

Town of Hamilton

Town Manager's Office

Town Manager Report to the Board of Selectmen Monday, November 1, 2021

I am pleased to be able to offer the following report on programs and initiatives that are on-going in the Town of Hamilton, as well as some updates on a variety of things that have happened since our last report.

Master Plan Steering Committee Visioning Workshop – The Master Plan Steering Committee and our consultants from Weston and Sampson will be hosting a Visioning Workshop at the Miles River Middle School on Saturday, November 13 from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. This is the perfect opportunity for residents, board and committee members and other members of the community to come together with the consultants and MPSC to share their thoughts about what the future of Hamilton should look like.

Patton Homestead Director – The town has hired Holly Erickson in the position of Patton Homestead Director. Holly has a strong background in event planning and organizing and in direct marketing of venues and service for events. She comes with a built-in local network of associates and vendors who she can utilize to spotlight the Patton Homestead as an event venue and she lives nearby in Ipswich, so she is able to respond quickly to requests for meetings etc. Holly will start out working 20 hours per week until January, when she will increase her hours to 25 hours per week and she starts on Tuesday, November 9. I hope to be able to introduce Holly to the Board at an upcoming meeting.

Council on Aging Director – The application period for the COA Director closes on Friday, Nov, 5 and so far we have several qualified candidates that have applied for the position, including some with local ties. Over the next week or so, those applications will be screened and a selection of candidates will be offered first round interviews with a screening committee, who will present finalists to myself and the COA Board Chair for final round interviews. Our goal is to be able to make an offer for a new COA Director before Thanksgiving.

Public Health Director, new offices and survey – We are working with a finalist candidate and hope to be able to make an announcement shortly with regard to the vacant Health Director position.

In the meantime, work has begun in the second floor space at the Council on Aging building, as we prepare to move our health department staff to that building and out of their currently inadequate, inefficient space.

We are hopeful that by locating our health staff in the same building as our seniors, we'll be able to provide better access to public health programs that may be needed by our local senior residents.

Another aspect of our efforts to better serve our seniors is the community needs assessment that is kicking off now. We have engaged the UMass Boston McCormack School with completing a

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survey and assessment meetings with various stakeholders in town and expect to have useable information that will better inform our program approach to serving Hamilton seniors.

Kicking off budget development – Following the Board of Selectmen's Joint meeting with the Finance and Advisory Committee this evening, the town administration will begin the FY'23 budget process with our department heads and staffs, with the goal of producing a cleaner, more transparent budget document that will help to communicate to our residents how the Town of Hamilton proposes to provide services and programming for our residents in FY'23.

The administration's principle goals for FY'23 are:

- To avoid an override situation
- To continue to offer the same services (level-serviced budget)
- To ensure appropriate staffing to maintain all existing services
- To maintain all capital assets of the town
- To meet required financial policies objectives
- To communicate the town's goals and needs
- To identify better efficiencies and systems to enhance resident life
- To be responsible with the town's limited resources
- To improve communication between the town and its residents

ARPA Funding – As noted in my last report, the Town of Hamilton will get close to \$2.4 million that we can spend in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, but we will only be able to spend it in specific ways.

At the next Select Board meeting on November 15, we will present to you some basic information about the ARPA funds, what kinds of projects/programs they are targeted to fund and offer some options about how to determine which projects/programs Hamilton should focus on.

The presentation we make to the Board of Selectmen and later to the Finance and Advisory Committee and the Capital Committee will highlight the restrictions on the ARPA funding and seek input to develop priorities.

All of the ARPA funds MUST be spent by December 31, 2024, and the reporting and certification of expenses will be a heavy lift for our town departments. We look forward to discussing this program in detail with you shortly.