

Town of Union
Fall 2020

We certainly have had an unusual year. COVID-19 changed the world and changed everything we do. From late voting in July, to an August outdoor Town Meeting, to all the protocols we must now go through, it has been challenging.

We thank you for all your patience and understanding as we get through this. It may not be easy, but we will prevail!

TAX BILLS: Yes, they are enclosed and yes, the tax rate has been lowered. We took a very conservative rate in revenues and still lowered your taxes. Thanks to our Assessors office for working hard to get our valuations in order. If you have any questions regarding the value of your property, please call Jim Murphy or e-mail him at assessor@union.maine.gov.

COVID-19: Union staff has worked hard to find grants, distribute PPE and keep residents safe. No matter your political feelings, we want you all to be safe. We have provided hand sanitizing stations to all businesses in town who requested them. We have provided face masks to businesses and individuals and will continue to do so as supplies allow.

Our office hours will stay the same for the next couple of months as we watch how the fall pandemic numbers fluctuate. Hours are posted on the front page of our website. Please call if you need an appointment outside our regular business hours; we will do our best to accommodate you within reason.

ROADS: The Board of Selectmen will be holding a workshop in November and would like to hear from you regarding the road on which you live. If you have questions or concerns please e-mail me at townmanager@union.maine.gov; they will be compiled and sent to the Board of Selectmen. You will be able to follow the meeting on zoom, but since it is a workshop you will only be able to listen in, hence the request for comments in advance.

SIDEWALK: The sidewalk article will be on the November written ballot, determining whether or not you the voter would like to continue with Phase I of the sidewalk proposal on Depot Street to Ayer Hill. It costs about \$500,000 with \$400,000 from State and Federal Funds. The Town of Union will spend around \$100,000, \$70,000 of which has already been encumbered for planning and engineering costs.

Future phases will go to the four corners (intersection of Heald Highway, Town House Road, and Sennebec Road), Ayer Park and a trail, Common Road, and eventually to Union Elementary School. All this is a few years down the road, or in this case, sidewalk.

As sure as the sun will rise tomorrow, you will hear from a vocal group that opposes the sidewalk article. There will probably be some phone calls and mailings from this group, and I can assure you their facts may not be as straightforward as they should be. If you have questions regarding any of this, please send me an e-mail or give me a call, and I will explain the project and program.

EXCITING PROJECTS: By the time you get this newsletter, you will have heard about a major solar project on Route 131. It is a projected \$14.5 million project, and you can follow it on our website and Planning Board links.

Speaking of websites, we are excited to be introducing a new design that allows more content and is compatible with mobile devices.

Paving will begin early next spring on North Union Road, Sennebec Road, and others.

Stay informed by checking out our website and subscribing to our list serve.
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ELECTIONS: If you have not yet heard we have a presidential election coming up – Tuesday, November 3, 2020. Due to COVID-19 and related protocols, we urge you to absentee vote – not only for everyone’s safety but also to avoid some pretty darn long lines that could happen.

REQUESTING AN ABSENTEE BALLOT: The Town is encouraging residents to consider voting by absentee ballot for the safety of both the voters and election workers. To minimize interaction with others during this public health pandemic (COVID-19), some voters may prefer voting by absentee ballot. Casting an absentee ballot is convenient and secure. Absentee ballots will be available the first week of October.

Union voters wishing to obtain an absentee ballot can order their ballots now by one of three options:

1. Order via website <https://www1.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/AbsenteeBallot/index.pl>
2. Mail or deliver absentee request form to the Town Office
<https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming/index.html>
3. Call the Town Office at 785-3658 to request an absentee ballot

The statewide deadline to request an absentee ballot is by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 30, 2020 (check our COVID hours). Please request and return your ballot early enough to allow for postal mail delivery time.

RETURNING YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT: All completed absentee ballots must be received in the Town Office by 8:00 p.m. on November 3. You can return your ballot a few ways:

1. BY MAIL – Please request and return your ballot early enough to allow for postal mail delivery time. Please factor in time both to have the ballot mailed to you and have it mailed back (at least 5-7 days each way).
2. OUTSIDE DROP BOX – Look for the red, white, and blue absentee ballot drop box at the Town Office entrance, 567 Common Road. This is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is secure, locked and constantly monitored by a security camera.
3. IN PERSON – The Town Office at 567 Common Road.

EARLY VOTING AT THE TOWN OFFICE: The Town Office’s Early Voting Polling Place will be set up in the Town Office. This will open approximately the second week of October.

HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE: If you would like a voter registration application mailed to you, you can request it by calling the Town Office at 785-3658.

For information on how to fill out the application and related requirements
<https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/upcoming/index.html>

If you would like to register to vote in person you may do so by coming to the Town Office, located at 567 Common Road during our business hours.

The State of Maine allows residents to register to vote any time leading up to and including the day of the election. Proof of residency and proof of identity is required, such as a driver’s license indicating a physical street address in Union (not a post office box mailing address).