

News & Updates from the Town of Falmouth

April 2021

Volume 3, Issue 7

# The Falmouth Focus

## SPECIAL PRINT EDITION

### FROM TOWN COUNCIL CHAIR, AMY KUHN



Dear Neighbors,

When I wrote this letter to you last March, lockdown was just getting under way and we had no idea what the coming months would bring. Now, a year later, more than 500 Falmouth residents have tested positive for COVID-19 and some have lost their lives. Others have lost loved ones, lost jobs, or closed small

businesses. And, many of our parents and families have struggled, continuously trying to balance the safety of going back to school with the challenges of staying out. For most, it has been a very hard stretch.

Even during the worst of days, however, Falmouth has also shined. Decades of investment in open space paid dividends beyond our imaginations as residents in all parts of town sought refuge on our trails and beaches. Our Town government was among the first in the state to adapt to virtual meetings, allowing us to smoothly and reliably conduct the Town's business throughout the year. And, our clerk's office successfully handled record breaking voter turnout in both the summer primary and fall general elections.

Perhaps most inspiring, we showed up for each other. Residents, local businesses, community groups, and Town staff joined forces throughout the year to raise tens of thousands of dollars for the Falmouth Food Pantry, deliver hot meals to front line healthcare workers, clean up our parks and neighborhoods, and make wellness calls to our seniors. This spring, we have every reason to be hopeful with another Maine summer on the horizon. Please, continue to wear your mask and follow CDC recommendations until this health crisis is behind us.

On behalf of the Town Council, thank you for your resilience and fortitude over the past year. It has been such a privilege to serve our community during this challenging time. We wish you and your families good health and wellbeing in the days ahead.

Warmly,

CELEBRATE  
EARTH  
MONTH 2021



April 22 is Earth Day! Mark the occasion by joining us for a Clean-Up!

### Community Clean-Up #1

**Date:** Saturday, April 17

**Location:** River Point, on Route 100, just east of the West Falmouth Crossing Shopping Center. Park at the head of the railroad bridge or in the rear of the shopping center lot. After crossing the bridge, look for an informational kiosk to the right. We will have bags and info at the kiosk.

**Time:** 9am-12pm

**Details:** Town to supply trash bags. Bring your own reusable work gloves and masks. Each participant will receive a free movie pass courtesy of Flagship Premium Cinemas in Falmouth!

### Community Clean-Up #2

**Date:** Saturday, April 24

**Location:** Route 1. Meet at Flagship Premium Cinemas, 206 US Rt. 1. Park in the lot at the side of the building.

**Time:** 9am-12pm

**Details:** Town to supply trash bags. Bring your own reusable work gloves and masks. Each participant will receive a free movie pass courtesy of Flagship Premium Cinemas in Falmouth!

### Neighborhood Clean-Ups



Organize your own neighborhood clean-up and the bags are on us! Email Ashley Krulik, [akrulik@falmouthme.org](mailto:akrulik@falmouthme.org) if you'd like to organize a clean-up in your neighborhood.

### SUMMER PROGRAMMING

Falmouth Parks & Community Programs staff is developing summer

programming for adults and kids, including camps

and the annual concert series. Watch for the Summer Program brochure in mid-April or contact the office for more information at: 207-699-5302.



## GRANTS & RECOGNITION

The Maine Chiefs of Police Association (MCOP) has awarded accreditation status to the Falmouth Police Department. The Maine Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (MLEAP), the accrediting body for the MCOP, ensures the candidate agencies have addressed the most critical law enforcement issues in both policies as well as actual operations. The department recently completed an assessment process verifying the department has the required policies, procedures, training, and physical infrastructure to comply with standards. MLEAP is the compilation of what Maine law enforcement professionals believe are the best practices needed to address the most critical tasks of law enforcement in our state. Falmouth is one of only seven communities in the state to have this accreditation. The accreditation took a year of dedicated work in policy structure, training, and infrastructure adjustments to ensure best practices. The accreditation is valid for three years in which the department will require further review for compliance verification within these high standards.



The Town was awarded a \$125,000 grant as part of the "Stream Crossing Public Infrastructure

Improvements Projects" program with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MEDEP). The grant will assist with the replacement of a failing culvert on Mast Road at the Suckfish Brook crossing. The project is expected to be completed during the summer of 2021.

## ONGOING INITIATIVES

### REVALUATION PROJECT

Falmouth's revaluation of all real estate is underway. Data collectors from Vision Government Solutions have begun visiting Falmouth properties to conduct exterior evaluations (interior evaluations will not occur until later in 2021 and 2022). Residents will receive notice by mail indicating when data collectors will be in their neighborhood. For updates and more information, visit our Revaluation Project Page via a link on the home page of the Town website at [www.falmouthme.org](http://www.falmouthme.org).



### VISION & VALUES PROJECT

The Vision & Values Project passed a major milestone with the completion of Community Survey #1.

Over 1700 respondents weighed in on a variety of issues. Data from the survey can be found on the project portal (via a link on the Town's website). In addition, Future iQ led residents in the first Future Summit (held virtually on two occasions in March) in which participants examined interesting data points from the survey and began to explore future community aspirations. The project will continue with this forward-looking process through discussion boards and additional Future Summits so there will be several opportunities throughout spring and summer to participate and give your input. We encourage you to visit the Vision & Values portal via the Town website ([www.falmouthme.org](http://www.falmouthme.org)) where you can find information and updates related to the project as well as other opportunities to join the discussion and share your vision.

*Regular updates on both these initiatives can be found on our social media pages, in The Falmouth Focus, and in our regular ads in The Northern Forecaster.*

## BROWNTAIL MOTH IN FALMOUTH

In the past few years, Falmouth has seen a reduction in nests and levels of infestation of browntail moth. In 2020, the Town conducted a spraying program to target areas in the public right-of-way that were deemed to be high risk. While not fully eradicating browntail moth, the Town's goal was to preserve the health of the street trees and to minimize the public health effects of this infestation.

In January 2021, the Town contracted Lucas Tree Experts to perform an assessment of browntail moth nests along all public ways in Falmouth within 15 to 20 feet of public roads and Town-owned property in order to identify high risk areas that should be treated again for control. This assessment found that no areas in Falmouth met the moderate criteria (high number of trees along the public way with at least 8 or 10 nests in each tree) and found no nests at all along the majority of the community's public roadways. Based on this assessment, the Town has decided to discontinue the browntail moth spraying program for this year.

These findings do not indicate that

browntail moth has been eradicated in Falmouth. It is likely that there will be nests in some trees.

Residents are advised to assess their own properties for nests during the winter months. The best means of preventing a browntail moth infestation on your property is to clip and destroy overwintering webs between October and mid-April. It is also best practice to treat trees before leaves have filled in, generally by the end of May or the first week in June. Residents with trees on their property that they want treated will need to hire a qualified contractor to do so.

Residents are also advised that the poisonous hairs responsible for the rash that accompanies exposure to browntail moth can remain in the environment and toxic for up to three years after an infestation. Therefore, there is still a possibility of exposure this year. The Town has created a fact sheet with additional information on browntail moth problems, precautions, and prevention. It can be found on our website at [www.falmouthme.org](http://www.falmouthme.org).



## NOMINATION PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR ELECTED POSITIONS

Nomination papers are available from the Falmouth Town Clerk's Office. Residents interested in running must submit nomination papers with a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 100 signatures no later than 5:00pm, Monday, April 12. The Municipal election will be held on Tuesday, June 8, for the purpose of

electing two (2) people to the Town Council for three (3) year terms and two (2) people to the School Board for three (3) year terms, and one (1) person as the Portland Water District Trustee Representing Cumberland and Falmouth for a five (5) year term.

## FOCUS ON FALMOUTH'S WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

The Town of Falmouth is implementing a phased upgrade of the Town's existing wastewater system to ensure that sewage is adequately conveyed and treated now and in the future. For background, see the previous articles in this series in The Falmouth Focus: "How Falmouth's Sewer System Works," (October 20, 2020) and "The Development of the West Falmouth Sewer Master Plan," (October 16, 2020) at: [www.falmouthme.org/your-town-newsletter](http://www.falmouthme.org/your-town-newsletter).

### The Woodlands Sewer Line Upgrades: Addressing Aging Infrastructure and Capacity for the Future

By Nathan Poore, Town Manager, with contributions from Bryanna Denis, PE, LSE, Wright-Pierce

The next critical phase in Falmouth's wastewater infrastructure modernization is to implement one of the most important components of the West Falmouth Sewer Master Plan: upsize the Falmouth Road Pump Station and its associated force main. Currently, West Falmouth wastewater flows through public wastewater lines running under The Woodlands neighborhood, visiting two pump stations on Pinehurst Drive and at The Woodlands Clubhouse, before exiting at Woods Road. This existing infrastructure imposes capacity bottlenecks in the system, and the "daisy-chain" flow of wastewater from West Falmouth through multiple pump stations creates engineering complexity and failure points.

Based on the Master Plan recommendation, the Town determined that the Town's existing wastewater easement under Woodlands Drive is the best route for the upgraded force main. This new force main, running in a separate pipe, would completely bypass the Pinehurst and Woodlands Clubhouse stations. It is the least expensive route and, because the Town already holds an easement to the property, would not require the taking of private property by eminent domain. Non-financial factors also favor the Woodlands Drive route, including minimizing blasting disruptions to Town residents, mitigating environmental impacts, and facilitating future ease of maintenance.

The Woodlands Homeowners Association (WHA) has voiced

opposition to the plan to upgrade the Town's infrastructure via the Woodlands route. Woodlands residents have expressed concern about risk to underground utilities, safety, and impact to the community. Trying to find an amicable resolution with the WHA, the Town has delayed the project for several years and instructed Wright-Pierce engineering firm to prepare multiple revised route evaluations to see if any alternative route could be feasible and cost-effective. Each of Wright-Pierce's evaluations have ranked the Woodlands Drive route as the most cost effective and least risky.

This month, the WHA and the Town failed to reach an agreement at a mediation before an impartial mediator. The Town has made every effort to accommodate the concerns of the WHA. However, implementing the West Falmouth Sewer Master Plan recommendation will have far-reaching benefit for the entire community and remains necessary to ensure the integrity of an aging wastewater system and to increase capacity for future commercial and residential demand in West Falmouth. Further delays will increase costs of the project, as well as risk a failure in the existing infrastructure. Therefore, the Town intends to resume and complete the design of the project through the Woodlands this year while continuing to work with the WHA to minimize construction impacts to The Woodlands community. Construction would be expected to occur in 2022.

## TOWN BUDGET UPDATE FOR FY2022

As FY22 budget development progresses, it is helpful to review the decisions made to the FY21 budget in response to the pandemic. These decisions directly impact the mil rate increase anticipated for FY22.

In early March 2020, the Town Council was ready to approve a budget that included a \$.46 increase to the mill rate almost exclusively driven by a need to expand Falmouth Fire-EMS. Falmouth Fire-EMS responds to over 2000 calls per year. A staffing study done in 2019 concluded that this level of service was not sustainable, recommended substantial expansion of the department, and proposed a multi-year phased plan to do so.

When the pandemic hit, Town Councilors and Staff revisited the FY21 budget, which had yet to be passed. Their goal was to reduce the increase to the mil rate while maintaining the planned expansion to Fire-EMS. Through the elimination of positions, postponement of capital improvement projects, and delayed hiring,

the mil rate increase for FY21 was reduced from \$.46 to \$.15.

A top priority of the Finance Committee in developing the FY22 budget is to continue with the planned expansion to Fire-EMS. A second priority is to restore some of the eliminated positions and move forward on capital projects and purchases that were postponed last year. Addressing both these priorities will require an increase to the mil rate in FY22. A significant portion of the increase that was eliminated last year (\$1,358,090) would be carried over to FY22 instead. An additional increase (\$167,435) will also be necessary for expansion of Falmouth Fire-EMS. In short, increases that were initially planned over a two-year period (FY21 and FY22), will instead be levied over one tax year (FY22).

**Note:** This update does not include information on the proposed School Budget which can be found at [www.falmouthschools.org](http://www.falmouthschools.org).



### Virtual Budget Meetings & Workshops

**March 31, 5pm**—Joint Town and School Finance Committee Budget Presentation

**April 7, 7pm**—Public Hearing on the FY2022 Budget

⇒ Opportunity for public comment

**April 12, 7pm**—Council Vote to Approve (tentatively scheduled but may be held later)

Additional info and a link to join by phone or Zoom will be provided in advance of each meeting at [www.falmouthme.org](http://www.falmouthme.org) and via E-Alert.

**GET CONNECTED**



E-Alerts are sent directly to your email about the issues that interest you. To

enroll, click "E-Alerts" on our homepage to select the bulletins you want to receive.



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myfavoritefalmouth/](https://www.instagram.com/myfavoritefalmouth/)

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

Let us know what kind of information you want to see in your town newsletter. Email feedback to:

[ecadigan@falmouthme.org](mailto:ecadigan@falmouthme.org)

*The Falmouth Focus* is a bi-weekly digital newsletter of the Town of Falmouth. Special print editions are sent via mail to residents twice annually. Visit [www.falmouthme.org/subscribe](http://www.falmouthme.org/subscribe) to subscribe to the digital edition.

**THE TOWN OF FALMOUTH**

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**GETTING THE INFORMATION YOU NEED**

There are many ways to stay up-to-date on Town business. The Town of Falmouth website ([www.falmouthme.org](http://www.falmouthme.org)) is a great source for information. The events calendar on the homepage lists upcoming meetings and events. We send email alerts (E-Alerts) when Town Council, Planning Board, and Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) meeting agendas and minutes are posted to the website. Subscribe via E-Alerts to those that most interest you. Town Council, Planning Board, and School Board meetings are live-streamed on Falmouth Community TV Channel 1301. Recordings of these meetings are also posted online. Videos of BZA meetings are posted online within 24 hours of the meeting. We also regularly post important updates via our News & Announcements E-Alert. *The Falmouth Focus*, our bi-weekly digital newsletter, is another way to stay in the loop. Subscribe via E-Alerts or pick up a hard copy at Falmouth Town Hall. Finally, don't forget to follow us on social media (see box at left for details).

**IMPROVING INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

The Town has completed its conversion to a new agenda and minutes management platform called Champion Data Systems. This new software will allow the Town to better archive all Board & Committee Meeting attachments related to agenda items in a single PDF document, provide consistency in the formatting of all agendas and minutes, link agenda items to the video recording of the meeting (when video is recorded) enabling viewers to go directly to the point in the video related to a specific agenda item, eliminate duplicative work in posting agendas, minutes, and meeting videos, and allow for better archiving and easier information retrieval.

Subscribers to E-Alerts for committee and board agendas will still receive those emails. Users can also still find agendas and minutes for specific meetings by date from within the individual board and committee pages. In addition, all agendas, minutes, and video recordings are centralized in an Agenda and Minutes Center accessed via the home page of the Town website. We believe this system will greatly improve access to and archiving of official town records.

 <b>UNDER CONSTRUCTION</b> 			
Street/Road	Type of Work	Notes	Date
Lunt Road	Repaving	I-295 overpass to Falmouth Road; MaineDOT Project	2021
Longwoods Road/Route 9	Paving	MaineDOT Project	2021
Mast Road	Culvert Replacement	Over Suckfish Brook; Pending Town Council FY22 Budget Approval	2021
Woods Road (Longwoods Rd. to Woodlands Dr.) Hemlock Cove Arbor Road Heritage Lane Partridge Lane	Annual Roadway Paving	Pending Town Council FY22 Budget Approval	2021-2022
Veranda Street Bridge	Replacement	MaineDOT Project	2021-2022
Bucknam Road	Install Signal Turn Lanes	I-295 northbound off-ramp; MaineDOT Project	2022
Bucknam Road/I-295 Bridge	Bridge Replacement	MaineDOT Project	2022
Johnson Road/I-295 Bridge	Bucknam Road/I-295 Bridge	MaineDOT Project	2022

