

Maine Town & City

The magazine of the Maine Municipal Association

October 2020

Katahdin Towns Leap Into Brighter Future

Mill properties receive
strategic investments

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Something to Talk About



The City of Caribou holds a special place in Maine history. A story telling event is planned as part of its Bicentennial celebration.

Leadership delivered: MMA Executive Director Stephen Gove writes that trying times require municipal officials to step up. And they are. **Page 5**

Small towns increasingly are getting involved in broadband upgrades, seeing them as key economic development projects. **Page 23**

ABOUT THE COVER: Ben Thomas, MMA's website and social media editor, took this photo during a recent factory tour in East Millinocket.

Rebound Central

Adjacent towns of East Millinocket and Millinocket are investing in their expansive mill properties. **Page 7**

Major City, Big Issues

Portland Mayor Kate Snyder has had quite the first year. We catch up with her about COVID-19, public protests, family – and more. **Page 11**

Recreational Surge

At the start of the COVID-19 emergency, some communities scaled back in parks and recreation. Turns out, public demand was rising. **Page 15**

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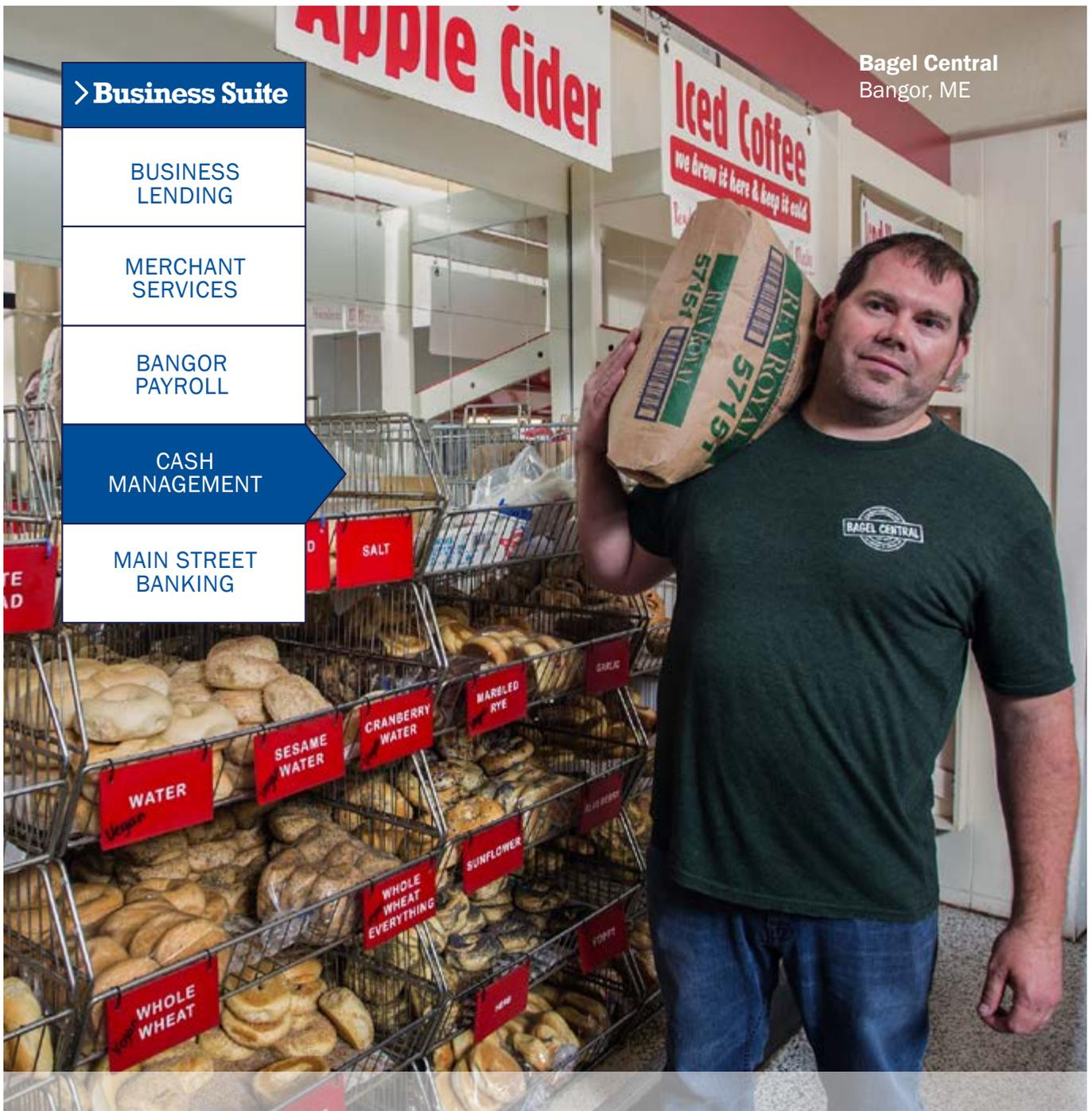
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A MESSAGE FROM MMA

BY STEVE W. GOVE / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Leadership, during an unforgettable period in history

Six months ago, Maine Municipal Association President Christine Landes and I stepped off a plane at the Portland International Jetport after attending meetings with our Congressional delegation and a National League of Cities' conference in Washington, D.C. Looking back, our return home that day, March 12, became one of those unforgettable moments in time.

While I drove, Christine live-streamed on her mobile phone Gov. Janet Mills' first COVID-19 news conference. Gov. Mills announced Maine's first presumptive case of coronavirus and initial steps to reduce its spread. We listened intently. By the time we reached the Gardiner I-295 exit, we both knew that we were in for a world of change. How much so? We could only guess. Three days later, the governor declared a civil state of emergency.

Since then, municipal leaders in Maine and across the country have faced an unprecedented public health, economic and social justice crisis and unimaginable change. The response from elected and appointed local leaders has been extraordinary.

I have been privileged to participate in Zoom conferences with appointed and elected municipal officials from all regions of the state since March as they put their heads together, rolled up their sleeves and focused on protecting citizens and employees and delivering necessary municipal services under challenging conditions. Municipal officials have moved quickly, decisively and imaginatively.

Local leaders worked countless hours establishing new protocols, safely re-opening town offices and city halls, conducting town meetings and elections under new rules and successfully pivoting to digital council and board meetings. We've witnessed innovations such as creating local ambassadors to communicate CDC safety measures, grant programs to help local businesses survive and new ways of delivering vital services from clerks' offices to transfer stations. Municipal officials have been called upon to address the often-differing concerns and needs of residents, seasonal visitors and business owners. Not an easy task in a health crisis. Local leaders have done it all and more over the spring and summer.

On the social justice front, a number of municipalities

adopted or are working on diversity and equity resolutions and action plans. Municipal officials around the state are engaged in community discussions, forming equity committees and taking training programs on implicit bias and racial equity.

The challenges are far from over. More difficult work and public policy decisions lie ahead. But it's also important to take stock in what local leaders have learned, and how much has been accomplished for public health, economic stability and equality over the past six months. Municipal officials serve a pandemic-weary public that, more so than ever, turns to local government for protection and guidance.

MMA remains ready to assist municipal officials with our legal advisory services, advocacy, personnel services, communications and training, and group services programs as cities and towns continue to adapt, find solutions and address issues. MMA is doing the same.

While we don't know for certain what lies ahead, we do know that municipal officials will meet the challenges head on. That's what local leaders do. You have proven it since the start of this crisis.

In closing this column, I wish to recognize **Christina St. Pierre**, MMA's Director of Administration and IT, for 39 years of service to MMA and its members. Christina retired at the end of September.

Christina managed the construction of the MMA office building in 1994 and the 2009 conference wing addition and renovations, directed way too many IT system conversions and upgrades to mention and developed MMA's IT framework from a handful of basic PCs in the early 1990s to its comprehensive infrastructure today. In between, Christina successfully tackled innumerable projects and issues. By all accounts, she has been a strong contributor to MMA's mission and just a good person to have on the team. She will be missed.

Christina and her husband Ralph, Assistant City Manager and Finance Director with the City of Augusta (who also retired), have headed south for a warmer fall and winter. We thank them for their service to local government and wish them all the best. ■

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Katahdin region towns head toward different economic future

East Millinocket Board Chair Peggy Daigle advises communities facing similar situations to “be present in the upfront,” rather than reacting to corporate decisions.

By Susan Cover

Two Penobscot County towns that suffered major losses when their paper mills closed are looking for innovative ways to redevelop the sprawling sites that once served as the economic heart of their communities.

In Millinocket, a non-profit is working closely with town officials to repair infrastructure, get grant money to clean up the site and attract new business. In East Millinocket, the town itself voted to purchase the mill, laying the groundwork for what town officials hope will be an opportunity for new commercial growth.

“The primary thing is getting access to the site and being able to control it,” said East Millinocket Select Board Chairwoman Peggy Daigle.

After months of negotiations, the town closed on the purchase in late July, giving townspeople the opportunity to now ponder not only the future of the town but of the Katahdin region.

“It’s highly unusual for a town to undertake this type of purchase, particularly with the hope of re-development,” she said.

Daigle and others are part of a statewide effort called the Forest Opportunity Roadmap/Maine, which is focused on working in collaboration with six towns that lost paper mills between 2013 and 2015. A 2018 report by the group set an aggressive goal to expand the state’s forest products sector from \$8.5 billion in 2016 to \$12 billion by 2025. The report acknowledges that the mills were not just the towns’ major employers, they created



Peggy Daigle

a sense of “community identity and pride.”

“The sister mills of Millinocket and East Millinocket were wildly prosperous during most of the 20th Century,” the report states. “In the 1970s, Millinocket was considered to have among the highest per-capita income in the state.”

At their peak, the two mills employed about 3,000. But the Millinocket mill closed in 2008, followed by the East Millinocket mill in 2014, when the remaining 250 workers lost their jobs.

Despite the high-profile closures of those sites and others across Maine, forest products are an \$8.5 billion industry that supports 33,500 jobs in the state, according to the Forest Opportunity Roadmap. One out of every 24 jobs in Maine is in the industry, which is considered the economic backbone of many rural parts of the state.

In the traditional mill towns of East Millinocket and Millinocket, the

hope is to redevelop those sites for many uses with the intention of diversifying the region’s economy.

Millinocket

In January 2017, a non-profit called Our Katahdin purchased the former Great Northern paper mill for \$1. With it came a \$1.5 million IRS tax lien that took more than two years to resolve, said Steve Sanders, director of mill site redevelopment for Our Katahdin. When the group settled the issue with the IRS last October, it opened the door to additional funding, including the recent announcement of \$850,000 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Brownfields Program.

Of that, \$350,000 will be used to assess the work that’s needed and \$500,000 is to clean up what Sanders described as the “iconic administration building,” built in the early 1900s. Like many mill sites, the property is separated from the rest of town by a gate, something Sanders hopes to have removed.

“This building sits right at the top of a major thoroughfare in town,” he said. “We’d like to remove the gate and have it be a part of the community.”

While the site is 1,400 acres, Sanders said only about 400 acres have been developed. As the group works to fix up the roads, water supply and wastewater system – and add broadband – it plans to expand to previously undeveloped areas to attract more economic activity. In addition, a state law passed in 2019 will allow the hydroelectric power on the site to be sold directly to businesses that locate there, resulting in “significantly reduced power costs,” Sanders said.

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



Exterior, interior photos from the mill in East Millinocket. (Photos by Ben Thomas)

In late June, Our Katahdin announced an \$8.5 million effort to improve the onsite power grid, data transmission, sewer and water systems, roads and rail lines. The bulk of that money comes from a \$5.36 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, along with funds from the Maine Rural Development Authority and Maine Technology Institute, according to a press release from the group.

Like the plans in East Millinocket,

the group hopes to create a multi-use industrial site on the grounds of the former mill.

“We are tailoring our infrastructure buildout to this multi-use vision of the site, and to the needs of prospective tenants, with whom we are having active conversations who will create new jobs on the site,” said Sean DeWitt, president of Our Katahdin, in a statement.

In addition to several regional and state entities, including the Maine

Rural Development Authority and the Maine Development Foundation, Our Katahdin works closely with the Town of Millinocket.

“Small towns aren’t set up to do major economic development efforts,” Sanders said. “We still remain a tight collaboration. You need to find good partners. We have a network of partners with a strong vision.”

Former Millinocket Town Manager John Davis said it’s been “extremely beneficial” to have Our Katahdin take the lead on the project, noting that many of the volunteers are either former mill workers or interested residents.

“They are the first organization that wants to develop the site as opposed to former owners who sought to strip its assets,” Davis said, in response to a series of emailed questions sent in August.

He stressed the importance of regular meetings to discuss strategy and share information about businesses that may be interested in locating at the site. He said towns facing similar challenges would be wise to either buy the site or work with others in the community to form a partnership.



East Millinocket

Daigle, a former municipal manager in nine towns, and fellow select board member Michael Michaud, the former U.S. Representative for Maine 2nd Congressional District, worked closely together on the deal to have the town purchase the mill site from a subsidiary of North American Recovery Management. The town used \$1.45 million in grant money to buy the site.

The old mill includes 215 acres of industrial zoned land along the west branch of the Penobscot River, according to a press release from the town. Of that, there is 222,000 square feet of space in several buildings. Throughout the process, town officials received permission from residents to move forward, including a vote in May 2019 to spend \$75,000 for legal, consulting and other expenses and a May 2020 vote to appropriate an additional \$250,000 to fund opera-

tions at the site for one year.

After that, the town will continue to apply for grants, foundation money and low interest loans to pay for needed improvements, repairs and remediation, according to the press release.

Daigle said the town wants to create a “multi-industrial complex” and already has some leaseholders waiting to move into some of the 144,000 square feet of warehouse space. Following the July closing, she and others worked on the types of details all new property owners face, from getting electricity back to the site and making sure the sprinkler systems are re-charged and ready to go.

“It’s an enormous leap for a town to take on something of this size,” she said. “It’s a meaningful step toward controlling our future.”

In September, Daigle said the town hired CES Engineering to handle designs and bid specifications for renovations that need to be done on

the buildings it plans to lease. It also hired a management firm to handle inquiries from companies interested in leasing the space and “everything

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related to redevelopment,” including applying for more grant money.

Over the summer, the town used the labor of four Charleston Correctional Facility inmates who spent five days cleaning out the warehouses. Daigle, Michaud and other volunteers renovated the guard building and are having electronic gates installed.

“We’ve been busy for the last six weeks,” she said. “We’re relieved we’ve got a management team to help us because we can’t do it on our own.”

One of the difficulties facing the town was that prior mill owners had already demolished nearly 200,000 square feet of space before the town had a chance to get involved. She suggested that other towns might avoid a similar situation by keeping close track of industrial sites, including knowing where the hazards might be and working with the state Department of Environmental Protection to identify potential needs and hurdles.

“If you’ve got a traditional indus-

try that’s struggling, looking to close down or close to bankruptcy, get engaged,” she said. “Try to be present in the upfront as opposed to where we’ve been in the back of the process.”

One bright spot for the town is that at least one of the buildings was constructed in 1990, so it still has many years of use left. Working together, she and Michaud, a former mill worker himself, made the type of strong team needed to see through such a big undertaking, she said. A town dealing with a private company can be a “pretty tricky process,” she said.

Daigle sees potential in the forest products industry and for digital companies interested in coming to East Millinocket. As for the town motto – “The Town That Paper Made” – she said the nod to the town’s history will always be an important part of the fabric of the community.

“The town is only here because of paper, but there’s so much more to what we could be,” she said. ■

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Under pressure: In first year, Portland mayor is learning fast

Kate Snyder opens up about how COVID-19 changed her city – and her family. She says now is time for more partnerships among communities and with the state.

By Betty Adams

Sworn in as mayor of Portland on Dec. 2, 2019, Kate Snyder already has faced myriad challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and a series of protests, one of which had people camping out on the steps of City Hall to demand safer and more affordable housing.

Maine Town & City magazine interviewed Mayor Snyder via Zoom last month to learn about the impact of these matters on her life and what she has learned over the past 10 months that could help other municipal leaders.

Snyder, 50, is the third full-time mayor of the city of 67,000 people, and earns \$76,615 annually in that post. She founded and served as executive director for the nonprofit Foundation for Portland Public Schools. Snyder also worked as executive director for the state Board of Corrections. She holds a Bachelor's degree in government and French from Skidmore College and a Master's degree in public policy and management from the University of Southern Maine. She spent six years on the Portland Board of Education, chairing that body for two years.

Q. How is the COVID-19 pandemic affecting your life and your role as mayor?

A. Well, I thought about this question when I read it. I thought that's interesting. Nobody ever asks me about my life. But I do have three children, and our girls graduated from college in May of 2019, and our son is in college. So I basically was on a job for three months when we came back from the National League of Cit-

ies conference on a Thursday night, March 12, and had our very first press conference on Friday, March 13 specific to COVID-19, at which point our daughter came back from New York, our son came back from college and our other daughter happened to be living with us at the time anyway because she was in the midst of a job search. My life changed because, all of a sudden, we went from a household with just me and my husband to the five of us and trying to accommodate four people who were working full-time plus a student who was finishing out his semester at school. So that was unexpected. It was honestly a big silver lining for me to have my family around. Having the kids home at those ages is unexpected.

Within the role of mayor, the most succinct way that I can put it is that COVID took everything that you might think about in terms of strategic planning and goal-setting and kind of overarching plans for how to approach the role and how to work with people. It set us all into a reactive mode. And for me, I remember those first couple of months, relying so heavily on what the governor and the director of the (Maine) CDC were doing every day. So I was tuning in to Dr. (Nirav) Shah's noontime and eventually 2 p.m. updates every day, waiting with bated breath for the governor's orders.

Q. How you are responding to the protests by various groups, including supporters of the Black Lives Matter Portland, as well as racial tension in general?

A. We've taken some action as a council. For example, one of the things that's on my list of things to be working on today is making appointments to the Racial Equity Steering



Kate Snyder

Committee that the City Council established through resolution this summer. (The resolution creating the committee says it is "to develop recommendations in response to systemic inequities.") The other way to respond is to try to meet with people and talk with people, so I am in the process of setting up a time to talk with the BLM Portland people. I haven't been able to meet with them up until this point. There's been a little bit of interaction back and forth on social media kinds of platforms, but my preference would be to sit down and have a discussion with folks so that we can better understand each other.

Q. What are you doing about the homeless issue, and how are you meeting your campaign promise to work on increasing affordable housing?

A. When you close Preble Street Resource Center for example, a place where people would really go during the daytime to access resourc-

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es, when that's closed, the issue of homelessness becomes much, much more visible and certainly goes beyond the confines of one neighborhood, Bayside. Those are real issues. They're triggered by the pandemic, but they're their own issues.

The work that's been happening in Portland preceded me for sure with regard to creating a municipal environment that is conducive to the creation of affordable housing. That work has been happening, and it continues to happen, and the pipeline for the creation of new units is bigger than ever. (In late July, the city issued an announcement titled "Ten

Mixed-Income Housing Projects Totaling Almost 900 Units Currently in Pipeline.")

I'd love to give a shout out to Councilor Jill Duson, who has been the chair of the Housing Committee for years. She's finishing up her sixth three-year term as a city councilor. She has been a champion for the creation of affordable housing and workforce housing and additional housing in the City of Portland for years and years. I certainly don't know everything at this stage. But one of the things I think about a lot is "What's the city's role in housing development?"

The City of Portland is not a landlord. But the City of Portland can work to create an environment that supports the creation of affordable and workforce housing. So that means zoning, it means working with folks who are applying for federal low income housing tax credits and that's a little wonky. But not everybody thinks about the importance of developers like Avesta Housing, like Community Housing of Maine. I don't mean developers in the sense of luxury condos. I mean developers who are working to create affordable housing. Their ability to secure those low-income housing tax credits is critical. So if we as a city can partner in support of those applications and we can create an environment that helps make their applications stronger, that's good work.

Q. What is one of most fun and/or rewarding things that you have been able to do as mayor since you took office Dec. 2, 2019?

I got to be on a Zoom meeting with a troop of Girl Scouts. That was probably a couple of months ago, and

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they're all doing school from home and they're navigating a new world. To me, that was nothing but fun for 45 minutes, to be able to talk to elementary school-aged girls who were terrifically involved and interested and had great questions. So being able to interact with people and listen to people, and learn from people, is the best. It's really one of the things that I enjoy the most: learning about people's experience of how their lives have changed and been impacted, what their most important issues are.

The other thing for any municipal person I think is people come with their own set of interests and their priorities. I think it's my job and the job of people who are working in towns and cities to listen to them all and to genuinely care and try to understand where people are coming from. Their

concern might be a pothole on their street. It might be the schools. It might be the business environment. It might be trash pickup. It might be taxes, it might be how the city is handling enforcement with regard to the pandemic. It could be our police force. It could be like I want to walk my dog without a leash versus with a leash.

Q. Previously (when campaigning for mayor) you described your view of the mayor's role as that of facilitator. Has that been the case or is it something else? Have you been able to build relationships and bring additional voices to the table to resolve problems in the city?

A. I think it's a significant part of the role, and I think it's very important. Ultimately, this is relationship work. This is people work. This is working with council, working with

staff, working with community members. So I think that being able to be very interested in those conversations and those relationships is important and being able to facilitate the conversations and the responses to people's concerns and priorities is really, really important.

There's more to the job than, you know, facilitating a meeting, but certainly making sure that we go into our meetings well-prepared with issues that are important to address, there's a facilitator role in there. The City of Portland on July 14 approved the creation of a Charter Commission, and so being able to think critically about the role of mayor, which was only created 10 years ago, and the various kind of roles and functions that we've got in city government is a really interesting road ahead...

We have an opportunity as a community to examine closely how things are working, what might need to be changed. And one of the things that

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I'm thinking about, as I recognize that that's going to be work that will happen over the next couple of years, is it's really important for me to be a helper in that commission's work, to identify what's working, what's not, and what might we be able to do to make tweaks and changes that could make things better.

Q. Is there anything I haven't asked you that you would like me to include given that your audience is other municipal officials?

A. The thing that pops into mind for me is the importance of working together, you know, town to town and

for them? What are we doing to be a business friendly climate in our community? So I've been lucky to have been part of discussions with (Greater Portland Council of Governments) and the Mayors Coalition. But I definitely do not want to leave out the importance of partnering with the state on a lot of the things that we face and what an important resource they are and what strong leadership we are getting from Augusta, recognizing that the Legislature had to adjourn early and some things didn't get addressed. Of course, there's going to be disagreement about solutions to

issues, but the extent to which we can say we're identifying issues that need attention, we're coming up with various solutions and moving forward on those. I think that's really positive. I would say there's a greater sense of partnership and shared experience right now. ■



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Parks and rec budgets pressured, yet use surges during COVID-19

Initially, some recreational programs closed. But as the health emergency continued, residents used public spaces and programs more, not less.

By Susan Cover

By helping with meal programs, childcare and grocery shopping for seniors, parks and recreation directors across the state are working to show their versatility at a time when cities and towns need to consider budget cuts.

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a triple threat to parks and recreation departments: Programs shut down in March, reducing revenues; re-starting programs requires more expensive cleaning and fewer participants; and, current or anticipated budget cuts as city and town leaders make decisions about what to fund, combine to make for a difficult situation.

Yet department leaders in Saco, Easton, Yarmouth and Farmington say being flexible and able to quickly pivot to new program offerings is the key to convincing decision makers to keep the departments funded.

“The people in parks and recreation are the heart and soul of the community,” said Deb Smith, executive director of the Maine Recreation & Park Association.

One of the difficulties facing cities and towns, particularly with regard to parks and recreation budgets, is the decline in revenues because events had to be canceled in response to the pandemic. In Portland, City Manager Jon Jennings informed council in an August memorandum that the city’s Parks and Recreation revenues were down \$2.5 million “from a lack of events, lessons and programs.” In response, his proposed 2021 municipal budget called for a 20% reduction in Parks and Recreation and the elimina-



Erika Dube on the job in Saco. (Submitted photo)

tion of more than 30 positions.

In September, Portland City Council voted to approve a city budget that eliminated more than 60 positions citywide, with the Parks and Recreation Department taking many of the largest cuts, according to Maine Public Broadcasting.

In Bangor, Parks and Recreation Director Tracy Willette said he has curtailed his capital improvement requests and left many seasonal positions unfilled in response to the pandemic. He’s anticipating both reduced revenues and expenses this budget year and next, according to answers he provided via email.

Despite the difficulties, Bangor has continued to offer programs for school-age children and opened its municipal golf course.

“As residents in every community continue to look for local options for

physical activity and recreation, Parks and Recreation services provide opportunities for that vital need,” Willette said. “There have been quite a few references in CDC updates regarding the need for individuals to stay physically active. Parks and Recreation agencies, either through facilities or programming, provide that necessary service.”

Stepping up ‘big time’

Before the pandemic, parks and recreation departments provided programming meant to bring people together.

“Then all of a sudden, we had to keep people apart,” Smith said.

In late March, Smith started Zoom meetings open to parks and recreation professionals across the state to talk about ways they could help during the COVID-19 crisis. For Saco Parks and Recreation Deputy Director Erika

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

Dube, it was a way to connect with professionals in other parts of the state she might not encounter otherwise.

Her department has helped with meal programs, a COVID-19 hotline, child care programs and modified sports and fitness offerings that change when necessary to comply with new safety guidelines.

“I really feel the parks and recreation industry is essential to all our communities,” Dube said. “Most people look to recreation departments for what we can provide. In our own unique ways, we stepped up to the plate.”

Smith said the 350 members of her association range from one-person departments, like the one in Easton run by Hillary Hallett, to others with multiple staff members. They are funded differently too, with some receiving town funding for a paid position supplemented by volunteers, while others rely on money generated by programming and town or city funds.

In Farmington, where the town operates on a January to December fiscal year, the parks and recreation department made modest cuts this year,

said Director Matthew Foster. Among other things, he delayed some capital improvement projects from this year until next. Although he hopes to be in a better position in November when he sits down to crunch budget numbers, Foster said he’s prepared to “make more difficult decisions in the future.”

Moving forward, Foster said he knows budget cuts might be necessary to get through hard times, but that Parks and Recreation Departments are also often underfunded. He thinks the pandemic has given the departments an opportunity to show their worth and he’s prepared to face the future with a flexible mindset.

“If I have learned anything from managing a department during COVID times, it has been to anticipate everything,” he said in response to written questions.

Smith agreed, saying for many cities and towns, the budget picture will likely be clearer in January which could usher in additional furloughs and layoffs.

“Eventually, there is the fear that it’s going to catch up to us,” she said.

Child care expansion

One area of expansion for parks and recreation departments is in child care, particularly because many schools are offering in-person learning two or three days a week. It’s a way to fill a community need and generate some revenues even as other programs are canceled or limited, she said.

As someone who’s worked in parks and recreation for more than 30 years, Smith said she’s no stranger to budget debates that pit the needs of police and fire departments against parks and recreation departments. She hopes the ability to be nimble in response to changing community needs will help the public and decision makers see that they are an essential service.

“They are a group of professionals that are there for their communities and they have stepped up big time,” she said.

Nationally, an April survey conducted by the National Recreation and Park Association showed that nearly half of all parks and recreation departments had received requests

continued on page 21



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The Municipal RISK MANAGER

FALL 2020

A Publication of the Maine Municipal Association

Time to Prepare

Children have returned to schools, temperature are dropping and the time to prepare for winter is upon us. The fall season is the perfect time to ready equipment and staff for the challenges of winter, which are now compounded by the ever changing employment landscape due to the Coronavirus. Despite all of these ongoing challenges, roads will need to be maintained and soon plowed, buildings maintenance crews will need to plan so that they can ensure safe egress that is free of snow and ice, and stage buildings to be ready for the impending cold. MMA Risk Management Services (RMS) finds that winter always brings with it some predictable claims, which allows us to take the steps to prevent them and protect people, property and community. To help you prepare and manage the risks associated with winter, we offer an overview of some common winter claims as well as tools and strategies to prevent them.

Building Preparation and Related Risks: Frozen pipes, roof damage, leaks and collapse.

Fortunately, most weather related losses are preventable. Here are some tips and reminders to help prevent these winter weather losses from occurring at your municipal buildings during the upcoming months:

- Make sure the building exterior is in good condition with all unnecessary openings closed.
- Insulate water pipes, paying special attention to pipes that are close to exterior walls or in unheated basements/crawl spaces/attics, pipes near windows, in foyers or soffits, and pipes that have frozen in the past.
- Locate, identify and mark water shut-off valves and ensure that your staff knows how to turn off the water.
- Repair or replace leaky or corroded valves now.
- Turn off the water to all outside connections and drain.
- Remove all hoses hooked up to outside connections and if possible drain the pipes.



- Ensure that you can remove the snow from around sand/salt shed building walls and foundation.
- Remove heavy snow from roofs if it can be done safely. Special care should be taken with flat roofs, which can be especially susceptible to snow and water collection.
- Keep gutters, eaves and downspouts clean and free of leaves, ice or snow.
- Do not locate computers or electronics directly below plumbing or roof drains.
- Make sure downspouts extend away from the building to direct water away from the foundation.
- Service heating systems to ensure that they maintain building temperatures.
- Schedule regular Building Freeze Watches to be performed during winter storms and periods of cold weather.
- Take special care to weatherize and monitor vacant or unoccupied buildings.

Slips, Trips, and Falls. Every year, slips, trips and falls are among the most common and costly workplace accidents across all industries, accounting for 35% of incidents and 65% of lost work days. RMS also receives liability claims from individuals who lose their footing on municipal property. Many of these events take place in the winter, so consider these ways to reduce the potential for this cause of injury.

Pay special attention to all building entrances and exits, parking lots, and walking paths near and around buildings. Sanding and salting, in addition to plowing, is necessary to reduce slips and falls. If you use a contractor to maintain these areas, check the service contract and make sure it is explicit about the frequency of maintenance during storms.

You may also wish to designate an entrance that will always be first to be maintained so that your employees can rest assured that they have a safe entrance to and from work.



Story Continued on Next Page

Monitor floors just inside building entrances, where melting snow and slush create slippery areas. Use large absorbent floor mats to catch this snow and water. During storms, you may need to post special signs to warn people of a slippery floor.

Encourage your employees to wear appropriate footwear and to walk slowly by taking small steps to allow themselves to react quickly to a change in traction.

Many slips and falls occur when employees get in and out of vehicles. Operators of trucks and heavy equipment should, in all seasons, face the vehicle whenever entering or exiting. In winter, it's particularly important that they clear as much snow and ice off of steps, grab bars, etc. as possible and report damaged or unsafe equipment immediately so that it can be repaired.

Plow-Related Risks. Your plow drivers work in all weather conditions and are needed to be on the road when few others are. Although we are unable to eliminate all risk, we can take steps to reduce the likelihood of accidents.

- When attaching or removing plow blades for the season, workers should have assistive equipment to keep themselves safe. Hand injuries as well as shoulder and back strains injuries are notorious for their long-lasting and sometimes life-altering effects.
- Perform pre-season equipment maintenance. Have drivers check all safety equipment such as lights, strobes, wipers, defrosters, communications and tires before every shift.
- Report, repair or replace damaged equipment immediately.
- Before winter arrives, supervisors should ensure that high-way drivers get experience operating their designated vehicle, pre-drive their assigned plow routes with the plow (and



wing) attached, and mark obstacles on their routes. Don't let their annual "shakedown" ride be in adverse weather.

- Supervisors need to monitor driver fatigue, especially in long or successive storms with extended periods in the driver's seat. Make it a priority to check in regularly with drivers to evaluate their fatigue levels.

Winter can arrive suddenly, so it's best not to delay your preparations. Taking the time now to start acting on the tips in this article will go a long way to keeping your employees, vehicles, facility users, and structures safe. For more winter loss prevention ideas, reach out to your loss control consultant or email us at rmsloss-control@memun.org we are always available for you. 🚧

Members Receive Dividends

All of us at MMA Risk Management Services (RMS) would like to recognize the extraordinary risk management efforts our membership and thank them for their continued commitment.

We are pleased to announce that the Property & Casualty Pool (the Pool) and Workers Compensation Fund (the Fund) have issued dividends to all eligible members. Because of our membership's dedication to health, safety and loss prevention, the Workers Compensation Fund has distributed **\$649,941** in dividends and the Property & Casualty Pool released dividends of **\$599,968**, for total dividend distribution of over \$1.2 million. Since 1997, the Pool and the Fund have returned more than **\$23 million** in dividends to participating members.

For more information about any of the MMA Risk Management Services programs, including dividend distributions, online training programs, grants, scholarships and other available services, please visit our website at www.memun.org and click on the Risk Management Services link, or call 1800-590-5583 and ask to speak with RMS Member Services representative.

Workers Compensation Renewal Reminder

It is renewal time again and we are here to help. The renewal applications for the Workers Compensation Fund are due by October 16, 2020, and we want our Members to know that we are available to assist you. If you would like help with the completion of your application or just have questions, please contact RMS Underwriting at rmsunderwriting@memun.org or 1-(800) 590-5583.

Serving Maine Communities Is What We Do And All We Do

Coverage Document Portal

Coverage Document 2019-2020

We are pleased to announce a new feature to the MMA Risk Management website which allows

members of the Property & Casualty Pool to view and download the Member Coverage Documents online. To access this new web feature, please login to the MMA site at www.memun.org and select Risk Management under the Quick Links. Once you land on the Risk Management page, you will see the Coverage Document Portal located on the right. Now you have the ability to view the coverage document for the years listed.

Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspections Frequently Asked Questions



Q1: Who will conduct the boiler or pressure vessel jurisdictional inspection?

A1: Maine Municipal Association has partnered with Travelers BoilerRe to provide our members with equipment breakdown coverage. As part of your equipment breakdown coverage Travelers BoilerRe can complete jurisdictional inspections on boilers and pressure vessels as required by the State of Maine.

Q2: What equipment requires a jurisdictional inspection in the State of Maine? What frequency is the jurisdictional inspection required?

A2: The State of Maine changed their requirements in 2015. Only the following objects now require a jurisdictional inspection in the State of Maine:

- Pressure vessels – Inspection required every three (3) years
- Steamers/cookers – Inspection required annually
- High pressure steam boilers (greater than 15 psi) – One internal inspection required annually; one external inspection required annually
- The following objects require an inspection only if they are in a school:
 - o Steamers – Inspection required annually
 - o Low pressure steam boilers – Inspection required annually
 - o Hot water heating and supply boiler – Inspection required annually

For a full explanation of the jurisdictional requirements in the State of Maine please visit the National Board of Boilers and Pressure Vessel Inspectors website: <https://www.nationalboard.org/ViewAllSynopses.aspx>.

Q3: How are jurisdictional inspections scheduled?

A3: The Travelers BoilerRe Risk Control Consultant can access real time boiler and pressure vessel information in the State of Maine database. The Risk Control Consultant will proactively contact the location to schedule the jurisdictional inspection prior to the certificate expiration date. For questions regarding your recent or upcoming inspection or; if an inspection is needed for a newly installed object, please contact the Travelers BoilerRe Inspection Hotline at 1-800-425-4119 or via email at BOILINSP@travelers.com. Representatives are available Monday through Friday, 8am – 4pm EST.

Q4: What will I receive after my jurisdictional inspection?

A4: The Travelers BoilerRe Risk Control Consultant will complete an inspec-

tion report and will electronically submit the results to the State of Maine.

- Passed Inspection: If the object passed inspection, the member will receive an invoice for the certificate fee from the State of Maine. The member is responsible for paying the certificate fee to the State of Maine. Upon receipt of payment the State of Maine Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation will mail a Certificate of Inspection to the mailing address on file.
- In Violation: If the object does not pass the inspection, the member will receive a letter from Travelers BoilerRe outlining the violation and the necessary actions. Some violations are certificate blocking and will require an on-site re-inspection by the Travelers BoilerRe Risk Control Consultant in order to pass inspection and ultimately receive a Certificate of Inspection.

Travelers BoilerRe may also issue insurance related recommendations that are not certificate blocking. The recommendation will be discussed with the location contact and a follow up confirmation letter will be sent to the location. Once the recommendation is complete the member should notify the Travelers BoilerRe Risk Control Consultant so the recommendation can be closed. Contact information will be included in the confirmation letter.

Q5: When will a non-jurisdictional boiler be inspected?

A5: For the purposes of this document we are defining a “non-jurisdictional” object as a boiler(s) within in a municipal building that required an inspection prior to the State of Maine changing their code in 2015. Travelers BoilerRe will inspect a boiler that does not require an inspection by the State of Maine only if or when the Risk Control Consultant is visiting the location for the purpose of a jurisdictional inspection.

Q6: Will I receive a certificate for a non-jurisdictional inspection?

A6: No, Travelers BoilerRe and the State of Maine will not issue a Certificate of Inspection or any documentation if the object does not require an inspection in the State of Maine.

Q7: What should I have ready for the inspection?

A7: The Travelers BoilerRe Risk Control Consultant will outline the necessary requirements for the inspection upon scheduling. Additional information regarding inspection preparation can be found in the attached article, ‘It’s Time for Your Boiler Inspection’.



ACCIDENT INSURANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021



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Maine Municipal Association Risk Management Services is pleased to announce that the Accident Insurance for Volunteers (AIV) coverage continues to be available through The Hartford Life Insurance Company. The program provides coverage limits of \$50,000 for accidental medical expenses at a rate of \$2.00 per volunteer.

If you have any questions with Accident Insurance for Volunteers (AIV) or the Volunteer Firefighter Blanket Accident Program (VFF), please contact Roberta Fogg rfogg@memun.org or 1-800-590-5583, ext 2232

Boiler & Pressure Vessel Inspections Training

This event will provide a 101 training on what you must know with regards to jurisdictional inspections

We are excited to announce the **October 28th, 2020** webinar training which will highlight what you need to know to about the jurisdictional inspections of boiler and pressure vessels. The training will begin at 10 am and is expected to run for approximately one hour. To ensure



public safety, the State of Maine requires periodic inspections of certain boilers and pressure vessels that are located in municipal buildings, schools and governmental facilities. This training is recommended for those who are responsible for the jurisdictional licensing and maintenance of boilers and pressure vessels. MMA Risk Management Services partners with Travelers BoilerRe Risk Control to perform these inspection services as an added service for our members.

This webinar will provide guidance on such topics as: The type of boilers and pressure vessels require an inspection, frequency of Jurisdictional inspections, guidance of the inspection process and your responsibilities.

Travelers Boiler RE Risk Control presenters are:

Steve Sawyer, Travelers Senior Regional Risk Control Consultant, Boiler & Machinery: Steve started out his career as a US Navy Boiler Technician, serving for six years. After returning to civilian life, Steve began a career in the insurance industry. Steve obtained his National Board commission, as well as several other State commissions throughout the Northeast. Steve progressed to a supervisory role as the Northeast Regional Manager where he oversaw a team of Risk Control Consultants for nearly twenty years. Steve has been involved with Maine Municipal Association since the beginning of our partnership.

Nick Andreychak, Travelers BoilerRe Risk Control Account Consultant: Nick has ten years of insurance and jurisdictional inspection experience. Nick started out his career at Travelers as Risk Control Consultant performing jurisdictional inspection, risk evaluations, and claim investigations. Nick enjoyed working with customers and pursued his current role as a Risk Control Account Consultant and now gets to do that daily working directly with Travelers BoilerRe clients, including Maine Municipal Association Nick aggregates and analyzes data to assist with loss control and prevention techniques. Nick utilizes data and results to create training and awareness sessions for clients. In his free time, Nick enjoys spending time with his two sons, playing ice hockey, and is a huge sports fan.

To Enroll: Please Contact MMA Risk Management Services Loss Control Department at: RMSLossControl@memun.org

Or Call Jennette Holt at 1(800)590-5583



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are Specialty Services & Coverage?

Members of the Property & Casualty Pool and Workers' Compensation Fund have access to special programs designed to help them manage risk, protect employees and the public. These program are:

- Tenant User Liability Insurance Program (TULIP)
- Volunteer Firefighter Blanket Accident insurance (VFF)
- Accident Insurance for Volunteers (AIV)

Tenant User Liability Insurance Program (TULIP) provides cost effective General Liability coverage for private outside groups who wish to use municipal properties. The program protects the facility user (tenant) and the municipality by providing access to low cost insurance for the facility user, therefore protecting both against third party claims for injury and or property damage.

Volunteer Firefighter Blanket Accident insurance (VFF) Coverage is underwritten by Hartford Life and is designed to pick up medical, disability and death benefits for fire department activities that fall outside of the Maine Workers' Compensation Act. The cost of coverage is \$34.00 per rostered volunteer firefighter/rescue person per year.

Accident Insurance for Volunteers (AIV) The program provides medical and dental reimbursement, death and dismemberment benefits for individuals injured while performing volunteer duties for participating members. Coverage is underwritten by Hartford Life at a cost of only \$2.00 per volunteer per year.

For more information on these programs please refer to: or call Member Services at 1(800)590-5583

THE INFORMATION ABOVE EXPLAINS THE GENERAL PURPOSE OF THE INSURANCES DESCRIBED, BUT IN NO WAY CHANGES OR AFFECTS ANY SUCH POLICY AS ACTUALLY ISSUED

The Municipal Risk Manager

The Municipal Risk Manager is published seasonally to inform you of developments in municipal risk management which may be of interest to you in your daily business activities. The information in these articles is general in nature and should not be considered advice for any specific risk management or legal question; you should consult with legal counsel or other qualified professional of your own choice.

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Continued from page 15

to cut their budgets, and 31% were already making cuts, according to a May article published by the Aspen Institute.

In the Aroostook County Town of Easton, Hillary Hallett is a one-woman department. Despite the pandemic, she was able to offer about 70% of the programming she normally runs each summer. With the help of a couple of high school students and a part-time temporary assistant, the children had a chance to play sports, try karate, yoga or gymnastics or discover their passion for art.

"It gives them a chance to find a niche," she said. "It gives them a taste of what's out there."

Although the town normally runs on a February to February fiscal year, the town meeting was delayed until July this year. Her department was fully funded and like all six town employees, she continues to pitch in wherever she's needed.

As for the children in the program, they all showed up with masks, ready to play outside of home for a change.

"Kids are amazing," she said. "They are way more resilient than we are as adults."

In Yarmouth, Community Services Director Karyn MacNeill said her budget to support parks did not change much, but she did see cuts to recreation operations. Those cuts came at a time when her staff was required to be in the office and help with programs to make sure people who are home-

bound because of the pandemic able to get things like groceries.

To respond to the changing demands, she hired a contractor to handle trash pick-up at the 14 parks and recreation sites she manages to free up her staff for other tasks. As more and more people flocked to town recreation sites, her staff spent many mornings separating picnic tables and benches that had been moved

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close together, violating COVID safety guidelines.

“There’s been triple the maintenance, triple the trash and triple the use,” said MacNeill, president of the board of directors for the Maine Recreation & Park Association.

As in other towns, Yarmouth hopes to provide child care for students during the school day when they are not in school buildings. MacNeill said hiring enough staff to cover those slots was proving to be a challenge. And because of COVID cleaning requirements, school buildings once used for adult and senior programs will be closed, leading to the cancellation of those programs.

“More partnerships are going to be the way for our communities to go,” she said. “Advocating for grants or scholarships that can be used in a community will be avenues to keep all areas active and involved like we once did.”

In mid-March, Farmington switched all its programming online, offering about three activities a day, seven days a week, on YouTube or Facebook, Foster said. Those pro-

grams included cooking shows, couch to 5k instructions, nature activities and yoga. In addition, they offered a weekly “Mindful Minute” featuring a local clinical psychologist.

Those online activities garnered more than 100,000 views in the first two and half months, he said, with people from “all over our state, country and more than 14 countries” taking advantage of the offerings.

In a July column published in the Sun Journal newspaper, Foster advocated for a statewide effort to create a funding stream that could be used to match federal funds meant to support municipal and state parks and recreation facilities. The Great American Outdoors Act, signed by President Trump on Aug. 4, permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund, setting up the possibility for Maine to receive additional money, according to Foster.

The federal funds, which would need to be matched by state money, could mean more than \$7 million per year to build or rehabilitate outdoor recreation facilities, Foster wrote. He hopes the Legislature will find a

way to come up with a stable source to support the activities and facilities many people relied on during the pandemic.

“I would like to challenge anyone who, in the last six months, has not enjoyed the fresh air of a park, the comfort of seeing recreation staff’s faces through in-person or online programming, the beauty of the flower gardens that adorn your community, or the playgrounds that were advocated for by your local Parks and Recreation Department,” he said. ■

All of the upcoming workshops can be found on the MMA website.

Use the following link:

<http://www.memun.org/TrainingResources/WorkshopsTraining.aspx>

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Investment in broadband is becoming commonplace

Small towns like Alton and Argyle show how rural communities can take advantage of the recently enacted, \$15 million bond issue to expand internet service.

By Tracy Scheckel, OTELCO

Before the COVID 19 pandemic and before the approval of a \$15 million broadband infrastructure bond, in Penobscot County, the towns of Alton and Argyle joined the ranks of Bremen and Roque Bluffs (featured in the April 2020 edition of *Maine Town & City*) as they, too, invested in high speed Internet to every location in their communities.

About a year after the local incumbent provider, OTELCO, employed a ConnectME grant to build Fiber to the Premise (FTTP) to 69 locations in Alton, the town administrator, Ron Borja contacted the provider: “Now that you’ve created a situation of the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’ where high speed Internet access is concerned, my select board wants to talk about how to get FTTP to the other 230 locations in the town.”

“After the initial call, OTELCO staff made a presentation to the select board explaining that they planned to invest \$290,000 to improve speeds on their copper infrastructure, but that to construct FTTP infrastructure with significantly higher speeds, the price tag was \$750,000”, explained Borja, “In order to build out the entire town, we needed to find a way to come up with the difference of \$440,000.”

Alton had access to \$150,000 from a discretionary fund but it required voter approval at the annual town meeting. With 60 people attending the meeting, the voters approved the

Tracy Scheckel is marketing and public relations manager for Otelco in seven U.S. states, including Maine. Since joining the company, she has managed its 2018 rebrand effort and plays a lead role in infrastructure grant writing and community broadband initiatives company-wide. You can reach her at: tracy.scheckel@otelco.com or 207-688-8219.



Survey signs (Submitted photo)

allocation by a vote of 58-2, but that left a funding gap at \$260,000. A successful \$260,000 grant application to the ConnectMAINE Authority filled that gap and the project was completed in early 2020. As of mid-July, 172 of the 260 locations were subscribed to the FTTP service.

Argyle is adjacent to Alton to the north and is an unorganized territory (UT) in Penobscot County. Laura Sanborn is the county commissioner serving the UTs and happens to live in Alton.

“As an Alton resident, I was very much in support of the Alton project,” she said, “but as a commissioner, I was also thinking about my constituents next door. I asked our then executive, Barbara Veilleux, to contact OTELCO, which also serves Argyle, to

see about a similar project there.”

OTELCO presented that it had a capital budget to improve its copper infrastructure but not enough for FTTP to the 134 locations in Argyle. The FTTP build was estimated to cost \$325,000 and OTELCO had half that budgeted for the copper upgrade, leaving a funding gap of \$162,500.

Penobscot County has a TIF for community and economic development in the UTs and the commissioners ultimately approved an appropriation of \$81,250, contingent upon a successful ConnectME grant application for the remaining \$81,250. In the spring of this year, OTELCO was granted the funds from ConnectME.

Applications for pole attachments and other make-ready began in the summer, and shovel-in-ground con-

struction is scheduled to begin in mid to late fall.

Funding picture brightens

It's important to note that in the spring 2020 grant round there were grant requests for more than \$4 million and approximately \$400,000 in available funds to award. Most projects did not receive funding this spring, but that is about to change.

This past spring, the Maine Legislature, among other pandemic related issues, considered and passed a \$15 million broadband infrastructure bond to be administered by the ConnectME Authority. The bond issue question was put to the voters in the July 14 primary and passed with more than 76% of the vote.

According to its 2019-21 strategic plan, the ConnectME Authority estimates that 17,660 miles of Maine roadways lack adequate Internet speeds. The cost for the infrastructure on the poles alone is estimated at more than a \$500 million, when the cost to get the service from the street to the home at between \$600 and \$1,500 / location is factored in. Thus, \$15 million is a fraction of the total cost for universal high-speed Internet in Maine.

Peggy Schaffer, executive director of the ConnectME Authority, explained that ConnectME uses a com-

petitive application process to award grant funds. The key components for a successful grant include:

- What percentage of the project cost is the applicant asking ConnectMAINE to fund? How much of the project cost is coming from other sources – also known as “match.” This includes match from the Internet service provider, the community, loans, private funds, federal funds or other sources of cash.
- How many locations the grant will connect, and the cost per connection the grant is requesting.
- How actively engaged the community is in the project, and how much demonstrated community support there is to do the build-out.
- What Internet speeds will be provided, and what is the cost to the consumer for that service?
- An identified plan for adoption/digital inclusion.

Locations eligible to be served by the grant must meet unserved criteria and applicants must talk to the incumbent provider (if there is one) to make sure there are no plans to expand service in that area in the near future.

As you can see, the ConnectME Authority will be working to stretch those funds as far as possible by re-

quiring collaborative funding models like Alton, Argyle, Bremen and Roque Bluffs.

Schaffer said, “It’s important that municipalities and other local government entities plan and prepare to be part of Maine’s statewide connectivity solution.”

As evidenced by the difference in approaches of Bremen and Roque Bluff to those of Alton and Argyle, there is no cookie-cutter solution to expanding broadband in a community. Here are some key elements that your community should incorporate into your broadband endeavors:

Community outreach

Survey your constituents to assess your community broadband needs. How do they use the Internet? Is Internet access adequate for their needs? If not, how is it deficient? If Internet infrastructure were improved, what, if any, personal, economic, and community benefits do they anticipate? Would residents support the use of public funds to help facilitate better Internet service? Would they be

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willing to serve on a broadband committee to help the project?

Based on community input, develop community goals and vision regarding Internet connectivity. Determine how many locations need better service and how many road miles that entails.

Establish a broadband committee to keep constituents informed about activities associated with a broadband initiative, to gather opinions from your constituency, and for garnering support for the project plan.

This the most important element of any broadband project. No matter what your broadband goal and vision turns out to be, you'll need your constituency behind you.

Assess existing resources

Contact your local provider to share your vision and learn about plans the provider might have. Is there existing infrastructure providing adequate service to parts of your community? Does the provider have plans to improve service? If the provider's plans are not in line with your vision, is there a way to work together to see your vision realized?

MMA Personnel Services and On-site Consulting Services

MMA Personnel Services offers a wide range of specialized on-site consulting services for our municipal and associate members. Personnel management and labor relations expertise is available for direct assistance or general inquiries through a toll-free telephone line. Direct on-site assistance is available in the following areas:

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For more information visit the MMA website: www.memun.org

Assess potential municipal funding sources

Based on your survey of the community, you'll have a sense of whether there is support for investment of public funds. Do you have a TIF fund available, or another fund that doesn't impact the tax levy? Can a CDBG help? Is bonding a possibility?

Identify potential partners or collaborations

This is where it can get tricky. In the cases of Alton, Argyle, and Bremen, the local providers, OTELECO and Tidewater Telecom, respectively, worked with the towns to meet their broadband needs by establishing three-way funding models between



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the towns, ConnectME Authority and themselves.

In Roque Bluffs, the town provided some funds and received a USDA ReConnect grant along with funding from the ConnectME Authority for its network which will be built and operated by Axiom Technologies but owned by the town. The Roque Bluffs model is one of many possible options when working with your local provider is not an option.

In summary, it boils down to you deciding what you need and want for your community; sharing that infor-

mation with your existing provider to see if there's a simple solution; determining what if anything your community can contribute financially to a project, and working toward creative solutions where financial collaborations are concerned.

Schaffer added, "The ConnectME Authority is an incredible resource and can provide you with a playbook to guide you through every phase of a broadband initiative. With \$15 million on the table, and likely more to come, there's no time like the present. Do not wait."

ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

This article is a collaborative effort between Otelco and the ConnectME Authority, written to let municipal leaders know how to take advantage of the recently passed bond issue boosting Internet service in rural Maine. This is considered a key economic-development investment, especially during the COVID public health emergency, when more people are working from home and more students are studying there.

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THE MAINE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION is steadily building its general-interest video training library. We now offer 23 videos, from topics that range from tips for newly elected officials to moderating town meetings.

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- Navigating Stress & Change, an insightful webinar to help professionals during uncertain times. (*Password required*)

To watch any of these videos, go to <https://memun.org/Training-Resources>

Some of the videos require Member Area passwords. If you need a password to access the Member Area of MMA's website, please call the Resource Center at: 1-800-452-8786



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Caribou's 'labor of love' includes telling stories, lots of them

This Aroostook County city holds a special place in Maine history. A well-planned story telling event – showcasing the Micmac Band, authors and historians – is scheduled for 2021.

By Janine Pineo

“We’ve been talking about doing a ‘Story of Caribou’ for quite some time,” said Christina Kane-Gibson, events and marketing director for the City of Caribou.

So begins the story of how Caribou geared up to put on its first storytelling festival, only to have a pandemic bring everything to a screeching halt.

Like any good story, there’s a back story as well as a vision for the future. Sandwiched between those two is the here and now, where the community organizers wait to begin their timeline to create a unique event that honors the state’s bicentennial and the part that Caribou has played in Maine’s history and culture.

One might think it all began with the Maine Bicentennial Commission awarding the city \$7,500 for the festival during its first round of grants last September, but we need to rewind back to where the seed germinated and took root a couple of years ago, according to Kane-Gibson. That’s when they first “tested the waters” to see if there might be interest in launching a storytelling event by holding a small affair at the library with a few speakers during Caribou Days in August 2018.

A handful of people told their stories, Kane-Gibson said, including a woman who was a child during World War II and found a way to help soldiers’ families across the country from her Caribou home.

According to an Aug. 6, 2018 article about the event posted on The



Caribou's caribou statue stands eight feet tall in the city's downtown. (Submitted photo)

County news website, Caribou resident Theresa Madigan listened to shortwave radio broadcasts that listed the names of prisoners of war. She would record the names and then mail letters to the families to let them know their sons were alive in POW camps. Hundreds of families received letters from Madigan, who was but nine years old at the time, according to the news story.

After the 2018 event, organizers came to a conclusion about the test run: “We can do this on a much grander scale,” Kane-Gibson said.

And that’s how “The Story of Caribou” began.

‘A much grander scale’

The idea presented to the Bicentennial Commission last year was an event

to combine storytelling with the state’s bicentennial and focus more on history, Kane-Gibson said.

“Join us for a nostalgic look into the history of Caribou, and a glimpse into the future of our own remarkable city!” reads the introduction from Caribou’s 10 pages of documentation submitted with their grant application. “This unique event will engage all generations while bringing us together to celebrate our community.”

The original plan was to hold the festival in mid-August 2020.

“The city will set the stage in Lyndon Square, just steps away from the Caribou Public Library, and anchored in our picturesque downtown,” the introduction continues. “The event will feature professional authors, citizen

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



Caribou city banner. (Submitted photo)

sharers, cultural experts and multimedia presentations.”

Lyndon Square, by the way, harkens to the history of Caribou and the Town of Lyndon, which is what Caribou was originally known as when it was first incorporated as a town in April 1859.

Funny thing about that name, according to Encyclopedia Britannica. On Feb. 26, 1869, the name was changed to Caribou. Then, days later, the name changed back to Lyndon on March 9. “On February 8, 1877, Caribou was finally confirmed as the town’s permanent name. Two enduring mysteries are the reason for the original name of Lyndon, and the reasons for the town’s name being subsequently changed back and forth between Lyndon and Caribou,” according to the encyclopedia entry.

Less in dispute is the fact that caribou once roamed the region, hence the name of Caribou. The square also is home to the city’s life-size bronze namesake statue that stands eight feet tall. The caribou statue has been there since 2005, placed during the multiyear revitalization of the city’s downtown.

Nuts and bolts

Caribou’s expansive grant document covers everything from brief biographies of the organizers to a map of the proposed grounds to sponsorship opportunities and a budget with fundraising goals. There’s a timeline that sets goals for each month and then each week as the festival date approaches.

That date is now for mid-August

2021. “We decided to move it to the same date next year,” Kane-Gibson said.

It will coincide with the Aroostook Band of Micmacs’ Mawiomi of Tribes, an event held annually on the third weekend in August. “The word ‘Mawiomi’ is derived from the Mikmaq language meaning ‘gathering,’” according to their website. “The event is intended to showcase beauty, strength, spirit and endurance of the Micmac peoples’ culture and tradition.”

Kane-Gibson called the pow-wow “eye-opening.”

“The Mawiomi is really just a healing event,” she said. “They have people come from all over.”

The rich local culture will be the focus of the second day of the festival, bringing together speakers from not only the Micmacs but also from Acadian, Lebanese and Amish communities. The first day of the festival will be about history, that of the city itself and the former Loring Air Force Base. It also will focus on the region’s agriculture, a driving factor that drew immigrants to the crown of Maine during the 1800s and spawned Caribou’s growth during that time.

“The small town grew throughout the late 19th Century, and with the coming of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad in the 1890s, agricultural exports exploded,” according to Encyclopedia Britannica. “This began a boom period which lasted well into the 1960s. Caribou became the largest potato shipping hub in the world and had many related industries.”

On the festival schedule will be storytelling through dance and theater performances, Kane-Gibson said. There are plans to offer tours of historic homes as well as tours of cemeteries and an art walk.

At the library, a number of children’s activities are on the docket, including Mother Goose stories and a visit with Maine author and illustrator Mary Beth Owens who wrote “The Caribou Alphabet,” a children’s storybook.

Kane-Gibson hopes to invite Maine publishers to the festival and have them promote local authors. “That part of it we want to flesh out,” she said.

There are plans to livestream the festival and the Mawiomi, she said, along with recording some folks’ stories for presentation, too, which then would be archived.

The lure of lore

“Everyone has a story that is not only interesting, but also important for family and community history,” said Kathryn Olmstead, a former University of Maine journalism professor and associate dean and one of the organizers for the festival. “Seeing friends, neighbors and family members – ordinary people – telling their stories inspires and gives others the confidence to do so.”

Olmstead was also co-founder and former editor of Echoes magazine, which published its final edition in 2017. The magazine was a Maine staple for nearly 30 years, telling the stories of Aroostook County. It chronicled the rural lifestyle, weaving together its history, its residents and its attraction that keeps drawing people there. In fact, the festival was also to be the launch of “Stories of Aroostook: The Best of Echoes Magazine,” an anthology being released this month and edited by Olmstead.

An Echoes panel is on the Saturday festival schedule for next year, titled “Caribou Talks,” and similar in format to the TED Talks series.

“People who are modest about the significance of their stories often have the most valuable experiences to share,” Olmstead said. “Storytelling validates experience, preserves history, creates a sense of place, and strengthens personal, family and cultural identity.”

When asked what stories of life in Caribou are waiting to be told, Olmstead had this to say: “I have a long list. At the top is a series of features on the number of young professionals who grew up in

Caribou who are returning to pursue their careers here, especially those in medicine. Second is the vast community of organic farmers (throughout the county), again many young people, who are revitalizing agriculture in Aroostook County. Third, a yet-to-be-compiled history of Loring Air Force Base that would make a fascinating story of the Cold War in Aroostook (1950s to 1990s). Fourth, how to encourage economic development without destroying the pristine natural resources of northern Maine.”

Kane-Gibson is a perfect example of a professional returning to pursue a career in Caribou. She spent 20 years in Boston but could never capture the feeling she had living in Caribou.

“I never got Caribou out of my mind,” she said. “We have that strong sense of community that you just can’t manufacture.”

Looking ahead

Everything has been “on the back burner” since last March, which means much on the organizers’ timeline has yet to take place.

The festival budget is projected to be \$30,000, with the city matching the \$7,500 grant from the bicentennial commission. Other funds will come from corporate sponsorships with various perks. The lowest recognized donation is that of “Storyteller” with its \$100 level.

There are volunteers to be recruited, advertising to be designed, and all the little details from setting up chairs to knocking down stages to cleaning up the downtown prior to the festival.

Kane-Gibson remains enthusiastic, despite the yearlong delay.

“It’s really kind of a labor of love,” she said. ■

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 updates.

Eric Conrad, Editor

The Story of Caribou

“Stories bring us together...”



PEOPLE



Danielle Brissette

Danielle Brissette is the new Caribou city clerk, replacing **Jayne Farrin**, who retired after a long municipal career that started in 1982 as Exeter town manager. Brissette, a Caribou native, was named assistant city clerk in February 2019. She has worked as both assistant and deputy town clerk under Farrin. She previously worked as an office manager and wanted a career change.

Mary Ann Brenchick is the new Lewiston public works director, taking the reins from Deputy City Administrator Dale Doughty. Brenchick is returning to Maine after working in Virginia for six years as executive director of Clean Valley Council in Roanoke, which promotes environmental stewardship and education. Brenchick is a former public works director for the towns of Old Orchard Beach and Kittery, as well as a Portland traffic engineer before taking the Virginia job. Brenchick will direct a 98-person department with eight divisions.



Christopher Backman

Christopher Backman was hired as Orrington town manager last month with a request by select board members to “keep us out of the media spotlight.” Backman praised the board for hiring interim manager **Joseph Hayes** for a year after three managers resigned or were fired within the previous 10 months. The third of the former managers was fired in May 2019 on a 3-2 vote after two months. The year-long break served as a cooling-down period. Backman, who lives in Lamoine, is familiar with many Maine municipal officials, having served as an auditor for local and county governments for years as an accountant with RHR Smith. Orrington is his first foray into town management.



David Barrows

David Barrows, a sitting Lincolnville select board member, died on Sept. 13 as the result of an accident on his farm. He was 64. Barrows was well-known and admired both as a selectman and farmer. He served from 2011 through 2014 and was re-elected in 2019 for another three-year term.

Former Wells Town Clerk **Jessica Keyes** retired at the end of June, ending a 42-year municipal career. Keyes is being replaced by her sister, **Brenda Layman**.



Jessica Keyes



Brenda Layman

In a true municipal family affair, Keyes worked as deputy to her mother, **Marion Noble**, for 21 years, from 1978 to 1999. When Noble retired, Keyes was elected town clerk, a job she held for another 21 years. Layman, meanwhile, has been working with her sister as deputy clerk, and won election without challengers in July for a three-year term to replace her sister. Keyes' primary goal was to follow her mother's policy of trying to satisfy residents and send them off happy with their experience at the town office. Layman, who said she does not intend to serve for 21 years, will focus first on getting ready for the presidential election on Nov. 3.

Winslow councilors hired Maine native **Erica LaCroix** from a pool of 30 candidates to replace Town Manager **Michael Heavener**, who retired on June 30. **Paul Fongemie**, interim manager and the town's public works director, said LaCroix's skills and experience will serve her well when she begins her new job on Oct. 15. She has a combined 23 years of experience with state and local govern-

ment. She will be the town's first female manager. LaCroix earned a Bachelor's degree in animal science from Michigan State University and a Master's in public administration from Norwich University. Her career achievements include serving as chief administrator for the Chesterville, Va., Sheriff's Office and as budget and grant manager for the Virginia state Transportation Department. Heavener plans to work with LaCroix during the transition once she starts this month.

Gardiner Fire Chief **Alfred Nelson Jr.** ended his municipal career when he retired last month after six years as chief and emergency management director. Nelson said the decision was bittersweet, but was the right choice for him and his family. He plans to work two days a week as a per-diem registered nurse. Nelson, a Pittston native and Gardiner resident, retired from the Augusta Fire Department in 2009 as a battalion chief. Before taking the Gardiner job in September 2014, Nelson worked as an emergency department nurse at Togus, the nation's first hospital for veterans built and owned by the government. During his tenure as chief, his “amazing crew” battled three major fires, including the July 2015 downtown blaze that destroyed one building and damaged three others.

The Mechanic Falls Town Council chose **Raymond Lavoie** to fill the seat vacated by **Nick Konstantoulakis**, who resigned in the spring. Lavoie, a business owner and construction engineer for the Maine Department of Transportation, is a former patrolman and firefighter for the town. Lavoie also has served on the town's school and recreation committees. He will serve until Konstantoulakis' term expires next year.



Sheri Truman

In a special election in September, **Sheri Truman** was elected to a three-year term on the Chelsea Select Board. She replaces **Ben Smith**, who served on the board for nine years. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the town to use only write-in votes, since the pandemic did not allow candidates to collect signatures.

STATEWIDE

With only weeks to go before the Nov. 3 election, city and town officials across Maine are finding ways to keep residents safe who come in person to cast their votes. Many communities have moved polling places to schools, which provide more space than most municipal polling places. In Bath, for example, officials are preparing a basement conference room for early absentee in-person voting. Meanwhile, Gov. Janet Mills last month issued an executive order meant to help local governments keep their voters safe from exposure to the COVID-19 virus. The order included allowing municipal officials to start processing absentee ballots up to seven days before the general election and permitting municipalities to share election clerks from other counties if they run short.

ALBION/BENTON

The Albion and Fairfield-Benton fire departments were awarded just under \$500,000 in federal grants in August – in one case, waiting nine years for approval. The grants are targeted to small, rural crews for fire protection and other gear. The program was created in 2001 after the 9/11 terror attacks, which killed 412 first responders, including 343 firefighters. Albion is a Kennebec County town with 2,000 residents. The town will receive \$343,000 under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) program to buy a large crucial hose and a used tanker truck. Fire Chief Andrew Clark leads 40 firefighters and said he kept tweaking the grant application for nine years before it finally was approved. Meanwhile, the Fairfield and Benton Fire-Rescue Department, with six full-time firefighters/EMTS and 20 others, will receive \$125,000 to buy 20 self-contained breathing machines that are used while actively fighting a fire. Benton and Albion in Kennebec County and Fairfield in Somerset County are contiguous.

AROOSTOOK COUNTY

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has accomplished one thing worthwhile: There were more people in August who wanted to move to Aroostook County than the number of homes available to buy. Statewide in August, home sale prices increased 17% as demand exceeded

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.

COVID funds for schools. The Mills Administration dedicated \$164 million in additional funds to support schools that reopened and need to implement health and safety protocols. This is the second phase of COVID-related school funding.

Small business help. Local leaders, especially in smaller towns, are asking what they can do to help small businesses stay afloat during the public health emergency. One answer is for businesses to apply for Maine Economic Recovery Grants. Phase 2 of this program made \$95 million available statewide.

Big infrastructure, local needs. A group calling itself the New Partnership on Infrastructure produced a 41-page "playbook" that emphasizes the importance of local job creation and innovation in prioritizing federal infrastructure projects, including those involving U.S. highways, bridges, airports and sea ports.

supply. Ditto for other rural Maine counties such as Washington and Piscataquis. Many of the new citizens are from outside Maine, and not just people moving from expensive Greater Portland to more affordable rural towns. The pandemic has made business executives more aware of how effective working from home can be. Other states report similar phenomena. Good prices, remote working, low property taxes and wide open spaces are among the attributes people like now as they look for more suburban or rural settings. One Houlton area Realtor said the spring/summer selling season is the best he has seen in Aroostook County in 20 years.

BOOTHBAY HARBOR

The coastal town, a premier tourist destination, is the 11th Maine municipality to create a Museum in the Streets to celebrate local history, heritage and prominent landmarks. The worldwide program includes "heritage discovery trails" and wooden panels showing and describing a particular spot or special location. Each walk features 10 to 30 panels, as well as two larger introductory panels complete with the town's logo and municipal seal, and historical photos showing the communities' past. The panels include bilingual stories explaining the site. Maps of the heritage trail are available at the community's museum or a shop. In addition to Boothbay Harbor, the Maine municipalities that have created a Museum in the Streets include: Augusta, Bar Harbor, Belfast, Biddeford,

Hallowell, Kennebunk, Searsport, Thomaston, Waterville and Wiscasset.

HOULTON

The town has received \$4.4 million in federal grants through both the CARES Act and the federal transportation department. The money will finance reconstruction of an existing taxiway that essentially calls for replacement of the asphalt. Vegetation also will be removed that obstructs the airway. Work was expected to start this month.

SEARSPORT

In what started as a way to show support to the Bayview Manor residents and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic by honking as they passed by has turned into a steady parade of vehicles honking – sometimes at a rate of 144 honks an hour. Residents of the facility, who cannot have inside visitors, often wave back to their supporters. Four months into the worldwide pandemic and with no end in sight, the town erected electric signs asking drivers to wave rather than honk. The signs angered some drivers and led to disparaging comments on Facebook and accusations that neighbors were "buzz-kills," meaning to ruin the pleasure of others. The town removed the electric signs. One businessman said his clients often ask, "What ... is going on next door? We just sit here hoping that it rains," he told the Bangor Daily News. Neighbors have pleaded with drivers to wave or give residents a thumbs-up as they pass; even to become pen pals with them.

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. All of the training programs listed below will be held online via Zoom. Please view our website (www.memun.org) for updates and details. Thank you.

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, running through Oct. 15. The convention will touch on many "high level" topics, such as inter-municipal collaboration, COVID-19, and understanding racial and ethnic differences. Members can register for individual Zoom sessions for as little as \$20.

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.

OCT. 22 Municipal Law for Tax Collectors (via Zoom)

The Maine Municipal Tax Collectors' and Treasurers' Association will hold a webinar from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Oct. 22, providing a basic overview of legal issues to be considered by professionals in these positions. The workshop will be led by attorneys from MMA's Legal Services Department.

The course is required for tax collectors who seek MMTCTA certification. It uses information from MMA's Tax Collectors & Treasurers Manual and Municipal Liens manual. It is recommended that attendees have access to these publications. Cost to tune in is \$30 for MMTCTA members and \$60 for non-members.

OCT. 29 Legal Update on Recreational Marijuana (via Zoom)

Remember this issue? It remains relatively new, and one of the highest regulatory priorities for many Maine municipalities. MMA Legal Services Attorney Rebecca McMahon and David Heidrich, Director of Engagement and Community Outreach with the state's Office of Marijuana Policy, will co-present a two-hour webinar on Oct. 29 designed to help local leaders make informed decisions about retail, medical and social marijuana practices.

The webinar will go from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The cost is \$35 for MMA members and \$70 for non-members. An important note: This workshop does not provide criminal investigatory or arrest advice for police officers.

NOV. 5 Managing Freedom of Access Requests (via Zoom)

This 2.5-hour webinar, aimed at municipal staff members who handle FOIA requests and municipal leaders who want to learn more about them, will be led by two attorneys from MMA's Legal Services Department, Nathan Poore, manager in

the Town of Falmouth, and Eric Conrad, Director of Communication & Educational Services at MMA.

The webinar will focus on the FOIA law itself, how to handle requests and open meeting requirements. Attendance does meet the state's requirements for FOIA training. The workshop will not explore laws about criminal investigations and police records. It will run from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Cost is \$35 for MMA members and \$70 for non-members.

NOV. 16 Spurring Civic Engagement (via Zoom)

Christopher T. Gates, a nationally renowned expert on encouraging public dialogue and participation in government, will lead a three-hour webinar on the topic from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Nov. 16. Gates has presented for MMA in the past; attendee evaluations have been excellent.

The workshop will explore what motivates citizens to get involved at the local level, how citizen participation can be encouraged and how to channel public energy into productive results. Cost for the session is \$65 for MMA members and \$130 for non-members.

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LEGAL NOTES

Elections & the 250-Foot Rule

(Reprinted from the February 2010 *Maine Townsman* Legal Notes)

Question: We've heard about a "250-foot rule" in reference to political campaigning on Election Day. What's this about?

Answer: On Election Day, a person is prohibited from influencing or attempting to influence another person's vote within the voting place and on public property within 250 feet of the entrance to the voting place (see 21-A M.R.S. § 682). ("Voting place" means the building in which voting is taking place, see 21-A M.R.S. § 1(49).) This means candidates may attend the voting place and may orally communicate with voters (i.e., "meet and greet" them), but may not attempt to influence their vote or state the name of the office sought or request their vote.

The ban does not apply to poll watchers, who may remain at the voting place outside the guardrail as long as they do not attempt to influence voters or interfere with their free passage. Nor does it prevent media representatives from conducting exit polls as long as they do not solicit voters until after they have voted and do not orally communicate with voters in a way that influences their vote. But party workers and others who remain at the voting place outside the guardrail may not use cell phones, pagers, or similar devices to audibly communicate in a way that may influence voters.

The law also prohibits the display of advertising materials such as signs or posters, the operation of advertising media such as audio or video devices, and the distribution of campaign materials such as literature or buttons on public property within 250 feet of the entrance to either the voting place or the building in which the voter registrar's office is located. ("Public property" does not include public easements or rights-of-way over private property.) The ban does not apply, however, to advertising on motor vehicles traveling to and from the voting place for the purpose of voting or to persons who are wearing a campaign button and who are at the polls solely for the purpose of voting as long as the longest dimension of the button does not exceed three inches.

A violation of § 682 is a Class E crime. Suspected violators should be promptly warned by election officials, and if a viola-

MUNICIPAL CALENDAR

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.

BY NOVEMBER 1 — Or 30 days after the date of commitment, whichever is later, the municipal assessors and assessors of primary assessing areas shall make return to the State Tax Assessor all information as to the assessment of property and collection of taxes. The forms of such return shall be supplied by the State Tax Assessor (36 MRSA §383)

NOTE: Failure to file this return in a timely manner could result in loss of tree growth reimbursement (36 MRSA §578).

BEFORE NOVEMBER 1 — Provide certification to the Maine Department of Transportation that Local Road Assistance Program (LRAP) funds will be used consistent with the requirements of the law (23 MRSA §1804).

PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 3 — Election Day. Registrars of voters shall accept registration prior to the November 3 election according to the time schedule of their population group (21-A §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 officer according to the needs of the municipality (21-A MRSA §122[8]).

NOVEMBER 11 — Veteran's Day Observed. A legal holiday (4 MRSA §1051).

ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 15 — Monthly/Quarterly 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].

NOVEMBER 26 — Thanksgiving Day, a legal holiday (4 MRSA §1051; 20-A §4802)

tion continues, law enforcement officials should be contacted immediately. If a person attempts to influence voters or interfere with their free passage, the warden (or in a local election, the moderator) must have that person removed from the voting place. Again, if necessary, law enforcement officials should be contacted immediately.

A similar 250-foot rule against political advertising applies during the 45 days prior to an election during the hours when the clerk's office is open and may be conducting absentee voting (see 21-A M.R.S. § 753-B(8)).

For a sample guide to candidates on all of this, see MMA's *Town Meeting & Elections Manual*, available free to members at www.memun.org. (By R.P.F.)

Maine Voting Residence 'Fact Sheet' Now Online

While searching for something else entirely the other day, we came across a very helpful Maine Voting Residence "Fact Sheet" on the Maine Secretary of State's website.

This posting explains in clear and concise detail what qualifies as a legal "residence" for voting purposes in Maine. It notes that Maine law's definition of voting "residence" (see 21-A M.R.S. § 112(1)) consists of two elements: (1) the establishment of a fixed and principal home in a given place, and (2) the intent to return there whenever temporarily absent. To underscore this point, it states, "Under this definition, residence is something that

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you *establish*, not something you *choose* (emphasis in original)."

The posting then lists a variety of factors a registrar of voters may consider in order to determine a voter's residence, such as the location of their occupied dwelling, the place where their motor vehicle is registered, the residential address where their mail is received, and so on.

The Fact Sheet also points out the consequences, for other purposes, of registering to vote in Maine. For example, if the voter owns and operates a motor vehicle in Maine, they must register it here and obtain a Maine driver's license within 30 days of establishing residency. Additionally, they may be treated as a Maine resident for state income tax purposes.

Finally, the Fact Sheet elaborates on the voting residency requirements for students, military personnel, incarcerated persons, and overseas voters.

We found this Fact Sheet to be very user-friendly, both in format and in content. We suspect local public officials as well as private citizens will, too. It's available here: <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/data/resident.html>

Incidentally, in addition to establishing a voting residence in Maine, to be eligible to register to vote here a person must be a citizen of the United States and at least 18 years of age (or at least 17 to vote in a primary election if they will be at least 18 by the general election). (By R.P.F.)

New Law on Initiating Local Liquor Option Referendums

Emergency legislation enacted last spring now creates an alternative to the voter petition process for initiating local liquor option votes (see PL 2019, c. 672, eff. March 18, 2020).

Formerly, and for as far back as we can recall, the local liquor option law required that a vote to authorize the State to issue licenses for one or more types of local liquor establishments must be initiated by a petition. The petition had to be signed by a number of voters equal to at least 15% of the number of votes cast in the municipality in the last gubernatorial election (see former 28-A M.R.S. § 121(1)). The municipal officers (selectmen or councilors) could not, by themselves, initiate a local liquor option vote – only a voter petition could do so.

Recently, however, the state licensing bureau (Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages and Lottery Operations) discovered it did not have accurate historical records of which municipalities had voted to authorize what types of local liquor establishments. This created a serious problem, especially for current license holders, because the bureau cannot legally issue or renew a license unless it has a reliable record that that municipality has in fact authorized that particular type of establishment. Thus, the emergency legislation.

The new law now authorizes a local liquor option vote to be initiated by the municipal officers themselves, without a voter petition (see 28-A M.R.S. § 121(1-A)). In the alternative, a voter petition may also do so, but the number of signatures required has been reduced to 5% of the number of votes cast in the last gubernatorial election or 30, whichever is less (see current 28-A M.R.S. § 121(1)). The intent of these amendments is presumably to make it easier to call a local liquor option election where there is doubt about whether a particular type of establishment was ever properly authorized. (Note, though, that a local liquor option vote is still required to be conducted by secret ballot referendum election – the same type as a statewide election – even if the municipality has not voted to adopt the secret ballot method of voting, see 28-A M.R.S. § 121(3).)

In the meantime, the new law also temporarily authorizes the state bureau to issue and renew liquor licenses in those municipalities in which a licensed establishment was operating between March 1, 2017 and March 1, 2020 even if the bureau does not have a record of a local option vote authorizing licenses for that type of establishment. This authority "sunset" on July 1, 2022, when the bureau is required to have finalized its records of which municipalities have authorized what types of establishments. By December 31, 2020, the bureau must notify each municipality of what the bureau's records show as being authorized types of establishments in that municipality. A municipality may conduct a local liquor option election at any time before or after July 1, 2022, either to correct or update the bureau's records or to authorize a new type or types of establishments.

For full details on local liquor option elections, including authorized ballot questions (which must be printed exactly as prescribed by law), see MMA's "Information Packet" on the subject, available free to members at www.memun.org. (By R.P.F.)

Executive Sessions & Code Enforcement

Question: Can our board go into executive session to consult with our CEO about code enforcement matters?

Answer: Yes, but only under the following limited circumstances. First, the CEO must be certified by the state as sufficiently familiar with court procedures to represent the municipality in District Court in lieu of an attorney. Second, the CEO must be authorized by the municipal officers (selectmen or councilors) to do so. And third, the enforcement matter must be pending (i.e. the case must actually have been filed) in District Court.

In short, this particular executive session privilege is very narrow – it does not permit pre-prosecution consultations with a CEO or consultations with a CEO who is not state-certified and authorized by the municipal officers to represent the municipality in District Court in lieu of an attorney. If and when the privilege applies, 1 M.R.S. § 405(6)(H) is the statute that should be cited in the required motion to go into executive session.

For more on executive sessions and the eight specific subjects that may be discussed in executive session, see our "Information Packet" on Maine's "Right to Know" law, available free to members at www.memun.org. (By R.P.F.) ■

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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.



When you need a **finance team**
that feels like part of
your community.



Nelson Toner



Lindsay Leone



Lee Bragg



Shana Cook Mueller



Zack Brandwein



Chris Devlin



Ginny Dufour
Paralegal



Janet Davis
Legal Assistant

Meet the Municipal Finance Team. With many decades of experience, we specialize in public finance, tax-exempt bonds and various other financing options for public entities. We find ways to provide our services in the most cost-effective manner to save our clients legal costs over the long term.