



Hubbardston
Massachusetts

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

DECEMBER 18, 2023

It's the most wonderful time of the year in Hubbardston! As we wrap up 2023 and look ahead to next year, I am pleased to share several updates from Town Hall.

After collaborative negotiations, we have reached a tentative 3-year agreement with the Hubbardston Police Union for the 2025-2028 contract cycle. This deal provides competitive wage increases while upholding principles of fiscal responsibility, positioning us well financially in the coming years. My sincere thanks go out to all bargaining team members for their efforts. I anticipate bringing this to the Select Board in January.

Our staff enjoyed a festive team building evening focused on building snowman decorations. It was a great opportunity to spread some holiday cheer while strengthening connections among employees. We look forward to making such team building events a more regular occurrence.

As we transition our focus to 2024, I we held the first capital improvement committee meeting to kick off planning for FY2025 and the four preceding years. We took the opportunity to review capital requests to prepare for infrastructure improvements in the coming year.

I also began quarterly lunch meetings with North Worcester County Manager peers to compare notes on common issues and potential areas for regional partnership.

Early in the New Year, residents can expect their annual Census verification forms, Recycling Survey, and Dog License renewal letters. We also have our next community Coffee Conversation on December 26th at 8:30AM at the Stars and Stripes Diner.

Finally, on this month's episode of our Hubbardston Headlines, we interviewed Claudia Provencal, the Director of our Council on Aging for the last 15 years. Claudia shared heartwarming stories about the critical role of volunteers, the invaluable services the COA provides to seniors, and what makes Hubbardston such a special community for residents young and old.

I wish everyone health, happiness, and joy this holiday season as we head into the new year! Please reach out at any time with any questions, comments or concerns to me at x200 or admin@hubbardstonma.us.



Project Briefs

Work is ramping up on several Town projects. I have begun collaborating with KP Law to secure necessary easements for our **Williamsville Bridge replacement project**, slated for construction in 2025 thanks to a \$5 million state grant. The project will include full bridge reconstruction and design services.

We are making progress on easements needed for the **Gardner Road Tower project commercial carrier RFP**. This important infrastructure upgrade remains a priority for the Town.

On the **Municipal Aggregation** front, we are working closely with our consultant to provide a comprehensive program update by mid-Spring 2024. This will allow residents to make informed decisions about energy cost savings.

Internally, we are excited to launch a new **Civic Academy** program aimed at increasing community involvement and volunteerism. This effort will be spearheaded by **Land Use Clerk Tricia Lowe** - expect more details soon.



Annual Town Report Photo Contest - The Town of Hubbardston is seeking photo submissions from community members for the cover of the 2023 Annual Town Report. Amateur and professional photographers are encouraged to submit images that showcase "What Hubbardston Means to You" - whether it's landscapes, buildings, events or any scenes that capture the spirit of our town.

Up to 3 photographs can be submitted by each entrant along with a short description of the meaning and location of each photo. The Select Board will vote to choose the winning photo during a meeting in February 2024.

The selected entry will be featured on the cover of the printed 2023 Hubbardston Annual Town Report as well as online publications. The winning photographer can choose to have their name published with the report.

Submissions Deadline: February 1, 2024 - Please email entries to bos@hubbardstonma.us; Please direct any contest questions to Toni Walker at bos@hubbardstonma.us or by calling 978-928-1400 x200. By entering the contest, photographers grant the Town of Hubbardston the right to publish, print and display submitted photos for use in the Annual Town Report and related town promotional materials. The town may alter, edit or crop photos at its discretion.

Hubbardston
ANNUAL TOWN REPORT
PHOTO CONTEST

Capture Hubbardston's beauty through your camera lens by February 1st and your photo could be featured on the 2023 Annual Town Report cover! Submit up to 3 photos showing what Hubbardston means to you - landscapes, events, and scenes that showcase Hubbardston - to bos@hubbardstonma.us for a chance to be showcased.

www.hubbardstonma.us

Meetings

I attended an insightful MMA webinar led by attorney Nicole Costanzo examining upcoming cannabis control regulatory changes for host communities. Key discussion points included revised host community agreement requirements, prohibited agreement terms, and new social equity mandates taking effect in March 2024. There were thoughtful questions addressed on emerging local impacts.

I continued strategic conversations with the Princeton and Rutland Town Administrators on potentially collaborating to optimize recycling and trash service efficiencies between our towns. We are actively exploring partnership opportunities that would both improve environmental sustainability and contain costs through an anticipated joint grant application in February.

I attended a public session on the proposed Rural Development Zoning initiative aimed at supporting local agriculture, eco-tourism, and complementary small businesses. The Planning Board will incorporate this citizen perspective to refine zoning revisions for consideration at 2024 Annual Town Meeting.

Met with the Public Safety Building Committee around priority setting for financing and designing a much-needed upgraded facility.

Additionally, I participated in the comprehensive annual school district audit review, examining auditor findings, and sustained strong fiscal stewardship policies.

Personnel

Mary Markowski, Chris Barbera, and I completed a comprehensive, three-month cyber security training. The in-depth program provided critical knowledge on current cyber threats, hacking techniques, risk mitigation best practices, and incident response protocols. Key topics covered included phishing simulation and awareness, password policies, multi-factor authentication, security frameworks, network monitoring tools, data encryption methods, employee education approaches, and procedures for reporting potential threats. Finishing this extensive course equipped our team with greatly enhanced skills to strengthen Hubbardston's cyber defenses and resiliency.

Fair Share Road Funding

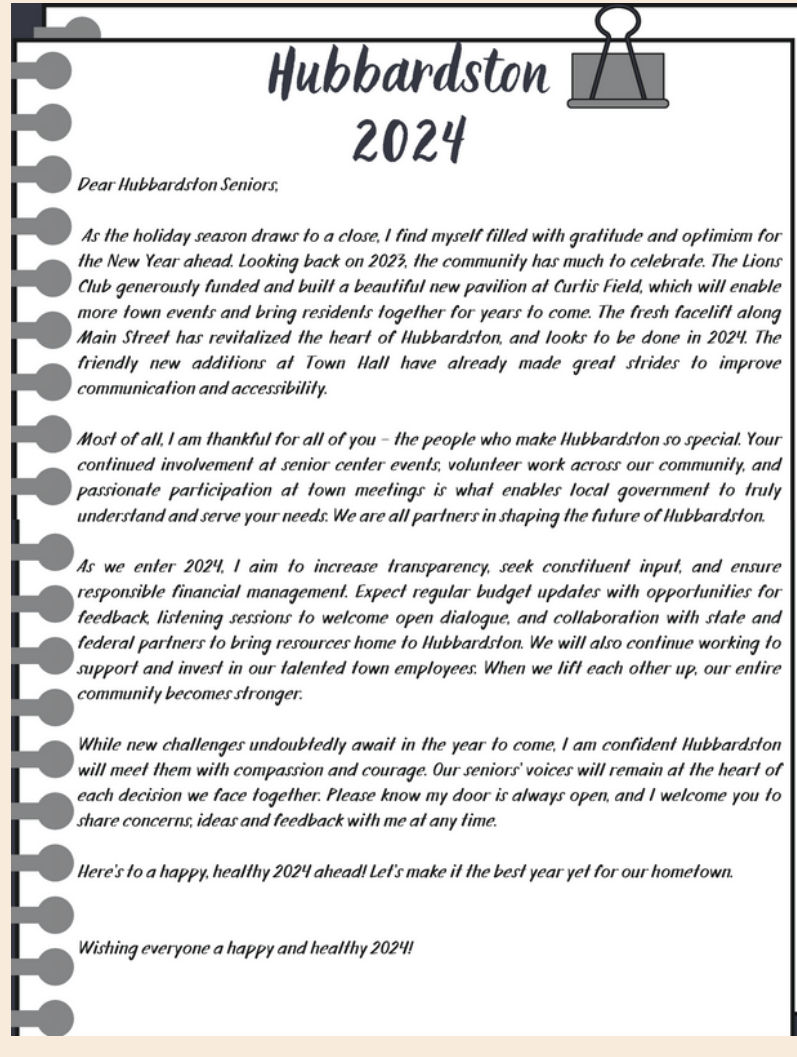
We received word that Hubbardston would be receiving \$229,290 in Fair Share apportionment for Fiscal Year 2024. The Fair Share Amendment funds are being distributed according to two formulas. The first \$50 million is being distributed using the traditional Chapter 90 formula based on local road mileage (58.33%), population (20.83%), and employment (20.83%). The second \$50 million is being distributed using a formula based on each municipality's share of road mileage. Each community is receiving a different total amount according to how the two formulas apportion the money. This apportionment is automatically incorporated into a municipalities' existing Chapter 90 contract with MassDOT with no further action required by the municipality.

Procurement - We have several active procurement initiatives underway. Our HCS boiler replacement project is moving forward, with bids due on December 21st. Earlier this month we hosted site visits for 5 prospective vendors to view the current boiler system.

We have released a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking services for property tax assessment needs from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027. The chosen firm will assist with preparing tax reports, representing the Town at tax classification hearings, securing the annual tax rate, and other assessment activities.

Finally, we are preparing to release an RFP for the Town's liability insurance coverage. This will be an open bidding process to ensure we secure the most competitive rates and responsive service. Additional procurement initiatives may be undertaken as needs are identified by Town departments and administration. We strive to secure good pricing and reliable vendors through fair and transparent procurement practices.

Senior Newsletter - I was invited to share my outlook on 2024 in the senior newsletter. Please find my submission. Below I'm happy to have this opportunity to speak directly to the senior community in town and offer some thoughts as we look ahead to the new year. My hope is that 2024 will be a year of continued progress on issues that matter most.



Hubbardston
2024

Dear Hubbardston Seniors,

As the holiday season draws to a close, I find myself filled with gratitude and optimism for the New Year ahead. Looking back on 2023, the community has much to celebrate. The Lions Club generously funded and built a beautiful new pavilion at Curtis Field, which will enable more town events and bring residents together for years to come. The fresh facelift along Main Street has revitalized the heart of Hubbardston, and looks to be done in 2024. The friendly new additions at Town Hall have already made great strides to improve communication and accessibility.

Most of all, I am thankful for all of you – the people who make Hubbardston so special. Your continued involvement at senior center events, volunteer work across our community, and passionate participation at town meetings is what enables local government to truly understand and serve your needs. We are all partners in shaping the future of Hubbardston.

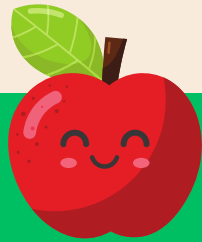
As we enter 2024, I aim to increase transparency, seek constituent input, and ensure responsible financial management. Expect regular budget updates with opportunities for feedback, listening sessions to welcome open dialogue, and collaboration with state and federal partners to bring resources home to Hubbardston. We will also continue working to support and invest in our talented town employees. When we lift each other up, our entire community becomes stronger.

While new challenges undoubtedly await in the year to come, I am confident Hubbardston will meet them with compassion and courage. Our seniors' voices will remain at the heart of each decision we face together. Please know my door is always open, and I welcome you to share concerns, ideas and feedback with me at any time.

Here's to a happy, healthy 2024 ahead! Let's make it the best year yet for our hometown.

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy 2024!

THANK YOU
😊



I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to our building maintenance custodian, Jim Vincent, for his outstanding service and positive attitude. Jim consistently goes above and beyond in maintaining the cleanliness and functionality of our facilities. He works diligently to ensure that our buildings are safe, tidy, and operating properly for both staff and visitors. Jim tackles every task with a smile on his face and a “can do” spirit. His willingness to take on extra assignments and respond quickly whenever an unexpected need arises has been invaluable. Jim takes great pride in his work and truly cares about our staff and citizens. His commitment to excellence and cheerful demeanor do not go unnoticed. I want to thank Jim Vincent for all of his efforts and for exemplifying what a positive employee should be. We deeply appreciate his hard work and dedication.



Snowplows Steal the Show at Special Storytime

Hubbardston, MA - A collaborative effort between multiple local departments resulted in an enriching storytime event for local children on Wednesday. The Hubbardston Department of Public Works (DPW) provided the main attraction by bringing two snowplows for the kids to explore.

"Over the past summer, the children were utterly enchanted seeing the fascinating machines working on Main Street. This inspired us to reach out to the DPW about providing that same up-close experience for our youngest residents during storytime," said Patricia Lowe, Storytime Lead at the Hubbardston Public Library. "We want to give a huge thank you to the Hubbardston DPW for generously agreeing to provide this unique and memorable opportunity for the kids to see these incredible machines up close," Lowe added.

"Intra-government collaborations like this storytime event bring tremendous value to our community," said Hubbardston Town Administrator Nathan Boudreau. "By working across departments, we can create special experiences for our residents and showcase how local government strives to benefit Hubbardston in creative ways."



Have Feedback?

Please contact the Town of Hubbardston via phone at 978-928-1400 or email us at admin@hubbardstonma.us with questions, comments or suggestions regarding the information in this report. Additionally, you may review the Town's other Reports on the Town website.

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