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Newsletter-1997 North Rd. Mt. Vernon, ME 04352
Select Board’s Desk

Greetings,

We hope you are all doing well and tolerating the whole Covid-19 crisis as best you can. It has undoubtedly been challenging from a municipal perspective! I think most residents probably know by now that Governor Mills and the legislature worked together to craft some emergency legislation to help municipalities and people, in general, to deal with the stay at home orders and so forth. For example, if you have an expiring auto registration, it will be good for 30 days after the end of the state of emergency. You can also renew via rapid Renewal online at https://www1.maine.gov/online/bmv/rapid-renewal/

While town hall is currently closed for regular walk-in traffic, employees are still working. You can call and discuss whatever your issue may be. Also, the code enforcement officer is continuing to conduct inspections and so forth. And most importantly, the transfer station has remained open – YEAH! However, this has not been without challenges. As it turns out, people are spending more time at home cleaning out attics, basements, and barns. We see an unusual amount of trash, and bulky waste coming in, and have filled up early on one recent week. In recognition of this current reality, the transfer station manager has suggested that we begin our summer Wednesday hours early. We plan to start opening Wednesdays 3-7 on May 6th.

The regular primary election that normally happens on the 2nd Tuesday of June has been pushed back a month to 7/14/20. Therefore, our local elections will happen at that time as well. We will have town meeting on Saturday, July 18th at 9:00 AM at the school. There is legislation in place to allow municipalities to continue past the end of the regular fiscal year using the same dollar amounts as the current one on a month-month basis until we pass the new budget at town meeting. So that will tide us over until town meeting, where the public votes on the 2021 municipal budget.

On a related note, the annual RSU 38 annual meeting to vote on the budget is at the Maranacook gym at 7:00 PM on June 17th, with the resulting referendum being on the ballot for the July 14th primary. I am hearing that the RSU board and leadership are working hard to reign in the 2021 budget in recognition of the challenging times ahead. There is a lot of concern for municipalities and schools alike about the available State revenue sharing. With the economy essentially shut down, the sales tax income for the State is WAY down.

I wish I could predict what happens next regarding the Covid-19 related emergency. The latest guidance from the State can be found online here: https://www.maine.gov/covid19/

The 1st of the four stages of the State’s plan to reopen: “contemplates a continued prohibition on gatherings of more than 10 people as well as the continued quarantine of all people entering Maine for a period of 14 days. All businesses that have been open may remain open. At-risk people should stay home when possible.” Additionally:

If employees are able to work from home, they should continue to do so. This includes State of Maine employees.

Professional services, such as legal services, should continue to be done remotely.

Construction firms should deploy additional Personal Protective Equipment and other safety measures on job sites.

One last note. There is some talk about not officially “opening” the town beach this year due to the uncertainty of when it may be safe to congregate in groups. The swim program has been canceled. More on this later.

On behalf of the Mount Vernon Select Board, Paul Crockett, Chair
Synopsis of Minutes for April 13, 2020

FY 20-21 Budget, Discussion.
Crockett mentioned how he is working on Triano, to reach out and get more information. They work on the Readfield Transfer Station, to get their eco-Maine waste. Crockett asked Wright to help in getting more information from the representative.

Crockett asked Wright about the progress he is making rearranging the Land Use Ordinance book. Wright said he is waiting for a copy of the proposed ordinances from the Ordinance Committee and he will continue to work on it.

Wright presented to the Selectboard quotes for new Town Office printers and discussed the different bids and the pros and cons of each bid. Crockett mentioned he got a quote from Budget, and Wright added it to the comparison. The Selectboard asked Wright to continue to negotiate between Kyocera and Budget and discuss at the next meeting. Placeholder price for the budget $145, along with adding color to the budget.

Crockett discussed, a new electric sign to be put in front of the town, to display upcoming events and informational messages, estimated around $3,000. Crockett continued to discuss the specifics and the different possibilities to use the sign and how we are going to install it. Dyar wanted more information before moving forward.

The Selectboard wanted to acknowledge the sad passing of Sam Tuttle, a town resident.

Jackson wanted to acknowledge it's going to be a tight budget and wants us to be conscious of how much we spend.

The Selectboard, Casey, and Wright discussed the incoming department budgets, along with the administrative budget and further questions Casey raised with the budget committee.

COVID-19, Discussion
Crockett discussed the moving of the election and annual town meeting. Jackson acknowledged that governor Mills is moving to July 14th. Casey proposed we might entertain the possibility of continuing to budget the same for the rest of our fiscal year. Dyar mentioned some of his ideas of different ways we may be able to have the annual meeting. Crockett mentioned his position of holding off on deciding to change the voting and annual town meeting. Wright presented to the Selectboard about the informational pieces provided by the State, Federal, and MMA. One of the items effects assessing and MMA sent an article about projected revenue from the state is down and may affect revenue sharing to the towns.

Other Business
Hardy talked to the Selectboard about adding an informational portal for the public to access documents. Crockett said he would talk to Nate about the feasibility, Selectboard agreed.

Jackson wanted to mention, the Code Enforcer is still working. Mt Vernon, the food bank needs food and money.

Hardy asked the Selectboard what the budget committee expectation. The Selectboard agreed that the expectation is the budget committee will present their budget to the Selectboard and have both proposals on the warrant to the town residents. Dyar made the position that people should have more than one choice.
Dr. Shaw Memorial Library, May 2020
Submitted by Mary Anne Libby

“Look at everything always as though you were seeing it either for the first or last time: thus is your time on earth filled with glory.”  Betty Smith, A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

We hope you are well. We miss you. We have been using our time during closure to address several projects, as are so many other libraries. We have been organizing & updating our collection, and our patron list. At the same time, we are discussing and updating our library policies, reviewing and ordering new materials, and we are excited to be working on a Story Walk project funded by a Maine Bicentennial grant. We participate in a weekly statewide Zoom meeting of libraries, led by the Maine State Library staff. They are always in contact with the Maine CDC, and are working with other New England libraries & organizations regarding how to continue services. They are gathering various plans from across the country, on what reopening might look like. As with all public buildings, the daily & weekly logistics will need detailed planning. Reopening will of course depend on slowing the advance of the virus, and on availability of medical resources and sanitation supplies. Most libraries will probably try a graduated opening, only offering limited services such as curbside service for a while till we all see where this is going.

Meanwhile, so many organizations are offering online resources. Online story times are of course favorites for young families. The Maine State Library keeps a list of suggestions regarding stories at: https://www.maine.gov/msl/libs/services/childliteracy.htm They also offer their Digital Maine Library for learning resources. They have databases for students language learning, geneology, newspapers, and more. To start with them, use this link: https://library.digitalmaine.org/

On our Facebook page (Dr. Shaw Memorial Library) we try to post all sorts of educational, informational, & literary online possibilities – we’ve put many on the page in recent weeks, so be sure to scroll down to see what might be of interest. We have featured activities or brief videos for children & adults, so hopefully you will find something you like. On our website at https://drshawlibrary.org we have a list of resources for information on the COVID-19 virus, as well as links to Maine Dept. of Labor unemployment information, possibilities for finding free e-books, and some educational sites. Along the top of the front page, right below the picture of the library, hover your cursor over “Research” and in the drop-down, click on “Links to research sites/tools”. You may be interested in the 2nd resource listed on that page, which is instructions on how to access the Maine State Library’s Cloud Library of e-books from various devices, play with that a bit if you are in need of reading and have a device. The Cloud library has been very busy, so you might have a wait to get the exact book you want but they do have a wide selection and they are working hard to try to meet the extra demand. Their site for the Cloud Library is: https://www.maine.gov/msl/topics/index.shtml

We also have 24 hour wifi available outside the building. You can sit in your car & catch up on your email homework, or whatever online needs you have.

Libraries, museums, and archivists are encouraging folks to keep a record of what it is like to live through this uneasy time. The Maine Memory Network is one place that accepts submissions of local current history on their “My Maine Stories” page. You can submit by typing your written journal entries or notes, you can make videos or audio recordings, and upload photos. They give instructions on how to do it all, and once you’ve submitted, they will let you know if it has been accepted. Their site is at: https://mainememory.net/mymainestories A good way to archive the history of our current challenges.

You can email us at DrShaw@shaw.lib.me.us if you have any questions, suggestions, or comments. We think of you, always.
I hope you all are getting used to this drill, and/or finding ways to cope. I don’t need to tell you that all the kids are home trying to remote learn, as are most of their parents trying to still make a living remotely. Looks like a mess, feels like a mess, is a mess. Lots of tough decisions between rocks and hard places.

First, the numbers briefly: At the end of last month, I was trying to get you ready for what was coming. Maine had had only about 10 cases and 1 death by the last week in March. Now, as of April 26th, we are at nearly 1000 cases, and at least 50 deaths, both surely undercounts given the continued shortage of testing supplies. There has been some leveling off in those daily reported numbers (https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/maine-coronavirus-cases.html?searchResultPosition=2), but we are indeed still in the midst of it. Much of the rest of the country is doing worse. Maine is the 8th best state by total cases, but corrected for our smaller population, still 18th best by cases per population (also available at that NY Times URL). The US has had over 50,000 deaths and probably lots more (because of testing shortages), representing 25% of world-wide deaths. I don’t think this is making American great again. Slow and confused leadership nationally has clearly contributed to a slower than possible response.

Even hospitals and medical practices have slowed, in all areas except emergency rooms and intensive care units, in order to prepare for further increases in the very sick patients. But if we can flatten the curve at this point, the hope is that medical systems may be able to open back up to some routine care in May. Right now, people with other types of on-going medical problems are not coming to be seen, both because they fear catching covid 19 and/or are discouraged by all the new screening barriers to get into the medical systems. I spoke to a 45-year old man’s family 2 days ago; he had been having chest pain with minimal exertion for several days, did go to the ER where blood studies and EKG were ok, and was sent home and told to come back if it didn’t get better or worsened. His symptoms continued; he thought it might be coronavirus and somehow got a test for it (in another state), which was negative. So now he is reassured though he continues to have chest pain with exertion, almost surely due to “unstable angina”, which should be worked up further and fixed with medicines or coronary artery repair. There are widespread medical reports of such delays and underutilization going on all over the country, associated with treatable acute disease.

The over-65 population is being especially hard hit by the disease. The majority of deaths are in that group. All we can do is socially distance to avoid overwhelming our medical systems until an antibiotic and/or a vaccine can be found. That’s going to take at least 6 and 24 months respectively, to be done safely. The highest mortalities in Maine and elsewhere, are in long term care facilities with their aged and often medically complicated populations.

Likewise, the economy is taking a huge hit. It’s hard to do business, and at the same time, achieve social distancing in almost all jobs, even the essential ones. Careful, one step at a time re-opening will be tried, but hopefully with dramatically increased testing capability. Once most people can be tested, we can find those who have had the disease without knowing it and therefor may be resistant as well as new cases, whose contacts can then be chased down, tested, and if positive, quarantined by Maine CDC staff. To do that, large numbers of such staff must be recruited and trained. That strategy could get us much more safely to the antibiotic/vaccine goals in a couple years. Our local economy depends a lot on summer visitors, many from areas of the country with higher infection rates. Their return over the next few months will require them to quarantine strictly for 14 days by the Governor’s orders, and then to practice safe distancing thereafter. Neighbors Driving Neighbors (http://www.neighborsdrivingneighbors.org/) has set up a system to help supply them during that quarantine with picked up groceries, if they don’t bring enough with them. Short term camp rentals may continue to be forbidden by the Governor, as are hotels currently.

I discussed personal and family/home safety precautions in last month’s town newsletter. Those strategies remain the same but with the addition now of mask-wearing when out and about. Since many have the disease without symptoms but can still spread it, mask wearing protects others from the mask wearer if he/she is a silent spreader. It is difficult to carefully avoid germs you can’t see; one has to imagine where they might be as we go through our daily lives.

I lead discussions of current research on this viral illness and lots more advice like this at my now weekly question and answer sessions, Saturdays, 10 A.M., by Zoom and conference call. If you live or summer in Mt. Vernon, Vienna or Fayette and would like to be on my list of invitees, email me your name, town, and phone number (cell preferred) and I will email you an invitation the Thursday before each meeting.

So, there is hope, but unfortunately there’s a lot of frustration and hard work ahead of us for quite a while.
Gardening Column

Here in Maine, we are lucky that the months of April and May each provide us with a holiday to help guide the gardening season. In April, Patriot's Day is a traditional time to plant peas (with hopes for yet another holiday marker - a 4th of July harvest). If you didn’t get a chance to work in your garden that weekend, no need to fret. Early May is a great time to plant many vegetables, including peas (if you haven’t gotten to it yet), spinach, and carrots. Or, if you haven’t prepared your garden beds yet, there’s still time to do that as well.

As the month of May continues on, I look forward to Memorial Day weekend. I’m writing this on a gray, rather chilly, morning, but by then the weather will be warm and we'll have many hours of daylight to help the plants grow. We can finally get some warmer weather crops in the ground, like tomatoes, peppers, and squash. With many of these crops, our short growing season means that seedlings are the best way to plant these vegetables. Many local farms have seedling sales in late May, and purchasing your plants there helps support the local economy and ensures a strong start for your garden.

As you continue your garden planning and planting, here are a couple of resources that you can use throughout the season to help find answers to all your gardening questions:

The Cooperative Extension has great fact sheets and videos: [https://extension.umaine.edu/gardening/resources/](https://extension.umaine.edu/gardening/resources/)

The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association has this new landing page for gardeners that will be updated throughout the season: [https://mofga.org/Resources-for-Gardeners](https://mofga.org/Resources-for-Gardeners)

Remember, you still have plenty of time to get growing. Mulch well, share with your neighbors, and happy gardening!

FREE INCOME TAX SERVICES

The AARP Tax-Aide program provides free Federal and State tax return services. Tax-Aide volunteers are trained, tested and certified by the IRS to prepare returns for low and moderate income taxpayers, with particular focus on those over 60, but all are welcome!

Low income taxpayers should note that the only way they can receive the Maine Property Tax Fairness Credit and the Sales Tax Fairness Credit is to file a Maine Income Tax return. Even if you pay no income tax you may be eligible for these credits. These may be worth several hundreds of dollars, depending on your circumstances.

The free tax services are provided by appointment only by calling after January 1 and are available at the following sites:

The Dr. Shaw Memorial Library in Mount Vernon (call 293-2565 when the library is open on Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays). Tax dates are Saturdays February 22, March 7 and March 21.

The Cohen Community Center in Hallowell (call 626-7777 Monday through Friday, 9:00 – 1:00). Tax dates are Mondays and Thursdays, January 30 through April 13.

The Buker Community Center in Augusta (call 582-3053 after 5:00 pm). Tax dates are Mondays and Fridays, January 31 – April 13.
There’s a Little Free Pet Pantry at 722 Belgrade Road- right next to the Little Free Library. If you need a bit of help feeding your animal friends, please stop by!
Virtual Feed ME 5K

The Maine State Credit Union’s annual Feed Me 5K walk is now a virtual walk due to the coronavirus. While maintaining social distancing, you can walk at any convenient location any day starting Saturday, April 25 and continuing through May. Take a picture of yourself and other household members who are also walking and send to us at mountvernonfood-bank@gmail.com and we will forward them on to the Credit Union. Here’s a good math problem for school kids: how many laps around your house or yard do you need to do to walk 5K? Hint: 1 foot equals .305 meters.

Support the First Baptist Mt. Vernon Food Bank by donating to this virtual walk. Your donation goes much further when you donate this way as each donated to us is matched by money the Credit Union raises through other funding opportunities. If you do the virtual walk, make sure to register in support of First Baptist Mt. Vernon.

The best way to donate is by going to this link https://runsignup.com/Race/ME/YourTown/FeedMe5K then Donate, Food Pantries then First Baptist Church Mt. Vernon and donate there. Alternatively, you can send a check to the Credit Union and note that it is for the 5K walk for First Baptist, Mt. Vernon (200 Capitol St. Augusta 04330, attention Stacy Dow). If you know someone doing the virtual walk, you can send your donation directly to them.

Changes at the Food Bank

The First Baptist Food Bank is helping to slow the spread of COVID-19 by enacting policies that will continue until the virus is no longer a concern.

Only one person from the household (the driver) should come to the food bank. When you arrive at the food bank, please remain in your vehicle and leave all windows closed. A volunteer will get your name, address and phone number. New customers will not be asked to fill out an application at this time. Pre-packed boxes and bags will be brought up to the vehicle. If you have a specific need, please mention to the volunteer and we will do our best to accommodate you.

If you are ill and can not get to the food bank, please use your emergency bag before asking for someone to deliver food to you. If you live in Mt. Vernon, Vienna or Fayette, please call Neighbors Driving Neighbors at 860-0677 by Wednesday to see if they can deliver on Saturday. Otherwise, call the food bank (293-2141) on Saturday between 8 and 10 a.m. and we will try to arrange a delivery.

We understand that these changes may be inconvenient and we thank you for your patience. Stay Safe.

Our hours remain Saturday from 9:30 to 11:30.
HELP MOUNT VERNON CELEBRATE
INDEPENDENCE DAY, 2020 &
THE BICENTENNIAL OF MAINE STATEHOOD

PLEASE DONATE FOR THIS YEAR’S
FIREWORKS DISPLAY!

Fireworks are planned for after the concert at the Community Center, 9:30 pm, Saturday, July 4th

Contributions for the July 4th fireworks go to the special Fireworks Fund of the Mount Vernon Community Partnership Corporation.

For more information or to make a donation, contact Tom Ward at 293-1016.
Belgrade

Union Church of Belgrade Lakes
Main St, Belgrade Lakes
(United Methodist)
Church Office: 495-3599
Rev. Bill Meyer

9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship
(nursery care provided)

Children’s Sunday School during
Worship

Wednesday — Adult Bible Study

Mt. Vernon

Dunn’s Corner Baptist Church
Wings Mills Road, Mt. Vernon
Church Office: 320-5902
Pastor Daniel Johnston
9:30 a.m. Sunday School classes
toddler to adult
10:30 a.m. Worship service,
Nursery is available
Jr. Church for children up to age 10
during worship service.

Wednesday, 7 p.m. Prayer meeting
- the HOUR OF POWER
Youth group Young Adults 4
Christ both Jr. & Sr. groups
meet 2 p.m. every Sun. at the
church, Sept. to June
Jr. ages 8-12; Sr. ages 13-18

North Vienna

United Methodist Church
572 Tower Road, North Vienna
Laura Church, Pastor
Church Office: 293-3710

9:00 a.m. Sunday Worship
Sunday School

Creation Station, an after-school,
faith-based, arts-intensive program
for any children in grades K-6.
Meets on Wed. afternoons from
3:30-5:00 following the MSAD #9
school calendar.

Youth Group for any youth grades 6
& up meets the 1st & 3rd Sundays of
each month.

North Wayne

North Wayne Church
(non-denominational)
10 Church St., Wayne
Pastor Jon Olson
Church Office: 293-2502
jolson@fairpoint.net
9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship;
Coffee, refreshments & conversation
follow each service

Readfield

United Methodist Church
1564 Main St., Route 17
Pastor Myung Eun Park
Church Office: 685-4211
office@readfieldchurch.net
“...extending God’s open
arms in fellowship and
mission.”
10 a.m. Sunday Worship
10 a.m. Sunday School/Nursery Care

Vienna

Vienna Baptist Church
116 Main Street, Vienna

9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship
Pastor Everett Maxim
293-3061

Winthrop

St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church
Friends Meeting House
219 Winthrop Center Rd. (Rt 135S)
Winthrop
Rev. Susan Berry Taylor, Vicar
AmmaTaylorSt.Andrews@gmail.com
Church Office: 395-2015
Sunday Eucharist 10:30 a.m.
coffee hour fellowship afterwards