



Town Administrator

7 MAIN STREET, Unit #3
HUBBARDSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01452
(978) 928-1400 x 200 FAX (978) 928-3392

To: Board of Selectmen

From: Ryan M. McLane
Town Administrator

Date: August 28, 2020

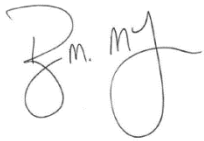
Subject: Town Administrator's Report

The following is the Town Administrator's report for the period ending August 28, 2020.

1. **COVID-19 Information** – We are working on all phases of our town reopening plan and will continue in our current posture until more information is available in the fall. Our town Boards and Committees continually ask whether in-person meetings will be allowed in the near future. The short answer is yes, but with severe restrictions. Indoor meetings are limited to eight people per order of the Governor and require strict adherence to CDC guidance. Groups can meet outside, but must limit gatherings to less than 50. As soon as either threshold is met, the meeting must end. While this does not greatly impact many of our public meetings, the Open Meeting Law does require fair and equitable access to public proceedings. This means any in-person gathering is limiting in some capacity. As a community and in consultation with this Board, the Board of Health and our public safety officials, decisions need to be made on what meeting types will be recommended.
2. **Department Report** – This week I finalized the Human Resource Policies Guide with our consultants from UMass Boston. I will be sending this final draft to all employees this month and looking to finalize the project by the end of September. Once complete, we will begin establishing procedures for annual mandatory training and work through compliance procedures for our employee records. Mallory and I also met with our Viewpoint Cloud providers to discuss options for implement full online permitting services for the town. Although we believe this would benefit the community, it is cost prohibitive. I am asking the Board for guidance on this venture as there are costs and benefits that will matter for years to come, especially given the impacts of COVID-19 and the uncertainty of the future.

3. **Financial Management** – I will present my final FY21 budget recommendations to the Board on Monday. This includes a balanced budget that meets the needs of our departments/schools, does not add additional free cash burdens, fully funds the FY21 Capital Budget and increase our town stabilization fund. This is possible due to the hard work of this Board, the Finance Committee and our town departments in preparing a long-term approach to our annual budget decisions. Although next year's budget remains incredibly uncertain, I feel we have a strong foundation from which to work on the challenges that are coming.
4. **Infrastructure Updates** – Construction began this week on the failing Route 62 culverts. The work will take the better part of a year and require significant detouring, but the project is necessary and fully funded by the state. Additional paving maintenance will also begin this month as part of the DPW's preventative maintenance program discussed at your previous meetings. We will update the town on this project and its traffic impacts on social media and the Town Web site. Lastly, I worked with Travis and our Town Engineers to resubmit our MassWorks STRAP Grant application for the repair and maintenance of Lombard Road. This important project is supported by this Board, our Legislative Delegation and our Public Safety Departments as a top priority in FY21. If successful, this grant would allow the Town to fully repair Lombard Road and start addressing a critical culvert problem for the Ware River Crossing. Updates about this grant will come in December.
5. **Employee Recognition** – This week I would like to recognize our Town Clerk Laurie Reed for her efforts during this challenging election season. In just her second year, Laurie continues to face unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a contentious Presidential Election. Laurie has done a tremendous job providing residents with information, meeting with residents (safely) to educate them on voting options and training her staff to handle mail-in and early voting. While many towns are facing Town Clerk retirements due to the challenges of 2020, we have a dedicated Clerk who is not only accomplishing the mission, but looking to improve our processes and procedures for the coming years.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rm. McLane".

Ryan M. McLane
Town Administrator