

## **Town Administrator Report**

**March 2, 2023**

### **Employee Forward**

This week, an email was sent to Department Heads regarding a transition from paper paystubs to digital, web-based paystubs through our payroll service provider, Harpers, called Employee Forward. It's a user-friendly portal that allows employees to make some changes on their own, such as address change, direct deposit information, and tax withdrawals. We will work with departments and employees individually to ensure everyone is comfortable with the change and, if not, employees will still have the option to receive live physical checks and/or printed paystubs.

### **Budget and Capital Requests Update**

This week, we received some news regarding state aid with the release of the Governor's budget, updated school information from Lowell Tech, and Groton-Dunstable Regional School District shared "scenarios" that they are currently considering with the Town of Groton. The Capital Planning Committee is meeting tomorrow morning to review several outstanding capital requests. Hopefully, following that meeting, I'll be able to submit a proposal to the Select Board for your consideration related to capital requests and ARPA funding informed by the Committee's recommendations.

### **Bandstand Earmark Update**

In the Economic Development bill, \$75,000 was earmarked for repairs of the bandstand on the Common. I have initiated the process to access the funds through the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development and received approval for us to move forward. Once we return a signed grant contract, we'll be able to initiate spending. In the approved budget that was submitted, improvements include electricity, roof, floor, frame, and other exterior improvements, as needed.

### **Woodward's Pond Utility Pole**

As a follow-up to this issue initiated by a resident request, the Conservation Commission approved the removal of the utility pole at the corner of Pond and Pleasant Street and Sue has submitted a formal request to remove the pole to National Grid. They have informed us that it should take 2-4 weeks for the pole to be removed.

### **Vadar Conversion**

The conversion to Vadar is moving forward. We expect to have the data extraction from POINT Software within a couple of weeks.

### **PFAS at Groton-Dunstable High School**

As you know, two weeks ago I sent an email requesting a meeting with all parties involved to discuss and get an update on the PFAS issue at the high school. Today, I received a response from Groton's Town Manager Mark Haddad who has scheduled a meeting with me and Town of Groton officials on Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. He also notified me that the Groton Select Board and Water Commission would like them to pursue the "Groton Water solution." They have concerns with working with the Town of Pepperell because of the PFAS issues they are facing.

### **Health Insurance**

The Insurance Advisory Committee is meeting next week to review options for employee health insurance. We have received rates from our current provider, MIIA, which increased 1.96% year over year.

### **Draft Policies**

Based on discussions and feedback at prior meetings, we've drafted policies for the following: building use, bandstand use, and banner/signage placement. We have also drafted a social media policy. Once reviewed and approved, we plan to create an official Town social media presence on Facebook to start and, in the future, will look at expanding to platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

### **Treasurer/Collector Contract Assistance**

I am in the process of soliciting quotes from municipal finance firms to assist the Town with reconciling cash. Cash has not been reconciled since July and, at this point, will have difficulty catching up without outside assistance. I have received one quote so far and hope to have at least one other shortly.

### **Liquor Licenses**

I have been working to draft materials to facilitate applying for liquor licenses. Once these drafts are ready, I will share them with you for your review. Items that will require action from the Select Board (Local Licensing Authority) are setting the fee schedule for licenses, setting hours of operation, and considering other restrictions on things like nips and single-serve beers.