

MANAGER'S REPORT  
September 9, 2021

Retaining Walls – Gardner Concrete is making progress on the replacement of the downtown retaining walls. Thank you for your patience as this project is underway.

Hazard Pay – I attended the Hancock County Commissioner's meeting to express concern over their proposal to award \$5,000 to full time correction and law enforcement personnel and \$2500 to other non-first responders who work for the County from ARPA funds. The County is receiving 10.2 million, which is significantly more than any town in the County. The degree to which they have chosen to provide hazard pay not only to first responders and corrections – but also to non-first responders – is above the ability for any individual community to provide for first responders. Regardless of whether they collect a paycheck from the county – police officers, firefighter/ems, and dispatch personnel who work for individual towns in the County provide services for the health and safety of County residents. I requested that they either drop the amount that they were considering awarding to first responders and corrections, or provide the same hazard pay to all first responders in the county, and that they not use ARPA funds for non-first responders, which they indicated was being done to address wage inequities between some union and non-union personnel. At the end of what was, at times, a somewhat tense meeting, they voted 2-1 with Commissioner Paradis in opposition, to move forward with their hazard pay program at 75% of the original amount or \$3750 for law enforcement/corrections and \$1875 for non-first responders. They also said that they would be sending out a survey to towns in the County asking how many first responders in the police, fire/ems, dispatch categories and what amount, if any, a community was considering as hazard pay for those employees. The Commissioners discussed the possibility of matching what a community for hazard pay at a 2 to 1 match. The Commissioners did not vote to do this – just to collect information at this point. With the Council's permission, I would like to continue to follow this matter to advocate for equal treatment for all first responders in the County.

Social Media – I would like the Council to consider working on a Social Media policy that would govern the use of our Facebook page, Instagram, etc. I have some sample policies from other communities that we can use as a base.

Office Hours – In response to Councilor Morrison's comments at the last meeting I have attached a breakdown of the use of before 8 and after 4:30 hours that we have been tracking since the office hours were changed in November 2019. The only dip in numbers occurred during the November 2020-Fed 2021 when masking was required for COVID in all public locations and there was no vaccine. However, the before 8 and after hours are not the only numbers that took a dip at that time – so did in-person transactions with more being done over the phone and by mail during that time. We switched to afford working people a better opportunity to get to the office when it was open, and while I am sure it has not worked for everyone, it has for many. Orland, Winterport, and Belfast have also transitioned to Monday-Thursday schedules since Bucksport made the change – and for the same reasons.

Candidates – We have six candidates for Town Council for the November election: Bruce Ashmore, Paul Bissonnette, Joe D’Avanzo, Tracey Hair, Jim Morrison, and Dan Ormsby. It is my understanding that there will be a Candidate’s Night this fall at Brown Hall adjacent to the Congregational Church with Rev. Steven York serving as the moderator and it is being sponsored by the Bucksport Enterprise. I do not have a date for it yet – but will post it when I do. The event will be live-streamed from Brown Hall so that others can watch who do not attend in person. I encourage everyone to make the effort to get to know the candidates and their views on Bucksport and its future before election day.

Historical Society House Tour - On Saturday, September 11th from 1-4 pm, the Bucksport Historical Society is hosting a historic house tour. There are four homes to tour as well as Wilson Hall, a private high school building of the East Maine Conference Seminary (1851). Wilson Hall is undergoing restoration, and the tour will include three levels of the amazing progress thus far. Tickets (\$25) are available at BookStacks, 71 Main Street, Bucksport, 207-469-7159. Masks are necessary.