



Town Administrator

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To: Board of Selectmen

From: Ryan M. McLane, Town Administrator

Date: February 1, 2021

Subject: Town Administrator's Report

The following is the Town Administrator's report for the period ending January 29, 2021.

1. **COVID-19 Information** – Hubbardston is a yellow community in the most recent weekly public health report with a current case count of 21. In the last 14 days, 438 Hubbardston residents have been tested with 22 positives, giving the town a 5.02% positivity rate. This is a LOWER rate than the previous week. Towns bordering Hubbardston are seeing lower case totals; however, Westminster, Gardner, Templeton, Barre and Rutland are still in a red status. Princeton is in a yellow status and is the only neighboring town to see a case increase from last week. We continue to be vigilant in our town offices, recommitting daily to COVID-19 safety and consistently updating employees with guidance about staying home when sick. We are requesting that residents only come to the town offices with an appointment and a valid in-person need. For now, all town departments remain open for appointments, but employees have been instructed to work from home when possible.
2. **Department Report** – I am meeting with each department in the coming weeks to solidify a long-term plan for management under an interim Town Administrator. These meetings will examine FY21 and FY22 budgets in addition to reviewing goals and job descriptions. The point of the meetings is to establish a baseline for my temporary replacement. As the Board knows, I will be leaving the town for one year due to an overseas military obligation. We have narrowed the temporary TA search down to three candidates who match the board's request for a part-time, collaborative administrator that will continue the progress the Board has made in the last five years. I am also pleased to inform the board that all major FY22 contracts are now in place and ready for your review and approval.
3. **Financial Management** – We now have all FY22 budget assessments and estimates except for our regional dispatch and two schools. Based on early estimates, I will present to the Board a balanced budget recommendation on March 1. FY22 revenue

projection for FY22 are stronger than anticipated with new growth and local receipts helping to overcome no increase in state aid as indicated by the Governor's budget released this week. Overall, the budget looks to be a level services budget with the only major increases coming from the Worcester Regional Retirement System and the Quabbin Regional School District. It is our hope that the state will continue to look at ways to assist regional school districts with the rising costs of education in the COVID-19 environment, but only rumors exist at this point. Our FY21 budget expenditures and revenue receipts continue to be on pace with expectations. This is a positive development compared to predictions at the start of the pandemic.

4. **Infrastructure Updates** – The Hubbardston Center School elevator continues to demonstrate faults and is in need of major repair. The repair may cost north of \$70,000, a serious blow to the town's tidy FY22 capital plan presented by the Capital Improvement Planning Committee. The elevator is currently operational and safe, but if faults continue, this situation could require an emergency special town meeting to authorize repair funding. I will be recommending the use of stabilization funds to complete this repair if the situation holds until Annual Town Meeting. Our staff and volunteers continue to work through the town's ongoing capital projects to include the library foundation, the fire station exhaust mitigation, the document management project and the reconfiguration of the town's baseball fields (Cal Ripken standards). Finally, I met with QRSD officials and our OPM (Anser Advisory) to firm up MSBA reimbursement procedures in anticipation of the Center School Roof project. The roof project is still on track for public bidding in March and construction in June.
5. **Employee Recognition** – This week I would like to recognize Mallory Seamon, Michael Stauder and our hard-working Board of Health for their careful attention to the town's upcoming vaccination plan. Michael was appointed by the Board of Health to serve as Hubbardston's medical advisor for this effort. He has quickly assembled an Army of Hubbardston volunteers to assist with the effort and is ready to begin when the vaccines arrive. Mallory has been working with the Board of Health to stay up to date on federal and state requirements and solidify the plan for vaccinating our residents. She has been compassionately fielding resident questions about the vaccine process and working to identify residents who made need additional assistance. In the coming weeks, the Health Department will put out specific guidance about vaccinations to include how to sign up. We plan to inform residents through a reverse-911 call; however, residents can find this information in real-time on our Web site and online platforms. Our health team has quite literally built this plan from the ground up, an incredible achievement and a credit to the town's wealth of talent.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rm. M.J.", is located at the bottom left of the page.

Ryan M. McLane
Town Administrator