

The Arrowsic Arrow

News Around & About Arrowsic

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Spring 2017



Sewall Pond in all its autumn splendor. (Photo Phil Mason)
The Arrow welcomes your favorite photographs of all things Arrowsic.

Come to the Arrowsic Town Meeting on June 15!

Arrowsic will hold its annual Town Meeting on Thursday, June 15 at 6:30 PM at the Arrowsic Fire Station on Stafford Lane (behind the Town Hall). Everyone is welcome to attend and those registered to vote in Arrowsic are eligible to vote in this annual exercise in direct democracy. In addition to the normal elections of town officers, you will vote on issues related to the provision of town services and hear about progress on the town-wide revaluation, fire department, recycling, conservation, and other ongoing activities.

Town-Wide Revaluation of Properties

Letter to Taxpayers from the Select Board

The Town of Arrowsic is undertaking a revaluation program, the results of which will form the basis of property taxation starting in 2018. The purpose of the project is to tax properties equitably and fairly based upon their current market value. Arrowsic tax bills due in 2018 will be the first bills to reflect property values assigned as a result of revaluation.

The last revaluation of the town was performed 1999–2000 and the ratio between assessed and market values is now almost too low to meet the state’s minimum standards.

A revaluation program does not, in and of itself, increase property taxes. That is not the purpose of the program. Only an increase in the overall expenditures of the town, school district and county will increase property taxes.

However, revaluation does change assessed values to more closely match current trends in the real estate market and specific information about individual properties. Therefore, assessed values for some properties will go up more than others based on their relative values in today’s market. If town expenditures remained exactly the same in 2018, properties that are relatively more valuable would experience a tax increase after the revaluation, while some would see little change, and others would actually have lower taxes.

The Select Board developed and issued a request for proposals in November 2016 after consulting with neighboring towns who have had more recent revaluation experiences. We received two bids and, after reviewing qualifications and checking with prior clients, selected the firm of William E. Van Tuinen, Tax Assessment Services of Madison, Maine, to conduct the revaluation. All four of the clients that we contacted were very satisfied with Mr. Van Tuinen’s work and we are confident that this process will be handled professionally and to high standards.

Here is what you can expect from the revaluation process.

- *Inspection of Properties.* An important component of revaluation is the collection of information on each home and property in the town via physical inspection. This is commonly referred to as “measuring and listing the property,” and takes from 30 to 45 minutes. During the inspection, characteristics of your home and property that affect its value will be recorded on a property record card. These characteristics include the house foundation, extent of basement areas, type of heating system(s), number of bathrooms, number of rooms, type of roof, type of siding, age of home, condition of home, etc. In addition, dimensions of the home will be measured and sketched on the property record card. Finally, an exterior photograph of the home will be taken during inspection.
- *Callbacks.* If no one is home during the first inspection, the revaluation agent will measure the home and make some observations from the outside. The revaluation agent will return to try a second time to do the full inspection. If that is unsuccessful, then the revaluation agent will send a letter and try to arrange an appointment to inspect the property.
- *Analysis of Sales.* The appraiser will carefully review sales of properties in the town, and surrounding towns if necessary. Based upon these sales, a valuation manual for the Town of Arrowsic will be developed for the valuation of all properties. The manual will include methods for the valuation of land, cost schedules, and depreciation guidelines.

- *Preliminary Valuation.* Based upon the information collected in the field, information about each property will be entered into a computer program and a preliminary valuation will be developed based upon the appraisal manual developed from the analysis of sales. The computer software that will be used is Trio, the same software program currently used by the town to assist in the valuation of property and to bill taxes.
- *Review.* The preliminary valuation will be checked and reviewed in the field with the goal of having correct data, a realistic estimate of value, and assuring that similar properties are valued alike.
- *Notification and Informal Hearings.* In the summer of 2018 taxpayers will be notified of the new valuation and will have the opportunity to meet with an appraiser to discuss and review the valuation. The same laws that normally apply to property taxes apply in a revaluation year. After receiving a tax bill, a taxpayer has the right to apply for an abatement if he or she is of the opinion that the valuation is excessive or disproportionately high compared to other similar properties.

Please note that representatives of the firm carry identification, and their identities may also be verified by contacting the town office or members of the Select Board.

Also, a property owner does not have to allow an assessor or revaluation personnel into their home or even on to their property. Nevertheless, we hope that taxpayers will cooperate with the inspection process because it will allow for a more thorough and accurate assessment. If a taxpayer refuses to allow such an inspection, the property will be assessed on the basis of the best available information but cannot be assured of accuracy. On this understanding, if you still wish to avoid an inspection, please contact a member of the Select Board and we will inform the revaluation crew not to inspect your home.

We are sending this letter, along with a brochure on revaluations prepared by the State of Maine, to all property owners this month.

Your cooperation with the inspection of your home is greatly appreciated to assure a fair and thorough revaluation for our town. Thank you.

—*Sukey Heard, Michele Gaillard, and Bill Savedoff*

On the Roads Again

The town three-year snowplow contract is complete this year. The Road Commission is negotiating with Charlie Collins/Maine Moss for a new three-year contract. Charlie and his crew have done a great job over the last three winters and the commission thinks it best to continue that relationship. If you have any input on the snowplowing, please contact the Road Commission via Jim Stump at 442-7527.

A heads-up that the Road Commission, well actually HC Crooker, will likely be paving the Mill Island Road and the south end of the Indian Rest Road sometime in June. We will keep the affected residents informed as best we can as to the exact date.

—*For the Road Commission, Jim Stump*

Arrowsic Writers Read—January 27, 2017

At 6:40 PM, there was standing room only at the Arrowsic Town Hall and twenty-nine names on the sign-in sheet. Six writers, Charlie Hudson, Andrea Hanson, Nancy Sferra, Damian Sokol, Al Miller, Don Hudson and Nancy Brown Stump signed up to read. That's all it took, no references, no reader's fees, no residency requirement, just folks coming together from where ever they had been.

Arrowsic "Reads" are typically various. Don read part of a piece he had written for *Wild Seed* in which he spoke of forest ecology and the changes that are apt to be coming in the next 100 years, some species going north while new species arrive from the south. Andrea Hanson drove from Portland to share a segment of a diary she had kept when she lived in Africa. Damian Sokol shared a bowl of orphanage porridge not fondly remembered except perhaps in the telling. Nancy Sferra pulled out her guitar and honored us with a song she will be including in her upcoming CD. Al Miller recited two poems, and in one he wondered whether we must agree about more than words and melody before we sing? Could it be that a short fiction piece about a Maine town meeting raises connected questions? (Link to complete story: <http://bit.ly/2qbZqoi>)

That said, please don't rely on me to have accurately relayed what others wrote. I won't do it justice, not that I haven't tried. I've taken notes and collected remembrances from others, but truth be told, I'm more at home in fiction where I can take the little I remember of a story and add the lots it made me feel. Then instead of beating myself up for failures of memory, I can call it the "guess you had to be there" event it was, complete with different portions resonating for different people, 28 listeners for every one reader.

"Outlast: A Mediocre Basketball Story" is a film by Charlie Hudson. This short "read" is a veritable Hallelujah chorus full of standup cheer, narrated by the film maker, the players and funny man, Bob Kalish, who, with small dance-step strides, lobs hook shot after hook shot over the changing arrangements of twin and tall towers, distracting us with one liners and various slights of hand. I can't remember a single joke, but I do remember laughing. I remember being charmed. I took no notes for this piece but sat back and let myself be mesmerized by the therapeutic humor and mystery of the Over 70 Team at the Bath YMCA still in the game in its top form. Here's hoping we can cajole Charlie into favoring us with another round.



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Arrowsic Writers Read welcomes everyone who would like to participate in this informal gathering.

—Nancy Brown Stump

Quotable Quotes

"I like to pay taxes. With them, I buy civilization."

—Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

(*The Arrow* invites you to send in your favorite quotes.)



Kevin Kauffunger and Steven Paul built a cap for an old open cistern between Squirrel Point and the northern clamming flat that presented a hazard. Photos show before and after.



Members of the Annual Roadside Cleanup crew separating recyclable materials from everything collected. The Conservation Commission and Recycling/Solid Waste Committee thank the more than 30 intrepid volunteers for their participation. (Photo Karen Dowell)

From the Education Committee

Proposed Increase in Arrowsic's Contribution to the RSU1 Budget

The Arrowsic Education Committee asked RSU1 Board Chair and Arrowsic representative Tim Harkins to explain this year's proposed increase in Arrowsic's contribution to the RSU1 budget.

Last year's RSU1 budget was \$28,264,149, and this year's is \$29,090,118—this equates in a 2.9% increase. Yet, due to the fact that we are only receiving a less than 1% (0.008%) increase in state subsidy, we have to raise a higher percentage through the local contribution (which is what the communities pay through property taxes). So the local share this year is actually increasing by 4.5%.

Another factor that contributes towards Arrowsic's increase is the fact that each town, based on the new funding formula, is charged on a per student basis, and Arrowsic has 0.5 additional students this year (40.5 up from 40.0 last year—I'm assuming the state arrives at a 0.5 student because they take an average of 2 pupil counts over the course of the year). This accounts for part of the additional increase.

One other factor that comes into play is that some communities have seen a decrease in the total number of students this coming year over last year, so Arrowsic is now responsible for a higher percentage of the total budget (3.06% of the budget as opposed to 2.97% last year).

These 3 factors are what have resulted in the (proposed) 7.65% increase. Please keep in mind that Arrowsic's percentage variance has been as follows over the past 6 years:

2012–2013: \$494,006 toward education
2013–2014: 2.60% (decrease) \$474,407
2014–2015: 8.30% (decrease) \$435,221
2015–2016: 3.96% (increase) \$451,433
2016–2017: 12.26% (increase) \$507,962
2017–2018: 7.65% (proposed increase) \$546,834

The dollar figures I show were pulled from documentation that I received each year as part of the budget process, and they may not represent the final number that was charged to Arrowsic (based upon changes that may have occurred in the final budget), but they are within a few hundred dollars. This is the number I think that best represents from year to year what the RSU charges for education.

Also, please keep in mind that these numbers will be changing as the budget process proceeds. The Board had some issues with the initial budget and we should see some small decreases at the next presentation.

District Budget Meeting and Referendum

A District Budget Meeting is scheduled on May 30, at 6:00 PM at the Bath Middle School, for citizens to vote up or down on the budget, and a Budget Validation Referendum will be held on June 13 for Arrowsic residents at the Town Hall. Polling hours will be announced closer to the date. The Arrowsic Select Board and Education Committee thank the RSU1 School Board, Superintendent Patrick Manuel, central office staff, and all the school administrators for their time and commitment to the challenging task of forming a budget. We hope Arrowsic residents will show support for RSU1 students by participating in the process.

To view a current copy of the budget, visit the Arrowsic website homepage, rsu1.org, or the Town Hall.

Nurse's Notes from Your Local Health Officer, May 2017

As we prepare to spend time outdoors this spring and summer, let's talk a little about the browntail moth caterpillar problem. You might have heard about this pesky critter; our town and those around us are the epicenter of the infestation this year. (For more about browntail moths, see the September 2016 and February 2017 issues of *The Arrow* at <http://www.arrowsic.org/arrow.html>.)

The caterpillars overwintered in their nests in the trees, but have now left and are eating the new leaves as they begin to grow. The hairs on their bodies, and the toxins that sit on those hairs, can cause an itchy rash. Those toxic hairs are in the soil, grass, on firewood, and even floating in the air. The toxic effects can last a few years, too. So last year's toxic hairs are still in your yards, even before this year's caterpillars emerge. The resultant rash is a type of histamine reaction.

For anyone who goes outside to play and work, here are some suggestions from your Local Health Officer—the “town nurse.”

- Cover up! Polyester fibers are best, as cotton weave will still let some hairs through. Wear gloves, long pants, long sleeves, and hats. Don't touch bare skin with gloved hands.
- Work in the cool moist mornings or on rainy days; the wet will keep the hairs more contained.
- Remove clothes and wash hands immediately upon coming back inside. Wash clothes separately right away.
- If you think a rash is forming, wash the area with cold water, pat dry, and apply anti-itch lotion (*see below*). Try not to scratch for the first few minutes; doing so sets up a cascade of histamine events and will be more difficult to stop. The rash can persist for up to a week.
- To treat the rash, topical lotions are available, both by prescription and over the counter. Your medical provider or local pharmacist can recommend treatment. The Mid Coast Hospital Walk-In Clinic in Brunswick also has treatment for severe cases.

If you feel that you've been exposed and are short of breath as a result, seek immediate medical care.

Using caution and being prepared will make outdoor activities more manageable.

—C. Woodman, R.N., Local Health Officer for Arrowsic

From the Recycling/Solid Waste Committee

The Alaska–Maine Recycling Perspective and Maine's Premier Recycling Conference

Recently my wife Susan and I returned home to Maine after 12 years of living and working in Alaska. Our exposure to recycling was a 23-mile drive, once a week, to drop off paper, cardboard, paperboard, scrap metal, and cans and bottles. Alaska does not have a returnable container law.

In September 2016, we moved to Arrowsic and were introduced to curbside, single-stream recycling. It was like going from horse and buggy to a driverless car, or so we thought, as we soon learned that the world of recycling had even more to offer...

Recycling (cont.)

Recently I attended the 24th Annual Maine Recycling and Solid Waste Conference & Trade Show in Rockland, sponsored by the Maine Resource Recovery Association. I was introduced to the future of recycling, including paint recycling and food scrap diversion. I was most intrigued by the effort to recycle food waste.

- Chelsea Malacara from the City of South Portland introduced a pilot curbside program to provide weekly curbside pickup of household food waste. 30% of their trash is food waste.
- Dean Richmond of Pleasant River Farms shared his efforts to divert seasonal tourist-based food waste from the solid waste stream. He is working with Sunday River and Mt. Abram to pick up and compost an average of 2,000 pounds of food waste a week.
- Dan Bell of Agri-Cycle Energy talked about converting animal and organic waste into electricity. His company is using an anaerobic digester to process 40,000 tons of waste and is producing up to 3 megawatts of power per year.
- Recently two New England states (Vermont and Massachusetts) passed new rules requiring the diversion of food waste from disposal.

It is obvious the future of recycling is changing and it is apparent that Maine is in the lead!

—Bill Nickerson, newest member of the ARSWC

Important Reminder about Free Paint Recycling:

Do you have unwanted latex or oil-based paint that you don't know what to do with? There is a new paint recycling program called PaintCare, which is offered locally at Rocky's Hardware (Bath), Ames Supply (Wiscasset), and Sherwin-Williams (Brunswick). Through the program, customers can drop off up to five cans of paint per visit per day at no cost. There must be liquid in the original container, and paints cannot be mixed. The paint will be taken to an out-of-state facility to be burned as fuel or recycled through this Washington D.C.-based nonprofit organization. For more information, pick up a brochure in the Recycling Shed or Town Hall, or go to www.Paintcare.org.

Upcoming Schedule Changes and Recycling Events

On June 2, we return to a weekly pickup schedule for trash, and recycling will remain biweekly. Trash will return to biweekly on September 1 (*see schedule at right*). Stay tuned for the date for the Annual Bulky Items Pickup.

The Arrowsic Arrow is Arrowsic's independent newsletter, produced entirely through the efforts of volunteers. The newsletter is published quarterly, currently in Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall. The Arrow is distributed via e-mail to all those on the Town of Arrowsic list or on paper to those who have asked to receive it in this way. The Town covers any costs for paper and postage. To avoid cost to the town, please consider receiving The Arrow through e-mail or printing your own copy. All articles and notices are welcome. Notices should be limited to 100 words.

Arrow Committee: Suzanne Gunston, Bob Kalish, Paul Schlein, Thomas Spear, and Nancy Brown Stump

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ARROWSIC SOLID WASTE/RECYCLING COMMITTEE					
2017 TRASH/RECYCLING					
PICKUP SCHEDULE					
<u>June–August</u> Weekly trash pickup; biweekly recycling; Friday pickup					
<u>September–December</u> Biweekly schedule for everything; Friday pickup					
JUNE	2	9 ^R	16	23 ^R	30
JULY		7 ^R	14	21 ^R	28
AUGUST	4 ^R	11	18 ^R	25	
SEPTEMBER	1 ^R		15 ^R		29 ^R
OCTOBER		13 ^R		27 ^R	
NOVEMBER		10 ^R		24 ^R	
DECEMBER		8 ^R		22 ^R	

^RRecycling, as well as Trash pickup
Questions? Contact: Paul Schlein, pschlein@gmail.com, 443-3209