

# TOWN OF UNION

<http://www.union.govoffice2.com/>

WINTER 2012

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Informational meeting**

February 27, 6:30 PM

Snow Date Feb, 28th

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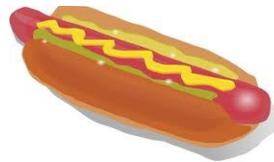
## INFORMATIONAL MEETING FEB 27

When I took this position about three years ago, I suggested to the Board of Selectmen that we have an informational meeting for the citizens of Union. The Board accepted the idea and we have held them ever since.

This is a chance for citizens to come to an informal setting and ask questions about Town Government. Budgets, policies almost anything you wish to talk about is fair game. There are a couple of exceptions: Personnel and any pending legal issues.

This is a great chance for you to get some in-depth answers that are not always allowed at the regular Town Meeting. If you have a question that will need to be researched please contact me before so I can prepare the infor-

mation for the meeting. We hope you can attend. 6:30 PM



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

### MAIL BOXES AND SNOWPLOWS!

There is nothing more frustrating than having your mailbox either hit or knocked off by the weight of the snow. Unfortunately most rural boxes are within

the Town's right of ways. If your mailbox has been lost multiple times it is time to contact us and let the Public Works Department, work with you on re-location. We DO NOT replace mailboxes but will assist you in placement and even bring in some fill to move your box back off the road. Contact PW at 785-3411 after the storm.

**GET TOWN NEWS AND INFORMATION DELIVERED TO YOUR E-MAIL BOX!**  
[union.govoffice2.com/](http://union.govoffice2.com/)

Sign up for all three list.

## REVENUE SHARING AND YOU

Every once in a while you read about Revenue Sharing (RS) but do you know how it works?

First some history; In lieu of cities and towns collecting local income and sales taxes, RS was developed. 5% of the State sales and income taxes were to be

distributed to the Towns based on population. As State revenues increased so did RS but when times were bad RS was reduced to reflect the same.

Since RS was adjusted up and down with the revenues, Towns adjusted their budgets accord-

ingly. However, the State of Maine was not willing to reduce their spending and began to raid YOUR RS dollars!

Now there is talk to take even more RS from the Towns and let the State put it in the general fund - *Continued on page 3*

# SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTERS



**E-NEWS  
DELIVERED TO  
YOU!**

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 a 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 bad. 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.

**INSURANCE  
COVERS  
MAJORITY  
OF NEW TANKER  
TRUCK!**



# FIRE TRUCK EXPLOSION!

I am sure many of you have read in the paper or online about our recent fire on the 1989 tanker truck.

In a nutshell the tanker was being taken to a local garage for repairs when a catastrophic engine failure occurred and caught the entire cab on fire. There were instant flames and we were fortunate that our assistant Fire Chief was not

injured in the incident.

As of this writing the exact cause of the failure has yet to be determined and the insurance companies have investigators looking into it.

The Board of Selectmen approved the receipt of \$175K plus in insurance and authorized an amount not to exceed \$35K to purchase a new tanker that will arrive in 60 to

90 days. We would like to thank Washington Fire Department for loaning us their "soon to be retired" tanker. We have this for about 60 days so hopefully the timing will work out.

The cost of the new vehicle is \$200K, about \$100K less than what a nearby Town just purchased.

# PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

This winter the Public Works Department has been busy trying to keep the equipment repaired in between the snowstorms.

Interesting, although we have not received as much snow this year thus far we have had considerable small

ice/rain /snow storms that have lasted many hours. We are at about the same level in sand and salt use and hours as we were last year.

As readers of these newsletters you know of our frequent breakdowns of aging

Public Works equipment. When we have a breakdown during a storm our normal 1.5 to 2 hour routes become 2.5 to 3 hours. If you live on a less traveled road you may not see a public works truck for several hours as we must turn our priority to roads that  
*Continued bottom of page 3*



# REVENUE SHARING

*Continued from page 1*



is another way of a tax increase on the local property owner.

It was not too many years ago the Town of Union was receiving over \$250K from RS, this year it is projected at \$130K, before they raid even more money

This is YOUR money, money you

pay each week out of your paycheck, money you spend at the local stores, money that belongs to you to keep your taxes low. Make sure you let your elected official in Augusta know you do not want them to raid any more RS money!

The concept of RS is fiscally sound. You have more to spend when the economy is good and less when it is bad. Funds are automatically adjusted just like they should be. Imagine if the State did this to all agencies! There would be no shortfall!

The bottom line is that Maine State Revenue Sharing raids have been one of the major factors of local appropriation increases.

Do you own research and let your political leaders know what you think, and as always please contact me with any questions.

[jayunion@roadrunner.com](mailto:jayunion@roadrunner.com)

**“THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN HAVE ONE EMPLOYEE, THE TOWN MANAGER.”**

## CIVICS 101

I thought it might be interesting to give some insight to how a Town Manager form of government is run.

So in each newsletter I hope to share some facts about local government.

The Town of Union operates under the Town Manager( TM) form of government as set in State statutes.

Union has a five member Board of Selectmen (BOS). The BOS, under State Law, can only act as a group. No one member has authority over another.

The Board of Selectmen have one employee, the Town Manager! The TM has authority over all employees in the Town.

So when you see a Board member

around Town and ask them a question about an employee, there is a good reason they refer you to the TM. They are not only acting under the law, they are protecting the employee and the Town from a potential liability.

Next time I will talk about the BOS and their roles as policy makers and my job( TM) of enforcing them

## PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

*(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)*

-are commuter links and highly traveled. Rest assured that in case of emergency we monitor ambulance and fire calls and all departments have the phone numbers of our crew to get assistance when needed. If an emergency call happens we will be right with the apparatus plowing and sanding.

By the time you receive this the Department will have proposed to the Board the specifications for a new PW truck. In our replacement schedule this was originally scheduled two years ago but was put off for a variety of reasons.

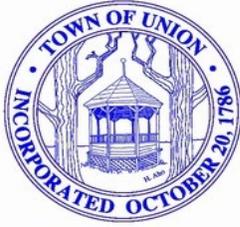
These funds will come from the public works reserve account. In

another words we have been saving for it!

We have been doing research on this vehicle for about a year now, and have looked at both new and used vehicles. Due to the specifications that are needed for plowing sanding operations there is very few if any used vehicles in good con-

condition available.

**\*\* This year the PW department has saved the Town about \$30K by doing its own repairs!**



**TOWN OF**

**UNION**

P.O. BOX 186  
UNION, ME 04862  
JAYUNION@ROADRUNNER.COM  
WWW.UNION.GOVOFFICE2.COM  
Phone: 207-785-3658  
Fax: 207-785-3652  
E-mail:  
JAYUNION@ROADRUNNER.COM

**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 Budget Committee, if interested please fill out a statement of interest form found on the web site or stop to pick one up. These terms will be until the June Town Meeting.



Town of Union  
P.O. Box 186  
Union, ME 04862

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