



December 7, 2023

# CHINA CONNECTED

China Branch Mills China Weeks Mills South China  
Village Village Village Village

*Where little villages come together*

Happy December! Monday's snowy day should put even the biggest Grinches in the holiday spirit. There's something to be said about a blanket of glistening, white snow to start your week off on a cheerful note. Good, bad or otherwise the cold and snow are here. This also means we are rolling into budget season. Beginning in January, the Select Board and the Budget Committee will review requests for funding from municipal departments, committees, and outside organizations for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Several months are spent crafting a budget which we hope will have as little impact on the mil rate as possible. Please join us in person, via Zoom or Livestream to follow the budget crafting process.

I cannot express how important it is to get a building permit or CEO permit **BEFORE** you start construction. In the last month, there have been at least 5 instances of construction starting before a permit was issued causing the applicant to pay an additional 2.5 times the fees. The municipality has 35 days to issue the permit. Please plan accordingly. We try our best to process permits timely, however sometimes additional information is needed from the applicant which may cause a delay or other issues come up which need to be resolved prior to issuance. We will visit each site prior to issuance to confirm the project has not started and that the project is occurring in an authorized area.

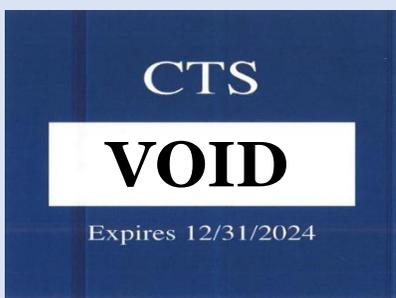
If your property is in the Shoreland Zone, anything within 75 feet of the high-water mark **REQUIRES a DEP permit**. Additionally, Maine law does require that any "contractor" working in the municipal Shoreland Zone must ensure an individual certified in Erosion and Sedimentation Control Practices (ESC) by Maine DEP is present on the site during all phases of soil disturbance, and is responsible for the installation and maintenance of any Best Management Practices (BMPs). Ask to see your contractor's certification before hiring! You can verify online at [www.maine.gov/dep/land/training/cccec.html](http://www.maine.gov/dep/land/training/cccec.html). When in doubt, reach out to the town for assistance or with questions.

Happy Holidays and best wishes for a safe and happy new year!

Becky Hapgood, Town Manager  
becky@chinamaine.org

happy  
holidays!

2024 Transfer Station access permits are now available at the town office. The cost is \$2.00 per permit. **You must obtain the current access permit by January 1, 2024 to enter the Transfer Station.** Each vehicle entering the Transfer Station will require an access permit. Please return your placard(s) to the Town Office when obtaining the new permit. To view the TS Access Permit policy please visit [www.china.govoffice.com](http://www.china.govoffice.com) under ordinances, policies & orders.



The Town Office will be closed Monday December 11<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 am-1:30 pm for an employee appreciation luncheon. Please plan accordingly.

**All Municipal Services will be closed Monday, December 25, 2023 and Monday, January 1, 2024.**

**Don't forget to license your dog!  
Dogs must be licensed by December 31<sup>st</sup> each year.**

**Male/Female - \$11  
Spayed/Neutered - \$6**

**A late fee of \$25.00 per dog begins February 1<sup>st</sup>.**



## Ask Us Anything!

Have you ever had a question about our community you wanted to ask but were too shy? I bet others from town may have the same question. We are starting an "Ask us anything" section of the China Connected where if you submit a question, we will publish the question and answer in a future issue of the CC. This will be totally anonymous! All questions may be sent to [jen@chinamaine.org](mailto:jen@chinamaine.org) by email or by text. Your question may help another China resident so don't be afraid to ask us!

**Question:** Last year those of us over the age of 65 were able to submit a form to hold our property taxes at the previous year's level. I understand the law has changed. Can we still apply for that tax break?

**Answer:** LD 290 Property Tax Stabilization for Senior Citizens program, enacted just a year ago, was repealed by the Maine Legislature on July 6, 2023. The stabilization program has been **replaced** with an expanded Property Tax Fairness Credit (PTFC) and an expanded Property Tax Deferral program.

The two existing State programs benefiting low-income seniors that have been expanded are:

1. **The Property Tax Fairness Credit**, which currently allows eligible Mainers to take a \$1,500 credit, has increased to \$2,000; it also loosens limits on the program in a way that allows the benefits to remain constant for a Mainer whose spouse passes away. Note: This program is not administered by the Town of China. **To claim the credit, you must file Form 1040ME and Schedule PTFC/STFC for the tax year during which the property tax or rent was paid.** This program will be administered through the Income Tax Division. For assistance, call 207-624-9784 or visit Property Tax Fairness Credit Summary at Maine.gov.
2. **The State Property Tax Deferral Program**, which is a lifeline loan program that covers the annual property taxes of Maine seniors who are age 65 and older, who cannot afford to pay them on their own. This program has been expanded doubling the income limit to \$80,000 and raises asset limits. Taxes covered by this program must be paid back when the subject property is sold or becomes part of an estate. This program is also not administered by the Town of China. For assistance, contact Maine Revenue Services, Property Tax Division at 207-624-5600 or [prop.tax@maine.gov](mailto:prop.tax@maine.gov). For more information visit State Property Tax Deferral Program at Maine.gov.



**Gift a Book!**  
Albert Church Brown Memorial Library  
35 Main Street, China

**Booksgiving**

Drop off a new/like new book to be distributed at the food pantry between

**Nov. 1st - Dec. 9th**

**New Year's Eve Family Game Night**

Albert Church Brown Memorial Library  
December 31<sup>st</sup> 4-7pm  
35 Main Street China



**The Community Aging in Place Grant Program** offers no-cost home safety checks, minor maintenance repairs, and accessibility modifications to eligible low-income elderly and disabled homeowners.

You may be eligible for services from the Community Aging in Place Grant if:

- You are age 55+ or have a disability.
- Own your home or live in a home owned by a family member.
- Annual household income limits are 100% of area median income (AMI).
- Live within the service area of our partners.

Examples of scope of work:

### Accessibility Modifications

- Grab bars and handrails
- Shower wand
- Shower seat
- Raised toilet seat
- Drawer pulls
- Doorbell
- Lighting
- Kitchen faucet

### Minor Repairs

- Winterizing
- Flooring repairs
- Storm door installation
- Gutter work
- Steps/existing ramps
- Minor plumbing and electrical
- Build shelf
- Adjust cabinet height

### Safety Checks

- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors
- Dryer vents
- Refrigerator coils
- Light bulbs
- Furnace filters

For more information call the Augusta Housing Authority at 207-626-2357

The South China Community Church offers a \$10 breakfast every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month 8am-10:30am! Breakfast includes sausage and gravy with biscuits, bacon, eggs, pancakes, muffins, tater tots, fruit, pastries, coffee and juice.

246 Village Street, China  
FMI call Diane at  
207-399-6359

