



Bulletin

Vol. 1 May 14, 2021

Annual Budget Town Meeting

This year's Annual Budget Town Meeting to adopt the FY 2021-2022 budget will be held by secret ballot on Tuesday June 8th rather than at an open Town Meeting. Polls will be open from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm at the West Bath Fire Department located at 192 State Road.

Absentee ballots are currently available for this election.

If you would like additional information about how to vote, or if you would like to request an absentee ballot, please contact Town Clerk, Karly Perry at townclerk@westbathmaine.gov, or call the Town Office at (207) 443-4342.

A Referendum Guide containing information on each budget article is available at www.westbath.org.

Town Meeting Informational Sessions

The Board of Selectmen will review the Annual Budget Town Meeting warrant and answer questions at a hearing to be held Tuesday May 18th at 6:00 pm at the fire department. To submit a question ahead of time, please contact the Town Administrator, Kristine Poland at townadministrator@westbathmaine.gov, or call the Town Office.

The West Bath School Board will review and answer questions about the education budget at a remote meeting which will be held Wednesday May 19th at 4:30. Public access information for the meeting may be viewed by clicking on the calendar link at www.westbath.org.

Comprehensive Plan Update and Call for Committee Members

West Bath will continue the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan which was most recently approved by the Town in 2006. The project was put on hold due to limitations on gatherings imposed by the State during the pandemic.

A Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning document which captures the vision of where a community wants to be at some point in the future. In Maine, Comprehensive Plans typically establish town policies dealing with issues such as transportation, natural resources management,

municipal capital investment, outdoor recreation, working waterfront access and marine resources, and land use. Different communities in Maine have differing priorities, and the final plan will reflect a vision that is unique to West Bath.

The Midcoast Economic Development District (MCEDD) has been asked about providing planning and consulting services throughout the process. The Planning Board will also continue a thorough review of the Town's Land Use and Site Development Review Ordinances to coincide with the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The goal is to present ordinance amendments that match the goals outlined in the updated plan.

If you are interested in serving on the Comprehensive Plan Committee, please contact Karly at townclerk@westbathmaine.gov, or call or stop by the Town Office to request a committee appointment application.

Members will be appointed to the committee by the Board of Selectmen at their first meeting in July.

Proposed Property Revaluation

Maine Revenue Services recommends that municipalities go through the revaluation process at least every 10 years, or when the certified ratio drops below 70%, or when the difference in valuation between similar properties is greater than 20%.

Article 5 on this year's Annual Budget Town Meeting warrant asks the Town to appropriate \$150,000 from the Long-term Capital Improvement Fund to conduct a revaluation of all real estate and personal property. The Board of Selectmen and the members of the Budget Advisory Committee recommend approval. In addition to equalizing property values, the revaluation process will allow the Town to streamline the assessing software needed to track valuations and create tax bills. Town Office staff currently use two programs that have difficulty interacting with one another. Elimination of one of these programs will reduce errors and simplify administration. This can only be done effectively during the revaluation process.

A revaluation does not necessarily result in higher property taxes. West Bath's last revaluation took effect in 2007. At that time, the mill rate fell from \$17.85 per thousand dollars of valuation to \$8.70. For a property valued at \$200,000, the annual taxes decreased from \$3,570 to \$1,740.

Transfer Station Access

Resident decals for access to the transfer station during West Bath hours of operation are available at the Town Office. The stickers help Casella's staff to recognize West Bath residents and taxpayers. There is no fee for a sticker. Dedicated hours for West Bath are Tuesdays from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm and Saturdays from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm.