

THE BRIDGE

Spring 2025

Norridgewock, Maine

ph (207) 634-2252

www.norridgewock.gov

Waste Management, Jeff McGown Honored with Spirit of America Awards



At the annual town meeting on March 3, Town officials presented the annual Spirit of America Award. This award is presented in cooperation with the Spirit of America Foundation, to recognize individuals and organizations who go above and beyond to improve our community's quality of life. The recipients may be individuals, groups, organizations, or businesses.

Waste Management – Crossroads (the name of the Norridgewock facility) has a somewhat divided history in town, but they are now one that has undeniably become a genuine part of the fabric of the community. The outside-the-box, above-and-beyond contributions help make Norridgewock a better place to live.

The company assists the Town with street sweeping along Main Street and provides recycling services at the Town Office. When there are municipal events (i.e., Oosoola Days, roadside cleanup, etc.), waste containers are delivered and removed at no cost. Very soon, a large group of high school students will disperse among the SAD 54 communities to complete

community service projects. As they break for lunch that day, the students and staff will be thanked with a barbecue. This is a small token of recognition, encouraging their good works in the community; Waste Management is the sponsor. The organization strongly supports our local recreation programs, the fire department, and parks activities. They also support countless other organizations in the region with worthy missions.

All the positive work and involvement from Waste Management is largely attributed to one person: Norridgewock resident Jeff McGown. He oversees the facility, ensures they are operating responsibly, and making sure they remain supportive of the community. It is important to Jeff that he leads an organization that is responsible and responsive. In addition to his accomplishments at Waste Management, Jeff has dedicated a lot of additional time to the Town of Norridgewock and surrounding region. Prior to its dissolution, Jeff spent a lot of time supporting the Norridgewock Area Chamber of Commerce. He volunteered as a member of the Town's Community Revitalization Plan Committee and served several years on the Board of Norridgewock Housing. Jeff has also served a decade as trustee of the Norridgewock Water District. He has been a Director for Somerset Economic Development Corporation, as well.



GRANGE SUPPERS ARE BACK! STARTING MONDAY, MAY 5

NEW HOURS: 5:00 – 6:30 PM PRICE: \$12

Somerset Grange (9 Mercer Rd., Norridgewock)

To nominate an individual, organization, or business for a future Spirit of America Award, please reach out to the Town Office or email rlabelle@norridgewock.gov. The recipient is chosen by the Select Board each fall, and the recognition is presented at Town Meeting in March.

There are so many people doing great things, and they deserve recognition... even if they aren't looking for it. Even the small act of nominating someone is a service to your community. Take a moment, think about people making an impact, and spend a minute or two submitting a nomination to recognize their good works. Continuing the tradition of this award is just one small way to demonstrate that Norridgewock has a commitment to fostering a community of service and recognition. ♦

Help Honor Norridgewock Veterans and Foremothers/fathers

Spring has arrived and the Norridgewock Cemetery Committee is making plans to follow up on the success we had cleaning and restoring our cemeteries last summer. In conjunction with the Norridgewock Historical Society, we are helping to support a special program this spring. From May 11 (Mother's Day), to June 14-15 (Flag Day and Father's Day), the Cemetery Committee will be holding several workshops on how to clean, document, and maintain historic cemetery stones. Tentative dates for the trainings are Saturday, May 17 and May 31.

The free workshops will include a cemetery field trip and hands-on training with all materials supplied. If you or your group are interested in attending one of these workshops, please contact Committee chair, Kathy Hopkins, at 634-3782 to sign up. Sign-up sheets will also be available at the Town Office and library. *Help beautify our cemeteries!*

Not into cleaning? We also need help recording information on gravestones. Not into written documentation? We also need help photographing historical stones. If this sounds like a great community service project for your group, let us know how you would like to help. ♦♦



\$30,000 Grant Secured to Update Town's 28-Year-Old Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is a town's long-term guide for growth, land use, and development. The Maine Growth Management Act (30-A M.R.S.A. §4312, et seq.) is the law that defines what must be included for the plan to be valid and creates a process for review and approval. Customarily, the plan is updated every 10 to 12 years; the last update in Norridgewock was adopted by voters at the 1997 annual town meeting. Certainly, much has changed since that time and the goals of the community have also likely shifted.

The process of reviewing the comprehensive plan can be administratively burdensome, which is why organizations like the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) keeps a qualified staff that can work under contract with member communities to provide this assistance and service. It was KVCOG that asked if Norridgewock would be interested in a plan update, and KVCOG that proactively applied for and secured the grant. Because of that work, Norridgewock will be able to update its comprehensive plan with no burden on local property taxes.

The review of the comprehensive plan will update data on population trends, housing, natural resources, transportation, economic factors, and public facilities. There will also be discussions regarding land use policies that may need to change to reflect changing community needs. Another significant component of the update is revising the implementation strategies; How does the plan take shape and become a reality? Goal-setting will be an important measure, helping to identify actions, timelines, and responsible parties for seeing ideas through, whether related to housing, conservation, economic development, infrastructure, or other achievable goals.

A comprehensive plan update requires public participation, engaging residents, businesses, and other stakeholders through meetings, surveys, and public hearings. A Comprehensive Plan Committee will be appointed by the Select Board to help guide the update with the end goal of having it adopted by voters. **If you have any interest in joining this committee, please fill out a volunteer application at the Town Office or online at www.norridgewock.gov/volunteer.** The update process will begin this fall, leaving the fun summer season alone so more people can be involved in the process throughout the winter. ♦♦

Town Office Closures



April 21 – Patriots Day
April 30 – Community Service Day
May 26 – Memorial Day
June 10 – School Election
June 20 – Juneteenth, observed
July 4 – Independence Day

DON'T FORGET... YOU NEED A BURN PERMIT

If you're burning brush, State Law requires you to have a burn permit. Permits are FREE. You can get a permit at the fire station or online through Maine Open Burn Permit, weather-depending. Call the fire station (634-2208) if you have questions.

2025 OOSOOLA PARK

Music Series

Ferry Road, Norridgewock
Tuesdays in July & August

Jul 01.	The Gawler Family	5:00 – 7:00 PM
Jul 08.	Dom Colizzi	
Jul 15.	Pat Colwell & The Soul Sensations	
Jul 22.	Matt Gagnon	
Jul 29.	Crooked Bill	
Aug 05.	Between the Lines	
Aug 12.	Stonewall Chrome	
Aug 19.	The Song Pirates	
Aug 26.	The Fossils	



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** Hosted by the Norridgewock Parks Committee**

The Latest News from Norridgewock Public Library

Winter kept us busy at the Norridgewock Public Library. We continued with lots of children programming and added lessons in science, sewing and geography for homeschool families.

We kicked off our homeschool events with a lesson in density. The library had a great turnout as children made their own lava lamps. Homeschool children also attended lessons on Brazil and hand/machine sewing. If you are a homeschool parent, save Wednesday, May 7 on your calendar. The library will be holding a science lesson about plants and seeds. Participants will get to plant their own flower seeds to take home.

The library's Palmer Lego Club continues to create inventive Lego builds every month. Topics this winter included building animals, vehicles and ziplines. Participants also love to build their own creations including houses and superhero structures. Join us every third Tuesday at 3 pm. Upcoming meetings will be May 20, June 17 and July 15.

Tadpole Storytime meets every 1st and 3rd Thursday during the school year to read a story and make a craft. Storytime is a great way for toddlers and preschoolers to hear stories read aloud and develop their creativity through crafts. Tadpoles recently made mittens, Dr. Seuss puppets and leprechaun traps. Upcoming storytimes include May 1, May 15, and June 5.

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. Froglets recently listened to the story *The Biggest Valentine Ever* by Steven Kroll and made fingerprint heart magnets.

Norridgewock Library Book Club meets the last Thursday of the month at 5 PM. The book club will meet April 24 to discuss *You Never Know* by Tom Selleck and again on May 29 to discuss May's selection. The book club does not meet during the summer.

Summer is right around the corner and the library is getting ready to have a fun-filled season of summer storytimes and the Summer Reading Squad challenges. Summer Reading begins June 14. See our Facebook page for more details. Summer Storytime starts July 10. This year's theme is Oceans. It will include animals living in the ocean as well as Pirates and Mermaids.

Keep in mind, our library catalog is listed on our website: www.norridgewock.gov/library. The online catalog shows you what books we have in our library. Looking for a book we do not have? Not a problem, we can request books through Interlibrary Loan and libraries across the state can send the book to us.

We hope to see you soon! ◆ KLD

Community Growers & Makers Marketplace Coming to the Norridgewock Grange, Starting July 26!

The Somerset Grange and Friends of the Grange are organizing a special event for our community, farmers, growers, artisans, and crafters. The event will be held in the Grange parking lot, with no charge for the space! Space will be allocated in 10' x 10' areas; sellers will be asked to provide their own tables, chairs, tents. All vendors will be local farmers, growers, artisans, and/or crafters. There will be wood and metal working, fine textiles, pottery, jewelry, photography, and more. To be eligible for the space, the vendor must have grown, raised, or made what is being sold. The date of the first marketplace is Saturday, July 26.

For a vendor application or to get more information, please contact MaryAnn Anderson at bwxfme@gmail.com or Becky Ketchum at rketchum1@aol.com. Spaces are limited, so be sure to sign up early! Please note, no food trucks at this event. ◆ RFK



Wrap Up: Town Meeting 2025

Annual Town Meeting is held the first Monday in March; voters cast secret ballots throughout the day, then reconvene at 7:30 in the evening to review other items related to Town operations. Those things include budgets and finance, policies, ordinances, and more.

During the day, 144 voters cast ballots for municipal officials, as well as a referendum question to consider funding a new Community Event and Engagement Coordinator. Establishing the new position failed by a wide margin of 91-47. Candidates appearing in name on the ballot were all elected. The Select Board had one seat for which there was no candidate; Pamela Easler and Jeffrey King both received 13 votes, which would have required a run-off election. Mrs. Easler made the decision to withdraw her candidacy and support Mr. King being seated to final seat on the Select Board.

For the Budget Committee vacancies, write-in candidates Mary Ann Anderson, Joe Clark, and Bruce Obert all accepted the positions to which they were elected. John Malek was appointed by the Select Board to fill the remaining seat for one year. The Planning Board was left with two vacancies, which the Select Board filled for one year each by Caroline Guerra and Andy Leavitt. Roger Collard was a successful write-in candidate to the Board of Library Trustees. Mike Obert accepted his write-in election to the Sewer Commission; the Select Board appointed incumbent members Robbie Bickford and Cody St. Amand to the remaining two seats on the commission.

On the financial side during the town meeting, voters approved the Select Board's proposed expenditures passed, with the only adjustment being a reduction of \$48,000 in anticipated revenues, which directly correlated with the proposed expense for the new Community Coordinator position. ♦

Congratulations!

to the following Town employees for their
dedicated years of service

Andrew Dexter

Fire Department

5 Years

Willis Libby

Public Works

5 Years

Scott Libby

Fire Department

20 Years

Daryl Wyman

Fire Department

25 Years

Jeffrey Jones

Fire Department

30 Years

Todd Pineo

Fire Department

30 Years

Donna Hays

Assessing Agent

30 Years



FIRE DEPARTMENT MILESTONES • At the 2025 Annual Town Meeting, Fire Captain Jeffrey Jones (L) and Fire Chief Todd Pineo (R) were recognized for 30 years of service apiece. Both joined the roster in the Fall of 1995 and are some of our most active responders today. NFD is fortunate to have strong and tenured experience among its ranks.

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Personal Property Tax

Personal property tax is a tax imposed on business personal property, including owned and leased tangible assets like machinery, equipment, and furniture used for business purposes. This isn't a tax specific to Norridgewock; it is a tax that is required by the State of Maine. The State determines, by definition, what is and isn't personal property for a business. *If you own a business that operates in Norridgewock, you want to make sure that you're declaring your personal property to avoid penalties.*

The State of Maine offers the Business Equipment Tax Exemption (BETE) program, which will exempt eligible businesses from the personal property tax. The State pays the Town a percentage of the assessment in lieu of the qualified, exempted tax. Most businesses will qualify for the BETE exemption, with exceptions for retail and utilities/telecommunications.

A business's personal property is assessed annually, as of April 1. Customarily, the business will provide an initial inventory of the personal property, then the list is updated annually for added or removed property. According to law, businesses must file a list of personal property with the Town's tax assessors (assessing agent). If a business fails to report its property, the value may be estimated, which could potentially result in a higher tax bill.

If you are a business owner and have questions about the personal property tax or need assistance reviewing documents seeking BETE reimbursement, please contact Assessing Agent Donna Hays at 634-5734, or email dhays@norridgewock.gov. She holds regular office hours the second and fourth Thursday of each month. ♦

Examples Personal Property Subject to Taxation

(36 M.R.S.A. § 601-612)

*not a comprehensive list, exclusions apply

Computers, Monitor, Servers, Printers, Copiers, Phones, Vending machines

Point of Sale (POS) Systems

Furniture and Fixtures (tables, chairs, shelving, desks, display cases, coolers, filing cabinets, etc.)

Tools and Implements

Machinery or manufacturing equipment

Certain tractors, harvesters, etc.

Signage, interior and exterior

Inventory Storage (shelves, containers, etc.)

Examples of Personal Property Exempt from Taxation

(36 M.R.S.A. § 655)

*not a comprehensive list, exclusions apply

Industrial Inventory including raw materials, goods in process and finished work on hand

Farm machinery used exclusively in production of hay and field crops to the aggregate actual market value not exceeding \$10,000

Livestock

Registered Vehicles

Certain vehicles exempt from excise tax

Registered Trail Grooming Equipment

Personal property in another jurisdiction

Beehives

It Isn't Your Town- It's You

If you want to live in the kind of town
Like the kind of a town you like,
You shouldn't slip your clothes in a grip
And start on a long, long hike.
You'll only find what you left behind
For there's nothing that's really new.
It's a knock at yourself when you knock your town.
It isn't your town, it's you!

Real towns are not made by men afraid
Lest somebody else gets ahead.
When everyone works and nobody shirks,
You can raise a town from the dead;
And if while you make your personal stake
Your neighbor can make one too,
Your town will be what you want to see,
It isn't your town, it's you!

-Author Unknown

*Appeared on the back of Norridgewock's Annual Report
for the Year Ending February 1, 1947*



Historical Gardening in New England...

The Norridgewock Historical Society will hold its first meeting and program of the season on April 23.

The program, *Historical Gardening in New England*, will be presented by **Kathy Hopkins**, retired University of Maine Cooperative Extension educator. All are welcome; the event is free.

**Wednesday, April 23
6:30 PM**

**Norridgewock Historical Society Museum
11 Mercer Rd., Norridgewock**

Town Receives Family Foundation Grant for Main Street Flags

The Galen Cole Family Foundation, of Bangor, recently offered a grant program to towns and cities across the State of Maine, encouraging the display of American flags along main corridors. With a swift application and submission, a foundation representative quickly replied that half the cost of flags and pole kits purchased for the Town of Norridgewock would be paid for! No real strings attached. The Town pays half and maintains them for a minimum of two years. With this grant, and despite planned roadwork, American flags will return to the Main Street of Norridgewock later this spring.

What is this foundation? The Galen Cole Family Foundation was founded by Galen Cole himself. A native of Bangor, he worked a half century for his family's transportation company, Cole's Express. Mr. Cole served in combat during the Second World War, earning a Purple Heart and Bronze Star. Believing that God allowed him to return home from war, he was committed to leaving his fellow man better off than he found them. Mr. Cole passed away on January 9, 2020, at the age of 94.

The flag program is just one small part of what the foundation does. It also supports the operation of the Cole Land Transportation Museum in Bangor, supports reading recovery and children literacy initiatives, walking sticks for veterans, summer camp scholarships, scholarships to the University of Maine, and more. If you would like to support the mission of this organization, you can make a donation payable to the Galen Cole Family Foundation, 359 Perry Road, Bangor, ME 04401. ◆



Village Improvement Plant Sale: May 31

It's that time of the year again.. For the Village Improvement Society ("VI") Plant Sale! Save the date: Saturday, May 31, in the Grange parking lot. They'll be open at 9:00 a.m., rise or shine.

The sale includes vegetable seedlings, annuals, perennials, house plants, cut flowers, and a "vintage" garden good table that will include books, vases, donated tools, yard art, and more. The VI Plant Sale supports various VI projects, including a scholarship for a Norridgewock senior (applications for this scholarship are available at the High School Guidance Office).

If you have any contributions from your garden/greenhouse or shed, we'd love to have them! Contact Becky at 634-3812. ◆ RFK

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Norridgewock Town Office
PO Box 7 | 16 Perkins St.
Norridgewock, ME 04957
phone. (207) 634-2252
fax. (207) 634-5285
www.norridgewock.gov

Select Board
Matt Everett, Chair
meverett_4seasons@yahoo.com

Lindsey Lynch, Vice Chair
lindseyl Lynch04957@gmail.com

Ronnie Blodgett
ronnieblodgett04957@gmail.com

Chuck Farrand
Jeff King
northeastfirearms@gmail.com

Town Manager
Richard LaBelle
rlabelle@norridgewock.gov

Newsletter Contributors
Kelli Dorais, Librarian
Becky Ketchum
Kathy Hopkins

Commissioners Approve Rate Increase

At a recent meeting, the Sewer Commissioners reviewed the financial position of the department. In 2024, the department operated with expenses of approximately \$296,338, while use charges only totaled \$278,399. This generated a deficit of nearly \$18,000. To ensure the department is operating at a minimum of breakeven, the commission authorized an initial rate increase of 10%, effective June 1, 2025.

The increase is likely the first of a phased increase; however, each member was sensitive to other pressures faced by ratepayers' households. The commission will reconvene in the next quarter to review new proposals for additional revenue generation, as well as methods to reduce expenses. Notices of all meetings are posted at the Town Office and on the Town website at www.norridgewock.gov; they can also be accessed via Zoom or YouTube. ♦

