



TOWN OF WINSLOW, MAINE

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Monthly Report to the Town Council –May 2021 - Presented June 14, 2021

The Town Office will be reopened to free entry effective June 1. Masks will still be required for a number of reasons. 1) The Governor's order states that all unvaccinated persons shall still mask indoors. I won't be asking employees to check for vaccination cards, so to ensure we are in compliance we are asking everyone to mask up inside the building. This includes unvaccinated employees, and vaccinated employees when working with or in view of the public. 2) Children under the age of 12 cannot be vaccinated and often accompany parents into the building. 3) Not all my staff have been vaccinated. If all goes well with this reopening, I anticipate opening our other venues such as Council Meetings and Parks & Rec Center use by July. The Library is also working on a phased reopening approach.

Sherie Fisher came on board as the new Administrative Assistant for Public Works and Fire on Monday, May 10. She has been catching up quickly and has made significant progress in auditing the personnel records at Public Works. This is a 2 year audit back to 2019 and has caught several significant errors due to the lack of a permanent employee in her position. We are excited to have her on board!

After over a month of negotiations we have come to an agreement with AFSCME for a 3-year contract commencing July 1, 2021. Details were provided to Council members prior to the ratification by PW and Fire employees. The agreement addresses pay disparities with comparable communities and positions in the area, implements a step system to reward longevity and makes future step increases dependent upon satisfactory performance. The contract is on this month's agenda for approval of Council.

The Fort Halifax Committee is well underway planning Fort Halifax Days and the Town's 250th Birthday Celebration for August 28. There will be a parade in the morning followed by a celebration at Fort Halifax Park. Exhibitors have been lined up including the Ancient Ones, Fort Western and Colonial Maine Living History Association. The Fire Department will be selling food as part of their annual fundraiser. The Library will also be putting on a program for the children. It promises to be a fun and festive community event.

At the end of June we will be losing our beloved Town Clerk, Lisa Gilliam, for six to eight weeks for surgical leave. This will leave a big hole in our operations which Tanya and I will have to make up for in her absence. Luckily we will have a college intern to help with the website project (see update below). We wish Lisa good luck and a speedy recovery!

Projects:

Phone System Upgrade. The project is underway with Consolidated Communications. This project will upgrade the Town's phone system to the newest software version (we are currently two updates behind) which is called Mitel instead of ShoreTel. It comes with additional features, the ability to assign superusers who act as a switchboard for the Town, and more tree options for callers to get them where they need to go more easily. We are upgrading from 3 copper lines to 8 at the Town Office/Public Safety/Parks & Rec building which will alleviate the busy tones callers get and our inability to call out when all three lines are in use. Most exciting Public Works and the Library will be brought on to the system so their phone lines can be put in the calling tree for customers, and we can transfer calls back and forth. This will be

especially helpful for the Public Works/Fire Administrative Assistant as she will be able to assign her extension to whichever desk she is sitting at on a daily basis. All necessary equipment has been ordered. The project timeline has not been finalized yet.

The new Town Website. Council approved Revize as our provider with a second vote on May 17. We will enter the agreement on June 17. To help coordinate and oversee implementation we will have the help of a college IT student on an unpaid internship over the summer. Kim Sollitt will be working afternoons with us all summer. Kim is majoring in information systems with a concentration in cybersecurity. I will continue to be the project manager and will oversee Kim's work, but it will be a great help to have someone doing the day-to-day coordination that will be necessary to get the project off the ground, particularly since we will be down one employee during the summer months.

The Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing will be conducted via Zoom on two days June 16 and June 22 in order to allow as much participation as possible. KVCOG will handle the advertising and is coordinating the Zoom meeting platform. The meetings have been posted twice on the web site and on the FaceBook page.

The Junior High Building. The environmental survey process is underway and should take a couple of months to complete. Once that is done recommendations can be made as to how to proceed with the building.

Food Waste Pilot. The Food Waste recycling site continues to perform well. Due to a large volume of requests, we now have a supply of countertop compost bins for sale at the Town Office. We are selling them at the Town's cost of \$7 each.

Benton Avenue Sewer and Water Project. Ranger has been making good progress despite difficulty in procuring materials, material cost increases, unsuitable material upon excavation in several locations and several structures that weren't properly mapped underground (an argument for an asset management system with GIS mapping). They estimate that their costs on the project have increased \$18,000 due to these issues. The project remains on target for completion in August.

Chaffee Brook Pump Station. The Town has applied for Congressional Earmark funding to assist with the cost of the pump station upgrade. Permitting is in the final stages and all reports for permitting have been finalized.

Sunset Heights Sewer. This project is in its preliminary stages and will take several years to complete. In addition to the Dunbar Acres neighborhood this project will encompass the drainage issues that exist behind the properties on Cushman Road. We plan to apply for Rural Development funding for this project.

Respectfully submitted by,
Erica LaCroix
Town Manager