



HARPSWELL BULLETIN

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2017 TAX RATE

The Selectmen/Assessors set the 2017 tax rate, or mill rate, at \$6.46 for every \$1,000 of assessed value. This is an increase of less than one percent (.9%) in the tax rate compared to the prior year amounting to \$6.00 more in property tax for every \$100,000 of assessed value.

HOW TO PAY YOUR PROPERTY TAX BILL

There are several methods available for paying your property tax bill. 1) Cash—stop by and pay in person; 2) Check—in person or via mail; 3) credit or debit cards—in person only with a 2.5% fee assessed for each transaction; and 4) a web-based payment service called AndroPay available through the Town's home page by clicking the online services tab—a \$1 fee will be assessed for each transaction. The first installment of the 2017 tax bill is due on Friday, September 15 with the second installment being due on Friday, December 15. A 6% interest rate will be charged on the unpaid portion of any installment after its due date. For future reference, the Tax Collector is authorized to accept pre-payments of taxes as a service to taxpayers for anyone who wishes to pay taxes in advance of receiving a tax bill.

HARPSWELL'S PROPERTY TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Harpowell provides property tax assistance to qualifying persons who reside in Harpswell and who have applied for and received the State of Maine Residents Property Tax Fairness Credit. Residents must file Form PTFC with Maine Revenue Services. In addition, residents must also submit an application to the Town's program by **October 15** of each year. Please contact Deputy Town Administrator Terri Sawyer at 833-5771 or tsawyer@town.harpowell.me.us if you have questions about this program.

FEMA PRELIMINARY FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAPS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has released preliminary floodplain maps for Cumberland and York counties that may eventually replace the 1985 versions currently in effect. Harpswell is considering a regional appeal with multiple communities that questions FEMA's approach to coastal flood analysis. The simplified and overly-conservative modeling used by FEMA results in more properties being placed in flood zones in Harpswell than is warranted. Please contact the Code Enforcement Office for more information.



MITCHELL FIELD PIER DEMOLITION

The March Town Meeting approved spending up to \$5 million to demolish the former Navy pier at Mitchell Field. The Town has hired Baker Design Consultants, a marine engineering firm, to develop the documents necessary to put the project out to bid. The Town plans to go to bid for a demolition contractor by the end of the summer so that work can start by late fall. The Town's marine engineering consultant estimates that the project could take up to eighteen months to complete. The Town is working to minimize the disruption of the project on the neighbors and users of Mitchell Field while allowing the contractor flexibility to complete the work efficiently. Additional information is available on the Town's website and will be updated throughout the course of the project. The Town plans to borrow the money for the pier demolition work and to repay the borrowing over a multi-year period.



Paul Plummer (l) and Art Howe (r)

NEW EMPLOYEES

The Town welcomes two new employees to its staff.

Paul Plummer replaces Harbormaster Jim Hays who retired in June after 12 years on the job. Paul was previously employed by the Town of Brunswick where he held the positions of Deputy Harbormaster and Assistant Marine Resource Officer. His qualifications make him an excellent choice as Harpswell's new Harbormaster. Contact info: 833-5771, x 106 or pplummer@town.harpowell.me.us

Art Howe was hired as the Town's first Fire Administrator in July and will be responsible for developing a municipal firefighter assistance program to supplement the work performed by Harpswell's three volunteer fire and rescue organizations. Art was employed most recently, in a municipal capacity, by the City of Portland as Administrator of its Housing Safety Office. Harpswell will be well-served by the experience and background he brings to the Fire Administrator position. Contact info: 833-5771, x 126 or ahowe@town.harpowell.me.us

A. DENNIS MOORE RECYCLING CENTER & TRANSFER STATION

Composting:

For many years Harpswell has promoted and educated the public on the benefits of home composting. After months of planning, the Town has taken the next step and added centralized compost collection to the Recycling Center. As of July 1, anyone wishing to participate can begin collecting food scraps and other compostable household items for deposit. There are new compost hoppers and signage at the facility next to the compactors. The program, with help from Garbage to Garden, is designed to make composting easy and accessible to everyone in Harpswell who wishes to take part.



Shredding: This year the Recycling Center held its first document shredding event. The turnout was quite good, with about 1 ton of material shredded and recycled. The goal is to provide this service to the community on an annual basis.

Fishing Gear: Harpswell's commercial and recreational fishermen now have a no-cost means of gear disposal. Any damaged or obsolete traps, netting, buoys and rope can be taken to the Transfer Station free of charge. All collected materials are either recycled or used to produce energy. Please contact the Transfer Station (833-6447) for disposal guidelines. This program is funded by a multi-agency grant and assistance from Maine Coast Fishermen's Association.

Wildflower & Butterfly Meadow: Last fall a project began that will turn the southern landfill at the Transfer Station into a wildflower meadow. The new meadow will be comprised of plants and flowers native to New England. The meadow will support stressed species of butterflies, bats, bees and birds that have been losing their natural habitat for decades.

Thank you for your continued recycling efforts and support of these new initiatives. If you have renters or guests, please inform them of the Town's recycling guidelines.

GRANT AWARDS

Up to \$72,000 for Pott's Point Upgrades – With a grant from the Maine Department of Transportation and Town matching funds, improvements have been made to the float system at the Town Dock—two new floats were installed in May. In addition, there will be an expansion of the parking area and upgrades to the nearby ramp, which is expected to be elevated. Ramp and parking improvements are scheduled for completion in 2018.

\$61,950 for Home Repairs – The Town of Harpswell, in partnership with Harpswell Aging at Home and Habitat for Humanity, has been awarded a Cumberland County Community Development Block Grant for the repair of 25 homes. Funding will allow income-eligible Harpswell residents, 60 years or older, to have certain home repairs performed by volunteers from the Harpswell Aging at Home organization. The purpose of this grant is to keep Harpswell adults, 60 and over, safe, warm, and dry in their homes. If you know of anyone who needs home repairs, have them call the Town Office at 833-5771 to determine if they are eligible for this no-cost service.

\$61,828 for Orr's-Bailey Islands Fire Department Renovations – The Town was also awarded a Cumberland County Community Development Block Grant for renovations to the Orr's Island fire station. This project involves renovating space on the second floor for use by fire and rescue responders. Improvements will include installing bathroom facilities, bunk rooms, kitchenette, dayroom and exercise/training room. The overall intent is to make changes that will help recruit new responders, retain current responders and provide space for municipal firefighters who will supplement volunteer response efforts.

\$20,000 for Basin Point Road Study – Basin Point Road is one of the longest Town roads and heavily used for access to a number of residences and businesses. It is periodically flooded and the frequency of flooding is likely to increase with sea level rise and more severe storms. The Conservation Commission in conjunction with the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust is spearheading a study to look at (1) how the road can be modified to minimize future impacts of flooding and (2) the impact of increased saltwater in the wetlands and pond in the Curtis Farm Preserve and how the transition from a freshwater to a saltwater environment can best be managed. The study is funded primarily by a grant from the Maine Coastal Program.

\$15,000 for the Mackerel Cove Boat Launch – Mackerel Cove, on Bailey Island, is not only a highly photographed site, it is also a heavily used harbor and beach for commercial and recreational purposes. The Town has a parking area, beach, picnic table and boat launch. With a \$15,000 grant from the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and up to \$10,000 of Town funding, the existing 140-foot long paved boat ramp will be reconstructed with concrete in the lower 40-foot section and pavement in the upper 100-foot section. The ramp will also be widened from 16 feet to 20 feet.

\$8,000 for Mitchell Field Natural Resources Assessment – Although the Town has owned Mitchell Field for more than 15 years, it has never systematically identified and evaluated the natural resources on the site. In preparation for a review of the Mitchell Field Master Plan starting this fall, the Town obtained a grant from the Davis Foundation for an assessment of the natural resources and invasive species on the entire parcel. A draft of that assessment and an accompanying invasive species management plan has been completed and will be discussed at an upcoming public workshop. A copy of the draft assessment is available on the Town's website.

\$6,570 for Harpswell Community Garden at Mitchell Field – A number of grant sources have contributed to the garden's incredible success! Grant sources are Harpswell Heritage Land Trust - \$5,000, New England Grassroots Environment Fund - \$750, UME Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Development Fund - \$500, and Johnny's Selected Seeds - \$320. For more information visit the Community Garden's Facebook page [facebook.com/harpswellgarden](https://www.facebook.com/harpswellgarden) or the Town's website.