

# BELGRADE NEWSLETTER

Town Office: 495-2258

Fax: 495-2742

Center For All Seasons: 495-3481

Belgrade Library: 495-3508

Website: [www.belgrademaine.com](http://www.belgrademaine.com)

Belgrade, Maine

December 2007

## Notes from the Town Manager

On December 3<sup>rd</sup> our first big snowstorm arrived and left several inches of new snow for us to enjoy. Winter has arrived and the holiday season is close at hand. This is the time of the year for us to relax and enjoy our family, relatives, and friends.

### ***Preparations for the March 2008 Town Meeting...Already?***

At the Town Office we are also busy preparing for the close of the year and for the upcoming Town Meeting in March... budgets, referenda, and warrant articles are all being readied for presentation to you. But wait you say, Town Meeting is almost three months away, why are you working on this now?

Actually, there is much more to our Town Meetings than just the meeting. The budget must be prepared and submitted to the Budget Committee and Selectpersons for approved for presentation to the citizens at the March 2008 Town Meeting; several referenda questions must be written and approved for public hearing and inclusion in the ballot, where appropriate, and all of the warrant articles must be written and approved in time for public hearing and comments...before they can be presented at Town Meeting.

We must meet specific timeframes to ensure that public process requirements are met, so that *you*, our citizens, have the opportunity to fully participate in this process and are fully informed to make those tough decisions that will set the course for the next year.

*Your participation is requested!*

On December 18<sup>th</sup>, public hearings will be held for two new ordinances that are being readied for approval; these are the Cemetery Ordinance and the Tree Ordinance. Also, an amendment to the existing Belgrade Library Ordinance is being proposed and will be heard at this hearing. Copies of these are available for review on our website and in the Town

Office. Several public meetings are being held to prepare the budget for the upcoming year. These will be noticed in the newspaper and at the Town Office. These are the meetings where you will find out what is being put into the budget and why, and where you can get the answers to questions that you may have about the budget.

*Remember, this is the time* to become engaged in the process so that you can have the maximum input on the decisions being made. I urge you to take the time to participate in the process, to make your voice heard, and to help create the future direction for our Town.

### ***Election Results!***

For those of you who may not know, Dan Newman is our newest Selectperson. This year there were four well-qualified candidates running for the office and while I give my sincerest congratulations to Dan, I give my sincere thanks to Mark Grey, Jean Saucier, and Mark Twist for the interest they showed in our Town by running for one of the most difficult offices that exists.

Some folks have asked me about the results for initiatives to return the budgets for the Center for All Seasons, the Library, and the social services articles to the floor of the town meeting. These were all narrowly defeated. These issues will continue to be voted by secret ballot.

### ***Ad hoc Building Committee Report***

After working for more than six months to meet the requests made by the Board of Selectpersons when they created this committee, members of the *Ad hoc Building Committee* submitted their final report to the Board of Selectpersons on Tuesday, December 04, 2007. Their report is available online by accessing our town website at: [www.belgrademaine.com](http://www.belgrademaine.com) or [www.maine.gov/local/kennebec/belgrade](http://www.maine.gov/local/kennebec/belgrade), or you can obtain a copy at the Town Office. There report contains

recommendations to: dissolve the ad hoc committee and form a new Municipal Building Committee; to construct a new multipurpose facility to meet space needs for municipal offices, history center/museum, food pantry, and library; and to put a warrant article to the people at the March 2008 Town Meeting to request money to hire professional assistance in the planning and conceptual design for such a building.

No recommendation was made at this time to proceed with the construction. This is a question that will have to be put to the Town once more information is obtained about *where the facility might be located and what it might cost.*

### ***The Grinch that is stealing the beauty of our town...a Litter Update!***

As you know, we continue to see litter along the sides of our roads. I am working to resolve this problem and continue to ask for your support in reducing or eliminating this problem. It is a difficult, year around task for any town and all of us, as community members, must be part of the solution.

However, most of the litter is just that. I am pleased to report, that contrary to what some think, we are not seeing a significant amount of bulky items being dumped on the sides of the road. Since our fee program went into effect, I have documented six incidents involving dumping of items subject to a fee. We have also had a couple of incidents involving large quantities of material not subject to a fee...no accounting for what *the Grinch* will do.

I will be placing a game camera at various locations around town in an attempt to identify *this Grinch!* Also, if you know of anyone who has a legitimate financial issue and cannot afford any fee, please tell him or her to stop by the Town Office and see me. I can help them get their items disposed of at the Transfer Facility at no cost to them and provide this help by keeping the issue confidential. There should be no excuse to dump items on the side of the road

First, it is illegal to litter, and getting caught can subject those that litter to severe penalties. But laws don't prevent *the Grinch* from doing bad things.

**Therefore, I want to dare you to “care” about Belgrade...if you see roadside litter, please pick it up. If you are thinking about tossing something out of the car...please don't.**

In closing, my family and I extend the warmest of Holiday Greetings to each of you, and our best wishes for a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year.



## **Recycling in Belgrade By Olivia Jewell 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Belgrade Central School**

Big news for the Transfer Station of Belgrade! The Board of Selectpersons and the Transfer Station and Recycling Committee have finally decided to recycle all paper, metal, glass and plastic number 1-7! This is a big step for the citizens of Belgrade since we are all used to only recycling plastics numbers 1 and 2.

Belgrade Central School has been doing their part in recycling too. They have started recycling all of the plastic sporks from the cafeteria. Then, last year, to do even more, the school started to recycle all of their mixed paper. Blue recycling bins are placed in every classroom and office. Students, teachers, and staff are encouraged to place all of their mixed paper in these bins. Then, every Wednesday, a smaller group of Green Fusion (the school's recycling club) members called the Trash Patrol, come down by the classrooms and take the paper out of the bins and put it in a trash bag to be taken to the Transfer Station to be recycled. Green Fusion has also planted a butterfly garden that helps prevent ground erosion that leads to the lakes of Maine.

Other people outside of the Town of Belgrade are helping us too! Bill Dolley, school custodian of Belgrade Central says, “I have always been a big recycler. I have a big bin of things that Oakland doesn't recycle, and I wait until I can find a placer to recycle them.” Everyone is doing their part to make the world greener. Some people have switched to pellet stoves to heat their houses, others have switched to energy-efficient light bulbs. Whatever you do, you can make a difference!





## NEWS FROM THE TREE COMMITTEE

The growing season has wound down and we have been focusing on two areas: (1) greater interaction with other town committees and the public and (2) our draft tree ordinance. We expect to have the proposed ordinance on the March 2008 ballot for Town Meeting, so we wanted to provide a little background. Voters aren't likely to approve an ordinance if they don't know what it does, nor should they!

The proposed Tree Ordinance:

- Establishes duties of the Town Tree Warden
  - Proposes guidelines to govern planting and maintenance of trees in public places.
  - Grants permits for working on public trees
- Establishes the town Tree Committee to “encourage stewardship and appreciation of Belgrade’s trees through education, research, conservation efforts, and public information.”
  - Charges Tree Committee with developing a Community Tree Plan for town lands.
- Defines public trees (trees on town lands and rights-of-way) and prohibits damage to them by people other than the property owner or town officials.
- Requires no-cost permits for planting, trimming, maintaining and removing trees on town lands, along town roads and streets, and in public rights-of-way.
  - Exception for property owners maintaining land between their land and an adjacent roadway.
  - Retains jurisdiction of the cemetery trees with the Cemetery Committee.
- Gives Selectboard authority to fine persons or companies who violate ordinance provisions.
- Specifies how to apply for a permit for work on public trees.
- References approved tree list for public plantings focusing on native species, as well as a “Do Not Plant” list for public plantings.

We've enjoyed talking with folks around town as we've worked to raise awareness of this proposal. Here are some of the questions we've been asked about the proposed Tree Ordinance.



## Why do we need a Tree Ordinance?

A tree ordinance would benefit residents of Belgrade by helping protect the public parts of what is one of our greatest assets in the town, our forested landscape. As more people move into Belgrade, there is more demand for utility lines, which provide many important components in our daily lives. However not all of the people involved in establishing and maintaining the lines understand the vital component trees play. By establishing this ordinance, the Town will need to be notified when work is being done around public trees so that we have an opportunity to discuss the work, suggest alternatives if possible, and educate the organization to insure that our forested community remains a healthy and beautiful part of our Town.

The ordinance also authorizes the Tree Committee to pursue grants for tree planting and education in Belgrade, helping keep our town beautiful.

### Can I still cut trees on my property?

Absolutely! This ordinance is only intended for trees that are in the public right-of-way or on Town lands.

### What about the right-of-way in front of my house?

### How do I know what is town property and my own property?

It depends on where you live, since right-of-way widths vary from road to road. But under this ordinance, landowners are allowed to maintain the right-of-way between their land and the road as they always have – so if you like to clear brush, or have a favorite roadside tree you like to take care of, go for it!

### Is there a penalty if I cut a tree on town property without permission?

Other than the right-of-way along your property, there is a penalty for cutting trees on town property, which is why we are hoping that people will call the Town Office first.

### Is this going to create more bureaucracy for the cemeteries and the Road Commissioner?

The cemeteries and Road Commissioner retain autonomy under this ordinance. The Tree Committee is working to make sure we all have good communication about what happens to Belgrade's trees in public places.

### Is this going to increase our property taxes?

Absolutely not! But maintaining a healthy community forest in Belgrade WILL help increase your property value!

To find out more about the Tree Committee, visit the town's website ([www.belgrademaine.com](http://www.belgrademaine.com)) and click on the “Tree Committee” link on the left side of the page. If you have questions or want to get involved, come to one of our meetings – 5:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month, usually at the Town Office.

## CEMETERY COMMITTEE NOTICE

Members of the Belgrade Cemetery Committee have proposed a Cemetery Ordinance for approval by Town voters. This proposed Ordinance incorporates traditional Sexton practices and policies and Town Meeting votes on operation and maintenance of our cemeteries, thus providing a single reference for Belgrade residents. It explains how a lot or spaces in a lot can be obtained, how to learn the cost of a lot or spaces, how many human remains can be placed in a lot or spaces, and specifies Town and individual responsibilities for lot or spaces maintenance.

The proposed Cemetery Ordinance is available for scrutiny at the Town Office. A member of the Cemetery Committee, Town Office Staff, Town Manager or a Selectperson can answer questions on the Ordinance. Every resident is encouraged to examine this Ordinance before voting by referendum in March 2008.

## **NOTES FROM THE TOWN CLERK**

On November 6<sup>th</sup> we had the State Referendum, Representative, Town Selectperson and Referendum Election. We had a total of 904 voters turn out- that's about 40% of all registered voters. As most of you probably already know, Pat Jones of Mount Vernon was elected as our Representative. Our new Selectperson is Dan Newman. Welcome aboard Dan!

Fishing and Hunting licenses are available December 1<sup>st</sup> Dog licenses for 2008 are due by January 1<sup>st</sup>. Late fees will be applied February 1<sup>st</sup>. These can also be done online. NOTICE!!

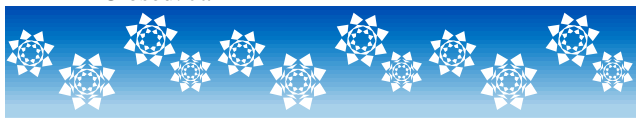
Nomination papers for the following offices will be available on December 20, 2007 and must be returned by 4:30 p.m. on January 29, 2008:

Road Commissioner: 1 year term  
School Board: 3 year term  
Selectperson: 3 year term

Articles for the Town Report are due By January 4, 2008. Please contact Cheryl at the Town Office for info

The following is a schedule for the Town Office during the holidays:

Open: Saturday Dec 15th, 9AM to 12 Noon  
Closed: Dec 13<sup>th</sup> 11A.M. to 1 P.M.  
Closed: Dec 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>  
Closed to the Public: Noon Dec 31st  
Closed: Jan 1<sup>st</sup>



## **WANTED!! YOU !!**

The Belgrade Tree Committee is looking for additional

members to their Tree Committee. And YOU are needed!

Our committee is involved in a number of educational projects here in the community that revolves around planting and maintaining our tree canopy. We also are involved in outreach to the community to help educate residence about the important contribution tree's play not only in the character of our community but the economic development of our community.

But we need your help. We need a few more enthusiastic, eager Belgrade residents that are willing to work with like minds! If you are interested, please don't hesitate to call the Town Office at 495.2258 and leave your name with Cheryl or Pat. One of our enthusiastic Tree Committee members will call you back!

## **Belgrade Historical Society**

In the process of estimating future town library needs a year ago, the Belgrade Historical Society was asked to estimate the space needed for a small Local History Area. Because there is no such place in Belgrade now, this estimate included square-footage for a worktable and one small showcase for artifacts, as well as books and files.

In August, the Historical Society learned that an ad hoc committee was assessing the space needs of all Town government functions. This time we were asked to estimate our space needs as part of a town office. The Town Historian currently houses most of the Society's holdings.

The Historical Society voted to go on record as supporting a central building, which combines a larger Town Office with a larger Library and Food Pantry. Members felt that a combined facility would be the most cost-effective, inasmuch as both the present Town Office and Library are very crowded. Members favor the inclusion of a space, which encourages the preservation of Belgrade's history, including the proper archival care, display and storage of artifacts, photo images and paper-based records.

## **BASEBALL TROPHY**

Does anyone know if the 1956 baseball team (school or town team) won a trophy? The Messalonskee Alumni Association has dispersed old trophies that were stored at the high school. One was brought to the Belgrade Town Office because it has "Belgrade" written on a piece of tape under the bottom. It has an emblem of Kennebec Valley Athletic Conference on it and is inscribed "Champions, 1956". If you can shed any light on this trophy or know of any Belgrade trophies, please contact Town Historian Nancy Mairs, 465-7924.

## **Reconsidering the Budget Validation Referendum**

Every three years the voters of a regional school unit are to consider whether the budget validation referendum process will be continued. In the applicable year, the budget validation referendum must include a separate question for the voters to indicate whether they wish to continue the process for an additional three years or discontinue the process.

As you can see, the budget process will look dramatically different this year as a result of the new budget validation process mandated by the state. We all will learn the new procedures together. Predictably there will be many questions as we move forward. By the time we're ready for voter approval we will have answered those questions together. In the end, the 2008-09 adopted budget will be the result of the will of the voters of Belgrade, Oakland, Rome and Sidney.

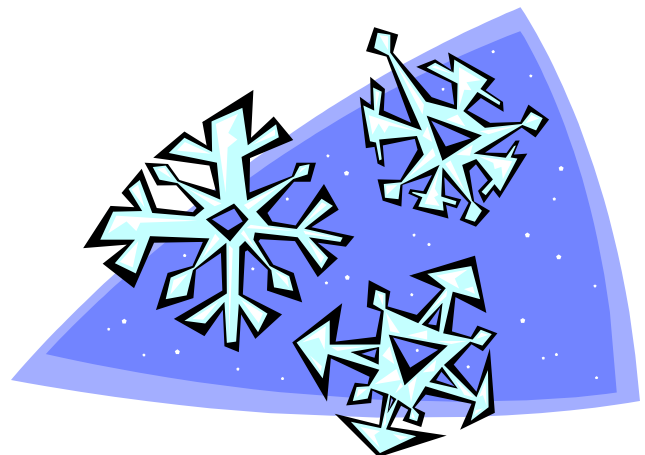
Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. James C, Morse Sr.

**TOWN OF BELGRADE  
6 MANCHESTER RD.  
BELGRADE, MAINE 04917**

**BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE PD  
PERMIT # 6  
BELGRADE, MAINE  
04917**

**POSTAL PATRON  
LOCAL  
CARRIER ROUTE  
PRE-SORT**



**NEWS from MSAD #47**

**SELECTPERSONS CORNER**  
**SELECTPERSONS:**  
Meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

A new budget process will take place this spring called a Budget Validation Process. There are three parts to the new format: 1.) Defined cost centers or line items are prescribed by the state, 2.) Defined revenue sources are prescribed by the state, and 3.) An approval process that involves a district budget meeting to determine the budget and a referendum to validate the budget approved in the district budget meeting. The process is time sensitive in that the referendum must occur on or before the 10<sup>th</sup> business day after the district budget hearing. This new procedure will occur throughout Maine with minor variation as to what body approves the budget currently. In council would have to approve the budget instead of a district budget hearing, before it goes before the voters. I want to acknowledge my colleague Rick Lyon's work regarding the summary below. He is superintendent of MSAD 22 and they've used this process for several years.

### **Cost Center Summary and Budget Format**

and

#### **The Budget Validation Referendum (2008-09 Fiscal Year) Cost Center Summary Budget Format Budget Articles/ Line Items**

1. Regular Instruction
2. Special Education
3. Career and Technical Education
4. Other instruction, including summer school and extracurricular instruction
5. Student and Staff Support
6. System Administration
7. School Administration
8. Transportation and Buses
9. Facilities Maintenance
10. Debt Service and Other Commitments
11. All other expenditures, including school lunch

Additionally, the warrant must include articles for the following revenue sources:

1. Total education costs funded by the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) allocation.
2. Non-state funded debt service costs approved by the legislative body.
3. Additional local funds, if any.

In addition to expenditure and revenue articles, the warrant must include a budget summary article to authorize the total school unit expenditures for the school budget.

### **Budget Validation Referendum Process**

The budget validation referendum **must be held on or after the 10<sup>th</sup> business day** following the scheduled date of the school unit's budget meeting. The warrants for the validation referendum must be distributed to the town clerks at least 14 days prior to the budget validation referendum date, and at least 7 days before the meeting.

### **Absentee Ballots**

Absentee ballots for the budget validation referendum must be delivered at least 7 days before the date of the budget meeting. Absentee ballots for the validation referendum may not be processed or counted by the municipal clerks unless they are received **after** the conclusion of the budget meeting and **before** the close of the polls for the validation referendum.

### **Referendum Question**

If the school budget does not exceed the maximum state and local spending target, the article to be voted upon at the budget validation referendum is as follows:

*Do you favor approving the [name of school unit] budget for the upcoming school year that was adopted at the latest [regional/district/municipal] school unit budget meeting?*

If the school budget exceeds the maximums state and local spending target, the article to be voted upon, which includes local funds in addition to those representing the regional school unit's local contribution to the EPS allocation, must be in the following form:

*Do you favor approving the [name of school unit] budget for the upcoming school year that was adopted at the latest [regional/district/municipal] school unit budget meeting and that includes locally raised funds that exceed the required local contribution as described in the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act?*

*A "YES" vote allows additional funds to be raised for K-12 public education.*

*A "NO" vote means additional funds cannot be raised for K-12 public education.*

### **If the Referendum Fails**

If the article presented at the referendum vote does not pass, the board must hold another budget meeting at least 10 days after the referendum vote to vote on another budget approved by the school board. The budget approved at the second budget meeting must then be submitted to the voters for validation at a second referendum conducted within 10 days of the second budget meeting. This process must be repeated until a budget is approved at a budget meeting and is validated at a referendum.

### **Reconsidering the Budget Validation Referendum**

Every three years the voters of a regional school unit are to consider whether the budget

validation referendum process will be continued. In the applicable year, the budget validation referendum must include a separate question for the voters to indicate whether they wish to continue the process for an additional three years or discontinue the process.

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