

Town Manager Report to the Board of Selectmen

Monday, Dec. 17, 2018

- The budget process is moving forward. Marisa and I met with each department head and a representative of the Finance Committee last week to go over the departmental budget requests. This week we are awaiting the School Department budget proposal, to understand how that will affect the town. Marisa is finalizing revenue projections for FY 20, as well and we expect to have a budget proposal by mid-January as required.
- Last week we also had a wonderful event for Police Chief Russ Stevens, who was installed as the new President of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association. The installation luncheon was at Myopia Hunt Club and was well attended by area Chiefs, several of our department heads a couple of members of the Board of Selectmen and a variety of state officials, including Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and Attorney General Maura Healey.
- Last week was a good week to have visitors to town. In addition to the Lt. Governor and Attorney General, we also had a visit from Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash. Jay met with me, a representative of the Board of Selectmen, the Chair of our Planning board and Hamilton development Corporation and Planning Director Patrick Reffett. We discussed a number of improvement projects the town is considering and what grant funds might be available to help us.
- On Saturday the town had two great events going on. First the Hamilton Police participated in the annual Stuff-A-Cruiser Toy Drive for the Shriners. Hamilton residents showed up in great numbers to support the Toy Drive effort and the Cruiser was filled more than once before the Shriners took the toys.
- Also on Saturday, we had a very successful inaugural Wreath Across America event at Hamilton Cemetery. More than 100 folks came out to help us lay more than 700 wreaths on Veterans' graves in the cemetery. I was honored to be part of the event, both as your Town Manager and as an Air Force event. State Rep. Brad Hill joined us and served as the Master of Ceremonies to kick things off.
- I want to let everyone know that I will be away for the Christmas and New Year holidays. My wife and I started planning a trip for the family more than year ago. In my absence, Finance Director Marisa Batista will be in charge at Town Hall and Chief Russ Stevens to manage any operational issues that arise outside of Town Hall. Chief Stevens is also being authorized to sign the payroll warrant and any emergency Accounts payable warrants in my absence.

➤ Update on Town Manager Goals:

- Self-Sufficiency of the Patton Homestead – A screening committee has completed initial interviews of five candidates for the Patton Director position and I will be interviewing finalists this week. I hope to be able to offer the position to a candidate in the next week or so and have the new Director start at the beginning of January. Additionally, the Patton Homestead Inc. Board recently met with their consultants at Empower Success Corps (ESC) and reviewed recommendations for items like marketing and utilization of the Patton Homestead, as well as development of a business plan and other community uses of the homestead. ESC's final report will be turned over to the community in January and they will continue to work with the board members on issues like fund raising and marketing.
- Financial Policies and Stabilization Funds – We are in the FY20 budget process now and with recent adoption of the Financial Reserves and Capital Planning policies, we will be making recommendations for appropriations to the General Stabilization, OPEB and a new Capital Stabilization Fund as part of the budgeting process. Once we have submitted our draft budget proposal for you in January, the department heads and finance team will begin to meet to re-organize and prioritize our Capital funding requests as well. We have not had any further word from the state, regarding our request for help in developing a new budget presentation model – given how late in the calendar we are and our need to submit a balanced budget proposal to you in January, Marisa and I have decided that we will not be making any substantive change to our budget document for FY 20. However, we do expect to begin making progress toward a new budget model a little later this year and will make sure that we have a template budget document to review prior to the FY21 budget process.
- Chebacco Road/Well Exploration and Manchester – Tim Gordon and I have had an initial conversation with an engineering company that has experience with roadway and water main projects and we are weighing the need to bring a new designer onboard to discuss improvements to Chebacco Road that would include road paving and installation of a new water main, that could potentially be tied in to the Manchester water plant. We are at the very early stages of this. I have discussed the idea with the Manchester Town Administrator briefly and there may be some common ground to pursue the water connection. However, we are not ready to talk in terms of a proposal or project cost at this point. I will keep you informed of progress.
- Town Hall Renovations – the town has signed a contract with our selected designer, LLB Architects. The company has been to Town Hall to begin assessing the building and has met with Town Hall staff to also begin assessing the current and future programming needs of town departments. The goal at this point is to have a design or design options, along with pricing and proposed construction schedule for consideration at Annual Town Meeting. However, I have expressed a desire that we ensure that the work is thorough and inclusive of community

feedback. If we need to delay a presentation to Special Town Meeting in the fall, I will urge that.

- Master Plan and Housing – I am scheduled to meet with MAPC staff, accompanied by Patrick Reffett, tomorrow, Tuesday, Dec. 18. We will be discussing the need for assistance with the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan, our already begun Housing Plan update, the expansion of that planning process to provide us with an updated Housing Production Plan and the possibility for MAPC to assist us with the other elements that would be needed to produce a town wide Master Plan. I hope to be able to report back to you a proposal to begin a Master Planning process that will include the already ongoing efforts for Open Space and Housing, this may require a Town Meeting request for funding to supplement MAPC's assistance.