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- Town Meeting Results

- Capital Improvements updates
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NOVEMBER ELECTION NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is intended to assist North Berwick voters with understanding the issues that will be voted upon at the November 8, 2022 election. The Board of Selectmen is encouraging North Berwick voters to use this newsletter as a guide to the election and to vote on November 8, 2022. **Please feel free to bring the newsletter to the polls to assist you in your voting decisions since there are no explanations on the ballot with the questions.**

WHERE TO VOTE? North Berwick Elementary School located on Varney Road between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M.

WHO CAN VOTE? You must be a United States citizen, be at least 18 years old, live in Maine and be a registered to vote in the Town of North Berwick.

WHERE DO I REGISTER? You may register to vote at the Town Office, or at the polls during election day.

CAN I HAVE HELP VOTING? Yes. If you need help reading or marking the ballot, you may ask a relative or friend for assistance. The helper does not have to be a voter or old enough to vote. An election official can also help you read or mark a ballot. However, your employer or union official cannot help you vote.

HOW DO I MARK A BALLOT? The Town uses an optical scanning machine to count the completed ballots. Complete the oval next to your choice. If you make a mistake, you may request a new ballot. **DO NOT ERASE.**

DO I NEED TO GO TO THE POLLS ON ELECTION DAY TO VOTE? No. Any registered voter may cast an absentee ballot instead of voting in person at the polling place. Absentee Ballots are available in the Town Clerk's office during regular office hours. Any registered voter may request a ballot in person, by phone or <https://apps.web.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/AbsenteeBallot/index.pl>

For the November 8, 2022 General Election, the deadline to request an absentee ballot, including a ballot voted in the presence of the clerk, is Thursday, Thursday, November 3, 2022 until 5 pm, unless the voter completes a special circumstances application, stating one of four allowable reasons for requesting an absentee ballot after this deadline. The four reasons are:

- An unexpected absence from the municipality during the entire time the polls are open on election day;
- A physical disability,
- An inability to travel to the polls because the voter is a resident of a coastal island ward or precinct; or
- An incapacity or illness that has resulted in the voter being unable to leave home or a treatment facility.

This special circumstances application must be signed **by the voter**. This application can be obtained from the Town Clerk or from the Secretary of State.

All ballots must be returned by 8 pm on Election Day. If returning your ballot by mail, please plan accordingly. Any ballots received after 8 pm will not be counted.



Absentee Voting Guide

Voting is one of the fundamental rights we have as citizens of this state and country. Everyone should make an effort to cast a ballot at each election.

Maine law makes it easy to cast an absentee ballot. You don't have to be out-of-town or have any other reason to take advantage of this easy way to vote at a time that is most convenient for you.

If you would like to vote by absentee ballot, please take a few moments to review the information below. Contact your local municipal clerk or the Elections Division if you have additional questions.

Make sure you have a voice in your future - cast a ballot.

What is absentee voting and how does it work?

Absentee voting allows you to cast a ballot without going to a voting place on Election Day.

Who may vote absentee?

Any registered voter may cast an absentee ballot instead of voting in person at a voting place on Election Day. You don't need to have a specific reason or be unable to vote at the voting place on Election Day to receive an absentee ballot.

What are the steps to voting by absentee ballot?

1. Complete an absentee ballot application to get a ballot; then,
2. Fill out and deliver the ballot back to the municipal clerk, or to the Secretary of State, Division of Elections (if you are a [Uniformed Service or Overseas voter](#)).

Is there a deadline to request an absentee ballot?

For the November 8, 2022 General Election, the deadline to request an absentee ballot by telephone or online Absentee Ballot Request service is 5:00 p.m. on Thursday November 3, 2022.

A voter may vote in the presence of the clerk during the clerk's office hours, until 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 3, 2022.

How do I apply for and receive an absentee ballot?

Contact the Chris Dudley, Town Clerk at Town Hall. [Uniformed Service and Overseas voters](#) will request an absentee ballot directly from the Secretary of State, Division of Elections.

You can make a telephone request for your own ballot, which will be mailed to the address you provide to the clerk.

You can request your own ballot electronically using the Secretary of State's online absentee ballot request service. The approved online form can be found at the following web site: [http://www.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/Absentee Ballot/index.pl](http://www.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/Absentee%20Ballot/index.pl)

You can make a written request by completing an absentee ballot application. Additionally, you can obtain a ballot for an immediate family member in this same way. A ballot will be mailed to the voter directly or to an immediate family member making the request. Your municipal clerk can tell you who is considered an immediate family member under the law.

NOTE: Ballots obtained by the voter or an immediate family member do not require witnesses, unless the voter receives assistance from another person in reading or marking the ballot.

Can I vote by absentee ballot in person somewhere?

Yes. You may vote absentee at the clerk's office as soon as absentee ballots are available. Absentee ballots are available at least 30 days before the election at the municipal clerk's office. You don't need to complete an application if you vote in person at the clerk's office. The deadline for absentee voting in the presence of the clerk, unless special circumstances exist, is the Thursday before the election.

For the Tuesday, November 8, 2022 General Election, voters can vote in-person absentee through 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 3, 2022.

Are there any other ways to receive an absentee ballot?

You may make a written request for a "third person" (someone other than the voter or the voter's immediate family member) to obtain and hand-deliver an absentee ballot.

You must designate, in a written request or application, the specific third person who will handle and deliver the ballot. Only this designated third person may handle the absentee ballot.

Ballots cast in this way must be witnessed by either a notary public, a municipal clerk, a clerk of courts, or 2 other witnesses.

When must my voted ballot be returned to my municipal clerk?

To be counted, voted absentee ballots must be received by the municipal clerk by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

If you plan to use the U.S. mail to receive or return your absentee ballot please note the following U.S. Postal Service advisories for mail delivery:

- Request your ballot no later than 15 days prior to Election Day
- Return your ballot no later than 7 days prior to Election Day

The USPS has assured us that all absentee ballots returned to your municipal clerk by mail at least 7 days prior to Election Day are guaranteed to be delivered in time to be cast and counted in the election.

If you plan to return your ballot outside of the suggested USPS delivery window, we encourage you to drop off your ballot in person via the absentee ballot drop box at Town Hall no later than 8 p.m. on Election Day; or plan instead to vote in person at the polls on Election Day.

ABSENTEE BALLOT DROP-OFF

The official, secure Ballot Drop-Box is located in the alcove on the left side of the Town Hall. The drop box is available 24 hours a day for ballot drop off and is lighted for convenient evening drop off. A video camera has been installed for security purposes.



What happens if I attempt to vote in person after I have returned my absentee ballot or vice versa?

When you vote by absentee ballot in the State of Maine, your municipal clerk will take receipt of the ballot and verify that it can be accepted. Once they do so, they will mark your name in the voter system as “AV” for “absentee voter.” Thus, when they print out the incoming voter list just before Election Day, your name will already be “checked off” with the indicator marking that you have already voted via absentee ballot, and you will not be eligible to receive a ballot if you show up to vote in person.

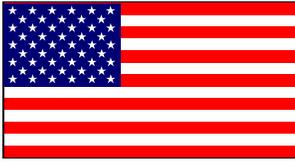
On Election Day, some voters are still dropping off their absentee ballots and the town office is still receiving some by mail. Absentee ballots are processed in batches throughout the day and the list of those newly received absentee ballots is shared with each polling place for each batch, so if the absentee voter tries to vote in person, they will not be able to do so. (And conversely, if they vote in person before their ballot arrives that day, their absentee ballot will be rejected).

How do I track the Status of my ballot?

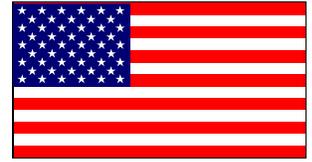
To track the progress of your absentee ballot, click on the black button at the top of the [Online Absentee Ballot Request Service](#) page that says, “Check the status of your absentee ballot.” The ballot tracking system will show you the date that your absentee ballot application is accepted by your municipal clerk, the date your clerk issues (mails out) your ballot to you, and the date your clerk receives your ballot. Please note that the tracker is not updated instantaneously; the information is accessible to you after your municipal clerk enters the updates. You can use this tracking system regardless of how you initially request your absentee ballot (whether you request it directly with your municipal clerk or using the online service). If you have any concerns about your ballot, please contact your municipal clerk directly.

How do I request an accessible absentee ballot?

Since October 2, 2020, the Secretary of State’s office is providing an accessible PDF electronic ballot option for any Maine voter who has a print disability and would like to vote independently from home. Please visit our [Accessible Voting page](#) for more information.



NOVEMBER 8, 2022 ELECTION GUIDE



CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE

United States Representative to Congress

Chellie Pingree Democratic
Edwin Thelander Republican

State of Maine Governor

Sam Hunkler Independent
Paul LePage Republican
Janet Mills Democratic

Maine State Senator *District 34*

Bradley Scott Ducharme Republican
Joseph Rafferty, Jr. Democratic

Maine Representative to Legislature *District 148*

Thomas Lavigne Republican
Margaret Wheeler Democratic

Maine Representative to Legislature *District 149*

Tiffany Roberts Democrat
Mark Rouillard Republican

York County Treasurer

Bobby Mills Democratic

York County Registrar of Deeds

Nancy Hammond Democratic

York County Sheriff

Roger Hicks Republican
William King Democratic

York County District Attorney

Kathryn Slattery Democratic

York County Commissioner

Robert Andrews Republican
Michael Cote Democratic



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING RESULTS BUDGET RESULTS



Municipal Budget

Town Meeting was held on Saturday, April 9, 2022 at the North Berwick Elementary School and was attended by approximately 61 citizens. The results of the budget are as follows for Fiscal Year 2023:

	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY22</u>	<u>Inc(Dec)</u>
Taxation	\$2,984,315.00	\$2,931,639.00	1.80%
State Rev. Sharing	\$290,710.00	\$173,695.00	67.37%
Excise Tax	\$1,087,070.00	\$1,000,930.00	8.61%
Equipment Fund	\$170,460.00	\$0.00	
Misc. Fees:	\$330,915.00	\$314,950.00	5.07%
Road Block Grant:	\$69,500.00	\$67,500.00	2.96%
Enterprise Fund	\$149,275.00	\$147,155.00	1.44%
Designated Surplus	\$35,000.00	\$15,000.00	233.33%
ARPA/Grants	\$89,000.00	\$0.00	
Undesig. Surplus	<u>\$333,840.00</u>	<u>\$227,650.00</u>	<u>46.65%</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$5,540,085.00</u>	<u>\$4,878,509.00</u>	<u>13.56%</u>

After all the articles were acted upon, the total budget increased by \$661,576.00 or a 13.56% decrease. The amount needed from Taxation to fund the budget decreased by \$52,676.00 due to an increase in State Revenue Sharing received after the approval of the budget.

	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY22</u>	<u>Inc(Dec)</u>
Highway	\$630,115.00	\$589,420.00	6.90%
Capital Imp.	\$892,974.00	\$598,891.00	49.10%
General Gov.	\$1,130,065.00	\$1,094,490.00	3.25%
Protection	\$2,036,448.00	\$1,790,153.00	13.76%
Library	\$277,350.00	\$262,475.00	5.67%
Parks and Rec.	\$136,670.00	\$124,865.00	9.45%
Health and Social	\$295,883.00	\$280,593.00	5.45%
Other	\$44,665.00	\$41,707.00	7.09%
Debt	<u>\$95,915.00</u>	<u>\$95,915.00</u>	<u>0.00%</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$5,540,085.00</u>	<u>\$4,878,509.00</u>	<u>13.56%</u>

Capital Improvement Budget

	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY22</u>	<u>Inc(Dec)</u>
Highway	\$654,955.00	\$405,000.00	61.72%
Parks and Rec.	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
General Gov.	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Police	\$45,460.00	\$0.00	
Rescue	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Transfer Station	\$42,000.00	\$42,000.00	0.00%
Library	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Fire	<u>\$150,559.00</u>	<u>\$151,891.00</u>	<u>-1.31%</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$892,974.00</u>	<u>\$598,891.00</u>	<u>49.10%</u>

County Budget: The York County Budget assessment to the town increased by \$16,207.00 for FY23. The Town of North Berwick's portion of the County Budget for FY23 is \$405,210.00.

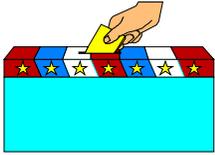
Education Budget: This year the overall SAD #60 budget decreased by \$1,787,480.00 or 4.10%, and the district had an increase of taxation to the three communities totaling \$998,122.00. The town's share of the SAD 60 budget is \$6,391,004.00. North Berwick's percentage of SAD 60's cost has decreased this year from 29.52% to 29.50% due in to the Town's State valuation and lower pupil count. Berwick and Lebanon's share of the education costs are 39.46% (\$8,498,782.00 which represented a \$408,327.00 increase) and 31.04% (\$6,724,636.00 which represented a \$299,483.00 increase) respectively.

**Keep up to date on all the Town of
North Berwick News and Events!**

**Check out the town's updated
Website at:**

townofnorthberwick.org





VOTING RESULTS

The following people were elected into office during voting at Town Meeting;

Wendy P. Cowan, Selectman
Michael Johnson, Sr., Selectman
Lauren Janousek, SAD 60 Board
Dale Clock, Cemetery Trustee
Peter Derby, Cemetery Trustee
Eric Gray, Water District Trustee

John Randall, Sanitary District Trustee
Jay Randall, Sanitary District Trustee
Maurice Dolbec, Budget Committee
Gregg Drew, Budget Committee
Todd Smith, Budget Committee
Lynn Manley, Budget Committee

BUDGET REFERENDUM QUESTIONS

Question #1: "Shall this municipality authorize the State to issue licenses for the sale of liquor to be consumed on the premises of licensed establishments on days other than Sundays?"

YES 300 NO 38

Question #2: "Shall this municipality authorize the State to issue licenses for the sale of liquor to be consumed on the premises of licensed establishments on Sundays?"

YES 285 NO 52

Question #3: Shall an ordinance entitled "Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments to Enact Drinking Establishment Performance Standards" be enacted?

YES 272 NO 57

Question #4: Shall an ordinance entitled "Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments to Revise Driveway Definition" be enacted?

YES 246 NO 78

Question #5: Shall an ordinance entitled "Proposed Animal Control Ordinance Amendments" be enacted?

YES 268 NO 59

All Referendum Questions were approved by voters.



SPECIAL TOWN MEETING – ADDITIONAL RESCUE SQUAD FUNDING

The Board of Selectmen held a Special Town Meeting, on Tuesday, July 26, 2022 at the Community Center to act on one article related to the funding of the North Berwick Rescue Squad, Inc.

Unfortunately, over the last few years, there has been a decrease in the number of available per diem EMT/Paramedics in the area and many are also employed by other area departments or ambulance providers. In addition, many of the area departments rely on per diem staff and have begun to increase wages in an effort to keep EMT/Paramedics on their staff; as a result, the Rescue Squad's ability to keep the North Berwick ambulance staffed had become increasingly difficult.

When preparing the budget for the Rescue Squad for the current year, increases in wages were proposed in an effort to shore up the per diem membership. Unfortunately, this did not assist in preventing open shifts. In fact, there were times when Rescue did not have enough per diem staff to consistently staff the Ambulance. Out of necessity, Rescue had been forced to request mutual aid service from other EMS providers, thereby degrading the service provided and putting more stress on other communities' coverages, to the point that the Rescue Squad had been notified by some area Ambulance providers that they would charge \$2,000.00 for response to North Berwick when our ambulance was not staffed. In addition, the number of per diem EMT/Paramedics, which we relied upon 100%, has decreased, and many communities in the area have begun to increase their wages and per diem rates to attract available personnel. EMT/Paramedics are, understandably, choosing to work for the highest paying communities.

The Voters approved the Rescue Chief's proposal to hire 4 full time personnel, thereby decreasing the reliance on per diem EMTs by 50% per month. Per Diem rates were increased to meet current rates in other communities, from the current \$24.00 per hour to \$30.00. The proposed increase in cost to the Town based on the worst-case scenario, is an increase of \$335,000.00 over the already approved \$361,290.00 appropriation. The Town will be responsible for \$265,000.00 this year and next year, with the Rescue Squad providing a \$70,000.00 cash infusion over the next 2 years from their cash reserves. In year 3, the town will be required to pick up the additional \$70,000.00 plus year to year increases such as wage and benefit increases. It is hoped that the worst-case scenario will not be met, thereby reducing increased costs to approximately \$250-260,000.00 per year with the Town's next two-year additional commitment being \$180-190,000.00 per year. To that end, voters approved the Board of Selectmen recommendation that the article be funded by using \$185,000.00 in taxation and \$80,000.00 in Undesignated Fund Balance.



TAX RATE ESTABLISHED AT \$11.15

The Board of Selectmen has established the FY2021 Tax Rate for the Town at **\$11.15** per thousand dollars of valuation. This represents a **\$0.25 increase** in the tax rate. The Town also performed a valuation adjustment on building values for properties throughout the town. This is the fourth year in a row that the Town had to adjust property values in order to maintain the assessing valuations between 91-100% of market value, as determined by the State of Maine. This adjustment allows the Town to offer the full homestead exemption to property owners and to ensure that the town will receive the full reimbursement from the State for programs such as Revenue Sharing and BETE reimbursement. (This represents over \$2 million dollars that helps offset property taxes.) This past year, values slipped to 89% of market value below the 90% threshold. After a review of the sales data and the town's valuation data, the assessor increased residential building tables by 10% to bring the town's expected assessment ratio to 94 - 96%. The valuation adjustment coupled with the increased valuation the town realized from new construction allowed the Selectmen to establish the tax rate.

This year it was generally predicted that the Town would see an increase in our mill rate due primarily to an increase in the MSAD 60 portion of the budget and an increase in Town expenditures. However, the State of Maine provided increased revenue assistance to schools as well as increased revenue sharing to the Town to assist in keeping the increase to \$0.25 on the mill rate. The town also saw growth in the town's valuation due to new home construction. As a result of the valuation adjustment and new construction valuation, 7.23% of property owners saw a decrease in their tax bill, 13.08% had less than a \$25 increase in their tax bill, 18.37% saw an increase between \$25-100.00 in their tax bill, 40.58% saw an increase between \$100.01-250.00 in their tax bill, 14.66% saw an increase between \$250.01-500.00 in their tax bill and 6.05% saw an increase of over \$500.00. (The 6.92% of property owners with more than a \$500.00 increase was mainly due to building improvements made on their property in the prior year.)

\$11.15 Tax Rate

	<u>FY2022</u>	<u>FY2023</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Combined Diff</u>
Municipal Appropriation	\$ 2,866,634.00	\$3,077,775.00	\$ 211,141.00	} \$ 151,228.64
TIF financing plan amount	\$ 22,156.43	\$22,664.61	\$ 508.17	
Overlay	\$ 321,071.34	\$260,650.80	\$ (60,420.54)	
School/Educational Appropriations	\$ 6,100,692.00	\$6,391,004.00	\$ 290,312.00	\$ 290,312.00
County Tax	\$ 389,003.00	\$405,210.00	\$ 16,207.00	\$ 16,207.00
Totals	\$ 9,699,556.77	\$ 10,157,304.40	\$ 457,747.64	\$ 441,540.64
Local Taxable Real Estate Valuation	\$634,977,500.00	\$672,516,000.00	\$ 37,538,500.00	
Local Personal Property Valuation	\$ 64,603,200.00	\$50,783,310.00	\$ (13,819,890.00)	
Total of Homestead Exempt Value	\$ 19,950,000.00	\$ 21,170,000.00	\$ 1,220,000.00	
BETE Reimbursement Value	\$170,336,893.18	\$166,499,694.75	\$ (3,837,198.43)	
Totals	\$889,867,593.18	\$910,969,004.75	\$ 21,101,411.57	

BAUNEG BEG MOUNTAIN PROJECT - UPDATE

The Great Works Regional Land Trust and Town of North Berwick continue to work with the landowner and funding agencies to complete the conservation of the South Peak of Bauneg Beg Mountain in North Berwick. In addition to the Town's \$100,000.00 contribution from the Impact Fee Fund (i.e., not tax dollars) for the project, the Town has received preliminary approvals for funding from both the Land for Maine's Future Program (\$181,700.00) and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (\$180,975.00). We are actively working to meet their requirements for final approval. It is hoped that the purchase of the land can be completed in early 2023 and begin trail construction in mid-2023.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS - UPDATES

This year voters approved the following Capital Improvements

Fire Department:

Pumper: Voters approved the \$24,580.00.00 payment on the pumper purchased 10 years ago. *This was the last payment on the bond for the fire pumper.*

Tanker: Voters approved the \$35,979.00 payment on the tanker purchase 7 years ago. *This is the seventh payment on the 10-year bond to fund the purchase of the tanker*

Fire Station Planning: Over the past three years, the town has been appropriating \$50,000.00 a year for the planning of a new Fire Station. In December 2018, the Board of Selectmen in conjunction with the Planning Committee, entered into a contract with Port City Architecture to complete a feasibility study for the new facility. The proposed facility will house both the Fire Department and Rescue Squad on land owned by the Town on Lebanon Road, incorporating the existing Rescue Squad Building into the design. This land is geographically located in the center of the Town. Port City Architecture completed a feasibility study in the Summer/Fall of 2019. Conceptual Plans have been created of the proposed new Station; however, final design has not been completed. Voters approved the appropriation of \$50,000.000 to continue the process of planning for a new facility for the Fire Department and Rescue Squad. *At this time the project has been placed on hold due to the projected construction costs. It is hoped to revisit the project within the next year.*

Pumper: Voters approved the replacement of the 1993 Fire Pumper with a new E-One Typhoon Pumper which is similar to the pumper purchased by the Town 10 years ago. Voters approved the utilization of \$275,000.00 from Pumper Reserve Fund and a \$15,000.00 prepayment credit to be used toward the \$665,000.00 purchase price and financed the remaining \$375,000.00 through a 10 lease agreement. This kept yearly payments to \$44,388.77 and within the budget frame work.

The Fire Truck has been ordered and expected in the fall of 2023.

Police Department:

Police Cruiser: Voters approved the Police Department purchase on a replacement SUV. The Town currently maintains 5 SUV's in our fleet and we have found that the maintenance costs are significantly less than the standard cruiser even as the vehicles age. The SUV model also allows for the department to respond to emergencies in all types of weather. This replacement cruiser will replace the first SUV purchased by the Town in 2015. *The SUV has been purchased and is being utilized by the Police Department.*

Transfer Station:

The second phase of the Transfer Station repaving project was approved and consisted of paving the entrance road coming into the facility and around the back of the recycling building to the Demo and Metal container building. *This project has been completed.*



Public Works:

Voters approved the replacement of the 1996 L9000 Ford Dump/Plow Truck this year with a new Western Star 4700sf single axle Dump/Plow Truck. The Town replaces plow trucks based on a 25 year replacement schedule and the current truck is currently 26 years old. The Town approved the use of funds in our Equipment Fund, \$125,000.00, along with \$125,000.00 of Undesignated Fund Balance funds to purchase the new plow truck at an estimated cost of \$250,000.00. *The Plow Truck has been ordered and should be received in February/March of 2023.*

ROAD PROJECTS

FY2023 ROAD CIP

PROJECTS: The overall Road Capital Improvement Budget for this year was \$400,000.00. In addition to making the \$101,205.00 final payment on the road bond approved ten years ago, the following projects are planned to be accomplished during the ensuing fiscal year.

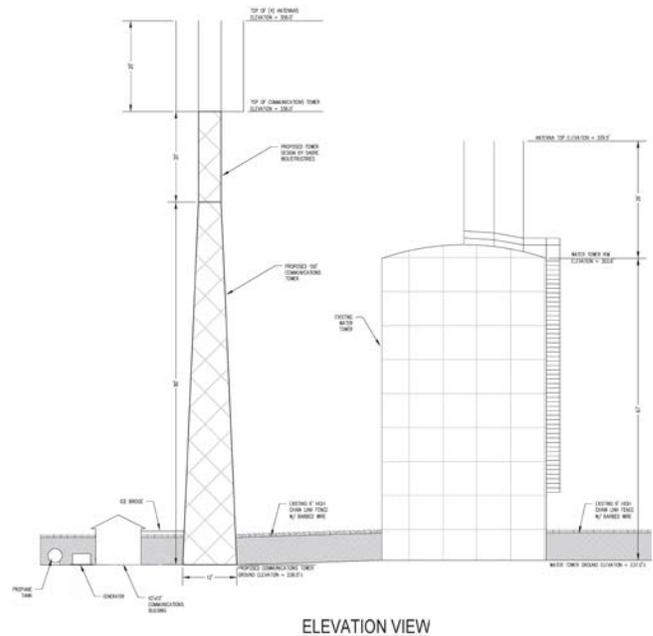
Lower Main Street: Due to the Water District needing to replace their water mains on Lower Main Street, the Town is will be assisting the Water District on this project by reconstructing the first 750 feet of Lower Main Street after the installation of the replacement Water Lines. *This project will be completed in Spring 2023.*

Ford Quint Road: The Town performed drainage improvements and resurfaced the section of Ford Quint Road from Valley Road intersection to the bridge or approximately 9500 feet Road. *This project has been completed.*

Madison Street: The Town resurfaced a section of Madison Street from the Route4 & 9 intersection bridge. *This project has been completed.*

ARPA Funding:

Communications Project: Voters approve the installation of a Communications Tower for the Town's Public Safety Departments utilizing \$197,000.00 of ARPA funds received as part of the federal Covid relief package. The installation of the Tower at the Water Tank site was determined to be the best solution to solve the Town's radio issues caused by the presence of Bauneg Beg Mountain in our town which does not allow for radio signals to reach the backside of the mountain and creating areas where the radio signal is weak or non-existent. Included in the project are a communication's shed with back-up generator power. In addition, the County of York will be upgrading the Blueberry Ridge Communications Tower at an estimated cost of \$1,400,000.00 which will assist with Fire and Rescue Communications on the backside of Bauneg Beg Mountain.



The Town has contracted with Civil Consultants for the engineering of the project and Southern Maine Communications for the installation of the Tower. The Planning Board has granted approvals under the Town's Zoning Ordinance for the construction of the Communications Tower. The tower has been ordered and is expected by the end of the year. It is anticipated to install the Tower in Spring of 2023 due to backlog of projects with the Town's subcontractors and availability of parts. The current goal is to be operational by summer/fall 2023.

Attention Seniors !!

Have you Applied for the State of Maine Property Tax Stabilization Program? Deadline for Applications is December 1, 2022

What is it? Property Tax Stabilization for Senior Citizens, also known as the Property Tax Stabilization Program (the “Program”), is a State program that allows certain senior-citizen residents to stabilize, or freeze, the property taxes on their homestead. As long as you qualify and file a timely application each year, the tax billed to you for your homestead will be frozen at the amount you were billed in the prior tax year. Eligible residents who move may transfer the fixed tax amount to a new homestead, even if that new homestead is in a different Maine municipality.

Who qualifies? To be eligible for the Program, an individual must meet all of the following as of April 1 of the property tax year for which they are requesting stabilization (so for applications due December 1, 2022, qualifications must be met as of April 1, 2023):

1. at least 65 years old,
2. a permanent resident of Maine,
3. have owned a Maine homestead for at least ten years, and
4. be eligible for a homestead exemption on the property they are placing in the Program.

If your homestead is owned by more than one individual as joint tenants, only one owner needs to qualify for the Program to participate. There are no income or asset limitations to qualify.

Permanent resident. You must have established a permanent residence in Maine. “Permanent residence” means that place where an individual has a true, fixed, and permanent home and principal establishment to which the individual, whenever absent, has the intention of returning. An individual may have only one permanent residence at a time and, once a permanent residence is established, that residence is presumed to continue until circumstances indicate otherwise.

Ten-year homestead. You must have owned a homestead in Maine for at least ten years. The ten-year period does not have to be consecutive. A homestead means residential property that you occupy as your permanent residence. A homestead also includes property that is held in a revocable living trust for your benefit or property owned by a cooperative housing corporation if you occupy it as your permanent residence as a qualifying shareholder. It does not include real property used solely for commercial purposes.

Homestead exemption. You must be eligible to receive a homestead exemption on your home. The homestead exemption generally applies only to your permanent residence. Your property tax bill will usually show whether you are already receiving a homestead exemption. If you are unsure whether you qualify for a homestead exemption, please contact the North Berwick Town Office.

How do I apply to the Program? Applications are available at the Maine Revenue Services (“MRS”) website, Town of North Berwick website and from North Berwick Town Office. You can also call the Property Tax Division of MRS at (207) 624-5600 to have an application mailed to you. Complete an application and submit it by December 1, with any required proof, to the North Berwick Town Office. The Town will review and approve or deny your application.

How does the Program work? Once you have applied and are approved to participate in the Program, the property tax billed to you for the next tax year will be frozen at the amount you were billed in the previous tax year. You must file a new application each year by December 1 in order to maintain that stabilized tax amount.

For example, if you apply by December 1, 2022 and qualify for the Program, the amount of tax billed to you for the April 1, 2023 tax year will be the same as the amount billed to you for the April 1, 2022 tax year. As long as you continue to qualify and to file timely annual renewal applications, the amount you are billed each subsequent year will be frozen at the amount billed for the April 1, 2022 tax year.

The State will reimburse the Town of North Berwick for the difference between the amount billed to you and the tax that would otherwise be due.



**NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2022
POLLS OPEN FROM 8:00 A.M. TO 8:00 P.M.
NO. BERWICK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



PLEASE OTE

**Town of North Berwick
21 Main Street
P.O. Box 422
North Berwick, Maine 03906**

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