



Hubbardston
Massachusetts

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

MAY 7, 2024

As we enter the month of May, there is a lot of excitement and activity happening in Hubbardston. The spring season is in full bloom, and the municipality is thriving with new developments and events.

We are pleased to announce that Melody Green was sworn in as the new Town Clerk on Monday, April 22, 2024 by Moderator René Lafayette. Melody brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to this vital role. Her regular hours at Town Hall will be: Monday: 9:00AM - 6:00PM, Tuesday - Thursday: 9:00AM - 4:00PM. The Town Clerk's office is a hub for many essential services, including voter registration, dog licenses, birth/marriage/death certificates, and numerous other administrative functions. We encourage all residents to stop by Town Hall to meet and welcome Melody Green to her new position. Please join us in congratulating Mel as she embarks on this exciting new chapter as Hubbardston's Town Clerk!



With Town Meeting just around the corner, finalized details and the full warrant will be distributed in the coming weeks. This annual event is a cornerstone of our democratic process, and we urge all residents to review the materials thoroughly and make their voices heard.

Earlier this month, we released the latest edition of Hubbardston Headlines, our local access short-form program. This month's episode featured an engaging interview with Select Board Chair Jeff Williams, who has diligently served his community for over a decade. Jeff provided valuable insights into his role, the importance of civic engagement, current town initiatives, and ways for residents to get involved. We hope you'll take the time to watch this informative program at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQnXn8rWOnE>. As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions for future topics and guests at admin@hubbardstonma.us.

The Library Board of Trustees will be attending the May 20, 2024 meeting of the Select Board. During this session, they will discuss their ongoing efforts related to the library's strategic plan. We anticipate an engaging dialogue and look forward to learning more about their vision for the future of this vital community resource.

Town employees recently participated in another creative "Painting with Paul" event. This time, the group channeled the vibrant colors of spring, painting beautiful flower scenes. These artistic gatherings not only foster teambuilding and camaraderie but also allow our hard-working staff to tap into their creative sides.

Hubbardston was recently in the spotlight as part of the Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce's "30 Members in 30 Days" promotion. On Day 10, Select Board Vice Chair Katie Young and myself had the opportunity to meet with Chamber President and CEO Rebecca Marois. We discussed the many exciting developments occurring in Hubbardston and explored opportunities for future collaboration between Hubbardston and the Chamber.



We look forward to sharing more updates and accomplishments with you in the months ahead.

Projects & Initiatives

- The Senior Center Deck Project is progressing thanks to a generous last-minute donation from the Friends of the Senior Center. Claudia and I recently conducted a site visit with Rob Despres, where we discussed timelines and logistics. We are excited to announce that construction is scheduled to commence around August 1st or potentially even sooner, weather permitting.
- DPW Director Travis Brown and I recently met with representatives from MassDOT to review the details of the forthcoming Town Center Project. During our walkthrough, we identified several areas for improvement and discussed potential solutions. One notable change will involve the repositioning of mailboxes along Main Street to accommodate efficient sidewalk snow removal during the winter months. MassDOT anticipates completing this transformative project by Memorial Day.
- Library Director Christine Barbera and I escorted Andy Nguyen of Contracting Specialists Incorporated for a site assessment for the Library Foundation Project. Nguyen's firm was the sole contractor to express interest in the project. Andy provided valuable insights. He recommended grading the ground to slope away from the building's front and considering the installation of a drainage hole in the granite wall to mitigate potential future issues. The quote will focus solely on exterior foundation repairs on the front right side of the library.
- DPW Director Travis Brown and I recently held our first round of negotiations with the DPW Union. We had a productive discussion and will reconvene for another meeting next week. These ongoing dialogues are crucial for fostering a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship with our valued DPW staff.
- Town Accountant Kelli Pontbriand and I continue our efforts to work closely with FEMA to appeal the amount of unapproved FEMA Public Assistance costs. Through diligent work, we have successfully lowered the initial figure of approximately \$140,000 to around \$90,000, and we remain committed to further reducing this amount. These costs stem from utilizing FEMA Public Assistance funds for items that were believed to be within scope during the 2020-2021 period but ultimately did not meet the criteria.
- We are currently addressing a mold issue within the Police Chief's Impala, which arose due to a leak in the trunk that damaged approximately \$1,500 worth of personal gear and clothing. The Chief has been compensated for these losses. While a request for a new vehicle is not feasible at this time, we are collaborating with mechanics and mold remediation specialists to resolve the problem effectively.

Meetings:

- I attended the extensive public hearings regarding the two proposed zoning bylaw amendments. While the Agritourism proposal was eventually tabled, I look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts to refine and advance this initiative in the future. On a positive note, the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) bylaw successfully secured a place on the upcoming Town Meeting warrant.
- I recently participated in a productive meeting with the Finance Committee, where we discussed various fiscal matters pertaining to the town's operations and they recommended the budget and ATM Warrant Articles.
- I had the opportunity to attend the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources (MMHR) Virtual Spring Meeting, which provided valuable insights and updates on best practices, legal considerations, and emerging trends in the field of municipal human resources management.

Grants:

- We have submitted a compelling application for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant program. If awarded, these funds will enable us to conduct a comprehensive review of all culverts throughout the town, ensuring our infrastructure is resilient and capable of withstanding the impacts of climate change.
- We recently received feedback reports from the Community One Stop for Growth regarding the five Expressions of Interest (EOIs) I submitted across various planning, zoning, and infrastructure initiatives. These projects encompass:
 - Modernizing our wireless communications bylaw to accommodate new technologies (aligns with the Community Planning Grant Program).
 - Constructing sidewalks, developing an active transportation plan, and installing downtown lighting (aligns with the MassWorks Infrastructure Program).
 - Overhauling special permit and site plan review processes to enable expedited permitting (aligns with the Community Planning Grant Program).
 - Reconstructing New Templeton Road and upgrading drainage/culverts (aligns with the MassWorks Small Town Road Program).
 - Developing a plan to redevelop sand pits into mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods with affordable housing (aligns with the Community Planning Grant Program - Housing Focus).

The feedback provided valuable insights into strengthening our applications, and our rural designation makes us eligible for the Rural Development Fund. However, it's important to note that only one project can be submitted per funding round for this program.

Additionally, Mallory from Rural Affairs Director Anne Gobi's office reached out to discuss our rural opportunities further, underscoring the importance of strategic prioritization for our Rural Development Fund project submission.

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.



2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING SENIOR CENTER PUBLIC HEARING

Get informed on the issues to be discussed and voted on at the upcoming Town meeting!

- Review of Town Meeting warrant articles
- Q&A with the Town Administrator
- Opportunity to discuss topics with fellow residents



WEDNESDAY
MAY 15, 2024 10:AM
7 MAIN STREET

INFORMATION FOUND AT
WWW.HUBBARDSTONMA.US

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