



# **TOWN OF SOUTH THOMASTON**

## **MARCH 2015 NEWSLETTER**



Cheryl Waterman, Chairman  
Dorothy Meriwether  
Dianne Darling

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

### **2015 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MARCH 31ST**

The 2015 Annual Town Meeting will commence at 7:00 PM, Tuesday, March 31, 2015 at the Gilford B. Butler School. The warrant contains 27 articles. In addition to dealing with the 2015 town budget voters will be asked to elect a Selectboard member for a three year term, to replace Dianne Darling who chose not to seek reelection. Moira Paddock, current Budget Committee chair, was the only person to submit nominations papers by the February 17th deadline.

Article 5 asks if voters wish to authorize the Town to purchase the Waldo Tyler property adjacent to the school. Article 6 requests approval to expend up to \$329,000 to expand and renovate Municipal Building/Fire Station to correct several life safety and ADA code deficiencies as well as to address electrical and other problems. Article 7 proposes to amend the Public Landing Ordinance. See related articles in this newsletter for more details regarding these three articles.

### **TOWN FILES SUIT TO RECOVER FUNDS**

The Town filed a lawsuit on February 13th in Knox County Superior Court against former fire chief Wayne Brown and former department member Colin Grierson. The suit seeks that nearly \$15,000 of former Firemen's Association funds be turned over to the Town, as was directed by the association's May 2007 dissolution vote. The money was to be used to help with the purchase of a new fire truck.

The funds had been in bank accounts controlled by the association. The lawsuit states that on July 15, 2010, Brown inappropriately withdrew a total of \$14,783 from the association's accounts. Five former members of the defunct association sent a letter in May to the attorney general stating that Brown had no authority to withdraw the money.

The suit states that numerous requests from the Town that the funds be turned over to the Town have been met with various responses from the defendants that include "avoidance, evasiveness, denials of knowledge about the status of the funds, assertions that the funds are being withheld contingent upon the Town's purchase of a class A pumper fire truck, and refusals to respond to numerous letters mailed by ordinary and certified mail". Brown previously told Administrative Assistant John Spear that "he had no idea where the funds were". Brown was also quoted in the Bangor Daily News as stating "that he does not recall if he withdrew the money".

Brown and Grierson's attorney, Walter McKee, has filed a response to the complaint denying the allegations.

### **WESKEAG BRIDGE REPLACEMENT**

The Maine DOT held a preliminary hearing at the Municipal Building on February 3rd to solicit local input regarding the replacement of the Route 73 Weskeag Bridge that is planned for 2016 or 2017. The two major topics of discussion were if the new bridge should include a sidewalk and if a one lane temporary bridge should be built for use during the construction period. In a show of hands straw poll, nearly all of the 25 residents in attendance supported the inclusion of a sidewalk. Upon learning that a new bridge could be built in approximately a month in the offseason, saving as much as \$400,000, if a temporary bridge was not built and a detour utilizing Westbrook Street was utilized, the attendees nearly unanimously supported that approach.

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## TYLER HOUSE PURCHASE TO BE CONSIDERED

Article 6 on the Annual Town Meeting warrant asks voters if they wish to expend up to \$20,000 to purchase the Waldo Tyler house property that is located adjacent to the Gilford B. Butler School at 44 Spruce Head Road. The actual purchase price of the property, which consists of a dilapidated structure situated on a .2 acre parcel, is \$10,000. The remaining funds, up to a maximum of \$10,000, will be used to demolish the structure and for associated legal and other related costs.

The Selectboard is making no recommendation concerning this article, but felt that the Town Meeting should have the opportunity to consider it; particularly in light of the fact that under current law, ownership of the Gilford Butler School would in all likelihood revert to the Town if RSU 13 discontinued use of the facility.

## PUBLIC LANDING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

The Selectboard is proposing that the Public Landing Ordinance be amended. The current ordinance, which was enacted on March, 26, 2013, is imprecise and difficult to enforce. The proposed amendments result in a significant rewrite. A copy of the proposed amendments can be obtained at the Town Office or on the Town's website.

## ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT JOHN SPEAR TO RETIRE

Administrative Assistant John Spear announced at the January 13th Selectboard meeting that he plans to retire effective May 8th. Spear noted in his resignation letter that when he interviewed for the position in November 2013 he indicated he was interested in serving for only a short period of time, two years at most.

Applicants for Spear's successor are now being sought. The Board changed the title of the position to Town Administrator to more accurately reflect the positions duties. The title change has no legal implications and should not be confused with the title of Town Manager, which does have legal implications.

## NEWSLETTER THREE TIMES PER YEAR

To reduce costs the Town newsletter will be issued three times per year as opposed to quarterly. One issue will be in March and mailed with the Town Report. In July/August a second issue will be mailed with tax bills. The third will be mailed in October/November and will be the only issue mailed as a stand alone.

The Town will also be setting up an email list to electronically mail newsletters, meeting agendas and other information. If you are interested in being on this electronic distribution list please email [deputyt@midcoast.com](mailto:deputyt@midcoast.com).

### TOWN OFFICE 2015 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

2015 Holidays	Date Observed
New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	January 19
President's Day	February 16
Patriots Day	April 20
Memorial Day	May 25
Independence Day	July 3
Labor Day	September 7
Columbus Day	October 12
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	November 26
Christmas Day	December 25

**WANTED**— Call the Town Office at 596-6584 for information.

- Emergency Management Director
- Health Officer
- Fire Department and Ambulance Service Members
- Library Volunteers
- Members for Appeals Board and Cemetery Committee

### TOWN WEBSITE

Visit the Town's website. Lots of information including news and announcements of upcoming meetings. Access it at anytime. If you have suggestions regarding the site, including what additional information could be added, please email Terri Baines at [deputyt@midcoast.com](mailto:deputyt@midcoast.com) or call her at 596-6584.

# TOWN OF SOUTH THOMASTON NEWSLETTER

## PROPOSED MUNICIPAL BUILDING RENOVATION

Voters at the Annual Town Meeting will be requested to approve expending up to \$329,000 to expand and renovate the Municipal Building/Fire Station. As was reported in the November 2014 newsletter, the Selectboard established an ad hoc committee to examine and make recommendations regarding how best to rectify several life safety and disability access code deficiencies at the Municipal Building. The Committee membership includes Selectperson Cheryl Waterman, Fire Chief Bryan Calderwood, Ambulance Director Pat Dougherty, Budget Committee Member Don Protheroe, Administrative Assistant John Spear and local architect John Hansen.

The initial concern, identified by the State Fire Marshal's Office, was lack of proper egress from the second floor meeting room in the Fire Department section of the building. Wanting to avoid a "band aid" approach and to make sure all issues were addressed, the Town requested Hansen to thoroughly inspect the facility and identify all code deficiencies. After learning the scope of the facility's shortcomings, which include severe electrical problems in addition to code violations, the Committee concluded that the only rational approach was to undertake a major renovation.

cont. on page 4

## HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION, DO YOU HAVE YOURS

If you are a homeowner and have been a year round resident for a year or more you should check to make sure you have a homestead exemption on your property tax bill. Go to the home page on the town's website and in the box in the lower left hand corner click commitment Book and then 2014 Commitment Book by Alphabet. Scroll down to your name for your primary residence. If you have a homestead exemption it should appear under the column titled *Exemption*.

You also could look at your tax bill for your residence. In the box in the upper right hand corner of the tax bill the number 10,000 should appear to the right of the word exemption. The number could be greater than 10,000 if you have other exemptions, such as a veterans exemption.

### OPERATIONAL HOURS

#### Town Office

Mon, Wed, Thurs 8:30 - 5:00  
Tuesday 8:30 - 6:00  
Closed Friday  
Phone: 596-6584 Fax: 596-7529  
E-mail: sthomstn@midcoast.com

#### Demolition Debris Facility

Wed, Sat 9:00 - 4:00  
A sticker is required for residents and vouchers are available at the Town Office.

#### Transfer Station (Buttermilk Drive)

Tues, Weds, Thurs, Sat. 8:00 - 4:00  
Phone: 594-0748

#### Library

Monday 11:00 - 4:00  
Wednesday 2:00 - 7:00  
Saturday 10:00 - 2:00  
Story Hour, Monday 10:00  
Phone 596-0022

## EMERGENCY (E911) SIGNS

Blue or green emergency house number signs are available at the Town Office. They cost about \$8.00 to \$11.00, depending on size and the number of digits. These signs are critical for emergency responders to be able to locate you quickly, especially at night or in inclement weather.

## NEW FEMA FLOOD MAPS DELAYED

FEMA has delayed implementing the new proposed flood insurance maps for Knox County. The maps were to become effective in July but due to a number of appeals, they have been delayed for a year.

## VOLUNTARY TAX CLUB

Voluntary Tax Club Booklets are available at the town office. Anyone interested in participating should contact the town office at 596-6584 for 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.

# TOWN OF SOUTH THOMASTON NEWSLETTER-DIRECTORY

## Selectboard

Cheryl Waterman, Chair	Cell: 691-5449
Dorothy Meriwether	Home :594-7873
Dianne Darling	Home: 354-0184

## RSU # 13 Board of Directors Representative

Christine Curtis	Home: 596-0252
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## RSU # 13 Superintendent

John MacDonald	596-6620
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## Administrative Assistant, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Treasurer, Registrar & General Asst Administrator

John A. Spear	596-6584
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## Deputy Clerk, Treasurer, Tax Collector, and Registrar

Terri-Lynn Baines	596-6584
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## Deputy Assistant

Michelle Ames	596-6584
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## Animal Control Officer (ACO)

Robert Robinson	593-9132
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## Call Knox Communications ACO issues

## Fire Department: Emergency Dial 911

Bryan Calderwood, Fire Chief	596-6674
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David Elwell, Deputy Chief	542-4797
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Gerald Harjula, Assistant Chief	354-8026
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*All 3 are Fire Wardens and can issue burning permits*

## Ambulance Service: Emergency Dial 911

Pat Dougherty, Director	594-9305
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Rich Norman, Asst. Director	594-5428
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## Emergency Management Director:

Vacant	596-6674
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## Library Director

Pennie Alley	596-0022
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## E-911 Coordinator

Arthur Grierson	Home: 594-8873
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## Road Commissioner

Gerald Grierson	Home:594-5493
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## Budget Committee

Donald Protheroe, Donna Withington, Gary Skarka, Gayle Gallant, Moira Paddock, Sonja Sleeper and Walter Reitz

Planning Board Roger Young, Chair, Eileen Skarka, Christine Curtis, Edward Gallant and Ruth Rinklin. Alternates: Gregory Peet and Jeffery Northgraves.

Board of Appeals Rich Norman, Chair, Rolf Winters, John Hansen and Barbara Noyes. Alternate: Charles Hartman

## Knox County Budget Committee

Dorothy Meriwether	Home: 594-7873
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## Code Enforcement Officer

John Snow	Cell: 390-0054
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## Plumbing Inspector

Lawrence Terrio	Home: 596-0545
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Terry Brackett, Alternate LPI

## Assessor's Agent

RJ D — Kevin McCormick	596-6584
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## Solid Waste Committee

Dianne Darling	Home: 354-0184
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Gordon "Skip" Connell	Home: 594-1801
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## Georges River Shellfish Warden

Neil Pollis	Cell: 542-4281
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<u>Knox County Sheriff (non-emergency)</u>	593-9132
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<u>Maine State Police (non-emergency)</u>	1-800-452-4664
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## MUNICIPAL BUILDING ( cont. from page 3)

The proposed renovations are depicted on a plan prepared by John Hansen dated December 23, 2015. It includes "gutting" all 1st and 2nd floor interior partitions in the public safety side of the building. Reconstructing life safety code compliant interior partitions on the first floor will create a reconfigured interior. The reconfiguration would include an office for both the Fire Department and Ambulance Service, a multi purpose meeting/training room and a bathroom. The meeting room would include a kitchen. The bathroom would include a decontamination shower. Additional first floor space would be dedicated for the construction of a life safety and ADA code compliant hallway that would bridge the elevation differential between the public safety part of the building and the town offices. The second floor would be eliminated, save for an open mezzanine use for storage purposes only.

To create the space needed to construct the areas described above the proposal calls for the addition of a 16' by 72' bay to be added on to the southwest side of the existing building. During the construction process several electrical problems that plague the building will be addressed as well as energy efficacy issues.

The Committee evaluated other options including, (1) attempting to devise a method to correct the code violations without reconfiguring the existing interior layout, (2) constructing an outbuilding instead of adding on a bay and (3) building an entirely new facility. These options were determined to be ineffective or, in the latter case, cost prohibitive.

On a related note, at its December 15 2014 meeting the Selectboard issued instructions that the 2nd floor mezzanine may no longer be used except for storage purposes. This means that the Fire Department has no appropriate and dedicated space to conduct its meetings and training activities.