



TOWN OF WINSLOW, MAINE

OFFICE OF TOWN MANAGER
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Monthly Report to the Town Council –June 2023 - Presented July 10, 2023

Esteemed Councilors,

It's hard to believe that we've just closed another fiscal year, but here we are closing out FY23 and opening FY24. We accomplished a lot in the last year, but we have so much further to go.

The month of June started with a celebration of one of our own Winslow residents, Peter Garrett. As you may or may not know Peter has been instrumental in the establishment and growth of the trail system on both sides of the river. His dedication and persistence are a huge part of the reason the trails are what they are today. At the June 3 20th Anniversary of the Kennebec Messalonskee Trails the Benton portion of the trail was named in Peter's honor. Recognition well deserved! Thank you to Peter, and all of the volunteers, who have worked so hard to bring this treasure to our area!

In June the Council selected Wally LaFountain as the 2023 Winslow Spirit of America recipient. This award recognizes volunteerism and community service. Mr. LaFountain has been active in the Winslow community for over 50 years, as a teacher, a coach and a mentor to youth. We will formally recognize him at the July Council Meeting. Thank him for his years of service and dedication to Winslow!

After tons of work on the part of our Department Heads the Town received the Safety & Health Award for Public Employers (SHAPE) on June 12! SHAPE recognizes public sector employers who maintain an exemplary safety and health management system. Acceptance into SHAPE by the Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards is an achievement that distinguishes an organization as a model for workplace safety and health. Upon receiving SHAPE recognition, the worksite will be exempt from programmed inspections during the period the SHAPE certification is valid. I would like to specifically recognize Amanda McCaslin with a certificate recognizing her diligence and hard work in spearheading this effort. Her own department, Parks & Recreation, as well as the Administration Department, were certified with no deficiencies. She is the driving force behind the Town of Winslow becoming a SHAPE employer!

The Police Department hired two new staff in June. Welcome to our newest patrol officer, Craig Johnson, and our first ever Officer Trainee, Dylan Rodrigue. Officer Johnson is a long-term law enforcement professional with more than 15 years' experience at both the local and County level. Mr. Rodrigue is a veteran and a current member of the National Guard. He will finish his requirements to go the Academy while he gets acclimated to police work in this apprenticeship position. He is also a newly wed!

On June 27 we interviewed a candidate for the Code Enforcement Officer position. We are conducting a preliminary background investigation and plan to tender an offer of employment based on a satisfactory result. We hope to have an individual in place in time to take advantage of working alongside Amos Michaud while he is with us this summer.

Public Works has tendered an offer of employment for a Truck Driver. Should the candidate accept he will start in mid-July. The Tax Collector/Codes and Assessing Assistant position has generated almost no applicants as of June 30.

As of June 29 all non-union employees were eligible to join the MainePERS retirement system. This allows non-union employees to have the same retirement plan choices that were previously only available to Police, Fire and Public Works. This is an important recruitment and retention tool in today's job market as MainePERS is offered by many other municipalities. HR & Finance Director Tanya Groce arranged information sessions with the MainePERS rep which were well attended. Fourteen employees were eligible, of which the majority chose to join.

Following up on the Do Not Drink Order issued by KWD last month after fire-fighting foam infiltrated the water system, Leonard Macdaid, Deputy Fire Chief Scott Bolduc, Public Works Foreman Trevor Tucker and I met with KWD leadership to discuss the next steps forward in addressing the event itself, as well as the aftermath. KWD staff will be coordinating with Fire Departments in municipalities they serve to inspect all commercial services for compliance and deficiencies. They will also revise the current Cross Connection Control Policy and establish deadlines for compliance. Communication was a focus of this meeting, with KWD staff indicating they had done very well, and Town Staff asking for improvement. KWD contacted their customers via email for those who had signed up for the customer portal, issued Facebook and website posts, and notified the media. However, they never reached out to anyone at the municipalities, and it was several hours before most of us became aware of the situation. I stressed the need to have an emergency action plan that included the locals as a key stakeholder going forward. Trevor Tucker brought up the issue of who should be supplying bottled water during a DNDO event. Again KWD staff and Town staff disagree on this responsibility with our side of the table indicating that KWD should arrange for bottled water to be available for us to distribute to our residents, and KWD comparing a water outage to a power outage; CMP doesn't provide generators when the power goes out. We did agree to work on an emergency action plan together moving forward.

This leads to the topic of notification systems. While I strongly believe that it was incumbent upon KWD to address the issue of notifying everyone on the water system, we are investigating a variety of notification solutions for our residents for all types of events. We have meetings set up with two software vendors, Go.gov and Civic Plus, as well as looking at reverse e911 (which will be available once Waterville's PSAP certification is reestablished) and the phone system used by the Winslow Public Schools. We may need a variety of solutions as no one system encompasses an app, text notifications, email and phone all in one. It is important to note that any system will require that residents sign up for notifications and will not be automatic.

In project news:

The contract for the Chaffee Brook Pump Station force main river crossing was signed on June 8 and the pre-construction meeting with Wyman Simpson is scheduled for July 6. The Council has two orders before them at the July meeting for this project; one to increase the borrowing limit from \$6.8 million to \$7.8 million, and the other to approve an engineering contract amendment to have Wright Pierce continue as the construction engineer after design engineering has been completed. We are opting to go with CWSRF funding instead of RDA funding. This is due to the fact that CWSRF will allow a waiver of the BABAA requirements which would exist under RDA and will make monthly disbursements of funds eliminating the need for interim financing. Those two factors along with a slightly lower interest rate should keep the annual debt payment roughly level with RDA despite a shorter payback term. Construction is still on track for fall of 2023.

There is no news to report on the Sunset Heights project, but as an update to last month's news that Senator Collins' staff would be touring both this project area and Chaffee Brook, this visit had to be postponed indefinitely. The Senator is still interested in seeing the projects that she has advocated for, but other priorities have taken precedence. I will report when the visit is rescheduled.



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The contract for the Cushman Road stormwater project with Eastwood Contractors has been executed and they are beginning mobilization. This project will be required to adhere to BABAA which may cause some delay in procuring materials. The hope is that construction will begin in August.

The environmental study for the old Winslow Junior High is ongoing. Icon Environmental has nearly completed Phase I, which consists of the building itself, and will be moving into Phase II to test underground shortly. There are many factors which have already been identified, including that there are fire blocks in the walls which may contain asbestos, the roof membrane which was installed over another roof which contains hazardous materials, and the abandoned underground oil tanks which DEP states were never drained. All of this adds up to increased mitigation and disposal costs. Craig Wilson indicates the project will be a minimum of \$600,000 to \$750,000, but he will have a firm estimate for us by the end of July.

The Ticonic Bridge project is ongoing with daily single-lane closures in each direction and nightly full closures. The bridge is scheduled for a full closure the entire week of July 17. Before that can happen the dedicated right turn lane onto the bridge for south-bound traffic at Augusta Road and Carter Memorial Bridge must be complete. That part of the project has been progressing slowly and once lane closures began significant traffic backups ensued. NOTE this is an MDOT project not under Town control. Citizen concerns regarding this project should be directed to Robbin Lanpher, the MDOT project manager, at 207-941-4500 or via email at robin.lanpher@maine.gov.

Haley Ward has submitted a preliminary concept for a new municipal facility that will work on the Public Works campus. However, between the Public Safety group (including both Deputy Chiefs), Paul Fongemie and myself we found it to be unsatisfactory as it separated Police and Fire and added one of the groups to the back of the Public Works building. The design failed to achieve the efficiencies that we desire and further would have caused operational issues with the Public Works department. They are revisiting their designs.

July is the start of a new fiscal year and we have a lot of irons in the fire. The goal is to make continual improvement with each new year. We are making slow progress, but it is progress nonetheless. I look forward to our accomplishments in the coming months as we get some of these major projects underway.

Respectfully submitted by,
Erica LaCroix
Town Manager