

Carrabassett Valley Selectmen's Meeting

4:30 p.m. Monday June 28th, 2021 at the Town Office

Depending on concerns over COVID-19, citizens may wish to participate by REMOTE ACCESS AS PROVIDED BELOW. Remote Access Participants will hear all the proceedings and will be allowed to speak.

We have set up a remote access process as follows:

- Participants call into this number: 1-425-436-6390
- Enter code following prompts: 668536 (it will then tell you to press the # symbol)
- Once the moderator joins all those on the line can join as well---Please announce yourself when asked.

Meeting will start at 4:30 p.m.

Agenda:

Review and sign Town Payroll Warrants: #23 in the amount of \$27,499.63 and # 25 in the amount of \$32,354.27.

Review and sign Town Expenditure Warrants: #24 in the amount of: \$95,969.47 and # 26 in the amount of \$62,098.58.

1. MINUTES from the last meeting (June 14th, 2021)—Attached.

2. PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPING A NEW TOWN WEBSITE: The Town Website Sub-Committee (Lloyd Cutter, Wendy Russell and Dave Cota) have reviewed two proposals to develop and help maintain a new Town website. We felt that both proposals from Sephone (the current provider) and from CV resident Tim Flight were very good. The Sub-Committee is recommending approval of the proposal from Tim Flight. A copy of Tim's proposal is attached (if you wish to see the other proposal, please let us know). Tim proposed website development cost is \$6,500 (similar to the other proposal) and his annual hosting costs will be \$500/year (the other proposal is \$1,200/yr.

As you know, the voters recently approved spending up to \$7,000 for this project.

3. PROPOSAL FOR HIRING A NEW TAX ASSESSOR (Single Assessor as opposed to an Assessor's Agent): As you know, Bill Gilmore will be retiring from his position as the Town's (Single) Tax Assessor in the next few months. The biggest difference between a Tax Assessor's Agent and a Single Tax Assessor is the that the Single Tax Assessor actually sets the Tax Rate and sets the property valuations. In this case, the Select Board members are not the Assessors. This is what we have been doing in CV for the past twenty years.

To facilitate hiring a new Single Tax Assessor we recommend contracting these services which is now being done in many municipalities in Maine (and was done here before Bill became the Tax Assessor). We have attached a proposed Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking proposals from Certified Maine Assessors. The proposal calls for the successful candidate to negotiate with the Select Board a per diem price for these services. We have anticipated that the services will take approximately up to 100 days per year (which, without benefits, should equate to approximately what the Town is currently paying for these services).

If agreed, we would advertise this RFP locally first to see if we can obtain a qualified proposal. Please read the attached RFP as we wish to review this with the Select Board.

INFORMATIONAL:

Annual Property Tax Bills are going out in the mail on or about Monday June 28th. As we indicated previously, there will be a somewhat substantial increase (10% to 15%) this year due to primarily a big increase in the School Budget due to a significant increase in the number of students that we pay tuition for. We also saw a big increase in our Town's share of the Franklin County Tax Assessment due to our Town's increase in State Valuation compared to other Towns in our County. CV's County Tax is now \$1,024,628 (see attached comparison with other municipalities within Franklin County). This year's Mil (tax) rate is .006825 (\$6.825 per thousand valuation) compared to .0065 last year or an increase of 5%. The increase in local tax valuation from 565,244,123 to 622,480,828 (or 10.1%) picks up the remaining tax increase needed.

Based on substantially increased sales values in CV our Assessor also increased property tax assessments. Some areas and properties of Town received somewhat higher assessments (again, based of sales data) than other areas. Our local tax valuation is still lower than the Town's State Valuation (622,480,828 compared to \$701,800,000 or 89%).

Household Hazardous Waste Clean Day at the Transfer Station from 9:00 to Noon on Saturday July 12th.

**TOWN OF CARRABASSETT VALLEY
MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
June 14, 2021**

Board Members Present: **Bob Luce** **Lloyd Cuttler**
 John Beaupre **Karen Campbell**
 Jay Reynolds

Others Present: **Dave Cota** **Matt Jacobs**
 Bill Haslam **Bill Gilmore**
 Bruce Miles **Chris Parks**
 Tom Cromwell **Mark Leathers**
 Sue Davis

Bob Luce opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. Dave Cota asked phone-in callers to identify themselves for the record.

Payroll warrants #23 and #25 in the amounts of \$27,499.63 and \$32,354.27, respectively, were reviewed and signed by Selectmen.

Expense warrants #24 and #26 in the amount of \$95,969.47 and \$62,098.58, respectively, were reviewed and signed by Selectmen.

The minutes of the May 24, 2021 were provided to the Selectmen for review and approval. Jay Reynolds made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Karen Campbell seconded the motion. Motion approved via roll call.

The annual Timber Harvesting Plan for the Public Lot was reviewed. Dave Cota noted that several members of the Forestry Committee were in attendance. Matt Jacobs and Bill Haslam, of American Forest Management (AFM), were also in attendance to review the plan in detail, which for public input as part of an annual process when wood harvesting on the Public Lot is planned. Block A1 on the map, 65 acres, will be harvested this summer. There will also be discussion about Block B, though there are some access issues with this block, which the Forestry Committee has reviewed. Adequate signage will be installed in the area of the Outdoor Center. Net revenues are anticipated at around \$30,000. The Selectmen expressed appreciation for AFM's professional approach to this work. Bill Gilmore extended a request to protect an area (referred to as the "Spruce Reserve" that is a significant spruce growth and unique area.

Bruce Miles was in attendance to discuss possible Town maintenance of the Old Huse Mills Road. Owners on his road and Holly Road have a deeded right of Way across Old Huse Mills Road, that is owned by the Town. He said a lot has changed since the Town bought ownership of the Road, with the cemetery built, a recreational bridge and a school bus turn-around. Bruce suggests the Town should take up the responsibility for maintenance of the road. He said plowing is roughly \$2,000. Lloyd Cuttler noted that the Town owns the land under the road, which provides some clarity in the decision-making process, since this is not an association-owned property. Dave Cota noted that there's not much opportunity for further development there. He noted that, where the Town owns it, the area is open for public use, which would not likely change. He suggests that the Town would need to contract to provide maintenance. Bob Luce said the alternative would be to abandon the road and noted that there's a process to go

through in order to do that. John Beaupre made a motion to authorize the maintenance of the road for the short-term, with the matter going on the Town Warrant for the next Town meeting. Lloyd Cuttler seconded the motion. Dave Cota noted that the plowing could be included with the annual bidding for the winter plowing contracts, which will cover the insurance concerns as contractors must supply the Town with a Certificate of Insurance. Motion approved via roll call, with Karen Campbell abstaining.

Dave Cota discussed the agreement with Life Flight of Maine to change the frequency of the Airport Automated Weather Operating Station (AWOS). He noted that funding for this was approved by the Town at the June 2nd meeting. The change of frequency enhances congestion safety concerns. Lloyd Cuttler noted that Life Flight can determine the weather conditions from their primary facility with the enhanced system including important cloud ceiling information. Dave Cota provided a copy of the agreement to the Selectmen. Jay Reynolds made a motion to accept the agreement as presented. Karen Campbell seconded the motion. Motion approved via roll call.

Dave Cota reported that Matt Ward has purchased Larry Hanson's airport hangar, and the Selectmen will need to approve a new lease. John Beaupre made a motion to approve the new lease which is a 10-yr. lease with a 5-yr. option to renew. Jay Reynolds seconded the motion. Motion approved via roll call.

Dave Cota discussed the GIS Data Updates and Map Development to existing trail database. This is also a matter that was approved at the June 2nd Town meeting. This will help provide for better emergency response. Jay Reynolds made a motion to proceed with this project. Karen Campbell seconded the motion. Motion approved via roll call.

Dave Cota updated the Selectmen on the proposal for net energy billing from Green Lantern Solar, based on discussions at the last meeting. The provision in the agreement, as Geoffrey Sparrow explained, is basically standard to these types of agreements. If the Town wished to get out of the agreement, the Town would need to find another user to take up the remaining portion of the Town's agreement. Under Maine law, this size project is not taxable under property tax. However, the Town will get up to 50% reimbursement through the State B.E.T.E. program, if approved by the State (based on 50% of the market value after the tax credits have been taken by the Company). John Beaupre made a motion that the Town should support this project as part of the community. Lloyd Cuttler seconded the motion. Following discussion, the motion was approved with a 3-2 vote via roll call.

Dave Cota had provided the Selectmen with a copy of the Annual Work Plan. A brief review of each item in the plan was conducted.

Informational:

The annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection will be at the C.V. Transfer Station on July 10, 9-noon.

The Employee Housing Committee will meet on June 25th at 10am at the Town Office.
Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn M. Schnorr
Secretary to Board of Selectmen

Website Redesign

CARRABASSETTVALLEY.ORG

Proposal by Tim Flight

April 19, 2021

Project Overview

The Town of Carrabassett Valley's website launched sometime around 1999. The most recent redesign went live in the fall of 2013. Since then there have been many advanced in website technologies and best practices that the current site hasn't kept up with. Key areas for improvement include security, accessibility, mobile device compatibility.

This proposal covers building a *full custom* WordPress theme. I will build custom database fields for committees, meetings, people, and calendar events.

Technology Platform

WordPress currently powers about 40% of the web. Many people are familiar with the administration and daily operation of WordPress sites. Extensive documentation exists, and users generally find it is as easy to use as creating a document in a word processing program.

Security

The current website does not use an SSL encrypted (https) connection. This means that communication between a visitor and the website is not encrypted and could be eavesdropped on. Many browsers will now trigger a warning when visiting the site that it is not secure.

This proposal includes moving the website to a more secure, SSL encrypted server.

I also include premium security tools not build into WordPress for clients who host their site with me. Some security tools include:

- brute force protection
- file change detection
- site malware scanning
- two-factor authentication for administrative users
- extensive user logging

Accessibility

The current website falls short of meeting accessibility guidelines. It is generally agreed that federal law Section 508 applies to municipalities and websites they operate. You wouldn't construct a new municipal building without considering accessibility. The same goes for

websites. More website owners are facing fines for not building websites in accessible manners.

- <https://www.governing.com/archive/The-Real-Reason-Local-Governments-are-Facing-More-ADA-Non-Compliance-Fines.html>
- <https://insights.diligent.com/laws-compliance-local-government/importance-complying-section-508-us-local-government-boards/>

By building a *fully custom* template I can ensure that the template addresses accessibility best practices. I take cues from Section 508 as well as WCAG and other standards.

Examples of accessibility standards include;

- adhering to browser preferences to font sizes
- ensuring proper color contrasts
- labeling images
- allowing menus and forms to be used without a mouse
- respecting user wishes for reduced motion
- ensure proper document structure for elements like titles, headings, and lists

Mobile Friendly and Browser Support

Most public facing websites now have over 60% of their traffic coming from mobile devices. I take care to build a *fully custom* theme with mobile devices in mind. I test the website using the latest, stable releases of all major browsers on all major platforms (Windows, Mac, iOS/ iPhone, Android). I test these platforms against Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Internet Explorer, Safari, and Opera browsers. All layouts will be mobile responsive and work from various input devices (mouse, tap, keyboard).

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

By using a *fully custom* theme we help ensure the on-site SEO is as good as it can be. The meta-descriptions and document structure will create pages search engines can easily interpret. The current site is particularly weak in this area and uses inappropriate and superfluous meta tags.

Structured Data

Many elements of the current website lend themselves to custom database fields. By building specific fields for these elements they allow consistent display across the site. This also allows you to update the look and feel of these elements without changing every instance.

I will extend the database to include fields to display these custom data types, using custom layouts.

ALERTS: Alerts are short, timely announcements that may disappear after a certain period of time. Alerts will appear site-wide.

CALENDAR: A calendar will be created to add events in various categories such as meetings, special events, and Town Office closures. Fields will be added to attach documents (agendas, minutes, flyers, etc) to events.

COMMITTEES: Committee pages display committee members (people), member term dates, and committee descriptions.

DEPARTMENTS: Department pages will allow for custom sub-menus as well as selection of people for contact info.

PEOPLE: Fields for first/last name, optional photo, optional contact info. These "staff" objects will then be selectable by various other page types. For example adding people to a committee page or adding contact info to a department page. This helps ensure contact info only needs to be updated in one place.

NEWS/POSTS: Allow for cards to be added to the homepage showing the most recent news items across various categories. Archives will be available.

Training

Training will be provided to up to three town staff per year on the general operation tasks for the website.

Support

While support is rarely required by staff after initial training, I'm always willing to help troubleshoot any issues that come up. Extensive documentation is always available.

Data Migration

I will migrate data from the existing main menu of the website (approximately 50–60 pages) to the new site prior. I will also migrate up to 20 of the most recent “news” items to a new 'News' section of the homepage.

Mailing Lists

I will assist the town to setup automated mailing list (email blasts) tool. This tool is separate in functionality from the website. Generally the service is free for up to 2,000 subscribers. Integrating signup forms on the website is included.

Hosting

While not required, I offer hosting services. By using my hosting services I'm better able to ensure proper speed, uptime, and security. My hosting services include daily automated backups. I also ensure that various parts of the site architecture (the WordPress core files, plugins, etc) are kept up-to-date on a near daily basis. Automated backups are taken before updates. Updates are performed in a sandbox (test) environment before applied to the production (live) environment.

I estimate hosting costs to be \$500/year, confirmed upon bandwidth analysis.

Timeline

The total development time from start to launch is estimated to be three months. This accounts for planning, development, data migration, testing, and launch.

Development Cost

The cost for development is \$6,500, no upfront cost is necessary.

Town of Carrabassett Valley Tax Assessor Request for Proposals

The Town of Carrabassett Valley is now accepting proposals from certified Maine assessors to provide services as the Town's Single Tax Assessor. The selected firm/individual shall be expected to commit to a minimum two-year contract, with an option to continue the contract for an additional two years. Work will be performed under the general direction of the Town Manager and, ultimately, the town's Board of Selectmen. The Town has approximately 900 residents, 3,100 Real Estate Accounts, 33 Personal Property Accounts and a total valuation base of 622,480,828 (2021 State Valuation of 701,800,000).

The Assessor Shall:

1. Perform annual update of valuations to include new construction, alterations, additions and deletions to all residential, commercial, industrial, and personal property as of each April 1.
2. Be available a minimum of one day each month at the Carrabassett Valley Town Office for scheduled meetings with taxpayers and to perform any other necessary assessing functions.
3. Process all deeds and update electronic records (Trio billing system) and record cards including photos, when applicable (approximately 200 transfers per year).
4. Read deeds and process splits by creating new record cards for new lots and make all necessary valuation changes to update the records.
5. Monitor land transfers for the possibility of Tree Growth, Farmland, and Open Space violations and calculate necessary removal penalties.
6. Draft, to scale, all land splits, subdivisions, and map corrections onto the Town's tax maps. Provide updates to mapping contractor and proofs changes prior to final map production.
7. Other undesignated days will be spent performing all necessary assessing functions in a timely manner.
8. Complete annual sales ratio study/turnaround document and Municipal Valuation Return in a timely manner with assistance from Town Staff.
9. Process annual Tree Growth Report in a timely manner.
10. Prepare Homestead Exemption Reimbursement application prior to filing deadline.
11. Appear at any required hearing to defend and offer opinion regarding property assessment within the Town.
12. Perform this work as an independent contractor and not as an employee of the Town.

13. Provide worker's compensation insurance to statutory limits for assessor's employees, if applicable.
14. Provide Commercial General Liability including Employers Non-ownership Automobile Liability to statutory limits.
15. Use the Town's existing land and building cost schedules for calculating property values and make continual changes each year to schedules if warranted.
16. Prepare and make tax abatements and supplements.
17. Accept and process new Homestead, Veteran, and Blind exemptions.
18. Maintain tables for computer record keeping, ex: tree growth, veterans, homestead exemptions related to certified ratio percentage.
19. Complete sales ratio study and Municipal Valuation Return.
20. Collect Personal Property forms and update computer records with additions or deletions.
21. Prepare Tax Commitment, verification lists, and summaries by the first of July each year.
22. Help coordinate maintaining E911 addressing range/street inventory according to ordinances with Code Enforcement Officer who, working with the Police Department is responsible for providing 911 changes.

The Town Shall:

23. Keep the appointment schedule for designated day per month meeting with taxpayers.
24. Troubleshoot assessing issues when feasible and arrange appointment with Agent, if needed.
25. Provide a list of new construction for field work in form of Building Permit copies.
26. Accept new Homestead, Veteran, and Blind exemptions, and forward same to Assessor for processing.
27. Provide a place to work at the Town Office and make available all necessary assessment records.
28. Provide clerical assistance and other reasonable office functions necessary to the Assessor to perform assessing duties. These duties include filing away work processed by the Assessor and Staff (property record cards, deeds, etc.).

29. Coordinate mapping updates with vendor to maintain accurate information for tax maps.

The Town and Bidder agree:

1. This proposal does not include any drafting of tax maps or providing the Town with new paper tax maps.
2. Travel or mileage expenses are the responsibility of the Agent and will not be billed separately to the town.
3. The Agent shall provide a monthly invoice to the town in the amount of one twelfth (1/12) of a total year's contract.
4. A minimum six-month notice shall be provided if either party elects not to renew at the expiration of any written agreement.

Other Bid Details:

1. Each bidder shall provide a general description of their firm and its municipal qualifications.
2. Each bidder shall provide names and phone numbers for representatives in towns located within the state of Maine where it has performed assessing services or relevant comparable services.
3. Each bidder shall provide a general description of the assessing procedures to be followed, presented in a form which will aid in evaluating its understanding of local governments and their assessing needs.
4. Each bidder shall provide their complete cost for providing the services listed at the terms above and must sign a Contract with the Town.

Proposals are due at the Carrabassett Valley Town Office, 1001 Carriage Road, Carrabassett Valley, Maine 04947, no later than _____, at which time they will be opened and read out loud. It is anticipated a final selection will be made on or about _____.

The Town of Carrabassett Valley Board of Selectmen reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to waive informalities or technicalities, to further negotiate with a selected vendor, and to accept the proposal that it deems to be in the best interest of the town.

2022

0.00146

\$ 146.00 Per \$100,000

	Valuation	Tax
AVON	\$45,100,000.00	\$65,846.00
CARRASSETT VALLEY	\$701,800,000.00	\$1,024,628.00
CARTHAGE	\$81,150,000.00	\$118,479.00
CHESTERVILLE	\$105,600,000.00	\$154,176.00
COPLIN PLANTATION	\$44,550,000.00	\$65,043.00
DALLAS PLANTATION	\$138,550,000.00	\$202,283.00
EUSTIS	\$179,850,000.00	\$262,581.00
FARMINGTON	\$490,000,000.00	\$715,400.00
INDUSTRY	\$99,300,000.00	\$144,978.00
JAY	\$589,200,000.00	\$860,232.00
KINGFIELD	\$147,050,000.00	\$214,693.00
NEW SHARON	\$110,250,000.00	\$160,965.00
NEW VINEYARD	\$85,450,000.00	\$124,757.00
PHILLIPS	\$83,600,000.00	\$122,056.00
RANGELEY	\$545,500,000.00	\$796,430.00
RANGELEY PLANTATION	\$207,950,000.00	\$303,607.00
SANDY RIVER PLANTATION	\$126,200,000.00	\$184,252.00
STRONG	\$88,050,000.00	\$128,553.00
TEMPLE	\$49,500,000.00	\$72,270.00
WELD	\$124,600,000.00	\$181,916.00
WILTON	\$272,750,000.00	\$398,215.00
TOTAL	\$4,316,000,000.00	\$6,301,360.00

UNORGANIZED TOWNSHIPS \$308,200,000.00 \$449,972.00

TOTAL \$4,624,200,000.00 \$6,751,332.00

Assessment \$6,721,432.00
Overlay \$29,900.00

Mill rate 0.001453534

County assess. \$4,709,355.00
Jail CAP \$2,012,077.00
Total Assess. \$6,721,432.00