



**GARDINER CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**



Meeting Date	01/06/2021	Department	City Council
Agenda Item	4.g Consider Awarding the Spirit of America Honor		
Est. Cost	n/a		

Background Information

Each year the Mayor and City Council are asked to select the recipient of the "Spirit of America" award for the City of Gardiner. Attached is the email reminder that the City Manager received from Bruce Flaherty, which also provides a background on the award. Presentation of this award should occur in April during National Volunteer Month. (A volunteer in the community should be given this award.)

Requested Action	'I move to advise and consent to the Mayor the nomination of _____ as the 2021 Spirit of America Award Recipient.'
City Manager and/or Finance Review	The City Manager recommends the above action.
Council Vote/ Action Taken	
Departmental Follow-Up	

City Clerk Use Only	1 st Reading _____	Advertised _____	EFFECTIVE DATE _____
	2 nd Reading _____	Advertised _____ w/in 15 Days	
	Final to Dept _____	Updated Book _____	Online _____

Christine Landes

From: Bruce Flaherty <bwflah@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2020 2:23 PM
To: Christine Landes
Subject: Gardiner Spirit of America Holiday Greetings & Thanks

Dear Christine & Other Gardiner Officials,

"Volunteering provides you with renewed creativity, motivation, and vision that can carry over into your personal and professional life." (helpguide.org)

Thank you for Gardiner helping the cause of volunteerism by choosing a 2020 Spirit of America Foundation Tribute recipient – this year (despite pandemic) 160+ Maine towns picked a local person, project or group to receive this award for outstanding community service!

'Share the Spirit': You're encouraged to share your Spirit of America experience with other Maine communities – hopefully inspiring town(s) not listed below to achieve Gold Distinction (as your municipality annually does) in 2021!

Congratulations to all 2020 Gold Distinction towns, including: Andover, Athens, Belgrade, Benton, Bradley, Bremen, Brownfield, Burnham, Canaan, Canton, Carmel, Castle Hill, Chapman, Chelsea, Chesterville, China, Corinna, Cornish, Cornville, Cushing, Damariscotta, Dexter, Dixfield, Durham, Eddington, Embden, Fairfield, Frankfort, Franklin, Freedom, Gardiner, Gray, Greene, Guilford, Hanover, Harmony, Hiram, Houlton, Jackman, Kennebunkport, Lamoine, Lebanon, Lewiston, Limerick, Limington, Lincoln, Lisbon, Livermore, Madison, Mapleton, Medway, Minot, Monmouth, Moose River, Mount Desert, Mount Vernon, Naples, Newfield, Newry, Norridgewock, North Yarmouth, Northport, Old Orchard Beach, Orrington, Pittsfield, Pittston, Portland, Ripley, Rome, Roxbury, Sabattus, Searsport, Sebago, Skowhegan, Solon, South Berwick, Standish, Starks, Stockton Springs, Troy, Union, Unity, Vassalboro, Vinalhaven, Wales, Washington, Weld, Weston, Windsor, Winterport, Winthrop, Woodstock, Woolwich.

A variety of the 2020 Spirit of America award winners (listing one/county):

Glenda Barker has done so much for Grange, Homemakers, Budget Comm., Fun Days & more.
Riley & Aubri Bosco are youths who made Unity recycling posters, painted town garden stones.
James Brawn has done a lot to help snowmobile club & local folks thru anonymous philanthropy.
Bremen Library encourages lifelong learning, advances knowledge and strengthens community.
Canton Cemetery Ladies have helped the cemetery, school, Memorial Chapel and other causes.
Judy Cyr has made a lot of free COVID-19 protective face coverings for residents & businesses.
East Grand Honor School National Society helps gather, distribute Xmas gifts to needy youths.
Jane Fulton was a Yarmouth High student who constantly showed optimism, kindness to others.
John Gibbons has served as Selectman, on Planning Bd, Midcoast Committee, RSU 40 Director.
Alejandra Herrera is always ready to lend a hand & her business has given generously to causes.
Kasey Jordan & Lily Philbrook are Girl Scouts who for years have maintained Vets' Memorial.
Don Kornrumpf, Will Neilson, Ken Telleen secured \$1,208,508 town internet connection grant.
McKenna LaBrie is pre-teen who does lemonade stand & Xmas project to raise money for cats.
Main Street Skowhegan organizes several community events, promotes the town, raises funds.
Tom & Marie Michaud have been very involved in protecting the environment of China Lake.
Steuben Volunteer Fire Dept. does events for kids (in Apr., Dec.), helped July 4th County parade.

It's not too early to think about whom your municipality might pick as its 2021 Spirit of America Foundation Tribute recipient and when the award will be presented. Best/simplest solution for most: choose the one to whom your annual town report is dedicated as Spirit of America winner and honor them at the annual town meeting!

Food for thought: Manchester (which in 2020 extended its record-breaking streak of choosing Spirit of America recipients to 27 consecutive years) annually selects multiple winners. By presenting a Spirit of America 'New Project' award, this town has inspired innovation (a new annual festival, a new safety crosswalk, etc.) and enriched its community!

Hoping you tell us by Feb. 28 that you have picked your community's 2021 Spirit of America winner – will publicize your city as a 'Pacesetter' if you do!

Wishing you a happy, healthy holiday season & thank you for being part of the Spirit of America family!

Bruce Flaherty, 622-7311, bwflah@gmail.com
Maine Spirit of America

A municipality may achieve the most prestigious Gold Distinction by presenting its Spirit of America Foundation Tribute at the annual town meeting or inauguration, during an annual community festival, or during National Volunteer Month (April).

FYI: Some Maine School Districts selected 'Education Tribute' winners in 2020.

Spirit of America Foundation has obtained a trademark for 'SpirAme' & in 2021 will have a new website (built by professional website developer Lauren Haven, who also is Administrator of Maine County Commissioners Association).



Spirit of America Foundation - Honoring Volunteerism

Home

(website last updated: Sept. 28, 2020)

Spirit of America Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity established in Augusta, ME in 1990 to honor volunteerism.

The Spirit of America Foundation Tribute is presented in the name of Maine municipalities – and starting in 2020, the Spirit of America Foundation Education Tribute is presented in the name of Maine school districts – to local individuals, organizations and projects for commendable community service.

Since Alma Jones received the first Spirit of America award from Augusta Mayor William Burney on Nov. 26, 1991, the tribute has been presented at 500+ ceremonies!

Spirit of America Foundation gives special thanks to these corporate sponsors: Ballstown Fire Arms, Capitol Chapter MSEA, Gardiner Federal Credit Union, Kennebec Savings Bank, Maine State Credit Union, Sprague & Curtis Real Estate, and Financial Services Agent Shirley Ezzy.

(‘SpirAme’ is a registered trademark granted to Spirit of America Foundation. Maine’s municipalities and school districts may use SpirAme Tribute and SpirAme Education Tribute respectively as alternative names for the awards.)

Ceremony Photos



Top to bottom:

Guilford's town meeting, 2017

Maine Spirit of America Day, 2015



Spirit of America Foundation - Honoring Volunteerism

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The Beginning

When Maine Governor John McKernan stated, "... I will create within the Executive Department a program to promote volunteerism in Maine" during his January 8, 1987 inauguration speech, Bruce Flaherty immediately thought about the possibility of a new 'Governor's Award for Volunteerism'! Since he has known John McKernan ever since the two were introduced as freshmen classmates at Dartmouth College, Flaherty wrote to Maine's new chief executive suggesting the establishment of a town volunteer recognition program culminating with the presentation of the new award at a state-wide event. Governor McKernan wrote back to Bruce on January 22, 1987, "Your thoughts about fostering greater volunteerism were great! As you know, I am very interested in this area and I have asked my staff to review your ideas and incorporate them into our program."

Although two separate suits brought against Governor John Sununu and the State of New Hampshire in conjunction with that state's volunteer recognition program discouraged the McKernan administration from adopting the ideas, Bruce continued to consider the possibility of a 'universal' volunteer recognition award. Over time it became apparent that a foundation should be established to oversee the presentation of the tribute. The name for that organization 'fell out of the air' when Bruce happened to be reading an article in the Monday, July 2, 1990 issue of the Boston Globe that began, "More than a decade after President Jimmy Carter warned of a crisis in the spirit of America". The phrase 'spirit of America' had a special 'ring' to it! 'Spirit of America Foundation' - a great name!

After an Augusta Kiwanis meeting in Oct., 1990, Bruce met with Fred Hayward, Roger Pomerleau, and Don Taverner to sow the seeds for Spirit of America Foundation. Realizing that three volunteers of the caliber of Roger, Don, and Fred were interested in the proposed foundation's principles, Bruce sensed something 'big' was evolving! Working as a team, the four developed tentative criteria for a 'Spirit of America' award and strengthened the organization in the months ahead.

The first Spirit of America Foundation tribute was presented to Alma Jones by Augusta Mayor William Burney on November 26, 1991! On June 7, 1992 Theresa Weber became the first youth to receive a Spirit of America tribute and 'Merry Christmas' (performed by China's Boynton Webber Post 179 and Auxiliary) became the first project to be recognized with that honor!

Spirit of America Foundation became incorporated with the State of Maine as of Oct. 16, 1990, applied for recognition as a 501(c)(3) public charity status from Internal Revenue Service, and got a letter dated December 13, 1995 from IRS granting the status (still in effect). The Foundation's mailing address is PO Box 5637, Augusta ME 04332.

Every year the Spirit of America Foundation Tribute is presented in the name of 100+ Maine municipalities. In many, Boards of Selectmen choose their town's tribute recipient and honor them at the annual town meeting. Radio personalities Don Brown and Ryan Cote and national trainer Wayne Mitchell have spoken at many Spirit of America events – five times Maine's Governor has attended the annual event recognizing the past year's Spirit of America honorees of all Maine towns!

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