

What's Going on in Dunstable?

THE DUNSTABLE SELECT BOARD'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 24, 2023

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

AARP Community Challenge Grant	2
MVP Process Underway	2
FY24 Budget Reductions Recap	3
FY24 Goals and Priorities	3
PFAS at the High School	4
New Fire Rescue Truck arrives in Dunstable	4
Upcoming 350th Anniversary Events	5

Union Building planning process underway

The Union Building Rehabilitation Committee, responsible for making recommendations on the rehabilitation, restoration, and re-use of the Union Building, has been hard at work creating a plan for their work and developing early concepts on re-use options for the Union Building.

The Committee is partnering with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), to assist with organizing, managing, and facilitating the community engage-

ment and outreach portion of the project.



A Request for Proposals has been issued seeking architectural/planning services to create a Restoration Plan and

Re-Use Feasibility Study for the Building. Proposals are due on July 26. The Committee hosted a site visit of the property for any potentially interested firms on Monday, July 17. We anticipate members of the Committee, NMCOG, and the architect will work closely on the project to determine a path forward for the building's restoration and future use.

Keep your eye out on future opportunities to get involved in the process and provide your ideas and feedback.

Financial Forecast for FY25 updated

The Select Board and Town Administrator have started the process to update the Financial Forecast for FY25 through FY28.



This updated Financial Forecast will assist the Town with its budget preparation and planning for the upcoming fiscal year, FY25, and in future

fiscal years. It is meant to provide information so the Town can make informed decisions on future spending obligations - forecasting both revenue and expenditures assuming current service levels are maintained.

The Financial Forecast allows the Town to evaluate the impact of various decisions over time. It can also help analyze where current trends are leading and estimate if funding will be available for budget spending.

For FY25, using the same spending and revenue assumptions as during the FY24 budget cycle, the Town has an anticipated deficit of \$399,491. The Financial Forecast, generally speaking, projects increases in spending between 1% (general expenses) to 2% (salaries), with some outliers with higher increases estimated. It includes a set aside of \$119,344 for Town Meeting Article expenses (capital), reduces use of free cash to balance the budget from \$574,343 to \$524,343 by \$50,000, and assumes a 6% increase for the regional school district.

AARP Community Challenge Grant awarded

The Town of Dunstable has been selected to receive a Capacity-Building Microgrant of \$2,500 through the 2023 AARP Community Challenge Grant Program. The grant will support a walkability project to conduct 3 walk audits in our town center with a focus on connections with public facilities, conservation trails, and our small business community. The Town plans to recruit aging

residents and volunteers, those who frequent the library and participants of our senior programming, and others to participate. The Town will host a minimum of 2 community meetings with walk audit participants, residents, business owners and Town departments to discuss how to incorporate the

walk audit findings in future planning. Fortunately, Northern Middlesex Council of Govern-



ments (NMCOG) will be partnering with the Town and AARP to assist in executing the project which will run through the end of the calendar year.

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness planning process moving forward

Last week, the Town hosted a meeting to kickoff the Municipal Vulnerability Pre-



paredness (MVP) planning process with core stakeholders, Hoyle Tanner, Weston and Sampson, the Town's engineering con-

sultants, and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA).

At this time, the project schedule includes another meeting with core stakeholders in August, followed by an initial kickoff meeting in September, and a workshop with a broader group of stakeholders in October. Once we complete the MVP Plan, we will have access to grant funding opportunities we cur-

rently are not able to access. As a reminder, the Town secured a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program grant in the amount of \$37,000 from EOEEA to complete a community resiliency and hazard mitigation planning process, and an expanded scope that will examine the community's vulnerabilities and strengths and identify priority actions to build resilience as the climate changes.

Stay updated on what's happening in Town!

Stay updated on what's happening in the Town of Dunstable and the work of your local government! There are many ways to stay informed:

- Sign-up to receive email notification on our web-

site, www.dunstable-ma.gov/subscribe, provide your email in the appropriate fields, and check off any notices you would like to receive.

- Follow us on Facebook: @dunstablema and Instagram: @townofdunstable
- Subscribe to our Youtube Channel: @townofdunstable3179

Questions? Email selectmen@dunstable-ma.gov

FY24 Budget reductions take effect

The outcome of the Proposition 2 1/2 General Override failing on Election Day is the reduction of the Town's FY24 Operating Budget. The resulting cuts in public safety, highway, and at town hall went into effect on July 1, 2023. They are as follows:

Police Department | Staffing, Supply, and Equipment Reductions **\$84,874**

The Department has **lost 1 police officer position** causing a reduction in coverage on the overnight shift from 2 to 1 officer, Monday through Friday. When receiving multiple calls for emergency response, this will result in an increased reliance on mutual aid, expected to affect response times.

Fire Department | Staffing, Supply, and Equipment Reductions **\$52,824**

The Department has **reduced the per diem firefighter schedule from 2 to 1** from 8 AM to 4 PM, 7 days per week causing an increased reliance on on-call firefighters and mutual aid. This is expected to affect response times and the ability to respond with limited staff back-up and support

Highway Department | Additional staffing and expenses **\$73,464**

Without the addition of the new employee, the Department will continue to have 1 employ-

ee work alone much of the time, restricting the type of work that can be performed. Communication improvements and required stormwater maintenance were cut.

Parks, Selectmen, Treasurer/Collector Departments | Staffing, Landscaping, and Professional Development Reductions **\$15,000**

The Parks Department experienced a reduction in requested landscaping and irrigation maintenance funding, Selectmen Department has reduced professional development and training, and Treasurer/Collector has less funding than requested for staffing support.

Goals and priorities set for FY24

The Town of Dunstable, through its Select Board, and by working with the Town Administrator, has created goals and priorities for the FY24 budget year, aimed at:

- Clarifying direction and purpose;
- Setting benchmarks for measuring progress;
- Providing motivation and sense of accomplishment;
- Ensuring alignment on vision and direction;

- Helping to guide decision-making; and
 - Allowing for ongoing evaluation of progress and performance.
- There are 6 goal categories which include: citizen engagement, communication, and transparency; employee engagement and team building; long-term financial stability; infrastructure and capital planning; service delivery and operational improvements; and plan-

ning initiatives.

You can view the goals and priorities in more detail on the Town website at https://www.dunstable-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhli4361/f/pages/goals_priorities_slide_deck_7_11_23.pdf or by visiting www.dunstable-ma.gov, going to the Town Administrator's department page, and clicking on the FY24 Goals and Objectives tab.



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New Fire Rescue Truck arrives in Dunstable

A new fire rescue truck arrived at the Fire Station this month. It received an inspection and now the Fire Department is working to outfit the truck with new equipment. The purchase of this truck was made possible by a debt exclusion override approved by residents of the Town of Dunstable in the amount of \$190,565 and a supplemental appropriation of \$15,000.

Since the cost of the truck was \$180,000, the balance remaining

of \$25,000 will be needed to cover the additional cost of the equipment on the truck.

The truck is expected to carry: attack hose, water supply hose, vehicle extrication equipment (Jaws of Life), vehicle stabilization, portable ground ladders, emergency medical equipment, technical rescue equipment, water rescue equipment, various firefighting hand tools, scene lighting.

This truck will be used as the Department's primary use vehicle, first out for most calls. It is smaller, easier to maneuver, and can be driven without a CDL license. It is even more critical to have this truck with the staff coverage being reduced in the Department.



PFAS at the High School update

Over the course of the last year, town officials have been meeting with representatives from the Towns of Pepperell and Groton, as well as the School District, to discuss, review, and analyze solutions to the problem of PFAS contamination at the high school.

At the present time, there is consensus among all parties that the most cost effective and time efficient solution is a phased approach to bring water to the high school. The first phase would make a water connection from Pepperell to the high school and, the second phase, would construct a larger loop connecting the water infrastructure and water supplies of the Towns of Pepperell and Dunstable from Route 113, Groton and Kemp Streets in Dunstable, and Jersey Street in Pepperell.

The connection from Pepperell to the high school will avoid a lengthy and costly permitting process and is the most affordable option. The project is estimated to cost +/- \$7 million

which also includes a contribution to Pepperell's Jersey Street PFAS Filtration Plant upgrades.

The proposed approach will have the Town of Groton design the initial phase, making the connection to the high school from Pepperell, with the design and specifications requiring approval from the Town of Pepperell.

An overview of the remaining items that still need to be finalized is as follows:

- Size of pipe – Accommodate flow for fire, irrigation, and/or domestic.
- Cost Sharing – Groton will pay for the project (+/- \$7 million) and will negotiate with Dunstable on cost share which will likely be 77/23 split mimicking the proportional costs of the school district.
- PFAS Filtration System at Jersey Street – The method to contribute to the cost of

the PFAS Filtration Plant still needs to be finalized. Discussion includes providing an upfront payment to cover capital costs or pay over time through the water rates.

- Memorandum of Understanding – Begin to outline a Memorandum of Understanding to provide a framework for an Intermunicipal Agreement.
- Intermunicipal Agreement – Determine if there should be one agreement between all communities or separate agreements.

The details of the second phase of the project between Dunstable and Pepperell will require more discussion, as a group, to determine a path forward. This will take place in conjunction with Phase I but the Town doesn't want it to hold up the advancement of Phase I. To permit the Dunstable/Pepperell connection will require a longer and more complex process, which will begin in tandem with Phase I moving forward.

Volunteer for the Town!

There are many openings on Town Boards and Committees. Visit the Town's website at www.dunstable-ma.gov to check out the vacancies. If interested, please send an email to selectmen@dunstable-ma.gov! We hope you'll apply to serve!

350th Anniversary upcoming events!

Wednesday August 16th - Dunstable's Summer Extravaganza: Music, Food Trucks & Fireworks: The Dunstable 350th Anniversary Committee has been busy at work planning an amazing evening to remember in honor of our Town's Anniversary. We hope you can join us on the Town Common where we will be offering a variety of food trucks, music by local band, The Shakerz, games and raffles, and fireworks at 9 PM! The rain date will be Thursday, August 17.

Saturday, August 19 - Dunstable Farm Days:

The Tyngsboro-Dunstable Historical Society, the Dunstable Rural Land Trust, and the Dunstable 350th Anniversary Committee have partnered to create some old fashioned hands on demonstrations and experiences for all ages.

Sunday, September 10 - Grand Town Parade and Ice Cream Social: Line up on Main Street for a Grand Parade celebrating our Town's 350th anniversary. Wave town flags, check out the floats and vehicles, and head to the Town Common for an Ice Cream Social sponsored by Tully Farm. Rain date is Sunday, September 17.

Saturday, October 14th Grand Finale, Historic Hoedown, BBQ and Fireworks: Come on down to Larter Field for our grand finale. Music, line dancing, lawn and family games, and BBQ. Bring your own drinks, and enjoy a fireworks display to cap off our year of celebrations! The rain date is Friday, October 13.

Route 113 project almost complete

The Route 113 Improvement Project is close to complete! Final pavement was installed this month.

Looking ahead, the contractor plans to paint street lines and, in the coming days, they will be spreading loam and seeding in front of Town Hall and other areas within the project limits, and completing driveway transitions.

Thank you to the Roads Commission, Dunstable Police and Highway Departments, and MassDOT for their hard work in ensuring this project is completed ahead of schedule and well within budget. but please continue to be patient with traffic delays, road detours, and reduced access to the town. Thank you for your continued cooperation and patience!



Fire Station's rubber roof replaced

Over the last week, the Fire Station's rubber roof was replaced. The Town issued an Invitation for Bids for the replacement of the roof and the lowest, qualified bidder was Signature Roofing at a cost of \$26,800, which is less than originally anticipated.

This project is being paid for through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding the Town received from the federal government.

MCO Associates MUD District

The Town is close to finalizing both a Land Development Agreement and a Lease Agreement with MCO Associates for the development of 44 rental housing units in the MUD District, 25% or 11 units will be affordable. Once these documents are finalized, approved by the Select Board, and signed by both parties, MCO will then prepare a Local Initiative Program application, through the 40B program, and submit the application to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities jointly with the Town of Dunstable.