



Town of Hamilton

Town Manager Report


For week of November 20, 2023

Department/ Project	Weekly Update	Timeline	Status
Town Manager			
1. Master Plan	1. Judi Barrett of Barrett Planning Group will update the Select Board during a presentation at the Monday, November 20 Select Board meeting. The work of the MPSC continues and will be completed late this year.	1. Late 2023	1. <i>On-going</i>
2. Special Town Meeting	2. Special Town Meeting was a success with approximately 120 Town Meeting voters present. Town Meeting members supported all of the items on the Warrant including funding for the Town Hall Renovation Project. Town Hall staff has moved to Patton Homestead and will be working fulltime from the Homestead (or COA building) effective Monday, November 27, 2023. The renovation project will be going out to bid in December 2023.	2. November 6, 2023	2. <i>Complete</i>
3. Brown's Hill Zoning	3. On Tuesday, Nov, 21, representatives of the Gordon Conwell Seminary will make a short presentation to the Planning Board after having provided written feedback on the proposed Brown's Hill Overlay District to the Planning Board. The Planning Board has been working on the BHOD since last spring and was looking for input from Gordon Conwell, the property owners.	3. Ready for Annual Town Meeting	3. <i>On-going</i>
4. MassWorks Grant and Hamilton Development Corporation	4. The Hamilton Development Corporation will meet in a joint session with the Select Board on Monday, November 20 beginning at 7:30 p.m. The HDC will review its recent history; outline a number of projects they have been working on; and seek Select Board support for continuing the work they've begun through their application to the	4. November 20, 2023	4. <i>On-going</i>

<p>5. Chebacco Road Paving</p>	<p>MassWorks grant program for infrastructure improvements in downtown Hamilton. Though the grant was not awarded at the time, the grant application lays out a nice proposal for roadway, sidewalk and infrastructure improvements to help make the downtown more appealing and welcoming to visitors and shoppers.</p>		
<p>5. Chebacco Road Paving</p>	<p>5. Work has begun on the Chebacco Road paving project, with contractors focusing first on the gravel road portion of the project, with the goal to get a binding coat of pavement onto the roadway before the first snow flies this year. Roadway drainage improvements, improvements to the already paved portion of the road and final top coat of the new road will all be scheduled to resume in the Spring.</p>	<p>5. Spring 2024</p>	<p>5. <i>On-going</i></p>
<p>6. School Feasibility Study</p>	<p>6. The next meeting of the New School Building Committee, feasibility study will be held on Monday, November 27, 2023 at the school administration building in Wenham. At its last meeting the committee adopted the Education Plan, which will drive the choices for determining school building options. The determination of potential sites will be taken up with a presentation to the Hamilton Select Board in December, as the available sites reviewed that had the best conditions to allow for a new school are both in Hamilton and controlled by the Hamilton Select Board. The committee, the Owner's Project Manager and the architects are still in the early stages of this work and it is important for residents to know that NO DECISIONS have as yet been made on any of the issues that are being reviewed by the School Building Committee.</p>	<p>6. Through 2025</p>	<p>6. <i>On-going</i></p>
<p>7. Board and committee meetings during Town Hall renovation</p>	<p>7. The Town Manager and the Executive Director of HW Cam are working on a plan that will allow the meeting room at the Hamilton-Wenham Library to be used for town board and committee meetings during the time that the Town Hall is closed for renovations. The goal is to allow the continuation of Hybrid Meeting capability at this site during the construction and allow HWCam to broadcast live from that meeting room as well. Additionally, some board and committees may choose to hold their meetings either at the Hamilton COA building, first floor or at the Multi-purpose room at the Miles River Middle School. In the meantime, the Select Board, Planning Board and others will be able to use the Memorial Room until construction starts at the Town Hall.</p>	<p>7. Winter 2024</p>	<p>7. <i>Through Fall 2025</i></p>

8. New above ground town fuel facility	8. Construction has begun on the new above ground town fuel facility, which will ultimately allow town vehicles to fuel here in Hamilton once again. The construction is scheduled to take 2-4 weeks and the expectation is that town vehicles will be able to fuel in the Hamilton DPW yard by sometime in December.	8. December 2024	8. <i>On-going</i>
9. Town Hall moving and closed to the public Fridays	9. Town Hall employees are scheduled to begin moving to the Patton Homestead beginning the middle of the week of November 13 and continuing through November 20, 2023. Following the Thanksgiving holiday all employees who are moving to the Homestead should be in place by then. "Town Hall" at Patton Homestead may temporarily remain closed to the public on Fridays as employees get settled into their temporary spaces.	9. Nov. 16 through Nov. 20, 2023	9. <i>On-going</i>
10. Start of FY'25 budget process	10. With Special Town Meeting behind us and the move to Patton Homestead imminent, the town's Department Heads are entering their fiscal year 2025 budgetary and capital requests and the Finance Director and Town Manager working to complete the first draft of the new budget document that will be used to communicate budgetary priorities and challenges to residents and taxpayers beginning this winter.	10. Through April 6, 2024	10. <i>On-going</i>
11. Deputy Fire Chief has started	11. Congratulations to our incoming Deputy Fire Chief Daniel Sullivan, who will begin in his new role with the town on November 15, 2023. Sullivan, a Wenham resident and longtime volunteer firefighter there, was offered the job following an exhaustive search and assessment process that clearly identified him as the best qualified candidate for the job. Congratulations and welcome aboard to Deputy Chief Sullivan.	11. Begins November 15, 2023	11. <i>Complete</i>
12. 40B development proposed for Chebacco Woods	12. The developer who had been seeking a Special Permit to construct a Senior Housing development located at 133 Essex Street, has applied to the state for a Comprehensive Permit to construct a partially affordable housing project on the site. The Select Board has engaged with well-known 40B attorney Amy Kwessell of KP Law to represent the town's interests in the matter. If the developer is awarded a Project Eligibility determination, the developer will have up to 2 years to apply to the Hamilton Zoning Board of Appeals to begin construction of their project. Town staff and boards and committees participated in providing information, identifying concerns and challenges with the proposal, to Mass Housing by the initial comment deadline of	12. To be determined	12. <i>To be determined</i>

	Monday, November 20, 2023. The state will now review the Project Eligibility application and make a determination of eligibility, likely in December 2023.		
Police			
1. Comfort Dog	Canine Luca has been with the department for approximately 5 months. Luca has been a big hit around town and has visited the schools, COA, Town Hall, and met with several people downtown, as well as at Patton Park. In the upcoming months, Officer Girolimon and Luca look forward to meeting with as many people as possible.	1.Ongoing	
2. Public Safety Xmas Toy Drive	Members of the Hamilton Police Department will once again be holding its annual “Stuff-A-Cruiser” Toy Drive. All toys will be delivered to Shriners Hospital in Boston	12/16/23	
3. COA Updates	Officers of the Hamilton Police Department meet with members of the COA, to discuss recent scams which have been affecting seniors in town.	11/21/23	

<p>Fire Dept</p>			
<p>1. Department Stats</p>	<p>1. The Hamilton Fire Department responded to the following calls along with other department activities. In the previous two weeks we responded to 26 fire alarm activations, 26 ambulance calls, 4 mutual aid calls, 0 MVA, 0 brush fires and 4 public assists. We also conducted the following fire prevention activities, 20 inspections.</p>	<p>1. On-going</p>	
<p>2. Call/Volunteer recruit training program</p>	<p>2. The Hamilton Fire Dept currently has 4 members enrolled in the Call/Volunteer recruit training program offered through the Mass Fire Academy. The program began 10/16/2023 and runs through 3/6/2024. The 240 hour program runs nights & weekends and covers topics like fire suppression, search and rescue, ladder operations, hazardous material incident mitigation , water supply, pump operation, ladder operations and stress management.</p>	<p>2. On-going</p>	
<p>3. Deputy Chief.</p>	<p>The Deputy Chief position has been filled. On 11/13/2023 Daniel Sullivan was sworn in at town hall by Town Clerk Carin Kale in the Memorial room.</p> 	<p>3. Complete</p>	
<p>4. DFS Grant</p>	<p>The Hamilton Fire Dept has submitted an application for the Dept Of Fire Services FY24 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant. This is a reimbursement based competitive grant. Hamilton Fire has applied for \$15500 which is the maximum amount we qualify for based on our population. Grant award announcements are estimated to be released in early January 2024</p>	<p>4. On-going</p>	

<p>Public Health Department 1. Health Related</p> <p>2. Food Permitting and Inspection</p> <p>3. Septic</p> <p>4. Animals</p>	<p>1. Hamilton's Dept. of Health has ordered 500 additional covid test kits available for distribution to the community. Currently we're experiencing a .7% positivity rate with 10 new cases of Covid having been reported. There are 4 confirmed cases of Lyme Disease and 1 confirmed case of Tuberculosis reported. Public Health clinics for the flu and bivalent boosters have ended, residents are encouraged to seek vaccines from their health care provider or health care clinic. If a resident can't receive one elsewhere they can call the Public Health Nurse. In addition, the health department will have a limited supply of single use gloves and bandages for distribution to the community - please call 978 417-6118 to order.</p> <p>2. Permitting of food establishments/food trucks has begun for the 2024 year. Round 2 of food establishment inspection, in accordance with appendix 5 of the 2013 food code is nearing completion.</p> <p>3. Soil tests, plan reviews and septic inspections are on-going along with permitting of septic haulers. We have processed 175 septic pumping reports, licenced 27 septic installers, 8 septic haulers, 10 title inspectors and 4 maintenance providers. We have completed 59 plan reviews, 29 title 5 reports, 12 soil tests and issued 10 certificates of compliance. The Health Dept. is working on a low interest betterment loan program that would benefit residents whose septic systems have failed and are in need of replacement. The application process will soon be complete.</p> <p>4. Permitting of animal keeping is on-going. Barn inspections have begun and the barn book will be completed and filed with the state. In accordance with Board of Health regulations, the new expiration date for animal keeping is August 31st of each year.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	

<p>5. New Programs</p>	<p>5. The sharps collection/disposal program for Hamilton residents is on-going and a sharps collection container can be obtained from the Senior Center (299 Bay Road) taken home, filled and returned for disposal free of charge. Please contact the Health Dept. or the COA to take advantage of this program.</p> <p>Blood pressure screenings are on-going at Lamson Hall on the 2nd Wed. of each month from 3:30-5:30.</p> <p>In an effort to update many out of date BOH regulations, the board is reviewing a new private well permitting program (details to follow)</p>		
<p>6. Public Health Concerns</p>	<p>6. Recently there have been several health related recalls the community needs to be aware of; The FDA has determined that Cinnamon imported from Ecuador is the likely source of lead after high levels of lead were found in children's applesauce. The FDA is advising parents and caregivers not to buy or feed 3 different brands of apple cinnamon fruit puree pouches to children because the product may contain elevated levels of lead. For more information about the advisory click here. https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-food-borne-illness/investigation-elevated-lead-levels-applesauce-pouches-november-2023</p> <p>Also; The CDC has announced a dog food recall due to a potential salmonella outbreak:</p> <p>Victor Super Premium Dog Foods Wayne Feeds Dog Food Eagle Mountain Pet Food Member's Mark</p> <p>Salmonella could be obtained by touching the dog food - Please discard any of the above brands and clean all surfaces that the food may have come into contact - and as always, wash your hands.</p> <p>Also; The FDA has announced the recall of 26 brands of eye drops that could cause irritation or blindness. Store brands found at CVS, Walmart, Target and Rite Aid are among the brands being recalled due to manufacturing in unsanitary conditions. Please cease using and discard any that you might have. For a full list visit; https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availa</p>		

	bility/fda-warns-consumers-not-purchase-or-use-certain-eye-drops-several-major-brands-due-risk-eye#eyedrops		
<p>Treasurer/Collector</p> <p>1 Tax Title</p> <p>2 Billing</p> <p>3 Move</p> <p>4. Munis</p> <p>5 Benefits /Payroll</p>	<p>FY 23 small balance letters have been sent. Sue sent out an additional reminder letter this year with great response. We are hoping to send out final notice letters once we get settled into our new office.</p> <p>2nd qtr real estate and personal property payments are winding down. Water bill payments are due 12/1 Water bills are also available for customers on the town's online payment system with Unibank. We are now working with Unibank to see if we can keep interest current and leave bills online after the due date. We are also working with Eastern Bank Lock Box to set up web exceptions. We are trying to avoid mailing back exceptions and longer turn around time for depositing into the bank. Once set up, Leticia will correct payments online and payments will be deposited that night.</p> <p>We are settling into our new office. Hoping to be totally unpacked next week.</p> <p>Munis conversion still working out some kinks. Hoping to have all the kinks worked out shortly. Reporting and processing our deferral is our main problem right now Deferral is in munis que as it is a problem with software itself. We are hoping not to have this problem when we move on to tax title.</p> <p>Sue has payroll and benefits running smoothly. She is now preparing for year end with payroll. Harper's our payroll company has also offered online webinars for preparing for year end which Sue is taking full advantage of.</p>		

<p>Parks & Recreation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Winter 2024 Program Brochure 2. Patton Park Summer Program Information 3. Fall Programs Report 4. LL Improvements to baseball diamonds 	<p>The 2024 Program Brochure was released last week and resident registration will start on Tuesday, November 28th.</p> <p>We are offering 54 programs with ~100 different activities available for registration.</p> <p>Within the winter brochure we also released preliminary registration information for the Summer Park Program. We have made updates to our registration dates, payment timelines, registration process, and refund policy. The goal is to ensure a more fair and less stressful registration process. That said we are still capped out at ~225 registrations per week across all of our age groups.</p> <p>We had an extremely successful fall season. In total we had just shy of 1200 total registrations across all of our programs and activities. This is compared to ~850 from the Fall of 2022.</p> <p>Once again, HWLL is funding improvements to diamonds in Patton and Pingree Park. The improvements mostly include work in rehabbing the diamond infields.</p>	<p>1. On-going</p>	<p>1. On-going</p>
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<p>Human Resources</p> <p>1. Openings</p> <p>2. Collaboration</p>	<p>1. Current Openings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regional Health Coordinator Towns of Hamilton, Essex, Wenham, and Rockport ● WATER TRUCK DRIVER/LABORER ● CLERK/TYPIST – MINUTE TAKER ● DPW Truck Driver/Laborer <p>2. Finalized Regional Health job descriptions, will be posted with anticipated changes of position.</p> <p>Working with Union and DPW on succession planning.</p> <p>Working with Fire, and succession planning.</p> <p>In discussions with the Town of MBTS on IMA for a full-time Conservation Agent.</p>		

<p>3. New Location</p> <p>4. Employee Engagement</p> <p>5. Notifications</p>	<p>Developing a training program for Minute takers with Wenham, a possible oversight position.</p> <p>3. The Human Resources office can be found on the second floor of the Hamilton Council on Aging building at 299 Bay Road.</p> <p>4. Successful ‘We are moving party’ was held at Town Hall on Friday, November 17. Planning for a Patton and Building Department in early December.</p> <p>5 . Employee Assistance Program flyers to be sent out soon, a gentle reminder that it is the most wonderful time of the year for all and support is available for those who need or want it.</p>		
<p>Town Clerk’s Office</p> <p>Nov 6 Special Town Meeting Follow Through</p> <p>2023 Conflict of Interest Annual Filings</p> <p>2023 Dog License Renewals</p>	<p>1. Stormwater Management Bylaw change was submitted to the Attorney General’s Office on Nov 8; we are awaiting final review and approval. Their 90 day deadline is February 6, 2024. Effective date will be the date I have the approved change posted by the Constable.</p> <p>2. Request for Home Rule Petition to increase eligibility limits for senior property tax deferrals has been sent to Senator Tarr’s office and Representative Kassner’s office on Nov 8.</p> <p>3. Votes have been certified.</p> <p>4. Minutes are pending.</p> <p>With Laurie Wilson’s help, we are contacting employees and board/committee members who are delinquent in completing the 2023 training. Early in 2024, the training cycle begins again.</p> <p>In 2022 we issued 1131 licenses and 4 kennel licenses. We’ve issued 1150 2023 licenses. 2024</p>	<p>Jan - Dec</p>	<p>Pending</p> <p>In process</p> <p>Never ending!</p>

<p>DBA</p> <p>Move to Patton Homestead</p> <p>2024 Election Season</p> <p>2024 Hamilton Census/Street List process</p>	<p>License renewals will be mailed in January as part of the 2024 Census/Street list mailing.</p> <p>“Doing Business As” renewals due every 4 years; approx 36 to be renewed in calendar year 2023. So far 44 NEW this year. Many more DBA’s being filed because banks are requiring them for business bank accounts.</p> <p>We are still waiting for the Sec of State’s office to install a dedicated circuit for the non-internet based voter registration system that we use. Until it is installed, Anne will be spending as much time as necessary at Town Hall where the system is still functioning.</p> <p>The 2024 State Election season has begun. Nomination papers for Dem and Rep Town Committees were due Nov 10 (Veterans’ Day holiday the Clerk’s office was required to be open from 8 - 5:00). Initiative Petitions for potential 2024 state ballot questions are due Wed, Nov 22. Again, Clerk’s office is required to be open until 5:00 pm.</p> <p>So far, we have received 291 pages of initiative petitions and have certified 455 registered voters on the forms. Each form requires multiple signature stamps, we have applied 1164 stamps.</p> <p>2024 election dates: March 5 Presidential Primary, April 11 Annual Town Election; State Primary Sep 3 (pending Legislative approval); Nov 5 State/Presidential Election. The Sec of State’s office will be mailing vote by mail application cards in mid-January to all registered voters. All state elections will involve in-person early voting and vote by mail; the town election will involve vote by mail for voters that indicate “all elections” on the application card.</p> <p>In mid-January, the 2024 Census forms will be mailed to all Hamilton addresses along with the dog license renewal form and the 2024 trash schedule.</p>	<p>Jan - Dec</p>	<p>Several more expected</p>