



Town of Hamilton

Town Manager Report

For week of January 22, 2024

Department/ Project	Weekly Update	Timeline	Status
<p><u>Town Manager</u></p> <p>1. Bond Rating & Bond awards for Town Hall/Water projects</p> <p>2. FY'25 budget and capital presentation</p> <p>3. Gordon Conwell/Brown's Hill</p>	<p>1. On January 12, 2024 Standard and Poors bond rating service affirmed the Town of Hamilton's AAA Bond Rating ahead of the town's bond offering for the funds to complete the Town Hall project and various previously approved water projects. Following that, the town held a successful bond sale which attracted ten bidders and resulted in an average interest rate of 3.02 % on a bond offering of over \$7 million. The Select Board completed the sale of the bonds with their vote and signing on Monday, January 22, 2024.</p> <p>2. The Town Manager, Finance Director and town department heads presented the FY 2025 operating budget and capital proposal to a joint meeting of the Select Board and Finance and Advisory Committee on Monday, January 22 beginning at 7 p.m. The proposed capital and operating plan of \$42,463,196 is approximately 6.83% above the previous year's budget and includes \$1.61 million in capital spending.</p> <p>3. The Select Board was scheduled to meet in Executive Session on Tuesday, January 23 at 6:30 p.m. via zoom to discuss strategy with regard to negotiations with the Gordon Conwell Seminary. Following that meeting a negotiation session was also scheduled for Wednesday, January 24 at 4:30 p.m. Once the sides have reached a tentative agreement on</p>	<p>1. On-going</p> <p>2. Through April 6, 2024</p> <p>3. Week of January 22, 2024</p>	<p>1. <i>On-going</i></p> <p>2. <i>On-going</i></p> <p>3. <i>On-going</i></p>

	<p>how to proceed with the Seminary’s stated plan to sell the student housing buildings to a market-rate apartment operator, the Select Board will be able to provide more information to the community and other interested parties.</p>			
<p>4. Union negotiations</p>	<p>4. The Town has reached a tentative agreement with the Hamilton Police Officers union on a new three-year deal to take effect on July 1, 2024. The union is expected to ratify the contract proposal at an upcoming meeting, while the town continues negotiations with the other four unions. Our goal is to have all unions reach at least a tentative agreement prior to Annual Town Meeting on April 6, 2024.</p>		<p>4. Winter/ Spring 2024</p>	<p>4. <i>On-going</i></p>
<p>5. Chebacco Road Paving</p>	<p>5. Work has halted for the off-season on the Chebacco Road paving project. 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 Cutler School Feasibility Study Committee will be on Monday, January 22 beginning at 5:30 p.m. The design and OPM teams will be hosting a public forum on the school project at the high school on Wed. January 17 in the morning. Please check the website for more details.</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 HWCam 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 boards 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>

<u>Public Works</u>			Timeline	Status
Facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Hamilton Town Hall <p>The energy audit is underway to determine alternatives to address the building's internal HVAC systems that will be included in the project bid documents.</p>		Construction Start Spring/Summer 2024	Working on final bid set and energy system designs
DPW Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Employment Opportunities <p>The Town still has one opening in the Water Department. If interested please email Tim Olson @ tolson@hamiltonma.gov or call 978-626-5227 for position details.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Radio Upgrades <p>The town has contracted with Cyber Communications for the radio upgrade project. A new base station antenna has been installed and trucks/equipment will receive new radios in February.</p>		Open	Open
Highway Dept	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Essex Street Drainage <p>DPW continues to communicate with the engineering consultant and owner of 470 Essex Street in hopes of a collaborative effort to address drainage upgrades along Essex Street near Appaloosa Lane. No new update</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Roadway and Sidewalk Improvements <p>DPW is in the planning stage for a FY25 Roadway and Sidewalk improvement project. This project will include a series of milling and overlay projects with associated sidewalk, curb, and drainage improvements as well as areas of new sidewalk installation.</p>		Complete by End of February	Base Station Complete, truck and handheld installation
Snow	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce Road Salt <p>Hamilton DPW has now outfitted all three sanders with liquid de-icing equipment to upgrade winter activity performance and help reduce road salt applications.</p>		On-going	Waiting for owner and development submittal
Vehicle Maintenance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> New Purchased Vehicles 		Summer 2024 bid	In-progress
			Complete	Ready for Winter
			February 2024	Ordered and being built

<p>Cemetery</p> <p>Sanitation</p> <p>Parks and Grounds</p> <p>Energy</p> <p>Water</p>	<p>Following the 2023 ATM approved article the town placed an order for a new front line sander and water utility truck. These trucks are presently being built and are estimated to be delivered to Hamilton in February.</p> <p>Hamilton also has purchased a new EV F150 Lighting for the DPW. This is Hamilton's first effort to utilize an EV for municipal use. This truck is planned to be delivered in January.</p> <p>No items to report</p> <p>No items to report</p> <p>No items to report</p> <p>1. Solar on the DPW Garage</p> <p>The Town is actively pursuing the installation of a solar array on the DPW Garage. This would be a ballasted system and sized to supplement the energy load required at the DPW Garage and also at the new Town Hall post construction activities.</p> <p>1. GAC Filtration Project</p> <p>Final MassDEP inspection was performed on the new GAC Filtration system. The Town has received approval to operate the new GAC facility on 1/19/2024</p> <p>2. Lead Service Inventory and Assessment</p> <p>The Water Department and hired consultant, Stantec Engineers, have continued to populate a service line inventory as mandated by EPA and MassDEP. Efforts have been made on the public side of the service connection, but please understand the required assessment and inventory also include the information from the private end of the service. The Hamilton Water Department will be issuing out a notice to all water which will include information regarding the program and instructions on how to assist the department. Failure to assist may result in increased consultant fees and associated water rate adjustments. Participation will benefit all. No new update.</p>	<p>Spring 2024</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>In-process</p>	<p>Under design</p> <p>MassDEP Final Approval given 1/19/2024</p> <p>Working on data from public side, will be reaching out to private owners for cooperation</p>
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<u>Fire Dept</u>			
1 Department Stats	1 The Hamilton Fire Department responded to the following calls along with other department activities. In The previous two weeks we responded to 17 fire alarm activations, 14 ambulance calls, 1 mutual aid calls, 1 MVA, 0 brush fires and 5 public assists. We also conducted the following fire prevention activities, 4 inspections		1 On-going
2. Call/Volunteer recruit training program	2. The Hamilton Fire Department currently has 4 members enrolled in the Call/Volunteer recruit training program. The program began 10/16/2023 and runs through 3/6/2024. During the last 2 weeks they have had lectures covering transitional fire attack, physical fitness, ropes and knots and have had practical evolutions covering hydrants, drafting and roof ladder carry, throw and rescue		2 On-going
3. New Equipment	3. The Hamilton Fire Dept applied for and received an EMPG grant from the Mass Emergency Management Agency. The Dept has purchased an EV lockout plug and EV fire blanket. The lockout plug has been received and is in service, the blanket should be in sometime in early February		3 On-going
4 Training	4. The Hamilton Fire Department hosted the Mass Fire Academy EV vehicle fire class on Saturday Jan 20th. The program was well attended and students received the latest training dealing with EV fires. This goes along with our grant approval and purchase of new EV fire fighting equipment to keep the dept up on the latest technology and training for EV emergencies.		4 Complete

Planning and Inspectional Services

1. Office Relocations for Planning, Conservation & Inspectional Services

1. Planning Office and Conservation Offices at Patton Homestead (650 Asbury St). Inspectional Services at Rear Building of COA Building (299 Bay Road).

Done - Nov-Dec, 2023

Done

2. Master Plan

2. Latter phases of document in preparation; Department Heads to assist in preparing Implementation elements for document; Committee to meet in Jan. 10, 2024. Planning Board to engage in review of document and adopt when appropriate.

Early '24

Ongoing

3. 133 Essex St Senior Housing Project

3. Applicant appealed Planning Board decisions; cases in Court

Ongoing

Ongoing

4. 133 Essex St 40B

4. Applicant submitted Project Eligibility Letter - Town reviewed/commented thereupon to MassHousing. Awaiting MHP decision on whether to fund project.

Ongoing

Ongoing

5. Planning Board considering Form Based Zoning (FBZ)

5. Evaluating concept; review of other communities FBZ

Ongoing

Ongoing

6. MassHousing Partnership providing grants for T Communities Zoning. Fall town meeting

6. Modeling work being undertaken by consultants. Town has received two grants from Mass Housing Partnership for early planning stages.

Expect product in Mar. 3A Zoning Article expected STM 24.

Ongoing

7. Conservation Commission

7. Seeking members (2)

<p>Public Health Department 1. Health Related</p> <p>2. Food Permitting and Inspection</p> <p>3 Septic</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hamilton's Dept. of Health has approx. 100 covid test kits available for distribution to the community. Currently we're experiencing a .23% positivity rate with 30 new cases of Covid having been reported. There are 5 confirmed cases of Lyme Disease and 2 confirmed case of Tuberculosis reported, 9 cases of influenza, 1 case of Campylobacteriosis and 1 case of Varicella. 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. 2. Permitting of food establishments/food trucks has begun for the 2024 year. Round 1 of food establishment inspection, in accordance with appendix 5 of the 2013 food code has begun. 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>On-going</p>	

<p>4. Animals</p>	<p>4. Permitting of animal keeping is on-going. Barn inspections have begun and the barn book is 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 and the Board of Health is in the process of updating the Keeping of Animals regulation (last updated in 1989).</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. Blood pressure screenings are on-going at Lamson Hall on the 2nd Wed. of each month from 3:30-5:30. 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 CDC has reported Salmonella was found in Charcuterie Meat sold at Costco and Sam's Club. At least 47 people in 22 states have been sickened and 10 people have been hospitalized after eating Busseto brand and Fratelli Beretta brand meats. Please do not to eat or serve these brands, they include the Busseto charcuterie sampler sold at Sam's Club and the Fratelli Beretta brand Antipasto Gran Beretta products sold at Costco. <i>(Salmonella poisoning can cause severe illness, particularly in young children, older people and those with weakened immune systems. In rare cases, the bacterial infection can be fatal.)</i> Consumers should discard any items they may have and wash all surfaces and containers they may have touched using hot soapy</p>			

	<p>water. Please call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these symptoms Salmonella poisoning: diarrhea and a fever higher than 102°F, diarrhea for more than three days that is not improving, bloody diarrhea, so much vomiting that you can't keep liquids down, and signs of dehydration such as not urinating much, dry mouth and throat and feeling dizzy when standing up. Also the CDC has recalled prepackaged salad and spinach kits manufactured by "Bright Farms" sold at Stop & Shop due to possible Listeria contamination. Please check your fridges and discard any that you may have. The germ can cause listeriosis, a serious infection most likely to sicken pregnant women, infants, those 65 and older and people with weakened immune systems. (An estimated 1,600 Americans get listeriosis each year and about 260 die. <i>(Shoppers who purchased the recalled products can bring a photo or receipt to their place of purchase for a refund. Those with questions can call Bright Farms at (866) 857-8745.</i> Finally wanted to warn you all not to order Scallops for the next few days while dining out. The FDA warns that some scallops distributed in Massachusetts were harvested from prohibited areas and could contain toxins or pathogens that could make people sick. Please stay safe and healthy.</p>			
<p>Finance</p> <p>1. GFOA Budget</p> <p>2. FY25 Budget</p>	<p>1. Working to complete the debt, OPEB, pension, trends and metrics sections of the GFOA budget document.</p> <p>2. Completed all FY25 initial Department Budget Hearings; FY25 initial revenue projections complete; working with CapCom and Department heads to project necessary</p>			

<p>3. Schedule A</p> <p>4. Standard & Poors Rating</p> <p>5. 1099's</p> <p><u>Treasurer/Collector</u></p> <p>1 Tax Title</p> <p>2 Billing</p>	<p>FY25 capital spending; preparing to present updated information at a joint FinCom/Select Board meeting on 1/22/2024.</p> <p>3. The compilation of Schedule A requirements are in progress.</p> <p>4. Hamilton is working with Standard & Poors for an updated Credit Rating score for the upcoming bonds. These bonds will be voted on at the Select Board meeting held on 1/22/2024.</p> <p>5. 1099 preparation is in progress and set to be mailed by the deadline of January 31, 2024.</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. Working on schedule with Sue to mail out first letters for our FY23 tax tile</p> <p>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. Reached out to Eastern Bank this week they are hoping to have programming complete by 12/22/23. Eastern Bank has had a delay we are hoping now for the end of January to Sample's have been approved for Real Estate and Personal Property 3rd qtr bill. They will be mailed 12/28. Real Estate bills have been sent we are now preparing for this 1st commitment of</p>			
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<p>3. Munis</p> <p>4 Benefits /Payroll</p> <p>5 BOND</p>	<p>motor vehicle which will be mailed on 2/14/24</p> <p>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>Starting to prepare for our upcoming BOND sale. Working on Bond Preliminary Official Statement (POS). Also preparing for an upcoming S&P ratings call. Completed S& P call waiting on rating should hear 01/12/24 Bond sale will be 01/17/24. Hoping for a good rate.</p>			
<p>6 Training</p>	<p>Leticia participated in an on-line training class to help improve her Excel Knowledge. Will continue to take advantage of training when available</p>			

<p>3. Summer Staffing</p> <p>Council on Aging</p> <p>1. Programming</p>	<p>We hope these changes lead to a more streamlined and less stressful registration for participants.</p> <p>All info can be found in our 2024 Patton Park Summer Program Information Guide using the link below:</p> <p>https://www.hamiltonma.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024-Patton-Park-Summer-Program.pdf</p> <p>Some job opportunities for the summer have been posted. Jobs currently available are positions at the pool, they include Pool Director as well as Lifeguards. Job descriptions and information on how to apply can be found clicking the link below:</p> <p>https://hamiltonwenhamma.myrec.com/info/dept/details.aspx?DeptInfoID=1075</p> <p>Camp Counselor opportunities will be posted within the month as we typically start that process a little later in the calendar year.</p> <p>Programming for February is complete. We are now starting on March planning. In February we will be offering 2 lunch and learns, two talks, a valentines day party, as well as our regular activities.</p> <p>January is in full swing. So far this month we have had two comedy documentaries, book group (which is continuing to grow) and a very successful technology class. Upcoming events include a winter tea, birthday bash, card making class and show and tell.</p> <p>Regular programming including the birthday party, bingo, arts and crafts, knitting, book club, and yoga continued. We started offering our Fit over 50 class, and Balance classes started back up. We also started indoor Bocce.</p>			
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<p>2. Shine</p>	<p>I am still getting calls for SHINE Appointments. SHINE is always looking for new volunteers. If you are interested please call the COA and speak to Theresa.</p> <p>Open enrollment ended on December 7th. I am still tallying the appointments, but at last count 125 consumers were helped to find new plans. I assisted one individual in saving themselves over \$7500 in medical bills. I am still getting calls for residents that are retiring, or going on medicare.</p>			
<p>3. Grants</p>	<p>First meeting for the grant was today. We can start to spend the money as soon as we get it. Research is being done about the best chrome books and tablets to get. We will work with Rowley to distribute them.</p> <p>Work on the hybrid technology grant has started. We are pricing out tablets, computers, etc. And hoping to get the program up and running in March.</p> <p>Our COA is partnering with Rowley in applying for a technology grant. We recently learned that our application and request for \$85,000 was approved. This money will be used to purchase ipads, computer lessons, and hybrid programming.</p>			
<p>4. Newsletter</p>	<p>February newsletter just went to print. We should be getting back early next week. In hopes to get it out in the mail early next week.</p> <p>We continue to partner with Wenham for our newsletter. We are looking at increasing the page size due to both COA's having more activities. We are hoping to start this in February or March. January newsletter will be delayed going out because of the holiday.</p>			

<p><u>Human Resources</u></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 Update: Seven applicants applied. Six candidates were prescreened on Friday resulting in two strong candidates to forward onto the next step in the process. ● Water Truck Driver/Laborer ● DPW Truck Driver/Laborer <p>2. Finalized Regional Health job descriptions, will be posted with anticipated changes of position.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regional Public Health Nurse ● Health Inspections (pending) 			

<p>3. Employee Engagement</p> <p>4. Notifications</p>	<p>Working with Union and DPW on succession planning.</p> <p>3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for a Building Department open house in early/mid February. • Developing an Employee Engagement survey focussed on team building and enrichment. <p>4 . Working with MIIA on Health and Wellness programs for town employees in the Spring.</p>			
<p><u>Town Clerk's Office</u></p> <p>Nov 6 Special Town Meeting Follow Through</p> <p>2024 Conflict of Interest Annual Filings</p> <p>2024 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. It may take 10 months for the Legislature to pass the Home Rule Petition.</p> <p>All municipal employees (including board and committee members) received an email from the State Ethics Commission regarding Ethics on-line training requirements. While most completed the training in 2023 and will not need to take it again until 2025, EVERY municipal employee MUST acknowledge receipt of the summary EVERY YEAR.</p> <p>In 2023 we issued 1150 dog licenses. Applications for 2024 licenses were mailed in January as part of the 2024 Census/Street list mailing. We have already issued 20 licenses!!</p>		<p>Pending</p> <p>Jan - Dec</p> <p>Jan - Dec</p>	<p>Pending</p> <p>Year round</p> <p>Never ending!</p>

DBA	<p>“Doing Business As” renewals due every 4 years; approx 40 to be renewed in calendar year 2024. We issued 49 in 2023. We have already issued 4 in 2024.</p>		Jan - Dec	Several more expected
Move to Patton Homestead	<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. VPN has been approved and installed as a temporary solution by the Sec of State’s office. Both Anne and I are having trouble logging into the system and printing documents are in constant contact with the troubleshooters at the state. The Town Clerk’s office is stopping at Town Hall every day to gather all mail from the drop box and bring it to Town Hall and also to drop off and pick up mail at the post office.</p>		November 2023	
Town Clerk Office Hours	<p>Because we could not bring everything in the vault and could not bring all election related materials to the Homestead, Anne and I will dedicate the 8:00 - 8:30 am period to stop at Town Hall as needed to get documents or materials that are needed or requested. Our official opening hour at the Homestead will be 8:30. We want to avoid having someone drive to the Homestead and not have either of us there.</p>			
2024 Election Season = 4 Elections	<p>2024 election dates: March 5 Presidential Primary, April 11 Annual Town Election; State Primary Sep 3 (the day after Labor Day); Nov 5 State/Presidential Election. The Sec of State’s office mailed 4.5million vote by mail application cards in mid-January to all registered voters. Applications have been arriving. Each application for “All Elections” requires the completion of 3 separate early voting records in the voter system. All state elections will involve in-person early voting at the Patton Homestead and vote by mail; the town election will involve vote by mail for voters that indicate “all elections” on the application card.</p> <p>Town Clerks from Wenham, Essex and Hamilton have collaborated to bring Poll Worker training delivered by the Secretary of State’s Office on Fri, Jan 26 at 2:30 pm at the Hamilton Wenham library. Additional training will be provided in February.</p>		Nov 2023 - Nov 2024	

<p>2024 Hamilton Census/Street List process</p>	<p>Nomination papers for the April 11 Local Election are available for pick up and are due back by February 22. The Town Clerk webpage has a list of positions up for reelection.</p> <p>The 2024 Census Form has been mailed to 2822 households. Forms are due back in 10 days. The mailing included the dog license renewal form and the 2024 trash schedule. I have worked with Laurie Wilson and Bobby Gates to post information on the town website and on the town Facebook page.</p>		<p>Jan 2024 - Dec 2024</p>	