

Hampden *Highlights*

Town of Hampden Newsletter • April 2014

Where do my tax dollars go?

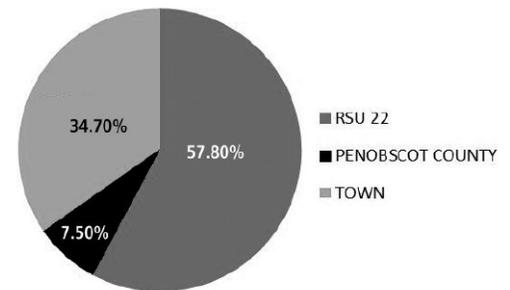
The town's current mil rate is \$16.65 per thousand dollars of valuation. It breaks down as follows:

\$9.62 RSU 22 amount or 57.8% of every tax dollar

\$1.25 Penobscot County amount or 7.5% of every tax dollar

\$5.78 Town of Hampden or 34.7% of every tax dollar

Mil Rate Breakdown
Town of Hampden 2013-2014



What about this year?

For six fiscal years, from 2007/08 through 2012/13 the Town maintained its mil rate at \$15.90 per thousand. It was the lowest mil rate in the region for a full-service community, with the exception of Hermon. The Town did this by keeping its own budget growth to no more than the growth rate allowed under state law and by absorbing increases received from the School District budgets and from increases in the Penobscot County tax.

In 2013/14, a \$300,000 funding cut in State revenue sharing, combined with a \$350,439 increase in the Town assessment from RSU 22 and a \$36,000 increase from Penobscot County made it impossible to maintain that mil rate for a seventh year and the mil rate was increased by \$.75 to \$16.65 even though the town reduced its own budget by nearly \$300,000. However, the mil rate is still the lowest in the area with the exception of the Town of Hermon.

The picture for 2014/15 is not looking substantially brighter. The initial report from RSU 22 is that the local share for Hampden will increase nearly \$300,000 this year. That brings the increase in Hampden's local share of the school budget to over \$813,000 over the past five years. It will not be possible for the Town to absorb this additional increase and another mil rate increase is unavoidable unless the proposed increase from RSU 22 for 2014/15 is substantially reduced.

Only 34.7 % of your tax dollar is used to pay for all town services including police, fire, public works, recreation, the transfer station, the library, the pool, economic development, administration, planning, assessing, paving, building and grounds maintenance, debt service for public improvements, street lights and hydrant rental for fire protection—all the services you rely on from your community with the exception of County tax and the expense of funding RSU 22. The County Tax and the School Budget are bills that the Town receives over which it has no control.

In 2013-14 the Town reduced its budget by nearly \$300,000 to accommodate a loss in State Revenue Sharing Funding. However, the RSU 22 local share for Hampden increased \$350,439, and the County Tax increased \$36,000. Taxes from new construction valuation were unable to make up for the increases in the RSU 22 Budget as well as the County Tax, even though the Town reduced its budget. The result was a mil rate increase of \$.75 to address these increased costs. With only 34.7 cents of each tax dollar used to fund municipal services unless there are drastic reductions in municipal services, or a mil rate increase, it is impossible for the Town to absorb further RSU 22 or County Tax increases. ■

Why is the Mil Rate important?

Large mil rate increases due to the school or county budget leave the Town no room for its budget to grow to accommodate cost increases for providing public services.

Continual mil rate increases make the community less competitive in the region when looking to attract businesses to help offset the residential tax burden and less affordable for working families looking to live here and seniors seeking to be able to keep their homes.

The 'brand' that makes RSU #22 a sought-after educational experience is also true for the Town of Hampden and the public services that it provides. If a larger and larger percentage of the municipal tax dollar continues to be funneled to education the community as a whole will suffer. There needs to be some sort of balance between the needs of RSU 22 and the needs of the Towns that support it. ■

We all know Hampden is a great place to live and raise a family. And now so does the rest of the world!

In the past few months the Town of Hampden has received four notable recognitions. These recognitions are a reflection of the wonderful community that Hampden is, the exceptional school system that it has, the low crime rate that it sustains, the wide range of excellent community services that the Town offers and the amazing people who live and work here. The accomplishments that have led to these recognitions did not happen by accident but by the efforts of many people over many years to make Hampden the incredible community that it is.

The recognitions are as follows:

The first was by a national blog that identified the top places in Maine to raise a family. The Town of Hampden was ranked #1! The article can be found online at <http://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/2013/best-towns-maine-young-families/>

The second was an article in *DownEast* Magazine called the Best Places to Live in Maine. The Town of Hampden was ranked #6! The article can be found in the March 2014 edition of *DownEast* magazine.

The third recognition came from a national real estate blog called Movato which ranked the top ten best places to live in Maine based on a number of factors. Hampden was ranked #8! The article can be found online at <http://www.movoto.com/blog/top-ten/best-places-to-live-in-maine/>

The fourth recognition comes from a national online blog that ranked the 25 Safest Places to Live in Maine. Hampden was ranked #7! The article can be found online at <http://www.safessentials.com/Blog/top-25-safest-places-in-maine> ■

FROM THE DESK OF THE MANAGER

Transfer Station Change – The Transfer Station is now open for brush and construction/demolition debris on Friday as well as Saturday and Sunday of the second and fourth weekend of each month. We are in hopes that this will cut down on the congestion that sometimes occurs with just two days available for the collection of that material.

Redistricting – The June primary election will also include a local referendum question related to adjustments of the boundaries of the four voting districts in Hampden. The Town is required by State law to review its voting districts after every census to determine if there is no more than a 10% difference in population between highest and lowest population districts. The proposed district alterations can be viewed on the Town's website at www.hampdenmaine.gov.

The plan that will be voted on was approved by a committee of Town Councilors and residents and then approved by the Town Council after a public hearing was held. The Town Charter requires that these changes be approved by the voters as well. If the referendum question is successful in June, all voters affected by a change in district will be notified via mail.

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HOW CAN I STAY INVOLVED?

During the month of May both the Town and the School District will be finalizing budgets for the next fiscal year. Both the Town and School budget meetings will be aired on local cable channel 7 as well as live streamed on the internet at www.justin.tv/hampdenmaine

If you want to attend meetings in person, the Town's budget meeting schedule is posted on the Town website at www.hampdenmaine.gov and the School budget meetings are posted on the school website at www.rsu22.us/

Your input is important. Let your elected School Board Members and Town Councilors know what level of services is important to you and what impact budget and mil rate increases have on you and your family. ■

2013 Annual Report - The 2013 Annual Report is now posted on the Town Website at www.hampdenmaine.gov. It can be found by clicking on the Annual Reports tab on the front page of the website.

Zero-Sort Recycling – Starting July 1, 2014, the Town of Hampden will begin participation in Zero Sort Recycling at the Transfer Station. This change will allow residents to recycle more of their waste more easily. It involves no sorting or separating, no figuring which number plastics are acceptable, and includes the collection of glass and all types of paper

and cardboard. We will be mailing information to all residents on how this program works in the next month.

Want to help? – The Town is always looking for volunteers to serve on Town Committees. There are a variety of Committees dealing with everything from community planning to recreation. Check out the list on the town website at www.hampdenmaine.gov under the Town Officials and then the Town Boards & Committees link. You can also print off an application at that same location – or pick one up at the Town Office. ■



Susan Lessard, Town Manager

STAYING CONNECTED!

The Town of Hampden has been working to increase the ways in which it communicates with the public and to make it easier for residents and business and visitors to stay informed about the Town of Hampden and its activities. The following is our current list of offerings:

Cable Television

The Town of Hampden operates a local government channel on Time Warner local cable channel 7. The channel airs Town Council and Planning Board meetings live, and also rebroadcasts them along with RSU 22 School Board meetings. The channel also scrolls slates containing information about local programs and upcoming events.

Video Streaming on the Internet

Persons with an internet connection and a computer or smart phone can view the same offerings as those with cable television by going to www.justin.tv/hampdenmaine. This channel shows exactly what is showing on cable channel 7. You can also access this site from the front page of the Town website at www.hampdenmaine.gov

Twitter Account

The Town of Hampden has an official Twitter account. You can follow by going to <https://twitter.com/hampdenmaine>

You Tube

The Town of Hampden has a YouTube account. It can be accessed by going to the front page of the Town website at www.hampdenmaine.gov and clicking on the YouTube link on the right side of the page. The Town uploads video of all Town Council meetings and has begun videotaping school budget meetings that are also on the site.

Town Website

The Town website can be found at www.hampdenmaine.gov. The calendar on the front page of the website lists all meetings of the Town Council and its committees. In addition, you can find copies of all the ordinances that the Town has, connections to department activities, and much more on the website. There are connections on the front page to the Town's YouTube account, video streaming, and the State of Maine Rapid Renewal program that allows you to re-register your vehicle online.

Town Newsletter

The Town sends out a newsletter (like the one you are reading right now!) from one to four times a year containing information on town department activities and items of interest to residents. The newsletter is also posted online on the Town website at www.hampdenmaine.gov

Email updates

You can register your email address on the Town Website at www.hampdenmaine.gov by clicking on the email sign-up section on the left side of the front page of the website. You will then receive an email from the Town reminding you of upcoming due dates for taxes, meeting dates, etc.

Feedback Form

There is also a feedback form link on the front page of the Town website at www.hampdenmaine.gov. You can use this to give us YOUR opinion on local issues, or to ask questions. ■

Hampden *Highlights*

Highlights is published quarterly by the Town of Hampden, and its success depends upon a community-wide effort. We ask you to please forward news, notes and tips about friends, neighbors, colleagues — or yourselves — by emailing manager@hampdenmaine.gov, drop off at the Town Office, or mailing to *Hampden Highlights*, Town Office, 106 Western Avenue, Hampden, ME, 04444. You can find *Hampden Highlights* on the Web at www.hampdenmaine.gov. We welcome your feedback. Edited by Susan Lessard • Layout and design by Val Ireland

Changes at Edythe L. Dyer Community Library

Patrick Welch's beautiful and ambitious Eagle Scout project can be seen in the audio room. These shelves are like works of art they really need to be seen in person to appreciate them. Thank you to Patrick Welch and crew! Check it out and some audio books too!

Other changes include new furniture



in the tower and the creation of a reading room on the first level complete with a Keurig machine. These changes were funded by the Friends of the Library. Your purchases in the Library Book Shop help pay for these projects. Thank you so much to our amazing Friends group. And to the best library patrons in the world, thank you. Now come enjoy! ■



Election Information and Related Dates to Remember

Thursday, June 5

RSU 22 District Budget Meeting

7 p.m. at the Hampden Academy Gymnasium

Thursday June 5

Last day to request an absentee ballot for the June 10 primary election

Tuesday, June 10

State of Maine Primary Election; Special Town Referendum; and RSU #22 Budget Validation Referendum

The election is held at the Hampden municipal building and the polling hours are from 8 a.m.–8 p.m.

More information related to the upcoming election:

- 1.) The State of Maine Primary Election will be held on June 10, 2014. You MUST be enrolled in a party (Democratic, Green Independent or Republican) in order to participate in the Primary Election. Unenrolled voters may enroll in a party at any time up to and including Election Day. Voters enrolled in a party who wish to switch parties, must do so prior to May 23.
- 2.) There will also be a Special Town Election on a proposed Charter Amendment which would amend the boundaries of the four Town Council Districts.
- 3.) RSU 22 will also hold its School District Budget Validation Referendum on June 10. The District Budget Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 5 at Hampden Academy and the budget adopted at that meeting will be voted on at the Election. Absentee ballots for the Budget Validation Referendum can not be returned prior to the June 5 Budget Meeting. ■

Hampden Farmer's Market has a New Home

The Hampden Farmer's Market will be held on Fridays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the parking lot in front of the Municipal Building at 106 Western Avenue. The market formerly operated in the parking lot of the old Hampden Academy, but that property has been sold and is in the process of being developed so the Market was looking for a new location. The Hampden Town Council voted unanimously to allow the market to operate at the Municipal Building on Fridays from May through November. We look forward to a successful season for the market! ■



LUSH LAWNS FOR LESS\$

We love lawns. They are part of our image of what home should be and, when healthy, they can provide a personal refuge and a place to play.

Maintaining a healthy lawn is the best way to combat weeds, diseases, and pests. If you find you have to continually add pesticides and fertilizers to your lawn to keep it looking good, this could indicate an underlying problem.

A YardScaping lawn can be healthier, and the bonus is that it is also healthier for your children, pets, your wallet, and the environment.

Fertilizer: more is not necessarily better! The iridescent, emerald-green lawn acquired by overfeeding with fertilizers, especially nitrogen, is actually unhealthy turf that's under stress. In this condition, the lawn is vulnerable to plant diseases, weeds and drought. Maine soils are rich in phosphorus, so phosphorus-free fertilizer is generally all you need for an established lawn.

Pesticides can be toxic if overused or

carelessly applied. Pesticides (fungicides, herbicides, and insecticides) are used to control diseases, weeds, and insect pests. The long-term effects on human health from continuous exposure to low levels of chemical pesticides is a subject of ongoing debate.

Weed and Feed is a combination of both pesticides & fertilizers. Because these products are generally applied to the entire lawn, you may be applying unneeded chemicals. For example, there may be areas of the lawn without weeds that don't need pesticides. Or, using weed and feed may result in applying fertilizer at a time of the year when the grass is not growing and the fertilizer won't be absorbed. This can waste money.

What You Can Do—If You Do It Yourself.

If you do fertilize your lawn—hold off until late summer–early fall. Between Labor Day and Columbus Day is the best time for the uptake of nutrients so your

money will not be wasted.

If you currently use weed and feed—consider spot-treating your weeds and then applying your fertilizer separately in late summer–early fall.

For additional information about low-impact lawn care alternatives, check out YardScaping for a Healthy Maine: www.yardscaping.org

What You Can Do—If You Hire a Lawn Care Company.

Ask your provider whether the insect and weed controls are applied on a fixed schedule. If so, they are not the company to hire.

Make sure your provider does a soil test before fertilizer is applied.

For additional information about selecting a natural, pesticide-free lawn care program, go to www.yardscaping.org/hire.htm or check out Paul Tukey's People, Places & Plants Tips of the Week: www.ppplants.com/resources/tip/04-04-06.html. ■

YardScaping hopes to inspire Maine people to create and maintain healthy landscapes through ecologically based practices that minimize reliance on water, fertilizer, and pesticides. The Maine YardScaping Partnership was formed out of the rising concern among statewide organizations and agencies over the possible pollution caused by yard care chemicals washing away into water bodies, as well as the risks of pesticide exposure to people, pets, and wildlife

Skehan Recreation Center

In October of 2012 the Town of Hampden acquired the former Hampden Academy property from RSU 22. The Town Council spent a good deal of time considering options for the re-use of the facility, and in September of 2013, sold it to Historic Hampden Academy, LLC – a company owned by long-time resident Danny Lafayette and his wife Carla. At that time, the Town Council also voted to lease a portion of the Skehan Gymnasium building from the Lafayettes for the cost of \$1 per year for use as a Town Recreation and Community center.

While the lease cost is \$1, the Town is responsible for all maintenance and utilities cost for the facility. No budget



from taxation was included in the 2013/14 budget for this lease, and the costs of its operation are currently being paid from facility program and rental fees, and from the recreation enterprise account which involves the program participation fees for all recreation



programs. 2014/15 will be the second year of the five year lease that the Town has for the facility.

A survey done in 2012 by the Town indicated that a majority of respondents were in favor of utilizing the Skehan

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GOOD NEIGHBOR PROGRAM



PURPOSE: *Hampden Public Safety would like to provide support to families affected by Alzheimer's, related Dementia or other memory or cognitive impairment issues. This voluntary program is used to identify, monitor and assist families with the safety of their loved one.*

How do I get started? The person with Alzheimer's, related Dementia or other memory or cognitive impairment issues, or an authorized person, can begin the process of enrolling the affected person in the Good Neighbor Program. The authorized person must submit documentation evidencing that person's authority, such as a

Power of Attorney, Guardianship, or Advance Directive. The process begins by submitting a completed Participant Form to Hampden Public Safety.

Where do I get the Participant Form? The form is available at Hampden Public Safety; 106 Western Ave. or on the website at www.hampdenmaine.gov.

What happens after the Participant Form is completed? The information on the Form will be made available to public safety personnel should the person become lost or reported missing. A member of Hampden Public Safety will also meet with the person and /or family to assist with providing resources if needed. The information on the Participant Form will be kept confidential by the Town of Hampden to the greatest extent permitted by law, including the privacy of health information under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA).

How could the Good Neighbor Program be helpful? The person with Alzheimer's, related Dementia or other memory or cognitive impairment issues may leave that person's residence or other location either on foot or in a vehicle and be unsure how to get back. If someone calls to report the person missing, Hampden Public Safety will already have most of the required information, including a recent photo. This will expedite the search process and significantly increase the chances of bringing the person home safely.

Who qualifies for the Good Neighbor Program? Any Hampden resident with Alzheimer's, related Dementia or other memory or cognitive impairment issues.

Is there any cost to participate in the Good Neighbor Program? No. This is a service provided by Hampden Public Safety.

How long do I stay in the Program? The affected person will remain in the Program until the person, or an authorized person, provides the Town with written notice of withdrawal from the Program. Hampden Public Safety personnel will periodically contact the affected person, or the authorized person, to make sure that the information on the Participant Form is still accurate. The photo may also be updated. ■

Skehan from page 5

Center as a community recreation center – but a majority of respondents were not in favor of using property tax dollars to support it. What do you think? Should the town use tax dollars for the support

of the Recreation/Community Center?

Log on to the town website at hampdenmaine.gov and use the Feedback Form on the left side of the front page to let us know your thoughts!

Programming offerings for all ages continue to expand at the Skehan

Recreation Center. You can view the offerings on the Town website at hampdenmaine.gov under Town Departments and then Recreation or by calling the Skehan Recreation Center at 862-6451. ■



Pink Perennials Anyone?

The Hampden Town Office is seeking donations of pink perennials for the Pink Garden located in front of the Municipal Building. Anyone thinning out their gardens this year is encouraged to remember this garden and donate any extra plantings that you may have. Breast cancer has touched the lives of many in the community and this garden is a living memorial to those who lost the fight and encouragement for those still fighting. ■

MARINA PARK NOW A REALITY

Thanks to a donation of \$520,000 from Chevron Corporation as part of a settlement with the Department of Environmental Protection, the Town is now the owner of eight and half acres adjacent to the Hamlin Marina on Marina Road. This acreage is permanently protected from development and will be used as a Town park. A parking lot for the property is being built this Spring and trails and other amenities will be added in the future. This park represents one of the few unspoiled access points for the public on the Penobscot River. ■

HAMPDEN BUSINESS & COMMERCE PARK PHASE II SET FOR CONSTRUCTION

After a request for proposal process to solicit interest in creative ideas for development of Phase II of the Hampden Business & Commerce Park on Route 202, the Town Council selected Sargent Corporation to create a plan for development. After months of negotiations between the Town and Sargent, the Town Council presented the proposal to the public and held a public hearing on it in March. Following the public hearing, the Town Council approved the agreement and Sargent Corp will be moving forward with constructing the infrastructure of roads and utilities to support the sale of the eighteen lots in Phase II of the park.

Under the terms of the agreement, Sargent Corporation will construct the road and utilities that will allow for the sale and development of the eighteen remaining lots. The estimated cost of this infrastructure is more than \$3,000,000. In return for this investment, the Town will deed the remaining lots to Sargent Corporation for sale and development. Phase II of the business park will be a Tax Increment Financing District and credit

enhancement agreements will be available to Sargent Corporation for any individual lot that creates more than \$500,000 in new building value. Personal property value is not eligible for the credit enhancement program. Economic Development Director Dean Bennett and the Town Council Planning & Development Committee worked on this project for many months and the outcome is a win for both the Town and the developer. Without this type of arrangement, it is highly unlikely due to budget constraints that the Town would have sought to borrow money to complete the park and the potential for eighteen new businesses to locate in Hampden would have stayed dormant.

This development proposal enables Phase II of the park to move forward without the need for the Town of Hampden to bond and borrow more than \$3,000,000 to construct the roads and utilities, which is a savings for taxpayers. It also creates incentives for Sargent Corporation to aggressively construct and then market and sell lots which creates new business in Hampden. ■

A Great Way to Help Your Neighbors

The Hampden Food Cupboard, located in the basement of the Hampden Congregational Church on Main Road North is a non-denominational entity that provides help to those in the community who are having a tough time making ends meet in terms of food security. At the present time, the Food Cupboard could use donations of the following items:



toilet paper; laundry detergent; non-perishable food items; bar soap; cereal; baked beans; pasta sauce

Items may be left in the collection box at the Hampden Town Office or at the Hampden Congregational Church.

In addition the Help for Hampden Fund, which is operated through the Hampden Congregational Church and is also a non-denominational entity, could use donations. This fund is used to help those in the community who may be in need of a fuel delivery or part of a rent payment or payment of part of an electric bill or some other emergency. The economy has not rebounded for everyone and for those interested in helping others donating to these two organizations keeps your 'helping hand' extended close to home. ■

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