



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: John C. Curran, Town Manager

CC: Susan Aker, Cathy O’Dea, Susan Michelini and Clancy Main

SUBJECT: Town Manager’s Report, September 10, 2018

DATE: September 7, 2018

CPC Public Hearing

The public hearing was held for the CPC Warrant Article on Thursday September 6th. All off the project were endorsed by the Committee. The Howe School, The Peggy Hannon Rizza Project and the Bike Path Design Funding were all submitted by the Town and approved.

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 will celebrate the completion of the Massworks Project downtown on September 13th at 7:00PM in front of Saint Theresa's Church. Secretary Jay Ash from the Office of Housing and Community Development will be joining us. Chris Dearbeck, the Director of the BMHS Arts Department, was a great partner in putting together the Artscape portion of the program. Thirty Seven pieces art work will be displayed on banners throughout

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.