



# TOWN OF UPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Memo To: Board of Selectmen  
From: Blythe C. Robinson, Town Manager  
Date: December 12, 2014  
Re: Town Manager's Weekly Report

### Warrants:

- Payroll: \$ 97,936.00
- Expense Warrant: \$ 112,803.63

### For Your Information/Follow Up:

- With regard to the Hampshire County Municipal Aggregation program we've gotten word that the final paperwork has been submitted to the State Dept. of Public Utilities and no more legal briefs are expected. Thus the State can begin writing the final order, and the opportunity to go out to bid for electricity on behalf what have become now 40 towns (they've signed up 5 more since we joined) can move forward.
- You may have read that the State has announced some budget shortfalls and Governor Patrick has made some cuts he has the authority to make without the Legislature. One of those is in regional school transportation which will impact the MURSD district by about \$310,000. He does not have the authority to reduce unrestricted local government aid without the legislature's approval, and they do not seem likely to do so. However the State has some issues to resolve, including funding a shortfall in the Group Insurance Commission of \$100 million, and paying for Medicaid expenses that were accrued but the claims are not reimbursable by the federal government. We are keeping a watchful eye on all of this, especially as the transition to Governor Baker takes place next month.
- National Grid has notified us that they'll be doing some vegetation management along the transmission lines in Upton on their right of way to prune back as needed, and remove dangerous trees from the area around the lines. We don't have a fixed starting date for this work.
- You might have noticed that we've closed the playground next to the VFW this past week. When the ground freezes, the playing surface does not give as it is designed to. There are very specific guidelines for depth of mulch that we maintain during non-winter seasons. When the playing surface is frozen and hard, children get injured when they impact it (which they invariably do repeatedly while playing). We close the playground every year to avoid these injuries and minimize liability to the Town.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
Robert J. Fleming, Chairman  
Kenneth E. Picard  
James A. Brochu

**TOWN MANAGER**  
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- Advertisements went out this week to fill the position of Director of Public Works to replace Jeff Thompson who is relocating south to take a new position in mid-January. Applications are due to our office by January 8<sup>th</sup>.
- We have arranged for Town Counsel to come out to Upton and provide two training sessions on the Open Meeting Law on Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. These sessions will be provided free of charge for all staff who support boards and committees, and the committee members themselves. It is likely we'll have an afternoon and early evening session to try and accommodate as many people's schedules as possible. Lauren is a great speaker and this is an important topic, so mark your calendars!
- We spent some time this week working on the Town Hall records that are still stored at the DPW in trailers. We had a staff person from the Secretary of State's Office come out to help us determine what records we no longer need to keep. We also had a company on hand to test some of the records for mold and other contaminants as they had been compromised by some degree being stored in the basement of Town Hall over the years. We're trying to wrap this up along with bringing back the Town Clerk's vault records from secure storage in the next month. The advice has come back from the acoustical engineer that installation of ceiling tiles in some areas will greatly improve the noise level on the first and second floors of the building. We're reviewing the recommendation and how best to implement it. We also had a firm out to give us some advice on coordinating wall hangings for Town Hall to as requested by the board.
- Just a reminder that sign offs on the Town's harassment policy and performance evaluations on all Town employees are due this month.