



**Town Manager's Report
June 5, 2019**

The airport in Waterville has scheduled a weekend fly-in that conflicts with our intended Oosoola Days event at our airport. After lengthy discussions with stakeholders, we decided it is unlikely that we will be moving forward with anything at the airport for that weekend; Oosoola Days will just be the Labor Day Monday events.

Our office phones have been upgraded to new technology, after experiencing problems with two of the phones. This upgrade came at no cost to the Town. We are also in the process of upgrading Town cell phones (2), which will convert from flip phones to iPhones. This conversion will save \$10 per month on recurring costs, replace the phones for free (up-front and every 10 months), and provide us with an additional \$300 sign-on bonus. There are no contractual obligations and we are receiving significant accessory discounts if required.

Delinquent personal property taxes have been paid on all but one account, which will be going to small claims court next Thursday. Real estate and personal property tax reminders were mailed last Friday in order to avoid adding additional fees to accounts before starting the lien notification process. Since reminder notices went out, we have collected \$10,600 in back taxes (\$255,400 still outstanding).

The new testing requirements related to PFAS have put a stop to our landspreading program from the wastewater treatment facility to the airport. Our initial round of testing came in slightly above what was acceptable; we are now working towards the testing of soils at the airport. See attached article. As a result, our plant is full and we are having to now truck sludge to Madison for disposal. The incremental cost is \$0.045 per gallon.

I have received numerous inquiries about the Town's willingness to be involved in establishing a new food pantry, which would ideally be located more centrally. Somerset Public Health has approached me about working in a cooperative manner to achieve such a goal. If you have any thought of potential locations, volunteers, or other ideas, please let me know.

The airport was inspected by DOT earlier this week and we were notified that we would need to restripe all markings. Roland is in the process of seeking out price estimates from a few qualified vendors. This will need to be done soon. Additional obstructions have been documented, which will need to be removed. They are also recommending that we complete another round of crack sealing. This is going to require us to take a hard look at hangar rates, as we move forward.

I've begun the process of reviewing next season's heating fuel contracts. At this time, we won't be locking into any commitments, but I will be staying in touch with current vendors to monitor pricing.

Ben Morgan will be recognized at his Eagle Scout Court of Honor this Saturday, June 8, at 12:00 noon, at Centenary United Methodist Church in Skowhegan—the Board of Selectmen is invited to attend.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
2	3	4	5 6PM Selectmen	6 4PM Enginrg RFP Questions Due	7	8
9	10	11 VOTING 8a – 8p OFFICE CLOSED	12	13 1PM- Downtown Revitalize Mtg 2PM Enginrg RFP Due (:15 open)	14	15
16	17	18	19 6PM Selectmen	20	21	22

Task force on PFAS ‘forever chemicals’ begins work this week

pressherald.com/2019/05/19/task-force-on-pfas-forever-chemicals-begins-work-this-week/

By Kevin Miller Staff
Writer

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AUGUSTA — A governor’s task force will convene for the first time this week to begin studying the impact of a class of “forever chemicals” showing up in water, soil and even some milk samples in Maine.

Gov. Janet Mills created the task force in March in response to growing concerns in Maine and nationwide about contamination from so-called PFAS chemicals. Used for decades in household products, food packaging and firefighting foams, PFAS chemicals linger in the environment for decades and have been linked to cancer, low birth weights and other health problems.

On Wednesday, the 11-member Task Force on the Threats of PFAS Contamination to Public Health and the Environment will gather in Hallowell to discuss the work ahead for the group and to hear initial “educational” presentations from state agencies.

“Clearly, Maine needs an action plan to find and prevent pollution from these chemicals,” said Mike Belliveau, executive director of the Environmental Health Strategy Center and a task force member. “We’re hoping the task force will help drive and develop that plan and, hopefully, we’ll learn what progress the state agencies have made already and be able to gauge the work ahead.”

Some of that information-gathering is well underway in Maine.

Earlier this month, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection began requiring wastewater treatment plants to test samples of treated sludge for PFAS before the material could be spread on farms as fertilizer or used as compost.

The department ordered the testing in response to extremely high PFAS contamination found on an Arundel dairy farm that spread treated sludge, or biosolids, for decades as fertilizer. The farmer, Fred Stone, has said his multi-generation dairy business is ruined because PFAS is still present in his herd’s milk despite installing a costly water filter and trucking in feed from other states.

Forty-four facilities submitted sludge sampling plans to the DEP for approval, and as of Friday afternoon the department had received testing results back from 29 facilities. DEP staff declined to release results Friday, but they could be part of the discussion during Wednesday’s task force meeting.

The results from one treatment plant, however, highlight the complexity of the issue facing Maine and other states as they grapple with an “emerging contaminant.”

The Brunswick Sewer District went beyond the DEP requirement and tested samples of sludge, incoming wastewater, outgoing wastewater as well as soils and water on a farm where treated sludge had been applied. PFAS was present in every medium, although mostly at levels below the 70 parts per trillion “advisory level” set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for drinking water. The EPA has yet to set health advisory levels for PFAS in soil or sludge.

“There is PFAS in the soils, which is to no one’s surprise, but it was nothing like the levels found down in (Arundel),” said Robert Pontau, assistant general manager at the Brunswick Sewer District.

Positive tests for PFAS in Brunswick are not necessarily surprising because the former Brunswick Naval Air Station has several known PFAS hotspots. The chemicals were commonly used in aeronautical firefighting foam because of their ability to help smother intense fuel fires, which is why many of the best-known PFAS contamination cases are on or near military bases.

Pontau said Brunswick does not plan to resume agricultural applications of treated sludge, also known as biosolids. But he and other representatives of treatment plants, municipalities and agricultural groups will be following the task force’s work closely as it decides how to proceed.

One task force member, Norm Labbe, brings the perspective of having to deal with what has emerged as Maine’s highest-profile PFAS contamination case.

Labbe recently retired after 35 years with the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District, including as superintendent. It was the water district that alerted Stone, the Arundel farmer, to potential issues after detecting PFAS in a district well on his farm.

The district spent more than \$1 million on an activated carbon filtration system for the impacted well, even though the 50 parts per trillion testing results were below the EPA’s 70 parts per trillion advisory level. As a result, the water now comes back clear of detectable PFAS.

Labbe said the science is still developing on the health impacts of PFAS and what exposure levels are safe. But he said the district chose the conservative – but costly – path because “when you don’t know all of the facts, you have to err on the side of caution.”

The experience has made him think differently, however, about the modern conveniences that consumers have come to expect.

"It was an eye opener because once I started researching it, I realized that the expression 'Better living through chemistry' . . . has come back to haunt us," Labbe said. "We want all of these products that are convenient – waterproof, stain-proof – but those types of material come at a price."

Belliveau, at the Environmental Health Strategy Center, said the only way to determine the scope of the threat is through "universal testing" of soils, water, milk, produce and fish. He and others, including the Mills administration, are also backing legislation that would allow the state to ban food packaging products made with PFAS in Maine.

DEP Commissioner Jerry Reid acknowledged that the task force has a challenging road ahead.

"This is a sprawling issue and it's got many dimensions to it," Reid said Friday. "You could study it for decades, if you don't define the assignment."

One key task for the group, Reid said, will be identifying the highest risks to human health and the environment from PFAS and deciding how best to focus the state's limited resources there.

"I do think the issue of how to put together a comprehensive testing protocol, and how to pay for it, is of interest for everyone," Reid said.

The task force will meet from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Camden National Bank Ice Vault on Whitten Road in Hallowell. The meeting is open to the public.