



## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen

**FROM:** John C. Curran, Town Manager

**CC:** Susan Aker, Cathy O'Dea

**SUBJECT:** Town Manager's Report, April 23, 2018

**DATE:** April 20, 2018

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### **Health Insurance Rates**

The health insurance rates for all employee policies will be increasing by 1% across the board as of July 1, 2018. The retiree policies went up significantly more. Medex increased by 5.5%. Blue Cross Managed Blue went up 12%. The Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO and the Tufts Medicare Compliment Prime plans went up 5%. These last three plans are not self-insured plans they are premium plans. All rate increases are driven by claims experience.

### **Professional Recognition**

#### ***Police Academy Recruits***

Four recruits successfully completed the rigorous Police Academy Program on April 11<sup>th</sup>, Leo Riberio, Alexander Allen, Sean Dougherty and Phillip O'Loughlin. Sean Dougherty finished as the top marksman of the class. Alex Allen won the Directors Award and also finished at the top of his class academically.

#### ***Tewksbury Board of Selectmen***

This office received a letter of sincere appreciation for opening a warming shelter and welcoming Tewksbury residents during the power outage of March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. They expressed their thanks to the Town and Bill Laurendeau for being good neighbors.

### **Food Pantry**

Billerica Community Pantry, Inc., a charitable organization that was formed by the Billerica Interfaith Association, has established a "just in time" food pantry located at the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints at 70 Concord Road. Initially, distribution will be monthly and increased to twice a month in September. Bishop Jared Koyle of the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints and Riyaz Ismail of Anjuman e-Ezzi, will make a presentation at the May 7<sup>th</sup> BOS meeting. The Billerica Community Pantry is carry on the work begun 27 year ago by Ken Buffum and Marie O'Rourke.

## **Fiscal Efficiency**

### *Community Compact Grant - \$10,000*

The Town applied for two Community Compact Grants over the Fall. Billerica was awarded \$25,000 for a wage and classification study for Public Safety, Clerical, and the Department Head Unions. This report will also include re-write of job descriptions if warranted. The second grant award was for \$10,000 to start the process of digitizing records. This will include a report on what records need to be kept, shredded, or can be digitized. The Community Compact grants are offered to municipalities through the Governor's Office. The grants promote best practices and efficiency. This grant was written submitted by Clancy Main – it is a great fiscal efficiency for the Town.

## **On-line Permitting**

The Building Department initiated on-line permitting on March 30<sup>th</sup>. The department is currently running a parallel paper and digital application processes. October 1<sup>st</sup> is the target date to eliminate the paper process. There is a desk top computer at the counter in the department for people apply and familiarize themselves with the new process and get assistance. The contractors that are currently using it like the ability to track the status of their application without calling or coming into the office. It is a much more user friendly system that what exists now. Commercial Plans will still be allowed as hard copies but residential plans will be required to be submitted digitally.

## **Aggregate Energy Update**

The Spring National Grid Rate has been set. Effective May 1<sup>st</sup> the rate will be .10870. This rate is slightly lower than the Town rate of .10984. This is consistent with what the Town was advised by our consultant, Colonial Power Group, Inc. The Town was advised that the spring summer rate would be higher than last summer but close to the rate that we have – .10984. The decision was made to lock in to this rate because the Town Rate would still be more competitive than National Grid because the average between the winter and summer rate for national grid would still be more costly even if the summer rate was slightly lower than the Town's annual rate.

If residents want to capture NGrids more competitive rate for 6 months they could still opt out of the Towns rate. However, they should be advised that the winter rate is projected to be .13+. This rate will be effective in November and December and the Town will still be locked into the .10984 rate for those months.

## **Clear Motion TIF**

The TIF agreement is not finalized between the Town and Clear Motion. Upon completion of this agreement it will be forwarded to the Board for review.

## **Marijuana Regulations**

The medical regulations were adopted by Town Meeting and are under Article 26 of the General By-Law. The restriction of this use is governed by Section 5E.8 of the Zoning By-Laws of the Town of Billerica. Recreational Marijuana would likely be restricted to the same overlay district. The Town is working with Town Counsel to bring forward some regulation proposals which it would make sense to incorporate those under Article 26 of the General By-laws.

## **Pot Holes**

The Town has had a particularly harsh winter. The DPW crews are currently out repairing the roads and will continue to do so.

**Middlesex Turnpike**

The Town asked VHB to review the intersection at Manning and Middlesex Turnpike to see if elimination of the dedicated left hand turn would not create a more detrimental traffic situation and or provide relief to the two properties on the Northerly side of Manning Road. There is no significant benefit to easement relief provided by this elimination but it would create an unsafe traffic situation. The Town has advised DOT of this information and its desire to move forward.

**CPC Mater Plan**

Rob Anderson has drafted a CPC master plan based on the Town's Master Plan. The CPC has moved set up a public hearing to receive input on the plan. Clancy Main has posted it on Google Docs. This will allow residents to provide public input by making suggestion on Google Docs effectively making this a digital public hearing. This is the link to the documents. [Open in Docs](#)