



## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen

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

**CC:** Clancy Main, Cathy O'Dea

**SUBJECT:** Town Manager's Report, September 28, 2020

**DATE:** September 25, 2020

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### **Boat Launch**

This office along with Chairman Rosa met with Doug Cameron on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Many of the concerns of the Department heads were discussed. A meeting is being set up to bring OFBA Engineers out to see if the Launch can be shifted downstream away from the intake. There was also significant discussion about security and emergency preparedness and response to a spill near the intake. Doug was also informed of the ongoing efforts to remove the Cabot Mill Dams and the impact it may have to the water level.

### **Desk Giveaway**

All of the desks have been given away to Billerica Residents. This program was very successful and well received by the public.

### **Planning Director Position and Hiring Freeze**

This office will be posting the Planning Director's position next week. There has been a hiring freeze implemented due to the fiscal uncertainty that existed earlier in the year due to Covid 19. However, concerns about revenue availability have been addressed with the Local Aid numbers that have been provided by the Legislature. Accordingly, the hiring freeze has been lifted. The current Planning chair and the former planning chair will be included in that process. I will also include Planning Member Gary DaSilva in this process.

### **Double Pole**

Steve Robertson is in communication with Tammy Saporito of National Grid. She sent a summary report which was not satisfactory as it appeared to be dated and was not the least bit informative. I will continue to pursue this with Mr. Robertson.

### **Pinehurst Fire Station Ground Breaking & Update**

The Town will be holding a Pinehurst Fire Station groundbreaking on October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 1:00 p.m. The Select Board, Hutter Construction, Left Field, and the Fire Department will be in attendance on Friday. Currently they are scheduled to complete the project on 9/22/21. Hutter is currently working through the abatement process. During the work, they found additional hazardous materials that

were not anticipated. This will result in a \$60,000 change order that will be deducted from the construction contingency budget line. Demolition is expected to begin the week of 10/19.

### **Old Ditson / Vining School**

The Request for Services (RFS) for an owner's project manager (OPM) bids were due on Friday. We received five bids and plan to open and review sometime early next week.

### **Bike Path Update**

VHB is continuing to work towards 75% design on the project. Kelley Conway has been in communication with them and is awaiting an answer on whether a submittal will be prior to the December 10 scheduled deadline. More information will be available on Monday. A few ongoing items are attached below:

1. The Engineering Department recently had a site meeting with abutters to review the design in the area of Astrig Way. This was an item raised at the design public hearing for the project where we were directed to look at alternatives to the present design.
2. The Town needs to do additional borings in the area of 129 Concord Road which are anticipated to be scheduled once we get approval from Conservation.

### **Yellow Community**

I released a press release attached below on Thursday in regards to becoming a yellow community. One item that has come to light has been that if the data was pulled one day prior or one day after we would have been deemed a green community.

Town Officials have been following the COVID-19 situation closely since the middle of February. The Town has taken many measures to stop the spread and had been successful through much of the late spring and summer. The residents of Town have also played a large role in following the guidance laid out by the Town and State. Following mask mandates, social distancing guidelines, and adhering to gathering limits have all contributed to slowing the spread in Billerica. When the Governor released his initial community risk map Billerica was a low risk community. As the weeks have moved on the Town has seen multiple spikes in COVID-19 cases. Last night the State released their positive test numbers over the past two weeks. Billerica had 26 cases over the past 14 days and therefore moved Billerica into the moderate risk category.

The 26 cases are spread throughout the community and the ages range from late teens to the elderly. After working with Town Nurse, Christine West we have learned that some of these cases were thankfully asymptomatic. Many only found out due to testing because of medical and dental procedures. Due to moving back into the yellow category the Town will begin reporting numbers more frequently. Sadly, there has been another death in the community bringing the total in the community to 30 deaths. This individual had many underlying conditions that contributed to this outcome.

Finally, Halloween is five weeks away. As we all know the coronavirus situation can and does change rapidly. The Town's decisions and recommendations regarding Halloween will be heavily influenced by what risk category the Town is in as we approach Halloween and state guidance. These decisions and recommendations will be released two weeks prior to Halloween. The Town asks that you continue to stay vigilant, social distance, and wear your mask to help slow the spread.

### **CPC / PHR**

This office was notified by CPC Chair, Rich Scanlon that Joe Fiumara is planning to place PHR on a late Oct CPC meeting. Joe is planning to get a sense of the CPC committee if they would support the project if it is to come back in the spring. If it is to come back in the spring PHR will need to

reapply. This means a new eligibility form and a full application which is due by December 31<sup>st</sup>. I will need a sense of the board prior to that if you would like to move forward with the project for the spring. Please advise.

**Masonic Hall**

The closing was delayed until next week due to the Masons delays on getting the necessary Deed signatures. It is expected to be completed next week.

**Personnel Investigation**

The Town has engaged Ed Mitnic to conduct the independent investigation into the allegations made by former employee Katie Mahoney. Mr. Mitnic is a former MCAD hearing officers and has many years of experience in labor law including disciplinary actions. The specific instruction to this officer by the Board was to engage an independent investigator to look into the allegations of threats made in the resignation letter of Katie Mahoney.

The investigator is scheduled to meet with Ms. Mahoney and her legal counsel on October 6<sup>th</sup>. The Investigator intends to interview Select Board Members after the conclusion of the interview of Ms. Mahoney. My Office will work with Boar Members to coordinate these interviews.