

# Town Manager Report

*Town of Lunenburg- December 12, 2023*



## Contact Information

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## Meetings, Events, and Other Announcements:

- The Master Plan Steering Committee has a survey out right now that has been posted on the town's social media accounts and is under the News & Announcements on the town website. The Committee wants to hear from you during this process of updating the comprehensive plan.
- Town offices will be closed in observance of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day on Monday, December 25th and Tuesday, December 26th.

## Board/Committee/Commission Vacancies:

The following is a list of current vacancies on the following boards/committees/commissions:

- Architectural Preservation District Commission (1 vacancy)
- Cemetery Commission (1 vacancy until the next Annual Town Election)
- Conservation Commission (1 vacancy)
- Finance Committee (1 vacancy)
- Green Communities Committee ( 1 Regular Member and 1 Associate vacancy)
- Open Space Committee (1 Member at Large vacancy)
- Personnel Committee (1 vacancy)

Interested persons can find Volunteer Applications on the Town Website and completed forms can be sent to the Select Board's Office. Anyone that has any questions on volunteer opportunities can contact the Select Board's Office at (978) 582-4130 x 144.

## **Employment Opportunities with the Town:**

The following is a list of current employment opportunities with the Town:

- Digital Services and Outreach Librarian (34 hours/week)
- Facilities Superintendent (40 hours/week)
- Finance Director (40 hours/week- contractual)
- Heavy Equipment Operator (40 hours/week)
- Land Use Director (40 hours/week)
- Principal Assessor (40 hours/week)
- Staff Librarian/Young Adult (30 hours/week)

More information on each position can be found on the website under job opportunities, which are located on the town website.

## **Massachusetts Broadband Institute(MBI) Broadband Infrastructure Gap Networks Grant**

I was contacted by our Verizon State Government Affairs Regional Director and Comcast to submit letters of support for their applications to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute for the Broadband Infrastructure Gap Networks Grant Program. Grant funds can be used to expand the fiber optic network and facilitate offering high speed broadband for unserved and underserved residents and businesses.

All carriers were encouraged to apply and municipalities are being encouraged to support all applicants to maximize connectivity.

According to Comcast, in Lunenburg, Comcast has a few areas they currently do not reach, for different reason and this grant would allow them to reach those homes.

## **FY24 Community Compact Grants**

- The Town received the \$25,000 that we were awarded for the Community Compact Best Practice to create an inventory and asset management plan for our bridges and culverts. The DPW Director is currently soliciting cost proposals for the work.
- The other Community Compact Best Practice, to develop, document and implement Financial Policies and Practices will be undertaken directly with the Division of Local Services. I met virtually with the Project Manager from DLS's Financial Management Resource Bureau on Monday, December 10th and we reviewed our priority needs, the process, the timeline, and next steps. I had drafted updated Financial Policies and Administration and Operation Procedures using the format the DLS has used in other communities, so I shared this information with the Project Manager, as well as the current Select Board Financial Policies currently in effect, and other information such as our Procurement Manual and audit comment on creating written key administrative and financial functions. My next meeting with the Project Manager will be during the first week of January and we will include our finance team on that meeting as well. The goal is to have a rough draft complete by the end of January and fully reviewed by the end of February. Any changes in policy will be presented to the Board for adoption and we will include other relevant committees such as Finance and Capital Planning on the process as well.

## **Regional Tour by the Rural Affairs Director Anne Gobi**

Last week Representative Scarsdale reached out to me to let me know she was doing a driving tour of Pepperell, Lunenburg, Townsend, Ashby, and Dunstable on Friday, December 8th with the Rural Affairs Director Anne Gobi and to ask if I could provide additional landmarks and issues/opportunities facing Lunenburg right now. I provided Representative Scarsdale locations of importance to the Town right now, including the redevelopment of 925 Mass Ave, the revitalization of Marshall Park, the location of the proposed 40B project on Howard Street, and the Leominster-Shirley Road corridor improvements we are looking at regionally. Other noteworthy items I included to relay were our lack of parking in the center of town, our aging town buildings we are looking at a long term solution, and the upcoming decisions that need to be made regarding the Turkey Hill Elementary School.

Governor Healey created the Director of Rural Affairs under the Executive Office of Economic Development to work with local, state and federal partners to provide resources and assistance to aid rural communities in order to shape and achieve their vision for economic development. The Director serves 181 of the state's rural communities and the mission is to help each rural community to use their unique economic assets to grow the economy and unlock job creation.

## **Green Communities Competitive Grant and Annual Report**

The LED Streetlight conversion project is officially complete. We received our finalized approved Incentive Application back from Unitil on December 7th; we originally were expected to receive \$33,400 and the final incentive approved was \$37,900. The Green Communities grant amount for the LED project included up to \$172,140. Once we have confirmed that we have received all associated invoices for this project, I will report on final costs. Currently we have spent approximately \$139,000, not including the approximately \$90,000 to purchase the lights from Unitil, which is not an eligible expense for the Green Communities Grant.

The FY22 Green Communities Competitive Grant also covered \$5,000 towards the hybrid cruiser in the FY23 Capital Plan and up to \$10,000 in funding for administrative support for use of MRPC staff to complete reporting requirements. Kayla Kress of MRPC worked with the School, DPW, Facilities, and myself to complete the annual report, which was submitted in November and now that all the projects are complete, we will need to submit a final report by February in order to submit an application for the next round of funding that will open in the spring.

Our energy consultant George Woodbury worked with Unitil on developing the appropriate wattages for the new LED fixtures for an Outdoor Light Billing Agreement that outlines the LED light types that were installed and will be maintained by the Town and the KWh usage the fixtures that Unitil will have to provide delivery of electricity to. On my end, I worked with Town Counsel and Unitil's Attorney to address any language changes in the agreement that was provided to us from Unitil.

## **FY25 Budget Process**

I will be meeting with all the relevant department heads this week to review their department's needs for FY25. Target budgets will be sent out before Christmas and due back in early January. I will present the Five Year Financial Forecast and Capital Plan recommendation the week of January 15th and the FY 2025 Preliminary Budget will be presented the week of February 12th. The Finance Committee will begin their budget meetings with departments on February 22nd and end on March 21st. The Finance Committee public hearing will be on March 28th. The Annual Town Meeting this year is Saturday, May 4th.

## **FY24 Pro Forma Recap**

The Pro Forma Recap and required Excess Levy Capacity has been submitted to DOR. The only remaining form to be submitted is the Overlay Form that needs to be signed off by the Assessors in Gateway.

### **Request for Proposals/Invitations for Bids**

- The Lunenburg Adult Activity Center Generator project bids were due December 6th and we received 4 bids. The low bidder was deemed a responsive, responsible bidder and the bid was awarded to Morse Brothers of Westminster for \$99,940. The lead time on the generator is approximately 16-18 weeks, so the project will be completed in the spring of 2024. This is a project in the FY23 Capital Plan.
- The Public Safety Carpet project is currently out to bid and bids are due on December 20th.

### **Mass Ave at Chase Road and Mass Ave at Electric Ave & Lunenburg Crossing Road Safety Audit**

MassDOT held a meeting to conduct a Road Safety Audit at the end of September. After the meeting, MassDOT repainted the yellow center lines, white edge lines, and white skip lines on Route 2A the week ending 10/13/2023. The final Road Safety Audit report was submitted on 11/13/2023.

### **Staff Trainings**

Excel training classes were extended to all town employees through department heads and one class was held last Thursday and one will be held this Thursday. There will be additional trainings in March of 2024.



**Heather Lemieux**

Heather is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters