

TOWN OF CORINNA NEWS

TOWN OFFICE NEWS

Selectmen Meetings:

Meetings are held at the Jones Nutter Auditorium at the Stewart Library at 6:00pm the second and fourth Wed. of the month. The Minutes and the Agendas are posted on our Town Website and on the Bulletin Board at the Town Office.



Town Meeting Information:

Friday, **March 13th, 2020** is the Municipal Election of Officers held at the Fire Annex with the polls open 8am to 8pm.

Our annual Town Meeting will be on **March 14th, 2020 at 10AM** in the School Gymnasium. *Please be sure to bring your copy of the town's annual report for this meeting.* The Town Reports will be available to the public the Monday before the meeting. The Registrar will be available one hour prior to Town Meeting for anyone needing to register to vote.

There will be a continental breakfast starting at 8:30am hosted by the Corinna Volunteer Fire Dept.

TOWN CLERK-PAM PARLEE

Two Elections in March

March 3, 2020-Presidential Primary and State Referendum Election

Fire Annex 8AM-8PM



March 13, 2020 Municipal Election-
Fire Annex 8AM-8PM

On the Ballot:

Vote for 2 Selectmen: 3 Year Terms:

Lloyd Alden Bolstridge, Jr.

James P Emerson

Francis Lee Kaufman

Dennis Woodward, Sr.

Vote for 1 RSU #19 Board Member: 3 Year Term:

Corinna Caron

Vote for 1 RSU #19 Board Member: 1 Year Term:

Kenneth Kealiher Jr.

TOWN MANAGER'S CORNER

January and February have been busy preparing the budget, town warrant, and town report. I want to concentrate on the Town Warrant and Town Report for this newsletter.

First, the Town Report will look a little different than what you are used to, but all the information that has



been there in the past continues to be in this year's report, just in a different format. Please take the time to look it over and feel free to come see me if you have any questions. I will do my best to answer your questions so you will have a better understanding. I feel there are two major changes. One, I removed the budgetary information in each individual article. The prior year's budget and amount spent are still in the report, just not listed in each article. Two, which goes along with the first one, I put in a spreadsheet of every account the Town uses to pay bills, and totaled each department. There are three columns, last year's budget, the amount spent from that budget, and the proposed budget for this year. I think once you get used to it, you will like the new layout. I kept the "funding chart," however, keep in mind that it is only an example of how the expenses "could" be funded. Once funds are put in the checking account, there is really no way to "earmark" those funds for certain expenses. All revenues are used to pay all expenses. The articles are written to reflect this.

There are some "hot topics" on the warrant that will need to be decided at this Town Meeting. The first question, and probably the one that will have the most discussion, is what to do with the Corinna Elementary School. We know that the roof needs replacing. The siding also needs replacing because of the type of siding that it is. There are asbestos floor tiles in the original part of the building. The furnace room is in the basement and is always wet, sometimes with inches of water on the floor. The heating system was previously controlled by a software program and we're having a difficult time getting access to that program to control the heating. The maintenance fees, without using the building, are in the area of \$70,000-\$80,000 per year. This is the amount needed to heat the building, provide electricity, a part-time custodian, insurance coverage, plowing and mowing, just to name a few of the major maintenance costs. There has been some discussion of moving the Town Office to the school building. Some other uses mentioned were to rent out the classrooms to businesses, or a day care, and possibly a 24/7/365-access workout gym – however, keep in mind, the Town of Corinna doesn't want to be a landlord. Therefore, a cost associated with renting classrooms would be to hire a property manager to handle non-payment of rent, and eviction when necessary. If we can't fill all the classrooms with businesses, we still have to maintain the building and quite possibly not have enough revenue to cover expenses, so property tax dollars would make up the difference to fund the costs of maintaining the building. Another thought was to remove the "old, original" part of the school building. There are major costs and factors to consider when weighing the pros and cons of this option. The furnace room is under the old part of the school. There are two possible fixes for the

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furnace room if we remove the old section. One, leave it below ground and build a new building over the furnace room. Two, bring it above ground and use some of the space in the new section to create a furnace/utility room. Either way, it's expensive. Another consideration of removing the old section is that the asbestos flooring will need special treatment during removal. I took the opportunity to talk with an engineer, outlining different scenarios of what to do with the building, and the prospective costs associated with each scenario. I will have his report available in the office and online. Please do some research, consider tax dollars and mil rate, and the possibility, or impossibility, of renting space-and keeping it rented - when making your decision. The article reads, "Should the Town KEEP the Corinna Elementary School?" Remember, no decision on what to do with the school will actually be made at Town Meeting, only the decision to keep it or not will be made at Town Meeting.

A second "hot topic" is what to do with the Fernald Market building. The Board is asking for money to obtain plans to **potentially** convert the building to a new fire station. This building would replace the existing fire station, which is in need of repair. It's also a much larger facility. The framework structure of Fernald Market is usable. I have an engineering report on this conversion, as it relates to the cost of remodeling OR demolishing and rebuilding. The funds the Board is asking for would also be to have a survey of Fernald Avenue, so when we repair and pave the road, we know exactly where the Town's lines of ownership lie.

A third "hot topic" is the purchase of a town truck. This would be a full size dump truck, with sander, wing and plow. The Board would rather see an outright purchase this year instead of taking a loan. If we take a paving loan, we will need to pay on it for ten years. In an effort to keep the mil rate to smaller increases, we don't want to pay on two loans at the same time.

As noted on the Town bulletin board, the Boardwalk has been closed due to disrepair. A committee has been formed to raise the funds needed for the repairs. They have already raised over \$7,000 in donations and will continue to fundraise. They will also be applying for grants to help fund the project. However, the Boardwalk Preservation Committee is seeking \$10,000 from the Town. If approved, this will give them approximately half the funds needed to repair the Boardwalk. The Boardwalk is important to the Town of Corinna because it gives everyone a stable, safe place to get exercise, enjoy nature, and relax from the stresses of life.

You will notice a large increase on the two articles relating to the Landfill Monitoring and DEP filtration. Until recently, the DEP was covering most of the testing and installation of water systems. They have decided they will no longer be covering any testing nor any

maintenance of water filtration systems. They will only partially cover installations of new filtration systems if needed. This is now the responsibility of the Town.

If you've reviewed the proposed budget, you will see an estimated mil rate of 20.58. The estimated mil rate is based on all articles passing and a five percent increase in the school budget. Remember that the school is on a fiscal year – July to June – so we won't know the actual school budget until this summer. What you also must remember is that the Homestead Exemption will increase this year, from \$20,000 to \$25,000. Homestead Exemption is also affected by the Town's certified ratio. So, I've worked out a few scenarios for you based on the value of a home. I'll use last year's mil rate of 19.25 as a comparison to the proposed mil rate for this year. If you have a home valued at \$100,000, less the Homestead Exemption with last year's 99% certified ratio, you would have paid tax on the \$80,200 value last year – approximately \$1,543.85. With the new Homestead Exemption of \$25,000 at a proposed 96% certified ratio, you will pay an estimate of tax on a value of \$76,000 – with this year's proposed mil rate of 20.58, tax would approximately be \$1,564.08. This would be an increase of \$20.23 in your real estate taxes for 2020. If your home is valued at \$200,000 with a Homestead Exemption, last year's real estate taxes would have been around \$3,468.85. This year's proposed mil rate would equate to an approximate real estate tax in the amount of \$3,622.08. This is an increase in the amount of \$153.23. Overall, the increase in the mil rate is offset by the increase in the Homestead Exemption. If you have lived in Corinna for at least a year, and have not applied for a Homestead Exemption, you must complete and file an application with the Town Office before April 1, 2020.

And finally, the Board is proposing to use \$135,000 of undesignated funds. The Town of Corinna has a Fund Balance policy that states the Town must maintain 18% of the prior year's expense budget as the fund balance needed for the current year. So, last year's expense budget was \$2,752,450 less overlay and debt services of \$156,900 for a total balance of \$2,595,550. Apply the 18% equals \$467,199 that the fund balance must not go below. The fund balance as of 12/31/19 is \$750,933. We're proposing using \$135,000 from fund balance, leaving a remaining fund balance of \$615,933. Therefore, we are within the parameters of the Fund Balance Policy.

Town Reports are being printed, and it will also be posted on the Town's website. Please feel free to come see me if you have questions – prior to Town Meeting, and I'll do my best to answer any and all questions you may have. Happy Spring to come!!

***TOWN OF CORINNA EMPLOYEES, BOARDS,
COMMITTEES AND TOWN MANAGER***