



Town of Wenham

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Selectmen / Town Administrator
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Peter Lombardi, Town Administrator
RE: Town Administrator's Report
DATE: August 22, 2016

The Academy at Penguin Hall

With demolition completed and finalized plans submitted and approved, the building, electrical, and fire permits for this project were issued earlier this month. The Town is very appreciative of the invaluable technical support provided by the State Fire Marshal's Office is helping guide us through this challenging permitting process. All work will have to be completed in compliance with relevant building, electrical, and fire code prior to the issuance of an occupancy permit for the remodeled building. A formal dedication ceremony is planned for Tuesday September 6th at 11:00 AM.

Wenham Pines (Lakeview)

The Planning Board and Conservation Commission opened their public hearings on this matter in early August. With the peer review process now underway, the Planning Board's next meeting on this project will be held on Thursday September 15. Information about the project is posted on the Planning Board page of the Town's website and will be updated on a regular basis as the review process unfolds.

FY18 Budget Process

Following up on the joint meeting between the Selectmen and Finance Committee on August 2 that reviewed our financial forecasts for the next fiscal year, we have begun the FY18 budget building process several months earlier than we have in the past. In order to have a clear understanding of Town expense projections early on, Department Heads will be submitting their preliminary budget proposals to me by September 12. Based on our conversations regarding the significant fiscal challenges for FY18, they have been directed to prepare a level services budget, avoiding any non-contractual increases and suggesting limited cuts where possible without impacting staffing or services. The Department Heads are aware that they may need to revisit their budgets later on in the budget development process if an operating override is needed, so that we can fully understand the impacts if it were to fail – this process would likely result in staffing and service cuts.

At this point, the plan is to schedule a follow-up presentation to the Selectmen and Finance Committee in late September based on more concrete Town expense and revenue numbers. Once we have a better handle on the extent of our financial limitations, we have discussed scheduling a meeting with HWRSD and Hamilton leadership in early October to review our initial findings and discuss anticipated challenges, limited fiscal capacity, and the potential for an override before they begin their own budget building processes in earnest.

Veterans Outreach

Karen Tyler, the Director of the Eastern Essex Veterans District, recently sent out a letter to all Wenham veterans to alert them some of the resources that are available through various local and state programs. While the focus of this mailing was on Chapter 115 financial assistance, there are a number of other tax exemptions that eligible veterans are encouraged to take advantage of. A full listing of these benefits is posted on the Eastern Essex Veterans District page of the Town's website. This information is also being displayed on HWCAM. This concerted outreach is a product of our monthly Social Service Leadership Team meetings where the Library Director, COA Director, Town Clerk, Veterans Director, and Recreation Director collaborate on a number of interrelated issues.

First Church Clock

Work on the steeple has now been completed and the clock is fully operational again. We are trying to get the manual strike mechanism to function properly so that the clock will chime every hour on the hour as it had previously. In keeping with the vote of Town Meeting this past spring to award \$61k in CPC funds toward the costs of this restoration project, we have also been in discussions with the First Church regarding the imposition of a historic preservation restriction on the facade of the church structure. The terms of this restriction, which will inform the extent of any future renovations to the building, will have to be approved by both the Wenham Historical Commission and the Massachusetts Historical Commission.