

Town Manager Report to the Board of Selectmen

Monday, May 20, 2019

- I met last week with Selectwoman Darcy Dale and David Wanger of the Finance and Advisory Committee to discuss their idea of offering mediation to parties aggrieved by the town or between independent boards and committees, as a first resort in dealing with potential legal issues that face the town. Their recommendation is based on the thought that mediation is a less costly and more positive way to find a resolution to certain disputes and can take far less time than litigation. Mr. Wanger's initial thought was/is to develop a process by which parties in dispute with the town could agree to mediation with an outside, third party mediator, in an effort to avoid a lawsuit. The program needs further development, but we've agreed to study a plan for adopting this type of strategy toward potential litigation in the future. As the program is developed, we'll share more information with the board and the public.

- Fire Chief Ray Brunet and I met this morning with the Wenham Fire Chief, their Fire Captain and the Interim Town Administrator to discuss their new basic life support ambulance service. It was a good discussion and one that left both Chief Brunet and I feeling like it is worth it for Hamilton to investigate the possibility of bringing municipal ambulance service to Hamilton in the future – it does have some promise for us. That said, the actual rollout of this could take two to three years to develop. We hope to bring a more complete explanation of the process, timing and costs associated with this possibility to a future Selectmen's meeting.

- Speaking of the Ambulance, as we've mentioned previously, the current contract for ambulance service is out to bid, with all bids due to the town by 11 a.m. on Friday, May 31.

- I wanted to let the Board know that we were informed by National Grid late last week, that in their effort to improve and upgrade their system, they will be performing a planned outage, on Tuesday, May 28 between the hours of 11:59 p.m. and 4 a.m., which will affect approximately 140 customers. All effected residents have been notified by mail and the announcement is going to be posted to the town website as well. This planned outage will allow the utility to install new equipment, which will help reduce the risk of unplanned outages even further. I'd mention too, that National Grid has asked if they can attend an upcoming Selectboard meeting to provide an update of their progress on improvements to their system. I've provided you each with a copy of the letter.

- The town is currently engaged in discussions with the Hamilton Development Corporation to execute a new agreement between the town and the HDC. The previous agreement had lapsed several years ago, with no successor agreement in place. In discussing this with the HC Chair, Rick Mitchell, we both thought it would be in the best interests of transparency and the citizens of Hamilton to have a new agreement executed and signed. I hope to accomplish that before the end of the fiscal year.
- I have shared a document from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, which they have asked the town to provide some feedback to. The document – A Transportation Vision for the North Shore Coalition – is a joint policy document that outlines transportation priorities for a consortium of cities and town on the North Shore, which the MAPC is proposing to present to state transportation and legislative leaders. A copy of this vision is with your packets. It includes five guiding principles and goals for transportation improvements for the North Shore, as well as 19 transportation actions that can be adopted/supported by North Shore communities in the North Shore Coalition. I share this document with you and ask you to provide me with your input and thoughts, so that I can pass them along to MAPC.
- I also want to inform the Selectboard and the residents that I will be out of the office next Thursday and Friday, May 30 and 31, to attend the Massachusetts Municipal Manager's Association annual Spring Conference and workshop. I have arranged for office coverage during my absence on Thursday and Friday during regular business hours, so that residents will not come to Town Hall to find a closed door.
- I also want to inform the Board and the public that I will be using some personal and vacation time during several Fridays in June and July on 6/14, 6/21, 7/5 and 7/12) , to take care of some family business. I will be available by phone and email during these days away.
- Lastly, an update on the search for a new Assistant to the Town Manager. There are four interviews scheduled for this week. So far, we have received more than 50 applicants for the position, with several highly qualified candidates among them. A screening committee of two – Treasurer/Collector Cheryl Booth and Public Safety Administrative Clerk Christine Larcom – will conduct the initial interviews and present finalists for me to interview. The position will remain open and posted until filled.

➤ **Update on Town Manager Goals:**

- Self-Sufficiency of the Patton Homestead – Patton Homestead Director Kaleigh Pare continues to make progress on preparing the Homestead to host a variety of events this coming summer and fall, including work on finalizing contracts for private users and policies and procedures that users will adhere to when renting out the space. When those operational documents are finalized, we will share them with the Board and make them available to the public on the town website.
- Financial Policies and Stabilization Funds – No update at this time.
- Chebacco Road/Well Exploration and Manchester – The town has signed a contract with Woodard and Curran to design, permit the Chebacco Road paving project. The next step will be to plan a public meeting with residents of the road to discuss the project and what it entails.
- Master Planning/ Housing Master Plan updates – Had the second forum, had a telephone conference with the consultant on Monday, May 20 and talked through a number of concerns, and outcomes and they are continuing their work. They are under contract through the end of June on the Housing Master Plan and the consultant has also begun its work on the Housing Production Plan, which was included in the project at a later date.
- Town Hall Renovations – All Boards and Committees meeting with the Town Hall Building Committee is scheduled for this Wednesday, May 22 at 7 p.m. at the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library. This meeting is designed to elicit feedback and resident input into the planning for the proposed Town Hall Renovation project. The project design is not finalized and the purpose of this meeting is to get a sense from community members about what their priorities for a potential renovation project are. There is also a community survey up through the town's website, which asks residents to share their thoughts there as well.