

Maine Town & City

The magazine of the Maine Municipal Association

April 2020

Small Towns That Think Broadband

Roque Bluffs, Bremen take
future into their own hands



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Meetings and Coronavirus
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Won't Back Down



Municipal leaders conduct business, show leadership, during coronavirus emergency. Turn here for advice on meetings.

Broadband in Roque Bluffs

*Tired of unsatisfactory internet service, this Washington County town won a major USDA grant to upgrade. Here's how they did it. **Page 13***

Broadband in Bremen, too

*The approach is different, but the Town of Bremen – like Roque Bluffs – is moving forward to improve internet service. **Page 23***

Bicentennial Series: Tall Ships

*Plans are being made for an extravaganza of tall ship visits in the lower Penobscot River basin. Organizers hope the show can go on. **Page 27***

MMA goes to DC: *President Christine Landes writes about local advocacy during a trip to the nation's capital. **Page 5***

Lyme disease *is still out there, and remains a hazard for many municipal employees. **Page 9***

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ABOUT THE COVER: *Freelance writer Susan Cover took this photo during her research trip to Roque Bluffs.*

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A MESSAGE FROM MMA

BY CHRISTINE LANDES / PRESIDENT

Opportunity in Washington, as your local delegates

The Maine Municipal Association details in its Mission Statement that professional services will be provided to local governments throughout Maine and to advocate for their common interests at the state and national level. This past March 8-11 we had an opportunity to do this at the national level, when several of us from Maine attended the National League of Cities Conference in Washington, D.C., and – more importantly – met with the Congressional delegation representing Maine.

The 2020 Federal Issues Paper that was prepared by MMA's State & Federal Relations staff served as an agenda for our individual meetings with U.S. Senator Susan Collins, Senator Angus King, Representative Chellie Pingree and Representative Jared Golden. Seventeen individuals that included representation from Auburn, Augusta, Bangor, Brewer, Ellsworth, and Portland, along with myself and MMA Executive Director Steve Gove, met with each of the senators and representatives, and had an opportunity to thank the delegation for the work that they have done and continue to do in representing Maine municipalities and people.

Mayor Jason Levesque, from Auburn, spoke of Auburn and Lewiston receiving a \$376,500 U.S. Department of Justice COP Grant to fund a school violence program. This grant allowed the cities to purchase 130 portable radios that are now compatible with their 911 Communications Center. This new system provides the communication tools necessary to work in old buildings, providing relevant officials constant contact in the event of a school-related event. What a great benefit for those cities!

Councilor Dan Tremble, from Bangor, detailed how, since 2016, the Bangor International Airport increased departures by 40% and added capacity by over 32%. This increase was due to major investments in airport infrastructure safety. As Maine's Congressional delegation supports increases to the Airport Improvement Program, the City of Bangor and other municipalities with airports will continue to develop important transportation infrastructure. Councilor Tremble did ask the delegation to give consider an increase of the Passenger Facility Charge, currently capped at \$4.50. This increased fee,

last adjusted in 2000, would give airports the option to use the increased revenue to fund projects for aging facilities, security needs and rising passenger demands. We want Maine's transportation infrastructure to continue to grow!

Portland's Mayor, Kate Snyder, explained how the City of Portland worked through the asylum seekers situation by activating an emergency operations center and providing shelter at the Portland Expo. The delegation was asked to support a program to allow asylum seekers the opportunity to seek work sooner than the six-month period waiting period required after filing asylum applications. These individuals have up to one year to file their applications, and in that time, they are eligible to receive General Assistance for up to 18 months. Providing education programs to these individuals, speeding up the application process, along with possible housing opportunities would help immigration reforms become more streamlined. As this state is dealing with stagnant population numbers and an aging workforce, wouldn't this be a great opportunity for all?

Lastly, our own MMA Executive Committee member and Portland Councilor, Jill Duson, spoke about affordable housing and the aid that the State of Maine has been fortunate to receive. This aid included not only funding for affordable housing programs in the amount of \$360.5 million, but also energy assistance for \$30.3 million: \$28 million for HEAP and \$2.3 million for home weatherization. Many first-time homebuyers, those requiring heating assistance and renters have benefited from these programs. What a great program for those that need it in Maine and our local municipalities!

I would like to take an opportunity to thank each of the attendees who took the time to accompany us to D.C. It was an experience that I would encourage each of you to consider. Meeting with our delegation, spending time with other Maine representation, attending classes at NLC, and having a chance to see D.C. are things you should not miss. Will you consider attending next year? ■

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Nurturing public participation in the throes of coronavirus

Maine municipalities have been thrust into holding remote meetings and trainings. Two experts – one based in Portland – offer advice on how to be successful at it.

By David Plumb

The drum beat of pandemic news is accelerating and feels increasingly part of our daily lives. My kids are two weeks into a remarkable experiment in virtual learning, my trips to the grocery store are planned strategically and we're all attempting to juggle work, school and family under the same roof at the same time.

Meanwhile, I'm supposed to be designing and planning for the public participation that will be an essential component of Maine's initiative to develop and catalyze broadly supported climate action. Our original plan of crisscrossing the state with 19 in-person meetings this spring is now unthinkable under the emerging reality of life with Coronavirus.

The urgency of "social distancing" is creating a challenge for the work we

do at the Consensus Building Institute – helping groups of people collaborate, develop innovative ideas together, and resolve disputes. Sure, helpful online tools that provide a platform for working virtually together have been around for several years – and we use them every day.

Yet, my experience clearly shows that pulling people physically together, shoulder-to-shoulder, has been an important ingredient when working through tough issues and achieving breakthrough collaboration. It's how we helped overcome years of mistrust between communities in Nigeria's Niger Delta and a multinational company; it's how we helped Chileans develop and mobilize around a new energy policy that earned the country the nickname "A Solar Saudi Arabia"; and it's how we

had envisioned helping Maine show leadership around climate resiliency and emissions reductions.

Maine meetings online

The pandemic, however, gives us no choice. Many of you in municipal government who are reading this article have already started to shift your public meetings and deliberation online, now with the official blessing of the state legislature. How can we make this big transition work well?

Thankfully, my colleagues at CBI and many others are embracing the challenge. We're "upping our game" on virtual interaction, finding and combining existing tools that allow us to recreate many of the positive aspects of in-person, constructive dialogue.

We recognize that in virtual engagement, some very real and powerful things may be lost: human warmth and physical connection through handshakes, the language of non-verbal communication, the small conversations and breaks at lunch, breaking bread together, and the feel of what it is like to be in community together in one room, tackling tough issues.

It has prompted me to reflect on what really makes a difference during in-person interaction so that we can find workable alternatives. For instance:

- How can we create a space for active listening and acknowledgement so that people truly feel heard?

IMPORTANT CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

Maine Municipal Association launched a resource area on our website on March 9 devoted to helping members deal with issues surrounding the public health emergency. It is updated several times a day. Just go to our home page: www.memun.org.

Among the updates:

- Actions taken by Gov. Janet Mills, the Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention and others regarding COVID-19.
- Analyses by MMA's Legal Services Department on many fronts, including guidance regarding "essential" employees.
- National news, charts, videos and other resources from the National League of Cities, International City/County Management Association, and U.S. CDC.
- A COVID-19 briefing by MMA staff, written each Friday, summarizing what you need to know about that week's events.
- Updates about municipal action taken, and examples of leadership shown, from across the state.

David Plumb is a Portland-based mediator, facilitator, trainer, and researcher with experience managing complex development and public policy issues in a variety of environments, including Nigeria's Niger Delta, northern Chile, and urban United States. You can reach him at: dplumb@cbi.org.

- How do we tap into the warmth of human connection, which helps us stitch together a sense of togetherness, even amid differences?
- How do we gather around a shared problem and feel the creative energy that comes from working on something together?
- How do we ensure that people who are less digitally savvy aren't left out of the conversation?

Getting answers to these questions will serve us well, even after the threat from this particular virus recedes.

Already, my colleagues have put together a tip sheet for online meetings (which follows this article), as well as ideas on some specific online tools. In the past week, I've been experimenting with ways to "humanize" online meetings and shrinking the physical distance that separates us. Little gestures can make a difference – having moments to show off your dog, to share your view out the window, or give others a peek at your lunch salad. Since most of us are now working from home, we can capitalize on these opportunities to feel a connection.

We are increasingly using shared documents, such as Google docs, to prompt real-time collaboration and visualization of ideas. Tools such as Ideaflick offer an intuitive virtual whiteboard all participants can use. Polling options integrated into Zoom, along with more sophisticated survey tools such as Survey Monkey and Poll Everywhere, help to take the temperature of the virtual room and prioritize issues.

Shifting online allows for creative asynchronous options for engaging different voices as well. For instance, with the Maine Climate Council, we will be creating short webinar presentations that end with a survey soliciting reactions on key topics.

In the end, I believe better virtual dialogue and public participation will lead to more ways for people to interact constructively around decisions that impact their lives. In fact, we may end up flipping this entire dilemma on its head: online tools may open up channels and opportunities for dialogue that outperform in-person strategies.

That sounds like a rare bit of good news. ■

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3. Ten Tips for Newly Elected Officials
4. Maine's Marijuana Laws: Municipal Opt-in
5. Social Media Guidance for Municipalities
6. Writing Effective Media Releases
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8. Your Vote Counts
9. The Challenge of Municipal Leadership

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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10 TIPS TO IMPROVE ONLINE MEETINGS

By Gina Bartlett

- 1. SUBSCRIBE TO GREAT SOFTWARE.** Many effective online video meeting platforms are available – investigate them, subscribe, and deploy. Zoom, GoToMeeting, and Adobe Connect, to name a few.
- 2. SET EXPECTATIONS UP FRONT** for participants to be effective online. When sending materials in advance of the call, outline expectations so participants understand that they need to be in front of a computer to see shared screens and enhance their ability to engage with the group. Encourage video whenever possible for groups of 15 or less. Send simple instructions with everything in one place (materials, log-in or telephone information). Avoid multiple emails with materials; if you make a mistake, resend one email with everything.
- 3. GET EVERYONE INTO THE SPACE** – opening activities. Create a simple activity for the first five minutes of the meeting, which is on the screen when people arrive or log in, to help participants focus on the meeting content. Facilitators monitor the log-in and welcome each guest, directing them to the first activity. Before officially launching the meeting, facilitators show the “whole desktop” to introduce tools, such as how to raise your hand, applaud, etc. Get everyone to try it out. For meetings of 20 or fewer that are meant for engagement and dialogue, prepare a roll call or use a virtual whiteboard with a list of participant names that can be checked off, rather than asking “who’s here?” and having participants interrupt one another awkwardly.
- 4. IF YOU HAVE A MIX OF IN-ROOM AND ONLINE PARTICIPANTS,** have two facilitators: one to monitor the online group and the other focused on the in-room participants, with both facilitators working together closely. Paying attention to online participants is critical, especially in a mixed (remote and in-person) audience. We’ve all been in the situation where we’re online and feel like we have to interrupt to get in the queue, someone puts their phone on mute with accompanying music or background noise comes on from a mysterious caller’s phone. Having a facilitator track online participants can fix this.
- 5. USE VIDEO.** Video engagement is a wonderful way for participants to see expressions and connect with the group. Facilitators can also turn on their cameras so participants can follow the facilitators’ expressions and instructions. Any individual who is presenting formally to the group should also have a laptop with a camera on them (rather than a wide angle view where the participant only sees the speaker as one of many in a meeting room). This will help participants focus on the speaker and connect better with the content. If you have more than 15 people in the meeting, other than the facilitator or presenter, video can be overwhelming; one way to manage this is to set the technology up so only the person speaking appears on the screen.
- 6. USE SCREEN SHARING** to drive attention and participation. While some participants may not have a camera, nearly all can follow a link. Facilitators can help everyone focus on the same information via the link and screen sharing. Rather than just sharing the presentation, periodically display summary information or questions so people can engage with the issues at hand and participate actively. Keep a summary slide updated along the way and share it toward the end of the conversation, much like you might do on a white board or flip chart. Avoid taking notes onscreen as it can be distracting. Of course, because not everyone may be able to see the shared screen, sending materials ahead of time will make sure that everyone can follow along.
- 7. TAKE A PULSE REGULARLY,** to keep online participants engaged. Demonstrating that you want to hear from online participants and facilitating their engagement is what creates a valuable online meeting experience. To generate quick feedback, use virtual meeting tools that don’t require talking: like and dislike buttons, applause symbols, polling, etc. Facilitators can and should invite online participants to speak: “Anyone on the phone or online wish to add in to this topic, Abe? Sofia?” Or, “Abe, we haven’t heard from you for a while so I’m going to check in with you after this speaker.”
- 8. MANAGE THE CHAT.** People want to talk and connect. Allowing folks to participate and weigh in on the chat is often a great outlet. The facilitator should monitor the chat and may occasionally want to prompt input. If the chat is getting so active that it is distracting from engagement in the full group, caution participants.
- 9. USE ONLINE IDEA-GENERATING TOOLS.** These tools (such as virtual whiteboards where participants can place and arrange virtual sticky notes) can be incredibly helpful to collect ideas, brainstorm, identify pros/cons, etc. Use them strategically to generate or clarify ideas. They can be fun and interactive.
- 10. TAKE BREAKS, WATCH THE LENGTH** of online meetings, and define the ending time. It is common for people in the room to say “we don’t need a break, let’s keep going” while online participants feel like they’ve been waiting to have a bio break or grab a coffee. Take the break and say what time participants should return. Remember, in online meetings there is no visual queue of people gathering, so setting a specific return time allows online participants to move, leave their desk, etc. and be ready to go when the meeting reconvenes. Taking breaks will make them better participants. Furthermore, in CBI’s experience, online meetings that last longer than three hours can draw energy and focus away from the work. Meetings that were formally all-day affairs are better off broken up into two or more components spread out over a few days or a week.

Tick, tock: Preparing for season of Lyme, other outdoor challenges

A variety of disease-carrying ticks have now migrated statewide and can be found in all 16 counties. It's yet another public health issue to worry about.

By Liz Mockler

While the nation reels from the coronavirus pandemic, a tiny insect that's roamed the Earth for millions of years continues to spread bacteria and sicken Americans every year.

Available reports on the number of deer and other ticks, and their disease-carrying bites, show Maine among the top 10 states facing the problem.

Ticks carry Lyme disease and other pathogens that first present as a flu-like illness. Left untreated, deer ticks can cause long-term serious illnesses such as arthritis and heart problems.

The nasty family of ticks causes more than Lyme disease in Maine. Five other diseases are transmitted to humans from deer ticks, American dog ticks, the lone star tick and various other types of ticks and infections.

Deer ticks are currently the chief outdoor concern in Maine, but other types of ticks infect large and small animals, including turkeys, raccoons and family pets, according to the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Tick-borne diseases are also carried by birds and white-footed mice, according to the Maine Medical Center Research Institute. Abundant information is available from many sources. The Maine Medical institute provides easy-to-understand guidance and advice (<http://www.ticksinmaine.com/risk>).

Maine researchers say the primary culprits that carry infected ticks are rodents and birds. Ticks become infected when they feed on the blood of

the small hosts and then transmit the disease-causing pathogens to larger animals.

Protections in place

Lyme disease was named in 1975 after the small coastal town of Lyme, Connecticut. At that time, a doctor reported to Yale University researchers a cluster of 51 cases – mostly pediatric arthritis.

Believed to have started their migration north from Rhode Island to all of New England over the past several decades, ticks have spread to every state in the union and are found in half of all U.S. counties.

The good news for Maine municipal employees, especially those working outside (such as recreation, public works and police), is that more aggressive and effective efforts and policies are in place to protect workers and educate the public.

Maine remains a top state for the various disease-toting ticks that thrive in meadows, forestland, hiking paths and backyards. Interestingly, according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, most people who are infected are bitten while gardening on their own property.

In 2016, national health officials declared Maine as the worst state for tick infestations. There are presently 14 known varieties of ticks in Maine.

"The way ticks are tracked varies by disease," said Robert Long, communications director for the Maine CDC. "The Disease Surveillance Program involves a clinical component, which sometimes causes delays.

"While we can't speculate on unreported cases," Long said, "data show that the number of cases in Maine is on the rise." There is reason



Robert Long

to believe the numbers will continue to climb as Maine gradually becomes warmer, due to climate change.

According to the Maine CDC, there are four main strategies to help prevent the spread of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases:

- Use an EPA-approved repellent.
- Wear protective clothing.
- Perform daily tick checks on yourself, family members and pets.
- Use caution while in areas known for tick infestations.

Important areas affected

In the Town of York, Robin Kerr oversees the use and management of the Mount Agamenticus Conservation Region, a diverse and popular area where people of all ages recreate, including hiking, biking, bird watching and picnicking. While centered in York, the greater Agamenticus region covers nearly 30,000 acres, and also touches in the towns of Eliot, Ogunquit, South Berwick and Wells.

The southern Maine treasure fea-

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tures natural resources of statewide importance, boasts the highest concentration of vernal pools in the state and protects reservoirs that serve three communities' water needs.

"Due to the sensitive habitats we work to protect (throughout the region), we do not use pesticides," Kerr said. "We do, however, utilize outreach and education as a resource to raise awareness about ticks and other factors visitors should be aware of."

Organic pest management, combined with a best practices plan, are employed to kill and control ticks in the York conservation region, Kerr said. She posts seasonal information provided by the Maine CDC and other sources in the visitor center, on its website, social media platforms, in kiosks and in boxes at each trail head.

For Kerr, managing the Mount Agamenticus region is a delicate balance of providing safe recreational, conservation and play areas, "while protecting the environment and waterways and reducing the chance of human exposure to pesticides."

Kerr said the York Parks and Recreation Department practices an

organic integrated pest management plan, in effect for the Mount Agamenticus region, public parks, school grounds and athletic fields.

"It's a philosophy of doing everything possible without using chemicals that could be just as harmful, if not more, in the long run," she said.

University's role

As Mainers have battled ticks and their diseases for decades, the University of Maine's Cooperative Extension Diagnostic and Research Laboratory in Orono conducted a first study of where ticks are concentrated in Maine and what times of the year they are most active.

Information is gathered primarily via citizens sending samples of ticks in their area to the lab. In 2019, the lab received 2,697 deer ticks samples from 358 Maine cities, towns and plantations. Of the total, nearly 40 percent tested positive for Lyme disease.

The full U-Maine lab report can be found at (<https://extension.umaine.edu/ticks/>). Last year also was the first time the lab offered citizens tick



Robin Kerr

test kits, which cost \$15 each.

There are several peak seasons for ticks in Maine, depending on the type and age. The first is in the spring, after the snow melts and frees ticks from their winter nests. Ticks thrive in damp areas, with Maine residents encountering adult deer ticks in late October and early November and a smaller amount in April and May.

Nymph deer ticks peak in June and early July, while American dog

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ticks peak in early summer. Thus, every type of tick can be found throughout the state and throughout the year.

In the Town of Lincoln, in Penobscot County, municipal employees receive annual training in multiple areas, including insect bite response and protection from ticks, bees and other insects.

Dennis Bullen, Lincoln public works director and transfer station director, said half of his 11-person workforce toils in various environments, such as mature forests, young tree growth, overgrown fields, athletic areas and flower gardens.

Employees also work in abandoned buildings, sheds, barns and similar structures. Bullen said there was only one report of a tick bite last summer, and “no (work) time was lost from this.”

“The (staff) are advised to be aware of their surroundings and to regularly check themselves during and at the end of each day,” he said.

Daily tick checks are the best way to ensure people are not sickened by a bite. Most experts recommend multiple tick checks daily for people

who work or recreate in grassy areas, forestland or meadowlands.

In Alfred in York County, one of the hardest-hit areas of Maine for ticks and tick bites, Health Officer Dennis Brewster said the town’s public works employees are careful while working outside at all times of the year.

He said all the town’s trucks are stocked with recommended tick sprays and repellents, “to be applied on the workers and others that are applied to clothing.”

Brewster said outdoor workers have encountered many ticks, especially during the months when they

are most prevalent. If an employee seeks medical attention, it is likely that the bite is reported to the state, he said.

Daily checks essential

An infected tick must attach itself to a host’s skin for 36 to 48 hours before passing on bacteria. Daily checks, therefore, are essential since the tick can be removed from the skin, usually after burrowing under the skin, before any diseases can be transmitted to the host.

“The woodlands and wildlife in this community provide an environment that allows the ticks to thrive,”

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Jonathan A. Pottle

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

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said Brewster. “Dogs serve as sentinels for the deer tick population and threat of disease in the community.”

“This is not a recent phenomenon,” Brewster said, of the number of ticks in town.

Fossilized ticks have been found that crawled on Earth up to 146 million years ago. Evolution of ticks and their dispersal have occurred for up to 65 million years, according to scientists.

According to experts and tick stud-

ies nationwide, Lyme disease is the most commonly reported tick-borne illness. This year, the Lyme Disease Association (<https://lymediseaseassociation.org/>) will ask citizens to contact their U.S. House and Senate members to support funding that would help provide more public education of Lyme and other illnesses transmitted by ticks, as well as studies into prevention and treatment options.

Another source of information for Maine municipal and county officials

comes from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, which reported 2019 as the worst year yet for tick activity in Maine. (<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/press-release.shtml?id+2003669>).

“Municipal staff can play a key role in reducing the spread of tick-borne diseases by helping to ensure that residents, recreation program participants and visitors use the ‘No Ticks for ME’ approach to protect themselves,” said Wood of the Maine CDC. For more information about that, go to: (<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/school-curriculum/Ticks/Tick-Educator-Guide.pdf>)

The state CDC also reminds pet owners that ticks like to attach themselves to both large and small animals and encourages people to check their outdoor pets each day for signs – multiple times a day in known infested areas of Maine. ■

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Courage, persistence: Roque Bluffs takes a big step forward

After years of struggling with slow internet speeds and spotty service, this town of 300 people voted to pursue a major USDA broadband grant. And it won.

By Susan Cover

A little over two years ago, Roque Bluffs Select Board members decided they'd had enough of dealing with slow internet speeds.

Board member Lisa Hanscom went two months with no internet service. Fellow board member Karen Miller was so frustrated with her sluggish connection that she called her provider, Axiom, to complain.

"He explained what the constraints were with the technology they have," Miller said. "It wasn't going to get better."

Board members then called the Island Institute in Rockland, which had worked with other small towns to expand broadband. A representative from the institute and Axiom came to a meeting of the Select Board, where it became apparent that the rural Washington County town of 300 residents didn't have an internet service provider problem, it had an infrastructure problem.

Miller and other select board members felt strongly that they needed to address the issue and they all agreed that everybody in town needed access.

"Just because we live rurally doesn't mean we can't have what the rest of the world can have," she said.

After two years of meetings, planning and grant writing, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced in January that tiny Roque Bluffs was the recipient of an \$893,170 grant to build a fiber-optic network to connect



Roque Bluffs Town Hall

166 homes, 22 farms and 16 businesses in the town. Roque Bluffs was one of four entities in Maine to receive a USDA grant as part of a federal rural broadband initiative.

Arrowsic, Monhegan Plantation, and the Biddeford Internet Corporation also received grants or loans, according to the USDA. During a ceremony at the Arrowsic Volunteer Fire Station, USDA Rural Development Under Secretary Donald LaVoy said the federal funds will create or improve internet access for 4,527 households and 215 businesses in rural Maine as part of the USDA's Re-Connect Pilot Program.

Miller and others in Roque Bluffs hope their success inspires other small towns to try for major initiatives, even though the odds may seem long at

first. Select Board member Owen Moody said it's a massive project for a town Roque Bluffs' size and that, at first, not everyone in town wanted to move forward.

"A lot of people were leery about it," he said. "They couldn't see outside the box."

Step by step

Once the town leaders decided they wanted to move forward, Miller said they needed to find out how much it would cost. Using \$10,000 from the Island Institute, they hired an engineering firm to give them estimates for what they would be looking at in terms of needed finances, she said.

Those types of engineering studies can cost anywhere from \$10,000 to \$100,000 depending on the level of services needed,

said Stephenie MacLagan, senior community development officer with the Island Institute. She worked closely with Roque Bluffs to guide the town through the process, which is an example of the programming and services the institute provides to 120 coastal and island communities.

"At the end of the day, towns like Roque Bluffs don't have the population density for a business to make capital investments," she said. "One way to address the market failure is for the community to help with the build out."

In Roque Bluffs, the engineering firm came back with a \$1.1 million price tag, which seemed insurmountable for such a small town. That's when its leaders started looking around for federal grants to help pick

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up the cost. They held public hearings to get citizen input and continued to hear complaints about spotty internet, Miller said.

Hanscom, now a former select board member who spent 19 years on the panel, said the board continually asked for citizen input and help throughout the process. And even though some people in town didn't think they had a chance to land a big federal grant, Hanscom said they kept moving forward.

"It's not something you'd expect a little town like Roque Bluffs to do," she said.

With continued help from the Island Institute, they gathered letters of support from local business owners and residents to accompany their formal grant application to the USDA. They asked for help from a summer resident – an astrophysicist at the University of Arizona, who has experience in grant writing – to help craft the document.

Then in May 2019, they held a town meeting to ask residents to give them permission to apply for the grant and for permission to borrow up to \$1 million if the grant was rejected. Miller said it was important for the town to show the USDA that they were serious about the project and would be willing to move forward whether they got the grant or not.

Town meeting vote

After a vote of 63-27, town officials had the go-ahead to finish the grant and get it submitted by the May 31, 2019 deadline. In the meantime, the town formed a Fiber Optic Broadband Advisory Board and worked out a contract with Axiom to create a public/private partnership so the town would own the infrastructure, but Axiom would manage it for the town.

MacLagan said a key to success in Roque Bluffs was that the select board got community buy-in. She has seen other towns go through the planning

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process and present the idea at a town meeting, only to be rejected by residents.

“Communities need to be courageous and show leadership,” she said. “This is one of those communities that put in a lot of hard work.”

In December, the town found out it would get the grant, with a formal announcement from the federal government in January. It’s important to note too that the USDA requires the town to kick-in \$297,000 of its own money, although Miller hopes a \$50,000 Connect Maine grant from the state will reduce that to \$247,000.

Even after winning the grant, there was much work to do, Miller said. The town called the state Department of Environmental Protection to ask for help with an environmental review to make sure that they would not disturb endangered species habitat, either by removing trees or installing new utility poles. It had informed the Maine Historic Preservation Commission that the work would not impact any historic sites.

And it was required to inform local Native American tribes of the project.

Miller had planned to travel to Dallas in mid-March 2020 for training from the USDA on how to administer the grant, but the conference was canceled at a time when many large events were being postponed because of the coronavirus. She’s unsure whether it will be rescheduled or whether the training will be done online.

This summer, Miller hopes to see new utility poles installed and the beginning of what’s expected to be a five- to six-month process to license each pole. It’s not likely that broadband will make it to homes or businesses this year; Miller said she has yet to develop a “real time calendar.”

“One of the select board jobs is to cheerlead for patience,” she said. “Because we’re getting that money it will take a little longer. We’re all so tired of dealing with what we have.”

Out of town trips

Miller noted some of the problems with the current service, both from her personal experience and that of others in town.

When she has to download paperwork for the town, she often travels



Owen Moody

to a friend’s house in Machias – six miles away – so she has the needed bandwidth. She knows of families who take their children into Machias so they can do homework and one family that travels to Helen’s restaurant, also in Machias, so it can have a strong enough internet signal to communicate with physicians.

And, though there are 10 computers at the Roque Bluffs fire station, only four to five can be used at a time

HIRING RESOURCES

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

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

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

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



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because there's a weak signal, she said. "It terrifies me to think about where we'll be in five years without fiber optic broadband," she said.

Miller is working to get additional

money – nearly \$27,000 from the Island Institute – to help pay for a certified public accountant to track the federal grant money and for additional compensation for the town trea-

surer who will also work on the grant.

Hanscom continues to serve on the town's broadband committee, which meets monthly. The group will help oversee the project through its completion and serve as a place for residents to register concerns, complaints or other types of feedback about the new service.

When it comes to advice for other small towns looking to do a major project, Hanscom said it's important not to get intimidated by the initial price tag.

"There's always ways to work through it," she said. "As town officials, you have to present it to the town. We had a lot of public hearings. After each meeting, we kept on asking them, 'Do you want us to move forward?'"

Miller said many people in town, both year-round and summer residents, played a role in successfully getting the grant.

"We had a moment of courage as a small town to step forward and see where this will take us," she said. "It happened because a lot of people came together." ■



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Maine Municipal Association

NOTICE

Seeking Nominations for MMA Executive Committee

Nominations

Nominations are being accepted for three seats on the MMA Executive Committee. The Vice President position is also open to municipal officials who have served at least 12 consecutive months on the MMA Executive Committee during the past five years. The Nominating Committee will interview candidates for the Vice President position and selected candidates for the Executive Committee positions during the 3rd meeting in May.

What Is Involved?

The Executive Committee is the Maine Municipal Association's corporate board, consisting of twelve elected and appointed municipal officials representing the interests of member municipalities throughout the state. The Committee has overall governance and fiduciary responsibility for the Association, its annual operating budget, and the development of policy and priority initiatives. The Executive Committee meets 10-12 times per year and has a required attendance policy in place. The Association reimburses municipal officials or their municipality for travel related expenses incurred for attending meetings or authorized activities to represent the Association's interests.

Who Should Apply?

- Town and/or city managers or chief appointed administrative officials in an active member municipality; or
- Municipal officers (mayor and aldermen or councilors of a city, the select persons or councilors of a town, and the assessors of a plantation)

What are the Qualifications?

- The ability to serve a three year-term;
- Basic knowledge and interest in corporate operations of the Maine Municipal Association;
- Although not necessary, it would be helpful to have prior experience on other governing boards/committees and/or involvement in the Maine Municipal Association.

Timetable

March 18, 2020	1st Meeting of Nominating Committee – <i>Review of Nominating Committee Process</i>
March/April 2020	Notice in <i>Maine Town & City</i> and e-newsletter <i>MMA This Month</i>
March 23, 2020	1st Electronic Mailing to Municipal Officials – <i>Seeking Interested Candidates</i>
Friday, May 1, 2020 – 12:00 noon	Deadline for Receipt of Statements of Interest
May 4, 2020	2nd Meeting of Nominating Committee by Conference Call – <i>Review Statements of Interest and preparation for Interviews</i>
TBD (May 12-15, 2020)	Final Meeting of Nominating Committee – <i>Interviews and put forth Proposed Slate of Nominations</i>
May 22, 2020	2nd Mailing to Key Municipal Officials – <i>Proposed Slate of Nominations and information on Petition Process</i>
July 10, 2020 – 4:30 p.m.	Deadline for Receipt of Nominations by Petition Forms
July 21, 2020	3rd Mailing to Key Municipal Officials – <i>MMA Voting Ballot for Election of Vice President and Executive Committee</i>
August 21, 2020 – 12:00 noon	Deadline for Receipt of MMA Voting Ballots
August 21, 2020	MMA Election Day – <i>MMA President oversees counting of MMA Voting Ballots</i>

For Further Information: Please visit the MMA Website at www.memun.org for additional information on the MMA Nominating Committee process, timetable, overview of Executive Committee responsibilities and access to the Statement of Interest Forms. Please contact Theresa Chavarie at 1-800-452-8786 ext. 2211 or by e-mail at tchavarie@memun.org if you have any questions.



Maine Municipal Association

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**STATEMENT OF INTEREST FORM
SERVICE ON THE MMA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Deadline for Receipt — 12:00 p.m. on Friday, May 1, 2020

Name of Candidate: _____

Municipal Position: _____ Years in Position: _____

Municipality: _____ County: _____

Preferred Mailing Address: _____

Work or Office Phone _____ Home Phone: _____

Mobile/Cell Phone _____ E-Mail: _____

Previous involvement with the Maine Municipal Association — Please provide info on your past involvement on MMA Governance Boards, Legislative Policy Committee, Ad Hoc Committees, Convention and Workshop Speakers/Panelists, etc. (provide dates of service, if available):

Other information not included on your Resume — other activities of interest, awards, etc.

What attributes do you believe you will Bring to the Maine Municipal Association?

The MMA Executive Committee has an Attendance Policy that requires a member to miss no more than three meetings per year. Based on this, do you believe the time commitment meets your availability? YES / NO

Please provide a Municipal Reference that we may contact:

_____	_____	_____
Name	Municipal Position	Telephone #

Please include your cover letter, updated Resume and up to five letter(s) of support.

I attest that the information contained above and in the attachments is true and accurate to be best of my knowledge.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Return to: MMA Nominating Committee c/o Executive Office
Maine Municipal Association, 60 Community Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330

FAX: (207) 626-3358
E-mail: tchavarie@memun.org

The Municipal RISK MANAGER

SPRING 2020

A Publication of the Maine Municipal Association

A Message from the RMS Director

As you all know by now, the world as we know it has changed. Along with many of you, many Risk Management staff are working remotely. We hope it will appear seamless to you, but it is possible some answers may be delayed. To avoid delays, we encourage you to email us and to send forms and information electronically. As always, our team is available to answer any questions you may have.

As our members grapple with responses for protection of their citizens and employees, some recurring questions are surfacing. Unfortunately, answers are not always easy to provide. Most kinds of insurance were not designed for a pandemic situation and, in fact, specifically exclude such situations. To put some perspective on that, there is no way for an insurer to ever fully access, or establish a price to underwrite the types of risk that a worldwide pandemic implicates.

The most common questions have been directed to the Workers' Compensation Fund and the Unemployment Fund. As well, we have provided some Risk Management tips that we hope will be useful during these difficult times.

Workers' Compensation Fund Members:

Question: Would an exposure to coronavirus/COVID-19 in the workplace be covered by workers' compensation?

Answer: Whether the Maine Workers' Compensation Act will cover workers who contract the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a complex question that is difficult to answer with any certainty. Contagious viruses, particularly those that are community spread, simply do not fit well in the definitions of an occupational injury or an occupational disease.

Exposure to COVID-19, including a quarantine, is similar to exposure to other illnesses such as the flu in that

exposure does not constitute an injury and the employee has not been diagnosed with a disease. Simply stated, an evaluation of compensability begins with a diagnosis (not merely a potential exposure); then an investigation can ensue to determine if contraction of the virus is related to a work event. The investigation will hinge on whether the worker experienced a work-related exposure.

The more widespread the outbreak, the less likely a specific time, place and event can be established for a single exposure. As employees go to public places like the grocery store, pharmacy, etc. chances increase that employees could be exposed during their time away from work.

A workers' compensation investigation for benefits will ask those types of questions. An additional factor is the incubation period of up to 14 days, which makes it more difficult for anyone to identify exactly where they were during the 14 days. If you have an employee who is diagnosed with the virus and they feel the exposure arose out of their employment, submit the claim as you normally would. We will conduct our investigation into the claim and provide a timely decision.

Unemployment Compensation Members:

As many of you are aware, Governor Janet Mills has introduced and the Legislature passed emergency legislation to support workers and businesses impacted by COVID-19, please refer to the Unemployment Insurance FAQ Regarding COVID-19 provided by the Maine Department of Labor.

We ask that you please perform all duties and responsibilities as normal and we will assist you through the process. If you receive anything directly from the



Maine Department of Labor regarding unemployment, please forward it to us. We will work with you and will respond on your behalf. We are here to help you with quarterly wage reporting, claims management, hearings, fact-findings and benefit assessments. Denise Kolreg is the MMA UC Unemployment Coordinator and is available to assist with all your questions related to unemployment.

Property & Casualty Pool

Members - Risk Management Tips:

- Cyber risks are on the rise during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Due to the reliance on email and IT infrastructure at an all-time high, cyber criminals are taking advantage of the higher frequency of companywide emails to employees to execute phishing and malware scams. While we as individuals may be particularly focused on health-related hygiene, it is important for local governments to consider their cyber hygiene during this pandemic. This can be as simple as checking to ensure the email address you received the email from does not contain typos and that it matches the domain of the organization it is supposed to be from.
- Take time to plan for securing and

Story Continued on Next Page

A Message from the RMS Director (cont'd)

monitoring municipal properties and schools that are closed. It is likely that some municipal properties will be closed while others may be open. We encourage that provisions are made to monitor the property much the way you would with closures for school vacations and extended holidays. In this edition, we have included

a checklist to use to assist with the facility inspections, it will also be available on www.memun.org

- Obtain legal advice at key decision points to ensure you are meeting your duty of care while staying within your authority.
- Review contracts and consider whether COVID-19 makes it impossible to comply with contractual obligations.

Take advice from your municipal solicitor. Be proactive and start a dialogue to finesse a compromise where possible.

We know that our members are on the front lines of community services and support, especially during adversity. We will continue to provide you with the services you need so that we can stay safer together during this challenging time. 📢

Protect Yourself from Fraudulent Impersonations and Phishing Hacks by Verification – And then Verify Again!

Municipalities and governmental entities are prime targets for phishing scams and fraud. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary: Phishing is “to try to obtain financial or other confidential information from Internet users, typically by sending an email that looks as if it is from a legitimate organization, usually a financial institution, but contains a link to a fake website that replicates the real one.”

Especially now in this crazy time of global pandemics and volatility, scam artists hope you will be distracted and either not follow protocols or believe that policies have changed. Recently, we at MMA Risk Management Services have been advised of similar attacks and have been threatened by hackers ourselves. We wish to share these stories as a lesson learned for you.

On recent occasions, municipalities here in Maine have received typical business phone calls from local businesses asking to update their bank account information. The person on the other end of the phone provides a name and title, which are accurate to the account. This is a common practice with what is called a *Spear Phishing Attack*, which is the fraudulent act of using electronic communication that is being sent from a presumably trusted source.

These criminal enterprises do research on the group that they are impersonating and use the names, titles and other contact information details to gain trust. As a result, the municipal employee may trust the information provided and view the person making the request as legitimate.

The person conducting the phishing attack then follows up with an email requesting a copy of their Automatic Clearing House/Electronic Funds Transfer (ACH/EFT) form. The municipal

employee sends the ACH/EFT form to the person who they incorrectly think is the authentic vendor, allowing the criminal to complete and return the electronic form. The completed form is returned and the banking information for the “vendor” is updated in the municipal computer system. Following this change, legitimate-looking invoices are submitted to the municipality – but when they are paid, the payment is actually sent to a fraudulent bank account.

This can and does go unnoticed until the *actual* vendor calls to check on the status of payment. Unfortunately, this occurs after the payment has been made and several thousands of dollars were sent to the fraudulent bank account.

You might read this and find yourself asking: What more could have been done? With the implementation of a few minor verification procedures, this event may have been averted.

We strongly recommend that you establish the following minimum verification tools:

1. Set up key contacts for your accounts and only provide information to those designated individual.
2. Use multi-factor authentication for account access and changes. Multi-factor authentication is confirmation from two points of contact prior to the release of information or the altering of accounts.
3. Never use an email as your primary form of verification.
4. Call the account holder utilizing your original contact information, not that in the email communication and verify.
5. Increase awareness. Educate your entire staff and keep diligent to always follow the established rules.

6. Look out for fake emails:

- **Don't trust display names** as these can be anything a scammer wants them to be.
- **Check for fake email domains;** they'll often be slightly different versions of the real thing.
- **Look at the logo** and other images; low resolution images can be a giveaway.
- **Review links carefully** by hovering over the link text (without clicking). A link that is different from the one in the link text is a sign of a malicious link.
- **Look out for bad spelling and grammar,** as this can be a tell-tale sign that it's not a legitimate message.

Remember that the best defense against phishing attacks is employee training and education. A good security awareness program is most effective when you communicate through multiple formats. Consider awareness posters in common areas, helpful hints distributed to employees via email, and classroom training sessions.

MMA Risk Management Services Online University offers the course, “Preventing Phishing,” which raises employee awareness and offers practical advice on avoiding phishing attempts.

Training your employees to detect phishing and other fraudulent activity is one of the most important safeguards against cybercrimes. If you need assistance with employee training, contact the MMA Risk Management Services at 800-590-5583, or find online training at www.memun.org.

Tips for Working from Home

Due to recent events, many of us find ourselves working remotely from our homes. Such a transition can be performed with greater ease if we implement a couple of recommendations and some planning.

Step one consider your work environment. Designate an area of your home, specifically for getting work done and commit to working in this space every day. This could be an empty or spare bedroom that you convert to a home office. If you are pressed for space, you can set up a desk for your computer and office supplies in the corner of an occupied room like the dining room or den. It is recommended to pick a location that will allow for a comfortable and quiet workspace that will allow you to focus on the task at hand.

Planning allows you to create an office that works for you. Attempt to design an office that is functional and conducive to you. We are not recommending that you need to run out and purchase a top of the line desk, but you do want a workspace that has the room and capabilities for you to perform your work responsibilities in a comfortable manner. You may want to consider attaching a monitor arm to your desk or table so that you maximize your desk space. Also the addition of a filing cabinet will help you to stay organized and clutter free. Remember, that you are creating a space that you will be working from daily, so make one

that works for you. Purchase comfortable and functional furniture and equipment with ergonomic considerations. Invest in what you need to comfortably and efficiently do your job. OSHA has an ergonomic self-assessment survey available at https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/checklist_evaluation.html.

Next, look to organize your time. It can be challenging to keep track of what you have to do throughout your workday when working from home. Start your day by reviewing your priorities for the day and for the week. Take time to document tasks and responsibilities and place them in order of importance and then place them in a calendar or task list. We all know that when working from home that it can be easy to lose sight of priorities, tasks, and deadlines, but with organizations we can stay on point and alleviate stress. When you make your task list, stick to it. It may be tempting to just leap into your email, but with a little extra focus, you can keep moving forward while working from home.

- Set goals and time limits for each task
- Utilize tools such as online calendars and task list with reminders
- After you complete each task, cross it off the list. This simple technique is both effective and fulfilling.
- Always consider what is working for you and what could use a little help and keep positive.

Avoid the tempting trap of television and social media. Social media, television and text messaging can be a giant time-suck and distraction if you are not careful. You should take some time to get familiar with your town's/company's social media guidelines. If you love using social media, then you may want to make it a habit to shut off social media notifications during the day and consider muting your notifications on your phone so that you can focus on the job on hand.

Working from home can get pretty lonely, especially if you are single or live alone. Dedicate time to have meeting with your team so that you all stay connected. Advise your coworkers of the dates and hours of your work, and the recommended form of contact so that

others know when and how to communicate with you. A common limitation of working from home is that team chat messaging sometimes falls short of expressing ideas clearly. Remind yourself not to take seemingly short or direct responses offensively.

Remember to place some focus on you and your needs. Self-care and Exercise are shown to naturally boost endorphins, which in turn increases happiness, enjoyment, and interest levels, all of which are important for productivity. Regularly stretching helps you maintain great posture and ease tension. At a minimum, stretch throughout the day so you don't get sore or hinder your quality of life. If your day allows, take a lunch break and go for a walk or do some light yoga

When you are home all day, family and friends might interrupt you without knowing better. This can be difficult, especially if you have young children at home, or have multiple pets all of whom want your attention. Set boundaries with your family while you work. Set and stick to specific work hours and communicate those hours clearly with your family and friends.

Computer safety is always a consideration. Just because you're not in the office doesn't mean you're not vulnerable. Your work computer is a target for thieves and hackers, so take care to work securely.

- Be aware of how your employer's network policies such as the use of Wi-Fi, personal devices, and more.
- Employ a "trust but verify" mentality for documents sent to your inbox.
- Use a business-grade Virtual Private Network (VPN) for encryption. Or your employer's approved VPN solution.
- Know how to get IT assistance and report security threats.
- Close your room's door to avoid disclosing sensitive information to family members or visitors.
- Keep work and personal websites, emails, and web browsing separate.
- Don't slack off on your duty to keep your home office equipment secure.



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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Critical Incident Stress Management Presentation

MMA Risk Management Services was honored to sponsor a two-day Group Crisis Intervention course, presented by Dr. Laurie Cyr-Martel, on March 7th and 8th in the City of Brewer. The course was offered at no charge to all members of the MMA Workers Compensation Fund with a specialized focus towards fire, police, emergency dispatchers, and EMS employees. The program was presented by Dr. Laurie Cyr-Martel. Dr. Cyr-Martel has over thirty-five years of experience in the field of emergency services and mental health and wellness. Her practice, "Health Strategies Consulting", provides training and consultation for public safety departments and organizations to assist in their health and wellness.



Presenter Dr. Laurie Cyr-Martel

Dr. Cyr-Martel discussed the core elements of a comprehensive, systematic and multi-component crisis intervention curriculum. This Group Crisis Intervention course provided guidance and tools to prepare the participants to understand a wide range of crisis intervention services. Fundamentals of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) were discussed and outlined providing the participants with the knowledge to develop several group crisis interventions techniques, specifically RITS (Rest Information and Transition) CMB's (Crisis Management Briefings), Defusing's, and the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD).



The need for appropriate follow-up services, health and wellness, and referrals when necessary, will also be discussed. Attendees who complete both days received a certificate indicating 14 Contact Hours, which qualifies in ICISF's continuum.

Due the success and need of this program, MMA Risk Management Services is planning on offering another course this summer in the southern region of the state. We will be providing further information on the MMA website <https://memun.org/Insurance-Services/Risk-Management-Services> when it becomes available. If you want to be placed on our Critical Incident Stress Management mailing list, all that you need to do is email rmslosscontrol@memun.org or call us at 207-624-0140. 🏠

EMERGENCY PROPERTY INSPECTION CHECKLIST

As we all work together to respond to the needs of our communities, coworkers and family members during the COVID-19 pandemic, we send a reminder to also secure, monitor and inspect the numerous municipal properties which may sit unoccupied. During this emergency or any emergency, it is likely to have a number of municipal properties closed or operating with only limited essential staff.

We recommend that you dedicate some time to review your properties and verify that the structures are secured and staged for a closure or for occupancy by only a partial staff.

Below is a basic checklist of items to be reviewed, performed and monitored:

- Set thermostats to a level that will prevent freezing
- Close and secure all doors and windows
- Unplug unnecessary electrical items
 - Coffee pots
 - Heaters
 - Copiers
- Create a plan for the periodic inspections/walk-through of all locations
 - Identify key shut-offs
- Make a list of key vendors and providers and include them in your planning
 - Heating
 - Plumbing
 - Electrical
 - Fire/Alarms
- Check water connections that show signs of leaks or deterioration
 - If possible, turn off those areas until normal activities are resumed
- Inspect remote detectors and sensor technology if applicable. Low temperature alarms provide early warning and can help avoid greater problems. Ensure that all alarms and sensors are working and that batteries have been replaced or have a full charge
- Clean out sump pits and test sump pump operation
- Maintain exterior lighting
 - Above doors, along walkways, in parking lots
 - lights are a real deterrent to people intent on criminal behavior
- Maintain steps, walkways, and driveways in "ready to use" condition
- Collect mail and delivery items daily or suspend deliveries to the location or re-direct deliveries to a staffed location

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How Bremen worked with provider to seek broadband funds

As in Roque Bluffs, some residents in Bremen were dissatisfied with their connectivity. They've been working with Tidewater and the Island Institute.

By Cheryl Ferrara

Whenever the subject of internet access is raised at public meetings in Bremen, a small town in Lincoln County, officials get an earful from residents. Non fiber-optic customers of Tidewater Telecom, the town's incumbent service provider, voice multiple complaints. They want faster service at reasonable costs as quickly as possible, and they hope Bremen's Board of Selectmen will help them.

A couple decades ago, Tidewater was an early adopter of the switch from dial-up internet to DSL, installing the "modern" copper infrastructure throughout its footprint in Bremen. However, DSL quickly became outdated. Several years ago, Tidewater was able to access a ConnectME grant to build eight miles of new fiber-optic network in some Bremen areas with the slowest speeds. Twenty-five miles of the town remained on DSL, creating an underserved population that expected more for the monthly price they were paying.

Some called for a new provider. Spectrum delivers high-speed internet to the adjacent Town of Damariscotta. Some suggested the town should establish its own service. Other Maine communities including Islesboro, Calais and Baileyville have public broadband utilities.

For Bremen, with 803 full-time and seasonal residents spread over a forested coastal area, establishing municipal ownership was not feasible. A public utility would take years to plan and build and require more knowledge and staffing than Bremen was able to provide.

Cheryl Ferrara is a Maine-based writer who worked with officials in the Town of Bremen to submit this article.

Word reached Tidewater, and in July 2019, the company approached the select board with a proposal to develop the most advanced Fiber to the Home (FTTH) technology for the town. The project would primarily involve Tidewater's private investment, but Tidewater also proposed a \$50,000 contribution from Bremen toward a ConnectMaine Infrastructure grant application. The select board had heard so much from disgruntled residents that it met Tidewater's request with skepticism, going as far as reaching out to the nearby provider as an alternative.

'People know people'

However, as small towns work, people know people, and by word of mouth a broadband group had begun forming that spring. Yvonne Gloede of the Bremen Library knew that resident Christa Thorpe had a new job. Thorpe, an ex-schoolteacher and current school board member, now was working at the Island Institute, a progressive community development organization in Rockland that supported island and coastal community broadband efforts. Yvonne connected Thorpe to Ernest Carroll, who recently retired to Bremen after summering in the area for more than 40 years. Carroll had shared with Yvonne his concern about how the lack of broadband was preventing younger people from moving to Maine.

Thorpe and Carroll met to discuss internet service. Using the Island Institute's "Community-Driven Broadband



Christa Thorpe (Photo courtesy of Island Institute.)

Guide," they formed an informal working group and approached the select board, offering to work on the issue. The select board directed them to Sam Hafford, who had decades of experience in internet and cable deployment. As a resident of Bremen, Hafford was attending the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission meetings of local towns engaged in a ConnectME planning grant. Interest in the regional committee came too late for Bremen to be part of that grant.

Brian Withers, once a vacationer to Newcastle, joined the group after moving to Bremen. As a global data analyst for Cisco, Withers added technical expertise to the committee. Earlier, he had rented a cooperative workspace in Damariscotta that closed after a year and a half. As a new Bremen resident with a five-year-old son, renting a solitary office in a fiber-serviced area such as Damariscotta proved too expensive. He was looking for at-home, high-



Christa Thorpe explaining the Tidewater partnership at a public forum on Feb. 29.
 (Photo courtesy of the Lincoln County News.)

speed internet to fill the gap.

Matthew Hanly, a Bremen school committee member, joined the group concerned that students without adequate internet would have difficulty keeping up with peers.

During the summer and while remaining autonomous, the informal group established goals and priorities that would secure the select board's approval. The group kept the board informed of work plans without sacrificing space for creativity and discussion.

Thorpe remembers that was a good decision. The group needed time without pressure to coalesce and think through strategies. The select board had pushed back on the \$50,000 request from Tidewater. Residents were pressuring the board to get something done quickly.

On Sept. 5, the select board officially appointed the working group as the Bremen Broadband Committee and approved its three main goals: 100 percent service to Bremen residents with no household left behind; every installation to be fiber, thereby allowing high-speed service to all; and, affordability for everyone including those where costs would be a hardship.

Taking the steps

First steps with Tidewater were lengthy. The committee and the provider went back and forth on preliminary ideas.

The committee asked detailed questions and requests of the company. Tidewater is owned by Lincoln Communications, Inc., so proposals needed to go up and down the chain of command.

Tidewater also needed to gain the trust of the select board and residents. The committee required complete transparency of itself and all parties to repair relationships and avoid misunderstandings.

To engage residents, the committee sent town emails, announcing meetings and recapping discussions with Tidewater. The committee kept volleying ideas from Tidewater and residents. In November, Tidewater presented the committee with an official proposal.

Residents frequently complained

about the prices Tidewater charged. Driving prices down to national or global rates appeared desirable, but the committee recognized a local company had higher costs that realistically fell to consumers.

Tidewater offer 'fair'

By researching competitors' pricing, the committee helped residents understand that Tidewater was offering a fair deal, although a sticking point remained that as a telecommunications company, Tidewater would require landline phone service with internet installations.

The committee's willingness to dive into the details fueled the hope of building a new level of trust. The committee also solicited a verbal commitment from Tidewater to explore subsidies for families in need without passing those costs on to other customers.

The first proposal, however, was destined to change. The original 23 miles of connections for \$400,000 rose to 25 miles at \$725,000. Community mapping found more than 600 residences needed service or fiber upgrades compared with the original 460. The question of seasonal residents connecting to fiber lines remained open.

For Tidewater, working at this depth with a committee was a new experience. In Thorpe's view, the company gained knowledge that would help in future broadband planning.



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The committee explained to residents that the stumbling block of identifying all underserved and unserved homes could not be helped. No reliable local or State of Maine data maps currently exist, so the combined efforts of Tidewater and the committee were critical.

The proposal relied on receiving another ConnectMaine grant. Tidewater committed to 80 percent of installation infrastructure costs and looked to the grant to supply the final 20 percent. Tidewater also waived the \$50,000 town contribution. The proposal was signed by the select board on March 6.

Even without a financial commitment, Bremen was able to contribute “in-kind” assistance for the grant application process. The committee began surveying residents to learn their needs, current internet availabilities and speeds. Surveys were returned via email or in writing by mail or town office drop off. The survey asked if residents supported the joint effort of the town and Tidewater to pursue the ConnectME grant. A successful grant application must demonstrate commu-

nity support from at least 85 percent of residents in unserved areas. The survey also gathered data about digital literacy to aid in providing competencies through the library or another learning center.

Building support

The committee circulated a petition asking for residents’ support and conducted drive-by observations of current lines and services. Notable

town residents were asked to write letters of support to accompany the grant application. The committee continued its weekly update calls with Tidewater.

Benefits to the community were always foremost to committee members. High-speed internet addressed the town’s Comprehensive Plan by supporting small and homebased businesses. The project would bridge telehealth and aging in place for doctors and families. Dr. Mike Clark spoke at



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the committee's Public Forum. Originally from Maine, Clark was educated away and came back to set up his medical practice. With changing access to medical records and telehealth, he recognized how dependent his work would be on reliable internet 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

With high-speed access, students could complete their school work or GEDs online and higher education

could be accessed, thereby closing the digital divide in education. In recent weeks, with the Coronavirus, working and studying from home have never been so necessary or so challenging for underserved communities. Providing high-speed internet could prove invaluable at such times.

As the process unfolded, commitments replaced distrust, a partnership was restored, and a grant application

came to fruition with hard work and transparency being key.

For the committee, next steps include completing surveys and petitions; and then hopefully, being selected as a ConnectME grant recipient. That's something the committee won't know until after May 2020. At this time and due to Coronavirus delays, ConnectMaine is expecting the grant rounds to be delayed about a month. ■



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MEETING IT ADVICE

Maine Municipal Association's IT Department, using some information originated by the City of South Portland, has produced a document that helps local leaders use Zoom meeting technology reliably.

Among the topics covered:

- Creating Zoom meetings using a password.
- Controlling access.
- How to mute participants.
- How to turn off the chat function.
- And, importantly, how to block videos on Zoom.

Details about these tips – and much more – are posted at MMA's main website, <http://www.memun.org>. Just click on the Coronavirus Resource icon to the upper left of the home page.



Maine Municipal Association
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4-Port Loop a tribute to coastal Maine's sailing heritage

The ambitious celebration plan involves 14 ports spanning three counties. While some plans are 'on pause,' everyone hopes the events can happen as planned.

By Janine Pineo

An inextricable part of Maine's past and present is a shoo-in attraction for the state's bicentennial celebration this summer: sailing vessels, and lots of them.

A principal goal of the Maine Bicentennial Commission has been to bring tall ships to a number of Maine ports, and that has led to the formation of a nonprofit to promote an event in July that will see ships big, small and in-between plying the waters of the lower Penobscot River.

"The dream is we have white sails in the harbor," said Rep. Dick Campbell, who represents House District 130 for Bucksport and Orrington.

Late last summer, Campbell got a call from David Cheever, vice chairman of the bicentennial commission, and a seed was planted to organize not just one harbor visit but several, creating a regional event spanning three counties for the 14 historic ports in the lower Penobscot River basin: Bangor, Brewer, Bucksport, Castine, Frankfort, Hampden, Orland, Orrington, Penobscot, Prospect, Searsport, Stockton Springs, Verona Island and Winterport.

According to its mission statement, the new nonprofit, the Penobscot Maritime Heritage Association, was formed to "help organize, coordinate and actively promote multi-community events collectively called the 4-Port Loop celebration, which focuses attention on the maritime history and heritage in the Penobscot River basin communities."

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



SSV Oliver Hazard Perry is scheduled to sail into Castine Harbor on July 12. (Photo courtesy of Jess Kaelbein)

The 4-Port Loop will be the featured event in early July with visits from different vessels tying up in Bangor-Brewer, Bucksport, Searsport and Castine. The loop launches July 8 for the Bangor and Brewer waterfronts and carries on downriver through July 14.

"It's a great, natural push down the river," said Kerrie Tripp, executive director of the Greater Bangor Convention & Visitors Bureau.

PMHA held a 4-Port Loop kick-off event on Leap Day in Bucksport, with presentations from representatives from each of the ports as they outlined what was on the docket for the communities hosting vessels and a plan to engage the other municipi-

palities along the waterway to encourage them to schedule events in their towns to complement the 4-Port Loop activities.

The idea is to not only create community events both water- and land-based, but to offer up numerous tourism opportunities that will continue to grow. "We hope to keep it sustainable," said Campbell, who is also president of PMHA.

The organization's budget goal is \$297,000, Campbell said, which will mostly go to get word out about the events in participating municipalities. PMHA secured a \$10,000 grant from the state's tourism office to launch its efforts and also established its title sponsor, Bangor Savings Bank. As of



Castine Harbor sunset. (Photo by Janine Pineo)

late March, the umbrella organization had raised 45 percent of its budget, with Campbell noting the more that's raised, the more it will be able to promote.

Progress has slowed somewhat across the communities and for PMHA because of the need to address shutdowns amid the COVID-19 outbreak, but none of the participating municipalities have canceled their July events.

“Our sense is we’re going to go and we’ll adjust accordingly,” Campbell said at the end of March. A five-day commitment had just come through for a Navy vessel to dock in Bangor-Brewer, Bucksport and Searsport, while the schooners Bowdoin and Charm had committed to their schedule in Bangor-Brewer and Bucksport.

Bangor-Brewer, July 8-10

Anchoring the 4-Port Loop will be Bangor and Brewer, with vessels making their way up the Penobscot on Wednesday, July 8, with the main events occurring on the following days.

Tripp of the Greater Bangor CVB said the plan is to bring together the waterfronts with everything hosted between the two riverbanks and help guide people to the next activities downriver.

In addition to the Bowdoin and Charm, the Navy vessel is expected, along with the University of Maine’s 3D-printed vessel, 3Dirigo, a 25-foot-long, 5,000-pound boat that was printed over several days last fall.

The cities’ list of activities includes scavenger hunts, walking tours, historical society events, a lighted night boat parade, logging displays and demonstrations, a waterfront concert in Bangor and live music in Brewer, and time capsules. “Movie on the Sail,” where a movie is projected onto a vessel’s sail, is also on the tentative schedule.

Initially, a final schedule was to be determined in mid-March, but Tripp said that meeting had been delayed because of the COVID-19 situation. “We’ve just kind of put a pause on it,” she said. “It’s too soon to call it. I haven’t looked past anything in May. We’re going to continue to plan.”

Bucksport, July 10-12

The 4-Port Loop will sail into Bucksport during its annual Bay Festival with its theme of Maine’s bicentennial.

Michael Ormsby, Bucksport’s harbor master, said the Bowdoin and the Charm will be at the town dock on Saturday and Sunday. It’s expected that the Navy vessel will tie up at the Dead River dock, which has been donated by the company for the event.

And the town is expecting 3Dirigo to visit, as well.

“Movie on the Sail” will be among the activities for the weekend, along with parades on both land and water, live music, fireworks, a lobster and oyster dinner, library and historical society exhibits, and an organ concert on a Civil War-era organ at Elm Street Congregational Church. Children’s events will include a dinghy race with training beforehand.

Civil War re-enactments that will include the 3rd Maine and the 6th Maine regiments will be held at Fort Knox over two weekends, including the 4-Port Loop weekend, according to Dean Martin, director of Friends of



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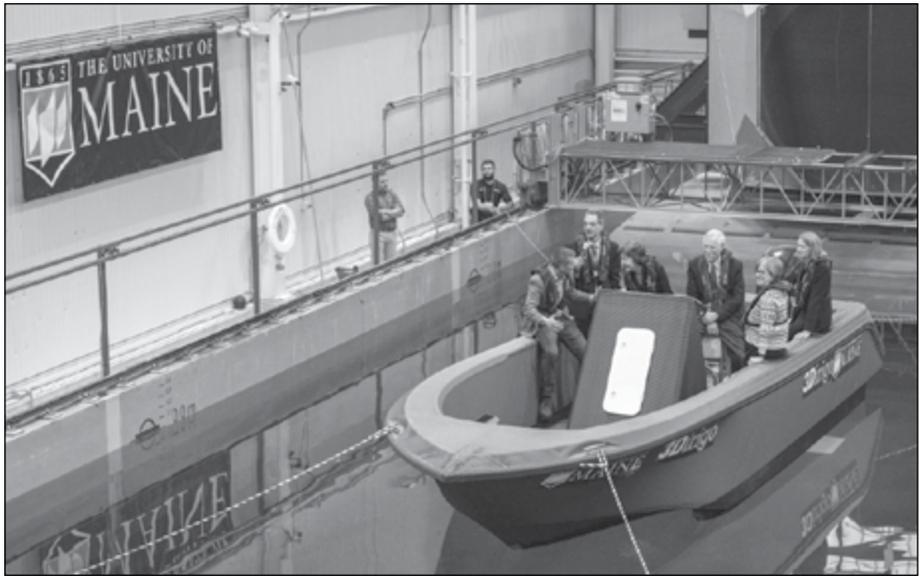
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Rep. Dick Campbell speaks at the 4-Port Loop kick-off event in late February in Bucksport. (Photo by Janine Pineo)



3DDirigo, the University of Maine's 3D-printed vessel. (Photo courtesy of University of Maine)

Fort Knox. “We’ve got a packed weekend,” he said.

If all goes well, there also will be an increase in “ahoy, mateys” and eyepatches. Campbell said the plan is to be “putting more pirates on the streets.”

Searsport, July 13-14

If Searsport wasn’t having enough celebration, what with 2020 being its 175th anniversary, it is tacking on even more events for the 4-Port Loop following its anniversary week June 29 to July 4.

“We’re really excited about this year,” said James Gillway, Searsport town manager and vice president of PMHA. “It’s our birthday.”

Searsport has a slew of daily events and activities during its weeklong celebration, including a different theme for each day. It will wrap up with what Gillway expects will be about an

hour’s worth of fireworks, double the usual amount for July 4.

At least that’s the plan. “We’re really concerned about fireworks,” he said. “We paid for ours already.”

The fireworks are coming from China and there may be a shipping problem because of the global situation due to COVID-19.

The town has planned another round of fireworks for the 4-Port Loop celebration on July 13. That, too, is up in the air.

Gillway expects there will be an array of vessels participating in Searsport. There may be windjammers, he said, but definitely schooners, most privately owned. “We may end up with tall ships,” he said.

Food vendors will be located in Mosman Park, and there will be a performance from the steel-drum group Flash in the Pans.

“The heavy lifting has been done,”

Gillway said. “Still wrapping up the final details.”

Castine, July 12-14

Castine is expecting a busy harbor when its 4-Port Loop festivities get under way.

Not only will the State of Maine return to port on July 12, but the SSV Oliver Hazard Perry, a 200-foot frigate, will sail up Penobscot Bay and into the harbor, along with the Bowdoin, Maine Maritime Academy’s ship returning from its stops on the 4-Port Loop.

Town Manager Shawn Blodgett said the details on the arrival of the two large vessels are being worked

BICENTENNIAL SERIES

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

Eric Conrad, Editor

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out, along with a Parade of Sails that day, which is designated as Maritime Heritage Day for the town.

The centerpiece of Castine's celebration is the Perry, a three-masted, full-rigged tall ship, with its main mast rising 130 feet. It has 14,000 square feet of sail and seven miles of rigging. The vessel was launched in 2015 and is the first ocean-going, full-rigged ship to be built in the country in 110 years. The Perry is Rhode Island's flagship as well as the state's official "sailing education vessel." It is named after Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, a Rhode Island native who was a hero of the Battle of Lake Erie in the War of 1812.

Blodgett said the town is still planning for its celebration in the midst of the COVID-19 situation, adding that the next "decision point" for Castine is June 11. The following day would be

the due date for the next payment on the Perry contract, he said.

July 13 will be a day to tour the historic town and visit the vessels, according to the schedule. Blodgett said there will be trolley service to help visitors negotiate the peninsula, which can be challenging to hosting large crowds.

Previous tall ship visits have guided the town in its planning for crowd management, Blodgett said. And because festivities are on a Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, it may be more manageable due to the days of the week.

On July 14, the town will mark Bastille Day with the departure of the vessels, tours, lectures and its annual dinner, the Picnic en Blanc, where everyone attending the Main Street event dresses in white.

For now, the 4-Port Loop is full

steam ahead. "We are optimistic that people will be looking forward to events like this as we get a handle on the virus," Rep. Campbell said. "We remain excited."

For more information, visit www.4PortLoop.com or www.Penobscot-MHA.org. Town websites also have information about their events, and news and links will be on www.Maine200.org, the state's bicentennial website. ■

EDITOR'S NOTE

Given the coronavirus emergency, it was impossible to know at press time if the public events highlighted in this article would be held, for certain. Seeing that they are scheduled for July 8 and beyond, we hope so.

Eric Conrad, Editor

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BICENTENNIAL WEBSITE

Maine's 200th anniversary of Statehood is this year, and the Maine Bicentennial Commission is leading the State's Official Commemoration. The commission has compiled a great amount of information, and many valuable resources, at its website: <http://www.mainebicentennial.com>.

Included among the offerings:

- A children's book called, "The Maine Birthday Book."
- Images about the future of Baxter State Park and Mount Katahdin.
- A photo gallery spanning many parts of the state.
- A Master Maine Guide.
- A look at 200 summers of Maine romance.
- Ways to buy Maine Bicentennial hats and t-shirts.
- And, much more.



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Many town meetings postponed amid coronavirus concerns

By Liz Mockler

The contagious coronavirus that has swept the globe compelled Maine municipal officials to take the unprecedented action of postponing most town meetings scheduled for March.

On the first Saturday of the month, March 7, many towns held their meetings and municipal elections as usual. A handful met later in the month.

On March 3, Gov. Janet Mills announced the creation of a state coronavirus task force. By March 13, Mills reported the first three positive cases in Maine. Days later she declared a civil emergency, imposed “social distancing” guidelines to slow the spread of the virus, and mandated all non-essential businesses, including restaurants and bars, to close indefinitely.

A slew of city and town halls were

closed to the public and non-essential workers were asked to work from home. By March 30, municipal officials began holding virtual meetings, priests were offering drive-thru confessions and funerals and memorial services were being postponed.

The world, and Maine, had changed.

One of the few towns to hold meetings was Alna, where voters held a 32-minute town meeting on March 21. It was held in the truck bay of the town’s fire station so people could stay at least the social distance of six feet apart.

Alna felt that it needed voters to approve spending plans to the town could pay bills, collect taxes and maintain services. Many precautions were

taken before holding the meeting – turnout was 32 – and articles were bundled into various packages to expedite the meeting. The budget did not require a tax increase.

Some articles were delayed until it is safe to hold another town meeting, mostly proposed capital projects and improvements.

In Castle Hill, the March 17 meeting was swift and all articles were approved. Bristol voters also gathered on March 17 in the town’s school gym, again spaced six feet apart. Elderly residents and those with “underlying conditions” were asked not to attend the meeting.

Sandra Fournier, town manager of the tri-community of Castle Hill, Chapman and Mapleton in Aroostook County, said all three meetings were held as scheduled, with plentiful precautions, and all articles were approved. Turnout was less than 10 in each community, which included select board members.

Other towns that held town meetings in March included Anson, Benton, Brooksville, Carrabassett Valley, China, Cushing, Damariscotta, Eustis, Freedom, Industry, Mercer, Minot, North Yarmouth, New Sharon, Penobscot, Richmond, Rome, Searsport, Somerville, St. Albans, Searsport, Sedgwick, South Bristol, Stonington and West Paris.

Typically, more than 100 or more towns would hold annual town meetings in March. ■

ELECTIONS

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

Town meeting election results: 2020 starts as unusual year

By Liz Mockler

Following are among the municipal election results from early March annual town meeting voting. For space considerations, unopposed incumbents are not included in the listings, with rare exceptions.

The names of challengers also are not included, unless they are former select board members or other former municipal officials. However, former selectpersons are included, regardless of whether they won.

The results are based on news reports and interviews with town clerks. The results are listed in alphabetical order by municipality.

Alna: Selectwoman **Melissa Spinney** won re-election after defeating former selectman and state Representative, Les Fossil, by a vote of 48 to 28. Fossil was not on the ballot, so his votes were write-ins.

Benton: Newcomer **Brandy Sloan** was unopposed to replace Selectwoman **Melissa Patterson**, who did not seek re-election.

Bristol: Incumbent Selectman **Chad Hanna**, who took out papers to serve another term, was elected on the town meeting floor after he did not return his papers in time to make the ballot. Hanna, who has served since 2001, with a year off in 2013, received 67 votes.

Castle Hill: **Theresa Albert** received 15 votes in her unopposed race to replace **Beth Pickens**, who did not seek re-election but garnered seven write-in votes. Albert also defeated one of three town assessors, squeezing past **Gerald McGlenn** by a vote of 11 to 10.

China: Janet **Preston** held off two challengers, one by a single vote, to fill the seat vacated by **Jeff LaVerdiere**, who resigned in October and whose term end in November. **Christopher Hahn**, who lost by a single vote, decided not to seek a recount after talking to the town clerk and learning the votes were

counted multiple times. In the three-way race, Preston collected 415 votes, Hahn received 414 and a third challenger garnered 299 votes.

Cushing: Craig Currie unseated incumbent Selectwoman **Laurie Haynes**, narrowly, to win a three-year term. Currie, who has been serving on the town's board of assessors, received 77 votes, while Haynes collected 75. Haynes has served on the board for nine years.

Damariscotta: **Daryl Fraser** defeated **William "Zev" Keisch** by a vote of 558 to 148 to fill a vacant seat on the select board until the annual town meeting and elections in June.

Eustis: Incumbent Selectwoman **Brandi Farnsworth** and newcomer **Amanda Brochu** both received 45 votes to win the open seats on the select board. Two other challengers received 41 and 32 votes, respectively. Brochu replaces **Jennifer Pelkey**, who did not seek another term. Brochu's father, James, is a former selectman.

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

Mapleton: Incumbent Selectman **David Dunlavy** defeated a challenger

to win another term.

Mercer: **Ricky Parlin** ran unopposed to replace First Selectman **Vernon Worthen II**, and **Dari Hurly** was elected to replace Third Selectman **Norman Redlevske**. Neither official sought re-election. Incumbent **Gary Mosher** was unopposed for another term as Second Selectman.

North Yarmouth: Former Selectman Paul **Napolitano** defeated a challenger by a vote of 765 to 718 to finish the term vacated last October when **Anne Graham** resigned. Napolitano, who has served on the board for 10 years, will serve until June 30, 2020.

Searsport: Voters elected two newcomers to serve on the select board. In a six-way race for the two seats, **Steve Tanguay** received the most votes with 286, followed by **Sandra Otis-Anderson**, who collected 270. Incumbent Selectman **Richard Desmarais** won 231 votes. The three remaining challengers received 187, 169 and 123 votes. In addition to Desmarais seeking re-election, the second vacancy was created when longtime Selectman **John Merrithew** died last year. ■

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PEOPLE

Former state Rep. **Rose Hemond Aikman** was appointed to the Mechanic Falls town council last month to fill the vacancy created by **Cathy Fifield**, who resigned on Feb. 3 and was not able to seek re-election because of term limits. Fifield will serve until the June election.



Linda Barker

After 39 years, South Portland Police Officer **Linda Barker** called it a career on March 6, ending numerous duties that included her favorite: running educational programs for children. Barker studied law enforcement technology at the Southern Maine Community College and graduated from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy in April 1981. She was hired by the city the same month. Even as a rookie, Barker worked undercover on drug cases and, despite the danger, she was not afraid, she told Maine Today Media. Her next position was as a detective, a job she held for 19 years. Barker, who met and married fellow city Officer Reed Barker, earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from USM. She later earned two master's degrees from the University of New England: one in addiction counseling in 1999, and a second education in 2006. Barker won special accolades for having such good relationships with students.

After serving 40 years, **Michael Cummings** also decided it's time to retire – from the Houlton Ambulance Department. Cummings joined the department as a high school student after two men having coffee at a local shop asked if he would be interested. When he began driving ambulance, he was still attending school. He was paid \$8 for a 12-hour shift. "I found I really enjoyed the job and it became my life's work," according to a published report. His retirement party was held on Feb. 28 at the fire department and

a steady stream of residents attended to thank Cummings and wish him well. Cummings said during his career he helped deliver six babies, noting that they now have babies of their own.



Bill Haynes

The "mayor of Waterford," **William "Bill" Haynes**, died on March 8 at the age of 70. He began his municipal career after working as a reporter and photographer for 20 years for the Portland Press Herald and the weekly Advertiser-Democrat in Norway. In addition to working as Waterford code enforcement officer, he also served as a volunteer fire firefighter and assistant chief, and was known for being savvy with computers and often would help others in the town office. He was born in Bridgton but grew up in Waterford. At 6 feet, 6 inches tall, "he was a big presence in a small town." He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Maine at Orono. He was an outdoorsman, coach and library lover who helped the town merge its public library with a private one. "He had 10 jobs," one town official said.



Erin Herbig

Waldo County state Sen. **Erin Herbig** was hired as Belfast city manager, effective last month. Herbig, who also represented Greater Belfast in the Maine House, as well as serving as House majority leader, is a native of Belfast. She replaces **Joseph Slocum**, who served as the city's manager for 13 years. Council members were happy to recruit Herbig to continue the "steady management" the city has enjoyed for more than two decades, according to a council news statement. With help from the Maine Municipal Association, an extensive search was undertaken and Herbig was a surprise and welcome candidate, councilors said. Herbig began her legislative career in 2010. She announced she will not seek re-election to the Legislature in November. Herbig graduated

from Belfast Area High School in 1999 and Boston College in 2003.

Meanwhile, Slocum was praised for his leadership qualities, as councilors said he led the city through numerous challenges and projects. They included helping to revitalize the city waterfront with a harbor walk that gives residents and visitors a half-mile stretch along the downtown waterfront to enjoy Belfast bay. Slocum, among other achievements, also oversaw the effort to convert two miles of railroad tracks into a rail trail. Slocum said he would miss the city and its staff, but that change is good for a community and at 66, he wants to continue working on his book writing.



Joseph Slocum

James Kierstead, a former longtime Camden public servant, died Feb. 25 in Rockport at the age of 70. A lifelong master brick mason, Kierstead ran his own company for decades and left his mark on many of buildings in the coastal town. Kierstead served as selectman from 2005 to 2008 and as a volunteer firefighter from 1970 to 1997. He also served as: board member of the regional solid waste corporation from 2011 through 2018; member of the planning board from 1987 to 1999; and, a Knox County airport board member from 2008 to 2013. Kierstead was a member of the original restoration group on the Mt. Battie Tower in 1990. The tower is part of the Camden Hills State Park and allows visitors a sweeping view of Penobscot Bay. Kierstead was a history buff and could answer nearly any question about Camden and its past.

Former Hallowell officer and Richmond Police Chief **Scott MacMaster** resigned last month to accept the chief's position for the City of Hallowell. MacMaster has served as Richmond chief for 10 years and will replace **Eric Nason**, who worked for the department for more than 30 years and served as chief since 2005. MacMaster worked for five years for the Hallowell department and was then hired by Gardiner, where he served from 1999 to 2007. He resigned to work as Greenville police chief until accepting the Richmond job in 2010.

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

AROOSTOOK COUNTY

The Ashland Ambulance Service and Aroostook County Sheriff's Office both launched programs in March to allow elderly or disabled residents to sign up to get a daily safety call. Ashland ambulance staff often stop at residents' homes to check on them. The sheriff's office adopted a popular call-in program that requires people who sign up to call the dispatch center between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. If a person does not call by 10 p.m., a dispatcher will call the person. If there is no answer, a deputy will make an at-home check.

AUBURN

A call center that specializes in handling inbound calls for health and wellness products needs to hire 100 more employees as soon as possible as it ramps up for a boom in demand. The novel coronavirus, a deadly respiratory infection, is sweeping the globe. The company markets health care products that are advertised on TV, online and in print. At the same time, company leaders were transitioning its 340 employees at its two locations to at-home work. They plan the same for the new crop of staff.

BANGOR

The city council approved zoning changes that would allow a local family to develop a seasonal RV park on 70 acres behind Walmart on Stillwater Avenue. The proposal also needs to be approved by the city's planning board. The land, which borders Penjajawoc Marsh, has been owned by the same family for more than 100 years and the owners don't want to sell the land, nor do they want to build cluster housing. The 7-1 vote also approved campgrounds, golf courses and driving ranges along certain rural areas of Stillwater Avenue – the location of the city's largest cluster of commercial businesses. A city-appointed commission to monitor development in the area of the marsh has given preliminary support for the zoning changes.

BAR HARBOR

The Jackson Laboratory will build a 100-unit apartment complex for its employees on a 37-acre lot owned by the lab on Mount Desert Island. The first phase of the project would include 44 units, with two more phases that

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*.

Coronavirus. The Maine Municipal Association has built an extensive COVID-19 resource area on our website over the past two months. Among the items you can find there are updates on: the legal front, helping towns and cities operate within the laws during a period of unprecedented disruption; the official front, especially with updates from the Governor's Office and Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention; and, from an employer's viewpoint, recognizing that towns and cities collectively employ thousands of Mainers.

Training videos. MMA has steadily built a vast library of online training, offered both through our Risk Management Services Department and with more general training for elected and appointed officials. Recently, we posted Power Point presentations of our Elected Officials and Planning Board/Boards of Appeals workshops, seeing that in-classroom training is not practical at this time.

would total 100 units. The lab, famous for raising mice for medical research around the world, also is building a 51-unit housing complex in Ellsworth. The lab employs 2,000 workers, of which 1,400 are based in Bar Harbor. The Portland-based Developers Collaborative will build, own, lease and manage both the Ellsworth and Bar Harbor apartments. They will be available only to Jackson Lab employees. Both lab officials and employees agree affordable housing is the Number 1 issue facing employees. In addition to Bar Harbor and Ellsworth, Jackson Lab employs staff in Farmington, Conn. and Sacramento, Calif., as well as 70 who work remotely. In the late 1990s, the lab employed 700 employees. Then, scientists realized mice are prime models of inherited human disease because they share 99 percent of their genes with humans. The lab has not stopped growing since, raising and shipping mice to laboratories around the world.

RUMFORD

The town's sewerage plant, which also serves Mexico and Dixfield, needs \$25.8 million in improvements. The 45-year-old building no longer meets regulations, and the original equipment is unreliable and sometimes fails, factors that put the plant's discharge permit in jeopardy. A new superintendent, who took over in 2018, found the plant's fiscal reserves were essentially depleted and the facility was potentially heading toward insolvency. The plant is licensed to treat

2.65 million of sewerage per day from the three communities. The plant project does not qualify for grants because its user rates are too low at about \$250 annually. Maine water experts say 70 Maine municipalities operate sewer systems or treatment plants and only one other than Rumford charges less than \$250 a year. The average annual rate for users of the 70 community plants was \$600 a year.

WALDOBORO

The town's planning board has given conditional approval for a 10-acre, three-megawatt solar farm, believed to be the largest in Lincoln County. The vote was unanimous, 4-0. The energy generated will be sold to a buyer, who will then sell it to the New England electric grid. The project is being built by SunRise Investments of Portsmouth, N.H. and is expected to run for at least two decades, possibly for as long as 30 or 35 years. The project will include 8,460 panels in a 10.7-acre area that will be fenced in. The board's approval came with three conditions: the developer must obtain a bond in the event the solar farm must be removed from the property; a parking area must be added; and the town's code enforcement officer must approve the selective cutting in the town's resource protection district. Representatives of the company told the planners the project would create technical and construction jobs, as well as paying personal property tax to the town.

MUNICIPAL BULLETIN BOARD

PLEASE NOTE

Due to uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus outbreak, we are promoting events starting on June 30 and scheduled after that. At press time for this magazine, we had postponed or canceled events running through May 31. Please view our website (www.memun.org) for updates and details about events scheduled between June 1 and June 30. Thank you for your patience.

SPECIAL SESSION!

JUNE 30

Municipal Leadership – How to Achieve Results When Teammates Can Tackle You: Augusta

Regardless of their roles, local government leaders require different skills than those in business or the non-profit sector. Biddeford City Manager Jim Bennett will lead attendees through a workshop that provides valuable insight into leadership and lessons to avoid being “tackled.”

The workshop will be held June 30 in the Christopher G. Lockwood Conference Center, Maine Municipal Association office, in Augusta. Registration will start at 8:30 a.m. The workshop ends at 3 p.m. Cost is \$65 for MMA members and \$130 for non-members.

JULY 9

Legal Update on Aerial Drones: West Kennebunk

Aerial, unmanned drones are proliferating both among hobbyists and officials who use them for valuable public purposes. This workshop provides a legal

update over how to use them properly and what municipalities can – and cannot – do to limit their use.

The afternoon workshop, to be co-taught on July 9 by Dan LeClair, Director of UAS Education & Research at the University of Maine-Augusta, and Michael Stultz, of MMA’s Legal Services Department, will begin with registration at 2 p.m. The course concludes at 4:30 p.m. Cost is \$45 for MMA members and \$90 for non-members.

JULY 13

Verbal Judo: Bangor

Perennially one of MMA’s most popular workshops, Verbal Judo is a tactical communication course that helps officials in all walks of municipal life to calm difficult people and defuse potentially dangerous situations. It is led by Joel Francis, a national instructor with the Verbal Judo Institute.

The program will be held on July 13 at the Bangor Hilton Garden Inn, beginning with registration at 8 a.m. Cost is \$120 for MMA members and \$240 for non-members.

July 14

MMTCTA’s I’ve Got the Job – What Now? Augusta

The Maine Municipal Tax Collectors’ and Treasurers’ Association will hold this popular course at the MMA Conference Center in Augusta, on July 14. It addresses many aspects of being a tax collector and treasurer, including the nature of the position, duties, dealing with delinquent property taxes – and more.

Stu Marckoon, treasurer in the Town of Lamoine, is the instructor. The program opens with registration at 8:30 a.m. It will conclude at 3:30 p.m. Cost is \$55 for MMTCTA members and \$85 for non-members.

SPECIAL SESSION!

JULY 21

Diversity Immersion: Augusta

This workshop, which received strong reviews during its debut in 2019, is designed to help officials and employees who view themselves as “change agents,” and want to be more effective in that role. It emphasizes learned traits such as recognizing diversity, building equity and being inclusive.

It will be held on July 21 at the MMA Conference Center in Augusta, and it will be led by instructor Susan Gallant. This workshop is interactive and includes hands-on activities and exercises. It begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. Cost is \$85 for MMA members and \$170 for non-members.

JULY 22

New Clerks: Orono

The Maine Town and City Clerks’ Association will hold this workshop, designed for clerks who are new to their profession, on July 22 at the Black Bear Inn and Conference Center in Orono. Kim McLaughlin, town clerk in Old Orchard Beach, and Merton Brown, town clerk in Kennebunk, are the instructors.

The course is designed to familiarize clerks with all aspects of their offices. It is relevant to clerks from small towns and larger cities. It begins with registration at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m. Cost is \$60 for MTCCA members and \$80 for non-members.

JULY 30

Planning Board/Boards of Appeal: Houlton

Attorneys from MMA’s Legal Services Department will host a session for local Planning Board and land use Boards of Appeal members from 4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on July 30 at the Houlton Fire Station on Military Street.

The workshop is designed as an introduction for new or less experienced members, but veteran board members may find an update useful as well. Among the topics to be covered: jurisdictional issues; public notice requirements; site visits; procedure for decisions; and, variances. The cost is \$65 for MMA members and \$130 for non-members. ■

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

Use the following link:

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

LEGAL NOTES

MMA CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES

Many of our readers are of course already aware of MMA's special dedicated webpage captioned "Coronavirus Updates & Resources." But for those who may not be, consider this an invitation to go take a look and to check back regularly – it's updated frequently, often-times daily. The site is located on MMA's homepage (www.memun.org) on the upper left just under the photo of MMA's building. Or you can go directly to it here: <https://memun.org/Coronavirus-Resources>

This site features, among many other things, detailed legal guidance from MMA Legal Services on conducting "remote" board meetings and cancelling or postponing town meetings and secret ballot elections.

Also highlighted are employer guidelines from the U.S. Department of Labor on new federal paid sick leave requirements and expanded Family and Medical Leave Act protections. Under the same category (employer guidance) are updates from the Maine Department of Labor on newly expanded unemployment benefits as well as guidance from the Maine DOL and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on employee health and workplace safety.

Another featured category is healthcare guidance for both employees and the general population from the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust and the federal CDC.

Yet another category is virus-related state and national news, which is constantly being updated as this unprecedented crisis unfolds and as government at all levels – federal, state, and local – responds to it.

Finally, MMA's coronavirus resources webpage features selected items from some of MMA's members, including emergency declarations, stay at home orders, and informational videos about the virus – in six different languages.

As we said before (but will say again), readers of this column – and all local officials responsible for municipal employees and the ongoing operation of municipal programs and services during this challenging time – should be checking MMA's coronavirus webpage on a daily basis for important legal, employment, and healthcare guidance as well

MUNICIPAL CALENDAR

MAY — Municipal officers shall meet as the "licensing board" to license innkeepers and tavernkeepers during the month of May (30-A MRSA §3812).

ON OR BEFORE MAY 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).

MAY 25 — (Last Monday in May) Memorial Day observed. A legal holiday (4 MRSA §1051); a school holiday (20-A MRSA §4802). Municipal officers shall direct the decoration of veterans' graves. (30-A MRSA §2901).

as virus-related state and national news and developments in other municipalities. (By R.P.F.)

ELECTED OFFICIALS HOLD OVER IF ANNUAL ELECTION DELAYED

With virtually all of the springtime local elections having been postponed this year as the result of the coronavirus pandemic, one of the most frequently asked questions for MMA's Legal Services attorneys has been about the effect on currently serving elected officials. To be precise, the question is, do elected municipal officials continue to hold office beyond the terms for which they were elected if the annual town meeting or election is postponed?

Fortunately, in practically all cases the answer is yes, elected local officials of all kinds are deemed by the common (court-made) law to continue or "hold over" in their offices until their successors are elected and sworn – there is no vacancy in office in the interim.

The hold-over doctrine is a longstanding and well-established general rule of municipal law (see McQuillin, *The Law of Municipal Corporations* (3d ed. rev. 2012) § 12.165). The Maine Supreme Court expressly adopted the concept of "holding over" as long ago as the 19th century (see *Bath v. Reed*, 78 Me. 276 (1886)).

The only acknowledged exception to the hold-over rule is where there is some manifest legislative intent to the contrary, *i.e.*, a clear, unambiguous statement in the governing law that the rule does not apply. In Maine this could mean either a State statute or a municipal charter or ordinance, depending on the office in question. In any case we don't

ever recall seeing a clear repudiation of the hold-over rule in any law governing the term of a local elected official (but we don't deny that there could be some instances of it somewhere).

To be absolutely clear, we should note that elected officials who hold over in office have and may exercise *all* of their customary legal duties and authority for as long as they continue in office. There is no legal limitation or restriction on their normal responsibilities or prerogatives as elected officeholders.

We should also note, however, that the hold-over rule does not generally apply to appointed officials, although a State statute or a municipal charter or ordinance could provide otherwise. For instance, the registrar of voters holds over by statute (see 21-A M.R.S. § 101(2)). So does the code enforcement officer for shoreland zoning purposes (see 38 M.R.S. § 441(1)).

But generally if a local official is appointed for a term of, say, one year, the appointment expires upon the expiration of that one-year period no matter what. In order to continue in office, the officeholder would have to be reappointed. Or a replacement could be appointed. If neither occurs, the office becomes automatically and immediately vacant at the end of the declared term and remains so until a new appointment is made. (By R.P.F.)

ADVERTISING JOB OPENINGS

Question: Are municipalities legally required to advertise job openings?

Answer: No, there is no law mandating that municipal employers post or advertise job openings or that they utilize

LEGAL NOTES

a competitive hiring process. But many municipalities have such requirements in their charters or ordinances or, more commonly, in their personnel policies.

Even if not legally required, advertising job vacancies and using a competitive hiring process makes good business and legal sense in most cases. Advertising assists in recruiting external talent and usually results in a larger, more diverse pool of applicants from which to choose. Advertising also provides solid evidence of a good-faith, non-discriminatory hiring process and will help defend against claims of illegal discrimination, nepotism, or cronyism.

Much the same can be said for board or committee vacancies. Though advertising or public solicitation of interest may not be required, it may still be good practice in most cases, even though board and committee appointments may entail policy considerations and other factors, such as compatibility and commitment, in addition to "job" qualifications.

For much more on advertising for job openings, including recommended methods, venues, and contents, see our "Information Packet" on the hiring process, available free to members at www.memun.org.

For a detailed list of questions not to ask and questions that can be asked during a job interview, see "Job Interviews: What Not to Ask," *Maine Townsman*, Legal Notes, July 2015, and "Job Interviews: What Can Be Asked," *Maine Townsman*, Legal Notes, August 2015.

And for a thorough review of person-

nel policies, including what's legally required, what we recommend, and samples, see our "Information Packet" on personnel policies, also available free to members at www.memun.org. (By R.P.F.)

MULTIPLE OFFICES, MULTIPLE TOWNS

Question: Can one person hold multiple offices simultaneously in multiple towns?

Answer: Yes, in fact this is not uncommon, especially in small-town Maine, where it is sometimes challenging to attract and retain willing and qualified individuals. For example, we know of numerous cases where one person serves as the assessor, code enforcement officer, or local plumbing inspector for several towns. Also, some small towns share a town manager or an administrator. Nor is it unheard of for a municipal officer (selectman or councilor) in one town to hold another office (manager, clerk, tax collector, or treasurer, for instance) in a different town.

These and other combinations of offices in multiple towns are made legally possible by the fact that there are only three legal qualifications for holding most municipal offices under Maine law: (1) Maine resident, (2) at least 18 years of age, and (3) U.S. citizen (see 30-A M.R.S. § 2526(3)). Local residency is not a requirement except for municipal officers and school board members or unless required by municipal charter for other offices. Thus, it is fully permissible for one person to hold offices in several towns as

long as local residency is not required in more than one town.

Incidentally, we don't believe the common law doctrine of "incompatibility" of offices applies to offices in different towns for the simple reason that the jurisdiction of officials in one town does not extend to any other town. Incompatibility can have serious legal implications for anyone considering multiple offices in the same town, however, so due diligence is called for in that case. For more on incompatibility of offices, see Chapter 2 of MMA's *Municipal Officers Manual*, available free to members at www.memun.org.

There might be instances where, due to a financial or contractual relationship between towns, an official serving in both, especially in an executive capacity, should consider abstaining from a decision impacting the other town – to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest. But these cases, we suspect, will be rare and very fact-specific.

While there are no laws barring someone from holding multiple offices in multiple towns, there are two laws prohibiting certain State and county officials from holding certain municipal offices. For one, State legislators cannot simultaneously serve as municipal assessors, although they can be municipal officers (see "Can a State Legislator be a Municipal Officer?," *Maine Townsman*, Legal Notes, May 2015). Also, county commissioners cannot simultaneously serve as mayor or assessor of a city or selectman or assessor of a town (see "County Officials as Municipal Officials," *Maine Townsman*, Legal Notes, June 2015). Apart from these, we're not aware of any other laws of this kind. (By R.P.F.) ■

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