

# HARPSWELL *BULLETIN*

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November '13

Town Web Site: [www.harpswell.maine.gov](http://www.harpswell.maine.gov)

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## **Special Town Meeting, Saturday, December 7, 10am, to Consider 24/7 Paramedic Service**

A Special Town Meeting has been scheduled for Saturday, December 7, 10:00am, at Harpswell Community School, 308 Harpswell Islands Road. The following article will be on the warrant for voter consideration: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$34,800 from unassigned fund balance to increase the dedicated paramedic coverage provided by Mid Coast Health Services to the Town from 5 days a week/12 hours a day to 7 days a week/24 hours a day for the three-month period starting January 1, 2014 and ending March 31, 2014. (Any decision to maintain this increased level of service after March 31, 2014 would require subsequent Town Meeting approval.)

### **The Issue**

In late October of this year, the Town's Fire and Rescue Committee (composed of the Fire and Rescue Chiefs from each of the fire and rescue organizations) recommended that the Board of Selectmen implement around-the-clock dedicated paramedic coverage as of January 1, 2014. The recommendation is a result of a critical situation occurring in the Orr's & Bailey Island (OBI) district and difficulties in maintaining adequate volunteer coverage being experienced by all three rescue organizations. With the resignation of two emergency medical responders occurring at the end of December, the OBI organization will be left with only one other trained EMS responder. Alternatives for providing coverage for the OBI district were explored, including having Harpswell Neck and Cundy's Harbor volunteers provide coverage, but none proved to be viable at this time.

### **Background**

In April 2012, the Town of Harpswell entered into a five-year contract with Mid Coast Health Services/Mid Coast Hospital to provide dedicated paramedic-level response Monday through Friday from 6am to 6pm for emergency medical calls. This dedicated paramedic service was instituted after a year-long strategic planning process which examined the issues facing the three volunteer organizations responsible for providing emergency medical service (EMS) in the Town. These three volunteer organizations—Harpswell Neck Fire and Rescue, Orr's & Bailey Islands Fire and Rescue and Cundy's Harbor Volunteer Fire Department—were experiencing particular difficulty in providing consistent emergency medical response during weekdays when volunteers were often working outside of the community. The dedicated paramedic service was viewed as supplemental and critical to supporting the existing volunteer organizations in fulfilling their missions to provide emergency medical services.

### **Contract Cost and Other Terms**

In addition to a dedicated paramedic being located at the Harpswell Town Office five days a week for 12 hours a day and responding to calls in the intercept vehicle known as Mid Coast 2 (MC-2), the current contract provides for a regionally located paramedic and intercept vehicle (MC-1) to serve as a responder when MC-2 is not providing dedicated coverage or as a back-up when MC-2 is on a call. Additionally, the contract obligates Mid Coast Hospital to provide training and administrative support including a review of all EMS calls for quality assurance purposes. The contract cost for 5 days a week/12 hours a day coverage in year one (April 2012 –March 2013) and year two (April 2013 – March 2014) has been \$123,000 each year. The proposed cost to cover additional hours for 24/7 dedicated paramedic coverage over a three-month period from January 1 to March 31, 2014 will be \$34,800, primarily to cover added personnel costs. (Note that the cost of a new one-year contract for 24/7 dedicated paramedic coverage from April 2014 – March 2015 is still under discussion with Mid Coast Hospital and will be a warrant article at the Annual Town Meeting slated for Saturday, March 15, 2014).

### **What does the Year One Data Show?**

In its first full year of operation, MC-2 (the dedicated paramedic at the Town Office) responded to 47% of all EMS calls (191 out of 406 calls) in Harpswell. In addition, 61% of the calls that MC-1 (the regionally located paramedic) responded to were in Harpswell (85 out of 139 calls in the region). Prior to the Town's contract with Mid Coast for dedicated paramedic level service, the average response time for MC-1 was 19 minutes and 40 seconds. In the first year of the contract for dedicated paramedic service, average response time for MC-2 was 9 minutes and 18 seconds. In the most recent quarterly report, MC-2's average response time was 8 minutes and 11 seconds with the average response time for the three combined rescue services being 12 minutes and 58 seconds. The full report and the most recent quarterly report are available on-line at [harpswell.maine.gov](http://harpswell.maine.gov)

### **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Issues Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps**

The Town has received official notification from FEMA of its newly proposed Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). To see how you the proposed mapping may affect your property, please visit the Town's website for a link to an index map which allows you to click on your property's corresponding map for detail. If you have specific questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jason Marshall in the Code Enforcement Office. The Town hopes to schedule a community coordination meeting in Harpswell so that FEMA can present its results and answer property owners' questions directly.

### **Fee Increases**

At the recommendation of the Budget Advisory Committee and after its own review of fees, the Board of Selectmen approved the following new charges effective February 1:

1. Resident recreational shellfish licenses from \$10 to \$20
2. Non-resident recreational shellfish licenses from \$20 to \$30
3. Moorings for residents and taxpayers from \$18 to \$25
4. Moorings for non-residents from \$90 to \$125
5. Rental moorings from \$70 to \$100
6. Propane tank disposal at the Transfer Station will be \$3 for up to 100 lbs. and \$20 for over 100 lbs.
7. Board of Appeals applications: variance requests from \$135 to \$270 and appeals from \$100 to \$200
8. Building permits from \$.12 to \$.20 for structures up to 2,000 square feet; from \$.12 to \$.25 for structures over 2,000 square feet; and a minimum of \$25 for structures under 100 square feet (no square foot fee)
9. 8.5" x 14" copy will be \$.35.

### **Harpswell Heating Assistance**

If you or someone you know needs help with this winter's heating costs, consider contacting Linda Strickland at the Harpswell Town Office, 833-5771, to see about applying for the Town of Harpswell's heating assistance program.

### **Reminder of Tax Payment**

The second and final installment of your 2013 property tax payment is due Monday, December 16, 2013.