



News About Town

A Message from our Interim Town Manager

Greetings friends and neighbors,

Whether you gather round the yule log, decorate the Christmas tree, light the menorah, wear an ugly sweater, eat too many cookies, enjoy the feast of Karamu, engage in airing of grievances and feats of strength, or unbind the woolen bands at the feet of the statue of Saturn, I wish you the warmest of season's greetings.



2023 is coming to a close, and as such it is time for a reflection. This issue includes many highlights from the past year, and I hope the recapitulation captures a few of the memories you created this year, and brings a smile to your face during the darkest days of the year.

These cold days and long nights, for me, are a time to sink into the deep silence and reflect for a moment on what was learned in the past 12 months. Among the variety of lessons learned from the trials, the disappointments, the joys, the achievements, and the changes of the year, one truth that is newly revealed to me stands out.

We, as the Town of Gray, are trying, and we really need your help.

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Having worked for a decade as the Gray Library Director, and having a plethora of interactions with many Town departments, I thought I knew all there was to know about the operation of the Town. It was not until I sat in this chair and fully saw each and every piece that went into the municipality of Gray did I truly appreciate the endless effort it takes from all staff members to keep the wheels spinning and the train on the rails.

The Town is fortunate to have so many highly dedicated and exceedingly capable people engaged in the million-and-one things that make a normal day normal. Since the work is always being done, it is easy to take for granted that the roads will be paved and plowed when needed, that the doors to the Library and Transfer Station will open for expected services as scheduled, that Town meetings can be viewed remotely, that if you call 911 that someone will show up, that the Wild Blueberry Festival will be wildly successful, and that recreation programs will be provided for every age and interest (to highlight just a few – and sorry to anyone I forgot to mention).

Each and every one of the things listed above do not come naturally, do not arise like the flowers of spring, and will not occur without the dedication, consistency, and professionalism of the Town staff. And for that, every single person who currently works for this Town has my unending respect.

Are we perfect? Far from it. Are there mistakes, missteps, misunderstandings, and corrections to be made? Absolutely.

And that is where you, dear reader, come in.

Beyond my respect for those who make life in Gray livable, my other significant takeaway from my time in the chair is how significant, important, and vital community involvement is in this Town. Our volunteer committees help chart the path to our collective future, play an integral role in the crafting of language and policies that guide staff, and provide invaluable insight into community needs. Our volunteers are essential, appreciated, and necessary to make Gray more than bump in the road between Lewison and Portland.

I know the wheels turn slowly, and I know it appears as if no individual input matters in the overall process – but trust me, your voice does matter.

We are listening, and in 2024 let's continue to work together to chart our path forward, increase our ability to live together while at times disagreeing, and milk every joy and ounce of pride out of living in the great town of Gray, Maine.

Happy holidays, y'all. I'll see you again when the light starts to slowly beat back the darkness.

Josh Tiffany

Town of Gray 2023 Year in Review

It's been quite a year for the Town of Gray, and as we are about to turn the page on 2023, let's look back at memorable moments from the past 12 months.

March – The public [first walked](#) the site of the recently extended [Village Area Loop Trail](#). The extension of the popular walking trail into the “gateway” property is the result of dedicated Town staff, cooperative contractors, and public input. Opening this extension was a year-long effort, and the Town recently celebrated the completion of the extension with a [ceremony](#), which you can watch on our YouTube channel.

June – This year's June election saw, among other things, one Town Councilor re-elected, a new Councilor join the leadership team, and the Town's proposed FY24 budget voted down. This rejection of the budget meant voters convened at a Town Meeting in September to [pass a new budget](#).

June – The Town of Gray relaunched its [YouTube channel](#), which now provides accessible content about Town business and community events. The channel is a home for meeting recordings of the Town Council, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, select School Board meetings, [Gray Community Television](#) content, and public forums.



The Gray/New Gloucester Retired Women United, just one group that was represented at the first-ever Gray Community Day in June.

June – The town witnessed its first [Gray Community Day](#), which was a special chance to recognize the dedicated volunteers who tirelessly contribute to our town's growth and well-being. Thank you to those

Upcoming Events

December 4

5 p.m.: Resiliency Committee Meeting – Zoom

December 5

5:30 p.m.: Town Council Executive Session – 24 Main Street + Zoom

December 5

7 p.m.: Town Council Meeting – 24 Main Street + Zoom

December 6

7 p.m.: Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting – 5 Hancock Street

December 14

7 p.m.: Planning Board Meeting – 24 Main Street and Zoom

December 21

4:30 p.m.: Ordinance Advisory Committee Meeting – Zoom

Wednesdays + Fridays

10:30 a.m.: Kids Story Time – Gray Public Library

Tuesdays and Saturdays

1 p.m.: Movie Time – Gray Public Library

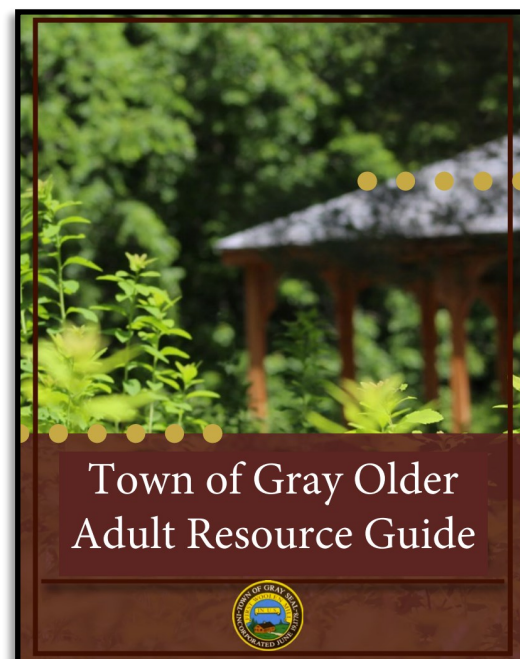
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Town of Gray 2023 Year in Review

who worked to make this day a success!

July – The Town released its comprehensive [Older Adult Resource Guide](#) (pictured right), a valuable tool for older adults and their families, offering a wide range of resources and services that may be beneficial to their well-being. The Town of Gray does not endorse any of the entities mentioned in the guide, but rather provides this content for informational purposes only.

July – Gray resident Mary Sweeney Underwood [was honored](#) with the prestigious Spirit of America Award and a corresponding sentiment from the Maine Legislature. The Gray Town Council recognized this outstanding achievement at their July 18, 2023, meeting. The Spirit of America Award is bestowed upon individuals who demonstrate exceptional dedication, generosity, and volunteerism within their communities.



August – The 7th annual Wild Blueberry Festival is a huge success, bringing 30 percent more people to Gray than last year's festival. More than 3,200 people celebrated community, local businesses, and the titular fruit together. Check out some photos from the event [here](#), and keep your calendar cleared for August 10, 2024!



The dessert bake-off was just one way to celebrate blueberries at this year's festival.

August – Town Manager Nate Rudy [left his position](#) to join the U.S. Department of State. Josh Tiffany, the Gray Public Library's long-time director, [stepped up](#) to fill the gap Rudy left until a new permanent Town Manager can be found. As of December 2023, that search is still ongoing.

August – For the first time since 2005, a Maine Little League team played in the Little League World Series. The Gray-New Gloucester/Raymond team played two games before being knocked out—the first against Seattle on August 17, and then Media, Pennsylvania on August 19. It was incredible seeing the G-NG/R community rally around the team during their successful season.

October – The Gray Historical Society celebrated the return of the [classic 1933 firetruck](#) to its

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Town of Gray 2023 Year in Review

original station at One Main Street in Gray. The firetruck is now on display in a new enclosure, an addition made possible thanks to the community raising more than \$50,000.

November – The Gray Assessing Department held a food drive on Election Day. This drive brought in quite a few more donations than last year, and hundreds of dollars in cash donations, which helps the Gray Food Pantry. This Election Day also saw a huge turnout for an off-year election, with 2,689 people casting a vote. Even with the huge turnout, the election was run smoothly thanks to the efforts of election worker volunteers and the Town of Gray clerks.

November – A huge crowd came to the Town Office to celebrate the [annual lighting of the town's holiday tree](#). The tradition was complete with carolers from Gray-New Gloucester High School, and a visit by Santa.

Let's also take a moment to welcome new businesses that came to Gray in 2023, including:

- [Sheer Bliss Salon LLC](#)
- [Carl's Creations](#)
- [Mother Eats Proper](#)
- Total Clean Maine
- Rickert Stone Masonry
- [KAH Consulting, LLC](#)
- Priceless General Cleaning
- DJ Foxy
- Big Bro Customs
- [Southern Maine Bee Removal](#)

Remember, you can check out all businesses in Gray by going to our [Business Directory](#). If you'd like to submit your own business information, please complete a [Business Directory Listing Request](#).

Thank you to all community members, volunteers, businesses, Town staff, and friends of Gray who contribute every year to making Gray a great a place to live, work, and play. Here's to a great 2024!



Santa was on hand to light Gray's holiday tree. This community tradition is growing every year!

Follow the Town of Gray on Instagram!

Some common feedback from our recent Community News Survey was that people wanted to see the Town use Instagram, a popular social media platform geared toward images, to help disseminate updates. You asked, we answered.

The Town's [Instagram](#) account joins [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [GCTV](#), the [News About Town](#) newsletter, and our website as just one more way you can get updates from the Town. Expect to see meeting agendas, government- and community-related updates, and pictures from around Gray on our Instagram.

If you have pictures of our beautiful town you'd like us to spotlight on Instagram, please message us on Facebook or Instagram, or [email](#) the Town of Gray.

If you haven't offered your feedback about Town of Gray-issued communications, please take a moment to complete the [Community News Survey](#). Your input is valuable.

Funding Available to Help Small Businesses

There are two new small business funding opportunities business owners should know.

Firstly, the Greater Portland Council of Governments is administering \$6 million in grants on behalf of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. The grants are open to businesses in pandemic-impacted industries across the state for activities that are directly related to increasing market reach and expanding sales activities. Learn more and apply via this website: <https://tinyurl.com/mr43t4ht>.

Secondly, \$500,000 in new pandemic relief funding is now available to small business and nonprofit organization owners in Cumberland County who started their business during the COVID-19 pandemic and have not received state or federal recovery funding to address economic impacts of the pandemic. Learn more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yjuhyfnb>.

Gray is Looking for Committee Members

Serve your town by volunteering for these committees!



Various committee/board members meet for a Leadership Academy in 2022.

- **Wild Blueberry Festival Committee:** Celebrates and promotes local businesses, community and school organizations, and the Pennell Complex.
- **Community Economic Development**

Committee: Promotes

community and cultural connections in Gray and supports established businesses.

- **Community Television Advisory Committee:** Makes recommendations regarding broadcast options for Gray, and recommends improvements to public, educational, and governmental programming.
- **Dry Mills School House Committee:** Preserves the rich history of the Dry Mills School House.
- **Open Space Committee:** Makes recommendations to the Town Council to help secure access to land/corridors through acquisitions, easements, land swaps, and other forms of agreements.
- **Planning Board:** Reviews and approves subdivision plans, site plans, conditional uses, and Shoreland Zoning applications in accordance with State Statutes and Town Ordinances.
- **Resiliency Committee:** Promotes climate action planning and influences the path our community will take toward climate resilience, energy efficiency, waste management and renewable energy.
- **Zoning Board of Appeals Committee:** Hears and decides administrative appeals where it is alleged there is an error in any order, requirement, decision, or determination by the Code Enforcement Officer.
- **MSAD #15 School Board:** Shapes the functioning of the Gray-New Gloucester school system.
- **Recreation Committee:** Advises and recommends to the Town Council on recreational and public parks matters, such as: programs, policies, development, and leisure time activities.

To apply to any of these committees, go to graymaine.org/volunteer.

The Town of Gray is Hiring!

We hire great people from a variety of backgrounds to do the town's important work. If you are looking for a career opportunity, check out our [Employment page](#) to see if there's an opening that's right for you! We currently have openings for Transfer Station personnel, an administrative assistant for the Assessing Department, and Town Manager, among others.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

- The Maine Department of Transportation has published a presentation about the proposed Route 202 work scheduled for 2026. The 2.38-mile improvement area begins 200 feet south of Wayne Avenue in Gray and ends at the Gray-New Gloucester border. To watch the presentation and leave comments, please register [here](#).
- The Gray Fire Rescue Association has been selected by Hannaford to benefit from the Bloomin' 4 Good Program. The association will receive \$1 from every specially marked Bloomin' 4 Good bouquet (pictured) sold during December 2023 at the Gray Hannaford on Shaker Road.



If you have an idea for a newsletter submission, please fill out this [form](#).

Questions can be directed to:
 Kyle Hadyniak
 Interim Director of Comm. and Information
 207-657-3339 x116

Find Us!

