



MEMORANDUM

TO: Select Board

FROM: Clancy Main, Acting Town Manager

CC: Robert Maynard, Director of Administrative Services

SUBJECT: Town Manager's Report, June 3, 2024

DATE: May 29, 2024

Police Roll Call

I attended the Police Roll Call for the 8 AM and 4 PM shifts last week. I will also be attending the midnight roll call on June 3rd. I was very impressed by Sgt. Ynostroza and Sgt. Gualtieri's command of the issues and organizational awareness. I feel very confident about the future of the department with our current group of Sergeants, Lieutenants, and Patrolmen. The Chief and Deputy Chief continue to do an excellent job mentoring leaders at every level of the department. During roll call, it became evident that mental health is a current struggle for many in the community. It was also noted that this time of year sees an uptick in mental health calls. Interestingly, May is also Mental Health Awareness Month. Over the coming year, I want to explore this further with the Chief.

Free Cash Fall Town Meeting

In preparation for the Fall Town Meeting, I wanted to make you aware of some items that I foresee will need to be included as free cash warrant articles:

- Debt Stabilization
- Schools/Town Munis Conversion
- Town-Wide Audit
- School Capital
- Various DPW Equipment, including a grappler truck not purchased last fall
- Miscellaneous contract retro items
- Further study of the Council on Aging, if the Board wishes
- Fire Department Equipment

I estimate that these items will account for most, if not all, of the free cash the Town will receive. I will provide more information throughout the summer.

School/Town Munis Conversion

My office and the Town Accountant met with Dr. Clery and her team regarding the conversion to one chart of accounts on Munis. We expect to begin this process at the start of the calendar year. The Town and Schools are expecting to need outside help to complete this project. The Town and School will meet further with CLA who performed the School audit over the summer.

School Budget Deficit

The School Department expects to close out their books in late summer or early fall regarding the funds needed from the ARPA earmark.

Town-Wide Audit

Town staff met with Marcum LLP, a top-ranked national accounting and advisory firm. Based on prior Select Board meetings, they have suggested a fraud risk analysis and controls audit. This will examine each department's spending, procurement practices, controls, and management practices. The audit aims to identify any issues and how best to address them. The initial estimate for the audit is between \$100,000 and \$300,000. My suggestion is to begin this audit at the start of the new year. A new Finance Director and other permanent administrative positions will be in place by then.

DPW Project Bid Extension

The bid period for the DPW project has been extended by approximately three weeks, moving the closing date to the week after July 4th. This extension was deemed necessary to allow general contractors more time to prepare their bid packages based on feedback indicating insufficient time to gather documentation from the filed sub-bids. This change will not negatively impact the project schedule.

Neighborhood Listening Sessions

Senior staff have discussed rebranding the neighborhood meetings due to a significant drop in attendance over the years, with only North Billerica and Pinehurst Fire Station seeing notable turnout last year. This year, these meetings will be called "Neighborhood Listening Sessions." We will use CodeRED to advertise these sessions to all residents.

Schedule:

Tuesday, June 11th, 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM, Grass at the Senior Center

Tuesday, June 18th, 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM, Micozzi Beach

Thursday, June 20th, 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM, Hajar School or Kolraush Park

Wednesday, June 26th, 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM, Pinehurst Fire Station

Additionally, I plan to set up a booth at the Farmers Market on a Monday, hold regular coffee office hours throughout town, attend COA breakfasts, and engage with the community in various other ways.

Old Ditson Park Listening Session

The Town will hold a listening session regarding Old Ditson Park on June 10th at 6:30 PM. Our social media post about this event garnered a lot of attention, and we hope to see many neighbors and abutters there.

Town Hall Hours

On Thursday, May 30th, this office and Michelle Rivera, the Human Resources Director, attended the AFSCME Union meeting to answer questions regarding the Town Hall Hour change. Following the meeting, AFSCME membership voted on and approved the Town Hall Hours Pilot Program by a vote of twenty-four in favor, none opposed, and one abstention. The BPAA will meet on Monday.

Recreation Building Update

The building team met this week. David Grubb is finalizing the floor plans with the architect. The major changes include the addition of more women's bathrooms and some office space rearrangements from what was presented at Town Meeting. Feedback on the colors and roofline of the building has also been provided to the architect.

Opioid Abatement

The Town hosted a listening session on Thursday, May 23rd, with Angela Consentino, a Doctoral student at UMass Lowell, who has been conducting the Landscape Analysis for the Town. Residents shared their experiences and recommendations for the abatement funds, with a consensus around the need for peer support, women's and youth programs, and additional outreach. The survey has yielded similar results, but we have only received roughly 250 responses. The Town needs additional responses to create certainty with the survey results. The Town will continue to promote the survey on social media and the website. The next listening session will take place on June 18th.

Bandstand in the Common

Mark LaLumiere has designed multiple options to make the bandstand accessible. He presented these options to the Historic District Commission, but no consensus was reached. The suggested options involve lowering the bandstand and adding a sloped walkway, which would make it accessible while respecting the historic nature of the structure. This project could be a collaboration opportunity with Shawsheen Tech.

If there is no interest in making the bandstand accessible, the Town will leave it as a non-usable bandstand with ornamental function and proceed with maintenance on the structure.

Swanson Meadows

From my understanding Rocco Scippa has floated the idea of a possible development at the back portion of Swanson Meadows. Rocco has floated proposals for that land almost every year that I have been here. Nothing can be done on that land until 2029 and the Town has first right of refusal.