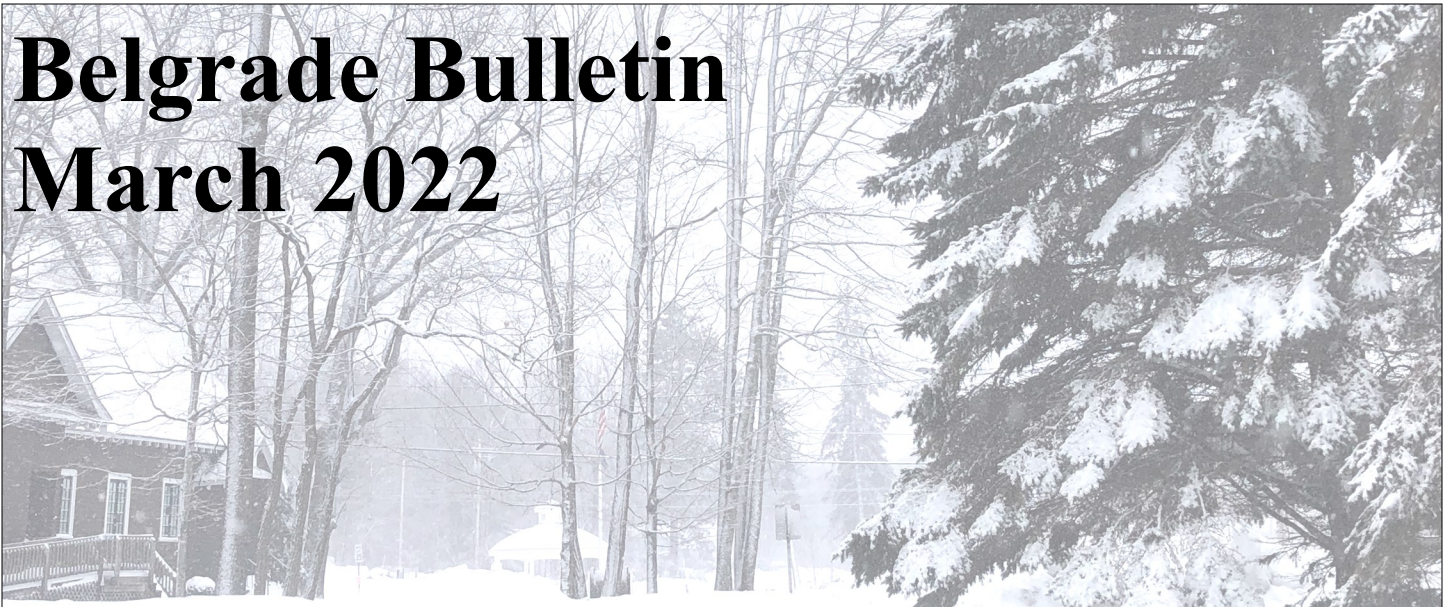


# Belgrade Bulletin

## March 2022



### **BELGRADE TOWN OFFICE**

990 Augusta Road

Belgrade, ME 04917

**Phone:** 207-495-2258

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**townofbelgrade.com**

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### **TOWN OFFICE HOURS**

Monday-Wednesday, Friday

8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Thursday 8 a.m.-7 p.m.

### **BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS**

Melanie Jewell, chair (2022)

Richard Damren, vice chair (2022)

Daniel Newman (2023)

Barbara Allen (2024)

Carol Johnson (2024)

### **STAFF**

**Town Manager**

Anthony Wilson

**Town Clerk**

Mary Vogel

**Treasurer, Tax Collector**

Nicholas Poole

**Deputy Clerk, Registrar**

Charlene Houle

**Deputy Clerk, Deputy Registrar**

Deb Nichols

Frank Haggan

## **Select Board Highlights September-February**

Happy New Year! Here are some highlights from the past few months of Select Board meetings:

- Carol Johnson was elected to fill the remaining term of a vacated seat. Welcome, Carol!
- Resident concerns regarding the increase in short-term rentals were brought to the board's attention. The consensus was to continue to monitor the issues and suggestions were made that road associations, etc. can establish guidelines for their properties without the imposition of ordinance regulations.
- Security system upgrades were considered for the Belgrade Public Library and the Community Center for All Seasons. Security cameras were approved and will be paid for at the library with a grant from Maine Municipal Association's risk reduction program.
- A policy for committee appointments was discussed and finalized. Board and committee openings will be open and advertised for two weeks; all applications will be forwarded to the individual board/committee for their review and recommendation to the Select Board.
- Several discussions surrounding a proposed public water system were held. Maine Department of Transportation and the Maine Rural Water Association have been working alongside the town to come to the best solution for the well salt contamination issue. Residents will be asked to vote to establish a Water Utility District and to allow the town to continue negotiating with MDOT for a solution, which may include creating a public water system. (More, Page 3).
- North Belgrade Community Center was designated as a Senior Center and will be used, along with the CFAS, to enhance programming and social programming for seniors. Because of this designation, the Senior Resource Committee can now apply for grants to help offset some of the associated costs of programming.
- The road commissioner and the Roads Committee recommended paving projects for 2022. These will include experimenting with chip sealing on a couple of roads (Minot Hill and East-West Lane) as a way to increase pavement preservation and save money. (More on paving, Page 2).

**Continued on Page 2**

## Town Manager's Report

- Contracts were awarded to Maine Technology Group for the town's information technology needs and to Atlantic Recycling Equipment LLC for a compactor container at the Transfer Station.
  - The Subdivision Ordinance rewrite was completed, as were the Cemetery and Commercial Development Ordinance updates. These were reviewed by the town attorney and suggestions incorporated. A tremendous amount of work went into each of these, and the town extends a sincere thank you to the Planning Board, the Cemetery Committee and Kennebec Valley Council of Governments for their assistance.
  - There will be no in-person town meeting this year. The board decided to proceed with a secret ballot town meeting again this year. For voting information, see Page 3.
  - The Budget Committee, department heads, the town manager, treasurer and the Select Board have worked hard to put together the 2022 budget. Several workshops were held, and the final warrant is available on the town's website and annual report mailed to all residents.
  - Multiple appointments were made to committees and boards. We appreciate your willingness to serve and are thankful to each of you for your contributions.
- *Melanie Jewell, Chair, Select Board*

Belgrade's 2022 municipal budget proposes an increase built around one objective: ensuring the town can attract high-quality applicants and retain talented public servants.

Over the past few years, the town has had trouble attracting applicants, particularly in facilities maintenance, at the Transfer Station and in recreation. That's largely because our compensation package has lagged behind the market. When a teen can earn \$15 per hour flipping burgers, there's little incentive to work for \$12.15 in our after-school child care program or summer camp. Two experienced deputy clerk candidates who wanted to work in Belgrade would have had to take big pay cuts, pay more for health insurance and accept a smaller retirement match to do so. Consequently, they turned down our job offers.

This year's budget aims to make the town's compensation package more attractive ... within reason. The budget would establish a \$15 minimum wage for town staff. Additionally, every full- and part-time employee's hourly rate would increase \$1.50. The budget also proposes a return to the town paying 100% (versus 90%) of its full-time employees' health insurance premium. Lastly, after decades of the town matching employees' retirement contributions up to 3%, the budget proposes increasing that to 5%.

The latter two moves are relatively inexpensive in the context of an approximately \$3 million annual budget. The wage increase is more expensive, especially in the Parks and Recreation Department, which hires mostly seasonal workers who have earned minimum wage. But if the town is to compete for labor in this post-pandemic economy, we have little choice but to increase compensation.

The good news is much of the increase is offset by a reduction in debt service in 2022. The result is a minimal impact on the town's portion of the mil rate.

— *Anthony Wilson, Town Manager, 207-495-2258, townmanager@townofbelgrade.com*

## 2022 Paving Proposal on Town Meeting Warrant

The Select Board approved a Roads Committee recommendation for the town meeting warrant to spend approximately \$882,000 to repave Depot Road, Guptill Road, Old Route 27, Hulin Road, School Street, Red Oaks Lodge Road, Lakeshore Drive, Transfer Station Road and the portion of the Transfer Station complex that wasn't repaved in 2021. The work would occur this year and be paid over three years, if approved by voters.

The package also includes chip-sealing for Minot Hill Road and East-West Lane. Chip-sealing involves spraying a thin layer of liquid asphalt

on the road and binding it with rock aggregate. The liquid asphalt prevents moisture from seeping into the road and deteriorating its base. When that happens, a road must be repaved at a far greater cost. Repaving Minot Hill Road would cost nearly \$176,000; chip-sealing it will cost an estimated \$63,836. Repaving East-West Lane would cost about \$96,000 versus an estimated \$47,043 to chip-seal it. Because Minot Hill is a busy through road with lots of truck traffic and East-West is residential, it will give the town a chance to evaluate chip-sealing on different types of roads.

Communities report chip-sealing is highly effective in protecting the investment they previously made in paving roads and does not result in more flat tires. If it works in Belgrade, it will be used in the future.

The Roads Committee is considering repaving North Belgrade roads in 2025 if the paving proposal is approved. This would include Horsepoint, McGrath Pond, Damren, Taylor Woods, Station and Stevens roads, and possibly others.

— *Anthony Wilson, Town Manager.*

## Town Warrant Addresses Well Contamination

Two Town Meeting warrant articles look to resolve the contamination of wells in the area bounded by routes 27, 8/11 and 135. The former practice of the town and Maine Department of Transportation storing road salt on open ground caused the contamination. The salt that leached into the aquifer not only contaminated the water for consumption, but has corroded plumbing fixtures and appliances. The town and the DOT are jointly responsible for remedying the issue for affected property owners.

Town and state officials studied several potential solutions. Drilling new wells, it was found, would be fruitless. Reverse-osmosis systems would have required additional heated structures; some of the affected homes are mobile homes. Under-the-sink systems would be inadequate. Buying the properties was considered, but would have displaced Belgrade residents, and neither the town nor the state was interested in owning or maintaining the properties. The conclusion was the only viable solution is a public water system to serve the 13 affected properties, including the Town Office and Pine Grove Cemetery. The state has agreed to fund the construction at a budgeted cost of \$2.2 million. The town would operate it, likely contracting with a third party at an estimated annual expense of less than \$20,000. System users would pay water rates that would approximate the annual costs of operating a well (mostly electrical costs).

One of the warrant articles seeks ratification of the Belgrade Water District created by the Legislature under a bill sponsored by Selectperson and State Rep. Dan Newman. The second article seeks voter approval for the town to complete its negotiations with the state. The resulting contract would require voter approval.

Town officials are happy to respond to questions to ensure voters have the information necessary to make an informed vote.

## Town Clerk's Report

### Town Meeting, Election Information

On March 19, the town will vote on the annual town warrant at the Center for All Seasons, 1 Center Drive (on Route 27, half a mile south of the village). Polls will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The entire warrant will be voted on by a secret ballot referendum.

Ballots are also available for absentee voting. Call 207-495-2258 to request that a ballot be mailed to you, or pick one up at the Town Office, 990 Augusta Road. The Town Office is open 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. weekdays and until 7 p.m. on Thursday.

The town encourages absentee voting, as there are 41 articles on the ballot, as well as the election of candidates. The last day to request an absentee ballot is Tuesday, March 15. Ballots must be returned by 8 p.m. Saturday, March 19. Ballots can be returned at any time to a secure dropbox on the north side of the Town Office or to the Center for All Seasons on March 19.

If you have questions about warrant articles, contact Town Manager Anthony Wilson at 207-495-2258 or [townmanager@townofbelgrade.com](mailto:townmanager@townofbelgrade.com).

You must be a registered voter to vote at Town Meeting. You may register at the polls or in advance at the Town Office. You may register by completing a voter's 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.

— *Mary Vogel, Town Clerk, 207-495-2258, [town-clerk@townofbelgrade.com](mailto:town-clerk@townofbelgrade.com)*

### Committee Openings

The town is seeking volunteers for several committees and boards:

Appeals Board: 1 alternate  
Assessment Review Board: 2  
Budget Committee: 1  
Don C. Stevens Committee (a trust for Belgrade Central School): 1  
Lakes Committee: 1 seasonal resident  
Parks & Recreation Board: 4  
Planning Board: 1 alternate  
Transfer Station Committee: 1

### Redistricting Changes

Census information gathered every 10 years from the U.S. Census Bureau is used to draw boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts.

As a result of the 2020 Census, Belgrade is now part of State Representative District 58 (New Sharon, Belgrade, Fayette, Mount Vernon, Rome and Vienna) and State Senate District 15 (Mount Vernon, Belgrade, Sidney, Vassalboro, China and Augusta). The changes will be reflected in the November election.

Belgrade remains in U.S. Congressional District 2.

### November Election Results

**Select Board:** Carol Johnson received 650 votes, Nicholas Alexander, 521

**Question 1:** banning the CMP corridor project passed in Belgrade, 735-524

**Question 2:** \$100 million bond for transportation infrastructure projects. Belgrade voters approved the measure, 886-373.

**Question 3:** State constitutional amendment guaranteeing Mainers' right to produce, harvest and consume food passed in Belgrade, 755-492.

# Meet the Candidates

Belgrade voters on March 19 will choose two members of the Select Board, each for three-year terms, and one representative to the Regional School Unit 18 board for a three-year term.

## Selectboard

Three candidates for two positions

(Incumbent Rick Damren, also a candidate, didn't return the candidate questionnaire.)

### Nicholas Alexander

**Education:** Messalonskee High School graduate, current student at Kennebec Valley Community College.

**Work experience:** Volunteer positions.

**Political/civic experience:** Board of Appeals; Belgrade Chair Maine Chapter of Young Republicans National Federation; member Maine GOP; member Kennebec County GOP; past member Maine Developmental Disability Council



**Why are you running for Select Board?** To encourage senior/youth engagement, lower taxes, foster economic development.

**What qualifies you?** Practical experience in civic issues.

**What is the biggest challenge facing Belgrade?**

Healthy/balanced living for all.

**How would you seek to address that?** Listening to all community voices and representing them.

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

Senior inclusion — Working and learning with Senior Resource Committee.

Youth Engagement— Economic Development- Combining priorities that continue fostering growth and development. Identifying capacity with our Rec Centers and local businesses to establish a deeply rooted and meaningful community mentoring program modeled after other successful entities such as the Alford Center in Waterville, programs in Augusta, and others across the state and nation. Working with our high school via JMG, and other programs, to prepare incoming candidates.

**What's one thing you want voters to know about you?** I enjoy working with members of our community. I like to be involved and meet new friends. I met some really great people when I ran for selectman this past November. I learned a lot during that process and I continue to learn so much about our wonderful town.

### Melanie Jewell

**Education:** High school graduate, some college.

**Work experience:** Clerk of the Works, city of Augusta; day care provider; Montessori teaching assistant; medical assistant; sales professional, O'Connor Motors.



**Political/civic experience:**

Joined the Select Board in 2005 as a write-in candidate, served nine years. I ran again in 2019 and for the last two years have served as board chair.

**Why are you running for Select Board?** I love this community and always strive to help Belgrade be the best it can be! I leave personal opinions and political beliefs at the door and work with the board as a team to move

Belgrade forward. Every board and committee member brings different skills and life lessons to the table; it's been my pleasure learning from others and incorporating those lessons into my own skill set.

**What qualifies you?** 12 years Select Board experience; 2013 Spirit of America Award recipient.

**What is the biggest challenge facing Belgrade?** The wells contaminated from long-term storage of sand/salt mix by the town and MDOT. The issue was first identified in 2011. In 2018, several additional wells were noted to be contaminated and others that had been mitigated were found to again have salt levels that exceed the threshold for households.

**How would you seek to address that?** The creation of a public water supply.

**Name two other priorities you hope to address.** Retaining talent by addressing the pay scale and benefits packages the town offers as well as offering opportunities for professional growth. A second priority is that recognizing our value as a desired destination depends on the health of our lakes; we must maintain the water quality and ensure the integrity of our lakes.

**What's one thing you want voters to know about you?** I will always work for you and for our town. You have my word.

To watch the Feb. 16 candidate forum featuring Select Board and RSU 18 board candidates

visit [townofbelgrade.com/communityconversations](https://townofbelgrade.com/communityconversations).

# Regional School Unit 18 Board of Directors

## Stacey Dowling

**Education:** Trinity Catholic High School, Watertown, Mass.; studied early education at Aquinas College.  
**Work experience:** Raising three children.

**Why are you running for School Board?** Doors to schools are closed to families, meetings are done re-



motely. It's time to open doors, and unite and involve families again. My goal is to connect busy families in more meaningful ways by showing them what's happening in the classroom so they can

support learning at home.

**What qualifies you?** I have an absolute willingness to spend the time necessary to be well-informed on the issues RSU 18 faces. I want to make sure we do what's right for every child!

**What is the biggest challenge facing RSU 18?** My boys are behind due to the pandemic, and I think we can all agree we need to do our best to make sure our kids are performing at grade level. The self-confidence a child possesses will affect their educational goals. I do not approve of teaching styles that make children feel bad for who they are or how they look. We should focus on everyone's uniqueness and creativity in the most positive ways possible.

**How would you seek to address that?** I would ask for more in-person parent-teacher meetings, open respectful communication, getting families more involved in the curriculum.

**Name two other priorities you hope to address.** I'm happy the district lifted the mask mandates. COVID clearly is something we are going to learn to live with. Masking children every day is not the solution. Also, curriculum should be agreed upon. Parents should be involved and heard when it comes to what children are learning in school.

**What's one thing you want voters to know about you?** I always say, "We moved to Maine because we love Maine, not to change Maine."

## Sharon Frost

**Education:** BA, Russian Studies; MA, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

**Work experience:** Peace Corps, ESL teacher, hotel training coordinator.

**Political/civic experience:** Board member Augusta Children's Museum and Pineland Suzuki School; member and classroom volunteer for three school parent associations.

**Why are you running for School Board?** I have always been vested in our school system and I have the time and energy to de-

vote myself to a position on the School Board.

**What qualifies you?** I have spent years in the classroom as a teacher and volunteer.

**What is the biggest challenge facing Belgrade?** The cost of necessities has taken a sharp rise. For fixed-income residents, spending extra on schools may not be a priority. Yet for our town to thrive and attract young families, we need a school system with strong academics, sports, music and arts. The challenge is finding a balance in which all needs are met.

**How would you seek to address that?** Exploring outside sources of funding, such as grants, alumni network and fundraising opportunities.

**Name two other priorities you hope to address.** Our schools have lost some excellent teachers. With the strain of the pandemic, this is somewhat expected. I would like to get a gauge on school climate, teacher satisfaction, etc. It's in our interest to hold on to good teachers. I've also learned of decreasing interest in AP exams. Next year, MHS may be unable to offer AP Calculus. I wonder why this is happening. Are we not placing enough emphasis on academics?

**What's one thing you want voters to know about you?** I believe every child deserves a chance to succeed. I know every child learns differently, and sometimes the path to learning is not always conventional. I would love to be a part of this endeavor.



## Penelope "Penny" Morrell

**Education:** Graduated from Belgrade High School in 1965 and am currently a student at University of Maine Augusta.

**Work experience:** After graduation, I went right to work as executive secretary to the vice president of Gannett Publishing, John Gannett at the Kenne-



bec Journal, and worked six years for him until my firstborn came. I was a stay-at-home mother until both my kids were in school full-time. I've held various jobs as administrative assistant/office manager at the Christian Civic

League of Maine, Maine Right To Life, MADSEC, and accountant at the state of Maine DHHS. I also ran my own business out of my home, Capitol Consulting Services. I am currently retired.

**Political/civic experience:** I was elected treasurer of the town of Belgrade in 1974 and opened office hours in the town office. I was elected to a three-year term on the Select Board in Belgrade. I currently lobby the Maine Legislature and Congress as state director of Concerned Women for America of Maine.

**Why are you running for School Board?** I am concerned about where education is going and would like to make sure students are taught correct history, how to think, not what to think, and excel in reading, writing and mathematics.

**What qualifies you?** I'm a parent/grandparent/taxpayer.

**What is the biggest challenge facing RSU 18?** Keeping the far-left ideology out of our schools.

**How would you seek to address that?** Rid curriculum of any if it exists, make sure no teacher training of it happens and make sure no teachers teach it.

**Name two other priorities you hope to address.** CRT, BLM and COVID restrictions.

**What's one thing you want voters to know about you?** I'm a born-again Christian who loves Jesus Christ and want to serve Him and the good folks of Belgrade.

# Regional School Unit 18 Board of Directors

## James M. Smith

**Education:** Master's degree in Educational Leadership, Doctor of Law and Policy.

**Work experience:** Public educator for over a decade working with at-risk students at Long Creek Youth Development Center, also for RSU 18 as a sixth-grade social



studies teacher, currently teaching seventh grade at Cony Middle School.

**Political/civic experience:** Volunteered for organizations such as the Elks, emceed multiple charitable events, including Veterans Day ceremonies,

and I have experience with political research, including health care and education.

### **Why are you running for School Board?**

My intentions are to return what the community has offered me (public education) and pay it forward through working with the School Board.

**What qualifies you?** I have more than a decade of experience in public schools as a practitioner. Not only that, but I have also been employed with good standing in the district. My education, professional background and familiarity of the district's mission qualifies me for the position.

**What's the biggest challenge facing RSU 18?** Due to the pandemic, many districts are finding graduation rates decreasing.

**How would you seek to address that?** My mission will be to support the vision and the mission of the district, entrust the roles of the administration to give appropriate recommendations, and contribute to improve the district's positive graduation rate through alternative programming, technology, and innovation.

**Name two other priorities you hope to address.** To maintain continued fiscal responsibility in which taxpayers pay the least amount with the maximum benefit for children's education. Second, ensure all of RSU 18 has access to social and emotional supports.

**What's something you want voters to know?** My wife, Cheryl, and I have lived in Belgrade for nearly a decade and have four children who are in the community. For more information, please email me at smithj2112@yahoo.com.

## Brian Wedge

**Education:** MS in Education.

**Work experience:** I retired from the Army Reserve after serving for 21½ years. I served as a non-commissioned officer in Iraq in 2003. I finished my military career as a senior instructor and first sergeant of a training unit in southern Maine.



During my time in this unit, I helped teach thousands of West Point cadets over the course of 14 summers. I was a junior high teacher at Palermo Consolidated School for

seven years and athletic director/assistant principal at Lawrence Junior High School for two years. I am finishing my sixth year as principal at Benton Elementary.

**Political/civic experience:** Stony Ridge Association President.

### **Why are you running for School**

**Board?** I have three school-age children who attend RSU 18 schools. I believe I can serve my community best as a school board member.

**What qualifies you?** I have a strong background in education, leadership and administration. I care deeply about both the students and staff.

**What is the biggest challenge facing RSU 18?** Staffing.

**How would you seek to address that?** Continue to help build a district that attracts highly qualified candidates, provides ongoing and meaningful professional development, and offers competitive compensation.

**Name two other priorities you hope to address:** Continued curriculum development and supporting initiatives that get our students learning outdoors. And provide better opportunities for all students to build aspirations and pathways to 21st century jobs.

**What's one thing you want voters to know about you?** I care about my community and will work tirelessly to support the work necessary to provide the best for our children. This work must be done through the collaboration among all stakeholders within the district.



## Boston Post Cane recipient named

Arthur Clark, 97, officially became the recipient of the town's Boston Post Cane last fall. The cane is presented to the town's oldest resident. Clark also got a plaque and lapel pin, bestowed by Selectboard Chair Melanie Jewell.

Clark is a retired educator, he was an avid cyclist who logged enough miles to circle the globe four times, and he ran the Allagash River 32 times in a canoe.

Clark follows Harold Boston, who held the honor from July 15, 2013, until his death in August.

The tradition began in 1909, when the Boston Post newspaper distributed the canes to towns across New England with instructions that each should be to the oldest man in the town (women were included in 1930). More than 700 canes were distributed; 517 towns still bestow it. The cane, made from Gabon ebony with a 14-carat gold top, officially belongs to the town. It's kept in the board room at the Town Office, along with the names of its recipients.

## Meet the New Code Enforcement Officer

Richard Greenwald was named town code enforcement officer earlier this year, beginning the job Jan. 5. The CEO is responsible for enforcing municipal codes, planning ordinances, and other regulations and laws.

He reviews all plans submitted with building and planning permit applications, issues building permits and inspects projects to ensure compliance with permits, enforces the local shoreland zoning ordinance and investigates complaints of possible code violations.

A veteran of the Marine Corps, Greenwald was a corrections officer in Maine's prison system and as a housing building inspector for the Lewiston Housing Authority.

His office hours are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, and 10:30 a.m.-7 p.m. Thursday.

Oakland CEO Dave Savage will continue to issue plumbing permits and conduct plumbing inspections until Greenwald earns his state license as a local plumbing inspector.

He recently sat down for a Q&A with the Bulletin.

**Why did you want to serve as Belgrade's code enforcement officer?**

I enjoy being able to help people and to keep the community safe. It's in my blood. Also, I grew up fishing here and always loved the small community feel. I want to preserve everything Belgrade has to offer.

**What are the responsibilities of your job?**

Assisting the public in obtaining permits to build or maintain a home, a camp and the land it sits on in Belgrade, while being environmentally conscious.

**What's the most rewarding aspect of your job?**

The appreciation that comes from the community when helping people, and their acknowledgement that my job is to help them achieve their building goals in a safe and environmentally responsible way.

**What's the most challenging facet of what you do?**

Getting people to know I am here to help them and not to hinder their efforts. We should be working together toward a common goal.

**What about your job might surprise residents?**

The personal gratification of helping a community safely grow far outweighs the monetary value.

**What would you like town residents to know about you?**

It's quite simple: I am a Mainah. You are not just a number to me – you're my neighbor. My door is always open.



## Recreation Department Budget Increase Explained

The Recreation Department's proposed 2022 budget includes a noticeable increase – almost all of it related to the need to increase wages for the young people who staff the after-school child care and the summer camp programs.

Recreation's operational budget is built around the pre-pandemic expenses of 2019 – with one exception. The new Village Green Music Series proved wildly popular last summer and fall, so we have devoted the same amount that was expended last year on the series' entertainment budget. We hope and expect to raise more sponsorships of the event to offset its cost.

Otherwise, the budget includes a raise for seasonal workers from a minimum wage of \$12.15 to \$15 an hour. Last year, we had trouble recruiting and retaining workers. That is not surprising given they could earn at least \$15 per hour working at most any fast-food restaurant. So, to be more competitive, the town proposes raising its minimum wage closer to that of those chain restaurants.

The wage increase is an important investment, considering seasonal workers are the backbone of two vital recreation programs – after-school enrichment and summer camp – that generate a fair amount of revenue. More importantly, competent workers are necessary to ensure the children who participate remain safe and healthy when in our care.

Additionally, the 2022 Facilities Maintenance budget invests in the Center for All Seasons and the North Belgrade Community Center. To ensure those buildings remain tidy for public events and private rentals, the Facilities Maintenance budget includes money for hiring a cleaning service to clean them once a week. That cleaning would be supplemented by the Recreation staff.

With these two key components in place, our plan is to then turn attention to recreation programming that best serves our community.

– Anthony Wilson, Town Manager

# Fire & Rescue Department Report

Like most other departmental budgets, the increase in the proposed 2022 budget for the Fire & Rescue Department is related mostly to personnel costs. Belgrade Fire & Rescue's first full year with two full-time emergency responders, both incredibly dedicated to their community, was a success. We must do what we can to retain them.

The proposed budget includes raises of \$1.50 per hour for the town's staff, to attract applicants and to retain valued employees, including full-time firefighters. Volunteer firefighters' on-duty rates are also rising. The budget also includes increased contributions to full-time employees' health insurance and retirement plans. Another \$13,000 is budgeted for a state pension that lets full-time firefighters collect two-thirds of their salary after 25 years of service. The Augusta, Waterville, Fairfield and Winslow fire departments offer this retirement benefit. Offering this plan is an important move to retain Belgrade's firefighters and to attract applicants when we eventually must grow our staff.

Also on the Town Meeting warrant is a proposal to resurrect a capital reserve earmarked for the tower and the equipment attached to it that the department relies on for radio communications. This revitalized fund would be populated with \$10,000 from the undesignated fund – money unspent from prior years. This amount should cover any expenses associated with a catastrophic failure of the tower. The town of Rome, which also uses the tower, will continue to pay \$300 annually for its upkeep. That money will be deposited in the fund.

Lastly, we continue to plan and work toward a new central fire station in the Depot area. We hope and expect to announce some tangible progress later this year. This would allow the Fire & Rescue Department's full-time members to be centrally located, yielding shorter response times to all parts of town.

– Dan MacKenzie, Fire Chief  
[firechief@townofbelgrade.com](mailto:firechief@townofbelgrade.com)



A rendering of the planned first responders memorial.

(Rendering courtesy Provost Memorials, Benton)

## First Responders Memorial Funding On Town Meeting Warrant

A group of Belgrade residents has been working on a public acknowledgment of the town's appreciation for our first responders. The memorial will be centrally located in town (somewhere in the Route 27/Depot Road area).

The proposed design calls for a 6-foot center stone with side benches extending six feet in each direction. The side benches will be made using Maine gray granite.

The design is similar to one being installed in the town of St. George, and was drawn up by Provost Memorials, in Benton, with input from the committee.

The total cost of the project is about \$24,000. The project is proposed as public/private with the public portion on the March 19 Town Meeting ballot. Article 40 seeks approval to appropriate up to \$12,000 from the town's undesignated fund – unspent money from prior budget years. The Select Board and the Budget Committee both unanimously recommend approval. The committee would greatly appreciate your support in voting for Article 40.

The private portion will come from town residents like you who want to honor the dedication, professionalism and kindness of our local first responders.

The committee's goal is to raise \$12,000 in private donations to match the public expenditure.

Donations may be left at the Town Office, 990 Augusta Road, or mailed to Belgrade Fire & Rescue Association, P.O. Box 404, Belgrade, ME 04917. Checks should be made out to the Belgrade Fire & Rescue Association. Note on your check that the donation is for "First Responders Memorial."

There is a website for the project that will have updated information, [belgraderespondersmemorial.org](http://belgraderespondersmemorial.org).

If you have questions, contact Mac Stocco at 207-465-2806 or [macstocco@yahoo.com](mailto:macstocco@yahoo.com). Thank you again for your support.

– Mac Stocco, Chair, First-Responders Memorial Committee



## Senior Resources Committee

The Senior Resources Committee has had an active winter season with the Sand for Seniors program. There has been a lot of ice this year, and committee members have delivered more than 50 buckets of sand to town seniors. Volunteers are always needed to help with deliveries. To be added to the sign-up sheet, or if you need sand, call the Town Office at 207-495-2258.

The committee has started a quarterly newsletter, *The Rockin' Years*. The current issue is the first winter quarterly newsletter for seniors and is available in print at the Town Office, 990 Augusta Road. It's also posted at [townofbelgrade.com/seniors](http://townofbelgrade.com/seniors). At that link, you will also find a Senior Survey, which is also available in paper form at the Town Office. The survey will assist the committee in acquiring grants and in planning programming and special events.

Free File of Life folders are also available at the Town Office. The folders hold your medical information and can be placed on your refrigerator to assist the Fire & Rescue Department if there is a call to your home.

The committee will have a brochure available soon that will provide a list of local resources for seniors. It will be available on the town website and at the Town Office.

In May, the committee will begin programming at the North Belgrade Community Center. Keep an eye out on Facebook, the town website and in the quarterly newsletter for events and programs.

— *Mary Vogel, committee co-chair*

## Transfer Station Report

The town's solid waste budget is proposed to increase in 2022. Two factors are driving that increase.

The first is the cost of hauling garbage from the Transfer Station to the landfill. That expense ballooned in recent months, necessitating a \$20,000 increase in waste disposal over what was budgeted in 2021. Disposal rates will increase 3% on July 1. Additionally, we are facing a 33% rise in the cost of disposing of demolition wood.

The second factor involves staffing. Several applicants turned down job offers at the Transfer Station last year after learning of the wages we pay, one of the issues prompting the proposed town \$15 minimum wage and \$1.50 per hour increase for current employees. The latter would ensure we can retain the staff we have.

Two other questions on the March 19 ballot also have an impact on the Transfer Station.

We need to build up the solid waste capital reserve to ensure we have the financial resources necessary should the hopper/compactor or any other equipment needed to operate have a catastrophic breakdown. This year's budget proposes moving \$65,000 from the undesignated fund – tax dollars collected but not spent in prior budget years – to the solid waste capital reserve account. Once we have paid for a new compactor container, that would leave a balance of about \$100,000 – enough to address any unforeseen and debilitating need.

Another warrant article proposes using up to \$59,000 from the undesignated fund to replace the Transfer Station's skid steer. The current skid steer would be used by the Facilities Maintenance Department; that would eliminate \$8,000 in rental costs each year.

Neither the shifting of money into the capital reserve nor the skid steer purchase would require collecting additional taxes.

— *Ken Scheno, Transfer Station and Recycling Center Director, 207-495-3326, [transferstation@townofbelgrade.com](mailto:transferstation@townofbelgrade.com)*

## The Dams Report: This Winter's Epic Beaver Battle

Our lakes' water levels are all at their winter storage levels — 18-24 inches below full for Great and Long ponds and 12 inches below full for Salmon and McGrath.

As far as our dams go, everything has been pretty much running on auto, thanks to dedicated volunteer Dams Committee members.

Speaking of dedication, I would like to introduce you to and commend the two Salmon Lake Dam operators, Cameron McCafferty and Ted Fontaine, who have really stepped up to the plate. We have

had consistent issues with our Salmon Lake beavers who are infamous for depositing debris and clogging the upstream side of the Salmon Lake Dam.

Cameron and Ted are forever clearing the obstructions for gate operation but this year, the beavers have upped the ante.

Historically, we have had downstream beaver dams but this year, they have built the Hoover of all dams across the entire stream, causing the downstream flow to back up and ice up the gate.

Not to be outwitted, our intrepid duo twice donned their boots and equipment to

open up the beaver dam only to be outwitted again – for the second time or was that the third time?

So, this time, we succumbed and elected to bring in reinforcements in the form of licensed trapper, Henry Carter, of Albion, to even the score and hopefully find a new home for the beavers.

Stay tuned, but as you know, it's never a good idea to bet against Mother Nature!

— *Dick Greenan, Chair, Belgrades Inter-lakes Dams Committee*

## Belgrade Public Library Report

For the last three years, the Belgrade Public Library's budget request has remained flat, at \$82,094. This year, we are proposing an increase for a few reasons.

Primarily, we are increasing our staffing budget so we will have two staff members – the full-time director and a part-time assistant – at the library for all 30 hours the library is open each week. This is for safety purposes. The personnel budget is also increasing so we can offer more competitive wages, part of the town proposal to raise its minimum wage to \$15 per hour, with a parity raise of \$1.50 per hour for other employees. These changes reflect 92% of the library budget increase. The rest of the increase is for programming and buying items for the collection.

Currently, we have a Book Bingo program running through April. Book prizes are available to patrons who fill a line on their bingo cards, and gift certificates will be available for those who fill in the whole board. This program is a big hit, so come to 124 Depot Road and participate today.

A writing program is beginning this month, Write Time, led by Kim Dawes, a member of the library staff, and Kathy Drolet. This will be an informal writing group that meets with the intention of encouraging folks to write more. The first meeting is 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 15.

We will also soon be choosing a book for another community read, which we hope to tie into several summer programs.

The library is full of materials to read, watch or listen to, and the above programs are only some of what we have on offer. There is something for anyone here at the library. Learn more at [townofbelgrade.com/library](http://townofbelgrade.com/library).

— *Jared Bond, Library Director,*  
207-495-3508,

[librarydirector@townofbelgrade.com](mailto:librarydirector@townofbelgrade.com)

## Old Town House Open House, Reopening Coming

For the past two years, the Belgrade Historical Society has been renovating the Belgrade Old Town Meeting House on Cemetery Road. The exterior work has been accom-



Maureen Milliken photo

plished and the BHS will be finishing much of the interior work this spring in preparation for a grand reopening this summer. The BHS plans to have a number of open houses starting after Memorial Day.

In addition, the BHS along with 7 Lakes Alliance will be hosting an outdoor historical conservation program this summer. More details will soon be available.

— *Dianne Dowd, President, Belgrade Historical Society*

## Long Pond Survey, Plan Topic of March 10 Meeting

In fall 2020, Belgrade Lakes Association conducted a lake watershed survey of Long Pond, with partners 7 Lakes Alliance, the towns of Belgrade, Rome and Mount Vernon, Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservatoin District, Maine DEP and EcoInstincts.

The survey identified 148 erosion sites in the watershed that were considered to be sources of stormwater runoff, dirt and phosphorus to the lake. Residential properties accounted for 43% of the documented erosion sites in the watershed, and roads and driveways accounted for another 41%. Phosphorus is plant food and an ingredient of fertilizer. Too much of it getting into ditches, streams and lakes can result in poor water quality and algal blooms.

This type of water quality problem is referred to as nonpoint source pollution, meaning that it comes

from multiple sources.

The purpose of the survey is to develop a Long Pond Watershed Plan to fix the erosion problems that and to prevent future water quality problems. BLA and 7 Lakes are developing the plan now in collaboration with the towns, Colby College, consultants and Maine DEP. The plan is expected to be ready by April. A public meeting to discuss the survey and plan will be held at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 10, via Zoom.

There are many things you can do to help reduce runoff and dirt from entering our lakes. BLA and 7 Lakes have several programs to help, including the Youth Conservation Corps, LakeSmart and 319 Program.

Contact 7 Lakes Alliance, 207-495-6039 or [info@7lakesalliance.org](mailto:info@7lakesalliance.org).

## Three New Businesses Keep Village Hopping

By Brian Beaupain

If you've been to the village on the weekends, you may have noticed a trend — a full parking lot at 87 Main St. The three women-owned businesses at this small plaza, on the corner of Hulin Road, all are fairly new and open year-round.

Wicked Good Elderberry is owned and operated by Kristin McDowell. The indoor local marketplace features items from local artisans and farmers. Products include clothing, tea, coffee, bread, dairy, honey, maple syrup and more, and of course, elderberry items.

Remedy Salon and Spa is owned and operated by Jessica Rouleau. Remedy offers hair and nail services along with massage and bodywork. Remedy has a number of professionals working there, all who have independent schedules.

Oliver and Friends Bookshop is owned and operated by Renee Cunningham. Oliver and Friends opened in June 2020, the oldest of the three businesses. Despite opening at the beginning of the pandemic, business wasn't slowed. In addition to books, Renee sells cards, puzzles, candles and more.

The 2,800-square-foot building, most recently an antiques shop, was bought in fall 2016 by Robert and Lisa Young and underwent an extensive renovation, including dividing it into the three commercial units. Liz Fontaine, of Lakehome Group, marketed the space.

All three businesses have active Facebook and Instagram pages.

## Winter Action Can Help Reduce Summer Browntail Moth Effects

The state is encouraging residents of central Maine to take advantage of the dormant season to reduce the impact of browntail moths in the warmer weather.

The microscopic hairs from the moths' caterpillars float through the air unseen, but their effects are all too obvious. As many area residents know, the poison ivy-like rash they cause is uncomfortable and long-lasting. They also cause respiratory issues. Long-term effects from the moths are deforestation.

Browntail moths have been in an outbreak phase in Maine since 2015, according to the Maine Forest Service, and they cannot be eradicated. But residents can take measures now to ease the impact once the weather warms up. The Forest Service recommends, while it's still winter, to clip and destroy webs within reach or hire licensed arborists or pesticide applicators to reduce out of reach ones.

The "four Rs" of dealing with browntail moths are:

**Recognize** – Learn how to tell if the trees where you live, work and play have BTM.

**Remove** – Use hand snips or extendable pole pruners to remove webs within reach from the ground and away from hazards such as power lines. Protect your eyes and skin from hairs that might be present from past caterpillar activity. After removal, destroy webs by burning or soaking in soapy water for several days, then dispose of the nests in the trash.

**Recruit** – Hire professionals to treat webs out of reach or near hazards on the property you own or manage.

**Reach out** – If you find browntail moths in your neighborhood, let neighbors and town officials know. The more neighbors, businesses, and others who get together to respond to the problem, the better the results, Forest Service officials said.

For information about the moth, resources and more, visit [maine.gov/dacf/knockoutbtm](http://maine.gov/dacf/knockoutbtm).



A browntail moth web.  
(Maine Forest Service photo)

## Winter Warmer Recipe: One-Pot Pasta

By Brian Beaupain

This recipe can be made any time of the year and is the perfect quick and easy, yet flavorful, dish to make after a long day.

While it makes a delicious sauce on its own, if you prefer your pasta more "saucy," simply add some marinara to it.

Beef, chicken, broccoli and other vegetables can also be added.

This dish has been a huge hit in our house with a side of roasted broccoli and a few slices of warm garlic bread.

1 tbsp oil  
1 onion, diced  
1 tbsp minced garlic  
1 tbsp Italian seasoning  
1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes  
1 tsp salt  
½ tsp pepper  
8oz spaghetti  
4 cups vegetable or chicken stock

In a medium stock pot heat oil. Once hot, saute onion until translucent. Add minced garlic and Italian seasoning. Cook for 1 minute. Add tomatoes, salt and pepper, and cook until the tomatoes begin to soften.

Add pasta and stock and bring to a boil over high heat. Stir frequently so the pasta doesn't stick. Once the pasta is tender, and almost all liquid has been absorbed, turn off heat. (You may need to add a little more water before turning off heat to achieve the desired tenderness of the pasta.) Garnish with parmesan cheese, fresh basil, olive oil, or anything you like.

— *Brian Beaupain is a member of the Communications Committee and is food service director at Fayette Central School and, in the summer, chef at Camp Andros-coggin.*

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

The Belgrade Bulletin is published three or four times a year by the Belgrade Communications Committee, which meets the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

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