



Town of Wenham

Town Hall
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Selectmen / Town Administrator
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Selectmen
FROM: Peter Lombardi, Town Administrator
RE: Town Administrator's Report
DATE: July 21, 2015

Personnel

The Town has hired Jill Laffin as the new Finance Assistant and Payroll Clerk. Jill was selected from a pool of over 50 applicants and begins work in the Finance Department on August 18. She brings significant experience to this position, having most recently spent 4 years working in the Treasurer/Collector's Office and Health Department in Dracut and another 9 years in the private sector before transitioning to municipal government. Both Angel Wills, Finance Director, and Leslie Davidson, Treasurer/Collector, participated in the screening and interview process and are excited to welcome Jill to their Department.

The Town has a full-time Administrative Assistant job opportunity currently posted on our website and through Indeed. This clerical position works under the general direction of the DPW Director and Water Superintendent, provides administrative support to the Highway Department, Water Department, Building and Grounds, Cemetery Department, and Tree Warden, and performs special projects as assigned. The posting expires this coming Friday, July 24, 2015. We have received over 100 applications to date for this position.

State Budget

Late last week, Governor Baker signed the FY16 budget with only minor modifications to the state legislature's conference committee proposal. Funding for local aid, special education circuit breaker, regional school transportation reimbursements, and Chapter 70 have all increased above FY15 levels. As approved, state aid levels are very closely aligned with what was initially put forth in the House 1 budget that our FY16 revenue projections were based on. Accordingly, the Town is in a solid financial position beginning the fiscal year.

The Governor has also recently proposed a \$25M supplemental budget currently pending before the House Ways and Means Committee that would help offset the significant Snow & Ice account deficits incurred by municipalities across the state this past winter. On a related note, the Town expects to receive approximately \$45k in reimbursements from FEMA in the next few months, having completed their review process.

Athletic Fields

Gale Associates was retained by the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District, along with the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham to undertake a comprehensive review of our field space needs and current conditions. One key element of their draft proposed field space master plan centers around the redevelopment of the athletic facilities onsite at the High School. The Joint Recreation Committee and Recreation Director, Sean Timmons, have been working with Gale over the past several months to hone in on some of the details of this proposed project, including the scope of work, some preliminary cost estimating, potential phasing options, and the like.

We have asked Gale to prepare a formal presentation for the Wenham Board of Selectmen, Hamilton Board of Selectmen, and Regional District School Committee that will address their recommendations, taking into account questions around funding availability, site constraints, operating/maintenance costs, etc. We have targeted late September for that joint presentation by Gale to begin a broader community conversation.

Pool Project

The final details of the pool design have been completed. The Joint Recreation Committee will continue to work with our engineering consultant for this project, Bargmann, Henrie + Archetype, to complete the specification for the bathhouse and building design over the next several weeks. The project remains on schedule to go out to bid early this fall, with local permitting occurring concurrently.

Regional Transportation Planning

Potential improvements to the Route 1 corridor between Revere and the Malden/Saugus line, where both north- and south-bound traffic is currently restricted to two lanes, has long been an important transportation priority for North Shore residents, particularly for those who commute into Boston. Funding for preliminary engineering and analysis of this section of roadway that had previously been included in the state's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRPT) was recently removed. The North Shore Alliance for Economic Development has drafted a letter on behalf of 32 communities that have been impacted by this decision in an attempt to advocate for the reinsertion of that funding into the TIP and LRPT. Wenham has been included in this collective appeal which is aimed at restoring this funding in order to properly assess potential remedies for this bottleneck.

Department Profiles

Starting in August, the Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle will be publishing monthly profiles of each of our Town Departments over the course of the next year. These Q&A sessions are designed to highlight the work that our employees do on a daily basis, to provide key contact information for residents, and to personalize our local government, putting a name and a face to the services we provide. It will also focus on the rewarding elements of their work, common challenges, avenues for feedback, examples of interdepartmental cooperation, recent achievements, and goals going forward. These profiles will be posted on the Town's website after publication and should to help answer some of the most basic FAQs.