

06/14/12 Message

Fire Rescue Station Project

This week the Fire Rescue Station Project Committee met with representatives of five firms who submitted applications to be considered for the Fire Rescue Station design-build expansion and renovation project. The committee further reduced the number to invite to submit proposals for the project. The three chosen firms are as follows: **PM Construction Co. with Grant Hayes Architects; Sheridan Corp.;** and **Wright-Ryan and Port City Architects.** A pre-bid conference will be held at the Fire Rescue Station at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 26th, with the Fire Rescue Chief conducting tours of the station the afternoon prior to the meeting.

In the meantime, the Finance Director, her assistant, and I have been working on the procurement of rates from several financial institutions bond anticipation note (BAN) financing for the interim period until actual bonds can be issued. A copy of the Request for Proposals is attached for information and review. The application deadline to Maine Municipal Bond Bank (MMBB) for the fall bond issue is August 1st, and staff has already prepared most of the application.

Public Works

The Public Works crew has been busy repairing damage to roads that was caused by the recent heavy rains. West Record Road was the only road closed to traffic on Sunday, June 3rd. Flooding on that road was caused by a blocked culvert and a major washout resulted, but the road was repaired and reopened the same day. Monday June 11th, crews cut out damaged pavement on Heath Road where it was undermined, and all lost gravel was replaced where needed. Washouts on Johnson Hill Road and North Raymond Road were also filled. Crews worked to finish all washout repairs on Bailey Hill Road, Summit Spring Road, Jackson Road, Range Hill Road, and Tripp Lake Road this week. Although significant damage was done around the state, it was determined by preliminary estimates that the total damage was not enough to warrant grant funding from FEMA.

Also at Public Works, the collection tank under the fuel depot has been filled in with sand and covered with concrete to prevent further drainage of water into the tank. This will save the town thousands of dollars in pumping and disposal fees.

We have determined that our Public Works crew cannot re-blaze the boundary between the transfer station property and the new conservation easement property because none of the original blazing marks are visible. The trees on which the marks were placed have grown too large. The Public Works Director has discussed this with Fred Huntress who originally blazed the markings, and he says he can do it again at a cost of \$50 per hour at a maximum 8 hours. Mr. Huntress has a chart that shows where the original markings were placed that he can use.

Employee Performance Evaluations

This week I completed all department heads' performance evaluations and determined wage increases for employees. All in all, it was a very valuable process and allowed the opportunity for us to sit down and focus on performance issues.

In the near future I intend to present the conclusions of the Position Appraisal Method study I completed that also examines compensation levels of similar positions in 16 comparable Maine communities. The study also takes longevity into consideration for each position on the Town of Poland.

Gems of 26

This week I attended a *Gems of 26* meeting at Cyndi's Dockside restaurant, and it was very interesting. The main topic of discussion dealt with the use of social media to promote businesses. I hope to be more involved with *Gems of 26* now that I have been invited to and participated in my first meeting.

Unposted Journal Report

At the last Board of Selectmen's meeting a question was asked about postings on pages of the Financial Report that are entitled, "Unposted Journal Report." The items shown there are to correct posting errors. For instance, if a check was received, but posted twice by error, the correction would be shown here. Likewise, if an expenditure is posted to the wrong account, the correction is shown here.

FOAA

Until Thursday of this week, I had received no formal FOAA requests for information in the past month that took any measurable time for me to respond to. Yesterday, however, it was brought to my attention that the Planning Board Chairman received a FOAA request from Oldcastle for all emails concerning its company since 2008. Town staff is gathering this information and will supply it in a reasonable time. I reminded department heads and employees to keep track of the time spent on FOAA requests and submit their reports of FOAA information requests to the Board of Selectmen via me monthly.

On another note regarding FOAA, I learned more yesterday at a Western Maine Managers' meeting about changes in the FOAA law which will take effect August 30, 2012. The hourly fee municipalities will be allowed to charge for complying with FOAA information requests increases from \$10 to \$15 per hour after the first free hour. In addition, all agencies and governmental units will be required to designate a Public Access Officer who is trained in the FOAA as is currently required of elected officials. I am recommending that Rosemary Roy be appointed the Public Access Officer due to her comprehensive knowledge about the town's computer system and past town issues and operations. The next issue of the *Maine Townsman* has an entire article about state legislation adopted in the last session.

Maine Turnpike Authority Tolls

Another point of interest at yesterday's Western Maine Managers' meeting was brought to our attention by AVCOG's Transportation Director, Jennifer Williams. She discussed proposed turnpike toll increases and the potential effect they will have on commuters if the tolls are implemented as proposed. MTA is planning to abolish the commuter discount, which could cause commuters' turnpike costs to double. A commuter who travels from L/A to South Portland daily could see his cost go from \$403 per year to \$920 per year. The MTA currently favors a plan to increase tolls for certain trucks by 25%. These increases, although they may be necessary to raise the revenue needed to pay bond debt for capital improvements, are not business friendly and may cause significant hardship to Maine travelers and businesses.

A few public meetings will be held to discuss the toll fee increases, but the one nearest us at Auburn Hall will be held the same time as the Poland Board of Selectmen's meeting June 19th. The public should learn more about this issue and become involved in the decision-making process; and if/when I learn more about the issue, I will pass along the information.