



TOWN OF SOUTH THOMASTON QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Jeffrey Northgraves, Chairman
Penelope Alley
Vacancy

MARCH 2010

Town of South Thomaston
125 Spruce Head Road
P.O. Box 147
South Thomaston, ME 04858

E-mail: sthomstn@midcoast.com Website: TOWN.SOUTH-THOMASTON.ME.US

2010 PROPOSED MUNICIPAL BUDGET

The proposed 2010 municipal budget to be presented to voters at the Annual Town Meeting on March 30, 2010 totals \$855,926. This is a decrease over the final 2009 budget of \$25,282, or 2.87%.

The total amount to be funded by appropriations (property taxes) is \$458,376. This is a decrease of \$5,844, or 1.26%. Anticipated revenues are \$91,050. Vehicle excise tax is anticipated at \$260,000 a decrease of 5.45%. The remainder of the proposed budget is funded with \$27,000 from the Revaluation Reserve and \$10,500 from Surplus. State provided commitment reducing revenues are anticipated to be \$25,000 less than last year, making the net municipal appropriation \$374,866 an increase from last year's \$365,396. The proposed budget places the Town under the LD 1 Tax Levy Limit by \$507.00.

It is important to note for the past several years in an effort to hold down tax rates, surplus has been generously utilized. The Town's year end surplus has decreased from a high of \$550,836 on December 31st, 2001 to \$300,600 as of December 31st, 2009.

The Selectmen and the Budget Committee started the budget process with a proposed budget over the LD 1 Tax Levy Limit by \$114,000. The Selectmen held wages, salaries and stipends for all employees the same as 2009. The Selectmen, Budget Committee Members and Departments Heads worked diligently together to reduce the 2010 proposed budget.

The Selectmen and Budget Committee believe they have done a good job on the proposed budget especially during these tough economic times and are hoping it will be supported by the voters.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING - TUESDAY, MARCH 30th 7:00 P.M. **GILFORD B. BUTLER SCHOOL**

CHANGE IN HOURS TOWN OFFICE & DEMO DEBRIS

In an effort to reduce costs in the 2010 proposed municipal budget, the hours for the Town Office and Demo Debris (Stump Dump) have been reduced.

The Town Office will be **closed on Fridays** starting April 2, 2010. The office will remain open until 6:00 pm on Tuesdays for your convenience.

The Demo Debris Facility shall remain open Wednesday and Saturday 9-4 all year. The facility will **no longer** be open on Mondays during the Spring and Summer months.

TO THE RESIDENTS OF SOUTH THOMASTON

I was deeply honored when the Town elected me Selectman last year. I had hoped that we, as a Board, could energize and engage more people in a dialogue and bring more townspeople to the table to address our town's direction and concerns.

My experience in serving on boards and committees over the years is that the best boards are the ones where there is an underlying trust and respect. Despite differences in philosophy or conviction, any disparities can be valued as providing a different perspective, not as a basis for dispute. A board that doesn't always agree can be a stronger board, providing the opportunity to consider different sides to any question. Lacking the necessary trust and respect, however, disagreements can become destructive fights, with each side only hardening in its opinion.

I felt our Board of Selectmen had somehow lost that requisite trust and respect and was no longer functioning cohesively as the leadership for our Town. To apply the brakes to a downward spiral, one of us needed to step down, to allow necessary regrouping, and to re-establish the Board's obligation to serve our community.

So, it was with great sadness that I submitted my resignation from the Board on February 16. I very sincerely thank the Town for trusting me to serve you all, and I am confident that the soul searching arising from this set back will help our community to move forward, stronger than before.

Submitted by, Dorothy Meriwether

SCHOOL COST

2004- \$1,564,000.00
2005- \$1,607,843.30
2006- \$1,707,673.63
2007- \$1,828,692.79
2008- \$1,990,165.41
2009- \$2,119,833.28

MIL (TAX) RATE (PER THOUSAND)

2004- 18.90
2005- 8.75
2006- 9.20
2007- 9.50
2008- 10.34
2009- 10.74

TOWN OF SOUTH THOMASTON

NOTE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ASSESSORS

Real Estate Property Reviews

Beginning in June 2008 through July 2009, the South Thomaston Assessors' Agent reviewed all waterfront properties in town to ensure consistency in the current assessed values. Using a "single thread" approach, the focus was primarily on the type of waterfront, location of the property, (i.e. open ocean, riverfront), view factors (site indexes), and external reviews of all structures on the property. Using current tax maps, aerial photo maps, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology, and site visits, inconsistencies were identified and corrected for approximately sixty-six (66) properties out of the 409 waterfront properties listed for the town. Property owners whose properties had discrepancies were notified by letter of the changes with said changes reflected in the 2008 and 2009 tax bills.

During the 2010 and 2011 tax years, non-waterfront properties will be reviewed using the same basic criteria and approach used for waterfront properties. Once completed, the overall inventory of properties for South Thomaston should be thorough and consistent. At that point, the property values can be adjusted to reflect "just value"; achieving equalization between waterfront and non-waterfront properties. By using this approach, the town will meet requirements for property equalization as set forth in Maine Revised Statutes Annotated (MRSA) Title 36 and should realize a savings from \$80,000 to \$150,000 by not having to contract an outside revaluation company for a full revaluation.

We, the Assessors, encourage you to cooperate with the Assessors' Agent when he visits your property over the next several months. He will make every effort to contact you once he visits your property to review the information he has on record or answer any questions you may have. If you would like for the Assessors' Agent to perform a complete re-inspection of your property, please call (207) 593-9331 or stop by the Town Office to make an appointment. You are also encouraged to visit the town office to review your property tax cards and validate information on record. The Assessors' Agent's office hours are normally Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 9am to 4pm. His approach is congenial and he encourages all property owners to be a "participant" in the property tax process rather than a "recipient" of the process.

ADDRESS CHANGE?

Often the town office is overlooked when it comes to address changes. Please notify us if your mailing address changes.

WANT TO BUDGET YOUR PROPERTY TAXES?

Voluntary Tax Club Booklets are available at the town office. Anyone interested in participating should contact the town office at 596-6584 we would be happy to be of assistance. You can budget your property taxes on a monthly basis. October is a great time to start although you can start participating in the Tax Club at any time during the year.

ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER APPOINTED

The Board of Selectmen appointed Arthur (Hutch) Hutchinson November 24th, 2009. Anyone in need of Animal Control Services should call Knox Communications at 593-9132 and they will dispatch an officer to respond.

NOTE FROM THE OFFICE OF ASSESSORS PERSONAL PROPERTY FORMS

South Thomaston businesses or business owners, commercial and residential, who did not receive an annual Personal Property Declaration packet through the mail, should come by the town office to pick one up. The packets were mailed in January 2010.

The deadline for filing business personal property statements is March 30th, 2010. Please be advised this is a MRSA Title 36, Section 706 formal request by the Board of Assessors. Questions or inquiries should be directed to the Assessor's Agent, Bert Taylor 593-9331. Office hours are Tuesday and Wednesday 9-4.

MOOSE LOTTERY PERMITS

In an effort to reduce spending the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife will no longer be mailing paper applications. You can apply on line at www.mefishwildlife.com. Anyone needing a paper application can stop by the town office. The deadline for filing online is May 14th. The paper application deadline is April 1st.

Welcome to the South Thomaston Public Library

The library is supported in part by town taxes. We also use money from book sales and grants to keep our drain on taxes as low as possible.

Getting a library card is very easy. Just stop in on Mon from 11-3, Wed from 2-7, or Sat from 10-2 and fill out an application. This card gives you the following privileges:

- Borrowing from our books, audio, and videos. We have an extensive Large print collection, and a collection of books by Maine Authors and about Maine.
- Access to the Maine State Download library from which you can download audio books directly to your home computer and transfer them to your iPod, or MP3. You can see an overview of this service at: <http://maine.lib.overdrive.com/93D33BB5-40D0-4977-8D7B-8FD903624A32/10/467/en/default.htm>
- Access to the South Thomaston Public Library catalog online at <http://opac.libraryworld.com/cgi-bin/opac.pl?command=clear> . Enter name, "sothompl", no password required. While we do not have an online reserve system, you can request a hold on a book in the catalog by clicking the email link.
- Although our South Thomaston Public Library card is not honored at other libraries in the area, if you cannot find a particular item in our catalog, we are happy to search and obtain it for you the state wide Inter-Library Loan (ILL) program. We currently allow our patrons 12 books a year ILL, after which we ask that you pay the return postage (\$2.50) for additional books. You can see additional information about programs and our collection on our website at <http://www.south-thomaston.lib.me.us/> .

We look forward to seeing you soon at the library. Please don't hesitate to contact us in the meantime if you have any questions. 596-0022

TOWN OF SOUTH THOMASTON

YOUR VOTE COUNTS ON THE SOUTH THOMASTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AT THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MARCH 30TH, 2010

WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

Over 120 **Updated** pages of information on South Thomaston including housing, population, the economy, public facilities & services, land use, transportation, history, natural resources, fiscal capacity, and recreation. Based on Town resident survey results, 60 recommendations are provided for consideration by town residents over the next ten years. Fourteen color maps detailing natural resources, soil suitability, land cover, water resources, and topography are also in the plan,

The Comprehensive Plan is not an ordinance, it is only a planning document of ideas and recommendations.

WHY IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPORTANT?

It provides a starting point for Town Residents to address future development of the town in areas such as Affordable Housing that over 62% of survey respondents were interested in. Recommendations of interest would undergo development and discussion by town resident committees and be voted on at future town meetings.

With a Comprehensive Plan approved by the town, South Thomaston would be eligible for Maine State grants for town improvements and needs.

WHO DEVELOPED THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Town's Selectmen – Jeff Northgraves, Penelope Alley, John Spear, plus resident volunteers – Bob Branco, Diane Darling, Larry Terrio, Vivian Newman, Ken Wilson, Skip Connell, Bill Atwood, Cheryl Waterman, Gary Skarka.

Hundreds of hours were spent from December 1996 to October 2009 developing the plan and the 21 question Survey of Town Residents that over 40% responded to.

The Select Board and the Comprehensive Planning Committee Support the Proposed Plan.

SOUTH THOMASTON SHORELAND ZONING ORDINANCE

The proposed Shoreland Zone Ordinance has been updated to meet State requirements. The Department of Environmental Protection requires every town to have its own Shoreland Zone Ordinance. Towns not having their own Ordinance would be required to follow the State Ordinance.

The Planning Board has worked on the proposed Ordinance for several months and has put forward an Ordinance that meets State requirements. If passed it will be a Town Ordinance, not a State imposed Ordinance. These are the changes:

1. The setback rule is changed. If there is a slope/bank that is 20% or more, the 75 foot setback will be measured from the top of the slope/bank, not from the normal high water mark.
2. The 30% rule is changed. This is the expansion of structures within the 75 foot restricted area. Structures may be expanded by 30%, measured either by square feet or by volume, whichever is greater.
3. The 1,000 square foot rule. Any structure within 75 feet of the high water mark can only be expanded up to 1,000 square feet. Any existing structure of 1,000 square feet or more cannot be expanded.

The Planning Board determined that the 1,000 square foot was too restrictive and decided to stay with the 30% rule which has been used for many years. State requirements allow for either option. The proposed Ordinance has met State guidelines, and will give control of the Ordinance to the Town.

SALTWATER LICENSES

The Town Office has received many inquiries regarding the new Federal Saltwater Registry Law that went into effect January 1, 2010. This is a Federal Law that passed requiring anglers to register on the Federal Registry with NOAA if they fish for or catch anadromous species in tidal waters: or fish in federal waters more than three (3) miles from the ocean shore.

Anadromous species are those that live mostly in the ocean but migrate into rivers and streams to spawn. As the Registry is handled through the Feds, the Town Office cannot register anglers. Anglers should go to www.countmyfish.noaa.gov or call 888-674-7411. Registration is free in 2010 and you can register and fish the same day.

FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

The South Thomaston Fire Department in conjunction with all of Knox County Fire Departments is offering **FREE** home fire safety inspections for residents of South Thomaston. If you are interested please call Chief Calderwood at 596-6674.

CHICKEN POT PIE

prep time: 15 min, start to finish: 1 hr 15 min, makes: 8 servings

1 bag (12 oz) Green Giant frozen mixed vegetables

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour - 1/4 teaspoon poultry seasoning

1/2 teaspoon salt - 1/4 teaspoon pepper - 1 1/4 cups fat-free milk - 1/2 cup

chopped onion - 1 can (10 3/4) condensed cream of chicken soup - 1/4 cup

fat-free sour cream - 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts (1 1/4 lb) cooked,

cut into bite sized pieces - 1 box Pillsbury refrigerated pie crusts, softened as directed on the box

1. Cook and drain vegetables

2. Heat oven to 375 degrees. In 2-quart saucepan, mix flour, salt, poultry seasoning, pepper and milk with wire whisk until blended. Stir in onion. Cook over medium heat 4 to 6 minutes, stirring constantly, until thickened.

3. Stir in soup and sour cream. Add chicken and cooked vegetables: mix well. Cook, stirring frequently, until heated, Pour into ungreased 2- quart round casserole. Unroll pie crust: place over hot filling. Seal edge and flute as desired. Cut slits in the crust. Bake 35 to 40 minutes until crust is golden brown. Let stand 10 minutes before serving

TOWN OF SOUTH THOMASTON

INFORMATION SECTION

Town Office Hours: Monday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Town Office Phone: 596-6584 Fax: 596-7529

E-mail: sthomstn@midcoast.com

Code Enforcement Officer & Plumbing Inspector :

Lawrence Terrio Hours: Monday 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at the Town Office. Office: 593-9331 Home: 596-0545

Assessor's Agent:

Horace "Bert" Taylor Hours: Tuesdays & Wednesday 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. Office: 593-9331

Demolition Debris Facility: Wednesday and Saturday - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (a sticker is required for residents)

Vouchers available at the Town Office.

Transfer Station: (Buttermilk Lane)Hours:.Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday 8:00 am. - 4:00 p.m. Phone: 594-0748

Library Hours: Wednesday 2:00 p.m.– 7:00 p.m. Saturday 10:00 a.m.– 2:00 p.m. Story Hour– Monday from 10:00 a.m.- 11:00 a.m.

IN AN EMERGENCY: DIAL– 911 **POLICE, FIRE OR AMBULANCE**

Have your physical address properly displayed.

NON EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Knox County Sheriff : 593-9132

Maine State Police 1-800-452-4664

BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE **TOWN.SOUTH-THOMASTON.ME.US**

Find up to date information and the latest news, Board Meetings, and Special Events. Our Land Use, and Parking Ordinance are available to download. The Board's minutes are now being posted on the website. There are also "links" to RSU #13, Vision Appraisal, and much more. Something you would like to see on the website? Contact: webmaster@town.south-thomaston.me.us

DO YOU QUALIFY FOR TAX RELIEF?

Homestead Exemption: This year the exemption is \$13,000.00. You must be a legal resident for a year and have owned homestead property for at least 12 months as of April 1st.

Veterans Exemptions: Veterans who are 62 or older, who served actively during a war time period, or widows of veterans could receive an exemption of \$6,000.00. Homestead & Veteran applications must be on file by April 1st of the current tax year in order to

TOWN OFFICIALS

Alternate Plumbing Inspector:

Christopher Leavitt Office: 372-6363

Solid Waste Committee:

Jeffrey Northgraves 593-9194

John Elliot 596-6584

Emergency Management Director:

Becky Butler 975-9228

TOWN OFFICIALS

Town of South Thomaston Board of Selectmen:

Jeffrey Northgraves, Chair (home) 593-9194

Penelope Alley (home) 594-7416

Vacancy

Administrative Assistant, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Treasurer, & Registrar of Voters:

Barbara J. Black 596-6584

Assistant Administrative Assistant, Deputy Clerk, Treasurer, Tax Collector, and Registrar of Voters:

Terri Baines 596-6584

Assistant Clerk:

Michelle Ames 596-6584

General Assistance Administrator:

Barbara J. Black 596-6584

Animal Control Officers:

Arthur Hutchinson

Please call Knox Communications

for Animal Control Issues at: 593-9132

Fire Department: Emergency Dial 911

Bryan Calderwood, Fire Chief 596-6674

David Elwell, Assistant Chief 594-8675

Robert Grierson, Deputy Chief 596-7241

Fire Wardens (issues burning permits)

Bryan Calderwood, Chief 596-6674

David Elwell, Asst. Chief 594-8675

Robert Grierson, Deputy Chief 596-7241

Gerald Harjula, Captain 354-8026

Arthur Grierson, Captain 594-8873

Ambulance Service: Emergency Dial 911

Rich Norman, Director 594-5428

Pat Dougherty, Asst. Director 594-9305

E-911 Coordinator:

Arthur Grierson 594-8873

Road Commissioner:

Gerald Grierson 594-5493

Budget Committee:

John Duncan, Kennedy Wilson, Charles Hartman, Rebecca

Geesey, Gayle Gallant & Moira Paddock

Planning Board: Roger Young, Chair, Dianne Darling, Gerald

Forcier, Eileen Skarka, & Edward Gallant. Alternates: Charles

Hartman, Cheryl Waterman

Board of Appeals: Rich Norman, Chair, Edward St.Charles,

Rolf Winters, Kennedy Wilson, Kent Woodward. Alternates:

David Robichaud, Barbara Noyes

Knox County Budget Committee:

Dorothy Meriwether 594-7873

Code Enforcement Officer & Plumbing Inspector:

Lawrence Terrio Office: 593-9331 Home: 596-0545

Assessor's Agent:

Horace "Bert" Taylor Office: 593-9331

RSU # 13 Board of Directors:

South Thomaston: Ruth Anne Hohfeld, Chair 354-6091

Rockland: Steve Dyer, Brian Messing, James Kalloch, Esther

Kilgour & Patricia Wotton **Thomaston:** Vice Chair, Jamie Dou-

bleday, Gregory Hamlin & Julie Sanborn **Owls Head:** Sally

Carleton **St. George:** George Emery & Josiah Wilson **Cushing:**

Loren Andrews

Webmaster:

Arthur Grierson 594-8873