

THE BRIDGE

Winter 2024-25

Norridgewock, Maine

ph (207) 634-2252

www.norridgewock.gov

Town Meeting : Monday, March 3, 2025

It's hard to believe that the old New England tradition of Town Meeting is back again. In Norridgewock, we convene on the first Monday in March to make all the necessary decisions for the next year. Voters elect their officials and have the opportunity to weigh in on financial, administrative, and regulatory measures.

On March 3, voters will go to the polls during the day to elect officials. This year's ballot may seem unusually sparse; there are several offices for which no one is running. In each of those cases, write-in candidates will be counted, and the top vote-getter is eligible to be seated. A list of offices and candidates is listed below. Where there aren't candidates listed below, or there are less candidates than the number of open seats, the seat will be open for write-in.

Absentee ballots are now available for request; however, ballots won't be mailed or available in the Town Office until the first week of February. The Town Report file has been sent to the printer and awaits the final component: the short audit report. Reports are expected to be available beginning the week of February 17. They'll be available at local stores, the Town Office, and online at www.norridgewock.gov/townreport. ◆

Property tax exemption applications and enrollment in land use programs must be filed with the Assessor's office by April 1

Exemptions include:

- Homestead
- Veteran's
- Blind
- Business Equipment

Land Use Programs include:

- Farmland
- Open Space
- Tree Growth
- Working Waterfront

Taxpayers only need to file exemption applications once. Refiling is required when a property transfers for any reason.

Town Office Hours Adjusted

Due to staffing issues/shortage, the Town Office will be open Monday through Friday, from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm; Thursday evening hours are suspended. As always, you can complete many transactions online at www.norridgewock.gov/reg. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we accommodate the needs of our employees. ◆



SLATE OF OFFICES & CANDIDATES

Select Board Member & Overseer (5 seats, 1 year)

- Ronnie Blodgett
- Matthew Everett
- Charles Farrand
- Lindsey Lynch

Tax Assessor (3 seats, 1 year)

- Charlotte Curtis
- Charles Farrand
- James Lyman

Budget Committee Member (3 seats, 3 years)

Budget Committee Member (1 seat, 1 year)

Planning Board Member (1 seat, 3 years)

SAD 54 School Board Director (1 seat, 3 years)

- Samantha Delorie

SAD 54 School Board Director (1 seat, 1 year)

- Rebecca Eldridge

Library Trustee (1 seat, 5 years)

Sewer Commissioner (2 seats, 3 years)

- John Ames

Sewer Commissioner (2 seats, 2 years)

To promote transparency in government contracts and spending, contract award details will be provided in this section of each newsletter edition. Contract results are also available at www.norridgewock.gov/rfp.

Bid Tracker

Surplus Vehicle: Fire Pickup Truck

Vehicle Information: 1988 Chevrolet Silverado Custom Deluxe 30, FWD, 97,850 miles
Successful Bidder: Gerald French
Bid Price: \$2,500.00

Road Reconstruction: Wilder Hill Road

Project Information: Drainage improvements and full-depth road reconstruction of approximately 1,100 linear feet of Wilder Hill Road
Successful Bidder: Bedard Excavation
Bid Price: \$375,000.00

Surplus Vehicle: Sewer Pump Truck

Vehicle Information: 1994 International 4800 pump truck, diesel, 2,200 gallon tank Field Gymmy, 42,500 miles.
Successful Bidder: Central Maine Concrete, LLC
Bid Price: \$7,500.00

Community Event & Engagement Coordinator Position Proposed

At the recommendation of the Recreation and Parks Committees, the Select Board explored the development of a new position that provides programming oversight and helps meet needs within the Town. A job description was reviewed by the Board, then referred to a volunteer working group for further review. The result is a proposed full-time position that would help support Parks and Recreation while organizing and executing community programs for all. The successful candidate would help spearhead community events (current and expanded) and support municipal operations through oversight of municipal property maintenance. The Select Board unanimously recommends the creation and funding of this position which, for 2025, is to fund the position at 75%, given that the position won't be filled for the entire year. The budgetary request for voters to consider by secret ballot referendum is \$48,000, which translates to a position that would ultimately cost \$63,000 if funded for a full 12 months. At a recent meeting of the Budget Committee, a majority declined to support the creation and funding of a new position.

As a reminder, voters will weigh in on this measure during the secret ballot voting during the day on March 3, or by absentee ballot; it will not be an item discussed on the floor of Town Meeting. Public Hearings on the referendum question will be held at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, February 5 and February 19, at the Town Office. ♦

Referendum Question to Appear on the Town Meeting Ballot, in addition to the Election of Candidates:

Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate \$48,000.00 to fund the new Community Event & Engagement Coordinator position?

Select Board recommends approval 5-0
Budget Committee recommends non-approval 3-1

COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER WANTED

Would you like to be a part of community betterment? Does improving the business climate in Norridgewock interest you? Do you have any ideas for economic development in town? *If so, consider submitting an application to join the TIF Advisory Committee!*

If you have questions about the position or the committee, don't hesitate to reach out to the Town Office. 634-2252 or rlabelle@norridgewock.gov

Town Office Closures



January 31 – closing at noon for
BMV training
February 17 – Presidents' Day
March 3 – Town Meeting Election
April 21 – Patriots Day

The Latest News from Norridgewock Public Library

We are jumping for joy at the Norridgewock Public Library over the community connections we have made this fall. We saw a record number of patrons as well as met new faces at various library and community events.

Speaking of community connections, we have great news! The library received a \$5,000 grant from the John Henry Eldred Jr. Foundation in Ohio to update our children's non-fiction and education section as well as update our young adult and chapter book collections. Not only will the grant allow us to purchase new books, but it will also enable us to put together Discovery Kits which children and parents can check out and learn at home. Topics of the discovery kits will include the solar system, alternative energy and Microscope discovery.

The library trustees and librarian helped Norridgewock get into the holiday spirit during the annual Holiday Stroll. We had a great time helping children make ornaments and bookmarks of their own design. Attendees also received a little holiday treat.

Tadpole Storytime is a great way to engage your toddler or preschooler. We meet every 1st and 3rd Thursday to read a story and make a craft. On occasion, snacks are also involved. Join us Feb. 6, Feb. 27 (special date), March 6, March 20, April 3 and April 17.



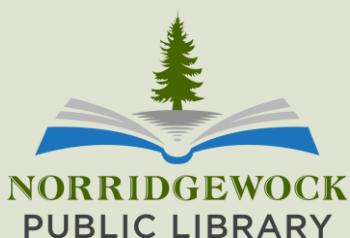
Older children will enjoy our Froglet events geared towards grades Kindergarten through Third. Although younger and older children can attend. We read a story and have craft time, usually with a holiday theme. Join us Tuesday, Feb. 11 and April 15.

Our Palmer Lego Club continues to bring the fun. Each month children gather to design Lego creations and participate in challenges. Last month, attendees made marble runs and raced marbles and other Lego creations. Join us every third Tuesday at 3 pm. Next meetings include Feb. 18, March 18 and April 15.

Other events over the last couple of months have included an author talk with Gerry Boyle, ornament painting with Cheryl Storer, our annual wreath workshop and regular meetings with our book club.

Make sure to check our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/norridgewocklibrary, to find out our community happenings as well as view photos from events and discover our latest new books.

Remember, our library cards are free, and you do not have to be a resident of Norridgewock to get one. Stop by soon. There is always something happening at the library. ◆ KLD



Library Hours

Tuesday & Thursday	10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday & Saturday	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Kelli Dorais, Librarian
library@norridgewock.gov



Mill Stream First Graders Donate Little Library

Under the leadership of First Grade Teacher Mrs. Veilleux and her trusty team, the first graders of Mill Stream Elementary School joined Town officials and members of the Parks Committee in early November for a ribbon cutting at Emery Town Square to promote their newly donated little library. Each child wrote their own name on the post of the box and brought a book to help fill the box. Franklin Savings Bank recognized the students' good works with a delivery of delicious cupcakes from The Bankery!

The initiative correlated with the *1st for ME* curriculum in which students learn about building strong communities and leaders. To celebrate the end of the unit, they decided on an idea to give people more access to books in the community. Well done, First Graders, and thank you for your great work! ♦♦

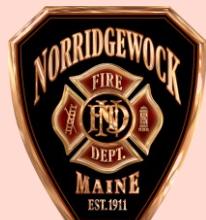


Working SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES
Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery
Dedicated To Life Safety

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME STARTS
SUNDAY, MARCH 9**

*When you move your clock ahead an hour,
remember to check the batteries in your
smoke and/or carbon monoxide detectors.*

*A reminder from the
Norridgewock Fire
Department*



**Skowhegan Area High School's
3rd Annual
Community Service Day
April 30, 2025**

Are you a resident of a SAD 54 community?
Do you have a project you need help with
(raking, stacking wood, gardening, etc.)? The
students can help! To get your project on the
list, scan the QR code below, visit
<https://forms.gle/yJ8hhuUp9KrvCMbt6>,
or call the Town Office to get signed up.



Column Note: Maybe you know it already, but maybe not. Norrie the Knowledgeable Alpaca is here to share information about a topic that you just might not have known about but that could be relevant to you in one way or another. Some topics may be helpful, some may provide insight into why something is the way it is and sometimes it might just be something about how or why your local government runs the way it does. So, keep an eye out for our furry fictitious friend in each future edition of The Bridge!

KNOW MORE...

with Norrie



Junkyards & Automobile Graveyards

The terms junkyard and automobile graveyard are often used interchangeably, but they aren't the same thing. While both tend to be unsightly components of driving around town, they are, in fact different. Both junkyards and automobile graveyards, especially when unlicensed, diminish the clean rural feel most small Maine communities want, they also can pose a threat to the environment (think oils, refrigerant, batteries, and more).

The Town of Norridgewock's standard for regulation is at the State minimum; we don't have any additional local regulations. Under State Law, the definition of a junkyard is a yard, field, or other outside area used to store, dismantle or otherwise handle: Discarded, worn-out or junked plumbing, heating supplies, electronic or industrial equipment, household appliances or furniture; Discarded, scrap and junked lumber; and, Old or scrap copper, brass, rope, rags, batteries, paper trash, rubber debris, waste and all scrap iron, steel and other scrap ferrous or nonferrous material. Think of your property or maybe one of your neighbor's. Do any of them qualify as a junkyard?

The equally unattractive sibling to a junkyard is an automobile graveyard. An automobile graveyard is a yard, field, or other outdoor area used to store 3 or more unregistered or uninspected motor vehicles... or parts of vehicles.



Above left is a property as seen on Google Maps in September 2011; on the right is the same property in May 2023. Below is an aerial view of the same property.

It's not that junkyards and automobile graveyards are illegal, it is that they are regulated and must be properly permitted. Unfortunately, unlicensed and unregulated junkyards and automobile graveyards plague many communities in Maine. These types of land use violations unnecessarily consume municipal resources and may cause property owners to face monetary penalties. Unaddressed, the Town can proceed with cleaning up a property and placing a lien against it.

The ideal method of enforcement is self-enforcement; the goal is always compliance and not financial penalties.



Do your part for your neighborhood and your community; keep a clean property. If you have questions about legally permitting a junkyard or automobile graveyard or are looking for assistance in bringing your property into compliance with the rules, please contact the Code Enforcement Officer. ◆

Park Committee Updates

Happy New Year

Gazebo Updates

The Parks Committee is thrilled to share that we began the planning process for a new gazebo at Oosoola Park. Our request from voters is for \$75,000 to construct a new gazebo, with any unspent money to be placed into the Parks reserve account for future maintenance and improvement in our four parks. The Select Board fully supports this investment, and we hope you will, too!

This exciting development comes as a result of the strong and continuous support from our community, which has been invaluable in bringing this vision to life. A new gazebo would significantly improve the appearance of the park, especially from the river, and it would make our music nights even better!

We hope that voters will support the funding request, which you will vote on during the evening part of Town Meeting. If approved, we hope to have the gazebo design and plan finalized within this year. The new structure will provide a charming and functional space for a variety of community events, including our outdoor concerts, family gatherings, and seasonal festivals. We are looking forward to creating a vibrant hub for social activities and fostering connections among residents.

Stay tuned for updates as we embark on this journey together!



Holiday Stroll Reflection

As we reflect on the recent holiday stroll, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for all the wonderful support from our community. Your involvement made the event truly special! We hope that everyone had a fantastic time exploring the variety of activities that were offered, from festive crafts to delicious treats, catering to all ages and interests.

One of the highlights of the event was a surprise visit from Santa Claus himself, who brought joy and excitement to all the children present. It's heartwarming to think that he chose to visit us in Norridgewock, making the holiday season even more magical.



Looking ahead, we are eager to expand participation in our tractor parade for next year. This year, we believe the parade was the largest we've ever hosted, with an impressive turnout that showcased the spirit of our community. We hope that many of you found the parade as delightful and engaging as we did.

Thank you again for being part of this festive celebration. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events and creating more wonderful memories together!

Kindly submitted by Parks Committee Member, Abigail Clair

Library Receives Grant for Children & Young Adult Section Update

Congratulations to the Norridgewock Public Library and Librarian Kelli Dorais! A recent grant application was successful in helping to update and enhance the library's collection for young readers. The continuous hard work and dedication by the librarian, the library trustees, and volunteers/friends of the library are invaluable assets for the community as they strive to provide valuable materials and services to people in Norridgewock and the greater region. Here's the announcement:

We have great news! The library received a \$5,000 grant from the John Henry Eldred Jr. Foundation in Ohio to update our children's non-fiction and education section as well as update our young adult and chapter book collections. Not only will the grant allow us to purchase new books, but it will also enable us to put together Discovery Kits which children and parents can check out and learn at home. We are so grateful for this opportunity to offer additional resources for our community. Keep checking our Facebook page to see when we get the new books and kits in. ♦ KLD



YOU'RE A MEAN ONE, MR. GRINCH – The Grinch quickly became a popular visitor to Norridgewock during the annual stroll.

Norridgewock Holiday Stroll A Community Success

The Town's Parks Committee organized another remarkable community event in mid-December, the annual holiday stroll and tree lighting. The sun came out as businesses and organizations opened their doors to welcome in guests looking to celebrate the holiday season. Lynch Landscaping invited people under the tent for cocoa and cookies, while Morgan Aviation kindled a fire for roasting marshmallows. Dunkin offered donut decorating, while New England Rent to Own hosted a free raffle offering over \$500 in prizes to one lucky winner!

There was wonderful music playing around downtown and the joy of the season was visible on the faces of all who attended. Old Saint Nick stopped by the Norridgewock Fire Station and he sat for photos while visiting with the anxious youngsters. All the while, Mr. Grinch paced up and down the road, delighting many, but provoking tears from some. Sidewalk strollers went up and down Main Street until the lighted tractors hit the road at dusk, leading the way to the tree lighting at the Town Square.

It was a wonderful community event., and we look forward to it once again next year. The stroll and tree lighting is scheduled for the second Saturday in December. ♦

The Parks Committee thanks the following businesses and organizations for their support of the 2024 Holiday Stroll, Tree Lighting, and Lighted Tractor Parade:

- Cumberland Farms
- DMO Landscaping
- Dunkin and the Bailey Family
- DW & Sons Garage
- Everett's Car Wash
- Everett's Tire
- Franklin Savings Bank
- Garden Girl 420
- Jada Brown
- Kennebec Market
- Lynch Landscaping
- Maine Antique Tractor Club
- Mill Stream Elementary PTG
- Moody's Homestead
- Morgan Aviation
- New England Rent to Own (NERTO)
- Nickerson Yard Maintenance
- Norridgestock Farm
- Norridgewock Fire Department
- Norridgewock Historical Society
- Norridgewock Public Library
- Norridgewock Public Works
- Oak Hill Equestrian Riders
- Quimby Child Care Center
- Skowhegan Savings Bank
- Somerset Grange
- York's Market

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Chuck Farrand

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Newsletter Contributors
Kelli Dorais, Librarian
Abigail Clair
Becky Ketchum



Monday, March 3, 2025

Polling Place:
Mill Stream Elementary School Gym
26 Mercer Rd.

Polling Hours:
8:00 am – 7:00 pm

Open Town Meeting:
7:30 pm

Absentee ballots may be requested at any time and should be available for early voting no later than February 3.
Ballots may be requested through the Town Office. In writing by mail, in person, or by phone (634-2252)