



From the Manager's Desk

Greetings to All,

As I sit here and reflect about my first six months here I am thinking about the challenges I accepted when I came here. I have worked to bring closure to some and some will remain in front of us for a period of time.

The Library Project is up and moving ahead after multiple false starts at the starting line for the last 12 years. During a referendum vote you approved 1.5 million dollars and the gun has been fired signaling a rush of events that will bring us across the finish line by the end of the year. The Rectory was jacked up and moved to a new home on an adjacent lot. This late 1800's building was saved from demolition to the joy of many. Its movement will facilitate an 1800 foot addition to the present St. Michael's Church that will enhance opportunities to use your new Library for years.

The Construction bidding process is underway and by the time you receive this newsletter, contractors should be in place and working. The end result will be usable space by the end of the year. It could be your Christmas present to yourself because it is your resolve that is making the Library a reality.

The budget process became an issue as we proceeded through the annual Town meeting. All the articles associated with the budget passed without discussion. The LD1 override article at the end did not fare as well and was defeated by a slim margin. The result was additional budget workshops by the Town Council and a special Town meeting. I hope that you have visited our Town website recently as we have endeavored to explain what LD1 is and how it affects us.

Transparency is the most critical item that faces us as municipal public servants. How much information do you disseminate at one time? Is that information understandable? Will it be taken out of context? Do people really care? A balance is hard to achieve that doesn't provoke some misunderstanding. We will stick with the facts and if you have questions **my door is open and I can be a good listener**. Better yet bring some solutions with you so that we can consider them. Better solutions come from looking at an opportunity from all arenas and through the eyes and minds of many. Issues should be considered opportunities to work on solutions as opposed to creating a chaotic status.

Our Special Town Meeting pertaining to LD1 overruns brought forth both constructive and critical criticism. Three hundred people attended the meeting during this hot, steamy night. A significant portion of the group was there to let the Town Council and Town Manager know that they expected cuts in budgets. Those same folks also appeared to be in favor of sustaining our Undesignated Fund (our checkbook) per the new policy as a vote to utilize \$100,000 to reduce taxes was voted down. I have spoken as to the needs of this Fund during previous meetings and agree that your decision is in the best interests of the Town.

The inability of passing the two articles to exceed LD1 leaves us with a \$420,855 gap between what was raised and appropriated and what we can actually spend. The process to eliminate those dollars will be difficult, as in checking the history of this Town there have been budget overruns in every year going back until at least 2002. My intention is to live by our budgets and not ask for additional funds at the end of the year. We will endeavor to supply essential services but some non-essential services may be eliminated or reduced. We must set the stage as we move forward and understand that things that are not sustainable will not be funded and things that are not essential may suffer in this and future budgets. Our LD1 gap will certainly grow in the next year and the effect will be twofold next year. This is a challenge that we need to work through together as the results must fit your direction.

In closing I need your suggestions and thoughts before we start the next budget process. Please stop by and see me and share any feelings that you may have prior to the beginning of the next budget process. I am working on a number of problems and need people to bring me solutions.

Respectfully,
Perry A. Ellsworth

MUNICIPAL ELECTION INFORMATION

Nomination papers are available from the Town Clerk on Monday, August 15th for anyone interested in running for Town Council or School Board at the November 8th, 2011 Election. There are 2 Town Council seats and 1 School Board seat available, all for 3 year terms. Papers must be returned to the Town Clerk by 3:00 pm Friday, September 23rd, 2011.

New Low Interest Loan Program Helps Local Homeowners With Energy Efficiency

Energy prices have increased dramatically in recent years. Now, a new locally-run, low-interest loan program is available to help homeowners in South Berwick and other Southern York County towns reduce their energy costs. The Seacoast Energy Initiative (SEI) is a non-profit loan program that offers loans of up to \$7500 for home weatherization and for controls that can make your current heating system run more efficiently. Some funds are also available for solar hot water systems.

The SEI is a \$500,000 loan program funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, also known as the federal stimulus act, which was signed into law by President Obama to help the nation recover from the Great Recession. The money was granted to South Berwick and five other local towns by Efficiency Maine Trust, a state entity. South Berwick is the lead town in the six-town consortium.

In addition to helping local homeowners reduce their energy costs and make their homes more comfortable during the heating season, SEI will also help stimulate the local economy by supporting jobs in the energy efficiency industry.

For more information on SEI and how to apply for a loan please visit their website at www.sei.org

Strawberry Festival

The South Berwick Strawberry Festival Committee would like to offer a huge THANK YOU to all the volunteers for the 36th South Berwick Strawberry Festival. Once again the Festival was a huge success in spite of the heavy rains. This is due mainly to the large number of community volunteers who helped out with the hulling on Friday and all the work that went into Festival day under the strawberry tent, with the break down and clean up afterwards. This year we received 13 requests for funds and we were able to honor 9 of the requested grants, for a total of \$10,500.

SoBo Central

Don't miss SoBo Central's first Lantern Fest!

Enjoy the sounds of PB & J before a lantern walk and launching of sky lanterns. Lanterns made from recycled materials will be available for sale or you can bring your own. Bring a picnic or purchase food from Spring Hill. Desserts for sale to benefit the library. This is sure to be the highlight of summer.

Thursday, August 25th from 5 to 11 pm at Spring Hill with a rain date of Friday, August 26th. For more information go to www.sobocentral.org

Volunteer Network

The South Berwick Volunteer Network (SBVN) provided nearly 550 rides to local residents to medical appointments in 2010. The services of the Volunteer Network are offered with no requirements except South Berwick residency & 48 hour notice, and supplements the transportation services offered by York and Wentworth Douglass Hospitals, and York County Community Action. Service is limited to an approximate 15-mile radius from South Berwick. Additional drivers are urgently needed. For more information, please call the South Berwick Volunteer Network at (207) 384-3311. Wheel-chair van service is also available.

Committee Openings

- ◆ Board of Assessment Review, 1 open seat, meets as needed.
- ◆ Community Development Committee, 1 open seat, meets the 3rd Thursday of the month.
- ◆ Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee, 1 open seat, meets 2nd Thursday of the month.
- ◆ Planning Board, 1 alternate seat, meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month.
- ◆ Recreation Committee, 2 open seats, meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month.
- ◆ Zoning Board of Appeals, 1 alternate seat, meets as needed.

Library

As the new library becomes a reality the staff wants to express thanks to the Town, its patrons, and Friends of the South Berwick Library for their vote of confidence and support, both financial and moral. We are looking forward to being able to serve our patrons with greater efficiency and in a more modern setting in the new library. We are also grateful to the MSAD #35 school libraries for sharing their teachers' summer reading list books with us. We added approximately 40 titles to our collection for the summer. This allows us to both supplement books in our collection and to set aside funds for books that we need in our permanent collection. This is a great use of resources that might otherwise reside on a school's or student's bookshelf for the summer collecting dust. The addition of our online catalog and the ability to manage your account at home has been very well received. Use of downloadable ebooks and audio books through the State's consortium is popular. However, in the long run, our statistics show that the people who use the library still prefer their reading materials in paper and ink. We are constantly adding new titles that appeal to a wide range of interests. We are fortunate that we can balance our resources to provide our patrons with the information that they need, whether it be for learning, recreation or entertainment.

~ ~ Historical Society ~ ~

Conservation Commission

Open Space Planning: The Commission has been working to develop the Town's Open Space Plan. Open space can serve as a vital component to the long term sustainability of a community. Open spaces can preserve wildlife habitat, provide opportunities for agriculture, ensure quality water resources, and contribute to the quality of life the residents of South Berwick desire.

How to help: Fill out the open space survey available at the Conservation Commission section on www.southberwickmaine.org or consider joining the open space committee charged with writing the plan.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid: A small, aphid like insect that threatens the health and sustainability of the eastern hemlock was discovered at Vaughan Woods State Park. The Maine Forest Service is using biological control in the form of predator beetles to reduce the rate of spread throughout the park and other areas around Town.

How to help: Volunteer to help monitor the hemlock trees at Vaughan Woods State Park or contribute money to the Maine Forest Service for the predator beetle.

Town Forest: When was the last time you took a walk in the woods? Visit our 88 acre Town treasure off of Knight's Pond Rd. to see the much needed post-harvest clean-up and trail work that Boy Scout Troop #336 completed.

For more information about these topics and the work of the Conservation Commission, please call 384-3300 ext. 336 or send an email to prnel@comcast.net.



Have you seen the Village Voices exhibit? Four centuries of enterprise and endurance in South Berwick

Visit the Counting House Museum, Weekends 1-4 pm through October. Free admission – Donations welcome

Coming Events

“Village Voices: The Tour” Sat., Sept. 17 – 1:00 pm
A one-hour historical walking tour begins in the post office parking lot. Free.

“Who Won The War of 1812? Forgotten Patriot Pirates of the Piscataqua” Thurs., Sept. 22 - 7:30 pm
Lecture at Jeppesen Science Center, Berwick Academy. History writer J. Dennis Robinson's irreverent bicentennial look at America's "Forgotten War," its killer impact on the Piscataqua region, and the story of the \$3 million tall ship *Lynx*. Donation \$2 requested.

The Community Chorus at South Berwick

Invites singers to join this South Berwick-based 60 singer regional chorus. Rehearsals start Monday, September 12. For more information visit our website: www.CCSB-SING.org or call Director Harry Moon at 384-7059.

Fall 2011 Concert

“Laud to the Nativity” ushering in the holiday season; performing with woodwind ensemble on December 3 & 4, 2011 in Newington (Holy Trinity Lutheran Church) and South Berwick (Performing Arts Center at Marshwood High School).

TRANSFER STATION HOURS

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| Sunday | 7 am to 12 pm |
| Wednesday | 7 am to 6 pm |
| Friday | 7 am to 12 pm |
| Saturday | 7 am to 6 pm |

Please make a note of these hours for your convenience.