

# The Hallowell Champion



Hallowell All-Age-Friendly Newsletter Volume 6 Issue 2 All Are Welcome Here

Spring 2025

## The “Secrets” of the City Budget? There Aren’t Any!



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The “Hopeful” sign by artist Charles Hewitt was recently donated to the City.

*Kate Dufour & Bob McIntire*

Spring is the season for developing municipal budgets. Unfortunately, there are no easy answers and it's not easy to do. It is up to taxpayers to save the day. Last year a proposed budget and resulting tax increases caused a sudden furor in Hallowell. It shouldn't have.

Kate Dufour has firsthand experience in the process, having been a city councilor for eight years and chair of the Finance Committee. As the Director of Advocacy & Communications at Maine Municipal Association, she has a statewide perspective as well. The following is Kate's review of the City's monetary “sausage making.”

“The process for developing and adopting the annual budget is described, in great simplicity, in [the

City] charter. As provided in Article VII, Section 5, no later than the regular March council meeting, the city manager, in cooperation with council committees and department heads, is required to submit budget estimates; that is, a proposed budget, for the ensuing fiscal year, which for Hallowell runs from July 1 to June 30.

The charter directs the city manager to submit to the council: (1) an update on the current financial condition of the City; (2) an itemized list of proposed expenditures and revenues, along with comparisons for the two prior fiscal years; and (3) any other information requested by the council. All the information is made public within two weeks of being shared with the council.

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### HOT DATES

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# Consideration of a New Public Works Building

## Old Fire Station Update on page 14



*Mayor George Lapointe*

In a non-binding November 2022 referendum, voters in Hallowell overwhelmingly approved the idea of building a new Public Works facility. Since then, Hallowell bought a piece of land off Central Street to house the Department of Public Works and potentially other facilities as well. This is a costly (\$4+ million) but necessary plan of action. However, concerns about the City's budget have some people saying that they don't believe that a new facility is needed. So, why does City staff believe that a new facility is needed rather than renovating the current Public Works garage?

First, the current Public Works building is old and in bad shape. The facility was built in the late 1800s as a trolley garage. In 2017, a structural engineer said that a major roof beam was failing. The repair for that was about \$75,000 with a guarantee of only 5 years. The building walls are solid brick without any steel framing. The

brickwork has deteriorated with age and water intrusion, which has rendered it structurally unsound in many places.

Second, the building and grounds are too small for the needs of a modern public works operation. The garage bays aren't large enough to store equipment inside which makes it difficult to wash and repair equipment. As discussed at a recent Finance Committee meeting, this results in deteriorating equipment that needs to be replaced at shorter intervals. The current facility doesn't have a wash bay to clean equipment after use; washing outside results in slippery, icy conditions. If it's too cold, outside washing simply can't be done. With the current facility, most public works equipment is stored outside subject to weather conditions. The grounds of the current facility do not provide enough room for storage and the movement of equipment. Hallowell did propose adding another bay a number of years ago, but this was

turned down by state regulators.

Third, the facility doesn't provide adequate office and workshop space for the Public Works staff. This is important because we want to retain valuable and experienced staff for all the functions that Public Works provides.

Finally, the facility is also on the floodplain which makes it vulnerable to flooding and restricts what can be done to upgrade the facility.

City leaders understand the challenge of paying for a new Public Works facility given the cost and the city's budget situation. Putting more money into an old, inadequate building is not the answer. A better strategy is to plan how to fund the new facility over time, particularly as other City debt is retired.

City leaders are available to answer questions about the Public Works facility and to discuss how to achieve a new building in a fiscally sound manner.



**Public Works building in an earlier reincarnation.**

## THE INSIDE SCOOP

New Faces on City Council  
Cohen Center  
A Trail for Everyone  
Climate Action Update  
Homestead Archivists & Author Talk  
UMA Students at Stevens Commons  
Vaughan Brook Watershed Project

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*Darrin Lary*

The Hallowell Water District is continuing with the initial phase of testing for removal of the PFAS contaminants in the Ferry Road wells in Chelsea. With the assistance of the District's engineering company, Wright-Pierce, and specialty water subcontractor, BlueLeaf Inc., pilot testing is almost complete to determine the best method for removing the PFAS from the drinking water.

Once the results from the final water quality sampling are received along with a report detailing the results of the extended pilot test procedure, the data will be reviewed to evaluate the best options for pretreatment of the source water and PFAS removal treatment. This evaluation will include options for the Water District such as capital construction requirements for the selected treatment process,

## PFAS Update - Hallowell Water District Initial Phase of Filtration Testing Underway

anticipated lifecycle costs for the equipment and treatment medias, and operating and maintenance expenses for the new treatment facility.

Depending on the selected treatment approach, a preliminary design basis memorandum will be developed detailing the features and requirements for the new treatment facility. This preliminary design will be developed collaboratively with the District to ensure the facility meets the current and future needs

of the water system.

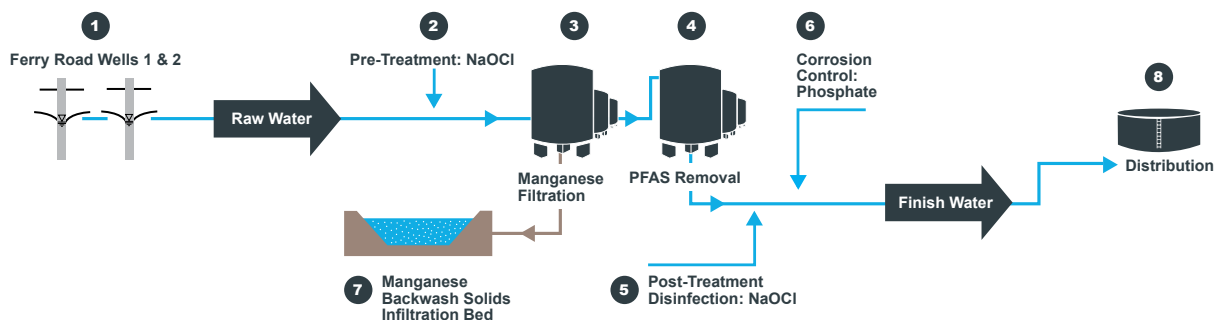
Zack Lovely, Director of the Hallowell Water District, and Darrin Lary, the Senior Project Manager at Wright-Pierce, participated in a PFAS workshop held at City Hall the end of January. A video recording of the workshop and copies of all the handouts are available by visiting the city website <https://hallowell.govoffice.com/> and scrolling down to a link of the program and materials.



**Photo Caption: Test pits and monitoring well to test percolation rates for onsite manganese residuals management.**

### Hallowell Water District Proposed Treatment Process Overview

**WRIGHT-PIERCE**  
Engineering a Better Environment



#### 1. Raw Water

Raw water is pumped from Ferry Road Well 1 and Well 2 in Chelsea.

#### 2. Pre-Treatment

The water is then pretreated with sodium hypochlorite (NaOCl) to oxidize the manganese.

#### 3. Manganese Filtration

The pretreated water then flows through GreensandPlus™ pressure filtration vessels for manganese removal.

#### 4. PFAS removal

Following manganese filtration water flows through PFAS pressure vessels with selective media to remove PFAS from the water.

#### 5. Post-Treatment Disinfection: NaOCl

After PFAS removal the treated water is injected with sodium hypochlorite for post treatment disinfection prior to discharge to the distribution system.

#### 6. Corrosion Control: Phosphate

Finally, the finished water is injected with a phosphate to optimize corrosion control before discharge to the distribution system.

#### 7. Manganese Solids Infiltration Basin

Backwash waste from the manganese filters is discharged to an infiltration bed to store oxidized manganese solids.

#### 8. Distribution

Treated water is pumped from the facility into the Hallowell distribution system which utilizes three water storage tanks holding 1.5 million gallons. The tanks provide water for fire protection and to maintain system pressure.

# New Faces on City Council

*Bob McIntire*

The November municipal elections saw four new City Councilors take their seats in the new year.



**Ben Gagnon.**

Ben Gagnon joined the City Council a bit earlier than the other new members as Councilor of Ward 3. He was appointed by Mayor George Lapointe in December 2024 to fill a vacant seat on the Council. He grew up in Durham and went to school in Brunswick. A graduate of Wheaton College, he spent six months studying abroad in Bhutan. He has been actively involved in politics, including the role of Finance Director for Governor Mill's 2016 campaign.

Ben moved to Hallowell in 2020 about the same time he started working for Serra Public Affairs and feels lucky to have found such a welcoming city. His priority is addressing the budget while maintaining essential services.



**Scott Cooper.**

"You can just say I'm Spike's dad," Scott Cooper explained as he sat down in the Hubbard Library. His wife, Becky, is one of the librarians. While at the University of Connecticut, Scott started working at a Subway on campus, then became the manager, and ultimately owned six franchise locations. After selling those businesses, he decided to follow his personal interests and earned a master's degree in Archeology from the University of Bristol in the UK. The program allowed him to do field work on St. Kitts. Following a stint managing Rising Tide Coop in Damariscotta, he moved to Hallowell in 2014 working first at Crown of Maine and now at Jacob's Glass in Winslow.

Scott was encouraged to run for City Council by friends as Councilor at Large. He believes his experience in business operations and finance will allow him to make a meaningful contribution to the Council and City.



**Lauren McPherson.**

Lauren McPherson loves the great outdoors and is the Councilor serving Ward 5, the most rural part of Hallowell. She started life in town, then moved away to go to school at Erskine Academy, yet spending nearly every weekend in Hallowell. Her entire family enjoys outside activities. She grew up in the woods looking for snakes and such so her

position as a wildlife biologist for the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is a great fit.

She believes in taking action, not just talking. She became concerned about the proposed increase in property taxes so decided to run for the Council seat. She is committed to determining the services we really need and paying for them, but not through unbridled development. She chairs the Health and Wellness Committee and sits on the Property Committee.



**Karen Tucker Knox.**

Karen Tucker Knox grew up in the southern part of the state. She was a radio announcer working first at the student station in Orono, then at WTOS, WYNZ, and WMGX. Portland was home for many years. She moved to Gardiner in 2004 and volunteered in many community activities like the Heart of Gardiner, a Heart and Soul project. She migrated to Hallowell in 2019 and became active in Vision Hallowell and the Heart and Soul initiative here.

Karen serves as a court-appointed mediator in small claims and evictions cases. She is passionate about working together to solve problems and helping people improve their lives and hopes to bring that attitude to her role as the Councilor from Ward 1.



# Get Hooked on Knitting and Crocheting at the Cohen Community Center



*Lindsay MacDonald*

Looking to add a little creativity and connection to your week? Whether you're a seasoned yarn wizard or just learning to cast on, Cohen Center's Knitting & Crocheting Club welcomes you with open arms (and plenty of yarn!).

Bring your current project—be it a cozy scarf or blanket, or even your very first granny square—and join us for an afternoon of crafting and conversation.

This is more than just a club; it's a place to unwind, make friends, and watch your projects (and your social circle) grow with a warm and welcoming group of fellow yarn enthusiasts. Everyone gladly shares tips, tricks, and inspiration

to take your skills to the next level. Delicious snacks, coffee, and water are available to keep you energized.

So, grab your hooks, needles, and a ball of yarn and come see what all the buzz is about! Let's knit, crochet, and connect! See you on Tuesdays at 12:30PM! A \$3 fee covers snacks!



**Cohen Center Knitters.**

## Kickstart a Heart-Healthy Lifestyle!

Spectrum Generations offers a wide range of programs to support your health and well-being. Monica Hawk, the Health and Wellness Coordinator, explained, "Whether you're looking to kickstart a heart-healthy lifestyle or make meaningful changes to improve your overall health, we're here to help you every step of the way." Here is just one example:

Building Better Caregivers is presented online to cover the whole state. Six sessions from 5-7:30PM

begin on April 2.

This program can positively impact heart health indirectly. Key factors are addressed that influence cardiovascular well-being through stress reduction, emotional support, and behavioral changes. Not only can this program positively impact your heart health, but it can also improve the overall quality of life for caregivers.

Contact Monica Hawk, Health and Wellness Coordinator, for more information at 207-620-1642 or [mhawk@spectrumgenerations.org](mailto:mhawk@spectrumgenerations.org).

## Medicare 101 Training

Medicare can be difficult to navigate but Spectrum Generations can help! Sign up for our Medicare 101 class, taught by Medicare certified volunteers. Medicare 101 clarifies the difference between Medicare Part A and B, Medicare Advantage, and Supplement Plans. The class covers eligibility and ways to avoid lifetime penalties, along with Medicare Saving Programs. If you are interested in attending or want more information, please call 1-800-639-1559 to sign up for a class near you!

- Cohen Center (22 Town Farm Road, Hallowell) 1st Thursday of the month; 9:30-11:30AM.
- Muskie Center (38 Gold Street,

Waterville) 4th Friday of the month; 1-3PM.

- Lincoln Center (767 Main Street, Suite 3, Damariscotta 1st Thursday of the month;

10AM-12PM.

- Waldo Center (18 Merriam Road, Belfast) 2nd Wednesday of the month; 10AM-12PM.



# A Trail for Everyone Is in Our Future!



*Rosemary Presnar*

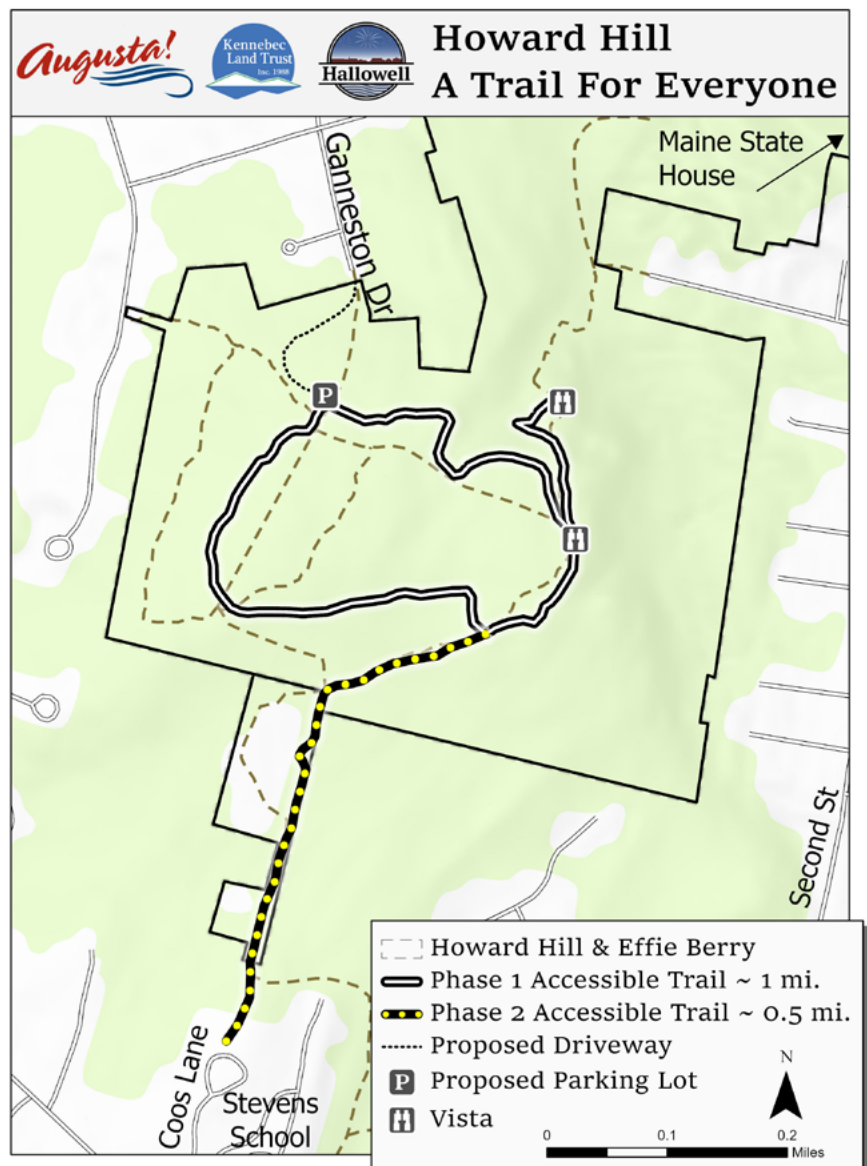
The City of Augusta, the City of Hallowell, and the Kennebec Land Trust (KLT) propose building approximately 1.5 miles of accessible trail on Howard Hill Historical Park in Augusta and Effie Berry Conservation Area in Hallowell.

The trail will be built to United States Access Board accessibility standards to enable a wide variety of users, including those with mobility and visual impairments and families with young children. All will be able to experience the wooded hilltop of Howard Hill, its scenic viewpoints overlooking the Maine State Capitol and the field habitat of the Effie L Berry Conservation Area. This area was chosen by KLT due to its proximity to a large population center and because these conservation properties offer unique outdoor experiences.

The current project plan is a phased approach over the next 2 to 4 years. The first phase will include an approximate 4,800 ft loop built from the future Ganneston Drive parking lot to the Howard Hill capitol overlook and back to the parking lot. It will also likely include a 1,000 ft spur to the lower Capitol vista. The second phase will be an approximate 2,500 ft trail connecting the phase one loop with Hallowell via the Effie L Berry Conservation Area and a trailhead at Stevens Commons.

The current total project budget of \$1,500,000 includes a new parking lot with funds provided by the City of Augusta, construction of over 1.5 miles of accessible trail; supporting infrastructure such as kiosks, signage, and benches; improvements and extensions to existing trails; and a fund for perpetual maintenance of the Howard Hill and Berry trail systems. Significant support is expected from state and federal funding agencies via grants, the regional business community, and individual donors and foundations.

The community fundraising goal from KLT members, businesses, foundations, and other community members is approximately \$400,000 out of \$1.5M. As of early February 2025, over \$89,000 has already been pledged or donated. To learn more about the project and to become a community donor toward A Trail for Everyone, visit the Kennebec Land Trust's website at <https://www.tkltr.org/a-trail-for-everyone>.





*Hilary Neckles*

HCA was formed in 2022 as a project of Hallowell Conservation Commission to help our community understand, mitigate, and adapt to climate change impacts while taking action to reduce carbon pollution. This year HCA will continue successful ongoing programs and will offer some exciting new local climate solutions. Hallowell Climate Action (HCA) was formed in 2022 as a project of Hallowell Conservation Commission to help our community understand, mitigate, and adapt to climate change impacts while taking action to reduce carbon pollution. This year HCA will continue successful ongoing programs and will offer some exciting new local climate solutions. For more information on any of these activities or to get involved with HCA, email [HallowellConservation@gmail.com](mailto:HallowellConservation@gmail.com).

### WindowDressers

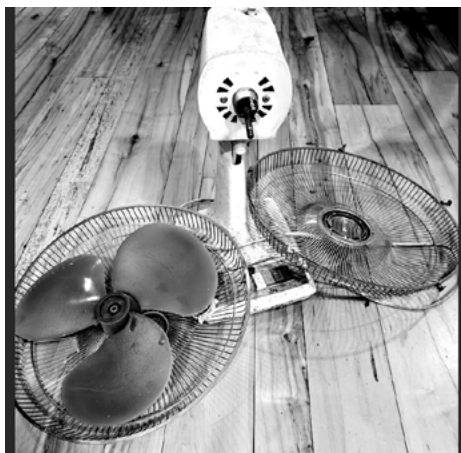
WindowDressers is a nonprofit organization that supports volunteers in constructing lightweight insulating window inserts for homes in their communities at local “Community Builds.” This volunteer model keeps the cost of inserts well below that of similar commercial products. In addition, WindowDressers offers up to 10 free inserts per year to households experiencing any kind of financial hardship.

Through Community Builds co-hosted by HCA during the past two falls, over 70 households in Hallowell, Augusta, and surrounding

# Updates

towns are staying warmer, saving heating costs, and reducing carbon emissions this winter. HCA will co-host a third WindowDressers Community Build this fall.

Insert orders are already coming in. Interested folks should request inserts soon to ensure being included in the coming season, as there is a cap on the number of inserts that can be constructed during the Community Build. To request inserts, either go to [WindowDressers.org](http://WindowDressers.org) and click on the red “Request Inserts Here” button, or contact HCA.



### Repair Café

Calling electricians, seamsters, bike repairers, woodworkers, mechanics, and handy-people of all kinds to help at Hallowell’s first repair café! The entire lifecycle of our “stuff” contributes to carbon pollution. Resource extraction, manufacturing, transporting products to market, and ultimate disposal in landfills all require energy that releases emissions.

Although it would clearly be better to repair a broken product than to throw it away, many of us don’t have the necessary skills. Repair Café to the rescue! At a repair café, volunteers who like to fix things come together with people who have broken things to fix to reduce community waste. HCA hopes to

host a repair café this spring and is currently recruiting volunteer fixers. Contact HCA now to help!

### Community Composting

Food waste that ends up in landfills contributes dramatically to climate change through production of methane, which is a very potent greenhouse gas. The US Environmental Protection Agency reports that the emissions caused by wasted food in the United States are greater than the emissions from all commercial flights in the country.

Composting organic waste keeps it out of the landfill and using compost to amend soil enhances soil health and plant growth. But not all of us have space for a backyard compost pile. ScrapDogs Community Compost will pick up your food scraps, take it to their facility, turn it into healthy compost, and deliver compost back to you. ScrapDogs will extend a free one-month trial to new customers in Hallowell. Contact HCA for a custom coupon code to sign up for this free trial.



Activities for all ages in the city’s parks: an art workshop featuring the new petroglyphs at Vaughan Field, Last Crane Standing’s Pollinator Garden cleanup at Granite City Park, 5th Annual Hallowell and Earth Litter Patrols (HELP), and more! Watch for details. Want to help? Email [hallowellconservation@gmail.com](mailto:hallowellconservation@gmail.com).





## Vaughan Woods & Historic Homestead

Kate Tremblay

Vaughan Woods & Historic Homestead recently honored long-time archivists Ron Kley and Jane Radcliffe at a February luncheon. Through their business, Museum Research Associates, Ron and Jane have catalogued and interpreted the collections of historical institutions and sites across the country and the world. The two have spent over a decade cataloging the contents and documenting the history of the Vaughan Homestead. They entered over 25,000 historical documents and artifacts into the Homestead's collections database!

## Homestead Archivists Honored

At the February gathering, staff and board members as well as volunteers presented books to be added to the new Radcliffe Kley Reference Collection, now housed in the research and records room at Vaughan Homestead. The collection honors both their loyal service to the Vaughan family and their passion for preserving and archiving local history. The books cover a wide range of topics, such as collections care and management, reading 18th-century handwriting, museum interpretation, research practices, relevant historical events, and more. Each book contains a special bookplate, a framed copy of which was presented to both Ron and Jane.

Ron and Jane continue to be integral members of the Vaughan Homestead team. Their in-depth knowledge of the collection



### Bookplate.

and dedication to the work have ignited a love of history in countless Vaughan Homestead volunteers, staff members, interns, and visitors with the story of the historic site. They provide much inspiration to those who have had, and will continue to have, the pleasure of working with them.

## Author Talk and House Tour at the Homestead Mark 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Revolution

Two hundred and fifty years ago, in April of 1775, the American Revolution began in earnest with the Battles of Concord and Lexington. Please join us at Vaughan Woods & Historic Homestead to mark this anniversary on Sunday, April 13, at 3PM. National bestselling author Andrew Lawler will speak about his new book *A Perfect Frenzy: A Royal Governor, His Black Allies, and the Crisis That Spurred the American Revolution*. The book brings to light

the largely untold story of rebellion in Virginia and will forever change your understanding of the American Revolution.

Vaughan Homestead will be open for informal tours at 2PM prior to Mr. Lawler's talk and after the presentation. Visitors may enjoy refreshments in the dining room and wander through a special self-guided exhibit, "Dissenters, The American Revolution & The Settlement of Vaughan Homestead," that explores

the Hallowell-Vaughan family's connection to the American Revolution.

The Vaughan Homestead is located at 2 Litchfield Road, Hallowell. Pre-registration is required. \$10/person, includes refreshments and a copy of *A Perfect Frenzy*. Register at [vaughanhomestead.org](http://vaughanhomestead.org) or by calling (207) 622-9831.







*Virginia LaFlamme*

Nestled along the scenic Kennebec River, Hallowell isn't just where University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) students live—it's where they find a sense of belonging. For those who call Stevens Commons home, college is more than academics; it's about becoming part of a community that embraces them. They may be here for just a few years, but in that time, they build connections, contribute to the town's character, and add to its spirit of warmth and opportunity. As they work toward their futures, they also find something just as meaningful—a place that welcomes and supports them, making Hallowell feel like home.



Sammy Thornton, 20, will graduate this May with a degree in Social Science. From nearby Chelsea, she chose to live in the Stevens Commons dorms to fully embrace college life. "I love the independence of dorm life, especially here. I love getting out and exploring the town whenever I can," she said. One of her favorite routines is enjoying breakfast by the water at Granite City Park. As a UMA Admissions Ambassador, she helps prospective students

## For University of Maine at Augusta students, there's no place like home at Stevens Commons

feel welcome, showcasing not just UMA's academics but also Hallowell's strong sense of community. Reflecting on her time here, she appreciates the town's laid-back charm and how it has enriched her college experience.



Aidan Gagnon, a freshman aviation student from Sanford, has a view of Hallowell unlike most. Residents can look up and see him soaring overhead in a UMA-branded plane, training for a future as a commercial and charter pilot. "Flying over Hallowell always reminds me how special this town is," he said. Balancing six classes, a part-time job, track, and lifeguarding, he appreciates the town's quiet streets and welcoming community as the perfect place to focus and recharge. Though he often sees Hallowell from above, he knows that below him is a little city that has become a place of comfort and possibility.

Landen Huff, a Computer Information Systems major, will graduate this fall after four years of calling Stevens Commons home. Growing up just 20 minutes away in Winthrop, he always knew Hallowell was special, but living here has deepened his appreciation for its welcoming spirit. "The

dorms are gorgeous, but I really feel love in the town," he said, reflecting on the warmth of events like the Pride parade and the charm of Water Street. As a student worker in UMA's Admissions office, he enjoys sharing not just the university's strengths but also the close-knit community that makes Hallowell feel like home. His time in Hallowell has been more than just a college experience—it's been a place where he has felt embraced, supported, and right where he belongs.



Hallowell is more than a place where students pass through—it's a community that shapes them, just as they leave their own mark on it. Their time here is temporary, but the connections they form and the experiences they gain stay with them long after they graduate.

### About University of Maine at Augusta

UMA transforms the lives of students of every age and background across the state of Maine and beyond through access to high-quality distance and on-site education, excellence in student support, civic engagement, and professional and liberal arts programs. For more information, please visit [uma.edu](http://uma.edu).



# Steering Committee Kicks Off Vaughan Brook Watershed Project

The Steering Committee for the Vaughan Brook Watershed Project has kicked off the 2-year monitoring effort. The committee reviewed tasks, timeline, and responsibilities for the Vaughan Brook Watershed-Based Management Plan Development Project being coordinated by the Hallowell Conservation Commission (HCC).

Vaughan Brook has failed to meet its Class B water quality standards in recent years based on monitoring

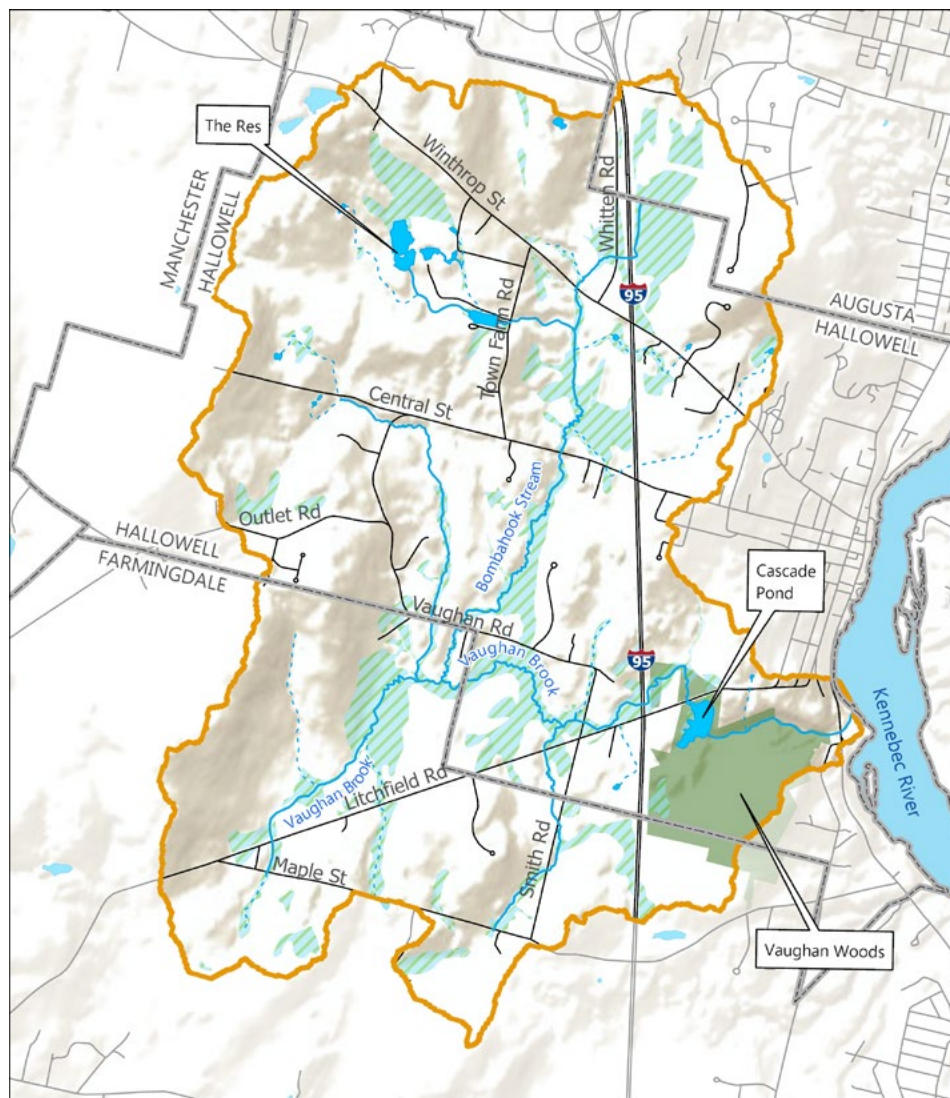
results from the Maine DEP's Biomonitoring Unit. Portions of Vaughan Brook also regularly do not meet Class B standards for dissolved oxygen based on data collected by HCC volunteers for the DEP's Volunteer River Monitoring Program (VRMP) since 2021.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) notified the City of Hallowell and the Hallowell Conservation Commission (HCC) of the

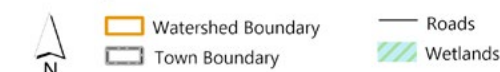


**Vaughan Stream Monitoring.**

*Rosemary Presnar*



**Vaughan Brook Watershed**



**Vaughan Brook Watershed**



*Ecological Instincts - Katie Goodwin*

grant award for Vaughan Brook Watershed-Based Planning in June 2024. HCC volunteers have been monitoring the water quality and the tolerance of aquatic insects in Vaughan Brook tributaries for several years. The collected data supported the successful grant application.

Now with contracts in place, the project's Steering Committee will partner with Ecological Instincts to develop a Watershed-Based Management Plan. The committee consists of HCC members, City staff, community members, along with Vaughan Woods & Historic Homestead and Kennebec Land Trust representatives. Ecological Instincts is an environmental consulting firm located in Manchester, Maine. It will manage the project to develop a 10-year plan that will guide the community in how best to remove Vaughan Brook from Maine DEP's Threatened Streams Priority List.

The project will incorporate the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's required nine elements of a watershed plan to address water quality impairments. The Hallowell community included protecting Vaughan Brook and its watershed in the City of Hallowell's 2022

**STREAM cont'd on PAGE 11**



# Hallowell Conservation Commission Advocates for Updates to Open Space District Ordinance and Local Zoning

*Rosemary Presnar*

Have you biked, fished, or snowshoed at the Hallowell Recreation Area, known as the RES? According to Hallowell's Code of Ordinances, the Open Space District's Permitted Uses Section, dated 1989, did not permit those activities!

Do you know that less than 40% of the total acreage of the RES, including the acreage considered the City Forest with its multi-use, single-track biking trails is not locally zoned as Open Space District? The Middle and Lincoln Streets neighborhood park, Vaughan Field, with its playground equipment, walking loop, soccer nets, and picnic pavilion is another example of incorrectly zoned local land use.

Many residents, city administrators, and elected officials perceive that the City's open spaces used as public parks for decades have a level of protection from development or nonrecreational uses. That is not the case, and the Hallowell Conservation Commission (HCC) members took on the task in 2023 to review and



study local zoning for our public open spaces. HCC focused on the City's cherished parks, starting with the RES, Vaughan Field, and Effie L Berry Conservation Area.

Seven lot parcels in these recreational areas were zoned as Residential or Rural Farm. HCC also discovered the Open Space District Ordinance was outdated and did not support the conservation and recreational uses supported and experienced by the Hallowell community.

The HCC worked through numerous committee meetings and reviews, including the City Council's Public Property Committee, the Recreation Commission, the Ordinance Rewrite Committee, and finally the City Council in February

2025 to update the Open Space District Ordinance to correctly reflect current land uses. Next step is to continue working with the City Council to update the local zoning designation of the lot parcels making up our parks.

The goal of this effort is to protect the current public open spaces in Hallowell for generations to come. Thanks to past and current HCC members and City Councilors, that goal is remarkably close to reality.



**STREAM cont'd from PAGE 10**  
Comprehensive Plan. The project team will update the community as the Watershed-Based Management Plan development project progresses through public meetings, social media posts, and additional newsletters.

Sixty-eight percent of the land area in the City of Hallowell is located within the Vaughan Brook Watershed. The watershed offers significant opportunities for year-round public recreation, including swimming, hiking, biking, fishing, birding, as well as snowmobiling and skiing in the winter. The stream and its network of tributaries

and wetlands are a major part of Hallowell's scenic beauty, valuable wildlife habitat, and climate resilience.

The stream is interconnected with over five hundred acres of freshwater wetlands that help to filter and improve water quality and function as natural sponges, absorbing and storing floodwater. How we treat and protect our watershed with its network of wetlands and streams affects Hallowell's quality of life.

Volunteers will be needed for early morning stream monitoring throughout the summer and to assist with the project's all-day fieldwork on June 5 and August 6

and 7. If you are interested, please contact the Hallowell Conservation Commission to add your name to the list.

Funding for this project, in part, was provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Section 604(b) of the Clean Water Act. The funding is administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection in partnership with EPA. EPA does not endorse any commercial products or services mentioned.

Email [hallowellconservation@gmail.com](mailto:hallowellconservation@gmail.com), ATTN: Rosemary Presnar, for more information.

# New Mainers Project Salutes Chris Myers Asch

*Diana Scully*

Immigrants to the Capital Area are nothing new. People of the Dawn first, followed thousands of years later by English and French settlers, then Canadians to work in the woods and mills. When larger numbers of families from the Middle East began to arrive in the Augusta area in the fall of 2016, some local folks were called to act. They formed the Capital Area New Mainers Project (CANMP) with cofounder Chris Myers Asch as the first Executive Director.

Chris stepped down from the role in the fall of last year. The organization hosted an open house in February to celebrate and honor his work. The CANMP Multicultural Center, formerly St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Hallowell, was filled with supporters and New Mainers alike. Tables were piled high with food as friends and neighbors joined to salute Chris and all those who contributed to the efforts.

Board chair Diana Scully of Hallowell began, "Because of Chris's vision and action, CANMP exists." She read a letter from Sarah Shed, one of the co-founders, who recalled how CANMP was born and the key role Chris played.

"[R]efugee families from the Middle East had somehow made their way to Augusta, and more were on their way. The word went out among the faith communities. There were meetings.

The need was to find a way to help our new neighbors, but the journey between aspiration and action can be messy and long. Chris, however, was ready to go right to action.

By January 2017, Capitol Area New Mainers was born. Committees were created and the idea of Family Mentor Teams quickly evolved. There were so many people who wanted to become involved in a warm-touch kind of way.



**The Asch family: Robyn, Chris, Miriam, Aaron, and Erica. Special Note. Miriam, a senior at Hall-Dale High School, is a Semifinalist in the 2025 National Merit Scholarship Program.**

*Suheir Alaskari*

It [was] clear that we needed a leader to keep the balls in the air, and Chris quickly became the obvious choice. From the very beginning, he was able to see what was needed and to see that need filled. Chris made it look effortless, and CANMP flourished."

Next, Suheir Alaskari of Waterville, CANMP's board vice chair, thanked Chris for his contributions to CANMP and presented him with a handcrafted wooden box created by Dr. Kieran Kammerer of Hallowell Woodworks, LLC. Tucked inside this work of art were many notes thanking him for his inspirational leadership. After comments by Myers Asch, several attendees took the mic thanking him during an open mic session. CANMP's new Executive Director, Jon Godbout, closed with thoughts about the organization's next chapter.

In 2021 the Episcopal Diocese of Maine turned ownership of the former St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and rectory on 20 Union Street in Hallowell over to CANMP. Chris and the St. Matthews congregation worked closely together and were instrumental

in having the building ownership transferred. As a result, the organization was able to provide housing for two large immigrant families. The former church became the Hallowell Multicultural Center in 2022. Since then, the Center has hosted the annual International Kids Festival on Old Hallowell Day and other community events.

Anyone who is interested in volunteering or has questions about CANMP should contact Jon Godbout at [jon@newmainerproject.org](mailto:jon@newmainerproject.org).



**St. Matthews now Hallowell Multicultural Center.**

*Hubbard Free Library*

Hallowell Champion



# Solar-Powered City Soon!

*Bob McIntire*

Hallowell will soon be joining the ranks of many Maine cities and towns generating electrical power with a new solar system to be installed on City property off Central Street. The solar array will generate enough electricity to meet both the city's needs and allow residents to purchase power as well.

The City will save 30% a year on its electrical power costs or nearly \$5,000 annually and earn an additional \$8,000 for leasing the space for the solar array. The project is being developed by Perennial Renewables, a company based in Hallowell and Burlington, Massachusetts.

The project timeline calls for commercial operation to begin in the fall, but the project has been a long time coming.

The City's solar energy initiative began over five years ago. Mayor Mark Walker created a Solar Power Task Force led by Patrick Wynne, then Councilor for Ward 5, along with five other residents who either owned solar systems or who were interested or involved in solar development. Members included Hal Booth, Ryan Gordon, Ben Sturtevant, Bob McIntire, and Anne McKee who was then working on Isleboro.

The Task Force started its work by determining the city's electrical power needs. The group researched solar power projects in Westbrook, Bucksport, and Tremont as well as one for Mount Desert Island High School. The Task Force explored best practices operating municipal solar systems and then looked at City property that might make a suitable site.

The City had purchased a 31-acre property off Central Street just past the Turnpike overpass for the

proposed Public Works Building (see page 2). The property, formerly an industrial site, has about 15 acres that can be developed. The remainder is wetlands.

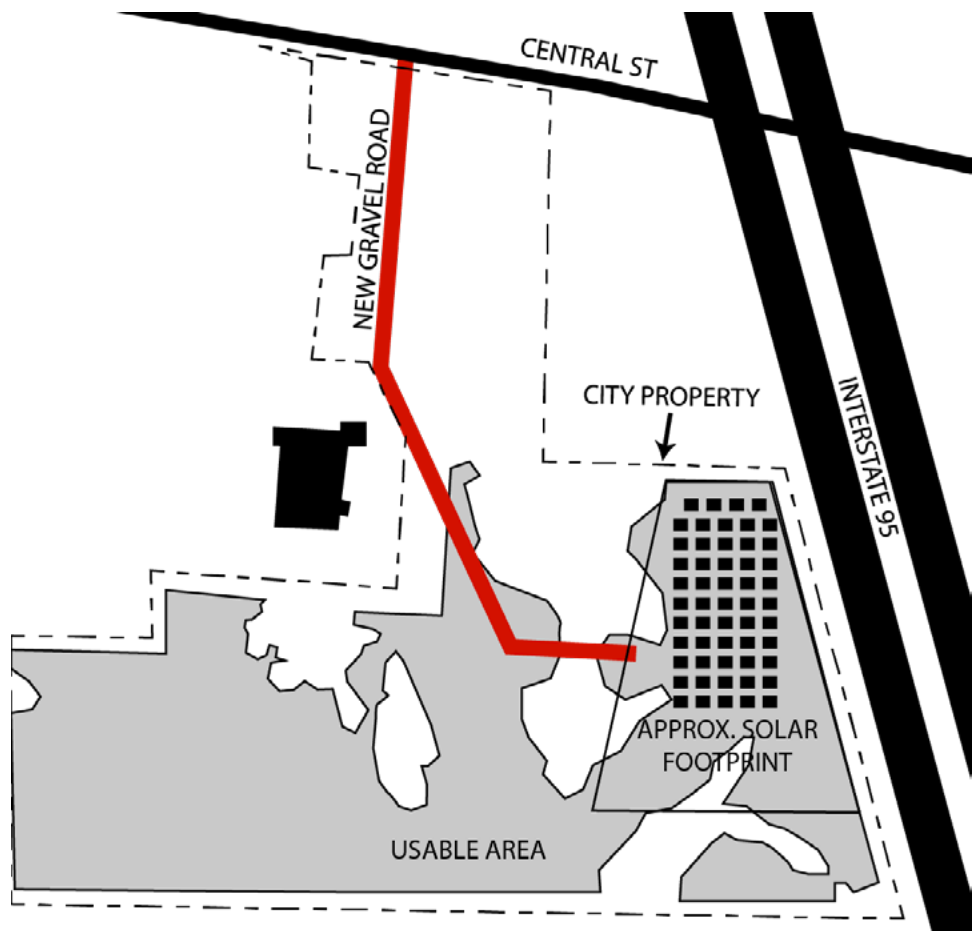
The city issued a solar RFP in March 2024 and received two proposals that were reviewed by members of the Task Force who recommended awarding the contract to Perennial Renewables. The company has developed several projects in the area including an array off Pleasant Street that is currently providing Net Energy Billing credits to a number of buildings at Stevens Commons as well as Granite Hill Estates.

Nick Lacasse, one of the founding partners, explained that the array will produce more power than the city needs to meet its demand. Hallowell residents and businesses



**Perennial crew beginning installation of the Stevens Commons array.**

will be able to sign up to buy excess power generated by the new facility and also benefit from a 10% to 30% reduction in residential power rates depending on the length of the agreement signed with the solar farm. Perennial anticipates offering residential contracts in the summer. Contact Nick Lacasse to learn more about subscribing your Central Maine Power account to the solar project. Call 207-446-06725 or email [nick@perennialrenew.com](mailto:nick@perennialrenew.com).



# Hallowell's New Code Enforcement Officer

*Mike Frett*

Welcome, Sarah Moore, Hallowell's recently hired Code Enforcement Officer (CEO). For those unfamiliar with the position, our Code Enforcement Officer ensures that local/State laws on property maintenance, zoning, and safety are followed to keep our community safe and well maintained. With over 25 years of varied and extensive experience in the construction industry, Sarah comes well prepared to assist our city in maintaining those objectives.

Sarah has worked on, or overseen, projects in Colorado and parts of Maine. Arriving first to Hallowell in 2007, she worked on renovating properties in Augusta, Rockland, Cushing, and Jefferson, before returning to Hallowell. Following a brief hiatus to pursue

other challenging interests, Sarah began an active role in property management and renovations.

Working as a consultant, Sarah has used her building skills and knowledge to help homeowners who are seeking to build, repair, or remodel properties in compliance with local codes. She is a consummate professional. Her insights are shared in an easily understandable and clear manner. In performing her duties, she remains constantly focused on the client's concern and intended purpose, while bringing those in line with accurate and reliable code requirements.

Sarah is also actively engaged within Hallowell's thriving community. She currently serves on the Hubbard Free Library Board of Trustees, overseeing building maintenance and repairs. Together



**Sarah Moore.**

*Mike Frett*

with her partner, Drew, their son, and Owen, the lovable French Bulldog, Sarah is at home in Hallowell. The family enjoys hiking, sailing, camping out, and biking. Again, Welcome, Sarah!

## Update on the Old Fire Station Sale

*Mayor George Lapointe*

This update gives information on the status of the Old Fire Station on Second Street. City Council has recently discussed the sale of the Old Fire Station. People have asked why this discussion is taking place given the non-binding referendum a couple of years ago where about two-thirds of voters chose to keep the Old Fire Station in public ownership.

The Old Fire Station has gone through major changes since being built in the early 1800s, from the City Hall to fire station to housing the Hallowell Food Pantry, and being used for storage. In the recent past, there has been interest in seeing the building restored and put to good use. After the non-binding referendum, City Council contracted with an architectural firm to visualize how the building could be used to house the Hallowell Food Pantry, Hallowell Police Department, and

a space for public use and display of historic firefighting artifacts. The resulting report was done in 2021 and estimated that the cost of renovation could be \$3.2 million or higher.

In the last couple of years, there has been a growing interest in the sale of the Old Fire Station by some Hallowell citizens and City Council members with covenants to protect the historic nature of the building, to provide space for the Hallowell Food Pantry and display space for firefighting artifacts. This interest has come from two perspectives: (1) to avoid the significant cost of renovation and upkeep as a municipal building and (2) to get the property on the tax rolls.

As the City's challenging financial situation became known last year, City Council voted to sell the building in a budget-neutral way, i.e., to not make money or to sell the building at less than market

value. This budget-neutral position was because of the unique nature of the building in terms of potential covenants, parking, and what might be acceptable as a use for the building.

The city developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) that defines the terms of an acceptable sale. The RFP was finalized at the March Council meeting. The draft RFP is available from City staff and on the Council's website. City Council welcomes comments on the RFP and on the overall issue of the future of the Old Fire Station.







*Stephanie Paradis*

The Hallowell Area Board of Trade (HABOT) is delighted to announce the return of the highly anticipated Hallowell Artwalk, now in its second year! Set to take place on June 28th and August 30th from 9AM to 4PM, the event will be an unforgettable celebration of creativity, community, and culture.

Following the incredible success of last year's event, the 2nd Annual Hallowell Artwalk will once again aim to transform downtown Hallowell into a vibrant hub of artistic expression. Visitors will have the unique opportunity to explore a diverse array of artwork from local and regional artists, including paintings, photography, ceramics, woodwork, and much more.

"We are thrilled to bring back the Hallowell Artwalk for its second year," said Nick Lacasse, President of HABOT. "This event not only showcases the incredible talent of our local artists but also fosters a sense of community and support

# Two Hallowell Artwalks Planned!



## **A couple of the galleries on the Hallowell Artwalk.**

*Bob McIntire*

for the arts. We invite everyone to join us for two days of creativity, inspiration, and fun."

Featured will be:

- Art Exhibits: Easily viewed on display outside of downtown businesses.
- Live Music: Local musicians will perform at the City's outdoor bandstand.
- Interactive Workshops: Hands-on art activities suitable for all ages.
- Food and Beverages: Savor delicious offerings from a local



food truck vendor as well as from our own outstanding restaurants.

"We believe that art has the power to bring people together and enrich our lives in profound ways," added Stephanie Paradis, Chair of the Artwalk Committee. "The Artwalk is an excellent opportunity for residents and visitors alike to connect with the artistic spirit of our community. We hope to see everyone there!"

The event is free and open to the public. Whether you're an art enthusiast, a curious visitor, or looking for a fun family outing, the Artwalk has something for everyone! For more information, updates, and applications to participate, visit our website at [waterstreethallowell.org/hallowell-artwalk-application](http://waterstreethallowell.org/hallowell-artwalk-application) or @HallowellArtwalk on Instagram.

## Join the Board of Trade and Help!

The Hallowell Area Board of Trade is committed to promoting our great little city and the businesses that help power its success, but the organization needs your support. Members have been busy. HABOT sponsored an Artwalk last October. People had such a great time we're doing it again in June and August!

The organization is revitalizing [www.hallowell.org](http://www.hallowell.org) that will include a landing page for Vision Hallowell (the Maine Downtown affiliate) and hosting the electronic version of

*The Champion*. In fact all the past issues of the newsletter are available online.

HABOT Members brought back the wildly popular Hallowell's Scarecrow Fest and the Halloween parade. We're onboard to do the same this year. HABOT launched Santa Con and raised nearly a thousand dollars for the Maine House Kids Christmas Event.

HABOT members look forward to improved scheduling and marketing of all the City's events.

Your support is essential. Become a member. Dues are just \$100 annually. If you haven't joined, it's easy! Visit the website [www.hallowell.org](http://www.hallowell.org) and click on "Member Center." Fill out an application and send a check to HABOT, PO Box 246 Hallowell 04347 or call Nick Lacasse, HABOT's president at 207-446-0635. He or one of the other members of the Board will run right over!



## **BUDGET continued from PAGE 1**

While back in the day, posting literally meant to a physical bulletin board, thankfully today we can rely on electronic postings, which are done nearly instantaneously.

The City Council then schedules a public hearing on the budget, which must be held 10 days before the budget is finally adopted and provide public notice of the hearing. Easy peasy, right? Well, not so much. While the process in the charter is straightforward, there is much work that occurs before a draft budget is submitted to the council,” Kate went on to explain.

“Beginning in early January,

members of the Finance Committee meet routinely to delve into the budget numbers, discuss requests with departments, amend the budget numbers, determine how much TIF revenue (see below) will be raised and appropriated, and present draft budgets to the council for feedback. The ‘review, discuss, and amend’ process is repeated until the committee is satisfied with its work and delivers to the council the final draft revenue and expenditure budget.

Even at that point the process is not over, as the council now can amend the budget as it determines necessary or even send it back to the committee for additional work. Just when you think the work is

complete, a public hearing is held 10 days before the budget’s final adoption.

Each step in the process—from presentation of the City Manager’s proposed budget to the evening the budget is adopted—is open to the public for observation and participation.

Developing a municipal budget is the most transparent process of all forms of government. The meetings are open to the public and advertised well in advance as required by state statutes.

Additionally, you will not find members of the committee or council scurrying to back rooms to have difficult conversations about the budget out of the earshot of the public. Everything is done ‘on mic,’ as the cool kids say.

The budget and process belong to the residents of Hallowell and for that reason, all are encouraged to participate in each step. After all, it is very difficult for our eight elected officials to make informed decisions, if we don’t all speak up. All of the Finance Committee meetings are listed on the Municipal Calendar at <https://hallowell.govoffice.com>. So, get out there and have your voices heard.”

## **\*Truth about Tax Increment Financing (TIFs)**

The facts according to the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (<https://www.maine.gov/decd/MTIF>)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a flexible finance tool used by municipalities, plantations, and unorganized territories to leverage new property taxes generated by a specific project or projects within a defined geographic district. Any portion of the new taxes may be used to finance public or private projects for a defined statutorily allowable period of time.

The TIF Program is locally driven: The municipality or plantation defines the district size, determines the amount of new taxes to be captured, identifies allowable public and private projects along with the term, with the whole proposal requiring local political approval.

A business may approach a municipality with a project for which a TIF district would provide financing. Or a municipality may take advantage of an already planned and financed project and create a TIF district around it, capturing a portion of new property tax revenue for specific public uses.

Over their term, TIF districts can return thousands to millions of dollars to a municipality. The projects financed may include anything from upgrading a road to adding a wing to an existing building or more.



# Get Involved in the School Budget Process

*Chris Myers Asch & Judy Feinstein*

The RSU 2 Board of Directors extends an invitation to Hallowell residents to get involved with crafting the school budget. Public input is critical!

The budget process begins in late fall. The school principals meet with the superintendent to develop a draft budget, including both “needs” and “wants.” Through the winter, the Board’s Budget Committee holds several public meetings to determine the most responsible allocation of resources. The Board held its most recent meeting at Hallowell City Hall on January 23 to review the overall process and timetable. The next meetings will be on the following dates:

- March 25, 5:30PM: Draft Budget Presentation/Feedback at Hall-Dale Middle/High School

- March 26, 5:30PM: Draft Budget Presentation/Feedback at Monmouth Memorial School

All residents are welcome to attend these meetings to offer suggestions about the draft budget. These are opportunities to ask questions and comment on specific items and expenses. In April, the Board will develop a final draft to present to the public at the following times, at which time additional public input and feedback are invited.

- May 12, 6:00PM: Public Hearing at Monmouth Academy
- May 13, 6:00PM: Public Hearing at Hall-Dale Middle/High School
- May 14, 6:00PM: Public Hearing at Dresden Elementary School

After these hearings, the Board will host a Regional Budget Meeting and Vote to determine the final budget. District residents who attend that meeting will vote on the final budget. Residents who do not attend in person are not allowed to vote; there is no “absentee” option. This very important meeting will be held at Hall-Dale Middle/High School on May 21 at 6:00PM. The total budget approved at that meeting will be on the June 10th election ballot. Details will be available to voters but the ballot question itself is for a bottom-line approval.

If you would like to learn more about the budget process, please contact Superintendent Rick Amero at the RSU 2 office: 207-622-6351.

## Tour Vaughan Woods & Historic Homestead

### JANE’S WALK ME

### HALLOWELL

**May 3, 1:00PM - An Exploration of Colonization, Industrialization, and Conservation**

The Historic Hallowell Committee and Vaughan Woods & Historic Homestead are partnering to offer a fascinating program from the Kennebec Proprietors to the Kennebec Land Trust. Jane’s Walk is a global festival of free, volunteer-led walking conversations inspired by community activist Jane Jacobs. The event combines the simple act of exploring a place with personal observations, local history, and civic engagement.

Jane Jacobs was a community activist and writer who lived from 1916–2006. She is best known for galvanizing her neighbors to stop a highway from being built in their New York City community. She believed in the power of individuals to influence the places they live.

The Hallowell Walk will begin at Vaughan Homestead on Hallowell Litchfield Road. Participants can enjoy the view of the river while taking in the story of the early colonization of the area by the Kennebec Proprietors, including Benjamin Hallowell, whose grandsons settled Vaughan Homestead in 1794. Parking is available inside the gates. Parking

for those with mobility issues is available closer to the Homestead and at the Vaughan Woods parking area. Trails are fairly level with crushed gravel on some and packed earth in the woods. Walkers can tour the Homestead grounds or proceed into Vaughan Woods along a route once home to a series of dams and factories, including a wire mill and a sandpaper factory. It will culminate at one of the preserve’s storied stone arch bridges, a symbol of the site’s revival and the nineteenth-century Vaughans’ “wilderness park” vision that would eventually become the conservation area we know today.

Jane’s Walk Maine is coordinated statewide by Maine Preservation. More information is available at <https://www.maine-preservation.org/janes-walk-me>.

# Thanks to The Hallowell Champion Publishing Partners!

Bob McIntire

How does *The Champion* make its way to your mailbox you may ask. The Hallowell All Age-Friendly Committee took on the role of publishing the newsletter after people participating in focus groups and surveys said they weren't getting the information they wanted. Many didn't do social media or get the *KJ* so the committee decided to start the newsletter but it had no money. That is where the wonderful Publishing Partners came in. They joined together to share the cost of publishing and distributing the newsletter.

The University of Maine at Augusta was just about to open dormitories at Stevens Commons and wanted to connect with folks

in town. Spectrum Generations and the staff at the Cohen Center were anxious to let more people know about the services available on Town Farm Road.

The Vaughan Homestead was expanding its programming and was anxious to share information about events. The Hallowell Area Board of Trade wanted to promote businesses in town. More recently the Hallowell Water District signed on to make sure customers had the most up-to-date details about the water most of us use. Finally, the City of Hallowell uses *The Champion* to share information about services provided to citizens. Plus the Hubbard Library, the Row House, and the Hallowell

Food Pantry have pitched in when budgets allowed.

*The Champion* also has had the benefit of support from organizations beyond the city limits. The Maine Community Foundation provided an initial grant to underwrite the design of the newsletter and more recently provided support for sharing information from committees that don't have a regular budget to cover the cost of participating. AARP Maine also stepped in when additional support was needed.

Thanks go out to all the Publishing Partners for allowing the All Age-Friendly Committee to provide this important public service.

**GOLD RUSH cont'd from PAGE 20**  
leave the harbor in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The voyage around the horn took 167 days. The adventurers landed in California on September 17, 1849.

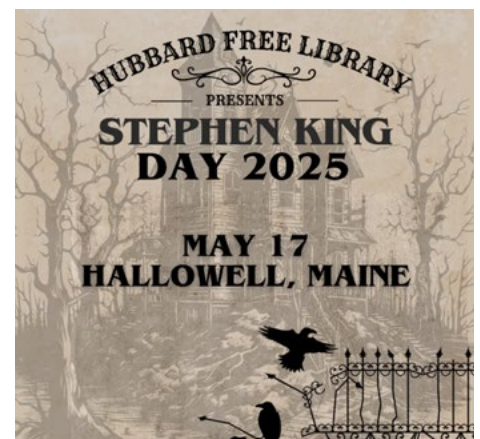
Other information about the Kennebec Mining and Trading Company may still lie hidden in attics; recorded in newspapers of the period; in historical society collections; or in municipal/county tax, deed, or probate records—both here in Maine and in California. Ron Kley, archivist at the Vaughan Homestead, who provided the details of this story is on the hunt! Anyone with information about the Kennebec Mining and Trading Company is encouraged to contact him by email at [ronkley5539@gmail.com](mailto:ronkley5539@gmail.com) and stay tuned!



## More Gold Rush Info - Mark your Calendar!

Ron Kley will be offering a University of Maine Senior College lecture outlining the research he has done over the past decade or so to identify folks from Maine who left homes, communities, occupations, and families. They pooled their resources and pursued a glittery dream in a place virtually unknown at the time. He is especially interested in a collaborative "company" of 50+ folks from towns of the lower Kennebec River Valley.

The "Senior College" online lecture begins at 1:00PM, April 1st. Registration is required. The presentation is available free of charge with a University Senior College Membership. Click on [www.umasc.org](http://www.umasc.org), then "Become a Member Today." Membership levels are available as low as \$10. Return to "Spring Classes" and select Tuesday "Spring Lecture Series."



## Stephen King Day, May 17

Hallowell is celebrating Maine's own Stephen King Day with a full day of events and activities inspired by King's works. The day features Stephen King Book Talks, a Carrie's Prom, Stephen King Pub Trivia, an Animal Kingdom Parade, and a performance by Gaslight Theater of *The Reach*.

Check in at the Hubbard Library or the Hubbard Facebook or web page for up-to-date information.



# Make a Difference! Lend a Hand!



## Hallowell Volunteer Fire Department

Openings for firefighters. Training is available. The course lasts 5 months, and when completed, the person is a fully trained and certified firefighter.

Contact Chief Jim Owens at 207-754-2518 or email [firechief@hallowellmaine.org](mailto:firechief@hallowellmaine.org) for more information.



## Cohen Community Center / Spectrum Generations

Have some spare time? The Cohen Center needs some help.

Meals on Wheels Frozen Meal Packers: Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 12:45–2:00PM

Dining Room Service Team: Monday–Friday from 10:45AM–1:00PM

Meals on Wheels Milk Bag Packers: Wednesday and Friday mornings 6:45–8:00AM

Meals on Wheels Drivers: Wednesday and Friday mornings

Contact Shawn Forkey, Regional Center Director, at [smforkey@spectrumgenerations.org](mailto:smforkey@spectrumgenerations.org) or call 207-626-7777.



## Interested in Conservation? Roll up your sleeves!

The Hallowell Conservation Commission (HCC) is seeking additional volunteers with conservation-focused interests and the love of Hallowell's natural resources. Help this passionate group protect the health and vitality of our natural resources, build climate resilience, and engage with the community. If you are interested in being added to our Volunteer List, please email [hallowellconservation@gmail.com](mailto:hallowellconservation@gmail.com) and follow us on Facebook.



## Join the Friends of the Hubbard Free Library!

A community organization dedicated to supporting the library through engagement, advocacy, volunteering, program support, and fundraising activities. Membership is open to everyone in Hallowell and beyond that cares about the Hubbard Free Library and wants to ensure that it can continue to grow and serve our community. Questions? Email [friendsofhubbardlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofhubbardlibrary@gmail.com) or call the library 207-622.6582.



Seek Elderly Alone, Renew Courage & Hope and RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) of Catholic Charities of Maine

## Companions, Shoppers, and Volunteer Drivers Apply Here!

Senior Support Volunteers Needed 55+. You could be the answer to someone's lonely prayer. Do you have a bit of time to share with an older adult? Consider this opportunity to serve. Please contact Lynn.

Need Help? Crave Company? If you are 60 years and older and need support with companionship, grocery shopping, or doctors' appointments, please call us.

Companions, Shoppers, Drivers Needed age 55+. Volunteer a couple of hours a week for seniors who need a helping hand. Provide companionship, assistance with grocery shopping/errands, and/or rides to doctor appointments for senior clients 60 years and older who live in Kennebec County.

Contact SEARCH Program Coordinator, Lynn Kidd, at 207-530-0137 or [lkidd@ccmaine.org](mailto:lkidd@ccmaine.org).



# Pack Your Bags, It's the Gold Rush!

Bob McIntire

The year is 1848. You're sitting at home in Hallowell and learn that a fisherman digging for worms just found a stash of gold coins in the mud along the Kennebec riverbank. Would you be among the first to grab a shovel to join the stampede or stay at home warm and comfortable? That's sort of like the choice people faced about 175 years ago when newspapers of the day brought word of a gold discovery along a different river, the South Fork American River, in a then-little-known place called California.

Mainers by the thousands responded to the news, dropping whatever they had been doing and heading west by land or sea. They left families, communities, and occupations behind, often selling or mortgaging their Maine property to pay their expenses. They joined a

tide of humanity headed westward in a great "Gold Rush" to the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

Turns out there was at least one Hallowellian among the dozens from the Kennebec Valley that joined in the rush. John Warren, who lived in town for a time with his uncle, Judge Ebenezer Tucker Warren, was among fifty-three adventurous folks from the area who formed the Kennebec Mining and Trading Company. Caroline Barnard of Gardiner, an unmarried female, made the voyage as well. She kept a journal, parts of which were serialized and published in an Augusta-based Unitarian weekly newspaper.

The group boarded a former whaling vessel, the *Obed Mitchel*, with a semi-retired sea captain, Gersham Leander Cox of Pittston, at the helm. The voyage started off inauspiciously with the ship running aground three times just attempting to

**GOLD RUSH cont'd  
on PAGE 18**



**Alonzo E. Raynes of Brewer headed to California in 1849. His brother, John Martin, drew the picture saying, he had a "red squirrel colored fur cap, Pilot cloth over coat, hunting boots, and rifle." Raynes lived in California for the rest of his life. Maine Historical Society and Maine State Museum.**

**(<https://www.mainememory.net/record/100920>)**

## The Champion Publishing Partners:



Vaughan Woods &  
Historic Homestead



spectrum  
generations



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Comments and suggestions welcomed! Email [hallowellagefriendly@gmail.com](mailto:hallowellagefriendly@gmail.com) or mail to *The Champ* PO Box 43, Hallowell, ME 04347

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