

TOWN OF MADAWASKA – January 6, 2015

## GENERAL COMMENTS - RESOURCE COMMITTEE

The needs of the community remain a priority despite the shifting tax burden. Town services and activities were reviewed by gathering information, interviews, surveys, public meetings, and resource committee member input. This work began in late August 2014 and has continued into December 2014. While our work as a resource committee has been extensive, it is not comprehensive and exhaustive. More questions have been raised and much remains to be done. This will have to be done by the respective boards and possibly delegated to action committees.

Generally, there appears to be a deep-seated sense of frustration in a rather large segment of our community which in turn leads to apathy and repressed anger. This widespread apathy and frustration is evident in a large part of our country as was evident in the state and federal elections. Yes, Maine did lead the nation in percentage of voter turnout but nationally, of the 243 million who were eligible to vote, a mere 33% used their enormous right and power – the worst showing in 72 years. Maine and Madawaska are but a tiny microcosm of a national lowering of standards which places us well down the ladder of academic success in all disciplines – a trend which we feel will eventually see us taking a back seat to other foreign powers. Hopefully we will be different with effort.

In Madawaska, we had better participation on Election Day. How do we get a similar participation in everyday town meetings and how do we develop a greater awareness of the good work being done by our town employees and governing boards? As we reviewed existing services and budget figures, it became apparent that the two town governing boards had done well in controlling cost. While disagreement may exist in where cuts should have been made, the budgets were contained. Our discussions resulted in seeing the need for other budget work to be considered. Our commendations and recommendations point to areas that should be addressed.

As a resource committee, we have not been able to expand our results into a specific timeline for we have come to a crossroad of decision making. Decision making is in your area of responsibility. We will gladly serve to help Madawaska change and grow if you choose to use our assistance in future work. We will also provide you with a list of Madawaska citizens who are willing to volunteer their services in one way or another.

In closing, thank you for allowing us to serve Madawaska in a positive manner. Through all the research conducted, interviews, and meetings attended, one thing rang clear, the resilient nature of our community and positive combined efforts of our leaders are indeed evident. Our community may not be what it once was, but together we will overcome all that lies ahead of us.

## RESOURCE COMMITTEE COMMENDATIONS

1. We commend the town manager and superintendent of schools for their cooperative efforts in providing the information and resources to make the Town Resource Committee work possible.
2. We commend the Board of Selectpersons and School Committee for their support in allowing the review of town services.
3. We commend the town department heads and school administrators for presenting information vital to understanding the school and town programs.
4. We commend the exemplary performance of the students and staff of WOWL, channel 16, in helping spread the message of the Resource Committee informational meetings.
5. We commend the many Madawaska voters for helping us assess the satisfaction of town services. Over twelve hundred voters participated in the survey. Many comments on the question side of the survey helped us understand concerns.
6. We commend and thank the student council and their advisor for their assistance in tabulating and recording the election day survey information.
7. We commend the town manager for sharing and utilizing the survey results as a constructive tool on town services.
8. We commend the school administrators and school committee for continuing work on community concerns regarding school facilities, school programs, and school costs.
9. We commend all citizens who participated in the Resource Committee informational meetings and for recognizing the importance of being present and informed on municipal governmental affairs.
10. We want to commend all volunteers that give of their time to make our community and school a better place to live and raise families. A format to recognize their special efforts could show our appreciation.
11. Finally, we would like to recognize all Town of Madawaska employees; the teachers, custodians, bus drivers, secretaries, recreation department workers, road crews, all emergency personnel, the secretaries in the town office. We commend you for all your collective efforts on a daily basis to bring value to this special place we call home, Madawaska, Maine.

## RESOURCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is our recommendation that clear goals and objectives be developed by the Town Manager that fall in line with the mission and vision established by the Board of Selectpersons. The manager's goals and objectives should be reviewed twice per year with results to be included in the manager's yearly contract performance review. This practice should be replicated by the town manager with the respective department heads to ensure a shared reality amongst all levels of municipal employment.
2. School enrollment continues to decline. This causes program problems and cost problems. Consolidation, regionalization, program review, staffing changes need to be addressed. Buildings usage needs to be addressed. A committee should immediately be put to work to explore the best approach to get this done. It is of grave importance that a tangible timeline be created and be revisited quarterly.
3. Town roads need to be repaired and upgraded throughout the town. Whatever decision requires immediate action.
4. Communications throughout the community should be positive and constructive. Working together to create efficiencies and cost saving approaches is vital. Brain-storming opportunities may be helpful.
5. The Northern Aroostook Regional Airport usage needs to be reviewed. Should the town continue to participate?
6. There is concern that the Town Budget Committee be dissolved and be replaced by a Finance Committee providing that their responsibilities be specified and set up in procedures and by-laws.
7. Town building usage and consolidation need further review.
8. Code Enforcement remains a concern by many. It is proposed that the codes be reviewed and revised if necessary to meet the current concerns and future needs of the community.
9. Community Development procedures have been helpful to many businesses but the needs of the community and economic development should be reexamined. New ideas should be developed that continue to move the town in a positive direction.