

THE BRIDGE

Spring 2023
Norridgewock, Maine

ph (207) 634-2252
www.townofnorridgewock.com

May Day Rainstorm Aftermath

The historic May rainstorm left much of Central Maine under water; different communities were faced with different levels of damage. Here in Norridgewock, there was widespread road damage and no known personal injury. The quick recovery from the storm damage is largely due to the phenomenal inter-agency cooperation.

Thank you to our first responders working to protect public safety and repairing our infrastructure: Norridgewock Fire, Norridgewock Public Works, Maine Department of Transportation, Somerset County Sheriff's Office, and Somerset Dispatch. Each and every one deserves our appreciation for their dedication and rapid response. ♦



Select Board Welcomes New Members

After March's Town Meeting, the Select Board welcomed two new members to its ranks: Ronnie Blodgett and Kelsea Bickford. Both are newcomers to Town government, but neither is a stranger to public service.

Ronnie Blodgett, 50, of Walker Road, has worked in law enforcement for over two decades. His strong public/private background may be attributed to his professional experience which, prior to police service, included construction and business management. Blodgett's run for office was motivated by his desire to see a better community and bolstered by his willingness to help the Town work with budgets, manage rising costs, and working to keep taxes affordable.

Kelsea Bickford recently moved from Upper Main Street to a new home on Childs Road. The 31-year old has worked in education for over 9 years and now serves as the JMG Specialist at Skowhegan Area High School. Her goals all lead to making Norridgewock an even better place to live and work. She believes there is significant economic development opportunity and she would like to help tap into that potential. Kelsea is also passionate about mental health and has been working with a County-wide group to address suicide.

The two new members join incumbents Matt Everett, Lindsey Lynch, and Dylan Wentworth. At their first meeting as a new board, Everett was elected Chair and Lynch elected Vice Chair. Regular meetings of the Select Board are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month, 6:00 p.m., at the Town Office. You can also view the meetings live on Facebook, Zoom, or after each meeting on the Town's YouTube Channel (@norridgewock). ♦

TIF Committee Endorses Plan to Improve, Pave Airport Parking Lot

For several years, the Airport Advisory Committee has discussed improving the parking lot at the airport, but funding has remained the chief obstacle. The project is one that, without outside funding, wouldn't be possible. One of the TIF Advisory Committee's primary goals is to "support desirable projects that are otherwise financially infeasible." The project fits exceptionally well into that mold, and that was made evident by the Committee's unanimous recommendation to support the expense of up to \$50,000 for improving and paving the parking lot. The improvements not just help those involved in aviation, but they will also prove valuable in support of events like Oosoola Days. Ideally, the project will be completed this summer. Earthwork will be completed by Norridgewock Public Works, then an outside contractor will be used for paving. ♦

Two More New Businesses Join Main Street

Over the last handful of years, Main Street has experienced some sense of revival. Maybe not quite back to what it was in its heyday, but certainly a vast improvement over what was one decade ago. A variety of factors support these improvements: strong public/private partnerships, a low tax rate, increasing demand, and the list continues. What is likely the lead cause for this revitalization is, quite simply: the people. Business people and consumers– both groups finding the value of locating a business in Norridgewock and patrons supporting local businesses. While some existing businesses have swapped hands without much change in appearance to the street, there are two new businesses that have worked to clean up properties, make investments in inventory and equipment, and have created new jobs right here on Main Street.

Maine Laboratories, LLC is located at 25 Main Street and is Maine’s first PFAS-testing lab. The Richards have connections to the region and settled on Norridgewock to land their business, in part because of the historic building they now occupy. To learn more about their mission, check out their website at www.mainelaboratories.com. **Cheryl’s Pizza** opened their doors at 50 Main Street offering a wide variety of delicious food: pizza, sandwiches, appetizers, salads, and more. They offer local delivery, too!

We welcome both businesses to our community and wish them great success! Help keep businesses open, goods and services local, and help keep your neighbors employed. Support Norridgewock businesses first. ♦



Mark your calendars
for the 50th annual
OOSOOLA DAYS
in Norridgewock!

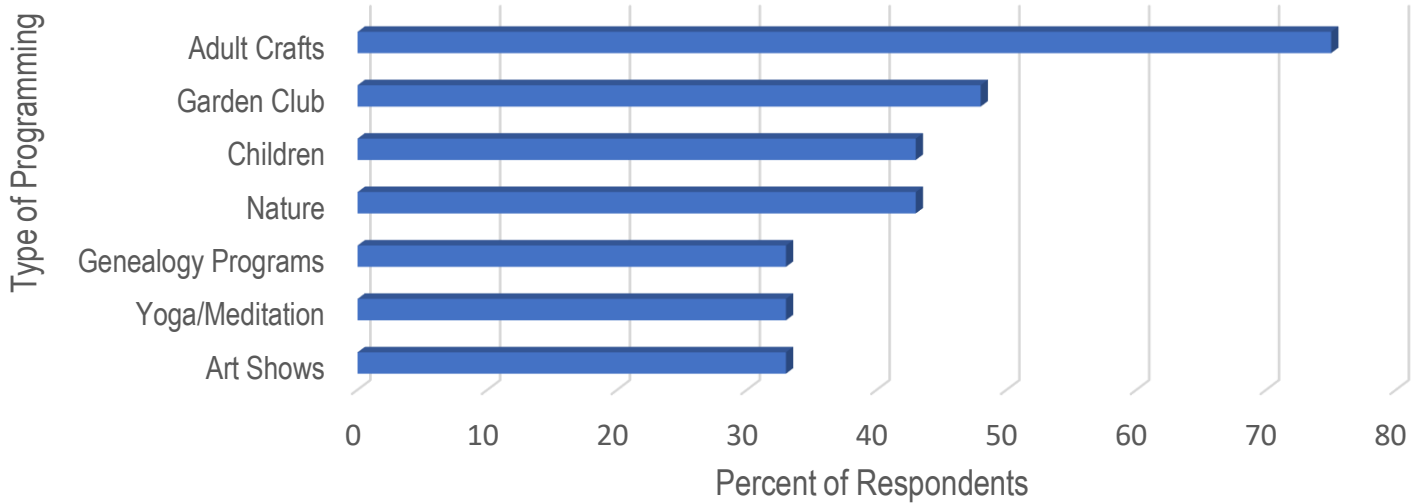
Sunday & Monday
September 3-4

Happenings at Central Maine
Regional Airport, Downtown
Norridgewock, and Oosoola Park.

If you, your organization, business,
or other group would like to be
involved, please email
rlabelle@townofnorridgewock.com

Norridgewock Library Survey Results are In; Thanks to Participants

The Library Board of Trustees has been working on engaging more members of the community to use the library and reminding people that the library is not just a place to go for books! As part of this initiative, surveys were conducted at a variety of public events (Oosoola Days, Holiday Stroll, special library events, Town Meeting, etc.), and at the Town Office. Participants were asked their interest in a list of 14 potential programs. By far, the attraction that generated the most interest is having adult crafts. The results are shown below for the top responses. Thanks to everyone who took the time to complete the survey! Your efforts help to make the Norridgewock Public Library a better resource and service for those in our community. ♦ RFK



The Parks Committee invites you to join



Saturday, July 1, 2023

(Rain Date: Sunday, July 2)

12:00 noon

Boats in the river by 11:00 am

Lineup begins at the bend upstream from the trestle at 11:30 am

Decoration theme: **AMERICA!**

Parade runs downriver along the southern bank, past Oosoola Park, circles around the island, and back upstream along the northern bank to the beginning.

No sign-up/registration required.

Just for fun! Decorating isn't required. Join in the parade or watch from the shore! Bring your motorboat, seaplane, pontoon, canoe, kayak, eFoil, SeaDoo, sailboat, or other water vessel. There's a way for everyone to be involved!

For more information, call 634-2252 or email rlabelle@townofnorridgewock.com



Thomas Soccer Coach Jim Evans to Host Youth Camp in Norridgewock

For the second year in a row, Thomas College Coach Jim Evans is hosting a community youth soccer camp at the fields in Norridgewock. The program runs July 31 through August 3 and offers programming for two age groups: Ages 4-8 and Ages 9-13. The cost of the camp is \$80 for the week. Evans has served as the Associate Head Men's & Women's Soccer Coach and Mental Performance Training Coach at Thomas since 2016.

The age groups will focus on different aspects with the younger group focusing on individual ball mastery and other basics of the sport. With the 4-8 year old group, parents are invited (but not required) to throw on a pair of sneakers and join in. The older age group will continue with developing basic skills, while also diving deeper into skills. There will be a little more competition, but just as much fun.

Full information on the camp is available at the Town Office. Sign ups must be completed online. To learn more about Coach Evans and his camps, please visit www.jimevanscommunitydaycamps.com. ♦

MSAD 54's 2023-2024 Budget Goes to Referendum on June 13

Voters will head to the polls on Tuesday, June 13 to decide the fate of the proposed 2023-24 school budget. As with many other budgets, both public and private, the school district is forecasting rising costs. One of the most significant increases in the proposed budget is the cost of employee health insurance benefits. There are also significant implications related to the increase in the district towns' values, relative to others in Maine. Because of that disproportionate shift, State assistance has declined requiring an increase in the local share (paid for through town taxes).

The change in State values is unfortunate and results in budget impacts that extend beyond the baseline budget. The initial budget draft represented an increase of 2.44%, but the local budget requirement increased to 6.78%. This is an unusual situation for Norridgewock, but one we must face nonetheless. In the most recent draft budget, Norridgewock's share would increase 5.07% or \$95,144.27. It is especially important to note that the shift in town valuations has hit other towns in the district worse. Norridgewock's share of the district budget decreased slightly; only Cornville saw its percentage share drop more.

Polls will be open from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm on June 13 at Mill Stream Elementary School Gymnasium (26 Mercer Rd.). Voters may request absentee ballots at any time; ballots should be available to mail or for voters to cast in-person at the Town Office beginning no later than May 26.

Superintendent of Schools Jon Moody will attend the Select Board meeting on May 17 at 6:00 pm to discuss the proposed budget, take questions, and hear resident concerns. The public is invited to attend.

Note: Norridgewock is represented on the 23-member School Board by four members: Samantha Delorie, Cheyenne Goodrich, Desiree Libby, and Janice Malek. School Board Directors are elected by the townspeople on a rolling basis at Town Meeting. ♦

Norridgewock Public Library

Library Hours:
Tuesday & Thursday
10:00 am – 6:00 pm
Wednesday & Saturday
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Did you know...
The library is available for groups that would like to meet and play D&D, Magic, cribbage, or other games. FMI, call 634-2828.



Waste Management is a private business. As a convenience to residents, we provide their back gate hours.

Sun, Mon, Tues Closed
Weds, Thurs, Fri 9:30am – 6:00pm
Sat 7:30am – 4:00pm

**Airport Rd.
634-2714**



The Town Office will be closed:

May 26 – Community Service Event
May 29 – Memorial Day
June 13 – School Budget Referendum
July 4 – Independence Day

**Subject to change, office is open weather-permitting*

A Living Document: The Town Road Work Plan & Project Priority List

Norridgewock voters have long been supporters of building and maintaining a strong transportation infrastructure. The annual budget for road construction and maintenance is substantial, which allows us to keep some of the best roads in the area. Town staff works to develop project proposals and priorities, which then is presented to the Road Advisory Committee for further consideration. That three member committee reviews staff recommendations, provides additional insight, then makes a final recommendation to the Select Board.

The chart shown at the right is the current project priority list. While we continue with regular maintenance items like crack sealing and overlay, the projects at the right are larger construction projects. The list is constantly subject to change; projects that may not be on the list now could be placed on the list if conditions change. Conditions can also impact the projects priority level and overall time estimate. Side note: there is a resident request for the paving of Bigelow Hill Road, which has not yet been put before the Road Advisory Committee for consideration. Once reviewed, it will be incorporated into the project priority list.

At the top of the 2023 project list is Phase II of the Burrill Hill Road project. Town crews worked this spring to complete repairs before Pike Industries began paving the entire length of the road. This has been a long project, but was coordinated as such for two major factors: budget constraints and the desire to see how the subsurface materials wintered before paving. The major investment in this road to build it up, improve drainage, and upgrade the surface should be long-lasting and a welcome improvement for the neighborhood. The Town is appreciative of the residents along the road for their patience and understanding throughout the project.

Also on the docket for this season is the bank stabilization of a 158-foot section along Sandy River Road. The project location is near Fording Road, where another similar project was completed about a dozen years ago. The project has been designed and final permits were received the first of May. It will be put to bid and hopefully completed within the timeframe required in the permit (between July 15 and September 30).

The Town was successful in working with Senator Collins' Office to secure \$2.5 million in Congressionally Directed Spending. The funds target the improvement of roadways within a watershed and making improvements to such roadways to mitigate the impact on water resources. To access the funds, there are a variety of administrative hurdles that must be overcome, but with the assistance of the Town's primary engineering firm, Haley Ward, these funds should help accelerate progress on the priority list.

If you have any major road project suggestions that you'd like the Road Advisory Committee to consider, please email the Town Manager at labelle@townofnorridgewock.com. The committee meets on an as-needed basis and notice of the meetings are posted at the Town Office and on the Town's website ♦

Father Rasle Road

- Erosion repair in the vicinity of Twin Oaks Dr.
- Estimated 2024

Winding Hill Road

- Replacement of Bombazee Brook crossing
- Funded largely by Stream Crossing Grant
- Estimated 2023 or 2024, budget-depending

Wilder Hill Road

- Reconstruction, drainage improvement from Route 2, approximately 650'
- Estimated 2024

Wade Street

- Improve drainage, pave
- Estimated 2025

Oak Hill Road

- Build up/gravel and pave
- Estimated 2026

Father Rasle Road


- Deep reclaim/grade/pave
- Estimated 2027

Welch Street

- Reclaim/pave, possible drainage improvements
- Estimated 2028

Norridgewock Public Library

Book Club



Meets the last Wednesday of
each month at 2 p.m.

For more information, call 634-2828 or email
library@townofnorridgewock.com



INCLUDING EVERYONE • This spring, a new swing was installed at Oosoola Park. The new adaptive swing is intended to include people of all ages and abilities. The purchase was recommended by the TIF Advisory Committee and approved by the Select Board.

ATV Routes Expanding, But Remain Unopened

While the Town has made great efforts in expanding ATV routes throughout Norridgewock, *please be respectful of the rules of operating and route closures*. Routes are only open once signed and may be closed at any time if there are issues. ATV drivers are encouraged to be respectful of others in the community— motorists, pedestrians, property owners, other recreators, etc.

Quick update on the rail trail: There is no definitive date on the trail opening. The trestle contract has been awarded and that work should be completed soon. Officials from the State are working diligently to resolve landowner concerns and to mitigate any potential issues that may arise. Your patience is appreciated as they work to make our town an even better place to recreate. ♦

Waste Management's Annual Update

Officials from Waste Management recently provided an annual update to the Select Board. Senior District Manager Jeff McGown and District Engineer Sherwood McKenney discussed facility operations, followed by construction updates on the new residential transfer station and Phase 14 cell.

The residential transfer station will be located in close proximity to the existing facility, but will be set back further from Airport Road and provide expanded services. This facility will replace the existing transfer facility. The improvements should make for a safer, more environmentally-friendly facility. There will be more queuing space for vehicles off of Airport Road, traffic will be one-way, and all containers will have roofs above them. There will also be a compost program that residents are invited to participate in at no cost. Even with all of the improvements, trailers will still be prohibited as they pose a significant safety concern.

The new landfill cell, known as Phase 14, has been permitted by all relevant agencies, including the Town. With current fill rates and trends, the current Phase 8 will be full in early 2024; however, it is likely that landfiling in the new phase will begin prior to that, in order to most efficiently manage waste. At the current pace of construction, the new Phase 14 cell will begin to accept waste in September 2023, which will be the point at which the per-ton fee paid to the Town increases from \$3.25 to \$3.80.

To get a Norridgewock resident dump sticker, you must have a current motor vehicle registration in Norridgewock for the vehicle you wish to use for going to the transfer station. Specific questions about the facility and its operations can be directed to Waste Management at (207) 634-2714. ♦

Join the
Norridgewock Historical Society
as they welcome
Amy Calder

award-winning journalist and columnist for the *Morning Sentinel*, as she talks about her new book *Comfort is an Old Barn: Stories from the Heart of Maine*

Wednesday, June 28 at 6:30 PM
11 Mercer Rd., Norridgewock

COMFORT
IS AN
OLD BARN
Stories from the Heart of Maine

