

Town Manager's Office – Stephen G. Eldridge, Manager

It has been a very colorful month and the warm weather has continued for most of it. This has allowed the Public Works Dept. to continue many of the needed repairs to our roads and to stay ahead of many other projects. The salt shed and Dorian Gym are scheduled to have their roofs replaced, hopefully before the snow flies.

The Board of Selectmen had their annual goal setting session this month. Each year we sit and discuss short and long term goals, what has been completed, what items may need to be moved to the short term goals and any new items that need to be addressed. The Board of Selectmen short term goals are items that they prioritize and look to try to fit them into our budget usually as a Capital Improvement or if the cost is minimal we place it in the operating budget. Areas that we include in the short term goals are Communication, Infrastructure, Economic Development, and Interior Town Operations. Communication is a priority. The Board would like to find ways to distribute information to our citizens in a more efficient way such as generating an e-mail listing of citizens that are willing to provide their e-mail so we can do a mass mailing or use of automated phone calls similar to what the school department uses. They would like to see the cost for an electronic sign or marquee to be placed near the town office so we can post information. A new addition to the short term goals this year is updating the Town Office electrical system which is still, in many places, the original wiring. This would also give us the opportunity to put in a generator so that in an emergency we could maintain necessary systems and provide an alternative shelter.

Long Term Goals are categories I have been tasked to research and provide costs and their feasibility. The topics include Regionalization of

Public Safety and Solid Waste where we might be able to find cost savings and improvements to our services. The Town Infrastructure is an ongoing long term project as we aim to improve our roads as well as sidewalks. This area includes our town buildings such as the town office, police station, fire station, transfer station, and public works. The Fire Station is a building that we have continued to put money into. The Board has requested that the Fire Department and I start looking at new locations that better serve their needs, as well as a building that we can use over the next 50-75 years. We will be looking at this over the next several years.

We must include addressing ADA Compliance Issues as well as asbestos removal from some of our older buildings. The Envision Berwick Committee, Recreation Department and the Recreation Master Planning Committee are working on a very comprehensive plan that will include a location and need for a Community Center.

The Board also started meeting with the Municipal Committees this month. These meetings are open workshops that will give the Board and the committee members an opportunity to have an open dialogue and discuss their needs and ideas. The first meeting was with the Planning Board and was very positive. The meetings will be televised on BCTV.

I hope to see you all at the November 8th election. This is a very important time to exercise one of our civil duties that many in the world don't have. Get out and Vote!

Finance Office – Maureen Finger, Director

Financial Statements/Audit:

The financial statements for period ended June 30, 2016 will be presented to the Board of Selectmen in November. The Town ended fiscal year 2016 on a positive note increasing the general fund's total fund balance by \$240,828 or 8.1%. The Town's General Fund is the general operating fund of the Town.

The following table summarizes the General Fund's fund balance for fiscal year 2016 and 2015 for comparison.

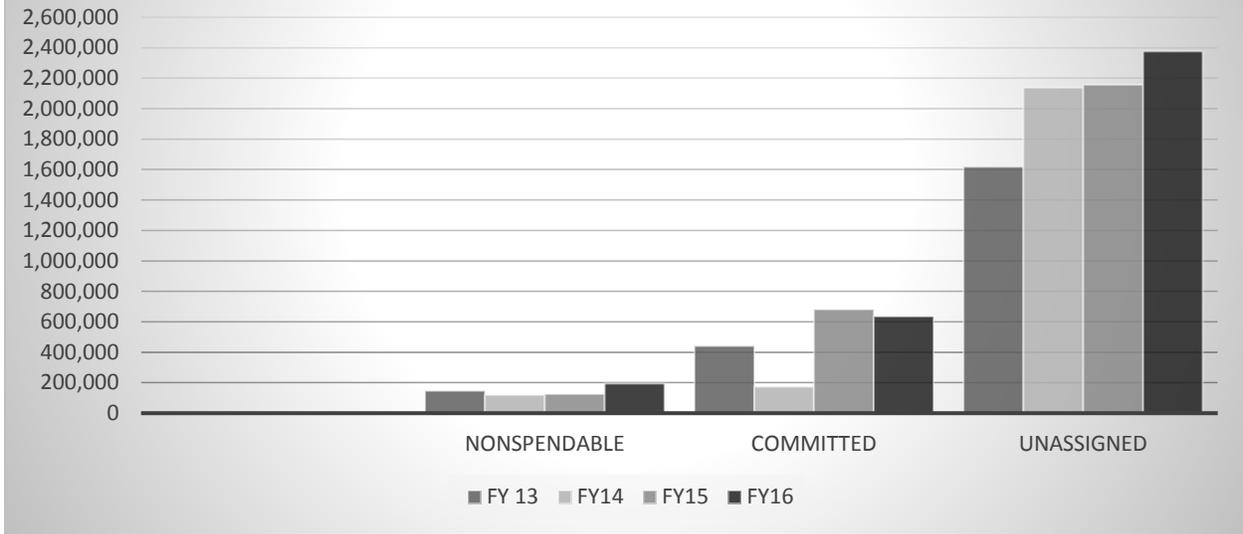
	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>\$ Chg.</u>	<u>% Chg.</u>
Fund balance:				
Nonspendable	\$ 194,150	\$ 126,675	\$ 67,475	53.3%
Committed	635,940	681,206	(45,266)	-6.6%
Unassigned	2,376,052	2,157,433	218,619	10.1%
Total fund balance	\$ 3,206,142	\$ 2,965,314	\$ 240,828	8.1%

The benefit of a healthy fund balance is to carry the Town through economic slowdowns, lower tax collections, unexpected one-time outlays, either resulting from a disaster, immediate capital needs, state budget cuts or other such events. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) has established a best practice that recommends, "... at a minimum, that general-purpose governments, regardless of size, maintain unrestricted fund balance in their general fund of no less than two months of regular general fund operating revenues or regular general fund operating expenditures."

The Town has taken this advice and developed a fund balance policy for the Board of Selectmen to follow. It is the policy of the Town of Berwick to maintain an unassigned fund balance in the general fund at 12.5% of the succeeding year's general fund including county tax and education budgeted appropriations. Amounts in excess of the target can be used to fund the capital needs of the community as deemed appropriate by the Board of Selectmen and voted upon at Town Meeting.

The following graph presents a historical look at the Town of Berwick's General Fund fund balance over the past four fiscal years. As you can see, the unassigned fund balance has grown from \$1,617,078 at June 30, 2013 to \$2,376,052 at June 30, 2016. This is a 46.9% increase in four years, all the while maintaining at least 12.5% of the succeeding year's budget in unassigned fund balance. Anything over this figure, the Board of Selectmen have been able to fund one-time capital projects during the succeeding budget process. It has also helped the Town with cash flow needs eliminating the need to seek short-term financing when tax collections are down or other revenues are lagging behind estimates.

Town of Berwick, Maine
General Fund Fund Balance
6/30/2013 to 6/30/2016



For more information on the results of fiscal year 2016, the Town’s Financial Statements will be placed on the Town’s website under the Finance Department once the Town’s auditors, RHR Smith & Company present their audit findings to the Board of Selectmen.

Tax Collections:

The first half taxes were due October 17th, and the Town Clerks’ and Finance Office staff were extremely busy entering tax payments during the first half of October. As of October 20th, 46.2% of the tax commitment had been collected.

Short-term Financing:

The Police Department has ordered a 2017 Ford Explorer Police Interceptor as approved by the voters at the June Town Meeting. This fully equipped vehicle will be purchased using tax-exempt lease purchase financing. Bid solicitations for tax-exempt lease purchase financing will be mailed out to numerous financial institutions in late October with a bid opening on November 22, 2016 at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting.



Water Department – Chris Weismann, Chief Operator

Our response to the high manganese in the river water hasn't ended with the October 17 announcement that the water was safe for anyone to drink:

- Finding out that manganese in the water can interfere with our chlorine analyzers, we bought the required laboratory reagent chemicals and learned the procedure to test for this.
- We've worked with the engineers to produce a design for fiberglass baffles to interrupt the flow of river water through the plant to increase the time the potassium permanganate has to work, a crucial part of the process.

Whenever we have the time, we're happy to flush the characteristic black particles out of our customers' service lines. You can also check out the simple instructions on our Berwick Water Department Facebook page, too.

Chief Operator Chris Weismann attended a meeting at the Somersworth town hall to discuss a draft "drinking water protection ordinance." New Hampshire and Maine state environmental protection and drinking water representatives are engaged in a cooperative effort to protect the Berwick and Somersworth treatment plant water intakes from the potential hazards to water quality presented by motor-driven boats,

snowmobiles, and other vehicles, along with the danger of contamination presented by human body contact with the river water.

Tyler Nodden, Class IV Operator, attended a fire hydrant repair class. Tyler has been opening hydrants and flushing out dirty water during the month, with a focus on dead-end water mains.

After ten years the Water Department truck has holes in the driver's side floorboard; sounds like time for a new truck.

All Water employees received the latest CPR training in a video format training at the Fire Department. New rule: 120 chest compressions, 2-inches deep, each minute.

Attended Maine Water Utilities Association meeting in South Berwick, listened to presentations on whether adding fluoride to drinking water was a good idea anymore.

Projected our chemical use during the upcoming calendar year—including an estimated amount of potassium permanganate—and submitted the numbers to the Southern Maine Treatment Chemical Cooperative Group. The group brings together 24 drinking water and waste water utilities, and solicits bids using the combined chemical buying volume, making it possible for us to receive lower cost chemicals.



Police Department – Timothy Towne, Chief

On Monday, October 3rd, Officer Wilfred “Bill” Vachon started work for our department. Officer Vachon will be working as our Community Resource Officer as well as performing the functions of a detective when the need arises. Officer Vachon brings with him a wealth of experience and training. He will be coordinating community events in the very near future. Please watch our website and Facebook page for further information on upcoming events.

We began using the departments new ATV on rural patrols specifically focusing on the Ridlon Road area. These patrols are in coordination with the Maine Warden Service and are also funded by that department as well. The new ATV was a tremendous improvement over the last one which lasted the department over 10 years. The new ATV is a Polaris Razor side by side. It is narrow and allows us to reach areas that we were not able to access with the retired ATV.



Seven members of the department attended training entitled Mental Health First Aid. This training is designed to assist officers who are providing initial help to people experiencing mental health problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis and various substance abuse disorders. The remainder of the department will be attending the next training session so that the entire department will have received this valuable information.

Officer Christopher Kearns has finished half of his basic training at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. He was placing in the top 25% of his class at the conclusion of the 9th week of training. He will graduate in December upon successful completion of all basic training requirements.

On Saturday, October 22nd, we hosted another “Drug Take Back” event at the police department. We have participated in these events for many years. We turned in 72 pounds of medication that was dropped off at the station by our residents. Officer Vachon helps coordinate this event in York County. He helped manage the transportation and ultimately the incineration of the medications that were collected. We have a locked drop off container inside the police department lobby that residents can use throughout the year. It resembles a post office box where you simply drop your medication through a slot into the locked compartment.

Public Works Department – Robert Perschy, Foreman

We started the month of October replacing a backlog of driveway culverts that had been accumulating over the summer. Some of these were new driveways, most are old rusted out failing culverts that have been there for over ten years. Now we replace them with plastic which will extend their life considerably.

We spent a week on Partridge Lane replacing 2 cross culverts that pass under the road , 3 driveway culverts, and fixing an area where the ground water comes up through the road near a sewer manhole. We also replaced a culvert passing under Little River Road with a plastic pipe.

We attached the Leaf Sucker on the 1 ton and started to collect leaves. We have many problem areas in Town where the leaves accumulate and plug driveway culverts causing the water to

washout driveways. We concentrated in these areas. We also have town properties that we maintain. We collect leaves which helps to save time in the spring during spring cleanup. This machine has been a huge time saver year after year as long as we have the man power and can get to the leaves before they freeze.

The department ended the month doing a few odd jobs at the Town Hall and setting up for the upcoming election.

The mechanic has been busy finishing up maintenance on the trucks and equipment preparing them for the upcoming winter. This is a tough task to accomplish to transition from summer to winter when we still have summer equipment to maintain and jobs to finish. The plow gear will be going on soon.

