



## 2021 TAX RATE

The Selectmen/Assessors set the 2021 tax rate at \$6.76 per \$1,000 of assessed value. This is an increase of .3% in the tax rate compared to the prior year, amounting to \$2 more in property tax for every \$100,000 of assessed value. For example, if your property is assessed at \$300,000 in value, then your property tax bill has increased \$6 from \$2,022 in 2020 to \$2,028 in 2021.

### HOW TO PAY YOUR PROPERTY TAX BILL

There are multiple methods for paying your property tax bill. This year we continue to recommend that you choose one of the following:  
U.S. mail, drop box (located on the Town Office building to the right of the main entrance) or online.

We can accept payment by:

- 1) Check—mail, drop box or in-person;
- 2) Credit or Debit cards—with a 2.5% fee assessed for each transaction;
- 3) Web-based payment service called AndroGov available through the Town's home page by clicking the online services tab—a \$1 fee is assessed for each transaction; and
- 4) Cash—must be in-person.

The first installment of the 2021 tax bill is due Wednesday, September 15, with the second installment due Wednesday, December 15. An interest rate of 3% will be charged on the unpaid portion of any installment after its due date.

### HARPSWELL'S PROPERTY TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Harpswell 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 (PTFC). Residents must file a Maine Income tax form for 2020, including 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 & Treasurer Terri Sawyer at 833-5771 or [tsawyer@town.harpswell.me.us](mailto:tsawyer@town.harpswell.me.us) if you have questions about this program.

### THANK YOU FOR 30 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE

Rosalind Knight retired as Town Clerk at the end of July after serving the Town of Harpswell for 30 years. Roz was hired as Deputy Town Clerk in 1991 working closely with Town Clerk LaVerne Vayo until Verne's retirement. In 1998 Roz was elected to the Office of Town Clerk and served for 23 years in that capacity, being re-elected in every election since her first. Under Roz's leadership and guidance, the Town Clerk's Office was modernized to include the use of voting machines, ending the practice of ballots being hand-counted. She stayed current on election laws and procedures, and diligently trained many election workers over the years to ensure the smooth operation of the polls on voting day. In fact, her team was one of the first in Maine to hold an election in March 2020 under new pandemic protocols.

Roz was also instrumental in overseeing the preservation of the Town's historic records, ensuring they would be protected and accessible. In her resignation letter, she thanked the residents of Harpswell for giving her the opportunity to serve and all of the people who helped her do her job including Deputy Town Clerk Cathy Doughty and the election workers who worked long hours at the polls and understood the importance of their jobs. Thank you, Roz, for your 30 years of public service!



## **PROTECTING HARPSWELL'S PRECIOUS GROUNDWATER**

We all rely on well water in Harpswell, and that can be nerve-racking in times of drought like this year's spring and early summer. All of us depend upon wells which draw upon groundwater. Groundwater has its origins in our precipitation of about 45 inches a year, on average. Precipitation infiltrates the ground and migrates through cracks and seams in the rock below. In forested areas, the precipitation can take a meandering path down tree trunks or off leaves before landing on the ground where it can seep in. Undergrowth and shrubs and fields or pastures also slow runoff. Concrete, asphalt, and roofs, on the other hand, typically send precipitation downhill quickly as runoff, without much infiltration, especially during downpours. While runoff can be collected for certain purposes, it does have the potential to carry pollutants and sediment into our marine waters.

What can we do to protect Harpswell's groundwater? The Harpswell Conservation Commission will help you learn what you can do, such as minimizing impervious surface, to protect your groundwater, your neighbors' groundwater, and the community's groundwater in the face of a growing population and climate change. Harpswell granted 43 permits for new single-family homes in 2020, an increase of 25% from 2019. Permit applications in 2021 are even more robust. Climate change brings with it the potential for protracted droughts (and, paradoxically, flooding rains). From the drought of 1999 - 2003 and again in 2019 - 2020 we learned that in the future, some of us might need new and costly wells. We invite you to community sessions in the coming winter and next spring to learn more. Watch the Town's website, social media, and the local press for information.

## **CAPITAL & SPECIAL PROJECTS**

### **Recycling Center Upgrade**

Phase I upgrades to the Recycling Center will begin on Tuesday, August 24, and take approximately 8-10 weeks for completion. Two new compactors, at a cost of \$164,085, are being purchased from Atlantic Recycling Equipment of Rollinsford, NH. Other improvements include new concrete approaches, drainage upgrades and expansion and reconfiguration of the parking lot and egress area. Site work is being performed by Aceto and Sons Earthwork of Lisbon, ME, at a cost of \$183,657. The new and improved layout will make a heavily used area much safer for residents, vehicles and employees. During construction there may be delays and intervals when the facility is closed temporarily. If that happens, we will try to provide advance notice. Thank you for your patience during these needed upgrades.

### **Mitchell Field Waterfront Improvement**

Improvement of the Mitchell Field waterfront continues to move ahead. The Town is finalizing a grant from the Maine Department of Transportation to fund the construction of a dual-lane, all-tide boat launch and other boating improvements, which may include floats. Construction is planned for 2022. The estimated cost of the project is \$685,000 with a 50/50 split between the Town and State of Maine. See diagram and details on the Town's website under the Mitchell Field tab.

### **Road Construction**

The Town of Harpswell signed a contract in the amount of \$592,823 with Crooker Construction of Topsham, ME to perform capital improvements on Gurnet Landing, Grover Lane and the first 2,200 feet of Basin Point Road. The project is expected to get underway in early August on Gurnet Landing and Grover Lane, with a shift to Basin Point Road after Labor Day. Improvements include reclaiming the existing roadway, fine grading to establish a uniform crown, repaving (base and surface) and upgrading drainage.

### **Cliff Trail Project**

The Cliff Trail project, to make the first half-mile to the head of Strawberry Creek more accessible, is nearing the half-way mark to completion. The Town's contractor, the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC), was impacted by COVID-related delays, difficulty in hiring and equipment breakdowns; however, MCC has made adjustments and considers the Harpswell project to be a top priority. Construction progress to date includes: extensive manual labor, the excavation by equipment of over half the trail; a crushed stone and gravel base laid over a ¼ of the trail, and construction of 3 out of 4 bridges. If you would like to volunteer, please email Recreation Director Gina Perow at [gperow@town.harpswell.me.us](mailto:gperow@town.harpswell.me.us) for sign-up information. The project estimate has been lowered to approximately \$104,000, with \$50,000 being covered by a grant and over \$41,000 by donations.

