

# Town Manager Report for July 13, 2020

The last few months have been among the most challenging and unique in municipal government, just as they have in all aspects of life for residents around town. The town's response and actions in the midst of the Global Coronavirus Pandemic have, at times, made it seem like the normal operations of local government are a thing of the past. Fortunately, due to the hard work of town employees and our citizen volunteers on boards and committees, that is simply not the truth.

Though government looks and interacts with the public in a slightly different way these days, we want to assure our residents that we are doing everything we can to continue providing the services they expect and are working hard to do so in a safe and efficient manner.

We don't know what the coming months and years will hold for us, but we are working with our partners at the state and federal levels, our neighboring municipalities and internally to find solutions to the challenges facing us as we continue to deliver vital services to the town's residents.

Here are a few highlights from recent activity around town:

There are some new additions to Town Hall. Town Clerk Carin Kale and Assistant to the Town Manager/Community Preservation Coordinator Pat Shannon both have joined the town with the start of the new fiscal year. We are also pleased to announce the promotion of MichelleLee Carroll, who is now serving Hamilton, Manchester and Rockport, as our new Regional Human Resources Director.

Town Clerk Kale would like to inform the Board and the public that last week Governor Baker signed "An Act Relative to Voting Options in Response to COVID-19" (Chapter 115 of the Acts of 2020) that authorized some permanent changes and some temporary changes (only 2020) to election laws. While "Vote by Mail" is authorized for both the primary and the state election, the law mandates the Clerk's Office to be open on several weekends for voter registration and in-person early voting.

- 1) In-person voter registration shall be offered from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm and 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm on Sat Aug 22 (for the primary) and Sat Oct 24 (for the state election).
- 2) In-person early voting is one (1) week before the primary and MUST be offered on Sat Aug 22 AND Sun Aug 23 – four (4) hours is the required time for towns of 5,000 – 19,999 registered voters.
- 3) In-person early voting is two (2) weeks before the state election and MUST be offered on Sat Oct 17, Sun Oct 18, Sat Oct 24 and Sun Oct 25 – four (4) hour requirement.

The installation of the electronic signboard at the Public Safety Building started today with the anticipation of completion tomorrow. This is a long awaited project and will provide a more attractive way to communicate with our residents and visitors.

We'd like to take a moment to recognize the retirements of Sergeant Karen Wallace and Officer Brian Shaw in the Hamilton Police Department. They both officially retired this year, after serving the town for over 33 years each.

Public Works Director Tim Olson reminds residents of the Board of Selectmen's recent vote imposing a water ban for sprinkling water. This is a nighttime ban and requires that any plant watering be done by hand. Residents who would like to report violators are encouraged to call the Department of Public Works.

The Town of Hamilton has begun the joint fueling arrangement with the Town of Wenham. All town vehicles are now fueling at the Wenham Fueling Station as part of a pilot study to determine if this is a long-term solution to the towns' needs to replace our fuel facilities. We'll be able to provide a report and look at a long-term arrangement, which could include the establishment of a new joint fueling facility for both towns.

Cape Ann Transportation Authority is off to a great start. The authority posted a notification on Facebook that was shared 16 times, reaching just over 11,000 people. The COA sent the first person to sign up and use the service a card with flowers as a thank you. Since last Wednesday, we have had approximately 7 people sign up for transportation.

The public works department is under contract to complete sidewalk replacement projects along Linden Street, at the Madonna Drive and Highland intersection, and along School Street from Knowlton Street to Essex Street. The work is scheduled to be completed by mid-August.

The town's new electric vehicle recharging station behind Town Hall has been installed and is up and running. This new facility was built without using town money, solely with grant funds, and is available for owners of electric cars to re-charge their vehicles.

Recreation Director Sean Timmons announced that the town has begun its revamped Summer Recreation Programs, effective the week of July 6. Recreation Staff are running smaller, directed programming for young residents in socially distanced groups at Patton Park. For details, or to learn how to sign up, please visit the Recreation Department webpage.

The Board of Health and the Recreation Department also worked cooperatively re-open town playgrounds with new signage and hand sanitizing stations. The public bathrooms at Patton Park are also open with daily cleaning.