

MEMORANDUM – OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

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TO: Select Board
FROM: Jennifer Warren-Dyment, Town Manager
RE: Town Manager's Report
DATE: January 6, 2025
CC: Department Heads; file



General Updates

Finance Department Transition: Katie McKenna's service to the Town concluded on December 31st and retired Finance Director/Town Accountant Karen Brochu is back serving as the Town's Interim Finance Director/Town Accountant. Her primary focus is reconciling and closing Fiscal Year 2025 and she is serving in a part-time capacity. The Assistant Town Accountant continues in her training, which is progressing well. **However, the operational impact of not having a full-time Finance Director/Town Accountant on staff cannot be overstated.**

The Town has been working with Robert Half to help with recruitment for both the Finance Director/Accountant position and Payroll and Benefits position. Unfortunately, they have not presented any candidates at this time for the Director position. An agreement was signed with Complete Staffing Solutions, who recently completed a similar recruitment requiring Munis in New Hampshire, for similar services. Both entities are compensated only if one of their candidates is hired. An interview is scheduled with a candidate who applied without the use of a recruitment firm for this Thursday.

Nancy O'Rourke, Payroll and Benefits Coordinator retired at the end of October and the Town has faced challenges in filling the position. A professional temp has been in the role since prior to Nancy's retirement. School staff has been training to assume payroll responsibilities and have begun to process the school payroll. Ms. O'Rourke has been assisting with the training and school staff have been excellent in their collaboration. The Town has conducted another round of interviews for the position and is doing its diligence before extending an offer, which is expected this week.

The operational impacts from these changes are being felt by all Departments across the organization, both Town and School. This is especially true as we enter into a budget season that is anticipated to be especially challenging.

Water Billing: Notification was sent to the 11 customers who receive water bills from the Town. They were informed that the water utility bills for certain properties were not issued on the regular quarterly schedule due to a breakdown in administrative billing procedures during a period of staff transition. They were notified that they will be receiving a catch-up bill reflecting water usage from January 2025 through November 2025. They have also been notified that the Select Board will be considering a rate adjustment in accordance with the contract. Melissa Richard, Executive Assistant, is preparing and processing those bills and hopes to send them out this week, but no later than next.

Master Plan Update: The Master Plan Steering Committee, working with Over Under, has completed the first draft of the Master Plan. The draft has been shared with the Select Board in the case members would like to provide any feedback.

Nashoba Associated Boards of Health: The Nashoba Associated Boards of Health completed their 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment. The document can be found on the Town website, Town Facebook, and the NABH website. There is a lot of data contained within the report, together with survey findings from the resident surveys that occurred in the Fall. NABH has announced that they will be using the data from this report to inform and improve our public health programming moving forward and they will be sharing those plans with communities.

The Town received a communication from NABH stating that the Board voted to raise assessments by 30%. They cited a structural issue with their funding model with relies on land-use activities that are not generating the revenue they once were, COVID- related grants for nursing services terminating, and rising health insurance and employment costs as some of the key factors. This represents a \$13,946 increase over the anticipated 10% estimate, for a total assessment of \$90,649.

Recruitment

Current recruitments:

- Staff Librarian, Young Adult- 30 hours per week
- Finance Director- 40 hours per week
- Payroll and Benefits- 36 hours per week
- Recreation Director- 19 hours per week
- Dietary Aide- 9 hours per week
- Outreach Coordinator- 36 hours per week

Board and Committee Vacancies

Appointed

- Agricultural Commission- 1 vacancy
- Architectural Preservation District Commission- 1 vacancy
- Cultural Council- 2 vacancies
- Green Communities (Associate)- 2 vacancies
- Historical Commission- 1 vacancy

- Parks Commission- 1 vacancy
- Personnel Board- 5 vacancies
- PACC- 1 vacancy
- Zoning Board of Appeal (Associate Member)- 1 vacancy
- Lunenburg's Representative to the First Middlesex Small Town's Collaborative- 1 vacancy

Elected

- Planning Board- 1 vacancy
- Sewer Commission- 1 vacancy
- Trust Fund Commission- 1 vacancy