



JULY 2014

About Town

- *Berwick's
Administrative
Newsletter*

DEPARTMENTAL & OTHER UPDATES

What's going on in Town?

By Patrick Venne, Town Manager

This newsletter is intended to keep Berwick's Board of Selectmen and the public at large abreast of how Town departments are functioning, i.e., what they have been up to, what obstacles if any stand in their way, and what they have planned for the future. It is intended to be a source of information for any and every person interested in learning more about what goes on at Town Hall and beyond related to the delivery of public services to the residents and tax payers of, and visitors to, the Town of Berwick.

Police Department

The Department has been conducting bicycle patrols in the downtown area over the summer months, as it did last summer as well. This program has been successful on multiple levels: it enhances productivity and fosters a greater face to face connection with those in the public during the targeted patrol shifts when it occurs. It will continue for the remainder of the summer.

The Department has also been busy working with local construction crews to implement suggested changes or efficiency upgrades to construction-induced detours.

In other news, Officer Milton Fogg has been working the Department's detective assignment since the recent departure of Detective William "Bill" Russell, who accepted a position with the Ogunquit Police Department. This is a temporary assignment until Officer Fogg returns to normal duties this fall as the School District's Resource Officer ("SRO").

Also, Officer Greg Sevigny accepted a position with the York County Sheriff's Office as a patrol deputy and worked his last day with the Berwick Police Department on July 14, 2014. The Town thanks



Officer Sevigny for his service, and wishes him well in future endeavors.

The Town will be receiving approximately \$36,000 in Maine Criminal Justice Academy tuition fee reimbursement from Ogunquit and York County as recipient agencies of these two officers. This money will be applied as a general revenue rather than an offset to the Police Department's specific operating budget because the expense was initially incurred in a previous fiscal year.

At its July 15th regular meeting, the Board of Selectmen selectively lifted a hiring freeze instituted in 2011 in order to permit Management to fill the vacancy created by Officer Sevigny's departure. The Department thereafter posted this opportunity in several public areas soliciting expressions of interest from fulltime-certified law enforcement officers. Applications were accepted until August 3rd. Administration will be reviewing all interested candidates throughout early August.

Officer Nicholas Higgins, the Department's most recent hire, is now fully integrated into the Department's regular scheduling. He was introduced to the public on August 5th at the Board of Selectmen's regular meeting that date.

The Police Chief has also been working on a proposed policy to institute standard procedures related to the coordination of private local events such as bike races which have the potential to create public safety concerns for both participants and others using the roads of Berwick.

Two such events are anticipated for the near future: a multiple sclerosis bike race (Great Maine Getaway benefit ride) and the Noble Woods Enduro Motorcycle Ride.

The MS Great Maine Getaway will take place on Saturday August 9th when approximately 450 cyclists will pass through Berwick between the hours of 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM., utilizing three miles of Route 4—a state designated bicycle route.

In addition to criminal law enforcement, the Department also

carries out statutory obligations regarding animal control. Until recently, the Town utilized Red Barn Professional Pet Services, LLC, as its required animal shelter contract provider in order to meet statutory obligations. In late July, the Town changed shelters from Red Barn to Cocheco Valley Humane Society in Dover, NH. The Department thanks Red Barn for years of dedicated service, and looks forward to forging a new partnership with Cocheco Valley. Cocheco Valley is located at 262 County Farm Road in Dover. Its hours of operation will be publicized on the Police Department website for those interested or in need of contacting the facility.

Calls for service at this time of year, compared to previous years, are normal.

For more information contact the Police Department at 207-698-1567.

Fire Department

The Fire Department presently has a staff of 29 members, with five on restricted duty.

At the present time, it is tending to vehicle maintenance when not responding to calls. The Department ordered a new Command Vehicle to replace its aging unit on July 21st with Board of Selectmen approval. A maximum anticipated delivery timeframe is 15 weeks. The existing vehicles is out of service as it was unable to pass inspection this month without costly repairs.

Regarding the Department's ongoing effort to implement administrative elements of the Department Study

conducted by MRI, the Department recently changed the title of fulltime "Lieutenant" to "Captain" in order to address organization of hierarchical relationships.

The Department is also in the process of scheduling interviews for new recruits to the part-time on-call force. One new recruit—Jeffery Doyle—was hired on July 1st, and two more are scheduled for second and final interviews with Management in early August.

Regarding fire prevention efforts, the Department continues to conduct wood stove and fire safety inspections upon request from residents.

The Department is also conducting its annual hose testing at this time.

So far this summer, 86 open burning and/or seasonal camp fire permits have been issued to residents after inspection and approval by the Department.

Regarding calls for service, staff responded to 53 calls involving Fire and/or EMS between June 23, 2014 and July 27, 2014.

A total of 14 calls for EMS were missed due to a lack of availability of EMS staff after hours and/or on weekends during this same time period. American Ambulance or a mutual aid ambulance provider provided first responder service for all of these calls.

Lastly, the Fire Station renovations entailing an interior wall, insulation and installation of a new shower facility are nearly complete at this time.

For more information contact the Fire Department at 207-698-1174.

Water Department

During the heavy rains which fell in the early part of the month, a great deal of color was added to the Town's water source, the Salmon Falls River. This complicated the Water Department's treatment of water in several ways.

When color is high, plant operations require additional attention due to the increased use of chemical treatment for its removal. This also requires more frequent filtering operations, and can have an impact on regulatory requirements as well.

For instance, on July 18th the Department handled a quarterly sampling for disinfection byproducts at two locations in Town. High river color requires increased levels of chlorine disinfection, which in turn creates a higher level of "byproduct" that is important to monitor to ensure it stays below mandated levels for health-based maximum contaminant levels (MCLs). If MCLs are exceeded, public notice of the health impact becomes mandatory. MCLs are not presently being exceeded.

The Department also noted in July that a meter used at the Recreation Field for its irrigation system was flawed and had been overcharging the Recreation Department's budget for water use. The Department is in the process of replacing the meter at no cost to the Recreation Department, and the overcharged bill is no longer due from the Recreation Department. Instead, by Public Utilities

Commission (PUC) rule, the Recreation Department will be charged based on average use over a number of years until a new and accurate meter is installed.

The Water Department learned of the flawed meter after conducting an accuracy test at the Recreation Department's request, and any customer may similarly request a free test of their meter, although not more than once every 18 months.

The former water treatment plant on Rochester has now been demolished by Brown Industrial Group, leaving the riverfront site cleared for future use by the Town as may later be deemed appropriate and feasible.

The present Water Treatment Plant recently had its parking lot crack-sealed and coated, with new pavement applied over sections excavated in previous years. This is the first time the parking lot has had maintenance investment since the Plant was constructed in 1999.

As discussed previously at a Board of Selectmen meeting, the Water Department also continues to work with a consultant (Sandy Bolotsky) to analyze revenue, audits, present rates and potential rate increase feasibility.

The size and timing of an intended rate increase is at this point not certain, however the need for a rate increase is relatively certain, as it is necessary to fund capital depreciation planning costs.

Preliminary results from the consultant should be available for consideration in early August, after which they will need to be addressed

with Management and will be brought to the attention of the Board of Selectmen during a public meeting.

For more information contact the Water Department at 207-698-1231.

Public Works Department

The Department is presently going through each truck in its fleet to perform routine maintenance, as well as servicing its other vehicles and equipment. Once this process is complete, it will have the vehicles and equipment inspected.

Service wise, the Department is spending much of its time mowing public lands throughout Town. The Department will also be paying specific attention to Ridlon Road in August, to ensure the road is as smooth as possible and not retaining water from storm events.

On August 4th, roadside mowing of Pine Hill Road, Long Swamp Road, Little River Road, Diamond Hill Road and Old Sanford Road will begin.

Full depth reclamation and repaving of large sections of both Pine Hill Road and Long Swamp Road have been completed by Boulanger Paving.

The State Department of Transportation continues to consider options regarding addressing the instability recently noted along a section of Hubbard Road, but no recent updates have been provided to Management by the State beyond an intent to install semi-permanent traffic signals to create a one-lane way of travel over a specific section of the road until stability matters can be addressed.

The State also indicated relocation of the river which runs alongside the road, to permit construction of a more stable roadway, is an option being considered. Those with questions or concerns about this specific matter (Hubbard Road) are encouraged to contact the State of Maine Department of Transportation by calling Kyle Hall, DOT Engineer for Region 1, at 207-885-7000 or emailing Kyle.Hall@maine.gov.

For more information regarding the Public Works Department more broadly, contact the Public Works Garage at 207-698-1220.

Recreation Department

The Recreation Commission last met June 12th. It does not meet again until the fall. Its next meeting is planned for Thursday September 11, 2014 at 6:30 PM at Town Hall and this meeting is open to the public.

Regarding events at the Recreation Field, summer camp is in full swing and going very well. The last day of camp is August 15th. There are presently 156 campers enrolled, representing grades Kindergarten through 8th.

Also, football and cheering practices have commenced for middle school programs, and Travel Soccer will begin in September.

The Recreation Department continues to implement and refine its new website, which lists all upcoming and ongoing offerings, at www.berwickrec.com.

Moreover, discounted tickets remain available for summer 2014 offerings at the following places and organizations: York's Wild Animal Kingdom, Water Country, Funtown/Splashtown, and Cranmore Mountain Adventure Park. If interested, please stop by the Customer Service window in the lower level of Town Hall for more information or to make a purchase.

For more information call Kim Taylor, Recreation Director, at 207-698-1101.

Finance Department

The Town's Finance Director serves as Deputy Tax Collector, and in reality handles the vast majority of tax collection efforts for the Town Manager who is the appointed Tax Collector. On July 15, 2014, the Department mailed out 297 thirty-day notices regarding potential tax liens for failure to timely pay tax obligations for FY 14. Tax liens will be filed on August 15, 2014 for those accounts which at that time remain unpaid.

The Department is also in the midst of converting software from "Munis" to "TRIO," as approved by and funded through Town Meeting. Tax assessing data files have been mailed to TRIO which indicated the conversion should be possible by the end of August. Other elements of the software's application, including the receivables register, delinquent taxpayers report, and tax pre-payment listing are still being examined for compatibility with the Town's existing data.

The Finance Director has been working diligently with a consultant from TRIO on an implementation schedule for conversion, and anticipates cash receipting, tax billing & collections, and water billing & collections are all functions that will be converted to TRIO by September 1st, while final conversion is anticipated to occur on or around January 1, 2015.

In order to accommodate the September 1st target for certain conversions, the Town Clerk's office will need to suspend the processing of tax payments and water payments on Thursday August 28th and Friday August 29th. This suspension will enable access to the necessary tax and utility receivable files for email communication purposes with TRIO. Over the following two days, TRIO's staff will convert the Town's Munis data into a format suitable for import into TRIO modules. This will allow the Clerk's office to resume normal operations on Tuesday September 2nd with respect to processing tax and water payments.

During the time of suspended tax and water payment processing, taxpayers and Water Department customers may still drop off payments, but they will only be able to receive a written receipt and the payments will not be recorded until September 2nd.

An announcement regarding this matter has been placed on the Town's website, and BCTV has also been notified so a Public Service Announcement (PSA) may be displayed.

Lastly, the Town's annual financial audit is scheduled for the week of

August 18th – 22nd, and accordingly the Finance Director is presently working on financial statements in preparation of this event.

For more information contact the Finance Department at 207-698-1101.

Planning Department

The Planning Board recently had Dave Andreesen, who has been active in other Town committees, appointed as an alternate member by the Board of Selectmen following a period of public advertisement and acceptance of expressions of interest. It also had former alternate David Dow appointed as a regular voting member.

At its August 7th meeting, the Planning Board will review the following proposed projects:

Wedgewood Commons, a 7 lot major subdivision, will be receive preliminary review. This proposed project is situated along Sullivan and Logan Streets at Tax Map U-3, Lot 9. Wedgewood Commons is represented by Corner Post Land Surveying.

Richard Desmaris will have a subdivision approval amendment reviewed for the elimination of one lot from a plan situated along Haflinger Lane found at Tax Map R-44, Lot 21.

Daniel and David Mitchell propose a bottle redemption center as a conditional use at 9 Commercial Drive, Tax Map R-54, Lot 15-2.

A conditional use approval amendment related to a change in hours of operation for Maine Subs' operation of a Subway restaurant at 10

Sullivan Street, Tax Map U-4, Lot 2, is also scheduled.

No new applications are pending before the Board of Appeals at this time.

For more information contact Town Planner John Stoll at 207-698-1101, stop by his office at Town Hall on the lower level, or email him at planning@berwickmaine.org.

Town Clerk's Office

Business in the Town Clerk's office is fairly routine and normal for this time of year with the exception that additional signatures have been submitted for review of a petition to allow alcohol sales for off premises consumption on Sundays within Town.

For more information please contact Town Clerk Jo Anne Lepley at 207-698-1101, jlepley@berwickmaine.org, or stop by the Customer Service window in the Town Hall lobby.

Miscellaneous

Prime Tanning

The Berwick Arts Association completed a public mural on the face of Prime Tanning with assistance from a diverse cross section of the community in July.

The Board of Selectmen also held a discussion with Fund of Jupiter, which is the primary "party in interest" related to the Prime Tanning site, at its most recent meeting to understand options available for assisting with potential future productive reuse of the site. No action has been taken in

this regard, but the Board is interested in exploring the options further, and has directed Management to bring further information back for consideration at a future meeting.

Lastly, a fire hydrant inadvertently enclosed in the fence erected jointly by the Sewer District and Town last year related to properties adjacent to the Prime Tanning complex will be relocated to the public realm outside of the fenced area sometime in the next month.

Joint Meetings

In late August, the Board of Selectmen or a component of it will have a joint meeting with both the School Board and South Berwick. In early September, a joint meeting with the Berwick Sewer District will take place.

Collective Bargaining Agreements

At its last regular meeting, and after more than a year of negotiations, the Board of Selectmen approved a renewed three-year labor contract with the Teamsters Local 340 Union which represents various staff members across Town departments.

Negotiations with the Maine Association of Police (MAP), the Town's other collective bargaining unit, continue in mediation.

About
Town
- *Berwick's
Administrative
Newsletter*

Berwick Town Hall
11 Sullivan Street
Berwick, ME 03901