**Town Manager Update**

*November 22, 2021*

In Human Resources news, I have begun to meet with the Police union on their three-year contract, and have set a date for meeting with the Dispatchers’ union as well.

Also in Human Resources news, there was an issue with information the Dalton Police contributed to a case over a year ago that just recently went to court, which you may have read about in the Berkshire Eagle. The issue regarding the information led to the case being dismissed. While I can’t offer any comment, I can confirm that the Town is moving forward with an investigation performed by an independent contractor.

Use of the state’s COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Leave Fund has been extended till April 1, 2022. Employees who demonstrate they are sick with COVID can have one week’s sick leave paid for by the state.

The personnel study is moving along well, with current pay being forwarded to the consultant for an analysis of what various pay changes would mean for the budget, based on an analysis of the positions and pay in comparable towns.

I am planning to have our Town Planner, Grant McGregor, present a report on some of his work at your next meeting, and hope that can turn into a periodic report, perhaps quarterly. He is working with the Planning Board, ZBA, DRA/DDIC, Green Committee, and Open Space and Recreation Committee, all of which do important planning work for the Town.

I met with engineers from Weston and Sampson this morning and toured the transfer facility. This initial activity, including a draft contract for next year, is paid for with a Community Compact grant; a second phase regarding an engineering analysis of the transfer facility will be paid for with solid waste funds.

I pleased to say that I have met with the Town Accountant regarding the FY 2023 budget and have started preliminary work on that.

New phones have been installed in the Town Hall, which should be much more reliable than the old ones. There are new extensions, which callers can identify through a name directory. We’re also posting the new extensions to the website.

I’m also moving forward, but more slowly, on the Town Hall renovation (including the lease), possibilities for the Bardin APR parcels, union negotiations, and website issues.

Since our Health Agent is not here this evening, I will say that Berkshire County, particularly, North County, has seen a substantial rise in COVID cases over the past few weeks, now 43 per hundred thousand (over seven days), only over the last few days equaled in Massachusetts by Essex County. As of November 18, Dalton had a 14-day average of 46.6 cases per hundred thousand, versus 36 for Mass. in general. This is of course before the holidays, so I will personally urge everyone who is not vaccinated to get vaccinated, and everyone who has been to get a booster shot.