

Town Manager's Report, March 13, 2023

Covering February 28th – March 13th

- **Highway-**

- 1,952 tons of salt used so far this season.
- Still working on storm cleanup. The crew has a good handle on it but with 5 storms in the last few weeks it did slow it down.
- Open position for Parks laborer.
- 500 hours of roadside mowing and maintenance.
- Brattle and Front Street- Reconstruction with drainage.
- Spring Street- Reclaim and pave.
- Moved into the new storage garage, which is a great addition to the Public Works facility.
- Patching potholes.

- **Police Department-**

- 2 Arrests
- 7 Accidents
- 106 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 a 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 8 of his 18-week academy training. Officer Sprouse who is attending the BLETP was just named president of the class by his peers of approximately 70 cadets. Chief received the call on 3/9 with the news from the MCJA. They are proud of him and wanted us to know we have provided a stellar candidate.
- Bridget Pote was named volunteer of the year by the Chamber of Commerce on 3/8 at the York Center for Wildlife.
- 3/13 will be the final walk through of the police department to finalize the accreditation process.
- 3/21 The PD will be volunteering time with Meals on Wheels to deliver meals to elders.
- Lt. Upton and Chief Ruger will be attending the FBI LEEDA part two class of a trilogy in the first week of April.

- Conducted oral boards for a new officer on 3/9 and potentially might have found a new full time and consideration for a part-time officer depending on the formality of the background check. This will put the PD back to full staff.
- Chief Ruger and Chief Hamel conducted a walking tour of the high school and Great Works School from top to bottom. The middle school will be this week.
- PD and FD performed a mock lock down at Central School for the first time and thankfully it was a success with only 1 external door left open.
- Berwick Academy has asked the PD to perform a CSI school. Lt. Upton and Officer Stephens will be conducting this training.

- **Fire Department-**

- 32 Calls and YTD is 171. Well above the call volume of the previous two years. 30 called ahead of 3/12/2022 and 60 calls ahead of 3/12/2021.
- 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.
- Training- cold water rescue training, as well as the annual state-mandated safety training. The Lieutenants have developed the water rescue itinerary, while the Health and Safety Captain is working on the BLS refreshers.
- Chief attended the New England FOOLS annual Northeastern Fire Summit on leadership track in Wells last weekend. Chief and 2 others will be attending the Maine Fire Chief's Association Professional Development conference at Sunday River later this month.
- Working on scheduling all of 2023's required third-party testing. There are several items that require annual 3rd party testing and inspection, including the fire pumps, hose, SCBA, ladders, and cascade system. There are only a few companies that provide these services, so he is scheduling now to ensure we can complete these items starting in July.

- **Code Enforcement-**

- 7 Building Permits- 5 build out permits and 2 for additions.
- 2 Pending Permits- awaiting more information.
- 4 Plumbing Permits-internal.
- 27 Inspections
- 9 Meetings
- 3 Violation complaints under investigation.
- Ordinance writing-creating Village Business District performance standards.
- Definition changes- LD2003- place appropriately in our ordinance- rough draft.
- Temp started 3/13, Martha.

- **Planning-**

- 3 lot subdivision in the final phases.
- Berwick Academy submittal for a playground.
- Working on ordinance changes for setback and submittals.
- SP-23-001- L J E Properties
- SP-23-002- Berwick Academy Playground Modification
- SP-23-003- Lords Lane X- 3 Lot Subdivision
- 100% Compliance for training for Planning and ZBA
- Violations- Cannabis ordinance, once passed. 2 violations will be active.
- Violations- Pending- dog kennel- Natick Lane.

- **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.
- Closed early on 3/1 due to a power outage and was closed 3/4 due to weather.
- There were over 2,000 visitors last month.

- **Recreation-**

- Powderhouse Hill was up and running with almost 200 visitors.
- Powderhouse surpassed 1,200 tickets for the season having sold 1,248 tickets as of this past Saturday.
- AARP continues to process about 20 – 24 tax returns for people in the community every Friday. They have been fully booked each week with 5 Friday's left.
- In addition to keeping up with our regular programming, we are working on plans for the Egg Hunt/Touch-A-Truck (4/8), Strawberry Run, and Summer Camp plans.
- Expanded our Coyote Club offerings adding an additional session to the Marshwood Great Works School kids.

- **Seniors-**

- Senior Center lunch on Wednesday 3/1 was a lunch and learn on fraud.
- St. Patrick's Day trip to Danversport Yacht Club to see an Irish band perform will be on Wednesday 3/15 and the Luncheon will be on Thursday 3/16 with entertainment by Brian Stankovich followed by beef stew.

- **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.
 - Certified Ratio form from the State has come in. The developed parcel ratio is 85%, which affirms the need for a statistical update of value as well as a full measure & list revaluation. I am planning to perform another statistical update for 4/1/2023 using the sales from 7/1/2021 to 6/30/2022. This will allow us to certify at 100% and not lose any reimbursement from the State. Please see attachments.
- **Town Clerk-**
 - Tax payments coming in.
 - March registrations usually double from January and February.
 - 1370 dog licenses on list with about 300 not done.
 - 3 applications received for the Board of Assessors review.
 - New hire starting 4/4- Britney Spencer.
- **Transfer Station-**
 - Crew is working on maintenance on down time.
 - Normally haul 6 containers a week and the week of 2/20 there were only 3.
 - Glass machine is broken. He does not see the need in fixing it as this glass gets disposed of with the demo debris.
- **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. Approved 3/9.
 - Rt 236 Traffic Study / Grants: Rt. 236 Traffic Study, final report has been submitted.
 - 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.
- York Region Chamber of Commerce: I am now serving on the Board of Directors for the Chamber; and attended the Annual Awards event. Pleased to announce for South Berwick, that Bridget Pote was given the Volunteer of the Year award; Jack Kareckas was given the Citizen of the Year award; and that Stage House Inn (Jim Flynn) was given the Business of the Year award.

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

- Port City Architecture-Building Study- kickoff meeting was held on 3/2 with the Building Committee. The Building Committee was brought up to speed with the project and they were very glad to be part of the process.
- FEMA- reporting damage from Christmas storm.
- Tax reminders were sent out last week.
- Collecting letters for the Annual Report.
- Finalizing the budget and completed 2 workshops with the Council.
- Lita from Port City visited everyone last week to take pictures of the working space and office furniture. She is working on putting the assessment together and will present it to the Building Committee for discussion and then it will be brought to Town Council.

- **Admin-**

- Staff office position changes are working out great.
- Great Works Internet worked on installing the fiber lines for high-speed internet.
- Received 4 submissions for the “What is South Berwick About?” writing contest. Town Council to pick top 3.
- Management Leadership training will be performed by Ray and Chief Ruger in April.
- Annual Safety D.O.L training will be conducted in April by Ray.
- Blain has sent in his EMA resignation, and this has been accepted. Ray will be appointed on 4/1 with his Deputy Director being Lt. Carver.