



# TOWN OF WINSLOW, MAINE

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## Monthly Report to the Town Council –May 2022 - Presented June 13, 2022

Esteemed Councilors,

As we near the end of the fiscal year we have begun working on year end procedures. Pre-audit operations will commence on June 7 and 8 with Hank Farrah being on site to pull documentation. He will work directly with our auditor to produce the final CAFR once the books close. The May 2022 Budget Status Report is both encouraging and discouraging at once.

There is a lot of orange and red in the expenditure accounts indicating that we anticipate going over budget or have already. The factors driving this are first and foremost the renegotiation of the two union contracts covering Public Works, Fire and Police. Those contracts resulted in wage increases, some of which were significant. I reiterate that this was needed to bring our employees up to a fair market wage. The other drivers are primarily the rising costs of fuel, electricity, and telephone services. All utility accounts except sewer and water are on track to be overspent or have already been overspent. In addition, many of the capital projects that were begun last summer are now running over budget due to material and labor cost increases.

The encouraging part of that picture is that our revenues continue to exceed budget in most cases, significantly in the case of State Revenue Sharing. This has allowed us to prefund some new capital projects this year and will allow us to appropriate additional funds at year end to shore up overspent line items. This will benefit our financial statements. I would like to make sure this is on the Council's radar as the Order to appropriate these funds won't be on the agenda until the final year-end figures are compiled.

In happenings around Town we have some exciting things going on with our local businesses. Aroma Joes on Bay Street is in the final phases of their facility renovation and should be opening soon. Alcom, Johnny's Seeds, and Orion Cordage are all looking to expand their facilities, and Kennebec Roofing is planning a facility here in Winslow. I am committed to supporting these critical Winslow businesses in any way we can as a Town, whether that be helping to find expansion sites, working with permitting agencies at the State level, finding funding sources or assisting with zoning.

The May Coffee with the Manager meeting was held on May 4 here at the Town Office. District 16 Senate candidates Kevin Kitchen, Marc Andre and David LaFountain all were in attendance and got to hear about some of the challenges we're facing at the local level, as well as provide some input of their own. Former representative Cathy Nadeau also joined the meeting. Discussion revolved around attracting more visitors and businesses to the area. It was noted that the Two-Cent Bridge is a great attraction, but once you cross into Winslow there's nowhere to go. We need some things in the immediate area, whether that be coffee shops or trails that give people a reason to cross the bridge. We also discussed the types of businesses that would attract more visitors. Ideas included a seafood restaurant, a major sporting goods retailer and a mini golf course. The next Coffee with the Manager will be held on June 1 at Northeast Labs. I'm excited to start expanding this to businesses in our community.

One event that I am excited to report will be coming to Winslow this year is the Parade of Lights. On May 26 we met with the Children's Discovery Museum and Waterville PD to discuss coordinating this event on both

sides of the river. The plan is to have pre-parade events at the Benton Avenue gazebo similar to last year's event. But the Parade of Lights will start at the Winslow High School, stop at the gazebo to light our Christmas Tree, travel across the Ticonic Bridge and finish up in Waterville. This is the next step in expanding our Christmas celebration. I have already reached out to MDOT to make sure we can continue during the Ticonic Bridge reconstruction.

May was also a busy month for staffing. The positions of Firefighter/EMT, Police Officer, Deputy Fire Chief and Executive Assistant were all posted. Police has had 3 candidates. Fire has had 9 for FF and several for Deputy Chief. There are 10 applications for executive assistant. In all cases there appear to be some high-quality candidates. The Police process is ongoing, Fire will conduct interviews the first week in June and Executive Assistant interviews are scheduled for June 21 and 22.

#### Project Updates:

**The new Town Website.** No update.

**Dude Solutions.** Training had to be rescheduled to July due to a scheduling conflict with their support team.

**Junior High Environmental Study.** Craig Wilson conducted the study with Shelley Phillips on May 19. We are awaiting the report.

We continue to apply for outside funding sources wherever we can. In May we were awarded \$200,000 in CWSRF funding for Chaffee Brook along with a contingent loan offer for the rest of the project. On May 31 I submitted a \$2.8 million grant request to MDOT for the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund to address flooding around Robert Street and Cushman Road. This is a sub-area of the Sunset Heights project, and if awarded would offset some of that cost. Funding would address storm drain issues that result in significant flooding in the area of McDonald's, Pleau's Market and Cumberland Farms along Bay Street, China Road and Augusta Road.

As we move into June I will be focusing on procurement. I will be developing RFPs for asphalt, Town Office renovations, and garbage collection services, as well as negotiating a new attorney contract. Looking forward to all the fun summer brings, including Fort Halifax Days and other local outdoor events.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Erica LaCroix  
Town Manager