

Town Manager Report

Town of Lunenburg- September 12, 2023





Contact Information

 Facebook

 17 Main Street, Lunenburg, MA,...

 hlemieux@lunenburgma.gov

 978-582-4130

 lunenburgma.gov

Meetings, Events, and Other Announcements:

- The Farmers Market is every Sunday from 10 AM until 1 PM until mid-October on the Ritter lawn.
- The Discovery Center for Civic Engagement and the Lunenburg Council on Aging have partnered together to help new retirees who are thinking "what's next" in their retirement and would like to use their talents or skills to make a difference in their lives and communities. There will be a Volunteer Fair hosted by this group at the Lunenburg Adult Activity Center on Wednesday, September 13th from 4-7 PM.
- The warrant for the Special Town Meeting closes on Monday, September 18th at 5 PM and the Special Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 14th at 7 PM.

Board/Committee/Commission Vacancies:

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

- Architectural Preservation District Commission (1 vacancy)
- Board of Assessors (1 vacancy until the next Annual Town Election)
- Cemetery Commission (1 vacancy until the next Annual Town Election)
- Finance Committee (2 vacancies)
- Green Communities Committee (1 Regular Member and 1 Associate vacancy)

- Open Space Committee (1 Member at Large vacancy)
- Park Commission (1 vacancy until the next Annual Town Election)
- 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:

- Assistant to the Sewer Business Manager (19 hours/week)
- Assistant Town Accountant (32 hours/week)
- Assistant Meal Site Manager (19.5 hours/week)
- Conservation Administrator (36 hours/week)
- Finance Director (40 hours/week- contractual)
- Heavy Equipment Operator (40 hours/week)
- Principal Assessor (40 hours/week)
- Seasonal Cemetery Laborers
- Videographer (2-10 hours/week)

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

September 11th Flash Floods Storm Event and MEMA Situational Awareness Update on Upcoming Rain

Although it is estimated we received over 7" of rain from last night's storm event, the damage in Town does not compare to the devastation in our neighboring city of Leominster. Today Senator Cronin's Office reached out to see if we had any initial damage assessment to include in their request to the state for relief funding. DPW Director Bill Bernard put together an estimate of approximately \$24,000 in costs attributed to this storm and this was forwarded to Senator Cronin's Office at the end of the day. Representative Scarsdale and Representative Kushmerek also reached out to see if we needed any assistance, as did our North Central Chamber of Commerce. Today I shared a post from North Central Chamber of Commerce, as they have created a dedicated email hotline for businesses affected by the flood event to contact them for assistance. That email is help@northcentralmass.com.

I would like to thank our public safety staff, including our Fire Department that responded with an engine, ladder truck, dive truck and boat to assist Leominster. The engine and ladder truck responded to calls in the City and assisted with evacuations on Exchange Street. The dive truck and boat assisted with evacuations at the Meadowbrook Trailer Park. Also, thank you to the DPW crew who were out until midnight last night closing certain roads that had flooding issues and clearing out drains until they were passable.

With the expected additional rainfall tomorrow and Hurricane Lee effects over the weekend, MEMA issued a situational awareness update:

"The National Weather Service (NWS) in conjunction with the MEMA Agency Meteorologist are predicting another round of showers and thunderstorms on Wednesday. High humidity coupled with a slow-moving cold front will run the risk for heavy bouts of rainfall mainly between 12PM – 10PM. Rainfall rates of near 1 inch per hour may occur across portions of western and central Massachusetts Wednesday afternoon and evening. While these showers and thunderstorms are

expected to be more progressive than they were Monday, any storm that produces 1 inch per hour rain rates, especially over a previously hard-hit area, is likely to cause additional instances of flash flooding."

Drier weather is expected to return Thursday afternoon into Friday.

"MEMA is actively monitoring Hurricane Lee through this week as it makes its way up the east coast. Daily coordination calls with the National Weather Service, National Hurricane Center, and MEMA Command and General Staff are underway. Future information on pre-event planning actions, activation, coordination calls, and response posture will be updated in the coming days."

925 Mass Ave (TM Goal #1,ii)

The EPA has approved funding for additional work to be done at 925 Mass Ave that will include soil borings, soil samples, monitoring well installation, groundwater sampling, removal of the hydraulic lift in the building, closure of the floor drain, and removal of the floor drain holding tank.

Due to the concentrations of VPH in the underground storage tank excavation groundwater samples, new groundwater monitoring wells in locations where each underground storage tank existed will be installed. Soil samples will be collected from each soil boring to provide additional site data. The work would also include collecting groundwater samples and updated groundwater elevation data.

Since environmental conditions beneath the building are a current data gap, the work will include removal of the hydraulic lift located inside the building to evaluate conditions beneath the building and evaluate the condition of the hydraulic lift to determine if the hydraulic lift may be contributing to the concentrations of PCBs detected in the previous soil samples. Once the lift is removed a soil sample would be collected from the hydraulic lift pit for analysis of VPH, EPH, MCP metals, and PCBs.

Additionally, the work will include closing the two existing floor drains located inside the building and removing the floor drain holding tank located south of the building. To evaluate soil conditions around and beneath the holding tank, the contractor will collect one composite soil sample for analysis of VPH, EPH, MCP metals.

Infrastructure, Facilities, and IT Updates

- LED Streetlight Project: Pine Ridge Technologies began the LED Streetlight conversion project on September 5th and ran into issues with the wiring on a majority of the streetlights they have attempted to convert. We contacted Until and are coordinating a meeting between their Electric Operations Manager and the vendor tomorrow to review what our contractor has found in the field. In the meantime, our contractor will proceed with the conversion and will address any wiring issues as they are encountered at each light.
- Senior Center ADA Patio Project: The Senior Center ADA Patio Project is expected to be complete by the end of this month. The ribbon cutting ceremony will be October 11th at noon.
- TC Passios Roof: There was yet again another leak at TC Passios that occurred over the weekend. After speaking with the Facilities Director and discussing everything that has been done to try to find where the leaks are originating, the patches that have been done, and that the roof is over its life expectancy, he is going to seek quotes to repair that roof in phases. A warrant article has been submitted for the Special Town Meeting as a placeholder.
- New Website: The question that was raised about accessing the town website with an iPad and having to double tap in order to expand menus will not be an issue with the new website through

CivicPlus. Our IT Administrative Assistant contacted our current website host and they would have to remove the whole menu and rebuild it and there would be a cost to that. Since we are moving to a new website in a month, we will not make this change on the current website but it will be a feature in the new website.

Third Quarter Preliminary Tax Bills for FY24

The letter the Board authorized the Chair to sign to request authority to issue third quarter preliminary tax bills for FY24 was sent to the Bureau Chief of Local Assessment once we received the signed version from Chairman Jeffreys. I am awaiting a response from the BLA.

I did receive confirmation from our BLA Field Advisor that the third quarter preliminary tax installment cannot be more than the amount of the first quarter preliminary tax installment (IGR 23-1, IV. B.)

This year, a "Pro-Forma" Recap Sheet, which does not contain valuation information, will need to be done to issue a third quarter preliminary tax bill and actual tax bills cannot be issued for the third quarter. Once we complete the certification process at the end of January/beginning of February, a tax classification hearing can be held, a Tax Recap Sheet submitted to DOR to set the tax rate, and the 4th quarter actual tax bills issued once the Tax Recap is approved..

Budget Updates

Health Insurance Estimate for FY25 and future years: The Assistant Town Manager/HR Director, Payroll/Benefits Coordinator, our health insurance broker, and I met with our health insurance account representative last week for our annual review. We were advised that due to the state of the healthcare industry and medical trends, we should budget 10% for active plans for FY25 and expect 8-10% increases in health insurance rates each year over the next five years. This was explained that due to low employment in the medical fields and hospitals renegotiating their contracts, insurance rates are trending high. Our retiree renewal for calendar year 2024 is estimated to be a 6% increase.