



From the Town Managers Desk

Monthly Newsletter

APRIL, 2016

BRIEFS!

Town Manager's Update

This is the start of our monthly newsletter to keep the Berwick citizens and visitors informed on what has happened and what is going to happen in town. The Board of Selectmen and I believe it is very important to have a site that people can go to catch up on local news and what the municipal government is doing. Each year citizens vote on the budget and unless you watch BCTV that is the only place to find budget information and see and hear the local municipal news.

Communication is important and hopefully you will find this Newsletter informative. The Towns' "Web Page" www.berwickmaine.org contains a lot of valuable information and links to a number of sites that provide information beyond your municipal government news.

In the next few months the newsletter will contain information from each Department Head. I think you will find it extremely interesting to hear from them. This will introduce you to each department and it will provide a clear understanding of what they do and how they serve you. I look forward to hearing your comments and recommendations.

If you haven't had the opportunity to introduce yourself please don't hesitate to stop by my office. I have an "Open Door Policy" and I enjoy touching base with citizens. If you have gone to the Town Manager link on our web site, there is a brief bio on my background; job experience, education and family. I have worked as a town manager for 16 plus years and my goals have always been; to do as much as I can in the time I have in each community I have worked in. It is always the goal of managers to hopefully leave your community in a better position than when you arrived.

I have been in Berwick since August 10, 2015. I chose to come here for a number of reasons. First and foremost had to do with the amount of activity and change that was going on and what goals the community had set. It was clear that the volunteer base and progress that has been made within the last 2-3 years had tremendous momentum.



I wanted to be part of this and bring my skill set here to assist in any way possible. I have not been disappointed in the least bit nor have the groups of volunteers, elected officials and many other partners in this movement slowed. Relocating to southern Maine has been a goal of mine and my wife, Ellen. I grew up in Gorham and have a lot of family in this region. Berwick places us central to our children (adults), my daughter in Portland and son and wife in

Auburn, MA.

Since arriving in August I have had a very positive experience. Citizens I have met have been very warm and welcoming. They have all been found to be passionate about their community and look forward to the positive changes coming. I have been extremely fortunate in every town I have managed to have great staff throughout each department. Berwick is not the exception.

I have been very impressed with the staff I have the pleasure of working with. Like many local government employees they are committed to doing great work and providing our citizens with good customer service, public safety, good roads, recreation and clean water. We are always looking at ways to improve how we do things and provide cost savings whenever possible.

To touch on projects that are in process I will mention briefly what they are and what is or has happened to date. The municipal budget process is completed and the Board of Selectmen will sign the Annual Town Warrant on April 19, 2016. I have put a brief summary of the budget on the web page. It was a good process and we think it is a good budget that gets a lot done that has been put on hold and also provides essential items for departments. We have also just finished contract negotiations with the Teamsters and MAP unions. The process was an extremely constructive discussion with good results for all parties. I thank all of you that participated.

The Police Department has been straight out with the heroin epidemic that all communities have had to deal with a long with all their other duties. These types of cases require patience and long hours.. The Fire Department is in their recruiting phase and hopefully they have some people step up to help.

John Stoll of the Planning Department is extremely busy with the Planning Board and the Envision Berwick Committee and other sub groups. The Prime Tanning Project is the big kahuna for Berwick. John, Envision Berwick members, town staff and Credere Associates our engineering firm are on target with the Brownfield Cleanup of the Prime site. Buildings should start coming down in May or June. What a difference this will make visually and it should get the contractors, developers and businesses attention. Things are happening in Berwick!

Recreational aspects of the community are moving forward as well. The Salmon River Boat Launch is in and it will be the first ADA boat launch in the state of Maine. We will be providing a parking area in the front of the public works fence this summer for overflow of boaters. The trail work is ongoing and a new river venue is soon to be realized that will be opened to the kayaking world. These projects are driven by volunteers with endless energy! They are reaching out to the Recreation Committee and have been welcomed to partner with them in expanding recreation in a variety of areas for citizens of all ages and visitors. These citizens and others are a mixture of young, older and some in the middle. These folks are working together with smiles on their faces that demonstrates the pride and enthusiasm that they have with no age barriers. It is truly amazing to watch and be part of.

The Water Department is finishing up an Engineering update with Tighe & Bond Engineering that will guide them through their future needs.

Public Works and I have updated the road paving plan and will start this spring on Diamond Hill, Pond, Wentworth and Beech Ridge Roads.



The Fire Department will start a 24/7 schedule in July to improve their response time and coverage to have staff available when called out. Berwick is on the move!