**Town Manager Update**

*March 7, 2022*

The Highway Superintendent and I have been discussing summer hours for the Highway crew, as the hours of daylight are longer and mobilization time can be reduced for day-long projects. This is a common plan for Highway Departments. As a result, we’re planning to try summer hours of 6-4 Monday thru Thursday, as of April 4 for Highway Department hours of operation. We plan to keep those hours of operation until the week of September 12 at which time they will return to regular hours.

We received notice of our FY23 Chapter 90 funding—$215,411, down $5,768 from last year and the lowest since 2008. I wonder whether our lower 2020 Census numbers affected the amount.

I have identified a number of special articles for the annual or special Town Meeting warrants:

First, as I mentioned some weeks ago, we have received a petition to accept River Street Extension as a Town way. We may also vote on an Accessory Dwelling Unit by-law; authorizing the Town to lease the farmland portion of the Bardin parcel; and rescinding the Town’s acceptance of the Civil Service program for our Police. Financial articles could include deauthorizing the remainder of various borrowings whose purpose has been completed; funding a Town Forest plan; and funding a modest grant match account.

I have made progress on the draft RFP for Division Road, though not yet quite enough to send it out. I have incorporated comments from MassDOT, the Highway Superintendent, and the Water District Superintendent. I am waiting for further comments, including regarding the comparative criteria, to see that we don’t disadvantage smaller, local firms, while ensuring quality engineering.

For a Transfer Station update, we have learned that we no longer have to pay prevailing wage for transfer station hauling. We’re waiting for a figure from the state so we can forward it to Casella and get a proposed contract.

Our Emergency Management Director has taken advantage of an offer from MEMA to receive additional personal protective equipment (PPE) from MEMA, working with Town staff to ensure everyone’s needs are met.

Staff celebrated the opening of Town Hall with coffee and tea, and a wide assortment of baked goods and fruit on Wednesday morning. I learned the staff includes many talented bakers and even more people who appreciate the results.

Surveyors’ bids for the portion of the Bardin parcel we intend to lease are due Thursday. The scope of work includes producing “metes and bounds” language suitable for a lease.

I have written the owners of the View Street lot adjacent to the Town lot that I believe Housing Court will have to create a deed for the Town land, as none exists. They may be required to have a survey of the lot done to create that deed.