

Vassalboro to Vote on Amendments to TIF Ordinance

The Vassalboro Selectboard has placed **three local questions** on the ballot for voters to consider on **Tuesday, November 4, 2025**. These will appear alongside **two statewide citizen initiatives**.

One of the local questions asks to approve amendments to the Natural Gas Pipeline Municipal Development and Tax Increment Financing District.

On November, 5 2024 the Town of Vassalboro approved appropriating \$360,000 from TIF funds or the undesignated fund, in the selectboard's discretion, to serve as matching funds related to a Maine DOT Municipal Stream Crossing grant that has been applied for.

Voters, however, did not approve amending the Vassalboro Development Program for the Natural Gas Pipeline Municipal Development and Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) to allow environmental improvement projects in the Town to be funded by revenues of the District. The selectboard is proposing to amend Project 2 to allow up to \$1.25 million in TIF funds to pay for costs associated with the Webber Pond waterway from the pond to the Kennebec River as this relates to environmental projects for commercial use or related to such activities, and costs associated with the development of fisheries and wildlife or marine resources projects.

Such projects may include costs associated with introducing alewives into China Lake and Webber Pond waterway from the pond to the Kennebec River that would improve fish passage for diadromous fish species such as alewife, blueback herring, American shad, American eel, and Atlantic salmon into Sevenmile Brook and upstream habitats (including Webber Pond). Many of these species require access to upstream habitats to grow, reproduce, and rear their young. Improved access to habitat would not only assist in restoration of these important diadromous species, but may also result in expanded harvest opportunities for alewives in the watershed. Habitat access for other commercially fished species like American eel is also likely to improve. Overall, this project will improve access to 2,484 acres of alewife spawning habitat, 230 units of modeled habitat for endangered Atlantic salmon, and at least 20 miles of riverine habitat. Please see a further description of this potential project in the narrative below.

Rebuilding the Dunlap Bridge (two large culverts) located on Mill Hill Rd. will assist with this goal. In 2023, the state's Department of Transportation inspected the structure and determined that there are signs of heavy corrosion below the water line. The state reported that the culverts have deteriorated at an accelerated rate and they have dropped the condition from fair to serious.

The initiative is one way to contribute toward the cost of the bridge without raising and appropriating funds from taxes.

The polls will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Vassalboro Community School.