



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: John C. Curran, Town Manager

CC: Susan Aker, Cathy O'Dea

SUBJECT: Town Manager's Report, August 27, 2018

DATE: August 24, 2018

Mass works Project Update:

Verizon removed the final utility pole on 8/23. Tropeano will be on site starting Monday to begin repairs at the pole locations. They expect that work to take 2-3 days. Currently the punch list is ongoing.

Bike Trail Grant Announcement:

On Tuesday, August 28th at 12:30PM Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and other state officials will be presenting the Town a \$100,000 grant for the Yankee Doodle Bike Path that cuts through the new High School. This will take place outside of the Shawmut Field Office steps away from where the Bike Path will be located. Thank you to Representative Lombardo for all his efforts in making sure the Town received this grant. Also thank you to Kelley Conway for her efforts in putting the grant together.

Water Bills:

The Town has received inquiries regarding the increase in water and sewer charges during the billing period of April 3, 2018 to July 20, 2018. There are several contributing factors to this issue. The Town is in the process of replacing all residential meters in Town, the rates have increased and this is a high use billing cycle.

The first factor is the replacement of the meters. Approximately 8,500 of the 13,000 meters have been replaced to date. This project is being done to eliminate inequities in the water billing period process. Specifically, the old meters were read individually by Town employees on foot, house to house. This made it impossible for everyone to be read on the same cycle often times many residents would fall above or below the four month intended billing cycle.

Ironically, the process of replacing the meters often results in an extended read because it captures the balance of the old meter at the time it is replaced. This balance would be added to your regular billing calculation. Conversely, if your meter was replaced in the last billing cycle your bill will be lower than usual because your bill will be based on an abbreviated cycle.

It is possible that you are entitled to an adjustment in this cycle if your bill cycle exceeds 120 days due to a meter change out and you consumed more than 2,000 cubic feet in the extended cycle. To put the

adjustment in context – if you consumed 1,000 cubic feet over 2,000 c.f. (3,000 c.f.) you would be entitled to an adjustment on 1,000 c.f. which would have a value of \$12.10 collectively for your water and sewer bill.

If you think your bill meets these parameters you can call the water billing department to inquire about whether you qualify for abatement on your bill. The number for the water billing department is (978) 671-1313 option 4.

However the more likely contributing factor to a high water bill will be the increased rates and the higher consumption period. The water rate increased by 3% and the Sewer rate increased by 7.6%

If you do have a new meter you can access your consumption history by following the instructions on this link: <https://www.town.billerica.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/7565/How-to-access-your-meter-readers-via-the-web-with-phone-app-instructions?bidId> .

Town Center Banners / Lights:

The Town has partnered with Billerica Public Schools in an effort to decorate the common and showcase student art in Town.

Towards the end of the year HS/MS students were asked to submit artwork for a pilot Town project. Thirty seven pieces of art were selected by the Chris Dearbeck, Director of Visual and Performing Arts. These thirty seven pieces will soon be turned into banners and be displayed throughout the Town Center! Thank you to everybody who submitted artwork and we look forward to a more expansive project next school year.

Special thanks to Chris Dearbeck for helping make this happen! The Town expects to hold an event on Sept 13th to celebrate the artist and the completion of the MassWorks Project! We are currently exploring the cost and logistics of lighting the new street trees.

Boat Ramp

On August 16th this office, the Conservation Director, Deputy Police Chief, DPW Director, Water Superintendent, and Recreation Director, met with Department of Fish and Game in regards to the boat ramp at the DPW site. After much discussion Fish and Game will explore alternative sites including the proposed site. A follow-up meeting is to be scheduled.

Preliminary Warrant Article 37 – Increased Fines for Signage

Currently any violation in our zoning code under which a permit is not needed is structured as follows.

The penalty for such violation shall be a warning or \$100.00 fine for the first offense, \$200.00 fine for the second offense, \$300.00 fine for the third offense, and \$300.00 fine for the fourth and each subsequent offense.

Currently M.G.L. Chapter 40A reads as no local zoning law shall provide penalty of more than three hundred dollars per violation; provided, however that nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit such laws from providing that each day such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

Currently the Town fines at the max allowable by law.

Roof Update:

See attached Addendum from DPW Director Abdul Alkhatib.

