



# Millinocket

Maine's Biggest Small Town

## Town Manager's Report – 8.25.22

### **MTCMA Convention Panel:**

- Stemming from positive discussions and networking at my recent Maine Town and City Manager's Association conference, I have been asked to participate in a panel discussion during a session at the upcoming MTCMA Convention in Bangor in October.
- The topic will be "Recruiting and Retaining Younger Municipal Workers".
- I will be joined on the panel by Bangor's Assistant City Manager, Courtney O'Donnell, who is a local graduate of Schenck High School and graduated around the same time I did from Stearns.
- Peter Osborn, another local East Millinocket graduate in the same class is arranging this in his programming and education position with Maine Municipal Association. It's a small world after all!

### **Congressionally Directed Spending:**

- We have unfortunately received the news recently that our CDS funding applications for both the Airport Terminal Construction and Downtown Revitalization projects did not make the final draft of the spending bill.
- These projects were initially supported by both Senators King and Collins, but ultimately were removed by the committee before determining a final draft.
- We have been assured by Edie Smith and Adam Lochman from Senator King's office that they will work with me and our Community Initiatives Director to explore other funding opportunities for these projects. More to come!

### **Employee Appreciation BBQ:**

- On Wednesday the 31<sup>st</sup>, we will be having an end of summer employee appreciation BBQ get together at the airport.
- We are arranging for the Town Office to close at noon that day and for Public Works to break for the afternoon to join us. We purposely scheduled the BBQ on a Wednesday as not to impede on the most important operation, the Transfer Site. We are excited for the opportunity to eat well together and get some time to socialize after a while few months.
- My wife, Stephanie, and I have committed to provide all meats and buns for this BBQ out of our own appreciation for my amazing and supportive team.

### **Social Media Policy:**

- Given recent events related to our Facebook page, I am providing a refresher on the Town's social media policy. We will be enforcing this more stringently than it has been in the past. This page is no place for bullying, harassment, or unnecessary arguments.
- This policy was adopted/updated by the Town Council on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019.



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## Town of Millinocket Social Media policy

The following are guidelines for Town of Millinocket employees, Town Council members, and external contractors who participate and/or represent Millinocket on official town social media pages. Social media includes blogs and other websites, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube or others. These guidelines apply when employees, elected officials and contractors are posting to/commenting on official Town of Millinocket pages.

1. Follow all applicable Town of Millinocket privacy policies. Posts and/or comments must not share confidential or proprietary information about the Town of Millinocket and citizen's privacy must be maintained.
2. All social media posts must support the public outreach, communication, and marketing goals of the Town of Millinocket.
3. All posts and comments must be factual, timely and accurate.
4. Public comments, including derogatory or offensive comments about another individual or group; comments that contains vulgar, profane, abusive, racist or hateful language, epithets, slurs, or is an inflammatory attack of a personal, racial or religious nature; is defamatory, threatening, disparaging, grossly inflammatory, contains gross exaggeration or unsubstantiated claims, violates the privacy rights of any third party; or is unreasonably harmful or offensive to any individual or community will be hidden or deleted. The Town reserves the right to ban a user if the user posts two or more of the above-described comments.
5. Town of Millinocket reserves the right to use employee names in public posts unless a direct request is made to HR that their name not be used in any public relations.
6. All posts and comments must be professional and show good judgment; errors, omissions or unprofessional language or behavior reflect poorly on the Town of Millinocket. All posts must respectful and professional.
7. The Town of Millinocket will not endorse or promote people, products, services, businesses, and organizations unaffiliated with the Town of Millinocket.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Jamieson, Town Manager.



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## **Department Updates:**

### **Safety:**

- Had MMA Risk Assessment Safety Audit at Public Works, and Transfer Site. A report will be generated from MMA and sent back to the Town with findings. No Major violations were discussed at the time of this audit.

### **Public Works:**

- Line painted parking at High School and Granite School. All other sections of Town completed except for Catch Basin markings.
- Installing Way Finding Signs in Town 50% completed. Ordered 4x6" wooden posts for the larger signs. Called in Dig Safe for locations to be installed. Transferred all other signs that need to be installed in Unorganized Territory to Medway DOT.
- Prepping hot top areas. B+B Paving will be doing the street and sidewalk paving in a couple of weeks.
- Cleaned up Mini-Park beside the Town Office.
- Removed over-grown bushes at the Town Office. Loamed and seeded area.
- Applied for MDOT MPI grant to reconstruct Bates Street. Storm water system, culverts, sidewalks, road re-alignment, and street paving will be the major upgrades needed. Amber Wheaton, CID, Ralph Soucier, Public Works Director, and Brent Bubar, MDOT Traffic Engineer will be working together to submit an application to the State for this upgrade which would qualify for a 60/40 split of funds between the State (60%) and Town (40%).
- Pelletier Manufacturing started working on Unit #11 plow truck sander system rebuild, sandblast dump body, and paint.
- Working on street sign replacements on the main runs and downtown area.

### **Transfer Station:**

- Compactor Building has now been upgraded to all LED lighting fixtures. A rebate from Efficiency Maine will be coming back the Town as filed by Public Works working with Gilman Electric. Approximately a 40% rebate will be calculated.
- After many months of negotiations between the Bondholder Trustee, the Receiver, Lienholders, and the MRC, the sale of the Hampden Facility to the MRC has been approved. This is exciting news and is a significant first phase of the plant's reopening. Earlier this week, we came to agreements with the last objecting lienholder, and with that news, the Judge was able to approve the sale of the Facility to the MRC. All Waste Disposal Agreements will remain the same as before.



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## Cemetery:

- Crew is doing a great job. Grounds are looking good. Two Volunteers have been able to restore the Knights of Columbus Monuments Statues, and re-paint the Monument which looks great. They also have been fixing leaning stones in the old sections.
- Public Works will be starting work this fall on the old section where the center of the roads remain humped up. Excavation and placement of reclaimed asphalt will be applied. We will be adding roads in the new addition on the south-east end in preparation for burial expansion. 450 plots have been surveyed and are mapped out for future sale.

Ralph Soucier, Director of Public Works

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## Town Treasurer:

- Working Diligently to prepare for the upcoming audit

Mary Alice Cullen, Town Treasurer.

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## Wastewater Operations:

- The treatment facility and pump stations are all currently functioning well. As needed, routine maintenance along with required lab work is being performed on a daily basis.
- Lab work consists of testing for Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD5), Total Suspended Solids (TSS), pH, e.coli bacteria and Temperature performed weekly.
- The Treatment Facility used 29,300 kilowatt hours of electricity in July, as compared to 29,100 kilowatt hours in June. Please see attached power consumption graph for yearly comparison.
- In July the Treatment Facility processed 11.8 million gallons of wastewater. The average daily flow was 0.4 million gallons. Peak flow was 0.8 million gallons which was on July 19th. Removal rates for Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD5) were 97%, and Total Suspended Solids (TSS) was 99%. Total rainfall for July was 5.32 inches.
- The States Streets Sewer Upgrade project was finished in the month of July. Paving, rising manholes, replanting grass and cleanup was completed. A job very well done by Northeast Paving Co.
- During weekly flushing in the Iron Bridge Road / Riverside Drive area, the Public Works employees are finding very large amounts of wipes nearly plugging the sewer lines. This is becoming a **very big problem** weekly. They are having lots of trouble unplugging the sewer lines. We would again like to remind the residents of Millinocket to please not flush wipes, paper towels, grease, plastics, Q-tips or anything but toilet paper (only) to the sewer system. These items are causing **extreme plugs** to the sewer system and costly maintenance to our pumping stations. We would like to thank the residents for this consideration.

James Charette, Superintendent

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## **Human Resources Director**

- Multiple job postings recently and scheduling interviews
- Drug and Alcohol Testing
- Emails and Phones, front office
- Personnel Issue
- Vacation

## **General Assistance Director**

- Assisted individuals to meet their unmet needs.
- Vacation

## **Bookkeeper**

- Processed payroll for Town and Wastewater employees, to include the warrants for the taxes
- Accounts Payable for Town and Wastewater
- Vacation

Lori Santerre, Human Resource Director

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## **Airport:**

- The Airport is operating normally for this time of year servicing the usual assortment of Aircraft. The second round of mowing has begun.
- The buildings that are being painted have been pressure washed and the necessary repairs are underway.
- We have received new loads of Avgas and Jet fuel.
- I attended the events committee meeting and the plans for the annual Fly-In Cruz-in are in the works.

Jeff Campbell, Airport Manager

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## **Code Enforcement:**

- Working to study and test to get certified
- Addressing permit applications
- Handling complaints and property violations to the best of my ability with the amount of time available.
  - **Reminder:** This is position is currently a part time role, split between Code Enforcement and Building Maintenance.

Evan Campbell, Code Enforcement Officer

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## **Assessor:**

Please make the council aware of the new tax stabilization program that was recently passed by the legislature. We have already received over 50 applications. We are allowed to accept these applications until December 1, 2022. To benefit from the program an applicant must:

- Apply every year
- Be 65 years old as of April 1, 2023
- Owned a Homestead in Maine for 10 years (anywhere in Maine and no required to be 10 consecutive years or 10 years in one community)
- Must be eligible to receive the Homestead Exemption on your property

Although well intentioned, unfortunately the program was not well thought-out before being passed by the Legislature. The assessing community is in hopes that some clarity will be added before the implementation in 2023.

In general, if an individual qualifies and applies every year their tax bill is frozen at the 4-1-22 level. If the individual fails to file an application in an upcoming year, the bill for that year reverts to the "normal" amount of tax. They may then file for the following year, but the new stabilized amount would reset. An individual can move and take that lower bill with them to the new community. If that happens, the individual must request that the old municipality notifies the new community.

As currently written, this law will substantially increase the workload in assessing offices. Although this bill relates to the tax amount and not valuation, assessors have been tasked with the oversight of this program.

Assessors will be responsible to:

- Verify eligibility (i.e., age, residency, and ownership of at least 10 years anywhere within the state of Maine.)
- Track the stabilized amount and report the difference to the state for reimbursement. (I suspect some sort of spreadsheet will be required annually to track the applicants, stabilized tax amount and assessed amount)
- Supply/collaborate with the "new" community when someone relocates.

This program will require annual funding from the Legislature to repay the communities for the taxes that are frozen and thus "lost" by the community. I am concerned that the price tag may exceed the State's ability to refund us at the local level.

Thanks for passing this along. I will keep you updated as this evolves.

Lorna Thompson, Assessor



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## **Recreation:**

- We ended our summer season
- The pools are now closed as of Friday the 12<sup>th</sup>
- Mike's Pool Service started the demolition of the filter system on Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup>.
- We are getting paperwork to the schools for the fall programs.

Jody Nelson, Rec. Director

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## **Community Initiatives Director**

- Worked on and published the community newsletter "Magic City Monthly" along with the manager and the department heads!
- Researched grant opportunities for various community/department needs.
- Working alongside Sharon Klein to host a Community Workshop on August 23<sup>rd</sup> - this is the first step for the Town to join the Community Resilience Partnership
  - Through grants and direct support to municipal and tribal governments and unorganized territories, the Community Resilience Partnership assists communities to reduce carbon emissions, transition to clean energy, and become more resilient to climate change effects such as to extreme weather, flooding, rising sea levels, public health impacts, and more.
- Planning different community events in partnership with various groups
- Attended various committee meetings
- Volunteered at the library's End of Summer Celebration
- Handed out school supplies with the PTO, EMPD and Millinocket Fire/EMS for the PTO'S Back to School Celebration
- Submitted a grant proposal to Brothers Helping Brothers for new turn out gear to the fire department
- Submitted a grant proposal to Winterkids to help purchase a new rope tow, on September 1<sup>st</sup> the entire community can begin to vote for our project! First place gets \$10,000 the three runners up will get \$5,000 to go towards their project.
- Applied to the MDOT Municipal Partnership Initiative alongside Ralph Soucier, for the reconstruction Bates Street. Storm water system, culverts, sidewalks, road re-alignment, and street paving will be the major upgrades needed.

Amber Wheaton, Community Initiatives Director

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## Town Clerk/Tax Collectors Office:

Totals include July 23, 2022, through August 22, 2022: Receipt Summary report which provides by receipt type, the number of transactions and total dollars processed at the Town Office. In summary, \$1,398,762.29 were collected, which involved 2425 transactions processed in Trio. **\*Report Attached**

- Sharon reconciled and up to date on weekly Motor Vehicle reports submitted to BMV.
- FY21/22 Real Estate & Personal Property Tax Balances as of 8/22/2022: \$96,798.20 remains unpaid for 82 RE accounts (*prior: \$116,646.97/184*); \$6,745.62 remains unpaid for 26 PP accounts (*no change*). **\*Reports Attached**
- Wastewater billing date: 7/27/2022; bill due date: 8/25/22; Interest date: 8/26/2022;
- July month end reports reconciled and submitted State Agent fees accordingly.
- Working on council meeting minutes.
- Fulfilling requests of tax information, providing normal daily requests of motor vehicle and wastewater and tax account balances via e-mail, fax and phone calls.
- Processing daily mail, online, phone, and drop box payments.
- Creating Agendas, posting advertisements of public hearings, notifications, and local paper advertisements, Email correspondence, returning phone messages and inquiries.

### Election:

- August began the start of the November 8<sup>th</sup> General election with submission of documents and deadlines; Absentee ballot Applications only are currently available, absentee ballots are expected to be shipped by mid-October.
- Town Council & School Board **Nomination Papers are available as of August 1, 2022** in the Clerk's Office; Town Council: Two (2) – 3-year terms; School Board: one (1) 1-year term, Two (2) – 3-year terms; Papers **due in office by 4:00pm, September 9, 2022**; Eligibility requirements: Primary Resident of Millinocket & Register Voter of Millinocket;  
**Returned Nomination Papers as of 8/22/2022**: Town Council- Robert J. Higgins, Gilda G. Stratton; School Board- None
- Updates daily to voter registration additions, deletions, and other requests.

### Other Items:

- Boards/Committees:
  - Planning Board: (1) Alternate seat available
  - Cemetery Committee: (1) 3-yr seat available
- Continued restoration efforts of vital records by filing, indexing, and storage.

Respectfully, Diana Lakeman Town Clerk/Deputy Tax Collector & Sharon Cyr Tax Collector/Deputy Clerk

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## Fire, Ambulance, Public Health & Safety:

*Town of Millinocket, ME.197 Penobscot Ave(207) 723-7000*





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- Monitoring COVID cases in our area have had spike over past few weeks.
- Attending committee meetings.
- Ambulance has been busy, noted uptick in COVID cases that have required transport.
- Met with Loss Control Consultant from MMA and checked out safety policies and did building inspection.
- Worked with Millinocket PTO, and Amber Wheaton (CID) on hosting a Back-to-School Celebration Day for children in our community. Will have school supplies, food, and other things for the children to enjoy as they get ready to go back to school. This was very well attended, and families were very appreciative for the supplies.
- Conducting safety inspections at Millinocket Schools prior to the opening of school on August 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Met with Engineering firm that is doing plans for the old Epstein's building for One North and talked about fire protection and security of building.
- Working with CEO on various projects and on code violations around our community.
- Working with Accessor on E911 addressing throughout the community and working towards doing more this fall.
- Worked with MRH to provide ALS certifications for staff that needed it renewed.
- Checking on progress of work done at Veterans Park and awaiting Emera to finish by installing new meter in panel.
- Attended online seminar with DHS on vaccinations and other plans for this year.
- Met with apartment building owner with concerns about issues in their building and required safety items, also spoke about trash containers and what they are required to provide and do regarding it being taken care of.

**Police Department: SEE ATTACHED REPORT**

**Millinocket Memorial Library: SEE ATTACHED REPORT**