

Manager's Report – May 9, 2016

Keep Rockport Beautiful – nearly 100 volunteers collected more than 1 ton of trash and other debris from Rockport streets and parks last weekend, the actual total was 2,609 pounds of trash pulled out and disposed of. This is a twice a year event and is the brainchild of one person Maggie Timmerman Christie, who mobilized a group of committed residents who organized and mobilized the 100 volunteers to get this done.

We have some problem areas that we need to continue to work on, but the energy of this group has given us the impetus to get things done. They are setting up an event debrief to talk about ways that the group can help capture the energy they have generated.

There are members of that group here in the audience and I would like to recognize them for their commitment and hard work. They are a force!

Infrastructure projects - We held a public meeting to discuss the Summer and School Street projects as well as the High Sidewalk project last Thursday. Summer and School Street will be done over the summer and the High Sidewalk on Pascal Avenue will be done in September after the high traffic season. The Mill Street bridge project will be done in August during the time of low water flow. The Mt. Pleasant Street project phase one is complete and we are moving into phase two which is to pave the worst section of the hill. We are doing some additional earth work on a small section near the beginning, to be sure that we are not paving over some ledge hiding below the surface that will cause problems further down the road.

We will hopefully be finishing up the Opera House project in the next month or so. We are looking at the adequacy of the cold air return vents to be sure that they are all at the proper capacity to supply enough air to the system so that the AC units work properly in the auditorium upstairs.

Library

The Library has a new assistant director Keith Drago, who came to us from the Rockland Library. Keith has his master's in Library Science and makes Ben BlackmOn look like an old man. A new sign is being built for the temporary location and has been donated by a patron of the library.

The Library recently purchased 3 laptops for patron use.

We are working on the AC for the building, with the start being new small window units purchased for the offices.

They are working on the book sale and on a new library logo.

The AHLPC is continuing to meet on a regular basis and doing great work. They are wrestling with some difficult decisions that have to be made, but they are getting it done. The meetings that they have are the most watched and streamed we have. I receive a lot of comments on how nice that is for those who cannot attend the meetings. A ***BIG*** thank you to Geoff Parker who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to make sure that it happens!

Planning

The Planning and Community Development Department has seen a slight pickup in permits being issued and the Planning Board is getting busy with 2 Site plans to review last month.

Jamie has been working on grant applications - one to the Connect Me Authority and one to Northern Border Grant for fiber. It was not a surprise that we were not successful with our connect me application as it is specifically targeted at underserved populations

Fire Department

The Fire Chief conducted a EMA tabletop exercise on Thursday the 21st 2-5 pm. it was very informative and is the first of what we hope are quarterly exercises. The next one will likely be on risk assessment.

80% compliance on E-911 house numbering

The Fire Department expects to be in the Shape program in the next few weeks just waiting for a follow up inspection. Working on PWD, the Harbor, PD the Town Office and the Library now.

With the dry weather the Fire Department has been chasing illegal burns. This will be a particularly bad problem until things are green and growing again.

The Department did a live car fire training with 3 cars this past month. This is a great training as the Department responds to so many motor vehicle accidents.

The Chief reported that he has installed back up cameras on Engine 23.

Finance

About 75 % spent on our budget some departments will be overspent.

The Select Board budget has been posted to the website with a linked index so that you can go right to the department that you want without having to scroll through the whole budget

Megan is working on WW budget which is due at the June meeting.

Public Works Department

The Public Works crew has been busy working on floats, street sweeping and ditching roads. Additionally, they helped with the roadside cleanup.

They all attended mandatory safety training last week.

Mike has been meeting with DOT on the Pascal repaving project and new sidewalk locations as well as the plan for the sidewalk on RT 1. We need to plan on budgeting our share of that project in next year's budget.

Police

Rockport Police Officers participated in autism training and active shooter training last month.

The Chief reported that at the end of April we were at 93 % of the total incidents compared to the previous year.

General Assistance

GA has been very busy with a steady flow of citizens needing help. The biggest barrier right now is the majority needing assistance are homeless and living in temporary housing. They currently have vouchers for housing, but there is not available housing in Knox County that will pass inspection. One client has had five rentals not pass inspection. She has been working with the Knox County Homeless Coalition on a way to make landlords aware of this issue through the media.

Stacey participated in the annual two-day MWDA Spring Seminar in Bangor and attended a training on Communication Across Barriers by Donna Beegle regarding Poverty.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector

We are getting a new voting machine in for handicapped residents to be able to vote.

Elections ballots headed to the printer so that they are ready in time for absentee voting.

Assessing

Kerry reported that the personal property tax submittals were lagging a bit, but have picked up as the deadline is close.

He has been working with the Maine Revenue Services is creating a new protocol on certification of assessors as well as helping to MRS is creating the Property Tax Institute.

We are planning on committing taxes the week of August 12th -19th.

Harbor

The spring storm resulted in lots of water in the parking lot and washout along the bulkhead.

The new docks are in and have been inspected by MDOT so we should have our grant money in soon. The PWD guys completed the new docks where the Heron is located and they have been installed and the Fisherman's floats have been installed. The remainder of the floats will be installed when the weather cooperates on a day that the timing is right to put them over.

Abbie attended Beach management training.

Fox on the Run started the first of the month and the weather immediately got cool, but we are excited to have them back at the Harbor.