

Town Manager's Report, February 28, 2023

- **Highway-**
 - 1,478 tons of salt used so far this season, in line with budget.
 - Still working on storm cleanup. The crew has a good handle on it but with having 2 storms last week and 3 coming this week this may slow it down.
 - Open position for Parks laborer.

- **Police Department-**
 - 0 Arrests
 - 3 Accidents
 - 51 Traffic stops.
 - Meeting with Archive Social regarding archiving of department social media accounts.
 - Meeting with Senator King's office reference to available Senate Appropriations funding.
 - Sgt. Stephens attended Civil Rights Officer Training.
 - Chief Ruger has been working on submitting grants. He has submitted to the Pipeline grant for new equipment and is now working on a 2nd grant for scheduling software.
 - John Sprouse is in Week 7 of his 18-week academy training.

- **Fire Department-**
 - 7 Calls and YTD is 146
 - Working on updating job descriptions for all positions, and goal setting for 2023 and beyond.
 - Members hosted the local Girl Scout troop, giving a tour of the station and teaching the troop about fire safety.

- **Code Enforcement-**
 - 5 Building Permits
 - 2 Plumbing Permits
 - 27 Inspections
 - 9 Meetings
 - 3 Violation complaints under investigation.

- **Planning-**
 - 3 lot subdivision in the final phases.
 - Berwick Academy submittal for a playground.
 - Working on ordinance changes for setback and submittals.

- **Library-**
 - Public Works assisted in clearing out unsold books from the book sale in October.
 - Summer reading plans finalized, presenters confirmed, prizes and kickoff supplies purchased.

- **Recreation-**
 - Powderhouse Hill was up and running with almost 200 visitors.
 - AARP continues to process about 18 – 24 tax returns for people in the community every Friday. They have been fully booked each week.
 - In addition to keeping up with our regular programming, we are working on plans for the Egg Hunt (4/8), Strawberry Run, and Summer Camp plans.

- **Seniors-**
 - Senior Center lunch on Wednesday is a lunch and learn on fraud.

- **Assessing-**
 - We began the process of reviewing eligibility for BETE (Business Equipment Tax Exemption) and updating the personal property taxable value and exempt value for 4/1/2023, FY2024.
 - Working on estimate for growth
 - Turn-Around Document is done. This is a report to the State and entails qualifying the sales to make sure they are market transactions as well as making reasonably sure the data is accurate so that the resulting ratio study will indicate our level of assessment. I am expecting our ratio to be in the 80's after I complete my analysis this week.
 - Receiving many applications for current use and for various exemptions.
 - Working on map changes that are effective for 4/1/2023. (Splits, subdivisions, lot line revisions, etc.)
 - Permit pass will begin either this or next week. Visiting a few hundred properties to follow up on incomplete construction as of 4/1/2022 and any new permits issued after that date. The results of the permit pass give us the actual growth number.

- **Town Clerk-**
 - Interview for the open position.
 - Preparing for Tax payments coming in.
 - March registrations usually double from January and February.

- **Transfer Station-**
 - Crew is working on maintenance on down time.
 - Normally haul 6 containers a week and last week there were only 3.

- **Economic Development-**

- TIF: Technical Revisions have been submitted to the Dept. of Economic & Community Development, for final review and approval. We are hoping to hear soon.
- Rt 236 Traffic Study / Grants: Rt. 236 Traffic Study, final report should be ready for the Town Council by mid-March.
- Business & Economic Development: working with 4 businesses, 2 are significant businesses on Rt. 236.
- Grants: continuing to do more research with Maine Philanthropy on potential grants. Also, SMPDC has new grant funding for qualifying businesses, through Economic Recovery. Sent that information to businesses; Dawn has posted it on the website.
- Market Analysis RFP: kick off meeting was held; project will start shortly. Contract will be sent out.
- Business Welcome Package: working with Jeni McCabe, and our volunteer Ashley O'Brien on a welcome package, complete with the information a business would need to locate or expand here in South Berwick. Jeni has done a great job with the initial set up.
- I1 and I2 Frontage Setbacks: working with Jeni, on a zoning ordinance amendment, to reduce I1 and I2 frontage setbacks from 75' to 40' – wrote a letter of support for the Planning Board's consideration.
- Maine DECD Confidential Business Location: Meeting with SMPDC staff this afternoon, to discuss the potential location of a 100,000 SF business to South Berwick. We are on the "short list".
- So Bo Central & Maine Downtown Centers Meeting: met with Amy Miller, and with Anne Ball, Director of Maine Downtown Centers to discuss our downtown; Amy expressed that many people are not in favor of losing the town hall to a new location and are in favor of keeping the building here and in use as a town hall.
- Maine DOT 2023-2025 Work Plan: has been released, only a few projects are slated for South Berwick. Will contact state traffic engineer to discuss.

- **Finance/HR & Benefits/Safety-**

- Thursday kickoff meeting with the building committee for the Town Hall needs assessment.
- FEMA- reporting damage from Christmas storm.
- Tax reminders were sent out last week.
- Collecting letters for the Annual Report.
- Finalizing the budget.

- **Admin-**

- Staff office position changes are working out great.
- Great Works Fiber working on installing the lines for high-speed internet.
- Tim is on vacation 2/27-3/3.