

Manager's Report – 3-9-15 - Select Board Meeting

Harbor Projects – Almost as soon as I announced that we had successfully bid out for the piling bids and awarded the project, DOT came back to tell us that the check for 5% of the total cost of the project was not adequate bond and the successful bidder would be required to provide a bond for the full value of the project. The successful bidder was not willing to do that, so we were forced to go to the next bidder whose bid was significantly higher. By adjusting the time schedule to get the job done, we were able to reduce the mobilization fee's down significantly to allow the project to be within budget. We have been exploring added pilings and the best configuration with the money we have. The docks at the North end of the harbor take a big swell in a SE and we want them to be as secure as possible. We have ordered the materials for the construction of the new docks that will be built by the PWD crew this spring.

We now expect the docks to be completed in late Spring.

Engineering Request for Qualifications – We received nine submissions for general engineering services and have narrowed that down to four candidates. Two of these are local and we will be conducting interviews of these firms on Thursday.

Library Request for Qualifications – We received five submissions for the analysis of the Library structure and preliminary site build-out and are reviewing the qualifications next week.

Opera House Project- The work on the Opera House has not been bid out yet. We will be acting as the General Contractor and subcontracting the work in house in order to save money. Mike has been working on the staging options and potential costs for that part of the work in order to develop bid specs for the roofing, painting and windows portion of the project. The big question mark is if there will need to be work done to repair the soffits, and we will have no way of knowing the extent of any damage or the cost of repair until the staging goes up and we can check for damage.

The question of roofing material(s) will be answered largely based on what we can afford once the bids come in.

It is likely that this project will take most of the summer to complete and the staging will be up on three sides of the building all summer long. We are planning on using a lift for the front of the building so that it could easily be moved when not actually in use in order to cause the least amount of disruption to events going on.

Parks and Gardening Bids – We received two bids for “gardening” services for the special care of the Town Office, Public Safety Building and Harbor Path and it was awarded to Farley and Son Landscaping in the amount of \$7,500 spread over the three years of the contract. All other mowing and maintenance contracts were extended for three years to the current bidders for the current price.

General Assistance - GA was audited by the State of Maine and passed without any problems. Stacey is traveling to Houlton this Friday to teach a Basic GA program to about 35 participants for the Maine

Welfare Directors Association and she testified at the Maine Legislature last week on the proposed changes in the Governor's Budget concerning General Assistance.

PWD Update – Thanks to the people in PWD who chose Comp time rather than OT Pay we are in fairly decent shape in spite of the winter we have had. We just went over our OT line last week with the amount we have paid out for overtime. The downside is we have over \$17,000 in comp time on the books. This means that we will basically have one person out every day for the next 6 months. I cannot say enough about the work these people have been faced with over this winter, the amazing job they have done, and how lucky we are to have the crew we have.

We are actually doing OK with sand and salt. We will have approximately 120 tons of salt on hand and enough money in the budget for 77 more tons. We “average” about 24 tons of salt per storm. Therefore, this is enough for a little more than seven more storms. Our sand supply is also doing very well. We have approximately 1300 yards left and have money left for approximately 750 more tons. We are in such good shape for two reasons, first, in spite of the Winter we have had and the amount of snow that fell, it was too cold for salt to be really effective so not as much was put down. Second, we used money left over last year to replenish our stockpile of material so we started the winter in good shape rather than always playing catch up. Unlike many communities, we were never in danger of running out of material to keep our roads safe.

Finally, the new “Big” truck has been delivered and is in Skowhegan at Howard P. Fairfield being fitted out with the sander and plow and wing. Mike's truck will be going up soon to get the sander installed.

Fiber optic project – We are now live in the Town Hall, Opera House and Public Safety Building and are all connected through the town server. There is a minor problem with the speed we are getting, as it is not symmetrical for download and upload speed. GWI is sending a technician in this week to try and track down the problem to be sure it is not something at their end. Strangely, we are seeing nearly symmetrical speeds over WIFI connections and hardwired download speeds of around 800 Mgps.

Continue to be active in Next Century Cities by taking part in conference calls to help move high-speed broadband forward. Became part of a broadband coalition group in the State to follow and support state efforts to promote broadband. I am speaking at the Maine Technology Conference in May, at another technology event being set up in the Bangor area for a date to be determined in June and another event, also at a date to be determined, in Portland. Suffice it to say, there is a lot of interest in what we are doing here.

I attended a workshop of the Mid-Coast Economic Developers to talk about a regional approach to doing the feasibility study for broadband. While Rockland appears to be ready to go with the study to some extent, the other towns are not ready to commit to start any time soon. Unless something happens, we will have enough money out of this year's budget to complete the study even if we end up doing it on our own. I will be bringing something to the Board at the April meeting for your approval with the thoughts that depending on the results of the study, we could be going to the voters with a bond as early as November of 2015.

Library – Because of the snow build up in the many valleys and flat spot between additions to the building we sustained a leak in the roof. This caused some damage to the Library inside in the area of the entryway. The PWD crew removed as much snow and ice as they could but there is no way of knowing the extent of the damage at this point. Once the snow clears a bit we will be able to get it looked at to see the full extent of the damage. Fortunately, no books or equipment were damaged at all.

Audit Report – The FY 2014 Audit Report was completed and was included in the budget. The auditor will be on hand at the May meeting to “formally” present it to the Board and to allow time for questions.

Special School Election - Thank you to Linda, Brenda and Shay for their work on the special school election. There was a surprisingly big turnout that evening. As always, they and the many others who come out to help did a great job.

WRFR- I will be on WRFR Friday morning at 7 am on the Morning News Hour with Chris Wolfe to talk about...well, whatever he wants to talk about.

125th anniversary – February 25, 2016 (which is a Thursday next year) will be Rockport’s 125th anniversary as an independent town from Camden. Now is the time to begin planning for the event, which actually became official on that day when Camden filed their petition in 1891. I would recommend that the Board invite people to join a planning committee to begin working on something to celebrate.