# Town of Parsonsfield – Proposed TextMyGov Communication System

The Town of Parsonsfield is looking for resident feedback to help decide if there is any interest in the Town to pursue the TextMyGov service.  We feel there is a need to improve transparency and communication between Parsonsfield residents and the Town. The TextMyGov system is designed to do that.

TextMyGov uses mobile phone text messaging that would allow Parsonsfield citizens to report, request, and receive information via text messaging with the Parsonsfield Town Office.   A cell phone and text messaging capability is required.  There are no downloads and no extra fees to use this service.

There are many ways this service works:

1. Textmygov can provide residents with automated town information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.  The person can text a dedicated number, request the needed information and receive a response. It's immediate, you don't have to wait for the office to open, search the Town's website or Facebook page.

2. Textmygov can be used to report concerns and send pictures to the Town, 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week.  Once submitted, it automatically gets sent to the appropriate department (CEO, ACO, Road Commissioner, etc), a copy automatically gets sent to the Town office and immediately starts a workflow.

3. Textmygov can send out notifications to residents.  There is no cost to sign up for this service.  The Town can send out reminders on meetings, election info, office closures, emergencies, etc.

4. Textmygov can also send out notifications in a specified area using GIS if needed if only a localized area is affected, such as one road or area.

Here are some examples:

- TextMyGov uses smart texting technology to communicate with citizens and allows the Town to answer most of your questions, 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week, in an automated format.  This service would allow the Town to automatically respond with information and provide details such as garbage pickup, town news, events, office hours, election information and more. This smart texting technology identifies keywords in text messages to provide immediate assistance.
  - Example:  You're going to work at 6AM on a Friday, and you can't remember if it's a recycling day or not.  You can send a text message to the Town's TextMyGov dedicated number and ask if it's a recycling day.  You will automatically receive a response that gives you the recycling schedule immediately.
  - Example: There was a storm last night and for some reason your road hasn't been plowed and can't remember who your contractor is that plows your road.  You text the dedicated number and ask who your plow contactor is.  You will get a response with the plow contractor map and contractor phone numbers.

- TextMyGov uses smart texting technology to also engage with citizens.  This allows people to be able to easily report code violations, animal control issues, road or plowing concerns like potholes, signs down, drainage problems and more.  This allows the Town to be able to automatically start a workflow conversation, and collect information by asking questions regarding your name, address, and your concern.   Residents would also be able to include photos of the concern.  This process develops a workflow, and the status can be tracked by the Town until it's resolved.  This can also be used to keep records and generate a log of any repetitive issues.
  - Example:  Big rainstorm, there is flooding and road washouts.  You have a big washout on your road.  You send a text to the Town's TextMyGov dedicated number at 6AM before you go to work.  It automatically responds with a series of simple questions to collect your name; address and you can send a picture of the damage.  This text information immediately goes directly to the Road Commissioner as a text message and/or email and gets logged into the Town office system regarding the issue, with all the information provided and a picture.  The Town is notified immediately.  This would also serve as backup for the Town to use if there is a FEMA declaration with the data you provided, and photos can be used for damage reporting.

- The Town will be able to use TextMyGov to keep citizens in the loop with notifications and reminders on important updates, reminders, and events. The Town can use this to send to citizens reminding them of holiday closures, emergency notifications, town meeting reminders, election information, town-wide trash pickup delays etc.
  - Example:  The trash contractor's truck broke down.  They will not be picking up trash today in Town, however they will pick up on Monday.  The Town can send out a text message to residents with this message.

- TextMyGov also has a mapping feature that allows the Town to send alerts to citizens by a defined radius.
  - Example:  The weather impacted trash pickup and they can't get to Mountain Road until Monday.  The Town can use the mapping feature, gather contact info for the residents on Mountain Road and send an alert just to those residents that their trash will not be picked up until Monday.  This does not require an opt-in, it is automatic. However, you can opt-out from the GIS mapping text messages if you prefer.

- Cost:  3-year contract with TextMyGov is required for the GIS mapping capability.
  The cost is $3,000 (which includes building the system for Parsonsfield) for the 1st year, and $2,000 per year after that.
  The cost of the first year can be paid for by the Town's ARPA funds.

- To try this system and see one example of how this works – text the word "snow" "plow" or "snowplow" to 435-265-4446.  This is a basic example of how you could get automated information any day, any time if you needed the contact information for the plow contractor.


**Please take the TextMyGov Survey! The Town wants your opinion!**