**Town Manager Update**

*May 24, 2021*

First, I’m sad to say that Judy Wagner, the Administrative Assistant, has notified the Town of her impending resignation. Her valuable service to the Town and her institutional knowledge will be greatly missed. I hope we can get a successor in quickly so that Judy will be able to orient the new Administrative Assistant. If you know of anyone who might like to apply, please let them know the position is posted on the Town website, or will be soon, together with instructions for applying.

As most people have probably heard, the Governor intends to lift most remaining COVID-19 restrictions by this Saturday, May 29. The state of emergency that has been in place since March 10, 2020 is scheduled to be lifted June 15. Starting May 29, the state's requirements will be replaced by an advisory consistent with the recent U.S. Centers for Disease Control guidance that vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask in most settings. Masks will still be required on transportation, in health care settings, schools and congregate living settings regardless of vaccination status. This will not affect our ability to use and apply for CARES funds.

The Senate Ways and Means cherry sheets are in. They propose an additional $52, 856 in receipts as compared to the Governor’s budget and an additional $15,137 in charges, for a net gain of $37,719 from the Governor’s budget. Now this can be conferenced with the House; if past trends hold, final figures will not be out till after the new fiscal year begins, though the FY 2022 state budget is supposed to be fixed by June 30.

Our Health Agent reported an outdoor gathering at Dalton Apartments of more than 25 people.  The property manager called the BOH and the Police, upset that current COVID gathering orders were not being followed. Our health agent conferred with two fellow health agents, and considering that this is an outdoor event, and given the current low metrics, she did not believe that the situation as described reached the level of a public health emergency that would necessitate her driving in and confronting the party hosts. She did leave a message for the host advising her that the gathering limit for private outdoor gatherings is at 25 and asked the Police to let her know if they thought further action by the BOH was needed.

I received a request for Federal earmarks and forwarded it to various Department heads, not so much as I expect they would have projects ready but as a notice that such requests may come in over time and they could prepare proposals for later use.

I received a complete street inventory and work priority list from the Highway Superintendent. There are eighteen highest-priority roads; I’ve asked the Highway Superintendent to identify the very highest priority of those, ballpark cost estimate. The four highest-priority roads are Orchard Street, at $300,000; Crane Street, at $80,000; Chamberlin Avenue, at $35,000; and Pleasant Street, at $291,000. These total $706,000. As you know, the Town gets about $220,000 per year in Chapter 90 money.

The eighteen highest-priority roads include Hemlock Hill Road; Anthony Road; East Street.; Kirchner Road.; a portion of road off Prospect Street; Gulf Road; John Street; Chamberlain Avenue; Fox Road; Orchard Street; Chalet Road; Dalton Division Road; Washington Mountain Road; Pinecrest Drive; Westview Drive; Fredrick Drive; Whippoorwill Drive; and Sleepy Hollow Drive.

The Highway Superintendent is participating in the regional bid for line painting this year in the hope of getting a better price. The bids are due to be opened soon, with work beginning soon after the beginning of the new fiscal year, July 1.

In tree news, Asplundh Tree Service is taking some problematic trees down along Route 9 in the near future along with about 50 other trees as part of an Eversource project.

The Building Superintendent performed another test for asbestos in the Town Hall attic due to incomplete information from the last time we tested. The results are in, and we are faced with the most expensive scenario. The plaster in the walls and ceiling of the old Opera House do indeed contain asbestos, and in the opinion of the Finance Committee Chair, this means the room should be gutted. I have therefore revised the request for borrowing at the special Town Meeting.

I am working on a policy for Town bathroom facilities at parks that will address past problems. There seems to be additional accountability needed from those who agree to maintain them after various events. I hope to bring it to you at your next meeting. There is an excellent memorandum between the Town and the CRA but problems were observed last year that call for clearer understanding.