

The VIKING



Town of Veazie, 1084 Main St., Veazie, ME 04401 • Veazie Community School, 1040 School St., Veazie, ME 04401 • WINTER 2025-26

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Town of Veazie Honors Mark Leonard for Over Three Decades of Service



At the October 20, 2025, Town Council meeting, Town Manager and Police Chief Mark Leonard was recognized for his 30+ years of dedicated service to the Town of Veazie.

Councilman Paul Messer led the tribute, sharing a detailed timeline of Leonard's remarkable career in public service. "For over three decades, Mark Leonard has exemplified unwavering dedication to the Town of Veazie," Messer said. "His career stands as a remarkable testament to public service—spanning law enforcement, emergency services and municipal leadership."

Among the many milestones



celebrated were Leonard's hire as a reserve police officer in October 1995, his promotion to full-time police officer in April 1997 and his appointment as Police Chief in September 2001. Leonard was later appointed Town Manager in February 2014, following an interim term that began in January 2013. He also served as Fire Chief from August 2013 to January 2020, a rare distinction that reflects his broad commitment to community safety.

In addition to his service within the town, Leonard's leadership has extended beyond Veazie. He was elected President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association in 2008 and later

served as President of the New England Association of Chiefs of Police in 2012, representing the state and region with distinction.

Leonard expressed deep appreciation for the recognition, noting how meaningful it was to have nearly a dozen family members present for the ceremony.

Councilman Messer closed his remarks by emphasizing the profound impact of Leonard's leadership: "Manager Leonard's legacy is not only defined by his titles and milestones but by the countless lives he's impacted and the community he's helped strengthen and protect."

Veazie Community School Student Council Leads with Heart



At Veazie Community School, leadership isn't reserved for adults—it's embodied by a group of passionate, community-minded students who are making a real difference in their school and town. The Veazie Community School Student Council has grown dramatically in recent years, evolving into one of the school's most active and impactful student organizations.

Last year, nearly 40 students

participated in Student Council activities, helping to organize events such as outdoor movie nights and multiple school dances that brought students and families together for fun, community-building experiences. The group also opened a school store, which allows students and families to purchase VCS gear and show their Viking pride throughout the community.

Because of its success and

growing popularity, this year's Student Council—led by advisors Mrs. Dineen and Mrs. Swift—was limited to students in grades seven and eight due to the high level of interest. There simply weren't enough spots to include sixth grade this year.

Co-advisor Mrs. Swift expressed pride in the students' efforts. "We couldn't be more proud of our Student Council members! Their hard work, enthusiasm and care for our school community shine through in everything they do."

One of the most exciting new initiatives launched this year is the Viking Heart Award, a special recognition created by the Student Council to celebrate kindness, respect and the "Big Heart" that Veazie Community School is known for. Students who demonstrate exceptional citizenship and empathy are nominated by teachers and peers to receive the award, serving as role models for others.

The Viking Heart Award captures the spirit of what it

means to be a Veazie Viking—students who care for one another, show compassion and take pride in their school community.

In addition to their many student-focused initiatives, the Student Council also made a generous gesture of appreciation toward the adults who support them. This fall, they purchased quarter-zip long-sleeve shirts for all Veazie Community School staff members as a way to say thank you and build school spirit.

"The students wanted to show their appreciation for the people who make VCS such a special place. Purchasing the staff shirts was their way of giving back and celebrating the amazing team who makes our school shine every day," shared Co-advisor Mrs. Dineen.

Through their hard work, creativity and genuine care for others, the members of the Veazie Community School Student Council are showing what it means to lead with heart—and proving that at VCS, our "Small School" truly has a "Big Heart."

Town Manager’s Message



What a wonderful summer and beautiful fall we’ve enjoyed here in Veazie! As we transition into the winter months, I look forward to seeing festive lights and decorations brighten our neighborhoods. Rest assured, the Town is well-prepared for the snow and ice ahead. We’re pleased to continue our partnership with Black Bear Lawn Care, whose dependable service and attention to detail help keep Veazie’s roads safe and clear throughout the winter season.

If you haven’t already, I encourage you to sign up for the Town’s text and email notification services on our website. These alerts are the quickest way to stay informed about upcoming events,

weather advisories, important updates and any schedule changes or cancellations.

As we wrap up the fall season, several projects are reaching completion. This year, our paving projects on the sidewalks on State Street and Main Street were successful and well appreciated. Planning is already underway for next year’s paving and infrastructure projects, and I’m excited to see how these ongoing upgrades will continue to enhance our community.

With Thanksgiving approaching, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to our first responders, who work tirelessly to keep us safe; to our volunteers, whose time and dedication make Veazie such a special place to live; to our local businesses, which bring life, character and convenience to our community; and to all of our

residents, whose spirit and pride truly define Veazie.

It’s an honor to serve as your Town Manager, and I’m grateful for the opportunity to work with and get to know so many of you. As you’ll see in another article, I was recently presented with a plaque for 30 years of service to the Town of Veazie. Short of my children, and now grandchildren, working for this community has been a highlight of my adult life. Thank you for allowing me to be the Manager and Police Chief of this great place I call home.

I’d also like to take a moment to recognize the outstanding work of our Town Office staff. From our clerks to the assessor and code enforcement, each member of the team plays a vital role in keeping the Town Office running smoothly. The range of tasks they handle each day is impressive, and they do it all with

professionalism, efficiency and the friendly service our residents have come to expect. I’m truly proud to work alongside such a dedicated and capable team.

In closing, as winter settles in, please remember to check on your neighbors, especially those who may need a little extra help, and report any concerns to our Police or Fire departments. If you ever have questions, suggestions or concerns, don’t hesitate to reach out to the Town Office. We’re always here to help.

As always, I welcome open and constructive conversations with residents. You can reach me by phone at (207) 947-2781 or by email at mleonard@veazie.net.

Wishing each of you a safe, happy, and peaceful holiday season.

Mark Leonard
Town Manager

Town of Veazie
1084 Main St.
Veazie, ME 04401
(207) 947-2781

Is published in partnership between the Town of Veazie and Veazie Community School for the citizens of Veazie.

Timothy Tweedie
Superintendent and Principal

Veazie Community School
1040 School St.
Veazie, ME 04401
(207) 947-6573

Upcoming Holidays and Council Meetings

Town office closed .November 27 & 28
Thanksgiving

Council Meeting December 8
@6:30 pm

Town office closed .December 25 & 26
Christmas

Town office closed January 1, 2026
New Year's Day

After School Program

at Veazie Community School

The Bangor Region YMCA offers an enriching on-site program right here in your community!

Well-trained staff promote an inclusive environment, giving individual attention to every child’s needs. Participants develop positive, strong relationships with other children and adults. **Join us at Veazie Community School!**

5-DAY	Mon/Wed/Fri	Tue/Thu
\$111	\$73	\$51

FREE FAMILY YMCA MEMBERSHIP!
(Up to \$950 Value!)

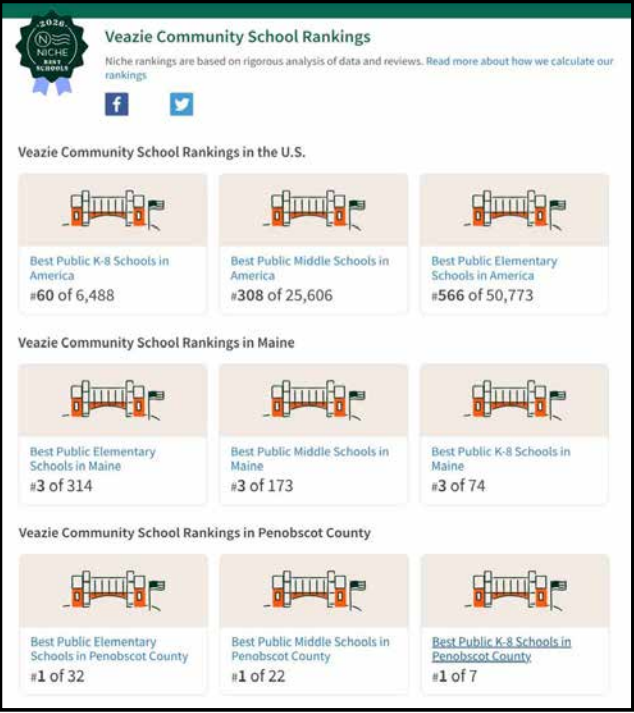
All full-time participants and their families.*
*Full-time is five days per week in after-school care.

- Financial Assistance is available to those who qualify.
- Multi-child & military discounts are also available.
- We accept State Subsidies.

For more information, call 207-941-2808 or visit bangory.org



Veazie Community School Continues to Shine: Data Highlights Academic Excellence



In early October, Veazie Community School was reaffirmed as one of the highest-rated schools in the state of Maine and across the country. The 2026 rankings compiled by Niche, released in early October, highlight VCS as a leader in education:

County Rankings (Penobscot County)

- #1 Public Elementary School (out of 32 schools)
- #1 Public Middle School (out of 22 schools)

State Rankings (Maine)

- #3 Public Elementary School (out of 314 schools)
- #3 Public Middle School (out of 173 schools)

National Rankings (United States)

- #60 of 6,488 Best Public K–8 Schools in America
- #308 of 25,606 Best Public Middle Schools in America
- #566 of 50,773 Best Public Elementary Schools in America

This is the third time in as many years that VCS has been ranked in the top five schools in the State of Maine and the best in the region. Superintendent Tim Tweedie says these rankings, which places Veazie Community School among the top 1–2% of schools nationwide, “reflects the hard work of our students, the dedication of our staff and the unwavering support of our families and community. They also affirm our continued commitment to academic excellence, innovative programming and the close-knit,

student-centered environment that defines VCS.”

Niche, one of the most widely used and respected national organizations which ranks schools, compiles its rankings using a combination of data from the U.S. Department of Education, statewide testing results, graduation rates and student-teacher ratios, amongst other factors.

It’s not just the Niche rankings that are confirming VCS’s place as an elite school. State and local data used to measure academic growth supports the notion that VCS students are flourishing. According to data from the The Maine Through Year Assessment—the state’s benchmark system for measuring student achievement and growth in reading and mathematics for Grades 3–8—VCS continues to stand out when compared to other schools. Administered in the fall and spring, this adaptive assessment tracks each student’s math and reading progress throughout the year and helps teachers tailor instruction to meet individual learning needs. The final spring administration provides the state and local school officials with a snapshot of overall academic achievement.

VCS Students Outperform the State Average Across The Board

While 63.8% of Maine students in Grades 3–8 met or exceeded expectations in Reading on the spring 2025 Maine Through Year Assessment, 79% of Veazie Community School students reached that same benchmark. In Mathematics, the contrast is even greater. Statewide, 49.4% of students met or exceeded expectations, compared to 74% of Veazie Community School students. And results from the Maine State Science Assessment tell a similar story. Among fifth- and eighth-grade students (the only grades tested statewide), just 36.2% of Maine students met expectations—while 77% of Veazie’s fifth and eighth grade students achieved that standard.

Tweedie noted that these assessment results are something the entire school community should take a moment to celebrate. “We’re certainly proud of these numbers,” he said. “While we know there’s always more work to do and that some students aren’t yet where we want them to be, there’s still so much to rejoice. This is three straight years of outstanding numbers. And we know that schools are about more than numbers and test

scores—but these are numbers we can truly be proud of.”

Another indicator of Veazie’s overall success is its high school graduation rate. According to data from Educate Maine, the state’s average graduation rate between 2018 and 2024 was 87.02%. During that same period, 98.3% of Veazie Community School students who attended high school graduated on time.

Student Growth: The Heart of Learning

Beyond strong achievement, VCS distinguishes itself through the exceptional academic growth its students have exhibited. Between fall 2024 and spring 2025, students in Grades 3–8 demonstrated significant progress in both reading and mathematics on the state assessment. For the most recent school year, 96% of VCS students demonstrated measurable growth in mathematics from fall to spring, while 81% of VCS students demonstrated measurable growth in reading.

“Academic achievement is only one way to measure a student’s success,” said Principal Tweedie. “We also place a strong emphasis on growth, because we know that students learn at different rates and in different ways. It’s important to celebrate progress—those students who are making meaningful strides, regardless of their current achievement level. Achievement offers a snapshot in time, but growth tells the story of where a student is headed and helps us project long-term success.”

Continuing a Tradition of Excellence

Veazie Community School’s recent recognition and strong assessment results reflect a continuing tradition of excellence that has become the hallmark of the Veazie community. “We’re simply building upon the excellence of those who came before us,” Tweedie said. “We all stand on the shoulders of others, and this community has a long-standing reputation for wanting the very best for its children. We’re proud to continue that legacy and to build upon the good work that has taken place here for decades.”

As school officials look ahead, the focus remains clear—providing each student with the opportunity to grow, achieve and contribute to a school community where excellence is the expectation.

A Year Later, VCS Leadership Pleased with CDS Transitions

Prior to the start of the 2024–25 school year, administrators in the Veazie School Department faced an important decision. Lawmakers in Augusta had enacted Public Law 2023, Chapter 643, Part W, requiring all Maine school administrative units (SAUs) to assume responsibility for providing special education services to children ages 3–5. This responsibility, previously managed by regional Child Development Services (CDS) agencies, will transition to local school districts over a five-year period.

Each district had the option to begin implementing the new requirements on July 1, 2024, or to wait and learn from other districts that joined early. Since the law mandates that all Maine SAUs complete the transition by July 1, 2028, the decision for local leaders was not whether to participate, but when.

Veazie chose to opt in for the 2024–25 school year, becoming one of only 15 school administrative units statewide—and one of just two in Penobscot County, along with RSU 19—to join Cohort 1 of the state’s new CDS Transition initiative. Maine currently has 260 SAUs in total.

By joining early, Veazie assumed full responsibility for identifying and serving eligible preschool-aged children within the community. This includes all Child Find obligations—locating, identifying and evaluating children who may have disabilities and require special education services.

According to Debrajean Scheibel, the school department’s Director of Special Services, the district was initially notified that three local children would be eligible for services or were in the referral process for early childhood special education. “By November of 2025, we were serving nine children ages three to five in our

new Early Childhood program,” she said.

These students receive a range of individualized supports based on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Services include specially designed instruction, speech therapy, occupational and physical therapy, and, for some students, behavior support from a Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

Scheibel noted that many families sought out Veazie’s program after hearing from other parents about timely evaluations and the convenience of receiving services within the same school their children will later attend for Pre-K or kindergarten. “Parents appreciate the one-stop model where everything—from referral and evaluation to instruction and therapy—happens right here in their community school,” she explained.

Integrating a new group of young learners into a PreK-8 environment required flexibility and teamwork. “We’ve had to be creative and intentional,” Scheibel said. “But our staff’s mindset has always been that we can, will and must do what’s best for children of all ages.”

The benefits have extended beyond the early childhood classrooms. “It’s been wonderful to see how quickly our littles become part of the school community,” Scheibel added. “Older students greet them in the hallways, volunteer to read with them and take pride in helping. There’s a joy that fills the building when they’re around.”

For caregivers with questions regarding whether or not a child qualifies for services, Scheibel encourages you to reach out. “We’re here to help with both the easy and the tough questions and to ask the ones you might not even realize need to be asked about your child’s development—socially, emotionally, physically and in terms of language.”

Veazie Community School Selects “GRIT” as Its 2025–26 Word of the Year

Just prior to the beginning of the 2025-26 school year, Superintendent Tim Tweedie announced to the Veazie Community School staff that their word of the year would be “GRIT.” Tweedie said he chose grit because he believes success in life often comes down to how we respond when things get tough. “In life, it can become a habit to look for the easiest solutions, give up or look for shortcuts,” he said. “I want our students to understand that real growth comes from effort, from sticking with something even when it’s difficult.”

To bring the theme to life, VCS staff have been actively recognizing and celebrating moments of perseverance among students. During the month of October, all teachers were given two tokens for the school’s new book vending machine. Each staff member was asked to identify examples of students who demonstrated grit—those who stuck with challenges, worked



through setbacks or showed determination to improve. Those students were rewarded with a token to select a free book from the vending machine. And teachers throughout the building have bought into the

importance of promoting grit. Fourth grade teacher Melissa Hileman noted, “Several Morning Meeting discussions have centered around grit in the classroom, and it’s exciting to see how much the students are embracing it. I’m already noticing real growth in this area. We’ve made a concerted effort to recognize students who give their best effort in all areas of their day, staying positive, and pushing through hard tasks.”

Middle school teacher Brian Gonyar said he sees examples of grit every single day, but he said one student in particular has recently impressed him. “Rosemary Smith has shown incredible determination in her work. When things get difficult, she doesn’t give up. Rosemary works even harder to master challenging concepts. Her focus, effort and perseverance make her a true example of what it means to have grit.”

Teacher and coach Jessica Hanscom has identified grit during extra-curricular activities,

in addition to the classroom. “Just last week, Maya Subernat showed incredible perseverance during a tough race. With a mile to go, she was hit with a painful cramp and almost stopped running. But instead of giving up, she took a deep breath, refocused and pushed herself all the way to the finish line. She ended up placing seventh overall, helping her team earn The Inland Invitational Runner-Up title!”

These are just three of many examples of grit that VCS staff have identified this school year. As the year continues, staff members plan to build on this theme by encouraging students to embrace challenges, learn from mistakes and celebrate progress. Tweedie noted that “developing grit isn’t about perfection, it’s about persistence,” a message that reflects the school’s broader commitment to fostering both academic growth and personal character.

Veazie Community School Fall Sports Teams Enjoy Remarkable Season

Veazie Community School student-athletes wrapped up an impressive fall season, highlighted by strong performances in both soccer and cross country.

The VCS coed soccer team, coached by Mr. Gonyar and Mr. Smart, included 22 participants. The team finished the season with a 6-2 overall record, going undefeated in league play to earn the number one seed for the postseason tournament. During the regular season, Veazie outscored its opponents 31–7. In the playoffs, after earning a bye in the quarterfinals, the team defeated Indian Island 6-1 in the semifinals, before picking up an 8-1 win in the championship game vs. Dedham. This was the fourth championship in five years for the VCS middle school soccer team.

The middle school cross country program, coached by Jessica Hanscom with assistance from Julie French, also enjoyed one of its most successful seasons in school history. The 24-member

team saw success across the board, with the girls’ team winning all three of their regular-season races and capturing the Small Schools Championship in Airline on October 8. The boys’ team also earned first-place finishes in half of their meets, including a championship win at the Small Schools event. These achievements were particularly impressive given the size of the competition, with 15 regional schools participating in the championship meet.

In addition to the team victories, VCS runners frequently earned top individual honors. Seventh-grade standout Maya Subernat claimed three individual first-place finishes this season, including the overall championship title at the Small Schools meet!

Altogether, 38 students participated in fall sports at Veazie Community School, representing an impressive 57% of all students in Grades 5–8.



VEAZIE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CALENDAR 2025 - 2026

August					September					October				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
				1	1	2	3	4	5			1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	8	9	10	11	12	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	15	16	17	18	19	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	29	30				27	28	29	30	31
November					December					January				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5				1	2
10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	5	6	7	8	9
17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	12	13	14	15	16
24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	19	20	21	22	23
					29	30	31			26	27	28	29	30
February					March					April				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3
9	10	11	12	13	9	10	11	12	13	6	7	8	9	10
16	17	18	19	20	16	17	18	19	20	13	14	15	16	17
23	24	25	26	27	23	24	25	26	27	20	21	22	23	24
					30	31				27	28	29	30	
May					June					July				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
				1	1	2	3	4	5			1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	8	9	10	11	12	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	15	16	17	18	19	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	26	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	29	30				27	28	29	30	31
T = Teacher Only Day H = Holiday V = School Vacation Day E = Early Release Day - Students will be dismissed at 11:30 AM P = Parent-Teacher Conferences: November 12 & 13 - 3:00 - 6:30 PM					175 Student Days 7 Teacher Only Days 2 Early Release Days					Mid-Trimester 1: Oct 9, 2025 End of Trimester 1: Nov 25, 2025 Mid-Trimester 2: Jan 23, 2026 End of Trimester 2: March 12, 2026 Mid-Trimester 3: May 1, 2026 End of Trimester 3: June 10, 2026				

First Student Day (PreK - 8) Thursday, August 27, 2025
Last Student Day June 10, 2026* - **Students will be dismissed at 11:30 AM on the last day of school**
*Additional days will be added at the end of the school year to adjust for snow days or unexpected school cancellations.
Adopted 2/3/25

New School Committee Member Finishing Out Vacated Term



At the October 20 town council meeting, Bruce Hall was appointed to the Veazie Community School Committee. He fills a void recently vacated by Alex Friess who relocated and is no longer a Veazie resident. Mr. Hall attended his first meeting on Monday, November 3, and his term will run through June 9. Mr. Hall is a graduate of Narraguagus High School, has a B.S. from the University of Tampa and a graduate degree from Miami University. His professional experience spans agriculture, manufacturing, research and consulting while providing industry leadership and service on local and national boards. Mr. Hall and his family

moved to Veazie about three years ago. Since then, they have fallen in love with the community and at its “Big Heart,” Veazie Community School. When reflecting on his new role, he shared, “I am honored to serve on the Veazie School Committee. Our school is already doing excellent work, and I want to help ensure we continue building on that strength by navigating the shifting seas of challenges and opportunities.” He went on to say, “To me education is more than test scores, it’s about developing good people. As a member of the Committee, my goal is simple: to make sure every student that goes into that school leaves a better person.” Mr. Hall is approachable and loves interacting with the community. He says, “If we haven’t met yet and you see me around town, please introduce yourself! I would love to meet you and enjoy casual conversation as much as talking about school related issues. I would love to hear from you-whether you’re a parent, teacher, student or community member!” He welcomes any questions, concerns or ideas and can be reached at bhall@veaziecs.org.

14th Annual Hathaway Holiday Lights Benefit Northern Light NICU



The annual Hathaway Lights will be up again this December, and you won’t want to miss it! For the 14th year in a row, the Hathaway family will put on a large-scale holiday light display to raise funds for the Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). This is in honor of their twin boys who were born at 29 weeks in 2011. While one son, Alexander Leroy Hathaway, passed away from complications, their other



son, Warren Alexander Glenn Hathaway, spent 51 days in the NICU. Thanks to the amazing men and women of Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center NICU the Hathaways were able to bring their son home and he

is doing well today. Each year, the light display has brought in roughly \$5,000 which all goes toward the Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center Foundation. The donations go on to directly impact patient care in many different ways. This year, in addition to

past lights, trees, arches and decorations, there will be an additional photo op location. Come check out the display at Veazie Community School:
• December 1–12, 4:30–8:30 p.m.
• December 13–25, 4:30–9:00 p.m.

Donations can be placed inside the stocking out front of the display or mailed to Northern Light Health Foundation/Attn: Hathaway Holiday Lights/43 Whiting Hill Rd/Brewer, ME 04412.



You’re Invited

The Veazie School Committee generally meets at 6:00 p.m. on the first Monday of each month in the school library. The agenda is posted at least four days in advance of each meeting on the Veazie Community School’s website.

PLEASE SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION AND UPDATES

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Kristen Bagley
Alexander Friess
William Reed
Bethany Tocci
Valli Vel

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OUR WEBSITE
www.veaziecs.org/

FACEBOOK
www.facebook.com/veaziecommunityschool

TWITTER
https://twitter.com/VeazieCS

Substitute Teachers Need
Are you looking to earn extra money while enjoying a flexible schedule?
Join our education team and become a substitute teacher at The Veazie Community School.

Requirements: At least 18 years old;
Completed fingerprints and valid Criminal History

Record Check: If interested, please find the substitute application packet on the VCS website (www.veaziecs.org) and submit to Superintendent Tweedie at ttweedie@veaziecs.org or HR Manager Lisa Swift at lswift@veaziecs.org.

Benefits: \$120/per day
You decide what days you work — Help your community
We would love to have you join our team!

A Note from Sgt. Chad Young – Veazie Police Department

Hello, Residents of Veazie! I'm Sgt. Chad Young, your friendly supervisor here at the Veazie Police Department. I wanted to reach out and connect with you through this great local paper. Some of you I've met out and about, while others might only know me or any of our officers by seeing us as the patrol car passes by. So, I thought I'd take a few minutes to tell you a little about what's going on at your police department.

Right now, we have four full-time officers (plus the chief), and three of those officers are academy graduates. We're also fortunate to have three dedicated part-time officers who help us keep things running smoothly.

By the end of December, we'll be celebrating our newest academy graduate, Officer Hunter Lemieux. Many of you might remember seeing him around town this past summer before he headed off to the Maine Criminal Justice Academy in August to begin the 18-week BLETP—

short for Basic Law Enforcement Training Program. (Yes, we in law enforcement really do love our acronyms... and our phonetic alphabet!)

At the academy, officers receive training in everything from EVOC (Emergency Vehicle Operations Course) to MCRS (Maine Crash Reporting System), SFSTs (Standardized Field Sobriety Testing), CIT (Crisis Intervention Training) and many others. It's a long, demanding course, and we're looking forward to welcoming Officer Lemieux back home to Veazie once he graduates.

Over the summer, some of you might have seen us training at the Salmon Club. Officer Sirois has done a fantastic job organizing regional negotiation trainings, bringing together Veazie PD, Bangor PD, the Department of Corrections and the Penobscot County Sheriff's Office. It's been great to see that kind of collaboration between local agencies; it makes all of us better

at serving our communities. Our department may be small, but we're a diverse and dedicated team. Each officer brings a unique set of experiences, skills and passions to the job, and together, we're proud to serve this town we call home.

Now, enough about us, let's talk about a few things we should all be thinking about this time of year. The days are getting shorter, the leaves have mostly fallen and before we know it, the snowmobilers will be dusting off their helmets and gearing up for another Maine winter.

As the daylight fades earlier each day, please remember to watch out for pedestrians (and their four-legged walking partners!). If you're out for a walk in the evenings, wear bright or reflective clothing, or even better, carry a small light. The same goes for our bicyclists, when it's dark, lights and reflectors are a must, and don't forget helmets are required for anyone under 16.

Speaking of evening hours, a

quick reminder that Riverview and Riverside parks close at sundown. We've noticed a bit more activity after dark lately, and as much as we hate to interrupt anyone's fun, we can only say, "You don't have to go home, but you can't stay here," so many times!

Lastly, for those of you planning to head south for the winter or even just away for the holidays don't forget about our property check program. If you're out of town, let us know, and we'll keep an eye on your home while you're away. You can pick up a property check form at the police department, town office or just give us a call and we'll get the necessary details over the phone.

We're proud to serve this community and grateful for the partnership we share with our residents. Thank you for helping us keep Veazie a safe, welcoming and close-knit town.

Stay safe, stay warm and don't hesitate to wave if you see us out on patrol.

Understanding the Property Tax Abatement Process

By Jacky Binette, Veazie Tax Assessor

Property taxes play an important role in funding the essential services that keep our community strong, from road maintenance and public safety to education and local infrastructure. However, sometimes property owners may feel that their tax assessment does not accurately reflect the fair market value of their property. When that happens, Maine law provides a clear and fair way to request a review through the abatement process.

What Is an Abatement?

An abatement is a formal request made by a property owner to reduce or correct their property tax assessment. In essence, it's an opportunity to appeal if you believe your property has been overvalued, improperly assessed or if there's been an error in the tax record.

How the Process Works

1. Filing a Request – Property owners must submit a written abatement request to the local Assessors within 185 days of the commitment date (the date taxes are committed to the tax collector). This deadline is set by the Maine State Statutes (Title 36, §841) and cannot be extended.
2. Supporting Information – When submitting a request, it's important to include documentation that supports your claim. Examples might include a recent appraisal, photographs showing property conditions or sales data from comparable properties.
3. Assessors' Review – Once your application is received, the Assessors will review all relevant information. This may involve a property inspection or further discussion to better understand your concerns.
4. Decision and Notification

- After reviewing the information, the Assessors will decide whether an adjustment is warranted. You'll receive written notice of the outcome.
- 5. Appeal Option – If you disagree with the Assessors' decision, you may appeal to the County Commissioners within 60 days of receiving the decision.

Key Points to Remember

- Abatements are not for general dissatisfaction with taxes but rather for correcting errors or inequities in valuation.
- Filing an abatement does not postpone the payment of taxes due. Taxes should be paid on time to avoid interest charges, even if an abatement request is pending.
- Communication is important. If you have questions about your valuation, you are encouraged to contact the Assessor's Office before filing. Many concerns can be addressed informally.

A Fair and Transparent Process

The Town of Veazie is committed to ensuring that every property is assessed fairly and equitably. The abatement process is an important safeguard that allows property owners to raise questions, present evidence and seek corrections when warranted.

If you believe your property has been assessed incorrectly, or if you simply wish to better understand how your property's value was determined, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Assessor's Office. We're here to help you navigate the process and ensure that everyone contributes their fair share, no more and no less. For more information or to obtain an abatement application, please contact me by calling (207) 947-2781 or via email at jbINETTE@veazie.net or by checking the Veazie website at www.veazie.net.

Community Response United at the Thompson Road Fire

On August 12, 2025, Veazie and Orono fire departments responded to a reported structure fire at 5 Thompson Road in Veazie. With multiple reports of fire and visible smoke, confirmed by responders, the response was escalated to bring in multiple towns to aid in containment and extinguishment. The fire spread up the rear exterior of the building, spreading to the roof and adjacent apartments. Due to the quick response and actions by all crews, the fire was contained to four apartments, with smoke, heat and water damage to the surrounding units.

Due to extreme heat, high humidity and a dangerous heat index, the incident escalated quickly, prompting a large

response. In total, 16 fire and EMS agencies assisted in the firefighting and support operations. One resident was transported for burns and several firefighters were treated on scene for heat related injuries.

Members of our community and local businesses provided water, ice and other much-needed donations to support our crews during this demanding event. The outpouring of support was truly remarkable and deeply appreciated.



Veazie Fire Department to Launch Community Paramedicine Program Under New Agreement

The Veazie Fire Department will soon expand its role in community healthcare after entering into a new agreement with the Community Care Partnership of Maine (CCPM) to establish a Community Paramedicine (CP) program. The initiative is designed to improve access to healthcare in rural Maine communities by connecting residents with trained EMS professionals who can deliver certain non-emergency medical services in their homes.

The agreement, effective Nov. 1, 2025, provides up to \$243,225 in funding to the Veazie Fire Department through a sub-grant administered by CCPM. The funds come from a larger \$1.9 million grant awarded to CCPM to pilot community paramedicine programs in four Maine towns.

The year-long project, running through Nov. 30, 2026, aims to help people be healthy at home, reduce emergency room visits and hospital admissions by offering preventive care and follow-up services outside of traditional emergency settings. Veazie's participation marks one of the first formal efforts in Penobscot County to integrate community paramedicine into a municipal fire

department. "This program will allow our department to play a bigger role in keeping residents healthy before emergencies happen," said Fire Chief Pete Metcalf. "By working alongside local healthcare partners, we can help prevent unnecessary hospital trips and provide more personal care right here in Veazie."

Under the terms of the sub-agreement, the Fire Department will identify and train up to four EMS staff members as community paramedicine providers. Funding will support wages, travel, and education costs for those employees. Additional funds will be used to purchase a dedicated vehicle, medical supplies, and equipment needed to perform in-home visits.

The department will also engage a primary care medical director to oversee the program and coordinate care with local healthcare providers. CCPM will provide ongoing oversight, technical assistance, and evaluation support throughout the project.

"The goal of this initiative is to expand access to essential healthcare services in areas that have traditionally faced barriers,"

said Sandy Nesin, Chief Executive Officer of the Community Care Partnership of Maine. "By partnering with local fire and EMS agencies like Veazie's, we're strengthening the link between emergency services and primary care."

The Veazie Fire Department will collect data on patient outcomes, participate in statewide evaluation efforts and report regularly to CCPM on program progress. This information will help determine the long-term feasibility of community paramedicine programs across Maine.

Town Manager Mark Leonard, who signed the agreement on behalf of the Town of Veazie, said the project represents an important investment in both public health and public safety. "This is about using the strengths of our local emergency services to meet changing healthcare needs," Leonard said. "It's forward-thinking and community focused."

If successful, the program could serve as a model for other small towns seeking to address healthcare gaps through partnerships between local governments and regional medical organizations.

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Firefighter Pete Celebrates 30 Years of Service



In July 2025, Chief Pete Metcalf was recognized for his 30 years of service with the Veazie Fire Department. Chief Metcalf joined Veazie Fire Department as a part-time, on-call firefighter on July 27, 1995, after serving two years with the Orono Fire Department. At the same time, he was working full-time as a Fire and Life Safety Officer for the Bangor Fire Department. Just a year later, in 1996, he was promoted to Lieutenant.

In 2002, Chief Metcalf was hired full-time for Veazie as Fire Captain. Over the course of his 30-year career, he has received numerous awards, including the Meritorious Conduct Award, a Life Saving Award (2013) and recognition for top responder and training attendance. Chief Metcalf is a licensed Advanced EMT, holds a bachelor's degree in Fire Administration and is a Maine Certified Chief Officer. He was promoted to Assistant Chief in 2015 and to Fire Chief in 2020.

Known affectionately in the community as "Firefighter Pete," he has taught countless fire and life safety education classes to students at the Veazie Community School. Of all his awards and accomplishments, the one that holds the most meaning to him came in 2019 during a school assembly, when the students presented him with a Pete the Cat book titled Firefighter Pete, signed by every student.



Fire Department Welcomes Newest Firefighter



The Veazie Fire Department is excited to welcome Robert Hendrick as the newest full-time firefighter at the station! FF Hendrick brings with him over 20 years of experience in the fire service. He is a State Certified Firefighter II, a licensed EMT and holds numerous certifications across various aspects of fire and EMS. In addition, FF Hendrick serves

as a State Fire Instructor, sharing his knowledge and passion with others in the field. FF Hendrick is excited to get started and shared, "I look forward to every shift! You never know what the day will bring as no emergency is the same, and there is always something to do around the firehouse." Chief Pete Metcalf comments, "FF Hendrick's dedication to the fire service is evident in everything he does, and we are proud to have him join our team as a committed and skilled professional."

Recognizing Veazie Fire Department Crew Accomplishments

Congratulations to the following crew members for their outstanding achievements!

- Firefighter/EMT Caleb Metcalf recognized for 5 years of service
- Firefighter/AEMT Dan Stiehl recognized for 5 years of service
- FF Eli Ewer obtained his EMT certification
- FF Olivia Bushway obtained her EMT certification

The town of Veazie is grateful for each of you! Check out their crew training in these photos.



Front L-R Chief Pete Metcalf, FF Dan Stiehl, FF Eli Ewer (back), Caleb Metcalf, Lt Jacob Reese, FF Rob Hendrick, Lt Nick Sirois.

L-R FF Eli Ewer, FF Ryan McGowan (back), FF Dan Stiehl, Chief Metcalf, FF Caleb Metcalf, FF Olivia Bushway, Lt Jacob Reese.



Seniors Celebrate Halloween with Fall Games and Fire Safety



The Veazie Senior Citizens group had a fun Halloween party on October 15. Everyone enjoyed a nice meal followed by Halloween themed party games. Prizes were given out to those who came dressed for the holiday. And, Fire Chief Pete Metcalf gave a talk and answered questions on fire and fall safety.

If you are 50 years of age or older and live in Veazie or have a connection to Veazie, you are welcome to join the group! For more information call Club President Sandra Patterson at 945-5908.

Thank you from the Historical Society!



The Historical Society recently received a donation from former resident Sarah Ives Lewis. Her donation included a box of old photographs mainly of the Weed and Colby families, but several other Veazie people as well. The group is eager to research these valuable pieces of Veazie history. Thank you, Sarah!

The Historical Society is always grateful for donations of all kinds. If you have something from the past you think might be beneficial whether photos or other memorabilia, please reach out!

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