

The Temple Times

Quarterly Newsletter ~ September, 2023

We seem to be experiencing a record breaking wet summer, with June coming close to the 1917 all time high. And then the July heat came close to breaking the 1911 record of 105 degrees. While some folks have gardens that are flourishing, others of us have been struggling. Mine first drowned and then sat with stunted growth for weeks on end. Now that it's August and the temps have "normalized," I finally have the garden I would expect around the end of June. There might be some normal harvest yet if we have a warm fall that lingers on into mid-December. As far as exactly how much rain has fallen, well, that depends on which cloud you've been sitting under. We'll be talking about this one for some time to come... unless this trend becomes the new norm.

Janine Winn, Editor

Town Calendar: (also on the Town website)

- Planning Board 6:00pm 2nd Monday, each month
- Select Board Meeting, each Monday, 6:00 to 7:00pm
- Temple Historical Society 3:00pm, 3rd Monday each month
- Election Day November 7, 8 AM - 8 PM

Town Office:

Hours: Monday, 11:00 to 7:00 PM
Thursday, 9:00 to 5:00 PM
(closed on major holidays)

Address: PO Box 549, Temple 04984

Email: templetownoffice@yahoo.com

Website: townoftemple.org

Phone: 778-6680

Fax: 778-0183

Facebook page: Town of Temple Maine

Trash pick-up every Friday. Recyclables pick-up on the 1st & 3rd Fridays each month.

Office Staff:

Tax Collector & Treasurer Sue Cantrell

Town Clerk & Registrar Bob Van Riper

Select Board Austin Foss
David True
Dean Collins

USPO: Temple's Post Office is now officially open, six days a week from 7:30 to 11:30 each morning. It is also possible to pick up your mail whenever the Town Office is open. If you need to make purchases or mail packages when the PO is closed, you can do these things at any other Office in the area. Yes, the hours are wonky but it is nice to have the PO back in town.

As of just now, the Temple Post Office can accept only cash or checks for payment. They hope to soon have their accounts set up to accept debit and credit cards.

We do have an official Window Clerk in Temple now. Bridget Beane, who grew up in Industry and now lives in Strong, has finished up her training, passed the required tests and will be with us six days a week, hopefully for a long time.

Town Office vs Post Office: It is a friendly debate, but nonetheless, the Town Office is not the Post Office. They can not sell stamps or money orders, get your packages or provide other Postal services. Sadly, the days of the Post Master / shop keeper / Justice of the Peace are long past.

Other Town Office News: Vehicle

Registration: The registration of new-to-you vehicles (brand new or used) must be done before 4:00 on any given day. In order calculate the Excise Tax on a vehicle, Town Office staff must call the DMV in Augusta to get the Manufacture’s Suggested Retail Price (MSRP). The Excise Tax is calculated using the MSRP adjusted for the age of the vehicle. If you can’t get into the Office before 4:00, you can fax the vehicle info, including the VIN to the Clerk, or call the office with the info, earlier in the day, and they can take it from there.

For registration renewal, please bring along your current registration. For all registrations, you will need proof of insurance and the current mileage.

Property Tax Bills: Treasurer Sue Cantrell will mail the current Property Tax bills on September 18th. The delay was caused by waiting for the State’s final plan for the current Property Tax Stabilization Program rates. The program, which allowed certain senior-citizen residents to stabilize or freeze their property taxes, lasted only one year and replaced next year by a yet-unformed system that will return discounts to eligible property owners with their Maine State tax return.

Current plan had expanded the eligibility thresholds for participation in the Property Tax Deferral Program and increased the maximum benefit available under the Property Tax Fairness Credit for those age 65 and older. Hopefully the new system will also offer the same benefits.

2023 Tax bills will be noticeably higher. The County assessment mil rate increased 3 points and Temple’s portion of the County budget is \$23,936. The RSU 9 budget has also increased; Temple’s share is \$41,974 per month. Yes, per month.

Did You Know?

Richard Donald Pierce, the author of *A History of Temple, Maine: Its Rise and Decline*, wrote the 210 page tome as a dissertation in 1946, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He was ordained to the Congregational Ministry at the Congregational Church in Temple in 1939 and served the church for over 10 years.

Storm Damage & Repairs:

Road Commissioner Erik Hellgren and his crew have continued to repair Temple’s roads after the rain damage in April and May. A complete report on our road damage has been submitted to FEMA and Erik is planning to start paving in October. The FEMA procurement procedures have tightened as natural disasters have increased nationwide, extending the paperwork requirements. Sections of Walker Hill Road, Day Mountain Road, and Varnum Pond Road as well as all of Iisalo Road will have their repairs finished this fall. It remains to be seen how much of the repair costs will be covered by FEMA. Given that their estimates are based on average costs of repairs, Erik is hopeful that we will make out ok.

Fire Permits: Planning to burn? Get a permit online at the Maine Forest Service website or from Temple Fire Department officers David True (779-4137), George Andrews (491-3627) and Wayne Tuttle (779-4012). All permits are free.

Temple High School Congratulations to Temple’s High School Graduates of 2023, Brooklyn Blodgett, Dylan Farmer and Giulia Johnson. You have successfully persevered during three years of upheaval unlike any we have seen in decades. We wish you continued great success no matter what your future plans may be.

Belfry Protection: The Congregational Church belfry that now sits next to the Town Hall is now protected from vehicle and snow plow collisions by 7 granite posts. Donations of \$1,500 have helped to cover the \$2,700 costs of posts, rings and chain that will give the belfry quite an elegant look. Thank you, especially, to the Andrews family for helping with the costs.

Members of the Temple Fire Department were instrumental in the installation. Hervey Andrews and Rick Blodgett fetched the posts from Westbrook. Erald Farmers' post hole digger and Jeremiah Gattis' backhoe did the heavy work, and I am told that Hervey and George Andrews provided all the necessary supervision. Thank you!

RSU 9 School Budget: The 2023/24 school budget passed district wide with 651 votes in favor of the proposed budget and 216 against. Temple's vote was 28 for and 15 against. With a total of 43 people voting, this breaks down to a 2 to 1 vote or nearly so. The overall District vote was closer to 3 to 1. New Vineyard voted down the budget, 12 to 10, and the split in Chesterville was even. The budget passed by a wide margin in Farmington, Starks, Vienna, Weld and Wilton.

Temple Planning Board: The Board is discussing updates to our Comprehensive Plan and to Temple's Building Ordinance. The Plan, which was adopted by voters at the 2017 Town Meeting is supposed to be reviewed every six months but this has not happened even once. In particular, growth projections and land use districts need to be clarified. The possible changes to the Building Ordinance will address issues brought to our Code Enforcement Officer as folks seek to build homes and outbuildings.

The Board invites interested individuals to join us, provide input and participate in this project.

More minds and eyes are needed. The Planning Board meets at 6:00 pm on the 2nd Monday of each month in at the Town Office.

Temple Historical Society: The Society held their Annual Meeting on August 19 to review the past year and make plans for the coming. Additionally, Lauren Spargo was elected Secretary to complete Barry Tracy's term. All officers will be elected next year.

Discussion regarding goals for 2023-2024 included stepping up publicity about the Society, including more history about the town and earlier residents in Society publications, developing a brochure about the organization, outreach to schools and homeschoolers, and increasing fundraising efforts.

The meeting was followed by a school session lead by Hiram Briggs, a teacher who was applying for the position of Master for the school for the coming winter session. Master Briggs, also known as Larry Whittington, made sure that the scholars in attendance knew what to expect under his tutelage. It was a great experience for all to learn more about early 19th Century village school life.

The Society now has Temple T-Shirts for sale as well as note cards with old scenes from the village and clocks made with shingles from the old schoolhouse.

Under development at this time is a building assessment and maintenance plan for the Red Schoolhouse. Should we seek grant funds for the building sometime in the future, having this plan in place will put us in good standing. And it's just a good idea.

The Archive Room in the Town Hall continues to be open on the first, non-holiday Monday of the month, 9 to 3:00. Other hours by arrangement.

Did You Know?

Doctor Pierce predicted that Temple was in an unstoppable downward spiral. By 1940, the population had dropped to 252 people and due

to the collapse of rural self-sufficiency, the prosperity of Temple had come to an end. He believed that we would cease to be an independent town by the mid-1950s and instead would become a plantation or township entirely dependent on County leadership. Well, we seem to have fooled Dr. Pierce.

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Covid Test Kits: The Town Office still has a supply of Covid test kits that it is giving away at no charge. Just stop in & ask for them.

Town Office Storage: The Office is working out a plan with the Historical Society to convert some of the space at the back of the Archive room into a storage room for Town records. It is expected that the loss of space for the Historical Society will be minor.

Neighbors: George Andrews was recently honored by the Fire Department for 60 years of service to the town of Temple as a member of the

Department. George, at age 26, joined the Department shortly after moving to Temple, to the house he and his wife Toni still occupy.

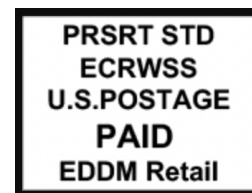
George says he joined because “it runs in the family.” It’s just what you do for the town that you live in. He has stuck with it all this time because, simply, “I liked it.”

During this 60 year career, George was Fire Chief for 39 years. It was an elected position, and the members just continued electing him. He gave up the position finally because the paperwork became too cumbersome; it was time to sit back. Small town fire departments have changed over the years.

George recalls that at it’s peaking the 1970s, the Fire Department had 24 members. Now they seem to have on average 10. Then and now, these are all men though that has not always been so.

As far as George sees his future with the Temple Fire Department, he will continue “as long as I last.”

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**Postal Patron
Temple, Maine 04984**

**The third issue of
The Temple Times for 2023**