

**BELGRADE TOWN OFFICE**

990 Augusta Road
Belgrade, ME 04917

207-495-2258

www.townofbelgrade.com



@BelgradeMaine

TOWN OFFICE HOURS

Mon., Tues., Fri. 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thursday 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.
CLOSED WEDNESDAY

BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS

Barbara Allen, Chair (2024)
Carol Johnson, Vice Chair (2024)
Melanie Jewell (2025)
Peter Rushton (2025)
Daniel Newman (2026)

STAFF

Town Manager
Lorna Dee Nichols

Town Clerk ~ Mary Vogel

Treasurer/

Tax Collector ~ Nicholas Poole

Deputy Clerk ~ Kelsey Libold

Deputy Clerk ~ Charlene Houle

Select Board Highlights

Barbara Allen, Chair

During this past year, the Belgrade community came fully back together after the Covid-19 pandemic, starting in March 2023 with the first in-person Town Meeting since 2019. The year quickly filled with activity, including the popular concerts and craft fairs in the Village Green, author talks at the library, thriving summer day camps, after-school programs and pickle ball games at the Center for All Seasons. There were weekly programs for seniors at the North Belgrade Community Center and favorite annual events such as the Fire and Rescue Department's Bean Hole Supper, Friends of the Library Book Sale, and Belgrade PTO Basket Bingo. In other words, after a nearly three-year hiatus, 2023 was a normal, active year for the citizens of Belgrade.

The Board of Selectpersons welcomed new member Peter Rushton, former chair of the Planning Board, who was elected in March to a 2-year term filling the vacancy resulting from the untimely passing in October 2022 of long-time Selectperson Rick Damren. At the same time, Dan Newman was reelected to a 3-year term as Selectperson. Melanie Jewell, Carol Johnson, and Barbara Allen remained on the Board.

On May 6, a large crowd of citizens and first responders gathered at the North Belgrade Fire Station to honor the memory of Rick Damren with a memorial ceremony and dedication of the North Belgrade fire station in his name. This was a fitting honor as Rick, a longtime member of the Belgrade Fire Department, school bus driver, and selectperson, spent most of his life dedicated to the citizens of Belgrade.

A ceremony was held at the town office on June 2 to dedicate the Belgrade First Responders Memorial. Please stop by to see this striking tribute to all those who provide essential services to our community: emergency medical services, firefighters, and law enforcement. The memorial

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**Join us for Movie Mondays at the Senior Center,
North Belgrade Community Center!
Every Monday at 2 p.m.**

Selectboard, continued from page 2

was made possible with town funds matched by private donations. Thanks to all who contributed and special thanks to all who serve our community as First Responders.

ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funding

The Town of Belgrade received \$332,777 from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), a part of the American Rescue Plan designed to support recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency. In general, any services traditionally provided by a government were eligible for funding.

The Selectboard solicited suggestions from residents in 2022, held public meetings, and deliberated throughout 2023 about the most effective use of the funds. We looked at what projects could have the greatest benefit to the town and whether alternative funding sources might be available for certain proposals. After considerable debate we decided on allocations in such areas as water quality of our lakes (\$30,000 for erosion control on town-owned properties), infrastructure (\$67,200 for repairs to the Village dam), administration (\$46,250 for digitizing the town's tax maps), and access to town properties (\$50,000 toward a new parking lot in the Village and \$27,000 for ADA access to Great Pond at the Center for All Seasons). The complete list of projects can be found on the Selectboard page on the town's web site: <https://www.townofbelgrade.com/board-selectpersons/pages/american-rescue-plan-act-arpa-allocations-list>.

Ad Hoc Public Works Committee – Winter Road Maintenance

At this time last year, we did not know who was going to clear the town's roads of ice and snow beginning in the fall of 2024 after the retirement of our long-time contractors, the Warren Brothers. Knowing the importance of the winter maintenance of Belgrade's 48 miles of town roads, the Selectboard authorized town manager Lorna Dee Nichols to form an ad hoc committee to explore three options: find a private contractor (or contractors), share services with a neighboring town, or establish a town public works department and secure the necessary facility, equipment and personnel.

Eleven Belgrade residents came forward to serve on the ad hoc PW

committee. They contacted plowing contractors and nearby towns, looked into possible sites and equipment that would be needed for a PW department, and explored personnel needs. The committee's persistence paid off: they identified a private contractor from Sidney who was awarded a three-year contract by the Selectboard in July. Cummings and Sons are working with the Warren Brothers this winter to familiarize themselves with the routes.

Thanks to the committee members for their efforts, to Jack Sutton for reminding the Selectboard to keep this matter active, and to Lorna for keeping the committee on task.

Fire Station and Water System

In 2023 the Selectboard worked on two major projects that will greatly benefit the Town when completed. The first is a site on which to construct a new fire station to replace the aging Depot station. The second is the construction by the Maine Department of Transportation of the community water system to serve the area loosely bounded by Routes 27, 8/11, and 135, which has experienced salt contamination in wells. Although progress may have seemed slow at times, residents can be assured that there is ongoing effort behind the scenes: the Fire and Rescue Dept. is pursuing a promising site and MaineDOT has completed preliminary engineering work and is now designing the water system.

Staff and Volunteers

The Selectboard has set aside time to hear directly from department heads and committee chairs on a rotating basis about their achievements and challenges. We have been impressed with the dedication of our staff and volunteers who work together throughout the year to ensure that Belgrade remains a vibrant, safe and welcoming place for residents and visitors.

The holiday spirit was evident in 2023 with a new tree on the Village Green, donated and planted by volunteers, along with lights, wreaths and festive decor on display throughout the town.

In closing, we would like to recognize Town Manager Lorna Dee Nichols for her commitment to the town throughout her cancer treatment in 2023. She showed incredible strength and determination even on some difficult days. Thank you, Lorna!

Town Clerk News

Mary Vogel, Town Clerk

Wow, this is going to be a busy and important year for elections!

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Presidential Primary- March 5th**
- State Primary Election – June 11th**
- Presidential General Election – November 5th**

•**On Tuesday, March 5, 2024** is the Presidential Primary, polls will be open from 7 am to 8 pm, at the Center For All Seasons.

With the new law changes Maine has now shifted to a Semi-Open Primary. What does this mean for you? If you are enrolled in a specific party, you may only vote for the party candidate(s). If you are unenrolled and have no party affiliation, then you may vote in any party of your choice. This change applies to both the Presidential and State Primaries. Absentee Ballots are now available through February 29.

•**On Friday, March 15, 2024**, there will be a referendum voting for three candidates for selectperson, along with special requests articles #3 through #8. **On Saturday, March 16, 2024**, there will be an in-person continuation of town meeting beginning at 1 pm at the Center for All Seasons on 1 Center Drive.

You must be present to vote! Absentee Ballots will be made available from February 15 through March 13. You may call 207-495-2258 to request a ballot be mailed to you, or you may come to the Town Office.

•You must be a registered voter to vote on either day. You may register by completing a voter registration card, which requires a photo ID and proof of residency, such as a Maine driver's license with a Belgrade address, a utility bill with a Belgrade physical address, a copy of a lease or rental agreement, or you can swear an oath of residency. **The registrar will be at elections both days for those who need to register.**

In closing, please try to remember when registering your vehicles or boats, it is helpful to bring your current registration, your proof of insurance and your mileage. If the vehicle is new to you, please bring the Monroney label (if applicable), a complete bill of sale, proof of sales tax paid, and a completed title for private sales.

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Town Manager Lorna Dee Nichols

2023 was another year of change: welcoming new Select board member, Peter Rushton, who has served the town for many years on the Planning Board; new team members Kelsey Libold as Deputy Clerk; Kevin Merrill as Assistant Sexton/Facilities Maintenance and Ed Call filling our new Custodial and Maintenance position. In addition, we added Tracy Malloy as Deputy Animal Control Officer, Victoria Alexander for the Assistant Recreation Director role and Chris Cogswell at the Transfer Station. We regretfully said goodbye to Local Health Officer Andrew Dallas who served a year in this position and Les Dimick who has retired from service at the Transfer Station. Deputy Clerk Charlene Houle also retired in 2023 but graciously agreed to fill in as needed. I would like to publicly thank them all for their service to our community!

I continue to be completely impressed with the knowledge, professionalism, and dedication not only of staff, but of the various committee volunteers. We are very fortunate to have so many community-minded folks willing to give endless hours of their time for the betterment of our town. We have open positions on several committees and would love to have you join one in service this year.

Having a year under my belt I feel the budget process has been smoother this year. I extend a huge thank you to our Treasurer Nick Poole for being so helpful in providing information and figures as we worked our way through. The process is always difficult especially as we continue to experience a tough financial climate. We are ever mindful that many residents, especially our older population, continue to find it difficult to buy food, pay for utilities and on top of that pay property taxes.

Another program passed by the legislature presents a new set of

challenges that the Planning Board will be working on early this year. LD 2003 aims to increase housing opportunities in Maine. Kennebec Valley Council of Governments will be assisting our Planning Board in this endeavor which has an implementation date of July 1 as set by Maine government.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee has begun meeting as we work toward updating the current plan with assistance from KVCOG. We will be seeking input from you as we delve into the specifics which will guide us through the next ten years.

We were successful in applying for and receiving a grant for mitigation of Brown Tail Moths on town-owned properties. These mitigation efforts will take place in early spring this year.

A significant accomplishment for us was to secure a contractor for plowing our roads. With the retirement of the Warren Brothers after this season, a public works ad hoc committee was set up and a capital reserve account established to explore options moving forward. After much work by the committee, Cummings & Sons of Sidney were awarded a three-year contract beginning in October 2024.

The Selectboard approved a trial run for a 4-day work week at the Town Office. Thank you! So many of you have shared that you love these new hours and the opportunity to get town business done before work!

As we look forward to the 2024 fiscal year, projects on our radar include:

- Appointing trustees of the newly established public water utility
- Working with the State Department of Transportation and engineers to ensure the new water system is designed and set up to best serve those affected
- Continuing work with local groups to ensure enhanced erosion control and clean water in our lakes
- Reviewing and ensuring ordinances



are up to date and compliant with State standards

- Reviewing municipal policies and procedures for compliance
- Exploring Wi-Fi access points and broadband coverage throughout our community
- Beginning much needed repairs to the Center for All Seasons building so that we have this great community resource for years to come
- Adding and enhancing recreational programs for all ages offered through the Town's Recreation Department
- Working on finding a location for and funding to build a new Fire Station
- Developing long range plans for Fire and Rescue, Facilities and our Transfer Station.
- Ensuring Belgrade continues to be one of the best small towns in Maine to live, work and play!

As many of you are aware, I faced some significant health issues in 2023 with a cancer diagnosis. I did not let this interfere with my commitment to you and continued to work during treatment. I am feeling stronger every day and looking forward to another year. I would like to thank each of you for the kindness and support you have shown me – you make a difference in my life and the lives of others. We have an incredible staff working hard every day for all of you. I am excited to continue the great work we've begun for you and our community as a whole.



Dog Registrations

Did you forget to register your dog?

Registrations were due by January 31st per state law. A late fee of \$25 per dog is now applicable.

We would like to thank all the residents who came into register their dogs by the end of December.

The online portal for dog registrations is now closed. We would like to remind people if you have not registered your dog, please come in and do so. Your dog's registration is for the public safety of all residents.



Congratulations to Trisha White who won the dog basket valued at over \$200!



Parks and Recreation

Dan MacGlashing, Director

What an awesome year in Belgrade for recreation! Thank you to everyone who joined us for programming at the Center For All Seasons and events on the Village Green. We had almost 500 participants between our After School Program, Summer Camp, and our regular programs at the Center. On the Green we saw thousands of folks come to

our Concert Series and Craft Fairs. We would like to extend a huge thank you to Lakepoint Real Estate for the generous donation to support our concert series as well as the private citizens who made contributions to our most attended program.

With growth in our programs, we also saw growth in our revenue. Our Craft Fair series alone made \$7,750 and we surpassed our revenue goal by \$32,915. We added some programming this year and bolstered our current programming and have made it our goal to add even more programming in 2024. If you would like to see programs at the Center or the North Belgrade Community Center, please reach out to us.

We would like to welcome Victoria Alexander onto staff as our Assistant Director. She joined the team in November and has already had a huge impact on our programs, especially the After School Program.

In 2024 we will be putting more effort into the parks in our community. With help from our facilities maintenance department and the Seven Lakes Alliance we will be updating our parks. We are also looking forward to opening our pool for the entire summer!

2024 will bring even more reasons to participate in our many offerings.

Belgrade Public Library

Jared Bond, Library Director

In 2024 the Belgrade Public Library wants to continue to focus on our core services of collection development, community programming, and tech services. Currently, we are in a good place to do this with minimal increases to our budget. Our overall increase of 5% is almost entirely staff raises, with some going toward increasing costs for our library software, and some for staff training.

We will be starting off 2024 with a Book Bingo program for the months of February and March, and a Community Read book to be announced soon. Keep an eye out for other programs as well as the year goes on, including author talks, summer reading, and more.

We are constantly purchasing new books and items for our collection. We have a selection of new audio books, board games, and movies to borrow as well as the latest from your favorite authors. Stop in today and check out a book and a movie for these cold evenings, or borrow a board game for a family game night!



Dams Committee

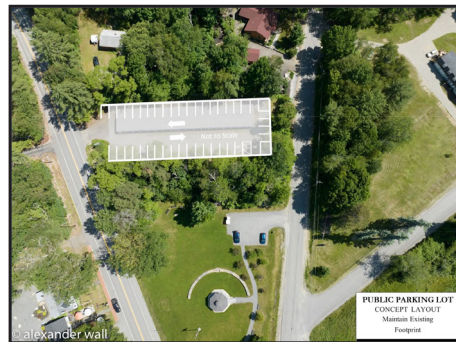
Dick Greenan

After five years of drought, Mother Nature made up for it this year starting on Memorial Day. But thanks to your Dams Committee delegates, we were able to maintain the water level management plan they are charged with implementing. The four Belgrade area lakes under the auspices of the

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Park Your Vision: A New Public Parking Lot for Belgrade

Friends of Belgrade Lakes Village has embarked on Phase 2 of the Village Enhancement Project: raising funds to construct a public parking lot adjacent to the Village Green. The project will provide safer and convenient off-street parking for about 55 vehicles, overhead lighting, benches, signage and a pedestrian pathway to the Village Green.



Previously, FOBLV raised over \$800,000 of which \$500,000 funded the brick sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, benches and bike racks throughout the Village. The remaining \$300,000 will be used to acquire the land for the parking lot. Additional fundraising is underway.

Over the years, FOBLV has demonstrated its ability to work with the Town of Belgrade in a public-private relationship. From the start of Phase 2/Parking Lot, Friends met with the Belgrade Selectboard to garner its support for the parking lot project. We are grateful for the ARPA fund award of \$50,000 towards this project. Upon approval by the voters, the parking lot will be gifted to the Town of Belgrade. This investment in the town's infrastructure will become a significant asset for future planning

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Are you concerned about climate change?

If you are concerned about this issue, and want to find out more about fair effective realistic climate policy and about Citizens Climate Lobby - information is available at: the Belgrade Town Office, Center for All Seasons, North Belgrade Community Center and at carboncash-back4me.org, citizensclimatelobby.org



www.townofbelgrade.com

TOWN CONTACTS/ SERVICES

Town Office 207-495-2258

Mon., Tues., Fri. 7 a.m.-5 p.m.
Thursday 7 a.m.-7 p.m.
CLOSED WEDNESDAY

Town Manager

townmanager@townofbelgrade.com

Town Clerk

townclerk@townofbelgrade.com

Notary Services:

The town has notaries on staff,
service is free

Belgrade Public Library

124 Depot Road
townofbelgrade.com/library
207-495-3508

Jared Bond, Library Director

librarydirector@townofbelgrade.com

Hours:

10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday
2-6 p.m. Wednesday, Friday
10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday

Fire & Rescue

207-495-7739

Emergency: Call 911

Dan MacKenzie, Fire Chief

firechief@townofbelgrade.com

Travis Burton, Rescue Chief

tburton@townofbelgrade.com

Parks and Recreation

Center for All Seasons

1 Center Drive

townofbelgrade.com/recreation

207-495-3481

Dan MacGlashing, Director

recreation@townofbelgrade.com

Roads

townofbelgrade.com/roads

207-649-8070

Jason Stevens, Road Commissioner

jasonstevens306@yahoo.com

Transfer Station

41 Dunn Road

townofbelgrade.com/transferstation

Ken Scheno, Director

transferstation@townofbelgrade.com

Hours

7 a.m. - 3 p.m. Saturday

11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Wednesday

Noon - 5 p.m. Thursday

(June-early October)

Pass required (contact Town Office)

Senior Resources

townofbelgrade.com/seniors

Mary Vogel, 207-495-2258

Transfer Station and Recycling Center

Ken Scheno, Director

With 2023 behind us, 2024 presents itself with the potential to be a much better year at the Transfer Station and Recycle facility. Our budget is down 1.8% despite increases in the cost of waste disposal. The cost of demo wood disposal has increased by 33.3% since 2022 along with a solid waste increase of 3% as of July 1, 2024, along with additional State mandated fees.

Staffing has been another challenge and remains an issue for 2024. The need to increase wages to be competitive and retain staff continues.

In 2024, the Transfer Station Committee, along with the Transfer Station Director will be working on submitting applications for several grants to make improvements to our facility. We will also explore new recycling programs. In 2023 we developed a three-, five- and 10-year facility improvement/maintenance program. We will start improvements in 2024. We were also accepted in the Department of Labor's Safety and Health Award for Public Employers (SHAPE) program in 2023.

Donations

We have several donation options at the Transfer Station. All help to reduce our waste stream and benefit our community. Please take advantage of these options.

- Bottle redemption: Belgrade/Rome Food Pantry, Lakes Christian Fellowship and Union Church
- Apparel Impact: clothing and shoes
- Kennebec Valley Humane Society
- Too Good to Throw Away building

Reminders:

- » Display current Transfer Station sticker. They are available at the Town Office.
- » Separate and dispose of recyclable items properly. See attendant with questions.
- » Keep loads covered and secure on the road and when entering the facility.
- » Practice strong safety values while at the facility.
- » Participate in the "punch card program". It saves you money and streamlines our process. The punch cards are available at the town office to all taxpaying residents at no charge.

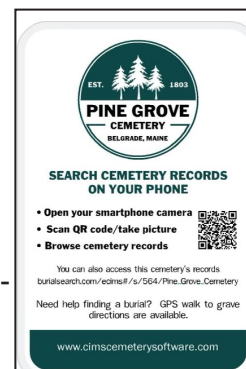
Cemeteries

Cory Alexander, Sexton

First, I'd like to draw attention to the newly built Veteran Memorial site at the Woodside cemetery. If you haven't seen it yet, please feel free to stop and check it out. The storm damaged it this fall but it will be repaired and improved first thing in the spring.

2023 was another productive year for the Belgrade cemeteries. We began the limited opening of Plan 5, Pine Grove Cemetery's newest expansion project. As part of the opening, we have added signs at the end of Plans 1,2,3,4 and 5 with a QR code on them. If you scan the code with your phone it will bring up the cemetery layout. You can then do a search and find anyone listed in our computer system (CIMS). This will be updated regularly as we enter more information into CIMS.

The cemetery crew mowed weekly and trimmed many overgrown bushes and trees in the cemeteries. We also removed several trees that had not been maintained and were severely overgrown. The crew will continue working to repair broken/damaged monuments. We also reset approximately 45 fallen or sunken markers. To help us continue moving forward with this project we have purchased a heavy-duty tripod to allow us to move even bigger headstones.



Cemeteries, continued from page 5

I'd also like to welcome Kevin Merrill as our new assistant sexton/main-tenance. He has been busy with learning the computer system and working nonstop in the cemetery. One of his biggest projects was to clean up and reseed all the damage the grubs did in the cemetery. We will continue with repairing this damage in the spring as well. I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank Wesley Day, Isaac Worster, Ed Call and Dan Wilson of our 2023 cemetery crew for doing a great job keeping Belgrade's seven cemeteries clean and beautiful places. Also, thank you to the many volunteers who worked collectively planting geraniums on graves in preparation for Memorial Day.

Lastly, I greatly appreciate the involvement of the Cemetery Committee, which advises the sexton, Town Manager and Board of Selectpersons on the cemeteries' maintenance and operations. Thank you to Committee members chairman Phil Sprague, Michial Heino, Bruce Galouch, Robert Lewis and Nick Zaccaro.



Dams, continued from page 4

Dams Committee are now at normal winter water storage levels as we look forward to spring ice-out.

Normal maintenance and repairs were successfully conducted on all three dams this past year in addition to successful completion of Belgrade's Village Dam extensive concrete remediation project, new gate steel plating, seals, paint, etc.

For 2024, in addition to \$9,600 for the continuing preventive maintenance and repairs on all three dams, the Dams Committee is requesting an additional pro-rata share of \$40,008 for the Village Dam's new steel plates for both 9'x10' radial gates, driveway work at the Wings Mill site, security fencing at the Village Dam, etc. and replenishment of the \$15,000 Capital Reserve Account to help offset future large project expenditures. The 2024 Proposed Budget Request reflects a 69.5% reduction from the 2023 Budget Request.

Your Dams Committee would like to thank the residents and officials of the five communities involved in this local governmental partnership for their continued assistance and support, and in particular, your Belgrade Dams Delegates, Craig Alexander, Tom Bennett, Ted Fontaine, Cameron McCafferty and Michael Belanger. Enjoy the lakes!

A Note from the Senior Resource Committee

Happy 2024! Each year, people all over the world set goals to break a bad habit, learn a new skill, do a good deed, visit a new place, try a new food, be kind, take a risk and countless other resolutions. It is a time for introspection, an opportunity for us to look back at where we have been and look forward to where we are going.

In 2023, your Senior Resource Committee delivered sand buckets to residents (call the Town Office if you need some this year), organized a regular weekly walking group, facilitated a weekly crafting group, supported pickleball, co-sponsored, with the Parks and Recreation Department, senior trips to the Coastal Botanical Gardens and a foliage trip to Rangeley, partnered with Maine General to bring a healthy cooking program and capped our year off with a holiday party, complete with cookies, hot chocolate and live music provided by Pam and Kevin Rhein. Most of the programming provided to seniors is free!



We plan to continue all these activities in the new year and are looking forward to offering other opportunities. Movie Mondays will be back starting January 15th. (We are looking for volunteers who may be interested in volunteering for "Movie Monday", please call the town office for more information.) Also, look for classes on end-of-life planning, tax assistance, exercise and movement, cooking, and possibly even dance classes.

Check out our new Senior Resource 2024 Winter Newsletter (written by Kim Haggan on a quarterly basis) on the Town of Belgrade website under committees. We will post our activities on this site as well.

The Board of Selectpersons designated the North Belgrade Community Center as the town's Senior Center, and we now have a sign in place! Many thanks to Leighton Signworks, Inc. who did a wonderful job matching the "Belgrade Senior Center" sign to the existing town sign.

We are always looking for volunteers and have openings for committee members. Please contact the town office to fill out an application.

The update of the Town of Belgrade's Comprehensive Plan is underway

Every 10 years, the Town of Belgrade updates its Comprehensive Plan under the guidance of the Comprehensive Plan Committee and with the expertise of Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG). The Committee and KVCOG work with the Board of Selectpersons, the town manager, town staff, volunteer committees, and residents to develop goals for the next 10 years.

The current [2013 Comprehensive Plan](#) was adopted by voters in 2014. Like that document, the update will serve as a road map of how citizens

would like to see Belgrade develop in areas such as housing, economic development, future land use, preservation of natural resources, recreation, and transportation by providing recommendations on how to achieve goals in each of those areas.

The process of updating the plan is meant to be collaborative, with residents and community stakeholders providing input alongside Town leadership and staff to create a common vision for Belgrade that will drive the community forward. Belgrade is one of the most desirable communities in the central Maine area due to its convenient and accessible location, some of the best recreational oppor-

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Code Enforcement

Hans Rasmussen, Code Enforcement Officer

Having served Belgrade for more than a year now I cannot imagine a better place to work. Maine is Vacationland and Belgrade is one of the places Mainers go to get away. I have enjoyed getting to know the camp roads, diverse terrain and people that surround the Lakes Region.

As I write this the office is under generator power and more than 300,000 Maine residents are without electricity. This is due to a wind and rain event that occurred on December 18th and has brought all the area lakes water levels well above full pond and spilling over at a time of year when being below full pond, as much as 18", is the goal. Another result of the excessive rain and wind is fallen trees. The softened ground has allowed the wind to topple many trees.

Please remember to photo document any damage to property and the cause. This will aid in the claims process and the issuance of permits for rebuilding or replacing damaged structures.

The Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) needs to be contacted prior to removal of hazardous trees. Replanting to replace damaged vegetation may be required in the Shoreland Zone areas (within 250 feet of a water body). Roots and stumps above the ground can be cut and removed or ground to the surface. Roots and stumps below the grade surface must be left intact. Shoreland Zone property owners must also inform the CEO of an intent to replace damaged structures within 18 months of the damage occurring. This is a State of Maine rule and "after the fact permits" are not guaranteed if violations are present.

2023 erased most of the effects of the preceding drought conditions. With any luck 2024 will be a comfortable balance of fair weather with periods of nourishing moisture.

Parking, continued from page 4

and will represent over one million dollars in contributions raised and donated by the Friends.

If you would like further information about this project, please contact the Friends at friendsofbelgradelakesville@gmail.com.



Budget Committee

Sara Languet, Vice Chair

The Budget Committee is an advisory committee of volunteers that provide guidance on budget priorities for the town's financial needs. In 2023, the town updated pay scales to attract and retain employees. Additionally, we addressed much needed repairs to the town's infrastructure. Our revenues increased and with careful budget planning the town has held this year's increase to about 5%.

In 2023, a factor revaluation of properties was completed by the Assessor. Waterfront land valuations nearly doubled while the land portion of non-waterfront was increased by 40%. The overall increase allowed the mil rate set to be less than 2022. Overall property values are strong in Belgrade as it is a very desirable place to live. Certainly, such is a

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direct result of our residents' and town officials' due diligence with the prevention, the maintenance, and the mitigation efforts to sustain the environmental quality of the town's landscape.

Our personal thank you goes to all the town staff and volunteers who give their time and efforts on behalf of the town.

2023-24 Budget Committee Members:

Bruce Galouch, Chairperson
Sara H. Languet, Vice-Chairperson
Scott Ferguson
Gary Mahler
Penelope Morrell and
Rev. John Hall

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

for

**Annual Town Meeting
Referendum Questions
will be available
February 15 - March 13**

Please call 207-495-2258 to request a ballot be mailed to you, or stop in to the Town Office.

Facilities Maintenance

Cory Alexander, Director

2023 was a busy year and 2024 is shaping up to be even busier. We started 2023 out by hiring two new full-time employees, Kevin Merrill as Assistant Sexton/Maintenance and Ed Call as Custodial/Maintenance. Both are doing a great job.

The town garage is mostly complete on the inside, other than repairs to the old section that we will be finishing up this year. We will also be adding a lean-to on the back side with a bathroom. This will add extra space so less equipment will be outside exposed to the weather.

At North Belgrade Community Center, we repaired the roof, chimney, and replaced the rear ramp with an aluminum one. Along with the ramp, we also replaced the rear door and repaired the sill and floor which was rotten. We have replaced all the interior lights with LED's. We also added an accessible picnic table to the playground, donated by the Union Church. We will be working on more repairs in 2024 as well.

At the Center for All Seasons, we repaired three places on the roof and had both chimneys re-pointed and sealed. The caps on both were stabilized as well. The pool was repaired and is now in working order for an early opening this summer. We also had trees removed and trimmed from around the building and the play area for safety reasons.

We have plans to build an accessible trail from the building to the lake. We will also continue to make repairs and improvements to the building in 2024.

Town office: a few security upgrades, cameras and motion sensors. We are checking into swipe cards for even more enhanced security.

North Belgrade Fire Department was painted, and door openers were replaced for more reliability.

The History House will have both security and fire monitoring added this year.

Transfer Station: A new roof has just been installed, and we will be starting to upgrade the lights on the inside, as well as finishing off the ceiling.



Meet the Candidates

A candidate forum will be held at 6:30 p.m. February 12, at the Town Office.

SELECTBOARD CANDIDATES - Three candidates running for 2 - 3 year terms.

Barbara Allen

Education:

MA New York University, management
BA Vassar College, music

**Work experience:**

20 years fundraiser for arts and education organizations, including Waterville Opera House and U Maine Farmington.

20 years director of successful music and movement program for families with young children

Political/civic experience:

20 years service on local boards and committees, including one term on Board of Selectpersons.

Why are you running for Select board?

"I am grateful that Belgrade voters elected me in 2021. With the knowledge and experience gained over the past three years, I believe I could contribute more to the Town in a second term."

What qualifies you?

"A 37-year resident of Belgrade Service as a selectperson, 2021-24, 2023-24 as chair.

Involvement in organizations that improve our quality of life, including Belgrade Public Library, McGrath Pond-Salmon Lake Association, Friends of Belgrade Lakes Village".

What is the biggest challenge facing Belgrade?

"Planning for the future needs of our town, its residents and visitors in a fiscally responsible manner, with the goal of keeping taxes as low as possible while providing needed services."

How would you seek to address that?

"With the update to the Comprehensive Plan now underway, we have the opportunity to examine where we are as a community and where we want to be in 10 years. It's vital that we involve as many residents as possible in the process for the plan to truly represent a consensus."

Name two other priorities, what you propose to do about those:

Continued on page 9

Carol Johnson

Education: BA
Colby College

Work experience: Retired from Allstate Insurance after 40 years.

**Political/civic experience:**

"During my first term as a Belgrade Selectperson I served on the Public Works Exploration Committee as well as the Fire Department Planning Committee. My other experience includes Past President of the Belgrade Lakes Association, Lay Leader and Chair of Church Council of Union Church of Belgrade Lakes, and Co-Chair of The Friends of Belgrade Lakes Village."

Why are you running for Select board?

"I believe in public service and giving back to the community. I am fortunate to be able to live in Belgrade full-time and wish to help the town maintain its character and yet move forward to address the issues we face."

What qualifies you?

"My professional background provides over 40 years of experience working with individuals, families and businesses to help protect their assets and cover their liabilities. I developed an ability to listen first, followed by taking a logical measured approach to problem solving. My other civic involvement, leadership and experience also provides me with an excellent background to work effectively in this position. I worked hard to develop a solid understanding of how the town works as part of my current position as Selectperson, and I have been making a difference on the board since being elected In November 2021."

What is the biggest challenge facing Belgrade?

"Our biggest challenge as a small town is providing services to an expanding population while keeping costs in line and taxes as low as possible with rising costs."

How would you seek to address that?

"We need to focus on solid long-term planning by ensuring our decisions are designed to work today and set us up

Continued on page 9

Jeff Worthing

Education:

Work Experience:
Fire protection field

**Political/Civic Experience:**

Belgrade Fire Department, Animal Control Officer

Why are you running for Select Board?

"I am proud to be running for the select board. It's important to me that my kids can afford to live in this great community one day. My willingness to serve the town isn't due to a personal agenda it's for every hard working person that calls Belgrade home."

What is the biggest challenge facing Belgrade?

"I want to keep unnecessary spending to the minimum. I want to make sure every taxpayers' voices are heard. The town of Belgrade needs the local government to be more transparent about issues within the town. It's also important to me that spending benefits the north and south parts of Belgrade not just the village."

How would you seek to address that?

"I will always defend every single taxpayer against unnecessary spending."

Name two other priorities, what you propose to do about those:

"The biggest challenge facing Belgrade is no accountability for unnecessary town government spending. Another large issue that I see is the properties that the town owns are neglected and not being maintained, and ultimately cost every single taxpayer in the end. The select board members need to start paying attention and staying on top of these projects. The town needs accountability to avoid ultimately hurting our residents with higher taxes."

☪☪☪

www.townofbelgrade.com

Belgrade Fire and Rescue

Dan MacKenzie, Fire Chief / Travis Burton, Rescue Chief

2023 was another busy year for Belgrade Fire & Rescue. Our department had 545 total calls for service, an increase of 28 over the previous year.

Recently we had a significant wind/rainstorm on December 18th. This storm resulted in sixty calls for service related to the weather incident. With that in mind we want to remind everyone to use caution when running generators during these events.

We had several carbon monoxide (CO) related calls from this storm. Everyone should run generators at least twenty feet away from home. Never run them near any open windows or doors. Always have working CO detectors in your home, and always make sure they are wired properly so as not to be back-feeding power out onto CMP's grid.

We often see generators running in a garage with the garage door open with people thinking this is ok. This

is extremely dangerous even with the door open. CO is odorless and can leak back into the home very easily. Also want to remind everyone to please observe and follow roadblocks that we must place. These are put out for everyone's safety and even though a wire may appear to be dead you truly do not know as it could be back fed by someone's improperly wired generator which can result in severe injury or death.

We would like to remind everybody that you must obtain a burn permit if burning brush or debris on your property. Allowable products to burn are brush, logs and clean unpainted non-pressure treated wood. No garbage is allowed to be burned. There is a new law this year that requires you to obtain a burn permit for any fire over three feet in diameter or three feet tall. Previously you did not need a permit for a cooking or warming fire. This year the law has changed and even if it is for cooking



or a warming fire and it is over three feet in diameter or three feet tall a burn permit will be required. Continue to obtain a permit at wardensreport.com. You will not be able to get a permit until 9 a.m. We must wait for the State to determine the level of fire danger before we can turn on the site. There will be no burning, even a campfire, on a red flag day. Also make sure to fully extinguish all fires before leaving them.

Thank you, Belgrade, for your continued and ongoing support. Hope everyone is having a great Winter Season.

Allen, continued from page 8

"1. Looking at ways to keep Belgrade vibrant by helping seniors stay in town and encouraging young families to move to Belgrade. The town could explore new housing options as well as increasing recreational and other services.

2. Maintaining a strong tax base by keeping our lakes clean. The Town should continue to work with the Lakes and Natural Resources Committee, 7 Lakes Alliance, and the various lake associations on erosion control and other efforts."

What's the one thing you want voters to know about you?

"I love living in Belgrade and being part of this dynamic community."



Johnson, continued from page 8

for success into the future. Belgrade has a strong team working to bring things up to date and plan for the long-term. Our ongoing Comprehensive Review project should equip us with a guide on managed growth while always keeping lake water quality and environmental issues in mind."

Name two other priorities, what you propose to do about those.

"We need to address the housing shortage. Options are limited for folks who wish to down-size and remain in Belgrade. We should provide leader-

ship on creating solutions and encouraging new senior living possibilities. Ongoing projects-the Salt Contamination issue in the "triangle" is being addressed with MaineDOT with hopefully a resolution this year as well as the continuing work of the Belgrade Fire Department's long-term planning for a new station that is critical to the town in the future."

What's the one thing you want voters to know about you?

"Belgrade is in my heart. My family has deep roots here and I am so glad I am able to be a part of this community. There is none better!"



Plan, continued from page 6

tunities in the heart of the Belgrade Lakes region and the natural beauty and serenity found in this rural area. The process of creating the plan will involve a variety of interests and collaborative efforts to ensure it evolves into a plan that will be championed by you, our community stakeholders.

Once available, a draft of each of the plan's chapters and the corresponding tables of policies and strategies will be posted to be shared with the public. The tables will list recommendations the Town could or should take in each topic area. Once the final plan is approved by voters and by the State of Maine in 2025,

these tables will be referenced when determining whether and how much progress is being made in realizing the plan. The chapters themselves will provide the background information and data that led to the recommendations.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee was established to consist of up to seven members. It currently has five members: Anthony Wilson, Chair; Dee Cooke, Kimberly Dallas, Pat Donahue, Joy Intriago. For those interested in serving on the committee, please complete an [application](#).

The Town welcomes your thoughts, input and questions. Please email those to [Town Manager Lorna Dee Nichols](#). Those emails will be shared with others involved in crafting the Comprehensive Plan.

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Town Boards and Committees

Board of Selectpersons meet the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Appeals Board
4th Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Dams Committee
1st Monday at 4 p.m.

Planning Board
1st and 3rd Thursday at 6 p.m.

Board of Parks and Recreation
Last Monday at 6:30 p.m.

Lakes & Natural Resources
2nd Tuesday at 3:30 p.m.

Roads Committee
4th Tuesday at 1 p.m.

Cemetery Committee
2nd Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

Library Trustees
1st Thursday at 7 p.m.

Senior Resource Committee
4th Monday at 6:30 p.m.

Comprehensive Plan Committee
3rd Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

Transfer Station Committee
2nd Monday at 7 p.m.

Check www.townofbelgrade.com for a full schedule of boards, committees and meetings, as well as agendas, minutes, Zoom links and other information.

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