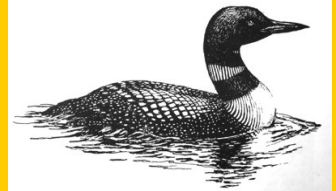


Town of Mount Vernon Community Newsletter



www.mtvernonme.org

January 2022 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

Rachel Meader @ 293-2379
deputyclerk@mtvernonme.org

Treasurer

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

Select Board

selectboard@mtvernonme.org

Anna Libby @ 951-2385
anna@mtvernonme.org

Paul Crockett @ 293-3000
paul@mtvernonme.org

Robert Grenier @ 293-2783
bob@mtvernonme.org

Select Board Admin. Assistant

Alice Counts @ 293-1105
Cell @ 714-403-6076
alice@mtvernonme.org
Mon, Tue & Wed 7am-3pm

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

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

Planning Board Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the Dr Shaw Memorial Library @ 344 Pond Road

TOWN DEPARTMENT STAFF

Animal Control Officer

Trish Davis @ 491-0410

Cemetery Sexton

Bob Grenier @ 293-2783
bob@mtvernonme.org

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

Anna Libby @ 951-2385
anna@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
Call Town Office for Appointment
assessor@mtvernonme.org

Transfer Station

Megan Goucher @ 213-3523
Sat & Sun 8:30 am - Noon

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

Mount Vernon Town Offices will be **closed** for the following holidays:

Jan 17 Martin Luther King Jr

Feb 21 Presidents Day

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

[Mount Vernon, Maine LIVE](#)

January Dates to Remember:

- 01-01-22—New Year's Day
- 01-03-22—Select Board Meeting in the Town Hall at 7:00PM
- 01-04-22—Ridge Riders Snow Mobile Club in the Community Center at 7:00PM
- 01-05-22—Community Center Board of Trustees Meeting via Zoom at 7:00PM
- 01-05-22—Broadband Committee (Zoom) meeting at 06:30 - 07:30 PM (see notice below)
- 01-06-22—Ordinance Review Committee via Zoom at 6:30PM (see notice below)
- 01-10-22—Girl Scouts Meeting in the Community Center at 5:15—6:45
- 01-17-22—Martin Luther King Jr Day—Town Offices will be Closed.
- 01-17-22—Select Board Meeting in the Town Hall at 7:00PM
- 01-18-22—Planning Board Meeting in the Dr Shaw Memorial Library at 7:00PM
- 01-19-22—Mount Vernon Republican Committee in the Community Center at 7:00PM
- 01-19-22—Broadband Committee (Zoom) meeting at 06:30 - 07:30 PM:
- 01-20-22—Tax Assessor is in town. Make your appointment early at 293-2379
- 01-24-22—Girl Scouts Meeting in the Community Center at 5:15—6:45
- 01-31-22—Select Board Meeting in the Town Hall at 7:00PM
- 01-31-22—Deadline for Dog Registrations. A \$25 late penalty will be due after this date.

February Dates to Remember:

- 02-01-22—Ridge Riders Snow Mobile Club in the Community Center at 7:00PM
- 02-02-22—Ground Hog Day
- 02-02-22—Community Center Board of Trustees in the Community Center at 7:00PM
- 02-02-22—Broadband Committee (Zoom) meeting at 06:30 - 07:30 PM
- 02-07-22—Girl Scouts Meeting in the Community Center at 5:15—6:45
- 02-09-22—Safety Committee Meeting in the Community Center at 6:00PM
- 02-14-22—Select Board Meeting in the Town Hall at 7:00PM
- 02-15-22—Planning Board Meeting in the Dr Shaw Memorial Library at 7:00pm
- 02-16-22—Mount Vernon Republican Committee in the Community Center at 7:00PM
- 02-16-22—Broadband Committee (Zoom) meeting at 06:30 - 07:30 PM
- 02-17-22—Tax Assessor is in town. Make your appointment early at 293-2379
- 02-19-22—Aging In Place, February Frolix in the Community Center 9:30Am-11:30AM
- 02-20-22—Aging In Place, February Frolix in the Community Center 12:30Am-2:00PM
- 02-21-22—Girl Scouts Meeting in the Community Center at 5:15—6:45
- 02-21-22—President's Day. Town Offices will be closed.
- 02-28-22—Broadband Committee webpage linked to town website.
- 02-28-22—Select Board Meeting in the Town Hall at 7:00PM

If you have something going on and want to post on this Town meeting page, please contact Alice Counts at 207-293-1105 or 714-403-6076 or Alice@MTVernonME.org

From the Mount Vernon Select Board

Another Holiday season has come and gone, and we hope you and your family have had a pleasant one. I have just gotten on the Select Board and have been warmly welcomed by both Paul and Anna and the rest of the office. I would like to remind everyone that we as a Board are here for you and if you have questions or need information, please feel free to attend a Select Board meeting or send us an email and hopefully we can be of help to you.

Recommendations for changes to the Land Use Ordinance have been sent to the Ordinance Review Committee (ORC). Some of the topics are solar installations, addressing fireworks, definition of recreational, seasonal docks and others. The general public is always invited to these meetings, look for time and dates on the Town website.

Whenever I get a chance, I remind everyone to make sure that their property is prominently identified, either at the mailbox or on a self-standing sign. Letters should be four (4) inches in height and reflective if possible.

The Select Board will begin its work of developing a budget for next year, working with the Budget Committee and each Town Department. We always focus on keeping taxes down, but we do have issues at play. The bridge on the Blake Hill Road is a state owned and they expect to remove it within one year due to its disrepair. More information will follow on this issue. We have a Broadband Committee working very hard to get us more coverage and a faster network. So, stay tuned and we will try to keep you up to speed on all that is happening in Town Business.

Respectfully,
Robert Grenier

Ordinance Review Committee

The Ordinance Review Committee will be meeting via Zoom on January 6, 2022 at 6:30 PM to discuss the topics the Select Board has requested the ORC to consider. The topics include: Solar farms, fireworks, definition of structure, front steps, seasonal docks, well setbacks, non-conforming structures, and recreational vehicle definition.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77477760019?pwd=cUI0ekg3NW5LSjAycUZxcGFkQ1Rpdz09>

Meeting ID: 774 7776 0019

Passcode: 9D8JpU

Susan P Herman

Community Center News

Thought you should know that this community is full of generous, thoughtful people. Over the last month I have encountered individuals who give of their time, their experience, their help, and their treasure. It helps me to believe that there is hope for the future. While we are still in a maddening pandemic and the politics of the US tend to divide us, when someone needs help and is at their wits end, the caring helpers come out of the woodwork and do their best to make things right.

After a shaky start, the Community Center's tree lights are finally back on. Our trusty electrician, Dave Talley of Archer Electric, is making sure that the lights stay on to guide Santa to everyone's home. Dan Jiorle, our furnace/heating person, came out on a shockingly cold night to make sure our furnace was working properly. John Jones Plumbing always gives us his time and expertise and we will have an "on Demand" hot water for our kitchen and bathroom. Bo Jespersen of Breathable Home, will have wonderful heat pumps installed in mid-January so we can have supplemental heat and COOLING in the summer. Wendy Stevens, our new housekeeper, is making sure our Community Center sparkles and is clean for public use.

Luke Olson is there ready to help with difficult chores when we need him. Many thanks go to town employees who keep our CC free of ice and snow! Chief Jason Beckler and volunteers (Chris Tibbetts, Ron Lockwood, Luke Olson) decorated the Fire station and the Rescue buildings. Many hands make light work! Thank you ALL!

So, if you happen to see any of these fine people in our community, please thank them for all that they do for us and for our Community Center.

Have a wonderful Christmas and Hanukkah season to All and to All a goodnight!

June Cauldwell

Plans Underway for February Frolix

The calendar is not set but we have some great things lined up for February Frolix. Some of the activities will be similar to 2020, such as snowshoeing (though this year we will have 3 different locations), chair yoga, sledding and skating.

We have several new things planned: we will start the month-long event with puzzle and craft bags for delivery or pick-up at the library. The puzzles will feature some special "metroplex" questions and of course, something edible. Other new activities will include a pick-up or deliver lunch, a children's book reading by the book illustrator and videos on several local Facebook pages.

For complete details, check the February newsletter, look for posters and calendars around town, especially the Dr. Shaw Memorial Library and town office, and on the library Facebook page.

Art Work on Display?

Is there anyone that would like to display their Art Work in the Town Hall Reception Area? We are looking to add some color to our Town Hall and are interested in Displaying Your Art Work on a rotating basis. Please see Alice Counts in the Selectmen's Office for further information.

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.

Travis Mills Foundation: Looking for volunteers! <https://travismillsfoundation.org>

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 Mount Vernon
- Attend committee meetings, usually once or twice per month
- Undertake tasks to help the committee communicate findings and alternatives to the town

Minnehonk Ridge Riders Snow Mobile Club

Next Meeting: Tuesday 01-04-2022

If you are using any of the Mount Vernon Winter Trails, you have the Ridge Riders to thank. They maintain 12 bridges and 28 miles of trails. Please contribute to this club with your donations and memberships in order to keep our trails safe and clear. These trails are used for snow mobile riders and cross-country skiers. Everyone is invited to our monthly meetings which are normally on the first Tuesday of every month at 700pm in the Community Center.

Membership fees are \$20/yr per individual or \$30/yr per family. Payable at the Town Hall. See Alice Counts.

Cash or Checks made payable to Minnehonk Ridge Riders.

President: John Karabin 207-480-0034

Mount Vernon Needs Your Help! (Cont.)

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.

Special Request

We are missing some of our Old Town Annual Report of the Municipal Officers booklets. If anyone has some of these that they no longer want, please contact Alice at 293-1105. We would like to complete our set.

Help Wanted: Conservative Non-Profit

Seeking part-time help with website maintenance, computer generated outreach programs, newsletters, and social media. Please call Barbara at 207-293-2866 or email at SaveRightWhales360@gmail.com

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!

BS From the TS



Hello from the MTV Transfer Station!!

Couple of things I want to announce. As everyone knows our beloved Carole has retired to her recliner and has trusted me with managing the Transfer Station. So, Hello to everyone!

I will introduce myself really quick. My name is Megan, I'm a Vienna Native. I was able to experience life outside of Vienna for a few years as the military brought my family and I to Elgin Airforce Base in Florida and Schofield Barracks in Oahu, Hawaii. I missed Maine so much, I decided it was time to move home. Home is now an old farmhouse on Blake Hill. So, I'm officially a Mount Vernon resident and couldn't be prouder. I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for, being you? I never imagined a "Municipal Disposing Specialist," would be a job title added to my resume.

As many of you have probably seen, there is a beautiful new, cozy addition to the transfer station. This new addition is a warming shed for the bitter cold Maine winters. A huge thank you to Mac, Bob, Alice, Paul and Tom Brady for making this happen. It's been a long time waiting.

I've tried cleaning up around the transfer station, especially for the winter, to make it easy for snow removal/sanding. It's very important that we aren't bringing huge items to the donation building and leaving them outside to freeze and be in the way of the snow removal.

Happy Holliday!!

Sincerely,

Megan

Mount Vernon Select Board Meeting of 12-06-21

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

Support Staff & Guests: Alice Counts (Administrative Assistant), Mark Gilbert (Ch 7), Kerry Casey (Treasurer), June Cauldwell (Community Center Chair), Greg Cauldwell (Planning Board Chair), Bill Butler (CEO), Sue Herman (Ordinance Review Committee Chair), Tom Brady, Jason Beckler (Fire Chief)

Select Board Members Signed Weekly Warrant (6:30-7:00)

Meeting Called to Order

SB Meeting was Called to Order by SB Crockett at 7:03pm

Meeting Minutes of 11-22-21

Meeting Minutes to be amended from "Select Board Approved Alice Counts Request for a new computer" to "SB Crockett was going to see about an estimate for a new computer."

Motion by SB Crockett to accept the meeting minutes as amended, 2nd by SB Libby. Motion Carried. Vote was 3-0.

PASS

Planning Board Class

Alice Counts is Signed up to take the Planning Board Class. SB Crockett asked PB Cauldwell if he had other members that would benefit from taking this class. Jon Railo and David Sanders were mentioned as needing this training.

Town Lawyer

PB Crockett reported that David Sanders suggested we use Tom Carey since he is familiar with the area.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Beckler inquired about any complaints with regards to the new Fire Department signage. He mentioned that the sign was donated to the Fire Department by the Fire Company at a cost of \$18,000. SB Crockett assured him there were no issues.

Chief Beckler reported an incident that happened earlier today with a Big Rig that jack knifed on North Road just south of Church Road. Leonard Heavy Rescue out of Lewiston was called in and mentioned that the Town should bill for the Fire Departments time as the insurance will cover this. In addition, Apparatus is covered at \$200/hr. Treasurer Casey stated that we should make a policy to bill non-resident vehicles which require the use of our Town services. The Heavy Rescue operator offered to help the Town with our billing. Treasurer Casey would like a copy of whatever is submitted to the insurance company. DOT and DEP were involved as there was fuel spillage.

NIMS – National Information Management Systems

Chief Beckler mentioned that the FEMA and Maine Forestry require NIMS compliance as a condition to qualify for their Grants as do many other government entities. Future Federal money is in jeopardy if we are not NIMS compliant.

XMAS Lights

June Cauldwell requested permission to hang lights on the Community Center and Rescue buildings. She also asked Chief Beckler if he would like to decorate the Fire Station as well.

Motion by SB Crockett that the Select Board has no objection to XMAS lights, 2nd by SB Grenier. Motion Carried, Vote was 3-0. **PASS**

Mount Vernon Select Board Meeting Minutes of 12-06-21 (Cont.)

Road Closures

SB Crockett reported that they will vote to close portions of the following two roads to winter travel:

Cottle Hill
Mooar Hill

Policy Updates

Kerry Casey reported that she would like to combine some of the Policies into the following categories:

Financial
Personnel
Smoking, Drug & Alcohol

Ordinances – Possible updates for the Ordinance Review Committee (ORC) to work

CEO Bill Butler Reported the following:

Definition of Structure. Town should consider rewriting the structure definition to exempt seasonal and portable items such as lawn chairs, tables, unsheltered fire pits, satellite dishes. This definition needs to be tightened up. For example Campfire Pits have a setback of 100 feet, but then they will want to add pavers and then possibly a roof and before you know it you have increased the impervious area. Currently the pit would have to be removed unless established before 1989. How is going to chase this down for each non-compliant fire pit? Is this really what we want our CEO to be spending his time on? Bill mentioned that the Shoreline Zone has no minimum size unlike the 100 sqft minimum elsewhere. Bill would like to exempt Seasonal Use Fire Pits. He further mentioned that anything affecting the Shoreline should go to Collin Clark for his feedback. SB Crockett asked ORC Herman to have her team look at this. ORC Herman stated that in 2009, the DEP told her that Shoreline Structures had no minimum size and were not allowed within 100 feet of setback

Front Steps. China's land use ordinance allowed for 3 foot by 6 foot .footprint for the installation of front steps even if the steps encroached into a buffer setback. The town should consider the same.

Seasonal Docks. Seasonal docks should be delegated to the CEO for permitting regardless of size, length, or configuration. Another area of concern is Docks turned into Decks. Again is this where we want our Towns efforts to be spent, inspecting properties for these type of non-compliance that is everywhere on every property on every lake? PB Cauldwell stated that the ordinance only allows for a 4 foot wide dock section but in reality, manufacturers are all making their docks 4 foot 2 inches and greater. Standard width needs to be updated. Bill mentioned that state guidelines require docks to be permitted by the CEO. but CEO can also manage seasonal if the Planning Board agrees under the current ordinance. Planning Board needs to make finding regarding extension at Public Hearing. ORC Herman stated that she received a lot of push back when she tried this in the past.

Well Setbacks. I have seen where drilled wells too close to another well can cause a fracking effect to occur. In China we had a 10 foot setback from side and rear property lines and maximum extent possible from the water body. This needs to be looked at further.

Non-conforming Structure. DEP guidance interprets a non-conforming structure as only that portion of the structure less than 100 feet to the water body. Our definition should be revised to reflect DEP guidance. ORC Herman voiced her doubt that the State would allow this. ORC Herman stated that the DEP minimum guidelines were taken directly from the state and would need to be looked into further.

Recreational Vehicle Definition. This definition should be improved to clarify the RV is road worthy (good serviceable condition) in order to qualify as a vehicle and not a structure. Bill stated that a Travel Trailer is not a structure if it has wheels, is road worthy and registered, else it becomes a structure.

Mount Vernon Select Board Meeting Minutes of 12-06-21 (Cont.)

The ordinance currently allows applicants to submit planning board applications directly to the planning board bypassing the code officer. The ordinance should be changed to require submittal of the application to the code officer or his/her designee so it can be reviewed for application completeness and scheduling for the agenda. This will also give the code officer the opportunity to provide copies of the application to the planning board prior to the meeting. PB Cauldwell, agreed that this would make both of their jobs easier and streamline the process. CEO Butler stated that there would need to be a positive finding on each item by the Planning Board, but that he would in no way dictate to the Board what they should do, he would only give his recommendations. ORC Herman agreed that the Planning Board needs to make a finding that application is complete. PB Cauldwell would like to run this by the Planning Board first so that all are in agreement.

Backlot Driveway or Flag Lot width – Part of the table is missing in Section 9D p.172 for the minimum width. ORC Herman found the reference in the 2009 (White) Land Use Ordinance to be 30 feet minimum width. Admin Asst Alice Counts to check the formatting of the table in the new update.

Rural Areas –SB Grenier inquired about allowed uses in the rural areas. SB Grenier questioned whether a permit was needed if it was an allowed use. ORB Herman stated allowed uses would still require a permit. She made an example of a small scale industrial operation which would be allowed if under 1600 sqft but would still need a site plan approval from the planning board.

Home Occupations – are only allowed if they are operated in the home or attached to the home. Additionally, on the topic of docks, I checked a few other local ordinances for comparison:

Readfield - no permit required

Belgrade: wharves, piers, and docks shall comply with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations;

Fayette - only permanent pier needs permit and no dimensional requirements. Also says: F: The facility shall be no larger in dimension than necessary to carry on the activity and be consistent with existing conditions, use and character of the area.

Solar Farms

SB Crockett went on the record, the Ordinance Review Committee needs to look at the possibility in support of this for incoming tax revenue. This will go in front of the Town for approval. There needs to be differences between the requirements for small scale versus commercial scale. SB Crockett recommends lessening the restrictions to make it easier to obtain. ORC Herman stated her concerns were Visual Impact, buffers, setbacks, Glare and Decommissioning. For larger scale you would need 3 phase power She asked if the Town wants to add restrictions. SB Crockett said No, we don't want to legislate it out of existence. ORC Herman mentioned that they would need to research whether a Public Utility Facility would be allowed in a rural area. SB Crockett said we should follow general building practices. ORC wants to be proactive. Treasurer Casey mentioned that Belgrade has a moratorium.

Bill commented that "the ordinance would currently require planning board approval for any solar farm. The primary issues are access control, stormwater management, adequate perimeter vegetated buffers, fire hazards, and reflection distractions near major highways. The solar arrays are classified as a structure therefore the total structure coverage would be applicable. Tweaking the ordinance to exempt solar arrays from the definition of a structure might be useful."

Mount Vernon Select Board Meeting Minutes of 12-06-21

Fire Works Ordinance

SB Crockett stated that this has become a huge problem. He suggested putting something in the Ordinance although it would not be enforceable but would hopefully be a distraction and should make an exception for the fourth of July and New Years Eve. Treasurer Casey asked whether or not civil action could come out of an ordinance. ORC Herman did not think so. CEO Butler said this would fall under the State Law Title 17 §2802, Miscellaneous Nuisance which can be tricky to use. SB Crockett asked ORC Herman to look into this.

Water Extraction Ordinance

SB Crockett tabled this under Select Board can look into this further. ORC Herman requested to have authorization for an MMA account. SB Crockett volunteered to make this happen.

Emergency Manager

We are still looking for someone to fill this spot. SB Libby reported that Mike Wenzel has shown interest in this position.

Blake Hill Rd Bridge project

Alice Counts reported that she reached out to the Engineering Department at the University of Maine at Orono to see if there was interest for their students to look at this project. The Engineering Department responded and are looking at the 2022 schedule.

Mail Box Regulation

SB Crockett penned a letter to the Belgrade Postmaster regarding an incident whereby a resident was asked to raise her mailbox to a height of 58 inches to accommodate the postal carrier's new truck. It currently is at 43-1/2 inches within the acceptable range between 41 and 45 inches. Although this is not within the Town's jurisdiction, he wanted to pass on this elderly residents concern as she depends on her mail to get and pay her bills.

Transfer Station

SB Crockett reported that the Transfer Station will be closed on Christmas Day.

Tom Brady has obtained a bid from Hammond Lumber and negotiated a 10% discount for a Manager's Shed.

Alice Counts provided two more bids. All bids are for an 8x12 Smart Siding. Windows would need to be added as follows:

Hammond Lumber - \$2475 after 10% discount, including delivery.

Hillview Mini Barns - \$2760 base price, delivery not included

Tuff Shed - \$3768 base price, delivery not included

SB Crockett asked Treasurer Casey where we currently stood with the Transfer Station Budget. The Treasurer reported that we should be at 46% and are currently at 32% so are doing very well so far this year.

SB Crockett asked Tom Brady if he would be willing to install the windows, Tom agreed.

SB Crockett motioned to allow up to \$3500 for the purchase of the shed from Hammond to include 2 windows. 2nd by SB Grenier. Motion Carried, Vote was 3-0. **PASS**

TRIO-

SB Grenier asked where we are with regards to Trio. SB Crockett said he wasn't able to look at it yet and tabled it until next meeting.

Mount Vernon Select Board Meeting Minutes of 12-06-21 (Cont.)

Other Business

Planning Board Training

The Select Board approved Alice Counts' request to attend the Planning Board training.

Fire Station Paving

Fire Chief Beckler needs new pavement in the Fire Station parking area and is wondering if this can be added to the paving contract. PB Crockett said he would get Road Commissioner Lee Dunn to look at this and get bids in before the budget is in and include it.

Adjourn

Motion by SB Libby to Adjourn at 9:07, 2nd by SB Grenier, Motion Carried. Vote was 3-0. **PASS**



Dr Jenn Cotone
The Big White Barn
169 South Road
Readfield ME 04355
207-620-2078
Cotonefamilychiro@gmail.com

COTONE
FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC



**KEEP·A·MOUNT·
VERNON¶
FAMILY·WARM¶
THIS·WINTER¶**

**DONATE·TO·THE¶
MOUNT·VERNON·COMMUNITY¶
PARTNERSHIP'S¶
FUEL·ASSISTANCE·FUND¶**

**TAX¶
DEDUCTIBLE¶**

**AND·A·
REALLY·NICE·
THING·TO·DO¶**

**·You·may·send·your·checks·to·the·
Community·Partnership·(made·out·
to·MVPCP)·and·mail·them·to·Sandy·
Wright··1664·North·Road·¶**

**¶
We·work·with·the·Board·of·
Selectmen's·General·Assistance·
Manager·and·the·Food·Bank*·to·help·
people·who·need·fuel·or·firewood·¶**

**¶
(*·People·needing·fuel·assistance·must·apply·to·
the·above·before·assistance·can·be·given··For·
more·information·,·contact·Sandy·at·293-2582·or·
scwright@fairpoint.net·)·¶**

Mount Vernon Select Board Meeting Minutes of 12-20-21

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

Support Staff & Guests: Alice Counts (Administrative Assistant), Mark Gilbert (Ch 7), Kerry Casey (Treasurer), Sue Herman (Ordinance Review Committee Chair), Michelle Pino, Heather Roberts, Fred Webber

Select Board Members Signed Weekly Warrant (6:30-7:00)

Meeting Called to Order

SB Meeting was Called to Order by SB Crockett at 7:03pm

Meeting Minutes of 11-22-21

Meeting Minutes to be amended from "Select Board Approved Alice Counts Request for a new computer" to "SB Crockett was going to see about an estimate for a new computer."

Motion by SB Crockett to accept the meeting minutes as amended, 2nd by SB Libby. Motion Carried. Vote was 3-0. **PASS**

Road Closures

SB Libby motioned to Close Cottle Hill Road from Karabin to Karabin property and Mooar Hill from the Dump to North Taylor Road for the Winter, 2nd by SB Grenier. Motion Carried, Vote was 3-0. **PASS**

Public Hearings

Remote Meeting Policies – it recently came to the Select Boards attention that each Committee/Board needs to adopt its own policy for Remote Participation/Zoom Meetings. Earlier on during the global pandemic, the Governor decreed an emergency that allowed for boards and committees to hold such meetings, however now that the emergency declaration has expired, the legislature, passed a law that allows such meetings to continue, but with certain restrictions or requirements. Once this policy has been voted on and approved, it came be shared with other town boards and committees so they can word smith it for their specific area.

Remote Meeting Policy for the Select Board (SB)

SB Libby motioned to accept the Select Board's Remote Meeting Policy as written, 2nd by SB Grenier. Motion Carried, Vote was 3-0. **PASS**

Remote Meeting Policy for the Ordinance Review Committee (ORC)

ORC Webber motioned to accept the Ordinance Review Committee's Remote Meeting Policy as written, 2nd by ORC Pino. Motion Carried, Vote was 4-0. **PASS**

Policy Updates

Kerry Casey took a stab at the following Policies but needed more information on the definition of Part Time and Regular Part Time Employees and what that means as far as holiday pay verses Paid Time Off (PTO). This needs to be looked into further and will be discussed at our next Select Board Meeting.

Financial

Personnel

Smoking, Drug & Alcohol

Emergency Manager

Mike Wenzel has accepted this position.

Mount Vernon Select Board Meeting Minutes of 12-20-21 (Cont.)

Blake Hill Rd Bridge project

SB Crockett has reached out to a few companies for bids.

Transfer Station

SB Crockett reported that the Transfer Station will be closed on Christmas Day.

The Shed was delivered to the Transfer Station.

Windows have been purchased for the shed and Tom Brady will install them.

TRIO –

SB Crockett is still looking into gathering data from other towns. Discussion will continue next meeting.

Other Business

We received a request from a Fayette Property Owner to be released from Fayette jurisdiction and annexed by the Town of Mount Vernon. The reasons stated included geographic considerations, practical considerations, and basic principles of community, citizenship and residency.

Adjourn

Motion by SB Libby to Adjourn at 8:15, 2nd by SB Grenier, Motion Carried. Vote was 3-0. **PASS**

FREE INCOME TAX SERVICES

The AARP Tax-Aide program provides free Federal and State tax return services. Tax-Aide volunteers are trained, tested and certified by the IRS to prepare returns for low and moderate income taxpayers, with particular focus on those over 60, but all are welcome!

Low income taxpayers should note that the only way they can receive the Maine Property Tax Fairness Credit and the Sales Tax Fairness Credit is to file a Maine Income Tax return. Even if you pay no income tax you may be eligible for these credits. These may be worth several hundreds of dollars, depending on your circumstances.

vCovid-19 measures will be in effect at all sites. Taxpayers may be asked health-related questions. Masks will be required. Social distancing will be maintained as much as possible.

The free tax services are provided by appointment only by calling January 4th or later and are available at the following sites:

The Dr. Shaw Memorial Library in Mount Vernon (call 293-2565 when the library is open on Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays). Tax dates are Tuesdays, March 1, March 15 and March 29, with April 12 as an additional day if needed. This site is intended primarily for Mount Vernon and Vienna residents.

The Cohen Community Center in Hallowell (call 377-8840 Monday through Friday, 11:00 am – 6:00 pm). Tax dates are Wednesdays and Thursdays, February 2 through April 14.

Broadband Committee

As 2021 ends, the Broadband Committee has been working with the Select Board for two years, studying options for bringing adequate broadband services to every home in Mount Vernon. The challenges and opportunities are complex. The broadband goals, endorsed by the Select Board, are critical to the welfare of families and the town itself.

During this first phase, the Committee has also been studying the context as well, both funding sources and pathways whereby town members can support the successful building of broadband services. Recently the Committee has established three working groups to generate recommendations for the town in the areas of i) technologies; ii) finances; and iii) communications (see below).

The Committee has been nudged along by i) town members sharing examples of both the costs and limitations of their current services. Other incentives to move ahead include: ii) the availability of substantial state and federal funding opportunities; and iii) reports of other Maine towns and regions moving ahead on parallel paths, within the Western Kennebec Lakes Community Broadband Association (WKLCA) and other towns independently.

In the first quarter of 2022, town members will see the Committee working on two priority goals. First (communications) you'll see more opportunities to learn about and participate in Broadband town and household planning using Zoom, email and website media. See the Announcements page of this Newsletter for dates and times of the Committee's Zoom meetings.

To strengthen communications about Mount Vernon's broadband options, the Committee is asking town members to share their email addresses to improve the Committee's mailing list. It provide updates about broadband options and frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the town website in the coming months.

You can contact Alice Counts (alice@mtvernonme.org) to obtain the Zoom link to the Committee's biweekly Zoom meetings (see Dates to Remember on Page 2 of this Newsletter). To discuss Mount Vernon broadband issues real time you can contact our Chairperson (william.h.rosenberg@gmail.com).

In the months ahead, we hope you will consider become engaged in Broadband discussions and preparations leading up to the spring Town Meeting. At that time, town members will be asked to authorize a pathway forward. 2021 has been in many ways challenging for everyone in town. It has also been a time of coming together for mutual support. 2022 promises as well to be challenging. The Broadband Committee thanks the town members, the Select Board and the state for their support of these. The Committee wishes each member of Mount Vernon (year round and summer residents) a prosperous 2022.

Dr. Shaw Memorial Library
January, 2022
Submitted by Mary Anne Libby

“Hyacinth loved the library. Walking through those heavy wooden doors and breathing in the smell of books always gave her a feeling of possibility, as if the whole world were waiting for her to discover it.” Karina Yan Glasen, The Vanderbeekers Make a Wish

Our Usual Reminder During the Winter Months: On days when we are open (Monday afternoons, Wednesday mornings and afternoons, Saturdays), we pay attention to possible bad weather and difficult traveling conditions. If there is snow or ice coming our way, please keep checking our library Facebook page, or call us during our regular hours — before you get in your car to drive here — to see if we are open, or perhaps closing early! Stay safe, everyone.

Tax Help Days: Our Tax Gurus David and Christine are starting preparations for our annual Tax Help Days for Mt Vernon and Vienna residents. David says people can start calling for appointments as of January 5th. We will schedule our appointments on days when we aren't open, so we don't have too many people in the building. The dates scheduled are March 1, March 15, and March 29. If necessary, David can set up another day in April. We require masks when you are in the building, and when you call to make an appointment, we will ask for your phone number and address, so we can send you the required paperwork and instructions, and so we can call you if we need to reschedule due to weather. We are so thankful to our wonderful AARP volunteers David & Christine for their hard work and commitment to this service.

Patron records: Please let us know of any changes to your phone number, address, or email so we can keep our records current and know how to reach you when we have materials reserved for you or want to reach you about other services. Thanks!

Alice will continue to make some **story videos** each month through the winter, based on a new theme each month, and will also devise some more **Take & Makes** to keep our young patrons interested in new (small) projects. Let us know if you want to sign up for those Take & Make kits. We'll post the videos on our Facebook page!

February Frolix: Interested in some outdoor winter activities like sledding, skating, or snowshoeing? Would you like to try some gentle chair yoga? How about a book signing by a local artist who illustrated a children's book that came out this year (The Deer Man)? The local Aging In Place Committee is working with us to sponsor various events throughout the month of February, for folks of all ages. We are also thinking of small Take & Make bags of crossword puzzles, Sudoku games, maybe some coloring pages, and possibly a Maine trivia page, for folks to work on at home. We are considering more activities. There will be a schedule of events coming out soon, and you will be able to contact the library to sign up for activities. We weren't able to do the Frolix last year due to COVID, but we are planning safe, physically distant activities for this year, and hope that we can reach people of all ages who would like to participate. We will pull it together, due to the efforts of the committee, the library, the Community Center, and lots of volunteers!

I am reading two novels right now: Robert Dugoni's The World Played Chess, which features some veterans from the Viet Nam War as well as a young person just trying to put together the next steps in his own life, and Whereabouts by Jhumpa Lahiri – a quiet book about living an ordinary life, community relationships, and a woman trying to find her role in it all. What are you reading, as the cold strengthens, and we see the slow return of light?

COVID19 SURGE

Dan Onion, MD, MPH
Mt. Vernon/Vienna Health Officer
293-2076; dkonion@gmail.com
January, 2021

I know all are tired of Covid talk, but it's becoming more and more serious, for Maine in particular, hence this somewhat repetitive message.

A local friend just called me to tell me his wife tested positive for Covid 2 days ago and now he's had 24 hr of cough, fever, shortness of breath and loss of taste. He's sure he's got it, and so am I. Because he's middle aged and has several co-morbidities, I suggested he pursue getting monoclonal antibody therapy. That requires an intravenous infusion at an ER visit. He declined because he thinks he's getting better. I offered to loan him my home oxygen saturation device (less than \$20 at most pharmacies), so he can know if his blood saturation is over 92% now and/or if it drops below that. He demurred but said he'd call me if things get worse. He and his family are understandably anxious because of the several deaths in town from Covid recently. His wife is improving, and I am hoping he too does soon.

Several Maine counties were identified the last week in December as being in the top 6 counties IN THE NATION with the highest percentage increase in Covid cases in the previous 2 weeks!! They were Franklin (4th), Aroostook (5th), and Piscataquis (6th), and with Somerset and Oxford not far behind. All are lowest vaccination rate counties. In other words, we in our 3 towns are surrounded by rapidly spreading Covid cases, mostly in the unvaccinated population. About 1/3 of cases have been vaccinated, because a much lower infection rate in a 3 times larger group can be misinterpreted as vaccine failure. And though the vaccinated may get the disease, they are much less likely to be as sick as the unvaccinated.

Nationally Covid case rates are now beyond a quarter million new cases a day. This is not your grandfather's influenza; it is 10 times as lethal and even more disruptive of our whole economy and lives.

Probably half those cases now are of the new Omicron variant, the rest are the Delta variant we have met and known since early Fall. The Omicron variant spreads very fast, but fortunately is a little less virulent (bad), and likely remains susceptible to the vaccines we have. A possible exception is the single shot Johnson and Johnson vaccine. A booster for any of J+J, Pfizer or Moderna vaccine improves our resistance. So, though we may catch the disease, it is 10-13 times less likely that we will be hospitalized, need ICU/ventilator care, or die. No matter which your first shots were, the boost can be with either the Pfizer or Moderna.

I worry that not enough people are taking this threat seriously; most store shoppers and clerks I see are maskless and not distancing; also absent are clerk barriers to stop the spread of aerosols. All of us should and must distance, mask, and otherwise be very careful, if schools are to continue teaching our kids, businesses stay open, we all are to survive to a ripe old age.

So PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, get fully vaccinated and boosted ASAP! I have been and am giving shots weekly at the very impressive vaccination, walk-in clinic in the Augusta Armory. It runs 3 days a week and will continue well into January. Usually Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, sometimes Saturday, 8 am to 4 pm. Short or no lines. All vaccines available. National Guard help. Only trick is getting into the building; you have to drive a couple 100 yds up the airport entrance road and turn left into the back of the Armory.

Come see me in the Moderna line for a shot, but if I'm not there that day, be assured 12 other vaccinators will be working the lines.

^[1] <https://www.pressherald.com/2021/12/16/three-rural-maine-counties-among-the-worst-in-nation-for-covid-19-spread/>