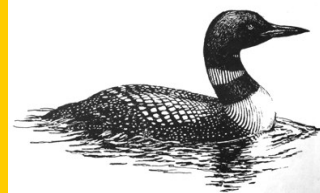


Town of Mount Vernon Community Newsletter



www.mtvernonme.org

October 2021 Edition

TOWN OFFICE STAFF

Town Office

Phone: 293-2379
Fax: 293-3507
clerk@mtvernonme.org
Mon 8am-6pm
Tue, Wed, & Thu 7am-3pm
Fri, Sat & Sun - Closed

Town Clerk & Tax Collector

Heather Wheeler @ 293-2379
clerk@mtvernonme.org

Deputy Clerk

Amanda Wheeler @ 293-2379
deputyclerk@mtvernonme.org

Treasurer

Kerry Casey @ 293-2379
treasurer@mtvernonme.org
Mon 10-12, Wed 10-11:45

Select Board

selectboard@mtvernonme.org

Anna Libby @ 951-2385
anna@mtvernonme.org

Paul Crockett @ 293-3000
paul@mtvernonme.org

Select Board Admin. Assistant

Alice Counts @ 293-1105
Cell @ 714-403-6076
alice@mtvernonme.org
Mon, Tue & Wed 6am-3pm

**Select Board Meetings are held
every other Monday at the Town
Office @ 1997 North Road**

Warrant @ 6:30 pm
Regular Town Business @ 7:00pm

TOWN DEPARTMENT STAFF

Animal Control Officer

Trish Davis @ 491-0410

Cemetery Sexton

Robert Grenier @ 293-2783

Code Enforcement Officer and Plumbing Inspector

Bill Butler Work: @ 293-2636
Cell: 446-6541
mtvernonceo@gmail.com
Tuesdays 8am-4pm

Fire Chief

Jason Beckler @ 293-2114
(non-emergencies)

General Assistance

Paul Crockett @ 293-3000
paul@mtvernonme.org

Health Officer

Daniel K. Onion @ 293-2076

Rescue Director

Pat Rawson @ 293-2597
(non-emergencies)

Road Commissioner

Lee Dunn @ 242-5828

Tax Assessor

Roger Peppard @ 293-1105
3rd Thursday of each month
assessor@mtvernonme.org

Transfer Station

Carole O'Connell @ 458-1425
Sat & Sun 8:30 am - Noon
**May 1st thru September 30th open
on Wednesdays from 3-6pm**

Dr. Shaw Memorial Library 293-2565

Website: drshawlibrary.org
Email: librarian@drshawlibrary.org

Mon 3pm-6pm,
Wed 9am-12pm & 3pm-7pm
Sat 10am-3pm

*Masks Required.
Curbside always available.
Call or email us in advance.*

Mt. Vernon Post Office Hours Retail Window

Mon-Fri 7am-10am, 11am-2pm
Sat 9am-11am

Newsletter

All articles to be submitted by 25th
of each month to

alice@mtvernonme.org

Paid Business Advertisements

- ◇ Business Card Size \$15/month
- ◇ 1/4 page \$25/month
- ◇ 1/2 page \$45/month
- ◇ Full page \$90/month

Town Clerk's Office

Closed October 12th and 13th for mandatory Election Training

All other offices will be open.

Special Election: November 2nd, 2021

Candidates: Bob Grenier (Selectman)

November 2, 2021 - Referendum Election

Description of Referendum Election

Referendum Elections are held to provide Maine's citizens an opportunity to vote on People's Veto Referenda, Direct Initiatives of Legislation (i.e. Citizen Initiatives), Bond Issues, other referenda proposed by the Legislature, and Constitutional Amendments. Referendum elections are an important part of the heritage of public participation in Maine.

Questions Appearing on the Ballot as found on [Bureau of Corporations, Elections & Commissions \(maine.gov\)](https://www.maine.gov/bureaucor/elections/commissions)

Question 1 – Citizen Initiative

Do you want to ban the construction of high-impact electric transmission lines in the Upper Kennebec Region and to require the Legislature to approve all other such projects anywhere in Maine, both retroactively to 2020, and to require the Legislature, retroactively to 2014, to approve by a two-thirds vote such projects using public land?

Question 2 – Bond Issue

Do you favor a \$100,000,000 bond issue to build or improve roads, bridges, railroads, airports, transit facilities and ports and make other transportation investments, to be used to leverage an estimated \$253,000,000 in federal and other funds?

Question 3 – Constitutional Amendment

Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to declare that all individuals have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to grow, raise, harvest, produce and consume the food of their own choosing for their own nourishment, sustenance, bodily health and well-being?

Select Board Meeting is now live:

You can find the link on MtVernonME.org under Government.

Scroll down to the bottom or click on this link

youtube.com/channel/UC3UCAtx3K5rgMCNAcBCqnLQ/live

[Mount Vernon, Maine LIVE](#)

Mount Vernon needs your help!

Neighbors Driving Neighbors (NDN): is recruiting an Executive Director to start by the end of this year. If interested, please call NDN at (207) 860-0677.

Transfer Station: Looking for a year round person for Attendant to cover these hours: Sat & Sun 8:30 am – Noon;
May 1st thru Sep30th Wednesdays 3-6pm

Floor Installer: The Town is also looking for someone to install the flooring in the Town Hall as a result of our huge water leak we experienced a few weeks ago. We are hoping for a recommendation on what type of flooring to use. The installer needs to have liability insurance and if he has employees, the employer needs to carry Worker's Comp Insurance. The Select Board is accepting bids now!

We have several Committees, Boards and Positions that are looking for volunteers. Please come and join us. You can contact Alice Counts at 207-293-1105, 714-403-6076 or Alice@mtVernonME.org for more information.

Athletic Committee is looking for the following:

Soccer commissioner - helps the Athletic Director plan the soccer season and meets with the other towns to plan the season which starts September 11, 2021

Baseball commissioner- helps the director plan the baseball season and meet with the other towns.

Softball commissioner- helps the director plan the softball season and meet with the other town.

Other Volunteers - help with the Athletic Director and Commissioners

We start planning for baseball/softball in February. We start the field work once the snow melts and the fields are dry enough to get gravel delivered.

Typical responsibilities:

- Helping collect registrations and importing registrations into a spreadsheet that is shared with other towns
- Helping plan volunteer days for clean up of the fields
- Helping get student refs for games
- Most communication is via email with typically one meeting in person per sports season.
- This is the link to our athletic committee page www.facebook.com/groups/185652524949106/

Broadband Committee

We're looking for someone who will work with our committee to:

- Find the best broadband solution for all of Mt. Vernon
- Attend committee meetings, usually once or twice per month
- Undertake tasks to help the committee communicate findings and alternatives to the town

Mount Vernon needs your help! (Cont.)

Emergency Manager

Maine's Local Emergency Management Directors coordinate local response and recovery when more than one department is responding to a community emergency. This is usually accomplished in two ways: through the development of local disaster plans and mutual aid agreements and the establishment of an Emergency Operations Center. The local director does not replace or direct the police, fire, ambulance, or American Red Cross; he or she helps them work together in an emergency.

The Local Emergency Management Director also acts as a liaison to County Emergency Management. They can look to the County for technical assistance and training, and emergency access to needed resources, from neighboring communities, the State or the federal government.

Local Emergency Management offices vary widely depending on the hazards present, the size of the town and available funding. Most municipal Emergency Management programs have one person and little to no budget. However, the responsibility for the community does not go away just because the town is small.

When your community is struck by a hazardous materials spill, hurricane, ice storm, forest fire, flood, tornado or other type of disaster event, your municipal Emergency Management Director will

Budget Committee

The Town of Mount Vernon budget committee is currently comprised of four individuals. This committee serves in an advisory capacity to the selectmen. Our task is to explore thoughts and ideas that may improve the efficiency and effectiveness of town operations.

We meet most often during the months of late February through May - generally biweekly. We communicate as information is discovered between meetings during that time. The hope of this committee is to be more informed during the rest of the year through quarterly budget updates provided by town employees and officials. New members are always welcome and I would be happy to provide information and answer any questions. Please understand, the town budget is not just about numbers. This committee uses history, experience and common sense (in addition to spreadsheets :)) to make recommendations that help Mount Vernon avoid complacency and keep us moving in a forward and positive direction.

be the lead figure in the response and recovery efforts. And before a disaster event occurs, your local Emergency Management Director will be busy behind the scenes working on disaster plans, attending meetings, organizing training and exercises for your public safety departments and providing public information on disaster preparedness.

Handicap Equipment Available for loan AT NO CHARGE to Mount Vernon Residents:

Have friends visiting from out of state, have a temporary or long term need?

Mt. Vernon Rescue has a supply of hospital/rehab equipment for anyone to use at no charge. We have a hospital bed, wheel chairs, walkers, commodes, canes, crutches and shower seats. If you have need for any of these, call Pat Rawson, 293-2597 or Leslie Grenier at 293-2783 or Alice Counts (Admin Asst) at office: 207-293-1105, cell: 714-403-6076, Alice@mtVernonME.org

We ask that you keep these loaner items in the Town of Mount Vernon and return them to the Mt Vernon Rescue when you no longer have the need for them so we can loan them out to the next person.

We are looking to add to our Volunteer staff. If you know of anyone that might be interested, please share. Mount Vernon would cease to exist without our Volunteer help and support!

From the Mount Vernon Select Board

Greetings and happy October!

This is an extra beautiful time of year in our little town, and I hope you're all able to enjoy some time outside soaking up the fall colors and sunny days.

As the seasons change, there are also some changes taking place here in town. As many of you saw in the last newsletter, Mac Hardy has stepped down from his role on the Selectboard. I would like to sincerely thank him for his service to this town both in his most recent role as Chair and throughout the years. I'm lucky to be able to have learned from him. Please extend your thanks as well if you see him around town!

We are also saying farewell to Carole O'Connell, our Transfer Station Manager, who is retiring from her role this month. (Though it's not goodbye forever - we'll still see Carole around town and she has even promised to fill in sometimes if needed!) We've been lucky to have Carole and I know I'm not the only one who will miss seeing her when I drop off my trash and recycling. Stay tuned as we work to fill Carole's shoes and please tell her thank you for all her great work when you next see her!

One last staffing change to mention is that Jason Beckler is our new Fire Chief. As Paul mentioned over the summer, Dana is retiring after his many years of service (thank you again, Dana!) and we are grateful to Jason for stepping into this new role. It is a big job, especially so during a pandemic, and we know Jason will do a great job. Thank you to him, the rest of the Fire department, and to all of the volunteers that help make our town a great place to live!

Despite these changes, the Selectboard remains busy working to move forward several infrastructure related projects that you have heard about over the past couple of months including bridge replacements and repairs, generators for emergency shelters, and more. We are also working to secure some federal funding to help cover the costs of some of these and other important projects for our town such as our continued broadband work. Stay tuned!

You'll notice if you've stopped by the town office recently that there is also work underway there! After a recent plumbing challenge, asbestos was discovered in the tiles there and everyone has been working quickly with various contractors to remove that flooring and put out a RFQ for replacement flooring. Thank you to everyone at the town office for all their help with the logistics of this project. If you stop by the town office, please remember to wear a mask.

Enjoy this season, and remember to share some gratitude with all of the folks mentioned above. Remember to also make a plan now to check on your neighbors and friends in town as the weather turns colder. Or even start now by taking some extras from your garden or orchard and sharing with your neighbors. It's never a bad time to take a moment for community, sharing, and kindness.

See you around town,

Anna

B.S. from the T.S.

Better Suggestions from the Transfer Station

By the Dump Lady

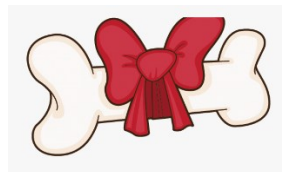
SO LONG, FAREWELL, AUF WIEDERSEHEN, ADIEU

As you most probably have heard, I am retiring . . . again. Even though I have really enjoyed working at the transfer station these past six years, my old bones can't take another winter of standing in the snow and ice. Therefore, my last day will be Sunday, October 31st.

I will miss seeing your (mostly) smiling faces and bantering with you, but I will not miss frozen lips, hands and feet. I will think of all of you dumping your trash in the snow, as I sit in my recliner sipping a Hot Toddy!

It is my good fortune to have worked with an excellent crew—Megan Goucher and George Smith, who are dependable and conscientious workers—and I leave you in their care. Megan and George have helped me tremendously, and I thank them for their loyalty and support. If I do say so myself, I think the three of us made a hard-to-beat team! Megan will be taking over as Manager. I am thankful to have been given the honor of serving.

Take care of my dogs!



Delineator Survey (Posts in the Road near the Fire Station)

Here's the link, and thank you. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MountVernon2021>

Mount Vernon Select Board Meeting of 09-13-21

Board Members Present: Paul Crockett (Chair), Anna Libby

Support Staff & Guests: Alice Counts (Administrative Assistant), Mark Gilbert (Ch 7), Kerry Casey (Treasurer), Ron Lockwood (Ch 7), Carole O'Connell (Transfer Station), Greg Cauldwell (Planning Board Chair), June Cauldwell (Community Center Chair, Safety Committee Chair), Michelle Pino, Katherine Booth

Select Board Members Signed Weekly Warrant

Meeting Called to Order

- SB Meeting was Called to Order by SB Crockett at 7:00pm

Meeting Minutes of 08-30-21

- Motion by SB Crockett to Table the meeting minutes until next meeting, 2nd by SB Libby. Motion Carried. Vote was 2-0. **PASS**

Select Board Organization and Vote for Chair

- SB Libby Nominated SB Crockett as Chair, 2nd by SB Crockett, Motion Carried, Vote was 2-0. **PASS**

Discuss Town Hall Masking Protocol and Vote on Policy.

- Motion by SB Libby to immediately reinstate Masking regardless of vaccination status due to the Delta variant and transmission rate, until further notice. 2nd by SB Crockett, Motion Carried, Vote was 2-0. **PASS**
- Further discussed that head gear is not acceptable, and that this applies to the Town Hall and the Swap Shack at the transfer station. Plastic barriers, i.e., cashiers windows are acceptable and do not require the clerks to be masked.
- Discussion regarding forming a barrier around the Swap Shop yard. Kerry Casey to order cones from U-Line. Also possible Sandwich Board signs.

Community Center Bids for two (2) heat pumps.

- Received bids from Breathable Home and Dave's Appliance. Motion by SB Crockett to accept the bid from Breathable Home, 2nd by SB Libby, Motion Carried, Vote was 2-0. **PASS**.

Community Service Day

- Tom Ward (Aging in Place) has work for the students to perform on Community Service Day. SB Crockett to reach out to Robyn Graziano, Master Advisor for Maranacook, Class of 2023.
- Community Center could use help with stone work.
- Pat Rawson can use help with stacking wood.

ARPA Funds available to municipalities

- SB Libby stated the following as top items that can benefit from these funds and report back next meeting.
 - Blake Hill Bridge
 - Generators
 - Broadband – possibly a separate grant coming specifically for broadband

Mount Vernon Select Board Meeting Minutes of 09-13-21 (Cont.)

- Community Center is looking into requisitioning their own generator, estimate approximate \$14k. SB Crockett to check with Mac Hardy regarding the CMP Triplex line from the Fire Station to the Community Center in Case of Emergency.

Water Damage Progress at Town Hall

- Alice Counts reported that Dry Masters found mold and mildew under the water cooler. It looked as though this was an ongoing process that took several months to develop. It was decided to dispose of the water cooler.
- Asbestos Abatement Complete
- Subfloor treated with Biocide to kill mold, mildew etc.
- Need Bid for moving furniture during new flooring
- Remove Old Desk to the dump
- Need licensed, insured Flooring Contractor to lay new flooring

Digital Talking Sign –

- Resident Katherine Booth voiced opposition to the Fire Station sign, as she was not happy with the appearance of the Town Hall electronic sign and felt this would be another example of the same.
- SB Libby stated that she was not sold on the idea, that she had misgivings about the sign as well.
- SB Crockett made the motion to allow the Fire Department Signage, 2nd by SB Libby, Motion Carried, Vote was 2-0. **PASS.**

Approvals Requested

- Discuss CEO private pay for extra trip to town for LPI work. SB Crockett approved CEO Butler to work on his off days, travel plus hourly rate once he is on site. Motion by SB Crockett to approve private pay when contractors needed CEO services, 2nd by SB Libby, Motion Carried, Vote was 2-0. **PASS.**
- Central Maine Power Town Pole Permit – Wings Mills Road and Parker Road. This permit has been faxed to CMP
- Community Center needs two (2) more Fire Exit lights. Ok per SB Crockett
- Purchase of surplus equipment from the State. The Town purchased 7 file cabinets plus other furniture for \$108.00.
- Discuss Potential Computer purchases. SB Crockett tabled this until next meeting.
- Aging in Place – 2 year Tri Town (Fayette, Vienna and Mount Vernon) Grant Application. Motion by SB Crockett, 2nd by SB Libby, Motion Carried, Vote was 2-0. **PASS.**

Consider Appointments for the following positions:

- SB Libby Nominated both Jonathan Railo and Tori Codd for appointments to the Community Center, 2nd by SB Crockett, Motion Carried, Vote was 2-0.
- Jonathan Railo – Community Center. Jonathan needs to sign oath of office
- Tori Codd – Community Center, Tori needs to sign oath of office.

Mount Vernon Select Board Meeting Minutes of 09-13-21 (Cont.)

Other Business

Updates on:

- Removal of Hazard Tree at Smith Cemetery on Spring Hill Road. Deep Root Tree service has schedule this for the end of this month.
- MMA Property Survey of Library, Fire Station and Sand/Salt Shed. Waiting Findings from MMA.
- CMP LED Street Light Conversion Program. SB Libby and SB Crockett to meet up Wednesday night at 6:30pm to inventory lights.
- Increase pay for Library and Transfer Station employees to be placed on Town Meeting Warrant in June 2022.
- SB Crockett suggested that Planning Board members should sign up to take the Planning Board MMA Classes.
- Posting of Transfer Station Job Opening.

Alice Counts (Admin Asst) brought up the following:

- Trio Meeting and Discussion to be arranged by SB Crockett – Tabled to next meeting
- Water Extraction to be added to the Town Meeting warrant in June
- Special Election for new Selectman to take place on November 2nd. Motion by SB Crockett to hold a Special Election on November 2, 2021, 2nd by SB Libby. Motion Carried. Vote was 2-0. **PASS**.
- Furniture movers needed to move furniture back in place after Dry Masters finished drying the subfloor over the past weekend and into today.
- Alice Counts working with Pat Rawson regarding Handicap equipment available to loan to Mount Vernon Residents
- Permission to power wash outside of Town Hall Entrance and side. SB Crockett recommended Sunny Day Cleaning and said anything less than \$500 doesn't need SB approval.
- Water Extraction to be placed on Town Meeting Warrant in June 2022
- Traffic Calming Cones are hard to see.

Motion to Adjourn

Motion by SB Crockett to Adjourn, 2nd by SB Libby at 8:22pm. Motion Carried, Vote was 2-0. **PASS**

Mount Vernon Select Board Meeting Minutes of 09-27-21

Board Members Present: Paul Crockett (Chair), Anna Libby

Support Staff & Guests: Alice Counts (Administrative Assistant), Mark Gilbert (Ch 7), Kerry Casey (Treasurer), Ron Lockwood (Ch 7), June Cauldwell (Community Center Chair, Safety Committee Chair), Bill Rosenberg, Chuck Wright, Ken Elliot

Select Board Members Signed Weekly Warrant

Meeting Called to Order

- SB Meeting was Called to Order by SB Crockett at 7:11pm

Meeting Minutes of 08-30-21 and 09-13-21

- Amend the meeting minutes of 08-30-21 as follows:
 - Under the Approval to Hire Electrician for Fire Exit, change “designated Steve Mallen as the Town electrician” to “recommended Steve Mallen to Replace the Town Hall Fire Exit lights”
- Amend the meeting minutes of 09-13-21 as follows:
 - Under Alice Counts brought up the following: Delete the duplicate occurrence referencing the Water Extraction. And change the second occurrence “Water Extraction to be placed on Town Meeting Warrant in June 2022’ with “Water Extraction – the Select Board will have a conversation on this to decide if this should be placed on the Town Meeting Warrant in June 2022 for Ordinance Review.” Also under this same section replace “Traffic Calming Cones are hard to see” with “Traffic Calming Cones are hard to see for some residents, as they blend in with the road markings.”
 - Motion by SB Crockett to accept the meeting minute as amended above, 2nd by SB Libby. Motion Carried. Vote was 2-0. **PASS**

Public Hearing and Adoption of the 2021 Update to the General Assistance Ordinance.

- SB Crockett stated that the State of Maine updates what they will pay for General Assistance on October 1st of each year. MMA publishes this Ordinance and the Town of Mount Vernon adopts this Ordinance. A photo copy needs to be made before binding and then signed copy is then given to the Town Clerk for safe keeping. Motion by SB Libby to sign the new GA Ordinance, 2nd by SB Crockett. Motion Carried, Vote was 2-0. **PASS**

Broadband Committee update – (Broadband to every home)

Bill Rosenberg, Chuck Wright and Ken Elliot attended the meeting via Zoom to give update on Broadband. For further information, see the document posted on the Town website.

There were inquiries into the ARPA funds which could arrive as early as next week, with half of the Town's allotment being available at that time and the remainder available in 6 months. The Town does not need to specify how they are going to use the funds at this time, however will need to specify at a later date. The amount allotted for Mount Vernon, is \$178,000

The Broadband committee is requesting \$5000 for someone to write the RFP. They were hoping to give the RFP writer the go ahead with the promise of paying him later when the funds are available. SB Crockett and Treasurer Casey were not comfortable with that solution but did mention the Broadband Committee currently has \$2650 in their account that they could use at their discretion.

The Spectrum deal is currently off the table as they are looking for other alternatives. Bill Rosenberg mentioned that Spectrum's coaxial cable will not serve the town well, in the future, whereas Fiber Optics will.

Mount Vernon Select Board Meeting Minutes of 09-27-21 (Cont.)

Treasurer Casey asked how the Coalition is going to work if Fayette and Vienna don't have Spectrum? Bill Rosenberg answered that The Coalition may still be an option down the road as the Town of Mount Vernon has some roads contiguous with these towns. However, Spectrum would rather go town by town instead of with the Coalition.

Discuss Safety Committee Update

Next Quarterly meeting is scheduled for November 10, 2021.

MMA Audit findings have been received and responded to with either correction or a plan for correction.

The Smith Cemetery Hazard Tree is scheduled to be removed next week.

Town Hall Update – Flooring and Repairs after the “Flood”

No bids have been received thus far.

CMP LED Street Light Conversion Program. Discuss and Sign Contract

SB Crockett decided to accept the inventory list submitted by CMP.

Motion by SB Libby to have SB Crockett sign the CMP Agreement to upgrade all Street Lights the Town leases from them. This contract is for 15 years.

Consider Appointments for the following positions:

SB Libby Nominated both Railo and Codd for appointments to the Community Center, 2nd by SB Crockett, Motion Carried, Vote was 2-0.

Jonathan Railo – Community Center. Jonathan needs to sign oath of office

Tori Codd – Community Center, Tori needs to sign oath of office.

Other Business

Bridge and Paving updates

Lee Dunn is waiting on Pike Industries to Pave Bean Road

TRIO meeting update

SB Crockett tabled this until next meeting

Motion to Adjourn

Motion by SB Libby to Adjourn, 2nd by SB Crockett at 8:15pm. Motion Carried, Vote was 2-0. **PASS**

SNOWMOBILE REGISTRATION PRICE INCREASE

Dear Registration Agent,

Snowmobile season will soon be upon us! You should receive your stickers soon. Included with your stickers was a letter with important information regarding the price increase for snowmobile registrations. **I am sending this email as a reminder to you that this price change is effective October 18th, 2021.**

If you are not a registration agent, you may disregard this email. If you are, please note that the prices in MOSES will be updated automatically starting on October 18th, 2021.

These new prices are as follows:

Resident Snow (new or renewal)	\$55.00
Non Resident Snow 3-Day	\$74.00
Non Resident Snow 10-Day	\$99.00
Non Resident Season	\$119.00

As always, if you have any questions, please call the MOSES Hotline. We are fully staffed Monday - Friday from 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

Thank you,

Angie Vo

MOSES Supervisor

Management Analyst 1

Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Licensing and Registration Division

HAUNTED BEACH HALLOWE'EN ☼

You're Invited to hunt for treats on the beach ☼

_____ ¶
SATURDAY, 30th October ¶

At Minnehonk Beach and Community Center 6-8 PM ¶

All activities are outdoors ☼

_____ ¶
Wear your costume; Stay for cider, donuts and ghost stories ¶
☼



Thought you should know that...

The Community center will be hosting another fabulous Outdoor Craft Show on Oct. 9th on the Beach area next to the CC. The CC will be open for rest room use and for food/hot beverages. If you want to be a vendor at this event, please Contact Leslie Grenier at 207-293-2783 for details.

And for some other good news; the CC will be installing two Heat pumps for cooling and supplemental heating, in January 2022. We are also going to install a separate hot water device in the kitchen/bathroom area to be used “on demand” and dispose of the old-style hot water heater in the basement. These upgrades will save energy use and hopefully over time, save the town money.

Other upgrades will be a safety railing where the trapdoor to the basement is located in the foyer. When that trapdoor is open, it is a significant danger for anyone who missteps. It will also help with the town’s Liability insurance rating. Also, the Exit Signs in the Great Room are being replaced and an additional one being installed over the front door exit in the foyer.

If you are driving slowly thru the “triangle” of the downtown area, you may have noticed a new addition to the sign on the front of the CC building. It’s magnetic with more bold lettering.

In addition, for those town committees who use the CC, there is now a Dry Erase Board erected in the Great room for use by those said committees. It came from the Town Office and is going to be put to good use.

I also want to welcome two new board Trustee members, Jonathan Railo and Tori Codd!

Covid Delta Variant Surge and Recent Advance Directives Conference
Dan Onion, MD, MPH - Mt. Vernon/Vienna Health Officer
293-2076; dkonion@gmail.com
July, 2019

As morbid as it may seem, these two topics converged these last two weeks of September here for the 3 towns for which I serve as local health officer, as I outline below.

First, **the surge**. I am perplexed and frustrated that so many fellow residents in our part of Maine are either not recognizing or ignoring the recrudescing COVID19 risks since the summer lull in infections. I'm terrified as I watch the state-wide numbers of infections, hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths all increase to 5-10 times what they were in late June and July, 2021, and are still climbing logarithmically. I see friends, neighbors and acquaintances suffering these events, the Maine CDC contact tracking system overwhelmed, hospitals overwhelmed, COVID testing availability becoming limited and limiting, but at the same time I see few people wearing masks or distancing in grocery and other stores, in meetings of social groups including churches, grange, and many other town groups. Several groups are now closing down and going back to virtual-only meeting or working on doing so.

The COVID delta variant has taken us back to pre-vaccine numbers of last winter and beyond. Why aren't people more aware? Why doesn't the Governor explicitly retract her summer "take off the masks" advice, albeit that was for outdoor activities except for closely-packed ones. Not shutting down schools should be our highest priority. We've got to diminish the openness elsewhere in the rest of the community, to cut transmissions in schools until we can get children under 12 vaccinated this fall.

These observations about a local raging and potentially fatal disease bring me to the excellent conference run at the Mt Vernon Community Center in mid-September on **advance directives**. If you catch COVID, just how far do you want medical care to go in trying to save you if you should get sick right on to death. The COVID delta variant is filling our intensive care units with old and young alike.

I've written about when and how to establish such a document in my July 2019 newsletter. Advance directives are important, because over the past decades, the default medical response, starting with rescue units right up to ICU admissions, is to aggressively treat, even to defibrillate or put a pacemaker in a stopped heart, intubate the lungs to artificially breathe, and to use all other means to try to reverse the dying process. That's fine and good if the patient is a relatively young (under 70 or 75) person free from other terminal diseases, but such aggressive resuscitation doesn't make medical sense if such treatment is very unlikely to succeed. Most people over 70 or 75, have other life-limiting conditions. Temporary resuscitation success usually condemns such patients to their final weeks in the world on a ventilator, and thus isolated from family, even more isolated now during the COVID pandemic.

So, if you decide you'd want to be spared such terminal indignities and isolation, you must create your own advance directives describing the limits to which you want medical care to go. Ask your primary care clinician (PCP) to discuss with you the odds of various levels of interventions should you get acutely ill and their likelihood of success. Ask your PCP literally to sign off on your conclusion on the last page of the forms. Then they, plus the hospital and the local rescue unit should all get copies AND you should put a copy of that last page on your refrigerator. I know, from my work with Mt Vernon Rescue, that's the first place rescue/ambulance crews will look for your guidance on how aggressive to be.

So, please be aware of the current COVID surge and respond with vaccines, distancing, masking, and ready use of covid testing when you visit others outside of your household. And please put together advance directives, if you haven't already, and be sure, if you choose less invasive approaches rather than a full court press, to get your clinician's signature on the directives and post them on your fridge.

In late August I was able to get rapid COVID testing (Binax) for Pat and me at Manchester Walgreen's drive-up window, having made the appointment a day or two in advance. Last week the nearest available free Binax tests at Walgreens were only in New Hampshire or Vermont; they did have and we bought over-the-counter home tests at \$26 for two. And last week Dr. Shah, at his newly resumed weekly news conference, voiced his concerns over shortages of testing across the state and backlogs for PCR testing results at the CDC lab.
(<http://www.themha.org/policy-advocacy/Issues/End-of-Life-Care/advdirectivesform.aspx>)

“One thing that is good about librarians is they listen to what you need and want and think of a way to help you... Maybe they do not have the book you requested because their library is nothing but leftovers. Or maybe what you requested is wrong == people often are, even...people who read – but it is okay because librarians have witchlike librarian magic to pick the right book for you.”

Laurie Frankel, One Two Three

People have been using George's memorial garden (and George's porch) for a comfortable spot while they use our wifi, or to take a few minutes to pause and breathe. The little garden is yet another magical place at the edge of the library, created by committed, hard working volunteers and staff. Many thanks to you all for making this happen! And, thanks to Charlene for the wonderful autumn arrangements by the main entrance, and for clearing out the porch!

Our Storywalk@ will end later this month. Take a nice walk through the trails at the Ezra Smith Conservation Area off of Pond Road, and enjoy reading the lovely picture book Alice chose for this summer – Amy MacDonald's Little Beaver and the Echo. We are so grateful that Kennebec Land Trust is always willing to collaborate with local communities in order to make activities like a story walk happen. .

Programs:

We haven't done any story times on Facebook for a while. We are thinking of reading a Halloween story during the last week of this month (exact date to be determined) online. We will also offer Take & Makes during that week. **Please sign up (email, phone, in person) for your kids to get a Take & Make**, so we know how many to prepare. We'll have stories and Take & Makes during Thanksgiving and Christmas season, too. We'll let you know dates as we go along. Please check our Facebook page for the most up-to-date information on timing.

We are also wondering about adult programming on Zoom. Some people say they are “zoomed out”, others are glad not to have to drive to events or programs, so they can just participate from home. What are your thoughts? Let us know if you are interested in participating in zoom programs, and we would love to hear your suggestions on topics that would be of interest. We'd love to share ideas with you!

Contact us for Take & Makes, or for ideas about zoom programs, at:

librarian@drshawlibrary.org 293-2565

or leave us a private message on our Dr. Shaw Memorial Library page on Facebook.

Some fun online resources for families:

These three links are all associated with University of Maine. They have information and activities for various age groups.

<https://extension.umaine.edu/4h/learn-at-home/activities-all-ages/> Learning activities in many subject areas, including astronomy, physics, government, coding, crafts, music and much more.

<https://extension.umaine.edu/4h/learn-at-home/> Videos and learning about cooking, gardening, science aimed at teens, outdoor adventures, healthy living. Much of it is based on 4H activities.

<https://astro.umaine.edu/online-resources/younger/> All about NASA and astronomy, from the Emera Astronomy Center. They have activities aimed at children, and even have some educational guides for teachers.

I've been reading some of N. Scott Momaday's poetry, and just finished two novels from our library collection: Sofia Sebovia's The Murmur of Bees, and Laurie Frankel's One Two Three. Stop by the library and grab something good to read, listen to, or watch. We're always glad to see you.