

MANAGER'S REPORT
October 27, 2016

Foreclosure Letters – I sent out 23 letters last week to owners of properties foreclosed on in 2014 asking owners to contact the Town to prevent further legal action/sale of properties. Many of these lots are land only, some are rental properties, and a number have not had tax payments made for more than 4 years. The goal of the Town is to work with owners to retain their property but it is necessary for owners to agree to work with the Town as well. So far three owners have been in contact and either paid what was due in full or made arrangements to do so before the next tax bill goes out in 2017. It is my goal to work through this list without having to bring any to the Council for sale.

Driver/Laborer Position – We received numerous applications for the driver/laborer position with the highway department and have done some interviews. It is my intent that a decision on this hire be made by next week.

Holiday Events – Economic Development Director Rich Rotella and I met with representatives from Main Street Bucksport this week to discuss the upcoming holiday season and plans that are being made to promote Bucksport and its businesses. As a reflection of Main Street spaces filling up, there is not a plan for sponsoring pop-up shops because there are very few spaces for in which anything could pop up! That is good news. A Main Street full of thriving businesses is one of the major goals of the community. More information will be forthcoming in the next several weeks of the seasonal events that will be held.

Worker's Compensation News – We received our final year-end report for the 15-16 worker's compensation year and renewal application for 2016-17. I am very pleased to report that the Town's experience modification factor – which is what impacts how much we pay for worker's comp premiums is .66 for the coming year. With that low a modification factor, the town will continue to pay substantially less for this coverage than we would if the Town were sustaining a lot of claims. It is a reflection on the training and safety practices of the Town Departments and the care with which our employees perform their work.

USDA Loan Closing – The loan closing for the sewer loan will be held on November 21st which locks in the 1.875% interest rate that saves the Town more than \$1 million dollars in interest payments over the 28 year life of the loan.

Concrete Sidewalks – Continued progress is being made on replacing the bad sections of the sidewalks in the downtown. The contract is due to be completed by October 31st.

Zero Sort – I have received information related to the cost of zero sort and I hope to have a Solid Waste Committee meeting scheduled soon so that we can move forward with this process.

Yellow Schoolhouse Project – I am sure that many of you have noticed the dramatic change to the Yellow Schoolhouse. The outhouse restoration has taken a bit more time than anticipated due to some deterioration but the project should be completed soon. The building is back in use and I am getting good reports on the work that has been done.

SafetyWorks – The Town has received the report back from the Department of Labor resulting from their inspection at the end of August. Each department has an identified ‘to-do’ list – much of which has already been done – in order to qualify for the SHAPE designation by the Department. We have until the end of November to report back on the items identified. This is a great program and a positive way in which to assess our operations in terms of their compliance with all of the laws and regulations governing workplace safety. Thanks to Fire Chief Craig Bowden for taking the lead on this effort and to all the other department heads and town employees for their help in attaining this designation.

Docks & Floats – The Town and Marina docks and floats were removed this week. They were originally scheduled for last week but it was put off a week to avoid filling the waterfront land area with floats just before the Ghostport festivities. The process went smoothly and they will be assessing what repairs need to be made to these items prior to the next in-the-water season.

Credit/Debit Card Payments – In 2011, the Town Council approved the acceptance of credit and debit cards for all municipal payments except property taxes. We have ongoing requests to allow this service. There is no additional cost to the Town for the acceptance of credit or debit cards since customers pay the fees associated with the use of cards. There was concern at one time over payments that might be made on taxes that were about to go to tax lien status in the event that a credit or debit charge was revoked by the customer. However this issue is of no greater risk for credit/debit cards than it is for accepting a personal check for tax payments. Unless there are objections by the Council I will be including a resolve on the next agenda to allow credit and debit card payments for property taxes.

Leaf Pick Up – The annual bagged leaf pick up by the Public Works crew will be held on Monday, November 14th for all residents in the areas served by municipal sewer and public water.