

Town Manager Report


Town of Lunenburg-April 14, 2020





Contact Information

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Announcement on Existing Vacancies:

The following is a list of vacancies on the following committees:

- Agricultural Commission (2 alternate vacancies)
- Americans with Disabilities Act Commission (1 vacancy)
- Architectural Preservation District Commission (1 design professional; craftsperson or building contractor familiar with historic renovation)
- Finance Committee (1 position appointed by the Finance Committee Appointing Committee)
- Open Space Committee (1 vacancy-citizen at large)
- Planning Board (1 position appointed by the remaining members of the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen until the next Annual Town Election in May)
- Zoning Board of Appeals (2 Associate vacancies)

Talent bank forms can be obtained on the Town Website and forwarded to the Board of Selectmen's Office.

Community Compact Grant:

Currently there are still funds in FY20 for Community Compact Program and I would like to submit an application as soon as possible in order to take advantage of this funding source that will likely be

eliminated by the end of this fiscal year due to the impact of COVID-19. There are three best practices that I see as needs that will benefit the Town, in no particular order:

- Create a formalized Continuity of Operations Plan for Pandemic/Epidemic situations;
- Prepare a Succession Plan that will help address pending wave of retirements that will challenge a municipality's ability to maintain service levels and utilize expertise and experience of mature workers through consulting or mentorship program;
- Utilize Financial Trend Monitoring modeled after the International City Management Association's Financial Trend Monitoring System.

Community Development Block Grant:

Based on the federal stimulus package and increased funding for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), I have reached out to Montachusett Regional Planning Agency to see how they may be able to assist us with putting together a CDBG application.

Also, Lunenburg was part of a multi-town CDBG funded Housing Rehab programs many years ago and I need to research that further with the Town of Lancaster, as they were the lead community in that regional program, to see if any repayments were made, which would then be available to Lunenburg.

FY 2021 Financial Updates:

The economic round table originally scheduled for last Tuesday occurred today and there was an abundance of testimony from various groups such as the State Treasurer, the Mass Taxpayer's Association, Standard & Poor's, among other officials. The meeting started at 10 a.m. and I had to log off at 1 p.m. to attend a briefing from the Lieutenant Governor, Sean Cronin, MEMA, and DPH and the economic round table was still going on. The economic round table testimony included the projected decline in tax revenues, the projected unemployment rate, the decline in GDP, and the economic prospects for weathering the impacts of COVID-19. The take-aways that I gleaned from listening to the testimony is that there will be dramatic shortfalls in state revenues up to 20%, unemployment may rise to 15%, but there are many uncertainties in all the projections that are dependent on a number of unknowns at this point including when the economy will re-open, if COVID-19 has a resurgence later in the year that will cause a shutdown, consumer behavior, being a "coastal community" and that impact on our state economy, among other factors that help create models for forecasting. The Commonwealth, compared to other states, is in a good position with the level of funding in the Rainy Day fund that will allow for more financial flexibility than other states. It was announced that this is the first of many economic discussions and currently we do not have a revised State Aid estimate from the State as they are at the beginning of hearing testimony on the impact of the public health crisis on FY20 and FY21 revenues.

I have forwarded the examples of the impact of how I outlined how I would approach revamping the FY 2021 budget and if we were to eliminate the new positions and additional hours and leveling funding our State Aid and Local Receipts and reduce our New Growth to the worst level we have seen in the last 10 years during the Great Recession to \$130,000, this would equate to a \$30,000 deficit. I am in the process of scheduling a meeting with the Capital Planning Committee on Thursday to discuss the possibility of decreasing the amount available for Capital in order to reallocate that to the operating budget. As soon as I have any updated projections, I will send them to both the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

Other Department Updates:

- The Assistant Town Manager, the Assessors Administrative Assistant and I completed a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for Tax Assessment Services and a position description for a Principal Assessor and met with the Board of Assessors last Wednesday, April 8th and on Monday, April 13th to finalize both. The Assistant Town Manager and I subsequently met with the Personnel Committee on Monday, April 13th to discuss the Principal Assessor position, which they approved and classified the position. We will simultaneously go out to bid for Principal Assessing Services at the same time as advertising for a Principal Assessor and based on the response to both the RFP and to the Principal Assessor position, determine the best course of action for that department. The RFP will be put out to bid this week with bids due by May 13th.
- The Sewer Commission held a meeting today, which I attended, to review the draft Request for Proposals for Operations and Maintenance of the Sewer System that will go out to bid shortly and a new contract would be in place for the start of the new fiscal year on July 1st.

Meetings, Events and Other Announcements:

- Town Counsel office hours in May will be on May 20th 12-4 p.m.
- Disposal of Yard Waste at the old landfill off of Youngs Road is occurring each Saturday until May 16th and is open 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.
- The School Committee is meeting tomorrow, Wednesday, April 15th at 7:00 p.m. via a Zoom meeting.
- The Conservation Commission is meeting tomorrow, Wednesday, April 15th at 7:00 p.m. via a Zoom meeting.
- The Library Board of Trustees will be meeting on Thursday, April 16th at 6:45 p.m. via a Zoom meeting.
- I will participate in the Finance Committee will be meeting on Thursday, April 16th at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.