

2013

## Town of Union "Mini Newsletter" Winter 2013

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# TOWN OF UNION

WINTER 2013

Info

## INFORMATIONAL MEETING FEB 26

It is that time of year again for our annual Informational meeting!

**6:30 PM, SHARP! Out no later than 8:00PM!**

This will be our fourth year of these informational meetings and if you have never been please think about coming. You have the opportunity to ask questions that are not normally allowed in a formal setting at Town Meeting.

Questions about budgets, roads, taxes and everything except personnel issues are allowed.

**"LOCAL GOVERNMENT BEGINS WITH YOU! BE PART OF IT"**



**Bring a dessert to share, the Town will provide coffee and water.**

### FOUNDERS DAY IN JEOPARDY

For the last few years the Board of Selectmen have handled all the affairs of the Union Founders Day. Several of our Board members are busy with their work

during the summer and are unable to dedicate the time to do this.

We need volunteers, a civic group, individuals, etc to keep this going. The Board will assist the group as much as it can.

Please contact a Board member or Jay if interested.

**GET TOWN NEWS AND INFORMATION DELIVERED TO YOUR E-MAIL BOX! UNION.MAINE.GOV**

Sign up for all three lists.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN AUGUSTA?

We have all heard the Governor's proposals, and they are just that proposals!

But let's talk about the big one that affects us the most.

**REVENUE SHARING!** The Governor has proposed "suspending" revenue sharing to

all cities and towns for two years. Once it is gone it never comes back.

Most people do not understand revenue sharing and what it is.

Many States have local sales and income taxes, but Maine does not allow that. Back 50 or so

years ago the Maine legislature agreed to have the State collect all sales and income taxes and reimburse towns 5% of those collected taxes. This is not a fixed dollar amount but fluctuates with the economy. When collections are low, less is reimbursed to the towns.

# SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTERS



**E-NEWS  
DELIVERED TO  
YOU!**

**SEARCHING  
HIGH AND LOW  
FOR TRUTH,  
JUSTICE AND  
THE AMERICAN  
WAY!**



Almost everyone now has a computer or access to one at a school or library.

There is no excuse for not knowing what is going on in your schools and government.

The Town of Union has an e-mail list where you can get the newsletters, meeting notices and more sent direct to your electronic mailbox.

Since arriving here about three years ago, one of my goals has been to get information out to taxpayers on what is going on

in Town. I can assure you that if you get it through the rumor mill it is either outright wrong or diluted so badly. You will never know the real story!

We have instituted the yearly information meeting. (See article in this addition.) We now do regular newsletters both by snail mail and electronic format.

By going to our web site and signing up for e-mail notifications you will have updated agendas, newsletters and other

important matters happening in Town. There are times when traditional notifications in newspapers and postings are not timely.

When you go to the web site make sure you check all three categories if you want all the information. If you just check agendas that is all you will get. We do not use the e-mails for any other purpose. You are not able to reply to others. It is for outgoing information only.

# A SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH!

Being in government assures you many surprises, one of the most concerning to me is the old "rumor mill".

Maybe it is the times and everyone wants to complain about government and some feel they need to embellish the facts a bit.

I think we could write a book around here on the most outlandish things that were heard

on the street. This information comes from people who sometimes you least expect it from.

Which brings me to the point of this little story; if you hear it on the street it probably has been twisted so much it resembles little of the facts.

I can't urge you enough to come in and ask questions. I am available most days and you

can always send me an e-mail.

You have a five member Board of Selectmen who can clarify most issues and who are in contact with me on a daily basis.

I believe every taxpayer has the right to have a straight and honest answer, and most of the time you won't get it on the street. Call us!

# PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

It is the middle of the winter! As of this writing we have not had any major storms but one is on the horizon for this week.

The little one inch storms have been plentiful though and are almost as expensive as 5-10 inch storms. We are

right on track financially at the moment, so let's hope we don't have too many blizzards!

Each year we are bound to take a few mailboxes down, and each newsletter I put something in about mailboxes. You don't want

them off the post and we don't want them to be hit or knocked off either. If your box has been knocked off from snow loads or even hit more than once, you need to contact the public works garage late winter and early spring and we will work with you to place your box in a safer place. *Cont pg 4*

# AUGUSTA Continued from page 1



So Revenue Sharing (RS) is probably one of the fairest ways to put money back to where it came from, you the taxpayer!

For the last 10 years the State has been unable to balance its budget and has raided RS. They don't call it a tax increase but if you are taking more from the taxpayer isn't that what it really is?

Local government has continually balanced its budgets, we have not overspent like Augusta, so it is not right for them to steal from us to take care of their mistakes.

I think it is admirable that the Governor wants to pay back the hospitals and I believe the State has a moral obligation to do so. But should they do that by cutting spending in Augusta or taking your RS and causing your taxes to go up?

In addition to Revenue Sharing the State has proposed a number of municipal raids, including taking your excise tax money, eliminating the homestead exemption and many other back door raids on your funds.

If you agree that local control is the way to go you need to contact your representatives and scream loud!

Go to Maine.gov and look up any politician you wish to speak to. You can speak to your local reps or others across the State.

Tell them to quit spending and trying to balance their budget on the backs of the property tax.

## The Board of Selectmen

have no control over school and county budgets.

## CIVICS 101

In the past "Civics 101" we have spoken about Town employees and the role of the Board of Selectmen, as well as the role of the Board as policy makers.

Over the years I have been surprised about the lack of knowledge on how school and county budgets are compiled.

Many citizens believe the Board of

Selectmen has the power to change the budget at SAD 40, they do not. This budget is set by the School Board and an assessment (bill) is given to the Town. School budgets are about 80% of your tax bill, yet very few people attend school budget meetings or even contact their school board members.

The Knox County budget is set in a

similar way, but by three Commissioners. The Town is given an assessment and we have to pay.

So when you get your tax bill each year please realize that 80-90% of that amount is not controlled by the Town.

On the web site we list who your representatives are.

# PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

Working with you on this saves us all time and money in the long run.

While I am still on mailboxes, please check those wooden posts, many times they begin to rot and it takes very little to knock them over.

## SAND AND MORE SAND!

Yup we have had a couple of issues with one of our sanders and it looks like we made it a dirt road. Hopefully we have this issue contained.

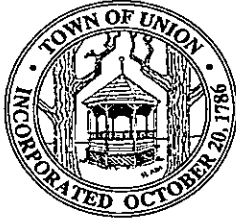
**DIRT ROADS:** Dirt roads are great in the summer and winter but spring mud season is another story.

Maine is known for mud season

and no matter what we do in the PW department your roads will get muddy.

We can't be at all roads the same time and we evaluate them on condition, traffic and alternate routes. Let's hope we have one thaw this year and not two or three mud seasons this year like we did last year. Last

but not least, if we stay on our current path of road repair and paving we should and SHOULD being the word here, be able to pave a dirt road in 4-5 years! What road first will depend on lots of factors.



**TOWN OF  
UNION**

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Town Office - 785-3658 Fax 785-3652

Public Works 785-3411

Fire non-emergency 785-4308

Ambulance non-emergency 785-3803

Tri-County Solid Waste (not town operated) 785-2261

Town Office Hours are Mon-Thurs 8-4  
Fridays 8-12 and the first and third Tuesdays  
8-6.

We have two openings on the Planning and Appeals Board, if interested please fill out a statement of interest form found on the web site or stop to pick one up.



Town of Union  
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