



TOWN OF UPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Town Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FROM: JOSEPH LAYDON, TOWN MANAGER
SUBJECT: TOWN MANAGER REPORT FOR JANUARY 2024
DATE: JANUARY 16, 2024

The following is the Town Manager's Report for the January 16, 2024 Board of Selectmen Meeting.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Town Manager – We are full swing into the development of the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget. I have been meeting with Town Staff to review budget submissions and capital requests. We are working to finalize the Town Manager's FY25 Budget Recommendation for distribution on February 5th. Annual Reports were due January 12, 2024. I have met with officials with MURSD and BVT to discuss school FY 25 operating and capital budgets and those discussions will continue throughout the next two months as they finalize their budgets. I will be attending the Annual Massachusetts Municipal Association Conference later this week, where Governor Healy will provide updates on the State's FY2025 budget. I and other Town Department Heads will be attending a Career Fair on Friday, January 26th at Nipmuc High School. The Career Fair is organized by Susan Barrow, a student of Nipmuc Regional High School and member of DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America).

Town Clerk –With the new Year, dog licensing for 2024 has started. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts will again be doing Vote-by-Mail, ballots are sent out by the State. Early voting at the Town Hall will occur starting February 24th through March for the March 5, 2024 Presidential Primaries. Voter Registration ends February 24th. The Town Clerk has met with MURSD Officials to review upcoming elections that occur at the High School to discuss logistics for set up and for securing the site.

Elder and Social Services/ Council on Aging – The leak that was occurring in Senior Center Bus has been fixed with the replacement of the windshield. Meals on Wheels moved from the Center at Millhaus to the Upton Community Center.

Police Department – December and January have been very busy due to recent storms and power outages. Considerable time has been spent conducting details in support of National Grid power restoration efforts. Recruitment continues to be a focus for the Police Chief and recently interviewed candidates for an open officer position.

Recreation – The Recreation Director is working with HR on position job descriptions and hiring process in preparation for the 2024 Kids@Play and beach season. The Director has also been working with BoH

Inspectors, the DPW Dir, and Town Manager to address facility issues prior to opening for the summer. The Recreation Commission is also revisiting the Facilities Master Plan and looking at funding requests for engineering studies for field space and a new facility at Kiwanis.

Finance Offices – Bills for personal and property tax are due February 1st. Excise Taxes will be sent out the end of February and due 30 days later. Working to support preparation of W-2's, which will be available through employees Employee Forward website account. The Treasurer's Office should be contacted to reset access if necessary. Assessors are busy with abatement applications. Finance Staff continue to assist in the Senior Tax Work-off program and are working on updating internal processes to streamline process.

Planning/ Code Enforcement – The Planning Board held an initial public hearing on the installation of lights at the soccer field at Kiwanis Beach. The Board is also reviewing an inclusionary bylaw and also looking at a revised solar bylaw as an overlay district. Staff is receiving responses from consultants responding to our request for MBTA Communities Technical Assistance to assist in developing a bylaw. Staff is working to address code compliance at the Upton Inn and continuing to enforce against work being done without permits. Staff continues to receive complaints about AirBNB's and will need to send out letters educating people on bylaw language. Staff is also working to support the affordable housing trust and working on two requests for proposes, one if for the sale and development of 28 Hartford Ave North and the other is for seeking a consultant to work on the Trust's Action Plan.

Conservation – Met last week to review the permitting for the Grove Street Bridge. The topic was continued to next week's meeting where it is anticipated that the permitting will be completed. Two weekends ago, a large effort by volunteers successfully installed the new bridge over Warren Brook.

Board of Health – COVID cases are increasing. While severity is less than past variants, transmission rate is higher and therefore spreading through the general population more quickly. The Department has COVID-19 tests that are available, but they are quickly being picked up. BoH has been seeing an increase in applications for In-law apartments resulting in increases in the permitting of septic system improvements.

Upton Apartments/ 40B at 45-51 Main Street –The Applicant has requested a continuation of the January 17th public hearing for the Upton Apartments 40B to Wednesday, February 21st at the Upton Community Center.

Thank you.