



TOWN OF WINSLOW, MAINE

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Monthly Report to the Town Council –January 2022 - Presented February 14, 2022

Esteemed Councilors,

Happy New Year! 2021 was a challenging year and a year for growth. In 2022 we need to build on the initiatives and momentum from the last year and continue moving the Town forward.

A new year means a new Council. On January 3 we swore in the 2022 Winslow Town Council. I would like to welcome and congratulate our new District 2 Councilor and Council Chair Dale Macklin. Chairman Macklin is new to Town Government but has been very involved in the community over his many years in Winslow. He has been instrumental in the improvements at the Fort Hill Cemetery last year and brings a wealth of local history with him to his new position.

The January Coffee with the Manager meeting was held on January 5 at Big G's Restaurant. Moving the meeting offsite to local businesses is intended to get more involvement from the business community, as well as to get those businesses more exposure as we advertise these meetings. This meeting was attended at a similar level as previous meetings with some new faces. Topics discussed included the Roderick Road Solar project, spring fundraising events for the Winslow Garden Club, grant moneys for new business startups, neighborhood cleanup efforts and maintenance of Veteran's Park. Two fresh ideas are to look at the possibility of starting a Farmer's Market on this side of the River and holding competitions for neighborhood beautification. The February Coffee With the Manager will be still be held at Big G's but will switch to an afternoon meeting to give folks who can't make morning meetings an opportunity to participate.

On January 11 the regional Central Maine town managers met at the Fairfield Community Center. This is the first such meeting in over a year. These meetings provide an opportunity to network with the other town managers, discuss solutions to shared challenges and work on regional initiatives. At this meeting we discussed how the various towns were managing remote meeting participation requirements issued by the State, as well as revisiting the regional Diversity Initiative. We agreed to start holding these meetings on a bi-monthly basis.

On January 17 Councilor Macklin and I attended the Waterville City Council Meeting to voice Winslow's support for closing the Ticonic Bridge during the upcoming bridge replacement scheduled to start late in the fall or early next spring. The Waterville Council was very receptive and appeared to be in general agreement with the idea of sending their own letter to MDOT to voice their support of this solution as well. We believe that a full closure will result in less traffic congestion, fewer delays and lessened traveler confusion, as well as decreasing the overall time to completion. Town Manager Steve Daly also expressed his desire to have more collaboration between Waterville and Winslow on other projects coming down the road, including lighting the Two Cent Bridge. The Waterville Council will vote on their own resolution in February.

On January 18 the newly formed Town Facilities Meeting held its first meeting. The goals for this committee are to figure out how to maintain what we have, and plan for new or upgraded facilities for the future. The Library was identified as the most critical building to address in terms of structural deficiencies, followed by the Fire Department. The Town Offices and Parks and Rec are third on that list. Police and Public Works are

fairly new facilities, but now is the time to plan for major maintenance moving forward. Department Heads responsible for facility maintenance were tasked with putting together their lists of needs and wants to bring to the next meeting. Even for the facilities that aren't critical yet it is important to consider what improvements would be necessary or desirable to make operations more efficient or to keep up with changing technologies. The Old Junior High Building was also discussed. Paul Fongemie and I are working to find the last engineering studies that were done on the Town Office complex to use as a starting point for discussion. The next meeting will be March 1 at 1:00 p.m.

The month of January saw our first truly significant snowfall of the winter season. Our wonderful Public Works crew did a fantastic job keeping up with the accumulation which topped a foot in some places. And they did it while being down 4 crew members! Unfortunately, a new COVID outbreak among the staff not only sidelined 4 crew but the Director as well. Yet the Foreman and his remaining crew worked the long hours and got everything done. No complaints were received in the Town Office which is a WIN.

The ample snowfall also gave the crews a great opportunity to see what the new sidewalk plow is capable of. I am happy to report that the unit is functioning very well. The machine is extremely durable and clearing the sidewalks is much faster than before with the old unit.

Finally, Tim Curtis, Madison Town Manager, and I have come to an agreement as to when to transition Amos Michaud to full-time services here in Winslow. Tim has indicated that he does not want to be compensated but does need time to seek a replacement. Finding part-time code enforcement officers has been particularly difficult in the current market, and Madison doesn't have the volume of work to justify a full-time position. Tim and I determined that April 4, 2022 is a mutually agreeable date for Amos to go full-time here in Winslow. I'm very excited to move Amos into the permanent Code Enforcement position.

Project Updates:

The new Town Website. Revize has completed data migration and has moved the project into beta-testing. This should take approximately three weeks and then we'll be ready to go live!

Dude Solutions. User training was held the first week of January with the various departments who will be the primary users. This includes Public Works, Fire, Police and Parks and Rec. Library did not attend, but will have only building maintenance in that system. This training exposed some further planning that needs to be done on the Town's end to determine exactly how we want data stored and how the flow will work with the individual departments. Further tweaks are on hold in order to get through budget season.

Junior High Environmental Study. I reached out to Craig Wilson at Icon Environmental again to get on their calendar and have not yet heard back.

Operations continue to be busy with budget preparation which is our current priority. Department Heads have been concentrating on updating their Capital Plans and we will be solidifying their requests in the coming month. There's lots going on and I'm excited to finalize some of the current projects and move into budget discussions in the coming months.

Respectfully submitted by,
Erica LaCroix
Town Manager