



The Falmouth Focus

News & Updates from the Town of Falmouth

SPECIAL PRINT EDITION

CARTS ARE COMING! FALMOUTH TRANSITIONS TO AUTOMATED CURBSIDE COLLECTION

Beginning this fall, Falmouth will transition to an automated waste collection system. Like many communities in Southern Maine, Falmouth contracts with Casella Waste Systems for residential curbside trash and recycling collection. Casella is now moving to an automated collection system which requires use of Town-owned trash and recycling carts along its routes. All communities contracting with Casella will be required to transition to the new automated system. No other waste hauler in the region offers rear loading collection.

Automated Collection

Automated collection requires specialized trucks with an automated side loader. From inside the truck, the driver controls a mechanical arm which grabs the trash or recycling cart and dumps it into the truck. These automated trucks save time, labor costs, and are generally safer for employees.

For communities, there is an initial expense involved in this transition:

namely the purchase of new trash and recycling carts for every residence. These new carts are specifically created to function with the automated trucks' mechanical arm. For Falmouth, this means approximately 10,000 carts are needed to provide every residence with both a trash and recycling cart.

New Carts



Falmouth worked with neighboring communities in a joint bid process to purchase new trash and recycling carts. The Town awarded a contract to Toter, an industry leader, who offered a local representative for on-site assistance and high-quality stackable, fully recyclable carts, composed of up to 50%

recycled content. The 64-gallon carts have wheels for easy maneuvering and attached lids to keep trash and recyclables dry and secure. Falmouth was fortunate to receive a grant of \$25,000 from The Recycling Partnership to fund a portion of the needed recycling carts. The grant will also cover the costs of some educational and outreach materials related to the transition. The Town will rely on uncommitted fund balances to pay for the remainder of the carts. Residents will not be charged for carts and their

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TOWN HALL HOURS

Monday: 7am-4:30pm

Tuesday: 8am-4:30pm

Wednesday: 8am-4:30pm

Thursday: 8am-4:30pm

Friday: Closed

ONLINE SERVICES

[www.falmouthme.org/
home/pages/online-
services](http://www.falmouthme.org/home/pages/online-services)

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ABSENTEE BALLOTS

The Clerk's Office is accepting requests for absentee ballots for the November 7 Election.

NOTE: Absentee ballots will not be mailed out until 30 days prior to the election.

Any registered voter may request an absentee ballot by calling the Voter Registrar in Falmouth at 699-5320 or 699-5308 or visiting Falmouth Town Hall.

Ballots may also be requested electronically at: www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/absent.html

The deadline to request an absentee ballot is Thursday, November 2.

CARTS ARE COMING (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

purchase will have no impact on the mil rate. The total cost to the Town is approximately \$600,000.

Cart Delivery & Implementation

A trash cart and a recycling cart will be delivered to residents' homes in late October or early November. Exact dates have not yet been determined. The start date for implementing the new collection system is dependent upon Casella's receipt of their new automated trucks. We will work to keep residents notified of the timing of cart distribution through our usual communication channels. Additional

information on cart placement and use will be included in a packet attached to the carts upon distribution.

Route Changes

As part of this transition, Casella will add an additional collection day (Monday) to Falmouth's collection schedule. As a result, collection days may change for some residents. Casella is still finalizing the new route. We will provide updates regarding route changes as information becomes available. The new schedule and routes will also be listed in the information packet attached to the carts upon delivery.

Yellow Trash Bags

Falmouth will continue its "Pay As You Throw" (PAYT) waste disposal fee structure. Yellow bags are still required for trash disposal. Recycling should be placed directly into the new recycling carts and not in a bag. Everything must be placed in the cart for collection. Additional bags, bins, or broken-down boxes sitting next to the carts cannot be collected.

More information

The Town will provide additional information regarding cart delivery and the implementation of the new collection system via its website, E-Alerts, social media sites, newsletter, direct mailings, and *Forecaster* ads. Residents are strongly encouraged to subscribe to News & Announcements E-Alerts to receive the most up-to-date information regarding this transition.

Subscribe at: www.falmouthme.org/subscribe

Information can also be found on our website at: www.falmouthme.org/public-works-department

Take the Survey!



We want to hear from you!

Have you taken the Final Survey regarding Falmouth's updated Comprehensive Plan? Use your smart phone to scan the QR code at right for an online version or pick up a copy at Town Hall. This survey will add to the feedback we heard at community workshops and through other engagement activities, as well as Town planning documents (e.g., Bike/Ped

Plan, Open Space Plan, future Climate Action Plan). It's crucial that we hear from as many residents as possible as we draft this plan to guide Falmouth's growth and development for years to come. **Deadline: October 10**





June 9 Ribbon Cutting at the solar array on Woods Road.

SOLAR ARRAY UPDATE

A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was held at the Transfer Station on Woods Road on June 9 to mark the completion of Falmouth’s landfill solar array in April. The array has produced 578,899 kwh of energy in its first 4 months online which will produce net energy billing credits of over \$108,000 to the Town of Falmouth.

LETTER FROM COUNCIL CHAIR, HOPE CAHAN

Dear Neighbor:

It is a busy and exciting time in the Town of Falmouth! As you know, we have been hard at work on an update to our Comprehensive Plan. This effort began with the Vision & Values project and has continued throughout the year with community workshops and other engagement activities. I hope you received the Final Community Survey mailed out to all residents in September and that you have provided feedback to inform our planning work.

It is so important to hear from as many residents as possible during this crucial phase of creating a plan that will guide Falmouth’s growth and development for the next ten years. If you have not completed the survey, please use your smart phone to scan the QR code on page 2 of this newsletter to go directly to the online version. If you prefer a paper copy, you may find one at Town Hall or print a hard copy from our website at www.falmouthme.org

In other big news, Falmouth’s waste collection process is undergoing a massive transformation. Please read the

article on pages 1 & 2 with all the details of our move to an automated collection process and continue to watch for updates regarding the timeframe for this change over.



environmental stewardship, and community resilience for years to come. These are issues near and dear to my heart and I’m so pleased to see so many environmental initiatives come to fruition here in Falmouth.

The Town Council is looking forward to a productive work year supported by staff and our dedicated volunteer boards and committees. They join with me in wishing you a happy and productive fall.

Best,

Hope

RECENT GRANT AWARDS

Long Range Planning: \$1,000,000

Greater Portland Council of Governments grant toward construction costs for the planned Route 1 North Project.

Public Works: \$25,000

The Recycling Partnership grant toward the costs of new trash and recycling carts for automated curbside collection.

\$800,000

MaineDOT and Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) award for paving and safety improvements to Falmouth and Winn Roads.

Police Department: \$16,000

Maine Substance Use Disorder Assistance Program grant to support recovery coach efforts.

\$11,682

Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation Grant to purchase two police-specific electric bicycles.

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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. Subscribe at:
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Send newsletter feedback to:
ecadigan@falmouthme.org

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INCORPORATED 1718

FALMOUTH
MAINE

SENIOR TAX ASSISTANCE

Falmouth's Senior Property Tax Assistance Program

The Town of Falmouth is accepting applications for its Senior Property Tax Relief Program. The program is open to current Falmouth residents, age 62 or older, with an annual household income below \$60,000. The household's property taxes must be greater than 4% of the owner's income. Renters can participate if 15% of their annual rent (assumed to represent the property tax portion of rent) is greater than 4% of the resident's income. Applicants are required to submit income verification and proof of 2022 property tax payments or rent payments.

The Town Council allocated \$90,000 to the program in the FY24 budget for which an estimated 150-200 Falmouth households could qualify. Refunds will be determined based on the number of valid applications received. Recipients will be refunded a proportional share of the available program funds based on income level. Residents can mail in the application and backup documents to Town of Falmouth, Finance Department, 271 Falmouth Road, Falmouth, Maine 04105, or call Pete McHugh at 699-5311 to make an appointment to submit your application in person.

The deadline for applications is October 12, 2023. Learn more at:
[www.falmouthme.org/finance/pages/
senior-property-tax-assistance](http://www.falmouthme.org/finance/pages/senior-property-tax-assistance).

State Legislature Repeals Property Tax Stabilization for Seniors

On July 6, 2023, the Maine State Legislature repealed LD 290 "Property Tax Stabilization for Senior Citizens" program, enacted in August 2022. The program allowed Maine seniors to freeze taxes at the previous year's level regardless of income.



Though repealed, initial applications will be applied to this year's tax bills. There is no reapplication process and no need for residents to provide additional paperwork or information to the Town or Assessor. Qualified residents who applied last year will be responsible for the "frozen" property tax bill amount for the 2023-2024 billing cycle. This amount will be equal to the tax amount the owner was billed in 2022-2023 unless the new amount would be lower, in which case the taxes owed would be the lower of the two amounts.

It is important to note that this is a State of Maine program. While the Town of Falmouth played a role in its administration, it had no part in its creation or repeal. Any questions or concerns regarding this program should be directed to your legislative representative. The State is expanding two existing programs to benefit low-income seniors--the Property Tax Fairness Credit and Property Tax Deferral Program. The Town of Falmouth does not administer these two programs but will continue to provide updates to residents as information becomes available. Learn more about State of Maine tax relief programs at:
www.maine.gov/revenue/taxes/tax-relief-credits-programs

FY24 Tax Rate: \$12.64

First Installment Due: November 2

Find FY24 Budget info at:

[www.falmouthme.org/finance/pages/
fy-23-24-budget](http://www.falmouthme.org/finance/pages/fy-23-24-budget)