of any media outlet in the state. **Page 27**

Changes of Scenery

Realtors, economists and local officials say Maine is an appealing option for urban Americans prioritizing safety during COVID times. **Page 7**

Bangor, Bar Harbor and Masks

Who would have imagined a year ago that we'd wear masks in public, as we do now? Read how two municipalities promote the practice. **Page 11**

Heritage Roundup

From Eliot to Surry, Dexter to Gardiner, communities forge ahead with unique ways to recognize Maine's Bicentennial. **Page 14**

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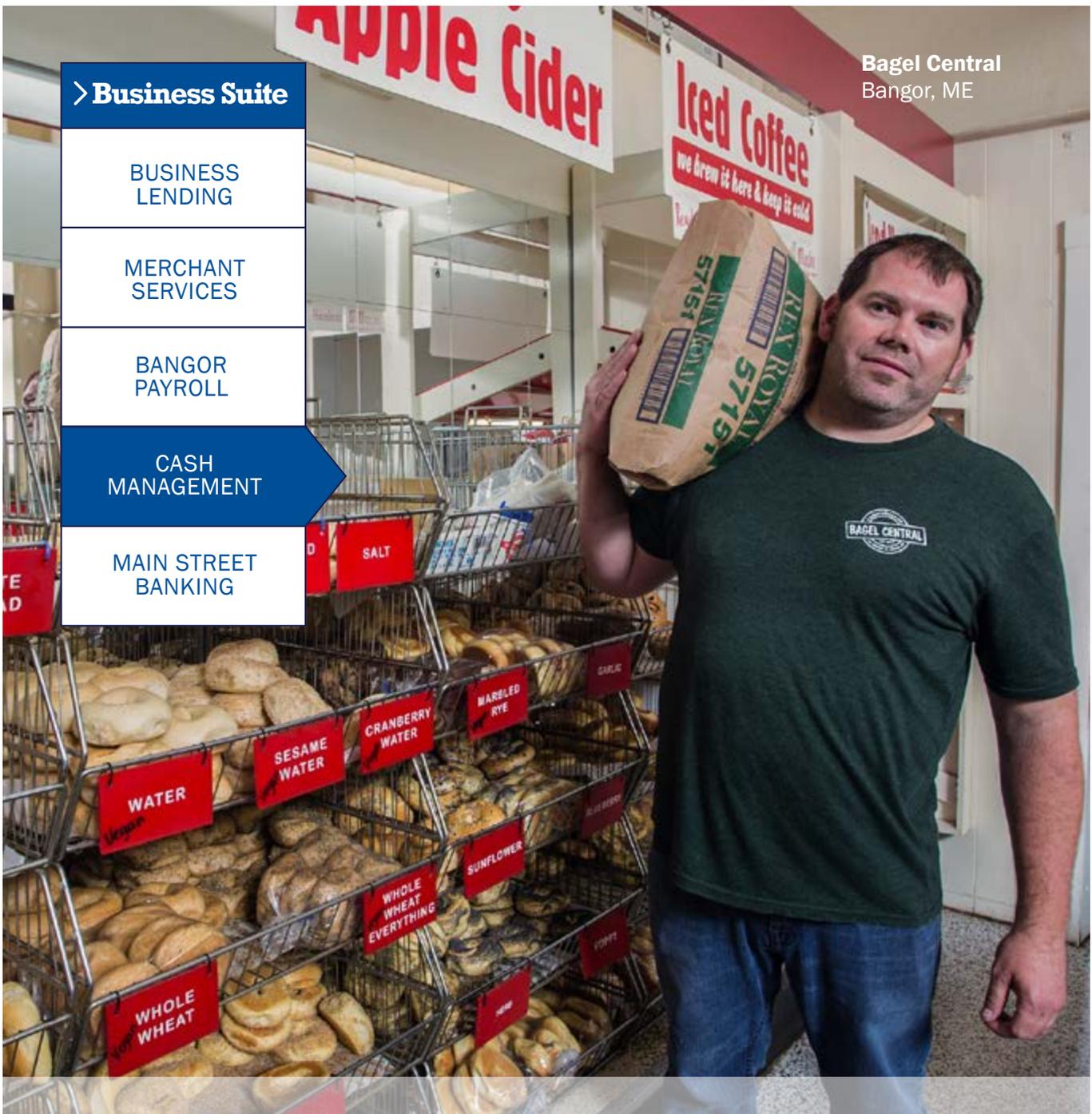
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A MESSAGE FROM MMA

BY ERIC CONRAD / EDITOR

This year's MMA Convention: Truly, unprecedented

You might think that this time every year, I write about the upcoming Maine Municipal Association Annual Convention, and say this one is special, unprecedented, or something like that.

This year, there can be no doubt.

The COVID-19 public health emergency created so many restrictions and qualifiers – both for MMA and our 2020 host, the Augusta Civic Center – that we've had to change, basically, everything. We will hold, almost entirely, a virtual convention. Here's the idea:

- MMA will host a small, in-person event at the Civic Center on Wednesday, Oct. 7. There will be no live exhibitors. We will keep the number of attendees and staff below 50, as per the State of Maine's current coronavirus guidelines.

- The event will be kicked off by **Kristy Senatori**, executive director of the Cape Cod Commission, which has done great, inter-municipal, collaborative work through a program called "One Cape Cod." There are many municipalities on the Cape and, as you might imagine, they face common challenges with development pressure, traffic, climate change and, yes, COVID-19.



Ms. Senatori will explain how her agency helps to bring the Cape Cod towns together, and will suggest ways that Maine can do the same.

- The rest of the day on Oct. 7 will resemble our in-person event, from a topical viewpoint. The Cape Cod presentation will be followed by the MMA Annual Business Meeting, speeches by **MMA President Christine Landes** and **Vice President James Gardner, Jr.**, awards recognition and a 2020-21 legislative recap and preview, led by Kate Dufour, who heads our State & Federal Relations Department.

- At 3:15 p.m., keynote speaker **Matt Lehrman**, a national expert on how to turn conflict into collaboration, differences into tangible results, will present via Zoom from his home State of Arizona. The theme of this year's conference is, "United We Stand," an idea proposed by President Landes early in 2020. How prescient this topic is, seeing how we battle COVID-19 together, and some of the recent protests across the U.S.



- The Convention's entire opening day will be live-streamed to MMA members with computer access around the state. There is a registration fee to watch – \$20 for the full day, or \$90 for this and 20 more virtual webinars that we plan to hold from Oct. 8-15.



Wednesday, Oct. 7 is just the beginning. On the morning of Thursday, Oct. 8, **Dr. Liam Riordan**, professor of history at the University of Maine, will remind us that 2020 is Maine's Bicentennial. Dr. Riordan will talk about the conflict and political events that led to the birth of our great state, back in 1820.

From there, we plan to have four, Zoom-based webinars daily on Oct. 8, 9, 13, 14 and 15. (Monday, Oct. 12 is a holiday.) We are still finalizing parts of the program, but most of it is in this magazine, on Page 18. You can also see it, and you can register, at the MMA website (www.memun.org).

There will be plenty of content for mid-sized and large municipalities. We are making a point of offering practical training to officials from smaller towns. For example, there will be breakout sessions on local roads best practices, Stream Smart culvert crossings, the basic tenets of tax assessing – and more.



We will end MMA's portion of the virtual 2020 Convention with a bang, a Zoom-based "conversation" with **Jeanne Lambrew**, who heads the sprawling Department of Health & Human Services, which oversees Maine's response to COVID-19, General Assistance programs and more.

We know, we know – this year's event is so different. "Necessity is the mother of invention," as the saying goes.

We sincerely hope that you see value in our 2020 program, and join us – and our online business exhibitors – from your home or office. ■



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Virus bounce: Will pandemic drive new residents to Maine?

Realtors, mayors and economists say COVID-19 has Americans from urban areas reconsidering where they live, and viewing Maine as an appealing relocation choice.

By Susan Cover

When Warren Berkowitz left suburban Boston to move to Maine during the “Back to the Land Movement,” he and others were disillusioned with the political establishment and the politics of the time, namely the Vietnam War and Civil Rights injustices.

It was the late 1960s and early 1970s and many of those who sold all their possessions to move to rural Maine were inspired by Scott and Helen Nearing’s book “The Good Life,” which describes in detail how to live off the land.

“In Maine, that amounted to a huge influx of urban and suburban young people, many of them you could classify as hippies,” said Berkowitz, manager of The Good Life Center in Harborside, an unincorporated village in the Hancock County town of Brooksville. “We were looking for a simpler way of life, one more in tune with nature.”

Fast-forward 50 years and Maine could be on the verge of seeing another wave of urban and suburban people from out of state looking to escape crowded cities, the spread of the coronavirus and to take advantage of the ability to work from home. They likely won’t be farming like Berkowitz and others, but will pack up their laptops in search of affordable homes, good schools and the high quality of life Maine has to offer.

“I think it’s quite plausible,” said Philip Trostel, professor of economics and public policy at the University of Maine. “It could be pretty promising for Maine.”

As an economist, Trostel said Maine needs the types of highly skilled



workers who are likely to be the ones leaving the cities to enjoy a more rural life. He thinks the pandemic might help accelerate a trend that was happening anyway, with more people being given the option to work from home.

“From an economic point of view, this is interesting,” he said. “There really isn’t a precedent for it.”

‘A very nice lifestyle’

The first call most people make when they are looking to relocate is to a real estate office, where Realtors report a significant increase in phone calls from out-of-staters interested in looking at properties, said Tom Cole, president of the Maine Association of Realtors and managing broker of Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate The Masiello Group in Brunswick.

“I think we are going to see more

and more people from out of state,” he said. “A lot of people have probably thought about this for a long time.”

Cole said the data doesn’t yet show an uptick in sales to out of state residents, noting that it can take 60-90 days to complete a transaction, particularly if the buyer has a home to sell first. Data released in late July by the Realtor association showed a 4.3% drop in home sales in June compared to June of 2019. However, prices are up 4%, with the median sales price reaching \$249,000.

By the end of the year, he expects the numbers to show an increase in sales to people from other states. Typically, 75% of Maine homes are sold to other Mainers, either as primary or secondary homes, he said.

“I think we will see more people from out-of-state come to Maine because more entities are allowing

Susan Cover is a freelance writer from Augusta and regular contributor to *Maine Town & City*, mainefreelancer@yahoo.com.



Clare Davitt



Michael Foley

people to work from home and Maine has a very nice lifestyle,” he said.

Sherri Dunbar of Tim Dunham Realty in Wiscasset often works with out-of-state buyers in the summer, particularly those who want to live on the water.

“I’m seeing all the way around there does seem to be more out-of-state buyers this year,” she said. “I think the next couple of months may look different than the first two quarters of the year.”

The buyers she works with are more anxious than in the past, at least in part because nearly every listing draws multiple offers. And clients she began working with before the coronavirus “were desperate to come in”

once the state started to allow out-of-staters to travel here.

“I would have to say in this market there’s a lot more serious buyers than tire kickers for sure,” she said.

Importance of broadband

Cole also noted another important piece of the puzzle: The passage of a bond question in mid-July that allows the state to borrow \$15 million for broadband expansion that will be matched by up to \$30 million in federal and other funds. Whether it’s an old farmhouse, a coastal property or a home in the mountains, Cole said access to high-speed internet is essential to drawing stay-at-home workers who may be looking for a change from

city life.

“Some of those areas just don’t have service yet,” he said.

Bangor Mayor Clare Davitt said stronger and faster broadband is needed to help current Maine residents work and go to school from home. That need will become all the more urgent if the state does see an influx of work-from-home professionals who want to move to the area.

“It’s something we’ve known was a problem for a while,” she said. “The pandemic has made it more clear.”

As someone who grew up in Bangor, moved away for 15 years and came back, Davitt described herself as “a big fan of people from away.” She said the state could benefit from new ideas and a more diverse population. In particular, the Bangor area’s cultural and artistic offerings and natural beauty are all strong attributes that will appeal to those looking for a change.

“I was just coming back to visit and six years later I work at my hometown library and I’m mayor,” she said.

Some of those who relocated to Maine 50 years ago also wanted to create a community and find a way to contribute to local towns in a way they could not have in the city, Berkowitz said. He said they were not so much dropping out of society as they were looking to live a different life.

“The Back to the Land Movement brought a lot of well-educated, progressive people to the state,” he said. “I don’t think there was an intent to nec-

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essarily drop out but to engage more intensely than you can do in a more urban place.”

During the coronavirus pandemic, Berkowitz’s daughter temporarily moved her family back to Maine from Baltimore.

“I think the pandemic is really going to have people question their existence in the cities,” he said, noting that many of the things his daughter loves about Baltimore – the restaurants, playgrounds and schools – may be closed or drastically changed when she returns. “They are looking hard at their life and wondering if Baltimore will be the same.”

Westbrook Mayor Michael Foley said the greater Portland area has been a desirable place to live and work for some time, with housing offered for sale often going under contract in less than 24 hours. From the city’s perspective, it’s important to realize that demand for new office space is

likely to wane in the coming years but perhaps the need for different types of housing – such as a proposed apartment complex with an indoor greenhouse and parking garage – will be where the city can help transition to a new post-pandemic economy, he said.

“Westbrook would certainly be a desirable place to be outside the core but close to the Turnpike and surrounding towns and cities,” he said. “A lot of the stuff we’re already working on will help with demand from people coming to smaller cities.”

One of the things already in the pipeline was to refocus economic development efforts from attracting new businesses to helping current businesses stay in Westbrook and grow, Foley said. The city earmarked \$40,000 in federal CARES Act funding for the retention and expansion program at a

time when some businesses are making the difficult decision to close.

“It was on our radar before COVID but with COVID it became more important,” he said. “We need to help maintain them and recover.”

What history tells us

Throughout its history, Maine has seen waves of newcomers settle in its cities and towns, along the coast, in the mountains and on lakes and rivers in the interior, said State Historian Earle Shettleworth.

In the mid-to-late 1700s, Acadians came to the St. John Valley and Germans settled in the Waldoboro area. In the 1820s and 1830s, Irish immigrants came to Bangor and a few decades later to Portland. After the Civil War, Franco-Americans from New Brunswick and Quebec flocked

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to textile mills in Biddeford, Auburn, Waterville and other industrial cities.

They were followed by Italians, Swedes and Poles, all drawn to America with the promise of a better life.

“It was amazing in that period of immigration how quickly there was upward mobilization,” Shettleworth said. “You had one generation coming off the boat with no more than what they had in a suitcase and in the next generation you have a superior court justice.”

In describing the waves of immigrants to Maine, Shettleworth said history tells us that limited opportunities and unrest – things like strict rules of inheritance or war – often drove people to leave their home countries and move to America. And though he can think of no parallel to the events of today, people from other states have

been coming to Maine to escape “hot and disease ridden” cities since before the Civil War.

They came by train or steamship from Boston, New York and Philadelphia heading to places like Biddeford Pool and the Rangeley Lakes region.

“They had the time and means to travel to Maine for the summer,” he said, noting that those summer traditions sometimes prompted visitors to buy second homes here.

As for the possibility of a long-term trend of city dwellers moving to Maine, the Good Life Center’s Berkowitz said he could envision a new wave of Mainers building on top of the current trend of organic farmers who are coming here to settle.

“I know a lot of people up here for the pandemic,” he said. “Like my kids. How many will stay is the question.” ■

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(Statewide sales June 1-30, 2020)

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Units sold 2020: 1,720

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Percent change: 4.15%

Source: Maine Association of Realtors

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- Maine’s Marijuana Laws: Municipal Opt-in
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Bangor, Bar Harbor use state funds to push mask wearing

The Mask Up for ME campaign in Bangor is particularly extensive, partnering city officials with local health-care providers and a public relations agency.

By **Stephanie Bouchard**

As spring became early summer this year, and talk of reopening became more urgent, the City of Bangor realized that it was going to need a strategy to reopen safely.

By late spring, scientific research made it clear that wearing masks provided some degree of virus control, so the Community Health Leadership Board (CHLB), a partnership between the city and several local health-care and human services organizations, brainstormed a solution: the Mask Up for ME campaign.

When they conceived of Mask Up for ME, said Patricia Hamilton, a family nurse practitioner and Director of Public Health for the City of Bangor, they didn't have much funding for it – \$70,000 to \$80,000.

The plan was to partner with a local advertising and public relations agency, Sutherland Weston, to do a low-cost (\$10,000) social media public health awareness campaign through Instagram and Facebook. But then, the city was able to apply for grant funds for COVID-19 prevention and protection through the state's Keep Maine Healthy program.

Bangor received \$157,957 from the state's grant program, which meant CHLB could expand the Mask Up for ME campaign. In addition to using social media to spread the word, CHLB with the help of Sutherland Weston created a series of paid radio, TV and web ads, as well as a graphic that is available for the public to use so it can participate in the campaign, too.

The grant funds also went to buy masks that are available for free at various locations in the city and the

installation of hand sanitizer stations at the city's parks and trails.

While encouraging physical distancing, and while hand washing is an important part of the Mask Up for ME campaign, masking itself is the key component.

"As a city, we realized, 'OK, we're going to start to reopen businesses,' " Hamilton said. "We knew we needed to get everybody on board with masking, and we knew it was going to be difficult because any time you have to change social behaviors, you know, from a public health perspective, that's going to be hard."

Why do people resist?

People may be resistant to wearing masks for a number of reasons, said Carol Nemeroff, a health psychologist who specializes in researching how people think about contagious diseases and their own health risks. Nemeroff is transitioning from her role as a professor of social and behavioral sciences at the University of Southern Maine. She became dean of Renaissance College at the University of New Brunswick in her native Canada in July.

Among those reasons for not wanting to wear masks is misinformation about mask wearing – initially, the message from national health experts was that masks were not effective at protecting people from the virus – and political polarization, which happens when wearing a mask or not supports a particular political ideology or identity.



Mailboxes around town in Bar Harbor help distribute free masks. (Submitted photo)

But maybe at play even more than misinformation and politics is basic human behavior that is unconscious and automatic, she said. That's the reaction against a perceived infringement on personal freedom. An example of this automatic reaction that everyone can relate to is when parents tell their toddler child not to do something, and the toddler screams out, "Nooo!"

Couple this automatic reaction with the cultural value Americans place on personal freedom, she said, and you can see why getting people to wear masks is a challenge.

Knowing the challenges it was up against, the Community Health Lead-

Stephanie Bouchard is a freelance writer from Bath and regular contributor to *Maine Town & City*, stephanie@stephaniebouchard.net.

ership Board drew on the expertise among its own members and market research done by Sutherland Weston to create a three-pronged strategy for the Mask Up for ME campaign, said Elizabeth Sutherland, cofounder and partner of the advertising agency.

The first part of the strategy was to encourage mask wearing by leveraging the power of local influencers in the community. Sutherland Weston reached out to folks who are well known around Bangor (or the state), such as Larry Geaghan, owner of the popular restaurant, Geaghan's Pub and Brewery in Bangor, and Dr. Nirav Shah, the director of Maine's Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The board asked them to take a photo of themselves wearing a mask and to provide a brief quote about why they wear one. Those images are posted on social media where they are easily shareable.

The second part of the strategy is to use humor to champion mask wearing. Sutherland Weston created several funny videos that appear online and on TV.

"We know that individuals really respond well to humorous instances that are things they can relate to," Sutherland said. Videos are a type of content that are popular with people, she said, and they are easy to share online.

The final component is to share



scientific data and numbers in their messaging without getting into the weeds. Source references to the data are included in the messaging so that those who want a deeper dive can go to the sources for themselves.

Sutherland Weston is tracking social media shares and other statistics in order to measure how effective the campaign is, but at the time of this writing in late July, the agency didn't have enough data to make meaningful determinations, said Sutherland.

Effort in Bar Harbor, too

Even without the expertise of an advertising and public relations agency, municipalities beyond Bangor are launching their own masking cam-

paigns. Some put simple signs or posters around their communities encouraging mask wearing, and some, like Bar Harbor, hand out free masks to all comers.

With the Fourth of July looming on the horizon and concern about an inundation of tourists, the community of Bar Harbor knew it would have to be aggressive in its strategy to keep residents and visitors safe, said Nina Barufaldi-St. Germain, Bar Harbor's



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“The highest priority for us – because of the number of tourists we see – is maintaining community health. A large portion of our town was concerned about community health – that people would come here, they would leave the disease, and then go home and we would be the ones who would be sick,” she said. “If we could figure out how to mask our visitors, then we’d be so much better off.”

Like Bangor, Bar Harbor received funds from the state as part of the Keep Maine Healthy program. It is using the \$127,000 grant money primarily for providing masks for free, signage, and for setting up and maintaining hand sanitizer stations.

Each morning, Barufaldi-St. Germain refills six large mailboxes placed in the most congested areas of town with 1,200 to 1,500 individually wrapped masks. She puts between 100 and 250 in each mailbox.

The masks were disappearing so quickly that she feared individuals were just clearing out the mailboxes, so she asked the police department to check the surveillance video of the area near the police station where one of the mailboxes is located.

“The PD pulled it up and they saw that people weren’t just stealing them,” she said. “They maybe were taking a handful of them, but they weren’t



just cleaning it out.”

Barufaldi-St. Germain expected that individuals may take more than their fair share, but, she said, she figures it’s still a win even if it’s a costly endeavor for the community. Each mask costs 46 cents.

“The idea is they’re going to take them. If they’re going to take them, they’re probably going to use them,” she said. “Even if they’re not using them in Bar Harbor, maybe they’ll be using them in their hometown or they’ll be using them while they’re traveling. Either way, we feel like we’ve done our part to help stop the spread.” ■



RESOURCES AND TIPS

Both Nina Barufaldi-St. Germain and Patty Hamilton are available if you want to learn more about what their communities are doing or just brainstorm ideas. Barufaldi-St. Germain said Bar Harbor is also interested in partnering with other communities and organizations in the hopes that by banding together, towns can leverage their buying power to pay less money for masks to distribute.

Contact Nina at: barharborjewel@gmail.com.

Contact Patty at: 207-992-4550, or patty.hamilton@bangormaine.gov.

Check out the Mask Up for ME campaign at these websites:

<https://chlb.me/mask-up-for-me/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CHLB-Maine>

Maine’s Department of Health and Human Services’ Keep Maine Healthy program has a number of free, downloadable resources on its website. Go here to access those:

<https://www.keepitmaine.org/>

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Flexibility reigns as towns adjust their Bicentennial plans

From Surry to Eliot – and elsewhere – Maine towns acknowledge COVID-19 thwarted many 2020 events, but perseverance and innovation remain.

By Janine Pineo

Inventive ways to mark the state’s Bicentennial have been the name of the game since the first Maine200 grants were awarded last September, as recipients run with ideas to celebrate the occasion throughout 2020.

Much of it was derailed the very weekend of the state’s 200th anniversary last March, but that hasn’t stopped some of those grant recipients from regrouping with not only adjusted plans, but sometimes entirely new ones for next year, pandemic permitting.

From historical presentations and walking tours to tree plantings, talent shows to a unique card game, municipalities have come up with a myriad of ways to commemorate Maine’s statehood.

Eliot

A year before Maine’s Bicentennial, Eliot established a Bicentennial Committee and decided to have a yearlong celebration of Maine’s statehood with a starting and ending point of the annual Eliot Festival Day, which would mark its own 40th anniversary in September 2020.

Even then, the York County town kicked things off a month early with a flag-raising ceremony in August 2019, running the state’s Bicentennial flag up the pole outside the Town Office. Events were happening every month after that, right up until the moment the state shut down because of COVID-19.

On the calendar for March 16 was an event at the elementary school to dedicate the mural of the clipper ship



Sen. Mark Lawrence and Rep. Michele Meyer display the Maine bicentennial commemorative flag before it was raised during a ceremony Aug. 12, 2019, in Eliot. (Submitted photo)

Nightingale, a vessel built in Eliot at the Hanscom Shipyard.

“We were all set to go. It was so disappointing,” said Jan Cerabona, co-chair of the Eliot Bicentennial Committee, which received a \$2,500 grant.

The Nightingale was launched in 1851 and named for a popular singer, the Swedish soprano Jenny Lind, who was known as the “Swedish Nightingale.” She was touring the United States at the time of the ship’s building and launch.

The clipper had a varied history, from ferrying passengers to Australia during its gold rush to carrying tea from China to England. The vessel was sold less than a decade after its launch and

was used to transport Africans in the slave trade. It was captured in 1861 by the USS Saratoga off the coast of Africa, as it was carrying hundreds of enslaved people. The U.S. used the ship during the Civil War before it was sold again. In the end, the Nightingale was abandoned at sea in 1893 en route from Nova Scotia.

Viewing of the mural is one thing Cerabona hopes might be saved for this year, she said, since people could physically distance where it now hangs. The painting, which was once in a private residence, is about 11 feet long and four feet tall.

“It takes up the whole wall of the

Janine Pineo is a freelance writer from Hudson and regular contributor to Maine Town & City, jepineo@gmail.com.

gym and it just looks beautiful,” Cerabona said.

Much of Eliot’s commemoration revolves around schools, including the town’s one-room schools. Cerabona said the town had eight one-room schoolhouses – a ninth was in the works – established back in the early 1800s. No. 2 schoolhouse was where the 45th Governor of Maine, John Fremont Hill, was educated as a child.

Of the eight, five schoolhouses are still standing, Cerabona said. Four now are private residences and one, No. 8, is open to the public and part of the bicentennial events.

There has been a history curriculum for the second-graders in MSAD 35, Cerabona said, along with exhibits in a display cabinet at the elementary school. The music teacher wrote a song the students were learning, and the No. 8 schoolhouse was part of the spring bulb planting done last fall at several locations in town.

Cerabona isn’t sure what next year will hold at the moment. It might include a float in the Maine State Bicentennial Parade, for instance. There may be some walks, inspired by children’s

books and a local history book. There is still much uncertainty.

“We’ve done a lot anyway,” she said.

Dexter

It was going to be a big piece of art.

The Penobscot County town received a \$500 grant from the Bicentennial Commission to use in its summer recreation program for the children to create tiles that would become a mosaic celebrating the bicentennial.

The final work probably would have been on display at the town office, said Trampas King, Dexter’s town manager, but now everything has been moved to

next summer’s program with a slight change of plan: the concept.

Marcy King, art teacher at MSAD 46, arts and crafts coordinator for the town’s summer rec program and wife of the town manager, said the initial plan was for a cutout of the numbers 2020 but that now seems odd with the postponement.

She’s bouncing around ideas for the project, possibly a 4 x 8-foot sheet of plywood, with “maybe some sort of collage.”

The second, third and fourth graders in the summer rec program would still create the art, she said. The theme

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likely will be what the Bicentennial means to them. "It'll be very random and abstract," she said.

The finished piece is destined for display at the Maine Red Hot Dog Festival held in town, she said, although the final destination for display is up in the air.

What's important is that the children see that their art is valued. "My intention is publicize their art," she said.

Gardiner

What was to be a three-day event in 2020 for Gardiner will be a three-day event in 2021, partnered with the annual Gardiner River Festival.

"We've put everything on hold for this year," said Tracey Desjardins, Gardiner's Director of Economic Planning and Development. However, much of what was planned for 2020 will be at the heart of the 2021 celebration set for June 17, 18 and 19.

The Kennebec County city, which received a \$10,000 grant, expects to hold a classic car cruise and sock hop on the first night for the kickoff. The next day will be History Day, with a number of historic tours available.

Among them will be the Downtown Historic Tour, which will follow along on the Kennebec Chaudiere Heritage Trail, a corridor that runs 230 miles from Quebec City to Popham Beach, passing through Gardiner. Another tour, the Tillbury Town Audio/Walking Tour, is based on "Tillbury Town" poems written by Gardiner native Edwin Arlington Robinson, a Pulitzer Prize winner. The Gardiner Library Tour will feature the inventory of buildings that highlight life as it was in Gardiner in 1820.

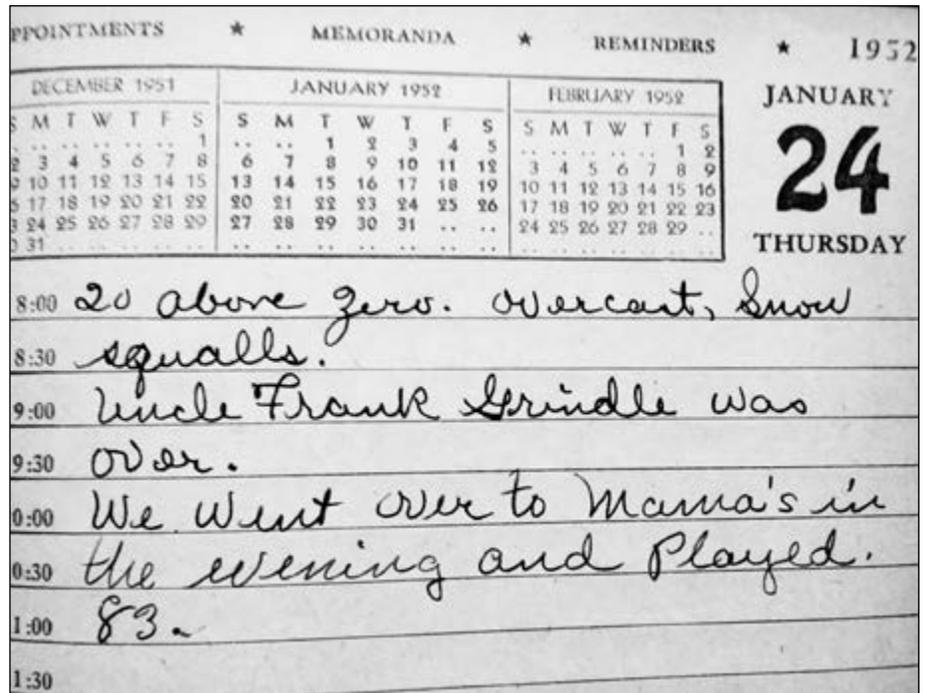
Melissa Lindley, executive director of Gardiner Main Street, which holds River Festival, said the last day of the event will have the River Festival's usual free family activities on the waterfront, along with the craft fair. The talent show always draws a crowd, and there will be fireworks to end the day.

"We're all kind of coordinating," Lindley said. "It's a good example of the community coming together."

Monmouth

The "Planting of the White Pines" was to have included trees for Monmouth residents to plant, too.

Once again, the pandemic shifted the course of the Kennebec County



Surry- Annie Hill Diary 1952. (Submitted photo)

town's plan. The Conservation Commission intended to plant a small grove of white pine in the cemetery at Monmouth Center and distribute 50 evergreen and deciduous trees for planting throughout the community, attaching plaques that would identify the trees as "Bicentennial trees."

"The pandemic canceled our original plans," said Larry Buggia, a member of the Conservation Commission. "The \$500 will be spent on buying potted pine trees to be planted as a grove in a cemetery with a sign indicating the source of funding."

Surry

"It was very dramatic," said Marie Merkel, chairman of Surry Celebrates Maine 200.

The Hancock County town, which received a \$2,500 grant, was prepared to kick off their calendar of 24 events from March through October with a free bean supper on that ill-fated night of March 14.

Twenty-eight hours before the start, Merkel said, "We canceled it."

So it has gone for nearly all of the events slated to be held. Merkel said they've managed to salvage Day at the

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Bay, an outdoor forum and community paddle held in June.

Currently, a “ghost wharves” tour is being held, Merkel said, led by John Curtis, president of the historical society, who compiled a history of the six wharves that bustled during Surry’s heyday as a port in the 1800s and into the mid-1900s. The 1.5-mile hike is limited to 10 participants at a time, with masks and social distancing required.

The wood and stone skeletons of the wharves ring Patten’s Bay, with only the town dock still in use. In their day, the wharves were used to ship such cargo as wood and bricks from the local brickyard. Incoming goods included molasses to be sold in town. One of the vessels sailing in and out of Surry was the schooner Stephen Taber, launched in 1871 and now recognized as the oldest documented sailing vessel in continuous service in the U.S. The Taber is now part

of the Maine Windjammer Fleet and sails out of Rockland.

One more event may occur, Merkel said, a performance of the DaPonte String Quartet on Aug. 30 at the Surry Arts & Events at the Barn.

Merkel isn’t sure what will carry over into 2021, although there are some definite plans. One is an art show called “Still Upstanding.” Organized by a local artist, it is a unique event that combines a roster of 15 artists painting historic Surry buildings on the same day the Surry Community Improvement Society sends out work crews to clean up the town. When it is done, an art show and gallery reception will be held later that day.

“We will definitely have this next year,” she said.

Another card to play, literally, may be a game called 83. Merkel said training sessions already had been held the

first of the year, teaching those interested about this card game that has no record outside of Maine.

It was to have been a weekly affair, Merkel said, reviving what was once a popular game that anyone could play. ■

BICENTENNIAL SERIES

Throughout 2020, Maine Town & City will feature articles about municipal efforts to celebrate Maine’s 200th birthday, written by freelance writer Janine Pineo. The Maine Municipal Association also wants to highlight your community special plans and events at the special Bicentennial area of our website: <https://memun.org/bicentennial>. Please email information about your happenings to: econrad@memun.org. We hope you enjoy our articles and featured website offerings.

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The 2020 MMA **Virtual** Convention 84th Anniversary Year

OCTOBER 7–15, 2020

FEATURED SPEAKERS



MATT LEHRMAN is a nationally recognized expert on public engagement, organizational collaboration and how to turn conflict into results. He will incorporate the current public health emergency – a stressor, if ever there was one – into his practical approach to problem solving. Hailing from Arizona, Matt has offered several presentations and workshops for the Maine Arts Commission. He will be available after his address for scheduled, individual consultations with municipal leaders.



KRISTY SENATORI is the Executive Director of the Cape Cod Commission, where she leads a process of designing innovative land-use and economic development policies that spans municipal borders. She will speak about the “One Cape Cod” approach in Massachusetts. A law school graduate, Kristy worked in the private sector for several years before joining the Cape Cod Commission in 2008.



LIAM RIORDAN is a professor at the University of Maine in Orono, where he specializes in Early American history. No surprise – he will speak to convention attendees about the 2020 Maine Bicentennial. More specifically, Dr. Riordan will explain the political events and undercurrents in the United States before and during 1820, which led to the birth of our great state.



What a “welcome home.” **JEANNE LAMBREW**, who grew up in Cape Elizabeth and became commissioner of the state’s sprawling Department of Health & Human Services in 2019, was thrown into the deep end of the coronavirus pool one year later. Zoom into this session for 90 minutes as she updates municipal leaders about Maine’s effort to combat COVID-19, the Keep ME Healthy program, local General Assistance, her deep experience in Washington, D.C. – and more. And have your questions ready.

Register online today! <https://memun.org/Convention/Registration>

THE 2020 MMA VIRTUAL CONVENTION: 84TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

PRELIMINARY AGENDA: For updated information please visit the MMA website: www.memun.org

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2020



9:00 – 10:45 a.m.

WELCOME AND FEATURED SPEAKER

Lessons from Away: Planning, COVID and 'One Cape Cod'

Kristy Senatori is the Executive Director of the Cape Cod Commission, where she leads a process of implementing innovative economic development, as well as planning and land-use policies that span municipal borders. She will speak about the "One Cape Cod" program, which includes how that region is dealing with COVID-19. A law school graduate, Kristy worked in the private sector for years before joining the Cape Cod Commission in 2008.

Presenter: Kristy Senatori, Executive Director, Cape Cod Commission

Certification: Valid for 1.5 MTCMA Certification credits in the following category: Leadership.

10:45 – 11:00 a.m. Break

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

MMA Annual Business Meeting

Please join us as MMA President Christine Landes, Vice President James Gardner, Jr. and Executive Director Stephen Gove shed light on MMA's upcoming priorities and the unprecedented topics that arose in 2020.

Certification: Valid for 1.0 MTCMA Certification credit in the following category: Leadership.

12:00 – 12:30 p.m. Break

12:30 – 1:45 p.m.

MMA Addresses and Awards

During this period, President Landes and Vice President Gardner offer their views of MMA and municipal government in Maine. Also, the recipient of the Ethel Kelley Memorial Award – MMA's most prestigious, annual member award – is recognized.

1:45 – 2:00 p.m. Break

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

2020-21 Legislative Update & Preview

COVID-19's impact on town meetings and elections. Marijuana revenues. Abandoned roads. Solar power. The 2020 legislative session featured many high-impact municipal issues, and 2021 promises to do the same, with a special

focus on municipal funding. Please "tune in" as MMA's State & Federal Relations staff provides an important status report on Maine's top legislative issues.

Presented & Moderated by: Kate Dufour, Director State & Federal Relations, MMA

Certification: Valid for 1.0 MTCMA Certification credit in the following category: Elected Relations.

3:00 – 3:15 p.m. Break

3:15 – 4:30 p.m.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

From Conflict to Conversation

The ideal of local government is its capacity to enable individuals to join together in recognizing and solving shared community problems. So, Maine, how are we doing? In this candid conversation, we'll explore how cities and towns strengthen their ability to address even their most complex and sensitive issues in ways that are welcoming, respectful, collaborative, and purposeful. In the face of current crises that are stressing every facet of local government, there's never been a more important time to assert that disagreement need not be disagreeable.

Presenter: Matt Lehrman, Social Prosperity Partners, Scottsdale, Arizona

Certification: Valid for 1.5 MTCMA Certification credits in the following category: Leadership.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2020



9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

FEATURED SPEAKER

The Birth of a Great State

Let's not overlook the amazing fact that this is Maine's Bicentennial year! Dr. Liam Riordan, a professor at the University of Maine in Orono who specializes in early American history, will help you understand the political events and undercurrents in the United States before and during 1820, which led to the birth of our great state.

Presenter: Dr. Liam Riordan, Ph.D., Professor of History, University of Maine

Certification: Valid for 1.25 MTCMA Certification credits in the following category: Leadership.

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THE 2020 MMA VIRTUAL CONVENTION: 84TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

PRELIMINARY AGENDA: For updated information please visit the MMA website: www.memun.org

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2020



1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Local Roads: Best Practices

It happens every year. We at MMA receive feedback, especially from mid-sized and smaller communities, that elected and appointed officials want to know more about building, maintaining and clearing local roads. This special, double session is designed to provide up-to-date guidance on local road issues, and answer attendees' questions.

Presenters: Peter Coughlan, MaineDOT Local Roads Center; other presenters TBD

Certification: Valid for 1.0 MTCMA Certification credit in the following categories: Leadership and Finance/Budget.

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Local Roads: Best Practices (continued)

Presenters: Peter Coughlan, MaineDOT Local Roads Center; others TBD

Certification: Valid for 1.0 MTCMA Certification credit in the following categories: Leadership and Finance/Budget.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2020



9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

The 2020 Election: Big Event, Coming Soon!

Don't miss Maine Deputy Secretary of State Julie Flynn's important update on election plans, and safety and security procedures in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a major Presidential election draws near.

Presenter: Julie Flynn, Deputy Secretary of State, Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions, State of Maine

Certification: Valid for 1.5 MTCMA Certification credits in the following categories: Elected Relations and Leadership.



11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Importance of Age Friendly Communities

Amid all the major surprises that 2020 provided, one thing remained constant: Maine is still the "oldest state" in the nation, a critical demographic unlikely to change anytime soon. This virtual workshop will highlight efforts by towns and cities to become more "age friendly," show why doing so is important – and how it produces tangible, proven results.

Presenters: Jess Maurer, Executive Director, Maine Council on Aging; other presenters TBD

Certification: Valid for 1.5 MTCMA Certification credits in the following categories: Leadership.

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Understanding Implicit Bias

This session will introduce the concepts of implicit bias and the strategies to address it. Participants will learn what implicit bias means, how implicit bias impacts the way we interact and communicate with others, and how to implement strategies to mitigate implicit bias. You will leave the training with a better understanding of your own implicit bias and how it influences your life, and will be given actionable takeaways to utilize in your life and work.

Presenters: Lindsay Gannon, Hart Consulting; Fowsia Musse, Maine Community Integration; Officer Samuel Quintana, Gardiner Police Department.

Certification: Valid for 1.5 MTCMA Certification credits in the following categories: Human Resources and Leadership.

2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Traditional Financing for Capital Projects

They are complicated, expensive, and highly necessary – and for many towns and cities, the most intimidating projects they will ever undertake. This workshop will give an overview of the traditional financing processes for big capital projects and bring attendees up to date on best practices.

Presenters: Danielle Ahern, SVP, Director Treasury & Payment Services, Bangor Savings Bank; Dan Pittman, Attorney, Eaton Peabody

Certification: Valid for 1.5 MTCMA Certification credits in the following categories: Legal and Finance/Budget.

THE 2020 MMA VIRTUAL CONVENTION: 84TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

PRELIMINARY AGENDA: For updated information please visit the MMA website: www.memun.org

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2020



9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Understanding Property Tax Assessment

Let's get down to basics. The system of assessing local property taxes in Maine is important, yet complex. This workshop is designed to distill the process so that elected officials, managers and assessors from mid-sized and smaller communities emerge with a common understanding about the principles of tax assessing, property valuation, tax exemptions and the Maine Tree Growth law.

Presenter: William Van Tuinen, of William Van Tuinen Tax Assessment Service, Madison

Certification: Valid for 1.5 MTCMA Certification credits in the following category: Finance/Budget.

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Community Risks of Inland & Coastal Flooding

This session will address the needs of both inland and coastal communities worried about flood risk from changing patterns of precipitation. By now, it's well-documented that climate events and projected changes to precipitation patterns will have – and have had – significant municipal impacts. Listen to Maine's leading experts talk about flooding risks to transportation infrastructure and the intersection of that risk with social vulnerability.

Presenters: Greg Stewart, Supervisory Hydrologist, New England Water Science Center, USGS; Ben Matthews, Watershed Restoration Specialist, The Nature Conservancy; Eileen Johnson, Environmental Studies Program Manager, Bowdoin College Moderated by: Jeremy Bell, The Nature Conservancy

Certification: Valid for 1.5 MTCMA Certification credits in the following categories: Leadership and Finance/Budget.



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2020



9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Stream Smart Crossings and Modern Culverts

Another "nuts and bolts" issue for municipalities involves dealing with road culverts, of which Maine has tens of thousands. Maine Audubon, working with Maine Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Conservation and many other entities, developed its "Stream Smart" program to show local contractors and officials how to replace and build culverts the "smart" way.

Presenter: Sarah Haggerty, Conservation Biologist & GIS Manager, Maine Audubon

Certification: Valid for 1.5 MTCMA Certification credits in the following categories: Leadership and Finance/Budget.

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Right to Know

Attorneys from MMA's Legal Services Department offer Right to Know training that is required for both elected officials and municipally appointed Public Access Officers. Attendees will get certificates that they completed the course.

Presenters: Richard Flewelling, Assistant Director, Legal Services, MMA; Susanne Pilgrim, Director, Legal Services, MMA

Certification: Valid for 1.5 MTCMA Certification credits in the following category: Legal.

AFFILIATE GROUP SPONSORED SESSIONS:

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Deep Dive into General Assistance

Sponsored by Maine Welfare Directors' Association (MWDA)

This interactive session will provide an overview of the General Assistance program required of all Maine municipalities. MWDA Board Members will lead discussions on eligibility, the application process and emergencies, among other topics.

Panelists: Rindy Fogler, Community Services Manager, City of Bangor; Ellen Moore, Interim Town Manager, Town of Milo; Denise Murray, Health & Welfare Director, City of Waterville; Stacey Parra, Clerk, Town of Union; Katina Howes, GA Administrator, City of Ellsworth

2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Municipal Manager/Administrator Networking & Roundtable Discussion

Sponsored by Maine Town, City and County Management Association (MTCMA) Details, Topics and Moderators TBA.

THE 2020 MMA VIRTUAL CONVENTION: 84TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

PRELIMINARY AGENDA: For updated information please visit the MMA website: www.memun.org

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2020



9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Lease/Purchase Financing for Essential Equipment

Financing options are more important than ever as municipalities face large capital replacement needs, while working with ever-tightening budgets. Lease-purchase financing can help, whether your city or town is considering LED lighting conversion, energy upgrades, vehicle purchases or technology and security improvements.

Presenter: Renee Piche, Power of Leasing; other presenters TBD

Certification: Valid for 1.5 MTCMA Certification credits in the following categories: Leadership and Finance/Budget.

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

FEATURED SPEAKER

A Conversation with DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew

What a “welcome home.” Jeanne Lambrew, who grew up in Cape Elizabeth and became commissioner of the state’s sprawling Department of Health & Human Services in 2019, was thrown into the deep end of the coronavirus pool one year later. Zoom into this session for 90 minutes as she updates municipal leaders about Maine’s effort to combat COVID-19, the Keep ME Healthy program, local General Assistance, her deep experience in Washington, D.C. – and more. And have your questions ready.

Certification: Valid for 1.5 MTCMA Certification credits in the following category: Leadership.

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Communities innovate to hold town meetings during COVID

Despite uncertainty over federal financial help for municipalities, voters in many communities still endorse important infrastructure projects.

By Liz Mockler

The most lethal virus since the Spanish Flu 100 years ago mucked up plans for normal 2020 Maine annual town meetings and July 14 primary voting.

But while town meetings were delayed, sometimes more than once, municipal clerks and their aides got the job done by summer. Most municipal elections were held as scheduled, with a record-setting number of Mainers voting by absentee ballot. The same was true for the July 14 primary election.

As of the end of July, COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, had killed nearly 160,000 American citizens. The Spanish Flu killed 195,000 Americans and an estimated 20 million to 50 million people globally. The pandemic lasted three years and the illness was most deadly in its “second wave,” the three final months in the fall of 1918.

This spring, municipal leaders moved quickly to ask non-essential employees to work from home and to close down city halls and town offices to protect both employees and residents.

All but essential businesses were shuttered for two months and the unemployment rate jumped to 10.2% by April, three times higher than the March rate. Maine would become one of the most successful states to battle the disease and slow its spread. Slowly, businesses began opening and, by July 1, most were allowed to reopen, at least partially.

Meanwhile, at press time for this magazine, local and state governments were seeking \$500 billion to \$1



Matthew Dunlap

trillion in addition to the initial outlay of \$150 billion from Congress to combat the results of the pandemic. They cited lost revenue in taxes and fees, jobless people seeking local and state help, the need to buy protective gear for front line health care staff and financial losses from canceled annual events that normally draw thousands of visitors and local spending.

Elected officials in some Maine municipalities created loan programs for struggling businesses.

Voters approved regional school budgets, despite not being sure when and how Maine school might reopen safely for the new school year.

‘Extraordinary job’

“The unsung in (the clerks’) heroism was the enormous amount of absentee ballots they handled,” said Matthew Dunlap, Maine Secretary of State, who is responsible for elections and related issues.

“In 2018, we had 35,000 absentee

ballots,” he said. “In 2020, we had 200,000.”

“They did an extraordinary job. There were a few glitches, but nothing systematic,” Dunlap said.

There were two bond questions on the Maine July 14 primary ballot. Both easily passed. A \$15 million high-speed internet infrastructure bond, to be matched with up to \$30 million from federal, state and municipal funds, was approved with 75.3% of the vote. A \$105 million bond for transportation infrastructure passed with 78.6% of the vote.

Meanwhile, in early March some of the state’s smaller towns held their annual meetings as quickly as possible after Gov. Janet Mills declared a State of Emergency on March 1, after the state registered its first COVID-19 case. By March 15, she had issued a stay-at-home order and other restrictions – including shutting all non-essential businesses.

Also at mid-March, town officials began postponing town meetings until May or June or beyond, while many others synced their town meetings and local elections with the July 14 primary.

By summer, municipal officials, especially town clerks who are responsible for preparing for and overseeing elections, scrambled to find other facilities or propose protocols to safely carry out the 2020 elections.

Dunlap said his office tracked the state’s new COVID-19 cases, looking for a spike caused by town meetings. There were none.

“The town clerks adjusted very well” to the new tasks needed to hold elections and town meetings and to carry them out.

Dunlap also praised voters who “took the extra time to do things

Liz Mockler is a freelance writer from Randolph and regular contributor to *Maine Town & City*, lizmockler@hotmail.com.

right,” especially “social distancing” and using masks and other coverings that are shown to be the first line of defense against being infected.

Many municipalities could not follow safety guidelines at their usual meeting locations, particularly keeping voters at least six feet apart. All but a handful of towns canceled their annual meeting outright, choosing to operate under last year’s budget.

Pass the popcorn

To pull off elections and town meetings, clerks followed Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for July 14 primary voters, including limiting the number of voters who could enter the polling place at one time. By summer, municipal officials were scheduling their town meetings in ballfields, tennis courts, parking lots, fairgrounds and even drive-in movie fields.

Voters in scores of towns decided at town meeting to lump all warrant items into one, allowing meetings to last 30 minutes or less, rather than the usual hours of discussion and debate over proposed items.

For example, the Manchester town meeting was completed in 12 minutes. Bristol voters spent 13 minutes at their meeting, and Monticello finished in less than 18 minutes.

Voters in other towns voted on the budget in secret. Turnout in those towns far outpaced the open-floor (or field) format.

Frankfort Town Clerk Heather McLaughlin prepared the town meeting to be held at the town’s ball field. The meeting is usually held the final week of March.

“It went very well,” she said, despite all the delays and various protocols needed to carry out the meeting under such strange circumstances.

“I am ready for it to be normal, whatever normal is going to be,” she said. “I look forward to when things can be like they were before.”

Turnout was good for the election, but less so for the town meeting. By secret ballot, Frankfort voters eliminated the highway department in favor of contracting for year-round road maintenance and other works. The vote was close, McLaughlin noted, with 186 in favor and 174 opposed.



Heather McLaughlin

Frankfort voters easily approved a 10-year, \$1million bond for road repairs. The vote was 267 to 94.

Unlike some other towns, residents did not want to condense the warrant into one article.

Major proposals

Despite the abbreviated meetings, the stress, concern for the public and sketchy economic outlook for the near future, Maine voters in some small towns still endorsed major spending.

They also acted on crucial local

HIRING RESOURCES

Perhaps the best website for help with recruiting and other personnel-related questions is the one run by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM): www.shrm.org

That website offers resource materials on hundreds of topics, including “external recruitment” and “talent acquisition.”

The **Maine Local Government Human Resources Association** is another resource. You can see who leads that group – and get contact information – through its website: www.mlghra.org

Maine Municipal Association runs a campaign called Hometown Careers, aimed at increasing awareness about municipal employment. Video and handout tools are available for members to use when talking to high school and college students, and other job candidates.

(www.memun.org or www.mainehometowncareers.org)



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questions, again mostly by secret ballot.

Westport Islanders decided after four “no” votes over nearly 40 years to accept ownership of a section of North End Road.

In Limestone, which used secret voting on the warrant, residents agreed to increase spending for ambulance service by \$191,250 for coverage by the Caribou Fire & Ambulance Department, for a total of \$216,000.

The town’s previous service, Crown Ambulance, closed last year. The Caribou and Presque Isle city ambulance services will divide up and cover the small towns that once used Crown.

Damariscotta voters decided to enter into an interlocal agreement with the five founding towns of Central Lincoln County Ambulance Service.

Voters in Arundel agreed unanimously with town officials to take \$100,000 from the undesignated fund balance to help reduce the tax burden specifically to respond to the pandemic’s “detrimental” effect on property owners.

In Peru, voters kept the budget flat by using \$250,000 from excise taxes and \$200,000 from the undesignated fund.

Five Hodgdon voters spent 19 minutes in early April to approve all warrant articles with nearly any discussion. They approved road work, more money for maintenance to the Hodgdon Homestead senior housing complex. The \$3,000 for the Homestead will cover the cost of spending more time clearing snow from walkways for the residents. The town will be reimbursed for the cost by residents.

Dresden residents decided multiple policy changes, including rejecting moving future town meetings from Saturday morning to Tuesday night. Supporters said the move would help increase participation, since Saturdays are busy for many families with children. The change was supported in a town survey, but attendees said they did not receive the survey. Dresden voters did agree to allot penalty fees from land use and site plan review violations and other fees to the planning board. The extra money will help

finance the board’s future expenses for land use regulation.

Kennebunk voters denied a request for a \$426,000 bond for sidewalk work, but did approve borrowing up to \$1.475 million for road paving, as well as buying and equipping a fire engine and front loader. Residents also authorized the select board to sell all or any portion of the town-owned properties on Portland Road. The board had purchased the property in anticipation of needing additional municipal space in a referendum last November, but officials said they need any revenue from the property to help cover expected losses due to the pandemic.

Wells voters easily approved a \$4.5 million bond for infrastructure projects (2,019 votes to 345 votes), including roadwork, repairing drainage at an old subdivision, repairing sea walls and replacing an island bridge.

Ogunquit voters passed all but one warrant article – the one that would have allowed a new tax levy to be more than the limit allowable under state law.

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Bringing it home

In Windsor, when voters were asked to allot \$25,000 for a general reserve fund, Town Manager Theresa Haskell used a home budget in her explanation to quickly gain support for the item.

“It’s like a family: They know something crazy might happen in their life so they’re going to need a few dollars put way,” she said, adding, “A few dollars, for a town, is \$25,000.”

Blue Hill is another example of a town that lumped all warrant articles into one, as well as voted in private. The town clerk and her aides spent the day counting 1,000 ballots. Last year, 125 voters decided the budget warrant and elected officials.

Councilors and select board members throughout Maine took notice of the vast difference and recognized that people may prefer secret voting to open-floor debate and voting.

Blue Hill residents also approved a request to create a town road improvement project, allocating \$250,000 to get it started. The vote was 714 to 113.

In Rangeley, voters approved just

under \$40,000 to add a full-time firefighter by a vote of 222 to 123. The new firefighter will work out of both the main and Oquossoc Village stations. The job will require the new staffer to have a fire truck or other vehicles on the road responding to calls within two minutes. The new person also will inspect and maintain trucks, keep up the station and assist the chief. The Rangeley department responded to nearly 500 calls this year, compared to 370 last year. The department covers 600 square miles in Franklin and Oxford counties.

Searsport officials hope to attract new activity downtown now that voters approved a downtown tax increment financing district. Taxes collected from within the TIF district may be set aside for a façade grant program, a revolving loan fund or low-interest and matching loans. The vote was 408 to 218. Voters also approved taking \$150,000 from undesignated funds to reduce property taxes.

Portland voters supported creating a charter commission that could make major changes to how the city

operates, including police oversight and budgeting, and government positions such as mayor or city manager. The commission will include three council appointees, and nine elected members. The council began appointing members the final week of July.

Residents of Chapman were firm about following all the guidelines released in March by the governor, rather than reschedule the annual meeting. One of the key rules for town meetings was for voters to stay at least six feet apart. It turned out only eight people attended after the town manager assured residents that there were no controversial articles.

Alna voters took 11 minutes to pass enough articles to get the town through until they could take up all articles. Voters totaled 32. Town officials, working on advice from the Maine Municipal Association and town attorney, developed the abbreviated March meeting format.

More annual town meetings are expected to be held before the presidential election on Nov. 3. ■



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Jonathan A. Pottle

Jon provides legal services to both public and private sector clients in the areas of environmental law, land use law, municipal law, utilities law, economic development, project development and finance, renewable energy, real estate, timberlands, and natural resources law. Jon’s practice in these areas helps clients with their strategic and tactical planning, day-to-day operations and troubleshooting, project development and financing, real estate and business transactions, municipal and utility district governance, and resolution of related legal disputes, including representation before Maine and Federal Courts as well as Local and State administrative boards and agencies.

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Towns hold elections despite public health emergency

By Liz Mockler

Following are among the municipal election results from March through July, nearly all of them in conjunction with postponed spring annual town meetings because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many select boards and councils scheduled their town meetings to sync with primary day July 14.

Town clerks and Secretary of State Matt Dunlap reported a week before the July primary that 180,000 Mainers had requested absentee ballots, five times the number of voters requested before the 2018 primary. They expect an even higher number for the Nov. 3 Presidential election; Mainers asked for 244,000 absentee ballots in 2016.

In the following list, unopposed incumbents are not included, with few exceptions. Former officials are named, whether or not they won. The names of challengers, unless they served previously, are not included. The results are based on newspaper accounts, interviews with city clerks and independent research.

The results are listed in alphabetical order by municipality.

Appleton: Two incumbent select board members were re-elected, with **Lorie Costigan** receiving 315 votes. Incumbent **Charles Garrigan** did not want to collect signatures to get on the ballot, but was re-elected as a write-in candidate and received two.

Belgrade: A recount confirmed that former Selectman **Dan Newman** edged out incumbent Chairman **Michael Barrett** by a vote of 400 to 394. Barrett was serving as chairman of the board at the time of the election.

Belmont: Newcomer **Suzette Harford** was elected to replace **Robert Currier** and **Wanda Pinkham** was elected to replace **AnnMarie Stultz**. Neither Currier

nor Stultz ran for re-election.

Benton: **Brandy Sloan** defeated four candidates to win re-election with 55 votes. The closest contender received 40 votes. Sloan replaces **Melissa Patterson**, who did not seek re-election.

Buxton: Incumbent Selectman **Francis Pulsoni** received 977 votes to replace **Jean Harmon**, who resigned last November. Newcomer **David Field Jr.** collected 924 votes to replace **DenNIS Santolucito**, who did not seek re-election.

Camden: Incumbents **Alison McKellar** and **Robert Falciani** received 1,591 votes and 1,047 vote, respectively, to outpace a challenger, who received 931 votes.

Chapman: Incumbents **Patricia Sutherland** and **Charles Beaulieu** were re-elected after being nominated by town meeting voters. Both will serve three-year terms on the select board.

Cumberland: **Allison Foster** received 1,416 votes to defeat incumbent Councilor **William Stiles**, who has served more than 20 years. A third candidate received 842 votes. Also, incumbent **Thomas Gruber** defeated his first challenger since he was elected in 2011. This year, he defeated his opponent by a vote of 1,729 votes to 1,214 votes.

Cushing: **Craig Currie** received 77 votes to defeat incumbent Selectwoman **Laurie Haynes**, who collected 75 votes. Haynes, who served nine years, did not ask for a recount, according to the town clerk. Currie is a former member of the town's board of assessors.

Castle Hill: Newcomer **Theresa Albert** received 15 votes to replace **Beth Pickens**, who did not seek re-election. Regardless, in secret ballot voting, residents gave Pickens seven votes.

Eustis: **Amanda Brochu** and incumbent **Brandi Farnsworth** were elected in a four-way race for two open seats. Brochu and Farnsworth received 45 votes each. The other contenders gar-

nered 41 and 32 votes. Brochu replaces **Jennifer Pelkey**, who did not seek re-election.

Farmingdale: Newcomer **Tyler Tripp** collected 339 votes to defeat incumbent **Nancy Frost**, who received 335 votes. A recount was held and confirmed Tripp's win; he picked up one vote during the recount. Former Selectman **Doug Ebert** garnered 346 votes to defeat former Selectman **James Grant**, who won 295 votes. Ebert replaces **Andy Vellani**, who stepped down earlier this year due to medical reasons earlier this year.

Frankfort: Incumbent Selectman Steven Imondi received 152 votes to hold off two opponents for another term on the board. The other candidates received 135 and 64 votes.

Freedom: **Elaine Higgins** was elected to replace **Brian Jones**, who did not seek re-election.

Jay: Incumbent **Gary McGrane** held off a challenger by a vote of 449 to 321 to win a new three-year term.

Limestone: Incumbent **Fred Pelletier** received 240 votes to win another term, while newcomer **Jesse Philbrick** received 214 votes to replace **Patrick St. Peter**, who was elected in 2018 to fill a vacancy and did not seek re-election.

Livermore: Newcomer **Tracey Martin** received 456 votes, running unopposed to replace **Wayne Timberlake**.

Lincolnville: Incumbent Selectman **Josh Gerritsen** received 742 votes to retain his seat, while **Michael Ray** received 627 votes to replace Jonathan Fishman, who did not seek re-election.

Mapleton: Incumbent **David Dunlavey** held off a challenger to win re-election with 56 percent of the vote. Scott Young was unopposed to replace Joshua Cheney.

Monmouth: Incumbents Kristin Sanborn and Douglas Ludewig held off a challenge to win re-election with 718 and 656 votes, respectively. The challenger received 301 votes.

Liz Mockler is a freelance writer from Randolph and regular contributor to Maine Town & City, lizmockler@hotmail.com.

Monticello: Incumbent **Terry Wade** received 59 votes and newcomer **Jimmy Burpee** collected 49 votes to win the two open select board seats. Burpee replaces Max Upton, who filled a vacancy but did not seek a full term.

Newcastle: Voters elected **Tor Glendinning** and **Rob Nelson** with 503 votes and 439 votes, respectively. The third candidate received 233 votes. The winners will replace Ben Frey and Carolyn Hatch, neither of whom sought re-election.

New Sweden: **David White** collected 95 votes to overtake incumbent Selectman Michael Landeen by a vote of 95 to 26 for a three-year term.

North Yarmouth: **Brian Sites** and **Austin Harrell** received 871 votes and 698 votes, respectively, to replace **Steve Morrison** and **Jennifer Speirs**, who did not seek re-election to the select board. A third candidate collected 478 votes. Meanwhile, Steve Berry defeated Paul Hodgetts by a vote of 756 to 568 to replace William Whitten, who resigned in March.

Norway: Two new selectwomen were elected to replace **Warren Sessions** and **Michael Twitchell**, neither of whom

sought re-election. **Dennise Dullea Whitley** received 921 votes and **Sarah Carter** collected 136 write-in votes.

Ogunquit: In a four-way race for two open select board seats, newcomer **Richard Dolliver** received the most votes at 460, followed by incumbent **Heath Ouellette**, who garnered 445 votes. Board chairwoman **Madeline Mooney** placed third with 357 votes, while **Thomas Sellers III** received 313 votes.

Orland: Newcomers **Lester Stackpole** and **Matthew Pierce** vied for the seat held by **Ralph Gonzales**, who did not seek re-election after serving as a selectman for more than 40 years. Stackpole received 364 votes, while Pierce garnered 270.

Pittston: Newcomer **Fred Kimball**, who nearly won a select board seat last year, defeated former Selectman **Gregory Lumbert** by a vote of 356 to 193. Kimball replaces former Selectwoman **Jane Hubert**, who did not seek re-election. Hubert defeated Kimball last year to replace **Roger Linton**, who had resigned last March. Hubert was elected to both the budget committee and planning board. She has served

previously on both boards.

Peru: Incumbent Selectwoman **Tammi Lyons** and newcomer **Jason Dolloff** held off a third candidate to win three-year terms. Lyons received 270 votes and Dolloff won 232 votes. A third candidate collected 164 votes. Dolloff replaces **Carol Roach**, who did not seek re-election.

Poland: Incumbent Selectwoman **Mary-Beth Taylor** defeated a challenger by a vote of 761 to 406 to win a second term.

Rangeley: Incumbent **Cynthia Egan** was re-elected with 215 votes, while former Selectwoman **Shelly Lowell** received 233 votes to replace **Donald Nuttall**, who served on the select board for more than 20 years before stepping down this year.

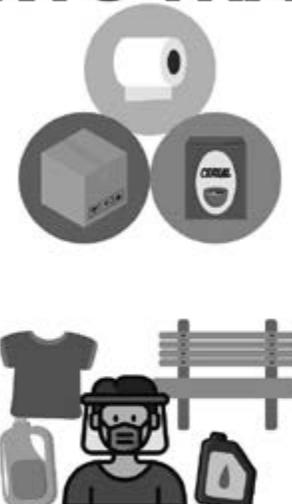
Richmond: Incumbent selectmen **Andrew Alexander** and **Robert Bodge Jr.** were re-elected with 498 votes and 480 votes, respectively. The held off two write-in contenders, Former Police Chief **Scott McMaster** and former Fire Chief **Matthew Roberge**. The two gathered a combined 206 write-in votes.

Rumford: Former Selectman **James Theriault** and newcomer **Eric McLean**

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won in a four-way race for two open select board seats. Theriault received 798 votes, while McLean collected 561 votes. They will replace **Mark Belanger** and **John Pepin Sr.**, neither of who sought re-election. The other two candidates received 525 and 301 votes. Theriault was elected to the board in 2018, not long before he was tapped to serve as Oxford County sheriff. He is a veteran who spent 44 years in law enforcement. McLean, meanwhile, is vice president of the nonprofit Greater Rumford Community Center Board of Directors.

Searsport: Incumbent **Steve Tanguay** and newcomer **Sandra Otis-Anderson** were elected in a six-way race for two contested seats. Tanguay, select board chairman, received the most votes with 286, while Otis-Anderson collected 270 votes. She replaces incumbent **Richard Desmarais**, who placed third with 231 votes. The three remaining contenders received 187, 169 and 123 votes.

Skowhegan: **Charles Robbins III** defeated incumbent Selectman **Gene Rouse** by a vote of 848 to 515.

Solon: **Wayne "Chip" Johnson** was elected to finish the final year of **Keith Gallagher's** term. Gallagher resigned

when he moved out of state.

South Thomaston: **John Spear**, former selectman and state legislator, will replace **Cheryl Waterman**, who did not seek re-election after serving six years. Spear served multiple terms dating back to 1996, serving last in 2011.

St. Albans: Incumbent **Todd Brown** received 133 votes to defeat is challenger, **Robert Worster**, who received 91 votes. Worster is the town's former assistant fire chief and still serves as a firefighter.

Stockholm: Newcomer **Arlo Redman** was elected with 50 votes to fill the unexpired term of **David Marceau**. Marceau stepped down after the town meeting. In a four-way race to finish the term of **Bruce Brierley**, **Peter Milinazzo** received 47 votes to win the seat. Brierley, who served the town as selectman for more than 30 years, resigned in March.

Surry: **Eric Treworgy** defeated an opponent by a vote of 361 to 177 to replace **Stephen Bemiss**, who did not seek re-election.

Union: Voters elected **Martha Johnston-Nash** over former Selectman **James Justice** by a vote of 516 to 212

to win a two-year term. Johnston-Nash will replace **Sarah Drickey**, who did not seek re-election. In the contest for a three-year term, **William Lombardi** defeated incumbent **Gregory Grotton** by a vote of 413 to 320.

Vassalboro: Newcomer **Barbara Redmond** ran unopposed for a three-year term. She replaces **Lauchlin Titus**, who did not seek re-election.

Waldoboro: Selectwoman **Joanne "Jann" Minzy** collected the most votes at 788 in a four-way race for two open seats. Newcomer **Jan Griesenbrock** won the second seat with 533 votes. Incumbent Selectman **Seth Hall** placed fourth with 488 votes. A final contender won 498 votes.

Washington: **Thomas Johnston** held off a challenger to win re-election by a vote of 277 to 93.

West Gardiner: Voters elected **Steven McGee**, who defeated a challenger by a vote of 503 to 480, to replace **Mert Hickey**, who did not seek re-election after serving on the select board for 33 years.

Westfield: **Conrad Brown** ran unopposed to take the seat held by **Michael Phillips**, who has been involved in town government for decades. Phillips did not seek re-election. During the June town meeting, residents stood to applaud Phillips in recognition of all he has done for the small Aroostook County town.

Wells: Incumbent Selectman **Timothy Roche** held off a competitor in a close race, by a vote of 1,276 to 1,206. Roche, vice chairman of the select board at the time of the election, will serve his fourth, three-year term.

Woodland: Newcomer **Scott Dow** defeated a challenger by a vote of 71 to 29 to win the lone open seat on the board. Dow replaces Carl Grant, who did not seek re-election.

Yarmouth: In a five-way race for three seats, voters returned **April Humphrey** and **Timothy Shannon** to the town council with 2,228 votes and 2,052 votes, respectively. Newcomer **Michelle Cromarty** collected 2,043 votes to replace **Richard Plourde**, who did not seek re-election. The two remaining contenders received 1,623 votes and 1,472 votes. Meanwhile, Councilor **Andrew Kitteredge** resigned before anyone could file nomination papers, so the council plans to call a special town meeting as part of the Nov. 3 election. ■

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PEOPLE



Stuart Barwise

Longtime Kennebunkport Selectman **Stuart Barwise** died on May 22, months after completing his last term on the select board in 2019. "Serving as selectman in... a town I

dearly love, has been one of the most rewarding times of my life," Barwise told Seacoast Online last August. Barwise, 54, stepped down from the board to take a job as manager of a Virginia resort. He served as selectman from 2004 to 2007 and again from 2009 to 2019. Among his many accomplishments, Barwise helped write the Beach Use Agreement that cemented public access to Goose Rocks Beach. Barwise served on the town's budget and recreation committees and the regional school board. He was described as a big man with a big smile. At his final select board meeting, his peers presented him with framed paintings of various views of Kennebunkport that he could hang in his new home in Virginia.



Darlene Beaulieu

With 20 years of municipal experience, **Darlene Beaulieu** has been named Greene town manager, replacing **Charles Noonan**, who has managed the town for the past 15 years. Beaulieu, who holds an associate's degree

in accounting, resigned in June as the administrative assistant for the Town of Whitefield. Beaulieu, a Litchfield resident, faced the tricky challenge of organizing the town meeting during a pandemic, and assisted in planning for a safe July 14 primary for voters. A former treasurer for the Town of Manchester, Beaulieu also worked as Winthrop finance director. Whitefield officials said they regretted Beaulieu's departure because she was knowledgeable about town issues and was an effective, admired leader. The new Whitefield and administrative assistant and town clerk is **Yolanda Violette**, most recently Mercer city clerk.



Jerry Douglass

Jerry Douglass, a former state transportation manager for 16 years, has been hired as Gardiner's new public works director, effective no later than Aug. 31. Douglass, of Brunswick, replaces

Tony LaPlante, who took the job of deputy director of public works for Augusta in March. Douglass, 55, provided technical advice to municipalities as well as leading training programs on topics such as ice control, work zone safety and snow removal. He said he is eager to return to the public sector after working the past three years for All States Asphalt. City Manager **Christine Landes** said she has known Douglass for six years and is confident of his leadership abilities and knowledge of public works. He was unanimously confirmed by the city council.



Jayne Farrin

Caribou City Clerk **Jayne Farrin** retired on Aug. 3 after 13 years as clerk and three years previously as deputy clerk. Farrin, who grew up in Harmony, started her career in 1982 as Exeter town manager

in Penobscot County. Farrin was hired in 1991 as Van Buren town manager. After marrying, she moved to Presque Isle two years later, where she still lives. Farrin returned to full-time work after raising two sons when she took the job of Caribou deputy city clerk in 2007. She replaced **Judy-Ann Corrow**. Farrin told the Aroostook Republican, "I'm forever grateful to Judy for hiring me. I cannot stress this enough. I am forever grateful that I was able to provide for my family, and I've

enjoyed the clerk world — even though I started in town management." Farrin said she liked working as a city clerk more than managing a community. Farrin will be replaced by **Danielle Brissette**.



Dennis Simmons

Wiscasset EMS Director **Dennis Simmons** has been named town manager, effective Aug. 3. Simmons was named EMS director in February 2019 and will be replaced in the interim by Deputy EMS Direc-

tor **Erin Bean**. Simmons earned a degree in public administration from the University of Maine. The select board voted unanimously to promote him to manager.

The Town of South Thomaston dedicated its 2019 annual town report to **Cheryl Waterman** for decades of service to the community, both in elected and volunteer positions. A successful developer who built a 14-home subdivision, she served as selectwoman multiple times, first in the 1980s and again from 2014 to 2019. She also served on the planning board, helping draft a new comprehensive plan, and represented the board on the regional shellfish management panel. She worked as a registered nurse and EMT for 10 years. She was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Navy Medical Corps before returning to South Thomaston to develop homes, volunteering for Habitat for Humanity and much more. In the annual report, Waterman was described as someone who "exemplifies service to country and community." **John Spear**, a former selectman and state representative, was elected with write-in votes to fill the seat held by Waterman. He is a former South Thomaston town manager who also managed the Town of Waldoboro. ■

If your municipality submits a news item for the **Maine Town & City**, consider sending a corresponding photo to: **Eric Conrad: econrad@memun.org**

AUBURN

City officials announced in July that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, its goal of increased development has been successful, mostly because of a “one-stop, friendly and streamlined” permit process. The city has seen unprecedented growth across numerous categories, including warehouses, residential and market-rate multi-family housing, and manufacturing. Auburn also offers business and housing developers generous incentives to settle in Maine’s fifth-largest city, located across the Androscoggin River from Lewiston. Between February and June 2020, the Auburn Planning Board approved \$55.8 million in new structures, outpacing the state’s largest city, Portland, over the same time span.

BANGOR

Police intend to increase patrols in the downtown district after merchants complained there were people drinking, fighting and using drugs and hurting their businesses and bottom lines. Panhandling and other “less than ideal” behavior also has become a downtown problem. Police said offenders could receive no-trespass orders for a year. Those who do not obey them could face up to six months in jail and fines of \$1,000.

HOULTON

The town’s airport is among eight in Maine to receive a grant to make improvements such as better lighting and removal of obstructions. A total of \$3.5 million was awarded in July to the Maine airports that, like all others across the nation, has suffered revenue losses during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Federal officials hope the airport grants will help prepare the facilities for when the pandemic is over. According to a news release, the money awarded to Houlton will finance construction of a new parallel taxiway, remove 23 trees and repair a culvert that runs along the airport. Other communities that will share in the \$3.5 million grant includes Bangor, Bar Harbor, Brunswick, Millinocket, Norridgewock, Pittsfield and Waterville.

FORT KENT

Electric or hybrid vehicles now have access to a charging station in far northern Maine. One station was installed at

NEW ON THE WEB www.memun.org

Highlights of what’s been added and updated at www.memun.org since the last edition of *Maine Town & City*.

Revenue sharing projections. The Maine Treasurer’s Office released projections for the Municipal Revenue Sharing program, for the fiscal year that began on July 1. Many towns and cities were anticipating these, as budgeting during the current public health emergency is difficult.

School reopening. Local guidelines and decisions will still prevail, but the Mills Administration put public schools in all 16 counties “in the green” for opening to students this fall.

MMA Executive Committee. A slate of nominees was put forth to serve on the 12-member committee that guides the Maine Municipal Association on budget setting and strategic priorities.

Northern Maine Medical Center and will be used mostly by hospital staff and visitors. A second charger was installed at the Fort Kent Town Office for public use. Steve Pelletier, director of economic and community development, said in July the two units are too new to figure out what to charge for the service. Vehicle owners will have access to the town office station 24 hours a day. Other municipalities are planning to install, or already have, electrical charging stations as electric vehicles become more popular with drivers.

MADAWASKA

People and business owners in the northern part of Aroostook County are suffering not only through the pandemic, but also the worst drought since 1895. Experts say if the drought worsens into a “drier category,” drinking water quality may be compromised. The region already is in a “severe drought” category, which often causes trees to become brittle, fish to die off, hay prices to increase, ponds to dry up and outdoor water restrictions imposed. July rainstorms helped protect vegetation, but was not enough to end the drought. As of late June, half of Maine was classified as “abnormally dry.”

ROXBURY

The effort took more than three years, but last month River Valley ATVers marked the opening of an 8.5-mile trail from the town of about 350 residents to Rumford. The trail also connects to a trail system through Woodstock, Peru,

Dixfield and Mexico, across the river from Rumford. Plaques at both ends of the new trail credit the Roxbury ATV volunteers and the manufacturer Polaris, which gave the club a \$10,000 grant to help make the project a reality. Riders took their first ride on July 12. The trail features steep hills, which riders especially like.

WATERVILLE

The city council waded into a dispute about whether or not people should wear face masks, or other coverings, to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which has killed nearly 155,000 within five months, plunged the nation into a recession, and closed an unknown number of businesses. Under the resolution passed on a 5-4 vote, councilors and city staff must wear masks to council meetings, as will the public. It also urges Waterville businesses to require customers and staff to wear masks. The vote followed one councilor’s reproach of his peers for not wearing a mask – an effective way to stop the public transmission of the virus, according to public health experts. Opponents of the mandate say they either cannot breathe with masks on, or government requiring the mandate infringes on civil rights. Some opponents don’t believe a mask will help. On July 8, Gov. Janet Mills issued an order to businesses to enforce mask-wearing, but enforcement is difficult. Some residents ignore local or state guidelines. ■

MUNICIPAL BULLETIN BOARD

PLEASE NOTE

Due to uncertainty caused by the coronavirus public health emergency, we are promoting selected events, but they are subject to change. Please view our website (www.memun.org) for updates and details.

Thank you.

AUG. 26

ZOOM WEBINAR

Managing Freedom of Access Requests

Sometimes FOA requests come in slowly. Sometimes they come from serial requesters, and they keep coming for a while. Either way, Maine law requires that all FOA requests be handled properly, fairly and in a timely manner. That's what this workshop – which will be held at the Maine Municipal Association's Christopher G. Lockwood Conference Center in Augusta – will address. Attendees will receive certificates proving they have met the state's requirements for FOA training.

The program will be led by MMA Legal Services Attorneys Richard Flewelling and

Michael Lichtenstein; Union Town Manager Jay Feyler; and, Eric Conrad, MMA's Director of Communication & Educational Services. The afternoon workshop begins with registration at 1:30 p.m. The program runs from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Cost is \$45 for MMA members and \$90 for non-members.

SEPT. 11

ZOOM WEBINAR

Labor & Employment Law

If you manage municipal personnel – as a manager, department supervisor or elected official – this workshop is a must for up-to-date information about legal and practical approaches to personnel situations. Attorneys from the law firm of Bernstein Shur, and MMA's David Barrett, head of Personnel Services & Labor Relations, will lead the workshop.

It will be held online via Zoom, starting at 9 a.m. It will conclude at 2:30 p.m. Cost for the session is \$65 for MMA members and \$130 for non-members.

OCT. 7-15

LIVE STREAM, ZOOM WEBINARS

MMA's 84th Annual Convention

Please join us for a ground-breaking event, as the Maine Municipal Association will hold a largely "virtual" convention

this year, starting at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 7. The convention will touch on many "high level" topics, such as inter-municipal collaboration, COVID-19, and understanding racial and ethnic differences.

We are also focused on "nuts and bolts" municipal issues too, ones that elected and appointed officials from mid-sized and smaller communities may really appreciate: best practices in local roads; smart culvert replacement techniques; capital project finances, including leasing options; the basics of property tax assessment and valuation. For complete details, see Page 18 of this magazine or go to our website (www.memun.org).

OCT. 20

Roles of Elected Officials & Managers: Augusta

This workshop is geared for councilors, select board members, managers and administrators who work with the manager/administrator form of government and want to learn more about roles and responsibilities. It is led by: Don Gerrish, former veteran municipal manager and consultant with Eaton Peabody; Pam Plumb, former Mayor of Portland and co-founder of Great Meetings! Inc.; and, David Barrett, director of Personnel Services and Labor Relations at MMA.

The evening workshop, to be held at MMA's Christopher G. Lockwood Conference Center in Augusta, begins with registration at 4 p.m. It runs through 8:30 p.m. Cost is \$65 for MMA members and \$130 for non-members. MMA requires masks to be worn while indoors, when social distancing is not possible. Meeting room capacity will be limited. (Note: MMA expects to record this session, and make it available online to members at a later date.) ■



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LEGAL NOTES

LRAP Forms Due November 1

The Municipal Calendar in the July 2020 Legal Notes column contained an error. It said Local Roads Assistance Program (LRAP) certification forms must be returned to the Maine DOT Community Services Division by August 1st. This is incorrect. The annual deadline to submit the form was changed last year to November 1st (see 23 M.R.S. § 1804). Submission of this form is a prerequisite to receiving LRAP funds. We regret the error.

For details on LRAP funding, go to <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/csd/lrap/>. (By R.P.F.)

'Remote' Board Meetings – OK for How Much Longer?

Question: Our municipal facilities are not large enough to safely accommodate in-person board meetings with the public in attendance during this COVID-19 pandemic. How far into the future are we legally allowed to conduct our board meetings “remotely” by means of telephonic, video, electronic or similar technology?

Answer: Until 30 days after the termination of the current state of emergency declared by the Governor due to the COVID-19 outbreak, whenever that occurs.

The authority to conduct board meetings by means of remote participation originated with the COVID-19 emergency legislation enacted by the Maine Legislature last March (see PL 2019, c. 617, eff. Mar. 18, 2020). Part G, § G-1 of that legislation amended Maine’s Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) by adding a new section (1 M.R.S. § 403-A) temporarily authorizing the conduct of “public proceedings” or board meetings by remote means, subject, however, to four conditions.

These conditions are: (1) public notice of the meeting must be given and must include the method by which the public may attend remotely, (2) each board member must be able to hear and speak to all other members, and the public must be able to hear all members, (3) the board must determine that public attendance will be by remote means, and (4) all votes taken must be by roll call vote.

Without this temporary statutory authority, remote board meetings would be contrary to the “open meeting” requirements of Maine’s FOAA, which contemplate that members will be physically

MUNICIPAL CALENDAR

ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1 — Clerks of organized plantations shall make return to the Secretary of State, on blanks furnished by him for that purpose, of the names of the assessors and clerks of their plantation and that the same have been sworn. There is a penalty for failure to make such return (30-A MRSA §7005).

SEPTEMBER 7 — (first Monday in September) — Labor Day — a legal holiday (4 MRSA §1051).

ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 15 — Monthly expenditure statement and claim for General Assistance reimbursement to be sent to Department of Human Services, General Assistance Unit, 11 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333 [22 MRSA §4311].

BETWEEN MAY 1 and OCTOBER 1 — Municipal officers may initiate process to close certain roads to winter maintenance [23 MRSA §2953]. For further information see MMA’s Municipal Roads Manual.

BY OCTOBER 1 — Assessors should receive the municipality’s proposed current state valuation from the State Tax Assessor. [36 MRSA §208].

ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 15 — Monthly expenditure or quarterly statement and claim for General Assistance reimbursement to be sent to Department of Human Services, General Assistance Unit, DHS #11, Augusta, ME 04333 [22 MRSA §4311].

OCTOBER — Registrars of voters shall accept registration prior to the November 5 election according to the time schedule for their population group [21-A MRSA §122(6)].

■ The Registrar shall publish his/her time and hourly schedules in a newspaper having general circulation in the municipality at least 7 days before it becomes effective. In municipalities of 2,500 or less population, this publication is discretionary rather than compulsory [21-A MRSA §125].

■ The hourly schedule for voter registration established by 21-A MRSA §122 may be changed by the municipal officers according to the needs of the municipality [21-A MRSA §122(8)].

ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 31 — Every employer required to deduct and withhold tax for each calendar quarter shall file a withholding return and remit payment as prescribed by the State Tax Assessor (36 MRSA § 5253).

BY NOVEMBER 1 — Any governmental subdivision holding tangible or intangible property presumed abandoned under 33 MRSA §1953 must make report to the Administrator of Abandoned Property of the State Treasury Department, pursuant to 33 MRSA §1958.

present at board meetings and entitle the public to attend in person.

Up until the current pandemic, the Legislature has repeatedly refused to authorize remote board meetings (see “Remote Participation in Meetings Rejected, Again,” *Maine Town & City*, Legal Notes, July 2019). But after this state of emergency is over, we wouldn’t be surprised if, based on this generally positive experiment, the Legislature revisits the subject and authorizes remote board meetings on a more permanent basis. In the meantime, though, as we noted above, the present authority for remote board meetings “sunsets” 30 days

after the state of emergency is terminated by the Governor.

For the record, this temporary authority to participate remotely in board meetings does not apply to traditional town meetings, which, at least as of this writing, still require that voters be physically present in order to participate and vote. For official guidance on how traditional town meetings can safely and lawfully be conducted in compliance with gathering limits and all other State requirements, go here: <https://www.maine.gov/dec/d/checklists/town-meetings>. (By R.P.F.)

LEGAL NOTES

Ten Common Mistakes in Drafting Ordinances

(Reprinted from the April 2006 *Maine Townsman* Legal Notes.)

An ordinance, to be effective, must be carefully drafted. Courts look to the specific terms of an ordinance rather than its general purpose or intent in order to interpret its meaning and applicability. We've reviewed a lot of ordinances over the years and have identified a variety of common drafting errors. Here are some of them:

Inconsistent terminology. An ordinance is supposed to be instructive, not an entertaining read. Using different terms to refer to the same thing (e.g., "house," "residence," "dwelling") is confusing and implies distinctions where none may be intended. Instead, choose a single generic term (e.g., "dwelling"), define it if necessary, and use it consistently throughout the ordinance.

Missing definitions. Some terms are commonly understood and may not require a specific definition (e.g., "applicant," "abutter"), but many have no generally accepted meaning and are subject to broad interpretation (e.g., "road," "frontage," "setback"). Failing to define uncertain terms in an ordinance is a clear invitation to misunderstanding and dispute.

Superfluous definitions. Every definition in an ordinance should have a purpose. Defining terms whose meaning is obvious (e.g., "municipality," "municipal officers") or that actually appear nowhere else in the ordinance is pointless and a distraction.

Faulty incorporation of materials. Maps, schedules, specifications, and other exhibits are not made enforceable just by attachment to or passing mention in an ordinance. They should be fully identified (e.g., by title, date, and source) and expressly incorporated by reference (e.g., "which is incorporated herein by reference and made a part hereof"). There are also special notice, adoption, and filing requirements for the adoption of building, electrical, and similar codes by reference (see 30-A M.R.S. § 3003).

Erroneous citations. It is meaningless and frustrating for an ordinance to cite other ordinances or statutes that no longer exist or that now exist in another form or under a different title. If in doubt about the existence of or the correct citation to

another law, always check with the appropriate source.

Inconsistencies with other laws. A "conflicts" clause deferring to the more (or less) restrictive of inconsistent provisions is no substitute for an ordinance that is in harmony with itself and other laws governing the same subject matter. For instance, State law limits municipal authority to regulate manufactured housing and mobile home parks (see 30-A M.R.S. § 4358). An ordinance that ignores limitations such as this is unenforceable and an embarrassment.

Absent or imprecise standards. Most ordinances vest some discretion in officials (for example, to grant or deny a permit or approval). Without reasonably specific standards, or with only vague criteria to guide officials in exercising their discretion, however, their decisions are reversible. Incorporating objective, measurable standards in an ordinance can help avoid this (see "Land Use 'Beauty' Standard Invalid," *Maine Townsman*, Legal Notes, June 2000).

Cannibalism of other ordinances. An ordinance that consists of nothing more than an amalgamation of borrowed parts from other ordinances is no more pleasing or predictable than Frankenstein's monster. Use other ordinances as prototypes only, and make certain that custom components mesh with standard features in form, sequence, and process.

Missing information and disorganization. Every ordinance should answer the following questions (among others) and roughly in this order: What actions or activities are regulated or prohibited? Who must comply, when, and how? What standards or criteria apply? Who has the burden of proof? Who has the authority to determine compliance? Is there an appeal? If so, by whom, to whom, when, and how? What relief is available, and under what circumstances? Who is responsible for enforcement, when, and how? What are the penalties for violation?

Unforeseen possibilities, unintended consequences. No draftsman is clairvoyant, and few if any ordinances contemplate all possibilities or effects, but every ordinance can benefit from "reality-testing." Short of using hindsight (which is also useful and legitimate), the best way of identifying an ordinance's shortcomings is to test it with hypotheticals or "what if"

scenarios before enactment.

Since this note was first published over 14 years ago, we've learned one other lesson so simple but indispensable that it bears repeating here: Proofread, proofread. (By R.P.F.)

New Pandemic-Delayed Tax Lien Docs Available

As municipal tax collectors undoubtedly know by now, Maine's Governor has suspended certain provisions of the property tax lien laws during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Specifically, the Governor's Executive Order No. 53 FY 19/20, issued on May 12, 2020, authorizes (but does not require) tax collectors to delay sending the 30-day notice of lien until 60 days after the current state of emergency has been terminated.

This means that for the duration of the emergency and for 60 days thereafter, collectors are not bound by the statutory deadline of one year following commitment of the tax in order to initiate the tax lien process. Instead, they may initiate the process by sending the notice of lien anytime during the emergency plus 60 days afterward, whether or not the one-year deadline has elapsed in the meantime. This effectively extends the one-year deadline for initiating the tax lien process for the length of time the COVID-19 emergency is in force and for 60 days thereafter.

According to the Governor's order, if a collector has already sent a notice of lien but has not yet recorded the lien in the registry, the collector need not do so and may instead re-initiate the lien process by sending another notice of lien anytime later during the emergency plus 60 days afterward.

To assist collectors who choose to exercise this authority, MMA Legal Services staff has prepared special 30-day notice and lien forms citing the Governor's order and briefly explaining its effect so that taxpayers, title searchers, and other interested parties will better understand this deviation from the norm in the tax lien process. The special forms are included in Appendices 1 and 2 of the online version of MMA's Guide to Municipal Liens, available free to members at www.memun.org.

For the record, there have been no other pandemic-related changes to the tax lien process. (By R.P.F.) ■

Maine Municipal Bond Bank

2020 FALL BOND ISSUE SCHEDULE

Capital financing through the Bond Bank's General Bond Resolution Program allows borrowers to take advantage of the Bond Bank's high investment grade rating, low interest rates and reduced issuance and post issuance costs. Traditionally twice a year, in the Spring and Fall, the Bond Bank will consolidate eligible applicants and engage in a bond sale. From application to receipt of funds the bond issuance process usually lasts three to four months. Below is the schedule for the Bond Bank's Fall Issue.

AUGUST						
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 30	24 31	25	26	27	28	29

Tuesday, August 4th

Application Deadline.

Tuesday, August 25th

Application approval (Board Meeting).

Thursday, September 10th

Preliminary opinions and loan agreements due from bond counsel of each borrower.

Friday, September 11th

Last date for signing school contracts and rates in place for water districts. PUC approvals due.

Week of October 5th

Maine Municipal Bond Bank Pricing.

Wednesday, October 14th

Final documents due from bond counsel.

Wednesday, October 28th

Pre-Closing.

Thursday, October 29th

Closing - Bond Proceeds Available (1:00 PM).

SEPTEMBER						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

OCTOBER						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

If you would like to participate in or have any questions regarding the 2020 Fall Bond Issue, please contact Toni Reed at 1-800-821-1113, (207)622-9386 or tir@mmbb.com.



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