



Hubbardston
Massachusetts

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S

REPORT

NOVEMBER 6, 2023

I'm pleased to provide an update on recent events and upcoming plans in town.

Special Town Meeting was a success, with over 70 people attending and finishing all business in under 30 minutes. I'm thankful to the moderator, clerk, and staff for their hard work and teamwork. Effective communication remains essential, through different methods, we've informed residents about important issues, encouraging more involvement.

Regarding the budget, most departments have met the November 1st deadline for budget submissions. I'm currently compiling these figures into a detailed FY25 budget book, emphasizing our commitment to responsible spending and transparency.

Looking forward, I'll be presenting a no-nonsense **5-year forecast at the December 4th Select Board meeting**. This straightforward presentation will offer valuable insights into our town's future path, accompanied by clear charts for easy understanding.

I'm in active discussions with the School District regarding next year's budget, ensuring our priorities are heard loud and clear.

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend a meeting organized by the **Small Town Administrators of Massachusetts (STAM)**. The insights shared during the meeting, particularly regarding Proposition 2.5% Overrides, were enlightening. It was inspiring to witness how other municipalities are creatively managing rising costs while working within the constraints of Proposition 2.5%. These shared experiences will undoubtedly inform our approach to similar challenges in Hubbardston.

The **Public Safety Building Committee** met in October to discuss plans and thoughts moving forward. They invited the chair of the successful Ashby Public Safety Building Committee to the meeting to discuss challenges and the opportunities they faced while going through the decade-long process of getting their public safety building approved, funded, and built.

The Structural Deficit Working Group met with Harold Scher of Regional Resources to review potential ways to increase revenue through tax rate and PILOT formulas. We discussed things like split taxation and exemptions. This will inform fiscal choices as the working group continues to turn over every stone looking for means of increasing revenue.

At our next meeting, I look forward to a winter readiness update from DPW Director Brown, and a Emergency Management Update from Emergency Management Director Judie O'Donnell.

In closing, I appreciate all your efforts as we work toward a vibrant Hubbardston. I welcome your ongoing ideas, concerns, and collaboration. Together, we can build a prosperous future.



The **Barre Savings Charitable Foundation** presented a check for \$3,000 to the Hubbardston Senior Center on Tuesday to support the construction of a new senior deck at the center. Brian Cirelle and Tom Mertzic, members of the Foundation's Board, presented the check to members of the Hubbardston Council on Aging, during a small ceremony at the senior center. The \$3,000 donation was represented by a check signed by Former State Senator Stephen Brewer, Chair of the Barre Savings Charitable Foundation. "We are thrilled to accept this generous donation from the Barre Savings Charitable Foundation," said Claudia Provencal, Council on Aging Director. "This proposed deck will provide a wonderful outdoor space for our seniors to gather, socialize, and stay active." The new senior deck will be built on the back side of the Hubbardston Senior Center and will feature benches, railings, and a ramp to improve accessibility.

The Barre Savings Charitable Foundation (BSCF) is dedicated to building a stronger local community by supporting those organizations enriching the quality of life of others. BSCF was established when the Barre Savings Bank (BSB) merged with Fidelity Cooperative Bank in 2016. The purpose of the foundation is to provide charitable support for the people in communities previously served by BSB. BSCF focuses its giving on youth and senior programs, programs supporting education and health and human services and other projects improving the quality of life in our communities. "We are very happy to support the construction of this senior deck, which will have such a positive impact on older adults in Hubbardston," said Brian Cirelle, Barre Savings Charitable Foundation Board Member. The Hubbardston Senior Center provides services and activities for residents over age 60 including activities, trips, exercise classes, social events, and more.

The newly constructed **communications tower on Gardner Road** is now fully operational for use by the Hubbardston Police and Fire Departments, in partnership with the Rutland Regional Emergency Communication Center. This culminates years of planning and preparation to improve emergency communication abilities in Hubbardston.

The Hubbardston Tower provides significantly enhanced radio coverage throughout the town for police officers and firefighters responding to emergencies. Testing has shown tremendous improvements on radio frequencies from the new tower. Construction of the tower was made possible through several grants awarded by the Massachusetts



State 911 Department Grant Program. The Rutland Regional Emergency Communication Center will utilize additional grant funds to purchase upgraded equipment for the Hubbardston Tower and existing facilities in Barre, Oakham, and Rutland. With the tower now complete, Hubbardston officials will jointly work with Rutland to issue a Request for Proposals inviting commercial cellular carriers to locate facilities on the tower. This will improve cell service in the area while generating lease revenue aimed at lower shared regional communications assessments. Efforts have been hindered to date by outdated language in Hubbardston's Telecommunications Bylaw.

The Hubbardston Tower represents a major advancement for public safety communications and progress toward modern commercial cellular service. Hubbardston thanks the State 911 Department and Rutland Regional Emergency Communication Center for their essential support in achieving this milestone.

Taste of Hubbardston highlights local businesses

By Eric Goodhart
Correspondent

HUBBARDSTON – The Hubbardston Economic Development Committee, founded in 2019 to support local businesses, sponsored the first ever “Taste of Hubbardston” event this past Wednesday evening, Oct. 18 at the Pinecrest Lodge at, 84 Bemis Road.

In truth, the title of the event, was very misleading. It should have been called the “Cornucopia of Hubbardston.” Not only was there a veritable bounty of food selections, but about a dozen owners of interesting Hubbardston based businesses that continue to carry on the entrepreneurial spirit of the town since its formal founding in 1776.

In fact, Whitney Friberg, the Chair of the Economic Development Committee said “the mission of the Committee is to look for ways to improve the community’s quality of life through an expanded local business base that respects and contributes to Hubbardston’s character and strengthen the economic well-being of all its residents.”



Turley Photo by Eric Goodhart

Attendees at the Taste of Hubbardston sponsored by the Hubbardston Economic Development committee line up to sample some of the locally sourced food.

I am thrilled to share the success of our recent “Taste of Hubbardston” event, hosted by Hubbardston EDC. This delightful evening was a celebration of the community’s vibrant spirit and a strong display of support for our local small businesses. The event showcased the incredible diversity of entrepreneurs and establishments that call Hubbardston home, from beloved staples like Giacomo’s Gourmet Foods and Greenwood Hill Farm, to exciting newcomers such as Wachusett Vineyards and the Journey Within yoga studio. The enthusiastic participation of both business owners and attendees highlighted the passion and creativity that thrive in Hubbardston. As we continue to champion and uplift our local entrepreneurs, we are reminded of the invaluable role they play in shaping the unique character of Hubbardston. Small businesses truly are the lifeblood of our community, and together, we will keep nurturing their growth and fostering a stronger, more connected Hubbardston. Special thanks to Whitney Friberg and the Economic Development Committee for their hard work putting together this awesome event.

Training: Our team has been actively engaged in various training programs to enhance our skills and knowledge, ensuring that we stay at the forefront of best practices. **Executive Assistant Toni Walker** has been attending HR courses, focusing on the latest developments in human resources strategies. **DPW Admin Wendy Leblanc** and **Treasurer Collector Mary Markowski** have completed an online accounting course, deepening their understanding of financial management and accounting principles.

Additionally, Chief Couture recently attended a chief conference, gaining insights from peers and experts in the field. This conference provided valuable perspectives on leadership, community engagement, and law enforcement strategies, enabling Chief Couture to continue serving our community effectively. These training efforts underscore our commitment to continuous learning and professional development, ensuring that we provide top-notch services to the residents of Hubbardston.

Grants & Procurement

In the realm of procurement, I am diligently following up on various projects, including IT services, boiler installation, and the ongoing senior deck initiative, which we are actively seeking a redesign solution to enhance functionality and decrease price.

On the grants front, we have made significant progress. We have received grant proposals from the Collins Center on the two grants received last month for training and technology improvement, reflecting the collaborative efforts of our team.

Additionally, we’ve submitted applications for key grants, such as the Green Communities grant, focusing on upgrading our library HVAC systems to create a more energy-efficient environment. We have also applied for the MEGA safety grant, which emphasizes our commitment to enhancing safety measures within our community. Furthermore, we’ve submitted a grant application for an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), a crucial step towards ensuring the well-being of our residents.


Have Feedback?


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SPIRIT WEEK




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