

## TOWN OF HUBBARDSTON

### Acting Town Administrator's Report April 26, 2021

This report provides an overview of the Acting Town Administrator's work progress and provides updates from Town departments and offices on various programs and initiatives. The report also includes information about projects and a schedule of upcoming municipal and community events.

#### **COVID-19 (UPDATE):**

The latest guidance from the Commonwealth can be found here: [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov)

Starting April 19, 2021, Persons 16 years of age or older became eligible for vaccination against COVID-19.

The Hubbardston Board of Health has allowed town committee members to meet in person. The public may attend remotely only. Zoom coordinates are to posted on the official meeting notice.

**Annual Town Meeting (UPDATE):** A draft warrant is prepared featuring a General Fund Budget, separate school operational assessments, separate school debt service, capital plan article, CPA debt service, and required standard articles.

The Community Preservation Act Committee submitted 6 articles, and the Planning Board submitted two articles.

The Town Administrator has prepared motions and explanations for each article and has sent them for legal review.

The Town Administrator and Moderator met to coordinate work on the Annual Town Meeting.<sup>7</sup>

The town administrators of member towns of the Quabbin Regional School District will meet to discuss the FY 2022 school assessment.

Open Items remaining on the warrant and budget are:

1. The Quabbin Regional School assessment.
2. Article 21: The strategy for managing excess Free Cash (approximately \$100,000).
3. The potential impact of the Police Reform Act that requires more funding for police training.
4. An assessment by the City of Gardner for a portion of capital expenses for two trucks associated with animal control.

#### **Short-Term Projects**

**Center School Roof Replacement Project (UPDATE):** The project is out to bid. There is a walk through scheduled for April 14. Subbids were received on April 22 for masonry and electrical. General Contractor bids are due May 6. Construction is expected to start in July. The project is expected to be completed in late August or early September.

Governor Baker on behalf of the Town has signed into law special legislation to certify the town meeting that authorized funding for this project (See Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2021).

The OPM, Architect, Treasurer, Chief Financial Advisor, and Town Administrator met to review the cash flow projections and plan for any debt service (est. to be \$6,000 of excluded debt service) to be included in the FY 2022 budget.

Vietnam Memorial: A committee is working on a grant application to fund a portion of the project.

Gazebo Roof: The project has been procured pending the successful execution of a roofer contract. Sanda Barry of the Parks Commission and Joyce Green of the Lions Club are coordinating this project. The bid received quoted a price of \$18,250, which exceeds the available budget by \$3,250. By excluding optional work valued at \$2,500 and drawing \$750 from available funds, the project may be funded. Work to start in the Spring 2021.

Fire Station Exhaust Project: The contractor has received the equipment from the manufacturer and is proceeding with the installation. This project is nearing completion.

Police Vehicle Camera Project: The Police Department received a grant to supplement a town appropriation. Any remaining non-grant balance will be returned to the General Fund. Chief Perry is moving this project forward.

Marijuana: There are two sites and several host Community Agreements under review. The projects are a grow facility (indoor and outdoor) and a retail establishment under review by Planning Board.

Green Communities: Green Communities funds are covering lighting upgrades to the Slade Building. This project is on-going.

IT Upgrade (UPDATE): The Town received a grant through the Community Compact IT program. The project consists of acquiring and operating a document management program, Laserfiche. The University of Massachusetts is managing this project. The Town acquired new copier capable of scanning the kind of documents that need to be archived. Staff are trained in operating the Laserfiche system, and documents are being scanned. This project is under way.

The contract includes scanning 60,000 documents, and this work is scheduled to begin in the first week of May.

Human Resources Upgrade: The Town received a Community Compact grant to rewrite the Town's human resources policies. The project is on-going.

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant: The next round of funding is open with applications due May 7, 2021. The town is working with TEC to develop an application to fund a culvert replacement plan.

High Street: The Town is working with TEC, Inc. to develop plans for repairing and expanding High Street through a MassWorks Grant.

Evergreen Road Bridge: Senator Gobi has filed special legislation (SD 1719) to allow the Commonwealth to grant to the Town of Hubbardston certain easements associated with future repairs to the bridge over Mason Brook.

Right of Way Project: This project is now active. Notices of land taking are being distributed to abutters. Funding is provided by the State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Construction is expected to start in Summer 2022.

Library Foundation: The Library Trustees are working to repoint and recondition the library foundation and walkways. Funding is in place from FY 2021 capital and Community Preservation Act funds for FY 2022.

Library Long Range Plan: Project is funded and is in the management of the Library Trustees.

Curtis Recreational Field Design (UPDATE): The project is being reviewed by the Park Commissioners who are working with a contractor. Prevailing wages have been obtained, and project is moving forward.

Rainbow's End Playground (UPATE): Parks Commission has received a price proposal for new playground equipment. DPW is scheduled to remove the old equipment, and a contractor will install new equipment. Funding is secured through CPA funds and CPA borrowing. A contract has been signed. Work is expected to begin June 1.

Cell Tower: The Town of Rutland and the Town of Hubbardston are collaborating to install a cell tower on land in Hubbardston. Hubbardston will supply the land; Rutland will build and operate the tower. The purpose of the cell tower is to enhance emergency communications by the regional dispatchers. Extra space on the tower should be leased to telecommunications companies to enhance civilian communications (e.g., cell phone service).

A geo-technical study of the site is complete and is under review by the Town of Rutland. The Town of Hubbardston is preparing an RFP for the civilian communications vendors, and the RFP will be delivered to Rutland.

Procurement: The Town is preparing the following procurement documents:

- A. The Town-contracted assessing services through Regional Resource Group, Inc. was amended to include an assessing assistant, and has triggered the need to procure assessing services for FY 2022.
- B. The lease for Fire Station #2 needs to be bid, as the total value of the contract exceeds the threshold of \$35,000.
- C. Bids for public construction and public works projects are being handled by consultants.

### **Long-Term Projects**

Master Plan: The Planning Board has contracted with Montachusett Regional Planning Commission to finish work on a Master Plan. Work is funded through a grant.

Affordable Housing Project: The Town hired VHB to analyze the town pit for hazardous materials. VHB was on scene last week to perform soil tests. The results of the study will inform the Town whether and how to proceed with a plan for developing affordable housing.

Economic Development: A Direct Local Technical Assistance grant will fund a study of a town center overlay district to promote business development. The Economic Development Committee is also seeking to install "Welcome to Hubbardston" signs in select locations.

Public Safety/Community Center Complex: Presentation to be made at ATM, describing a vision of a future project. A committee is working on a presentation.

### **Departmental Functions**

FY 2021 Revenues: Revenues to date for the fiscal year are trending slightly higher than our target and are within our expected range.

TOWN OF HUBBARDSTON				
REVENUES (ESTIMATED TO ACTUALS)				
March				
4/11/2021				
A	B	A/B	C	C/B
FY 2021 Revenues (9 months)	FY 2021 Target Revenues (12 Months)	Percentage of Actual Revenues to Target Revenues	Target Revenues (9 months)	Percentage of Estimated Revenues to Target Revenues
\$ 7,583,272	\$ 9,477,532	80.01%	\$ 7,108,149	75.00%

FY 2021 Expenses: Expenses in the General Fund are slightly lower than expected, and they are within range.

TOWN OF HUBBARDSTON				
EXPENDITURES (ESTIMATED TO ACTUALS)				
March				
4/11/2021				
A	B	A/B	C	C/B
FY 2021 Expenditures (9 months)	FY 2021 Target Expenditures (12 Months)	Percentage of Actual Expenditures to Target Expenditures	Target Expenditures (9 months)	Percentage of Estimated Expenditures to Target Expenditures
\$ 6,935,188	\$ 9,883,451	70.17%	\$ 7,412,588	75.00%

Tax Title: The Treasurer and Planning Board are working on resolving tax title lands. The Town is following legal requirements to proceed with foreclosures where necessary.

#### **Town Actions and Community Events:**

- April 26: Select Board reviews the warrant.  
Select Board holds a public budget hearing.
- May 10: Select Board votes on the warrant.  
Ballot question deadline.
- May 11: Select Board signs the warrant.
- May 12: Warrant is sent to the printers.
- May 17: Deadline for posting the warrant.

Warrant notice is mailed to voters.

June 1: Annual Town Meeting.

June 8: Annual Town Elections.

Thank you for your attention. If there are questions, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

David G. Nixon  
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