



The Quamphegan

From the Manager's Desk

Snow fell at a higher rate than in the recent past, spring rains started and never seemed to end, and very hot temperatures and humidity hung on. This all seems like what happened in Augusta in its last legislative session. The governor presented a plan for curtailment of revenue sharing and school funding along with numerous other attachments. The legislature moved forward with a full agenda, one of which was not to curtail any further the funds that support lower taxes in municipalities. The result was a mixed bag that did not get completed until most towns, including ours, had completed their annual town meetings and budgets were passed.

The removal of revenue sharing, as proposed by the Governor, would have resulted in a loss in excess of \$500,000 to the Town of South Berwick. Additional cuts in school funding would have increased that number. This created a real dilemma for us as we put the budget together. The only answer was to move ahead with a budget that met the essential needs of the community without any frills attached. Meeting LD1 was a challenge as reduced state funding means less revenue that has to be made up some other place. The actual loss of revenue sharing amounts to a loss of \$150,000 in revenue this year and a further curtailment next year.

Department Heads worked hard to meet the LD1 number. Unfortunately we were not able to flat fund the budget as we did last year. We did hold the lines at a total increase of \$107,000 or 1.8%. We must not lose sight of reducing the operating budget by \$253,000 two years ago. Personnel cuts were made then and again this year. We are lucky to have employees with diversified talents who are willing to pick up the slack when positions are omitted. They work hard each day to continue the services we need to deliver.

The County has moved to a fiscal year budget and we will be paying for 18 months in this year. This onetime payment adds \$180,108 to this year's County allocation for a total of \$539,212.

The School struggled with where funding would be coming from also. You endorsed their budget with an increase of \$459,162.

The tax bill breakdown will be as follows:
School: \$7,044,770 63.2% 10.91 mils
Town: \$3,557,493 31.9% 5.51 mils
County: \$539,212 4.8% 0.83 mils

MDOT started reconstruction of a portion of Route 236 on the Berwick end of town early in the spring. This project was another perfect storm as sewer, water, and drainage was installed during a rain intense spring. We understood that there would be traffic issues with one way traffic and I applaud the construction crew and MDOT for keeping traffic moving throughout the project. I also thank you for your patience.

Grinding and milling impacted downtown businesses for a couple of days. Paving will be completed by the time you receive this and all will be normal again with one significant change. New paving from the Berwick tracks to the New Hampshire Bridge and up Portland Street to the golf course will provide smooth traveling through the town for years to come. We hope that those who utilize these streets will enjoy the beauty of our central business area and all that it has to offer. The "downtown" area of any community is its heart and it is important that we have businesses that offer the opportunity for local shopping.

The storefronts continue to see new businesses. Great Work's Chiropractic moved to another vacant store front and Antonio's Broadway Barbershop took that spot. Further

down the road Monkey Business became Mikey's Wicked Good Pizza. It's great to see the diversity of business that we have to utilize and offer to outside customers visiting our area.

We continue to work on our local roads with the funds that you approve each year in town meetings. Although the improvements may seem miniscule to some we must not forget that we have 68 miles of road to maintain and plow. Thank you for your continued support in this budget area.

We continue to work on collaboration opportunities with other communities. We still share our Assessor with North Berwick, our Code Enforcement Officer with Berwick, our solid waste and recycling hauling with North Berwick, and provide dispatching services to Berwick. All of these collaborations save tax dollars for both communities. Your Council is working with Berwick and Eliot exploring additional opportunities. Change is a difficult thing but may be the only source of reducing cost in the future. Please keep an open mind as ideas are explored or better yet stop by and share your ideas of how we could improve services and reduce cost at the same time.

Access to affordable senior housing remains an issue. Avesta housing was not able to secure funding through Maine State Housing last winter and we continue to work with them exploring opportunities for funding in the coming year.

I am proud to be the Town Manager of South Berwick and appreciate the support I have received here from the residents at large. I and those working with me remain committed to serving you on a daily basis.

Respectfully submitted,
Perry A. Ellsworth

The Maine "Circuitbreaker" Program Repealed

The Maine Residents Property Tax and Rent Refund "Circuitbreaker" Program has been repealed as part of the enacted state budget. It has been replaced with a refundable Property Tax Fairness Credit that can be claimed on the Maine Individual Income Tax Form.

The new credit will be available beginning in **January, 2014** on the 2013 Maine Individual Income Tax Form 1040ME. A worksheet will be included with Form 1040ME to calculate the amount of the credit.

Who will be eligible for the new credit?

Homeowners or renters will be eligible who meet **ALL** of the following requirements:

1. Were Maine residents during any part of the tax year;
2. Owned or rented a home in Maine during any part of the tax year and lived in that

- home during the year;
3. Had Maine adjusted gross income of not more than \$40,000; and
4. Paid property tax on a home in Maine during the tax year that was more than 10% of Maine adjusted gross income or paid rent to live in a home or apartment in Maine during the tax year that was more than 40% of Maine adjusted gross income.

How much is the refundable credit?

Qualified Maine residents can receive a credit of as much as \$300 or \$400 if 70 years of age or older.

For additional information, and for assistance you can call the Maine Revenue Services at 626-8475, or visit their website at www.maine.gov/revenue/taxrelief/tnr.htm.

Pay Taxes Online

The Town is excited to offer residents an easy and convenient method to pay tax bills online.

It's Fast, Easy, Safe, and Secure!

The system is very user-friendly and bills can be paid via a checking account or credit/debit card. No registration is required to view an online replica of the paper bill or to pay the bill.

To pay your bills online, go to www.southberwickmaine.org and click on the tax check out button.



New Permit Issued for South Berwick

The Town of South Berwick storm drains continue to be regulated by the Maine DEP through a General Permit that was re-issued on July 1, 2013. The Town's storm drains have been regulated by this program since 2003. The program requires that the Town complete a diverse set of tasks designed to keep the discharges through the storm drain system clean, so that waters which receive the discharges can continue to be "fishable and swimmable" as required by the Clean Water Act. Some of the activities that the Town is required to complete under this permit include:

- Inspecting storm drains to make sure that no litter, sewage, pet waste or hazardous materials are being discharged through them;
- Conduct public education to let people know that they should not put anything down the storm drains, because they discharge directly into streams, rivers and lakes without treatment;

- Make regular repairs to the storm drain system to ensure it functions properly.

There are many other requirements that the Town must fulfill over the next five years. A meeting to plan the specifics of the Public Education Components of General Permit Requirements will be held on Wednesday, September 18, 2013. If you are a teacher interested in environmental education, a volunteer for an environmental group, or a citizen that would like to attend the meeting and provide input, contact Kristie Rabasca at 415-5830 or Jon St. Pierre, Public Works Director at 384-3300 x117.



Volunteer Network

Looking for a rewarding volunteer opportunity? Help the South Berwick Volunteer Network (SBVN) provide free medical transportation for our neighbors. The need for service is great, with an average of nine transports a week. Rides are offered within a 15-mile radius of town with no requirements except South Berwick residency & 48 hour notice. Wheel-chair van service is also available, thanks to individual and civic group contributions. For more information about volunteering or to schedule a ride, please call the South Berwick Volunteer Network at 384-3311.

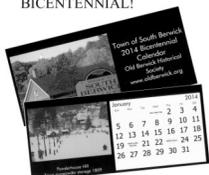
Conservation Commission

In April, the Open Space Plan was adopted by the Town Council. This follows nearly two years of dedication and work by the Open Space Committee members, Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, and citizens that shared their input. Thank You!

This fall we plan to dedicate a new and longer trail in the Town Forest, which is located off of Knights Pond Road. We are grateful for all the wonderful volunteers who generously donated their time to rebuild and improve the trail—why don't you come and check it out.

Are you interested in working on Conservation? Then why not join the Conservation Commission. Currently, there is one vacant seat that needs to be filled. For more information please contact the Town Clerk at 384-3300 x101.

South Berwick's having a BICENTENNIAL!



South Berwick Bicentennial

Next year is South Berwick's 200th Anniversary. In 1814 the Village of Quamphegan, which was part of Berwick, became today's village of South Berwick.

We need you to start thinking about how you, your businesses, or your organization can help us celebrate this milestone event. The Ad Hoc Bicentennial Committee, would like to see all town events next year be tweaked towards an 1814 historical theme. For instance, there could be a Fife and Drum Corps for musical entertainment at the Strawberry Festival.

The Old Berwick Historical Society will contribute information and research to support your planning. They will also be holding monthly lectures about the history of South Berwick. Please visit their website for more information: www.olderberwick.org.

Let's use our famous Yankee ingenuity and see what great ways we can celebrate the Bicentennial all year long! Won't you please "like" the South Berwick Bicentennial page on Facebook. This page was created to be an open forum so residents can exchange ideas and thoughts as to how to make this a Bicentennial to remember.

A beautiful 2014 desk calendar celebrating the Bicentennial is available at the South Berwick Pharmacy and the Counting House Museum.....pick one up today!

For more information please contact Norma Keim, Ad Hoc Bicentennial Committee, at 384-2915.

Library News

The Library has been packed with people who have found time for reading during the summer.

Over 200 people signed up to participate in the Summer Reading Programs and are happily collecting prizes as they reach their reading goals.

As a member of the South Berwick Library you can get free memberships to any of the Berwick Libraries and the Portland Public Library. You get access to dozens of services like free digital libraries for your e-reader, language

learning, and Ancestry.com. The library also has passes for museums in Boston, Portland, and our local area. For more information visit the library at Young Street or go to our website: www.southberwicklibrary.org.

The Friends of the South Berwick Library need your help to finish fundraising to furnish and equip your new library. Visit the Friends website for information about ways to help us reach our goals by donating to the Capital Campaign.

www.friendsofsouthberwicklibrary.org



The Community Chorus at South Berwick invites you to join the 60 singers in this South Berwick-based regional chorus.

Rehearsals start Monday, September 9, 2013.

For more information visit our website: www.CCSB-SING.org or call Director Harry Moon at 384-7059.

Fall 2013 Concert:

December 7 and 8, 2013

"A Boy was Born" ushering in the holiday season; choral performance with harp and instrumentalists.

Nomination Papers

For anyone interested in running for Town Council or School Board at the November 5th Election, nomination Papers will be available from the Town Clerk beginning Monday, August 12th.

Currently, there are 2 Town Council seats & 1 School Board seat open, each for a 3 year term.

Papers must be returned to the Town Clerk before 1:00 pm Friday, September 20th, 2013.



Recreation Department

Another great year at the South Berwick Summer Camp has come to an end. Thank you to our wonderful Directors, Counselors, CITs, and Junior Counselors. This year campers enjoyed themed-weeks and many great field trips. We also offered tennis camp and "Arts to You" at Shoe Town Playground.

We are already planning for our children's fall programs. Information will be sent out during the start of the school year for Pee Wee Soccer, Tree Tops Chorus, Mad Science, children's yoga, and the Strawberry Festival sponsored Granite State Zoo.

The South Berwick Senior Center provides a wealth of activities that enrich the lives of seniors in our area. The Center is a great place to go for fun, friendship, and fitness. The Center offers a variety of exercise classes, weekly Bingo, bridge, cards, line dancing, special events, trips, meals, and guest speakers. Come join us.