

Entire Maine town effectively shuttered after sole clerk quits

Christen Bouchard resigned after the board of selectmen denied her vacation request

[Abe Asher](#) 1 day ago



(Alamy)

A small town in [Maine](#) has been paralysed after its only clerk quit following the board of selectmen's decision to deny her vacation request.

Christen Bouchard, town clerk in Passadumkeag, Maine since 2020,

submitted a request roughly a month-and-a-half ago to take two weeks off. The board of selectmen declined her request, claiming that there was no one available to fill in for her.

Now since her departure on 7 April, the town has had no one to register vehicles, maintain vital records, or liase with the state Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Town clerk isn't the only significant vacancy at the city of Passadumkeag. [According](#) to *The Bangor Daily News*, the town of 356 people also lacks a code enforcement officer, an assessor, an animal control officer, a school administration official.

On 19 April, a [message](#) from the town noted that town office would be closed to in-person visitors until further notice.

"The Treasurer will be in a couple days a week to accept payments on things such as taxes," the statement read. "Please call the office before heading out to do any business here as there are no designated hours of operation now."

Treasurer Barbara Boyer has reportedly been coming into the office to collect tax payments, but she is unable to register vehicles, perform building inspections, perform animal welfare checks, or do many of the other things that the town relied on Ms Bouchard for.

An *Independent* call to the town office went unanswered on Wednesday.

It is not clear that the town will be able to fill the positions and re-open for business any time soon. In March, town residents [rejected](#) a budget article meant to fund town operations after town officials failed to adequately explain the reasoning for a proposed salary increase. The budget article

also did not include funding for a code enforcement officer, a necessity under Maine law.

Given the budget uncertainty, the town's small population, and the fact that the municipal positions are only part-time, town officials told the *Bangor Daily News* that they are struggling to fill the open positions. Ms Bouchard was only contracted to work 16 hours each week — though she said she often worked more — and was paid just \$13,500 per year.

"We have been left with a mess from years of neglect and are doing as much as we can to get our town back in order," first selectman Brad McKechnie said.

"I do believe in time with the team we have, we will get Passadumkeag back in order and looking good, but it will take a bit and is going to be a challenge for sure."

For now, Passadumkeag residents are turning to selectmen and other municipalities to fill basic governmental functions — getting their cars registered in the nearby town of Howland, for instance.

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