

Town Manager Report to the Board of Selectmen  
Monday, January 7, 2019

- The budget process continues. We are scheduled to present a balanced budget proposal to you at your next meeting on Tuesday, January 22 and meet jointly with the Finance Commission on Sat., January 26 to review that budget. I request that the board officially schedules that meeting today.
- Retirement party for Chief Phil Stevens is this Thursday, at the Danversport Yacht Club.
- Town Meeting has been scheduled for Saturday, April 6 at the Hamilton-Wenham High School Auditorium.
- The State Legislature prior to January 1 passed and Governor Baker signed, a new law that allows municipalities to collect sales taxes on “short-term rentals” or Air BNB type of rentals within the town and also allows the town to create and enforce local by-laws to ensure the practice is not impactful to neighbors, the town or potential renters. I’d like to propose the Board of Selectmen put this issue on an upcoming agenda and I can direct Town Counsel to come up with a briefing document to help you determine if you wish to bring this type of by-law to the Annual Town Meeting.
- E-newsletter and push notifications from the website, I had a meeting this afternoon with our website provide, Stirling Technologies, and it looks like we are going to be able to start providing some of the functionality the board was looking for an better communications to residents throughout our existing website. I will have more information, probably by our next meeting, but the short of it is that we will be able to push out a weekly e-newsletter to those who subscribe for it and also offer residents the opportunity to opt-in to meeting and calendar announcements by department or board. This will require us to initiate some more content through the website, but once it is on there, it can be accumulated into the weekly newsletter.
- The town received an annual data report from Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School and a copy of that has been placed into your packets today and will be posted to the town website.
- Update on Town Manager Goals:
  - Self-Sufficiency of the Patton Homestead – The town has a number of additional interviews to conduct for the Patton Homestead Director position. Our first round of interviews was interrupted, but the screening committee will be continuing their work this week.
  - Financial Policies and Stabilization Funds – Given that our Finance Department is currently short-staffed and we are in the midst of developing the FY 20 budget, I’d ask for a timeline from the Board for considering the next financial policies to

be considered by the Board. Though the state is assisting us with drafting the language for these financial policies, they still require quite a bit of work from our Finance Director. I would request that we be allowed to bring forward the next policies for your consideration at some point following the Annual Town Meeting, with the goal of having a first reading in late April or May. The Finance Director has told me that the prioritized list of policies, which the board had earlier agreed to or approved remains the same. As part of this process, I also want to inform you that a new budget template the Town requested through the Community Compact Financial Best Practices process has been delivered to the town by DOR. However, it was received too late to begin migrating our budget to the new template in time for this year's budget process. As with the new financial policies, the new budget document will require a significant amount of work by the Finance Director and town department heads to reflect the Town of Hamilton budget and we do not want to rush the process and risk unnecessary errors. Our goal will be to have the budget document created prior to the FY'21 budget process, giving everyone time to understand the new budget tool.

- Chebacco Road/Well Exploration and Manchester – No change since our last meeting.
- Town Hall Renovations –The architect LLB Associates has now been to Town Hall to meet with staff on two separate occasions including last Friday, when they took turns meeting with departments to discuss space needs for each department. LLB will be putting together an initial plan based on program needs for each department.
- Master Plan and Housing – Patrick Reffett and the Planning Board are continuing to move forward with their work to update the Housing portion of the Master Plan. Additionally, the Affordable Housing Trust has agreed to fund an additional sum of money to allow the Housing consultant to also create an updated Housing Production Plan for the town and I have requested through the MAPC for District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) to help the town complete an update to its Open Space and Recreation Plan. This would give us three components of a Master Plan. I have also sought a scope of work and timeline from MAPC to look at how we could complete the remaining portions of the Master Plan and I am anticipating a response from them shortly. Their proposal may seek to complete the Master Plan over two fiscal years, using a combination of DLTA funds – which would be work they would do on the Master Plan for us at no charge, along with a matching share of work they would do for us at cost. By splitting this over two fiscal years we could also reduce the financial impact of the part of the plan we'd be paying for.