

Town Administrator's Report December 3, 2024

Local Initiative Program – 41 Lowell Street

The Local Initiative Program application for the housing development at 41 Lowell Street has officially been submitted and received by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. The review process is anticipated to begin shortly.

Police Department Windows and Doors Replacement and Repair

As you know, the Town received a FY25 state budget earmark in the amount of \$45,000 for police station improvements. In addition, we budgeted \$20,000 for window replacements at the police station through the capital improvement article funding at Annual Town Meeting. We have finalized the grant contract and paperwork and issued an Invitation for Bids to replace/repair the windows and doors at the police station with a not to exceed price of \$65,000. It has been posted on the website, at Town Hall, in the Central Register, in the Groton Herald, and COMMBUYS. Bids are due January 7.

Demolition Delay Hearing – 473 High Street

For your information, the Historical Commission has scheduled a demolition delay hearing, in accordance with Dunstable Bylaws Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 6:30 PM for the house located at 473 High Street.

Department of Public Utilities Public Hearing and Comments – Municipal Aggregation Plan

On November 7, 2024, the Town filed a request with the Department of Public Utilities for approval of our municipal aggregation plan pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 134. The Department will conduct a virtual public hearing to receive comments on the Town's filing. The Department will conduct the hearing using Zoom on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, beginning at 2:00 p.m. Attendees can join by entering the link, <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87178872065> from a computer, smartphone, or tablet. If you anticipate providing comments via Zoom during the public hearing, to the extent possible, please send an email by the close of business (5:00 p.m.) on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, to annemarie.belle@mass.gov with your name, email address, and mailing address.

Town Hall Repairs Update

ServiceMaster has completed the mitigation and demolition work of both upstairs and downstairs ceilings. MIIA representatives along with contractors are expected to visit this Thursday to begin plans for the repair work which is expected to include repairs to the ceiling as well as replacement of the carpet.

NMCOG Call for Project Ideas

NMCOG's 2025 call for Planning Assistance and Project Ideas is open and are due this Friday, December 6 for priority consideration. Please share any ideas you may have.

Cell Tower at Water Tank

Final terms have been agreed to between the Board of Water Commissioners and T-Mobile. We are currently coordinating signatures and should have a fully executed agreement shortly.

Police Patrol Officers and Sergeants, NEPBA, Local 7 Contract Negotiations

As you know, the Police Union contract is set to expire at the end of this fiscal year. The Town and Police Union have their first bargaining session scheduled in December. We will keep you informed as negotiations progress.

Website Update

Sue has been working with CivicPlus on developing an affordable means to update the Town's website. We had a meeting with a representative from CivicPlus last week and they are finalizing a proposal for the Town to consider. It will take an upfront investment and higher annual renewal costs, however, for many residents the website is their first introduction to the Town and Town government, and we would like to make this first impression an improved, more efficient, and user-friendly experience. More information to come.

FY24 Audit

Over the last couple of days, our auditors, Roselli, Clark & Associates, have been on-site performing our annual audit for FY24.

FY26 MIIA Renewal

The Town received renewal rates from MIIA for property, liability, and workers compensation programs for FY26 and FY27. They are very favorable rate increases based on our favorable loss history of 0% increase in FY26 and 2.5% increase in FY27.

New Floodplain Bylaw

The Town will need to update its zoning bylaw to include a Floodplain bylaw and regulations as part of having a compliant bylaw when the new flood maps become effective. It is expected that FEMA will issue the Letter of Final Determination in early January which is anticipated to include an effective date of the new maps in July, which is when the Town will need to adopt a compliant bylaw. Thus, we'll need to plan to have this ready for Annual Town Meeting in May. Leah and I have attended trainings on the issue and I'm coordinating a call with DCR to review approach and process.

FY26 Budget and Capital Needs

Most all departmental budget and capital improvement requests and submittals have been received. I am in the process of compiling this information and hope to have a budget and Capital Improvement Plan drafted by the end of this month or early January.

2024 Resident Survey

The 2024 Resident Survey has been issued and will be available to complete through the end of December. So far, in the week it has been available, we've received 37 responses.

Woodwards Mill Dam – Phase 2 Assessment

The Town is in possession of the Final Phase 2 Assessment and Evaluation Report of Woodward's Mill Dam. There are a number of findings, most significantly:

- A large void (hole) in the top of the raceway near the downstream end, which jeopardizes support for the Dam crest and road, creating a potential safety hazard for vehicles if not repaired soon;
- Deterioration of the upstream stone masonry face with voids between stones resulting in ground loss (erosion) between stones causing sinkholes in the crest behind the stone masonry;
- Significant deterioration of the downstream concrete walls, including cracking, significant spalling and delamination, exposed rebar, etc. on top and downstream faces

I will be sharing the entire report with the Select Board, Road Commission, Conservation Commission, and Community Preservation Committee, for their review. It seems there are some things that should be addressed sooner than others.