



# TOWN MANAGER E-Mail Newsletter



Hi All:

This is my message to everyone in the Town of Wells, staff, department heads and Board of Selectmen as I shut off the office lights August 7, 2020. I have cleaned my office to an uncomfortable level of any paper lingering on the desk and moved my electronic files for hopeful easy access to the new Town Manager. The file cabinets are slated for digital archiving which should create a little more office space. After 25 years in Wells and another 15 years in other communities in Southern Maine, I wish you all the very best knowing we have had a tremendous journey of:

- adventures from beach ownership trials and tribulations
- developing an engineered harbor and irregular dredges with hopeful new approach to them on the horizon

- winning the Community College placement in Wells
- working on the Amtrak Downeaster and partnering with the Maine Turnpike to create the Wells Transportation Center
- cementing the incredible gem of the Wells Reserve from the vision of Mort Mather into a State Authority following its start as a town department
- working to introduce seasonal trolley service in Wells
- working with the Wells Conservation Commission and its leader Dr. Owen Grumbling in seeing their vision for creating open space in the community
- raised the Town bond rating along with our financial condition with the Finance Director and Bond Broker
- worked on several comprehensive plans
- Seeing visions of Wells future developed over the years with our new Public Safety Complex, new Highway Garage, new additions onto Town Hall and the Library; School District rehabilitation schools: 1) Junior High School addition; 2) building the new Elementary School; and 3) building the new High School, and so much more which this doesn't begin to highlight.

We did it as a team approach through town meetings and countless hours of meetings with the 400 plus volunteers on our boards and committees. We rolled up our sleeves and spent, now looking back, municipal time which we will never see again except for our physical and legislated successes. None of this could have been accomplished by any one person, but particularly we couldn't get a forward purchase if it wasn't for the excellent and supportive Boards of Selectmen that I have had the privilege to work for and with over the 25 years. My first board of selectmen appointed me

acting Fire Chief the first week on the job and challenged me to find a professional fire chief ASAP which I did in John Dean. We have had a lot of fun and challenges that kept me coming back with the urging of the elected selectmen and legislators from Wells who accomplished a lot to assist the Town.

I started my career in the 1970's following obtaining a BA and MPA at Nason College and Western Kentucky University. After returning from Kentucky, I went to work for the York County Community Action Corp in Sanford and did grant writing and programming. I ran for Selectmen and won on my second try - not bad for a kid from Yonkers, NY! It was a full-time position, and with two other selectmen, we managed the town. I met my wife in Sanford and we went on to Westbrook where I was the Assistant to the Mayor for five years, which is similar to a manager's position and then went to downtown Portland and worked for the Greater Portland Council of Governments as its Deputy Director. We moved to Kittery Point in 1986 and commuted for two years when Wells opened up and that's the history except for a 5 year tour of duty as Town Manager of Kittery - and seeing my two daughters' graduate from high school. Finally, I saw the light and came back to Wells in 2011 until my retirement ending a forty year career.

I know COVID-19 is sending me out with a career bang, and somewhat symbolic of when I started. COVID-19 is like the movie *Groundhog Day*, as a friend has referred to it as, and I hope we can wakeup from it soon.

I started my career when computers were not available and we had magnetic data punch card machines. We had pay phones, TV antennas and we communicated either by phone or in person with constituents. We had open town meetings where attendance were

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initially high and it was like theater in the round selling the business of the community to them for their acceptance. It was challenging and fun. Many good advances in Municipal governing have occurred in Wells such as the Town Charter, technology with email and text and cable broadcast of meetings to better assist and inform the public.

Wells is a special place, it is family oriented and is growing fast including its transient lodging industry and the incoming migration of the many retirees which is changing the face of the community. Our new Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen, with the Town Department Heads, will face many new adventures together going into the future.

Ok- my station stop has arrived and it is time for me to get off the train and watch from the sidelines until new adventures come my way.

Thank you all for the privilege of being your Town Manager!

Sincerely,

Jon Carter

