

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT 2017

The purpose of this memo is to report on work done in the 2017 year. Although the report is presented by department, it is important to note that without Council action and approval – none of the work described could have been accomplished. The Town is fortunate to have a forward-thinking Town Council that is willing to consider new ideas and ways of doing things.

Public Works –

- During the past year the Town Crew has taken on the added responsibility of transporting waste from the Transfer Station to PERC on a weekly basis. This change is saving the Town more than \$27,000 annually.
- The backhoe and a plow truck were upgraded this year. Using lease purchase for the backhoe and a three year note for the truck leveled the impact to the reserve account and to the annual budget.
- A new sidewalk plow was purchased at a cost of nearly \$65,000 less than the old type of sidewalk plows. And this unit also is able to be used in other seasons for multiple purposes.
- Solar panels were approved for installation on the Town Garage roof to offset power bills not only for the public works garage but for 7 other town electricity accounts.
- The Town crew will be making its own salt brine for use this year which will save the budget over \$4,000 per year going forward.
- The Public Works Director has expanded notifications for the sale of surplus highway equipment resulting in a higher number of bids and higher bids for property that the Town sells.
- The Public Works crew won the Spirit Award at the Annual Parade of Lights for the second year in a row.

Transfer Station –

- The conversion to zero sort at the end of 2016 has reduced solid waste tonnage shipped to PERC by nearly 25%. Since zero sort costs less than solid waste – it is saving the Town money and it has made life easier for people using the Transfer Station.
- We have removed the old storage trailers from the transfer station.
- The water system was changed to avoid the need for anyone to have a confined space license for the Town.
- The Town acquired a new bobcat to replace the old one at the facility and transferred the forklift to the Highway department.

Police

- A new police cruiser was purchased, and a used vehicle was purchased for use as the chief's vehicle. This step was taken to 'speed up' the rotation of cruisers through the system before they become maintenance problems.
- Police Chief Geagan was named the President of the Maine Chief of Police organization.
- We have a new full time officer, Officer Coleman, with the department following the resignation of an officer. In addition there is a new part time officer, Officer Lowe.
- The Police Department has received several grants from the Bureau of Highway Safety for speed, oui, and seatbelt enforcement.
- The department has had some major staffing challenges due to vacancy and illness but they have continued to provide excellent coverage for the Town despite these challenges. It is important to remember that this department deals with the same kinds of crimes here that you read about in larger communities. We are fortunate to have the professional and capable crew that we do.

Dispatch

- Dispatch has converted to the Spillman program which now allows the Town to access a wider range of police agencies in order to share information.

FIRE/EMS

- The fire department received a \$240,000 grant to install smoke detectors and CO2 monitors in all single and two family homes in Bucksport and Verona as well as to do fire inspections for those who wished to have them.
- The Fire Department received a grant of \$254,000 for the addition of 2 full time fire/ems persons for a three year period. At the present time, the four regular full time staff members are working large numbers of hours of overtime due to the volume of primarily EMS calls received by the department. These new members should help with that situation.
- The Public Safety Building is having all lighting replaced with LED lighting as a means of reducing the cost of electricity in that building.
- The Fire Department has also received several other safety grants from the Maine Municipal Association for safety equipment purchases.
- The Town received SHAPE status from the Department of Labor – one of only 8 communities in the state to do so for all municipal departments – and this project was spearheaded by Chief Bowden. This results in decreased worker's compensation premiums for the Town of Bucksport. The Town has received the LEADER designation from the Maine Municipal Association Risk Pool for its efforts to maintain a safe workplace. This also helps reduce our worker's compensation premiums.
- The Town's ISO rating has dropped again – from 04/4Y to 03/3Y and this will be effective as of April 1, 2018. This will help to drop premium rates for fire insurance for those who live in the community.

- The Fire Department handles all required training for workplace safety, and fire extinguisher training which insures that all departments stay in compliance with rules governing required trainings.

IT/PEG Channel

- We have instituted a new training records program that provides a way to keep track of all the required training for all employees in one program – as opposed to different methods in different departments
- The Town has transitioned to a new phone system. The Town secured a favorable rate by ‘piggybacking’ on the system that was purchased by RSU 25. Since the Town and the school share internet services via the Public Safety Building and the Town Office – this has provided some real efficiencies.
- The Town now offers video streaming of Town Council meetings with the meetings available for viewing after the Council meetings as well. We are in the process of adding the Planning Board meetings to this.

SEWER TREATMENT

- The \$13.4 million dollar treatment facility is up and running now. It was such well-run project that we have a sizeable contingency remaining. Contingency is grant money so we should be able to use it either toward a solar project to help offset electricity costs at the site or some other needed sewer upgrade.
- The Town granted Maine Water a three year contract for management of the treatment plant and collection system. This includes the addition of one full time person which is required due to the change from primary to secondary treatment.
- The Town reduced sewer rates for those not on Town Water to be consistent with those on Town water by changing the cubic feet charged as a minimum from 2100 cf to the 1800 cf per quarter charged to sewer users on public water. The Town also reduced rates from full payment for locations with a sewer line but no building on the lot to \$45/quarter to cover debt service only in the sewer budget. The Town has not had to raise sewer rates for the second year in a row.

RECREATION

- Nowhere has there been a bigger change than in recreation. In this past year the Council voted to contract with Downeast Family YMCA for recreational services in Bucksport. After more than 40 years with Recreation Director Tim Emery providing excellent services, there was a good deal of concern over how to insure that programs and offerings remained in the excellent category. The Y hired home-town Bucksport alumnus Nick Tomaszko as the Bucksport Y Recreation Director and the new set up is off to a great start.
- Before and after school care is now available through the Bucksport Y
- The Fitness facility has been relocated to a large room and new equipment installed.
- The ice rink has been rehabbed, a liner added, and skate storage areas installed.

- The pool was dedicated as the Tim Emery Municipal Pool in recognition of Tim's long term service to the Town and its residents.
- Major repairs to the pool piping system will be done in the Spring and a proposal is yet to be reviewed for a Splash Pad area to be added to the facility.

MARINA & WATERFRONT

- Marina manager Bill Chandler chose to resign after three years of successful management of the facility. Mike Ormsby, harbormaster, was selected to take on this role.
- The Marina was in the black for the third year, with no use of tax payer funding for the facility.
- Plans are for the addition of at least 4 slips to serve 40' seasonal boats for the 2018 season.
- Repairs have been identified as necessary at the Town Dock and Fishing Pier which will be done in the Spring of 2018
- The Town will see its first destination cruise, a Norwegian exploration cruise, in the Spring of 2018.
- AIM Development allowed the use of the oil dock for a non-US registry cruise ship in the fall of 2017 with approximately 50 travelers spending time in Bucksport and the area visiting the Fort and the Bridge and in local businesses.
- The Gator was replaced with a vehicle more suited in terms of size for the work that it does.
- Rich Rotella, Economic & Community Development Director added the Waterfront/Marina to his Department oversight responsibilities
- New LED lighting was installed on the Waterfront Walkway lights, as well as Night Sky adapters in all poles as well. Not only will the electricity bill be less expensive, but the light is now more concentrated on the walkway itself.
- The Town took steps to insure that the walkway would not be gated off to the public by taking a permanent easement behind the Fort Knox Inn for the walkway that has been in existence for more than 20 years – and ungated for nearly 15 years.
- The Town has received donations of several granite benches for the walkway from community members and groups.

TOWN OFFICE

- The Town Office has new LED lighting installed which will help to save money on electricity and which took advantage of significant rebates from Efficiency Maine.
- The Town has increased security measures at the Town Office and plans for additional work to address other areas of concern as well as to install handicapped accessible doors.

- The Town Manager was elected to the Municipal Review Committee Board of Directors and appointed as the public member of the Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers.

CODE/PLANNING/ASSESSING

- The Town received permission from DEP to relax dimensional requirements on the water side of Main Street which has resulted in changes to local zoning that afford property owners more flexibility in using their property.
- The Assessor and the part time assistant hire to help are nearing the end of the revaluation that has been in process. The goal is for this valuation to be used as of 4/1/18.
- Regulations were put in place that prevent the location of marijuana social clubs and retail sales outlets.
- Ordinance review is in process to bring our ordinances up to date.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Rich Rotella, Economic & Community Development Director has assisted several businesses in locating in Bucksport this past year, as well as assisted existing businesses with their development plans. He serves on Eastern Maine Development Corps Loan Advisory Committee, staffs the Economic Development Committee, and acts as the Town's representative to Heart & Soul, Main Street Bucksport, and many other organizations. He also oversees the Waterfront and Marina operations.
- The Town received, through Eastern Maine Development Corp, a \$200,000 area wide planning grant for redevelopment of the former mill site as well as a \$125,000 technical assistance grant for environmental work at the site. Environmental Phase I and Phase II assessments have also been completed on the property.
- The Town finished the addition of 8 lots to the Town Business Park.
- The Town has received favorable publicity from local print and video media due to his efforts to promote the community and its progress.
- The Town was recognized by the Eastern Maine Development Corporation as the 2017 Community of the year for the work done in moving forward following the closure of the mill.

MISCELLANEOUS

- The Town sponsored its second annual Parade of Lights with over 30 float entries.
- The 225th Birthday Celebration for Bucksport/20th Bucksport Bay Festival was a tremendous success. The Town partnered financially with the Chamber of Commerce to provide sufficient funding for a worthwhile celebration. Not only did

the weather cooperate, but vendors report that they did well as did local businesses in serving the thousands of people who attended the events.

- The Town financially assisted Heart & Soul with their project which has provided outreach to hundreds of Bucksport residents.
- The Town financially assisted the Main Street Bucksport program which has operated three major local events – the Bridge the Gap Race, The Arts Festival and the Film Festival – as well as five minor events and ongoing work to promote Main Street businesses.
- The Town partnered with RSU 25 for field maintenance of school and recreational fields.
- The Island Journal is doing a major article on Bucksport by the end of 2017, or early 2018.
- Yankee Magazine is doing a major article on Bucksport in the Spring of 2018.
- The mil rate dropped from \$16.50 per thousand to \$16.40 per thousand for the 2017/18 year – an overall reduction of 70 cents per thousand since the 15/16 tax year.

This is not everything that has been done in the past year – but it provides a look at the variety of actions taken – all with the idea of moving Bucksport forward. As stated at the beginning of the memo – none of this work could have been done without the approval of the Town Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lessard
Town Manager