

**Town Administrator Report**  
**January 29, 2024**

**Roof and Ceiling Repairs at Town Hall**

Following the completion of the roof repairs at Town Hall, there was another major storm event and during the storm there was minor leaks from the roof, once again. The contractor responded immediately and, again, worked to identify the cause of the leaks and made repairs. Mike McDonald, the roofing contractor, again mentioned that the “chimney” was causing the leaks and he would recommend its removal. I have informally shared this information with the Historical Commission, along with pictures of the chimney’s condition.

**91 River Street**

At the last Select Board meeting, as we discussed the Town Hall roof, it was mentioned that the barn’s roof at 91 River Street also had a leak. Following the meeting, Mike McDonald met Dave Tully at the property and inspected the roof. He provided a rough estimate of the cost, which he will refine and submit, of between \$1,000-\$2,000 to complete. Overall, the building is in good shape and we are currently using it for storage so we should make the repairs as soon as the weather allows.

**Floor Replacement at the Police Station – IFB Responses**

The IFB issued for the replacement of the floor at the Police Station received 5 proposals, the lowest was Capital Carpet and Flooring Specialists, Inc. at \$13,855, which is lower than we originally anticipated.

**Fire Safety Earmark Reduced by 50% - from \$50,000 to \$25,000**

As you know, the Governor was forced to make mid-year 9C cuts to the state budget caused by lagging state revenues. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the budget earmark secured by Representative Scarsdale for a new Fire Chief’s vehicle has been cut in half – from \$50,000 to \$25,000. We are now working on a plan or options for the Select Board to consider.

**Training – OML, COI, Public Records**

Thank you to Town Counsel, Brian Falk for providing a comprehensive training on the Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest Law. We offered the training in a hybrid format – we had a total of about 25 people participate in the training.

**Union Building Reuse Update**

In collaboration with NMCOG, the Union Building Rehabilitation Committee conducted a survey to solicit input on reuse preferences and priorities. The Committee is holding a meeting on January 31 and hosting a second public meeting on February 8 to discuss the survey results and update the community on the work of the consultant team.

**41 Lowell Street Update**

The Planning Board and Affordable Housing Committee hosted a joint meeting to review the LIP Proposal at the Dumont Property. They plan to meet once again, jointly, on February 5 to develop their

recommendations to the Board. We also held our technical review meeting on January 24 with a variety of board and committee representatives to allow for an informal review and comment period.

### **Year in Review**

You may have seen, this month we compiled a document reviewing the many initiatives and accomplishments of 2023 and distributed it through the website and social media. Thanks to all the volunteers and employees who contributed to these efforts. It was quite a year!

### **Community Preservation Committee Receiving Applications**

The Chair of the Community Preservation Committee sent an email announcing that they are currently open for funding applications. There are a few options that I have thought of, which include: off road trails feasibility study and engineering; restoration of chimney at Town Hall; and the restoration of the old schoolhouse/Highway Department building.

### **Mass Trails Grant Application**

In addition, I have reached out to NMCOG to discuss the possibility of applying for a Mass Trails Grant to support the off-road trails feasibility study, and requesting CPC funds for the matching (20% local match required). The deadline for the grant is February 1.

### **Open Space and Recreation Plan**

The Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan expires in 2025. Leah has begun the review process and we have submitted the Plan's update to NMCOG as a potential project idea, in the case we require their assistance with the update process and materials and/or applying for a EOEEA grant to support the update.

### **Performance Evaluation Template**

As you know, we have sent you all a template for a performance evaluation that, upon your approval, I'd like to roll out in line with the new fiscal year.

### **Governor Healey's Municipal Relief Package**

The Governor announced her Municipal Empowerment Act which includes some provisions that could benefit the Town. It adds a new 5 percent local option Motor Vehicle Excise surcharge, a fee charged by every city and town on vehicles registered in their communities based on the vehicle's value and also increases the local option meals and hotel/motel tax. Equalizing 30B thresholds for advertised procurements to \$100,000 for all municipal purchasing. Establishing central valuation of telecom and utility property through the Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services (DLS) to relieve cities and towns of the cost of individually hiring experts and consultants.

### **Other State News**

In addition to the Municipal Empowerment Act, Governor Healey's budget will include a 3% increase in UGGA/local aid which is good news. They've also announced they were filing a 2-year Chapter 90 authorization which will include an additional \$24 million dedicated to rural communities of which we will qualify.

### **Greater Lowell Health Alliance Meeting**

Last week, I had a productive meeting with representatives of the Greater Lowell Health Alliance. I learned a great deal about the organization, what they offer to member communities, and about opportunities to get involved. On a rolling basis, they offer small grant opportunities to communities and on an annual basis, usually at the end of May, have a larger grant program. They also have several task forces where they would welcome our involvement. If you have any ideas for a program, class, seminar that we could provide with grant funding and/or have an interest in serving on one of their task forces, please let me know.

### **Important Dates**

Union Building Public Meeting – February 8 at 6 PM

41 Lowell Street Review Meeting with Planning Board and Affordable Housing Committee – February 5 at 6:30 PM