



TOWN OF UPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Town Manager

MEMORANDUM

To: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

FROM: JOSEPH LAYDON, TOWN MANAGER

SUBJECT: TOWN MANAGER REPORT FOR APRIL 4, 2023

DATE: APRIL 4, 2023

The following is the Town Manager's Report for the April 4, 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting.

Town Manager: The Town Manager reviewed the following topics:

Town Manager's FY 24 Budget Recommendation – The Town Manager's Budget Recommendation is available online. Primary increases were driven by retirements costs, insurance, educational costs, trash and increase in the Library's budget.

Town Hall Bathrooms – Replacement toilets have been delivered to the plumbers and we are awaiting confirmation of a start date. In the meantime, we are continuing to limit use of town hall to those groups that are staff supported. I ask that staff check bathrooms prior to leaving to make sure nothing is bubbling out of floor drains or toilets.

Electrical Aggregation - The Town of Upton is continuing its work to finalize its electric aggregation program but at this time it is not available. Colonial Power, our aggregation consultant, has responded to a request for documentation from the Department of Public Utilities. While the information was provided, no update on approval of the aggregation plan has been provided.

Treasurer Collector: This is the last week for printing off weekly paystubs. Next week we are transitioning to emailed copies of paystubs. An "HR/Payroll" email has been set up for people having issues or need assistance gaining access. Department is working to send out stipend reminders for elected officials. Real Estate Property Tax bills are due May 1st. Access to bill file stays up a week to 10 days after due date and people should contact Treasurer Collector to obtain a current balance after that time. The transition to VADAR Cloud has been completed.

Assessor: Abatement process has been completed, to total abatements equaled \$60K. Exemption program has also been completed resulting in exemption of \$70K, \$50K of which is veterans which is reimbursable by the State. Staff is preparing supplemental billing to capture new growth up to June 30th. Income and Expense Reports are being prepared. These go to all town businesses and they have 60 days to return.

Conservation: The Conservation Commission completed its permitting for an irrigation pond at Fivefork Farm. Working with a property owner on Mendon Road where fill was dumped adjacent to a wetland.

DPW: DPW Staff is starting their street sweeping program and is starting to solicit quotes from contractors. DPW Staff also worked to get fields open for recreation, which occurred this past weekend. Preparing for Memorial Day, working to clean up s, fertilize, aerate, and seed cemeteries. Working on road repairs which involves switching over from cold patching to more permanent hot-patch repairs. Preparing to start crack sealing roads this spring. Anticipate bringing Grove Street Bridge 25% design plan before the Board of Selectman on April 18th. Lastly, the Water Department will start hydrant flushing.

Town Clerk: Staff will send out an email that State Ethics and Open Meeting Law trainings are required to be done every two years for all employees and officials. Training are online and the State will keep track of compliance. For the upcoming election on May 9th, there will not be in-person early voting. Registered voters can still vote by absentee ballot or by mail. Candidates Night, hosted by the Bloomer Girls, is scheduled for April 20th at the Fire Station. The only contested seats are Board of Selectmen and School Committee. Town Clerk was contacted by a 3rd grader teacher about visiting town hall and offices. The planned June visit may be smaller than in the past and involve smaller groups coming to departments.

Police/ Fire: Fire Dept Staff is working with code enforcement on various inspections, including at the new community center. Dept is starting annual 104 inspections, these had not been done under previous Chiefs. Reviewing rural water supply tanks, to track down ownership. GURR has been fairly silent, still working on the phase 2 fire protection improvements. The new radio box alarm system is up and working. The system, paid for through a state 911 grant, upgraded the firearm system in Upton and Hopedale and allows for wireless expansion of fire alarm system. UCC is first facility, and 206 Milford will be the second.

Recreation: Acceptance of applications for Kids@Play and the beach closed a couple days ago. Recreation is looking for volunteers for helping hikes around Upton. DPW informed Recreation that they can get the equipment ready at the beach on June 6th. Recreation stated that will allow for a potential June 10th opening.

Board of Health: Board of Health Inspectors are awaiting the tentative start date for the beach so they can do testing. There has been a significant decrease in COVID cases, with about 3 positive cases a week being reported. No new information on new variants of vaccines.

Library: Regular library operations are going well. Library posted a flier about hours of operation for the month of April, including identifying when the library will be closed for moving to the new Community Center. April 19th is the scheduled move date. A lot of outside work still being done at the Community Center. Paving and parking lot line striping will occur April 24th through the 26th.

Planning: Governors Landing and East Street Estates appear to be nearing the end of their permitting processes. On April 11th, the Planning Board will hold a public hearing on proposed ATM zoning amendment hearing; Articles submitted deal with regulating 5G and increasing ZBA membership. Received an inquiry about increasing the adult marijuana use district. ZBA continued their review of Governors Landing. They have also heard a number of cases for accessory apartments, some are coming about as part of enforcement for apartments constructed without approvals. Staff has started tracking accessory apartments since there is a 5 year renewal requirement in the bylaw. Received one application under the facade program and staff will reach out to more businesses.

TM Office/Human Resources: Annual Town Report and Finance Report are ready to be sent to the printers. Staff is awaiting BoS execution of the warrant. Electronic on-boarding of new employees will start with new recreation hires. Staff is starting board/committee reappointment process. Staff will email employees about the start of open enrollment. We will adding a new vision coverage to the health plan, which will allow for a 0.5% reduction in premiums. Open Enrollment will occur in May. Scholarships are due April 13th. Working on the dedication for community center, pulling together programming for the ceremony that will occur June 14th at 6:30 PM.

Thank you.