**Cape Elizabeth and Scarborough Propose Assessing Collaboration**

The town managers of Cape Elizabeth and Scarborough will be proposing to the respective town councils in early April a collaborative program to provide assessing services to the two communities.

Matthew E. Sturgis, assessor for the Town of Cape Elizabeth would concurrently serve as the chief assessor for the Town of Scarborough with 60% of his time devoted to Cape Elizabeth and 40% to Scarborough. Scarborough would eliminate their current full time chief assessor position left vacant recently with the departure of William Healey to serve as Lewiston’s assessor. Scarborough would maintain their deputy assessor position held by Susan Russo who is now the interim assessor for Scarborough . Sturgis would remain an employee of the Town of Cape Elizabeth and Scarborough would contract with Cape Elizabeth for his services.

Cape Elizabeth has 4,502 real and estate and personal property accounts. Scarborough has 11,536 accounts. The combined state valuation of the two communities is $5.4 billion which would make Sturgis responsible for the second highest state valuation following Portland at $7.7 billion.

Cape Elizabeth would raise the pay for Sturgis to third highest for any local assessor in Maine. Cape Elizabeth would also save about $34,000 from the collaboration and Scarborough would save about $50,000. The initial interlocal agreement would be for one year with an expectation for annual renewals.

Sturgis would not be responsible for handling pending tax appeals stemming from a 2012 reassessment of waterfront area properties in Scarborough.

Scarborough town manager Tom Hall approached Cape Elizabeth manager Michael McGovern on March 17th with an initial conversation seeking a collaboration. Hall, McGovern, Sturgis and Scarborough human resources director Jaclyn Mandrake met on March 19th to continue discussions. Sturgis met with Scarborough deputy assessor Russo on March 20, 2015 as part of the continuing exploration.

Sturgis says if the councils agree to the collaboration, he looks forward to the challenge of serving both Cape Elizabeth and Scarborough.

Sturgis has been Cape Elizabeth’s assessor since February 2001 after having served as part of the assessing staff for the city of Auburn, Maine. He lives in Gray where he serves as town council chairman. He formerly lived in New Gloucester where he served as a member and chairman of the board of selectmen. He is also the vice chair of the Greater Portland Council of Governments and is board chair for the Maine chapter of the American Lung Association.