

Board of Selectmen

Town of Upton



Massachusetts

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Kenneth E. Picard, Chairman

James A. Brochu

Robert J. Fleming

TOWN MANAGER

Blythe C. Robinson

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Memo To: Board of Selectmen
From: Blythe C. Robinson, Town Manager
Date: September 28, 2012
Re: Town Manager's Weekly Report

Warrants:

- Payroll: \$ 89,494.44
- Expense Warrant: \$1,223,637.42

For Your Information/Follow Up:

- The content of my weekly report will change with this edition. Going forward I will be posting my report to the new website, and have decided to separate the background on the Selectmen's meetings into a different document. Since the meetings don't occur weekly I thought it would be confusing to include it some weeks and others not. It will still be included in your agenda packets prior to each meeting.
- The design development phase of the Town Hall project is in full swing. On Wednesday the architect and OPM met with more of the departments that will be located in Town Hall to discuss their space and needs in order that the design may be further refined. They have also continued their investigation about the structural aspects of the project that needs to be known before the project is bid.
- We were served with a lawsuit late last week, the Upton Development Group (UDG) versus the Town and number of current or former residents regarding a parcel of land for which UDG wishes to perfect title. It has been reviewed by Counsel, as well as the Board of Assessors. It is the opinion of the Assessor's that this land belongs to UDG, and in fact they have been taxed for it. Our attorney will respond as necessary to the court on our behalf.
- We had a meeting with Hopedale officials and managers from the State 911 office to discuss having Upton provide "ring down" service to them as part of their plan to leave the regional dispatch center they are in now. That went well and on your agenda I've included an item to ask for approval to begin a process to negotiate an inter-municipal agreement.
- Website design continues to be a main focus for us – with a "go live" date of October 15th. We continue to update all of the pages, add content and work towards this date.

Next week all users of the software that will be in place for each department to update their pages on their own will be held on Tuesday.

- The balance sheet was submitted to the DOR so that our free cash can be certified and while there are only a couple of articles proposed for the STM warrant we hope it will be approved prior to November 14th.
- We received notice from the DOR that the “excess and deficiency balance for Blackstone Valley Tech has been certified by the DOR for June 30, 2012 in the amount of \$598,699.
- We received a letter from the Town of Mendon asking us if we would be interested in providing Code Enforcement services to them now that their building official is no longer with them. We are seeking some additional information so that we can determine whether or not this is feasible for us.
- The Recreation Commission met on Monday to interview the five firms that were short listed firms who for the possible design of the South Street Park project. The firms were ranked after that process, and the Commission members are conducting reference checks on the top three firms. A decision as to which firm we will then ask for a price proposal (the top rated firm) will likely take place after this report is completed.
- I attended training that CMRPC hosted this week on electricity contracts and options for solar arrays, net metering, and aggregation of municipal accounts. The Hampshire Council of Governments made all of the presentations, and it is clear that they are on the forefront of what is possible for municipalities in the electricity procurement and solar markets. They do offer some opportunities to partner up with them, and we will be exploring these further in the coming months. They had put out an RFP for companies to develop solar farms on municipal properties, and may do that again in which we could participate. They are also analyzing the opportunity to sign net metering agreements with new solar installations, and I’ve indicated our interest in joining that effort. I believe it would be worthwhile even to pay a small fee towards their costs of putting out a bid or RFP given how complicated these arrangements are.
- The Board of Assessor’s has received a letter from Verizon seeking \$38,483 from FY 2009 regarding the amount they were taxed for poles and wires. Appeals Court held that the ATB had improperly concluded that Verizon NE was subject to Chapter 59 personal property tax on its poles and wires over public ways for years prior to FY2010. Further, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court refused a request for further Appellate Review on May 3, 2012. This has been forwarded to our attorney for review prior to making payment and resolving this outstanding issue.