



# TOWN OF UPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Office of the Town Manager

### MEMORANDUM

TO: SELECT BOARD  
FROM: JOSEPH LAYDON, TOWN MANAGER  
SUBJECT: TOWN MANAGER REPORT FOR OCTOBER 29, 2024  
DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2024

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The following is the Town Manager's Report for the October 29, 2024, Select Board Meeting.

#### **Town Manager**

- *MURSD Capital Subcommittee* - Attended MURSD Capital Subcommittee Meeting on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Subcommittee is charged to develop capital recommendations for addressing building and facility needs for the FY2026 budget season. MURSD was invited to participate in the accelerated building program for the replacement of the roof at Nipmuc Regional High School. The subcommittee also discussed various levels of projects by importance, including upgraded athletic facilities.
- *Police Chief Screening Committee* – The Police Chief Screening Committee is meeting Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>. The Committee will be meeting over the next month to review applicants and ultimately to select candidates to send to an assessment center and present a candidate for appointment.
- *Special Town Meeting Information Available* – STM is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at the Nipmuc Highschool Auditorium. The warrant and supportive information is available on the Town's website under news and announcements.
- *Upton Center/ 140 TIP Project Call* – Town Staff will attend a Zoom call with MassDOT District 3 Staff to discuss the Town's plan to look at lighting, landscaping, and streetscaping in Upton Center

**DPW** – DPW has completed paving on Mendon Street and Pleasant Street. A small section of Fowler is being paved followed by Taft Street between Elm Street and East Street. The results of the lead line inventory were submitted to the state and the department is submitting an expression of interest for a grant program to fund resolving unaccounted water, likely due to errors in metering. Work to pressure wash and paint of Risteen Building will start next week.

**Town Clerk** – To date, the Town mailed out 2121 ballots. Approx 1300 have been returned. The deadline to request a mail-in ballot is today at 5 PM. Mail-in ballots must be date stamped by November 5<sup>th</sup> and received by November 8<sup>th</sup> to be counted. Early voting started on Saturday October 19<sup>th</sup> and continues to November 1<sup>st</sup>. So far approx. 724 people have come to vote at Town Hall. Total votes so far is approx. 2,024 votes. For comparison a total of 5,328 ballots were cast in 2020 representing an 85% turnout. ESS will be running a "Election Day Shuttle" on Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup> between 10 am and 12 PM. People who want a ride to vote should contact the ESS Department.

**Elder and Social Services** – The current Senior Tax Work-off Program season is coming to an end on October 30<sup>th</sup>. The next season starts November 1<sup>st</sup>. For those interested in participating, please contact ESS Department. A new "Friends of Upton Seniors" group has met three times so far. The group will be set up as a separate 501C3 group to fundraise to support senior center activities.

**Recreation Department** – Recreation is starting preparation for hiring for the 2025 Beach and Kids@Play season.

**Finance Department**

- *Assessing* – Staff is preparing to submit sales data, new growth, and circuit breaker exemption information to the state this week. Tax Classification Public Hearing is scheduled for November 19, 2024 at 6:15 PM with the Select Board.
- *Treasure/Collector* – Real Estate and Property Tax Bills are due Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup>. Working with DPW on next water/sewer bill. Staff is also working to prepare for processing payroll changes should Article 2 and 3 pass STM.

**Fire Department** – The Upton Fire Chief and the Mass Department of Fire Services wants residents to know that the State has declared a Statewide Brush Fire Warning due to statewide drought conditions. US National Weather Service out of Boston has also issued a Red Flag Warning due to dry conditions and gusty winds. There are 47 active brush fires across the state. Residents are asked not to do any outside burning and to take precautions with outdoor activities.

**Fire/EMS Association** – The Association is hosting their annual Halloween Parade and Spooky World at the Fire Station on Halloween Evening. The Halloween parade will assemble at 5:30 PM at the Upton Community Center parking lot. Parade kicks off at 6 PM.

**Human Resources** – MIIA/BlueCross rates for retirees are increasing. The Town is sending out a letter to retirees that Medex 2 (medical plan) with Blue Medicare Rx (a Medicare Part d Prescription Drug Plan) will be increasing 20.8%. The letter identifies factors contributing to the cost increase such as new Medicare & Medicaid Services payment methodology, cap on out-of-pocket maximums on prescription drugs, and rising cost of healthcare services. For more information on benefits changes going into effect January 1, 2025, visit the Town's Human Resource webpage.

**Upcoming Events**

Coffee with the Town Manager w/ Denise Smith, Town Clerk – Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup> from 9:15 am to 10:30 am.

Veteran's Day Breakfast – Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am

Senior Dinner, sponsored by Upton Men's Club (Catered by Christiano's) – Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at 5 PM