**Town Manager Update**

*January 23, 2023*

I attended the MMA annual conference this past weekend. Aside from hearing the Governor’s priorities in her first address to the MMA, I visited a number of our vendors and state partners at the trade show, attended workshops in municipal law, labor law, and recruitment—all eligible for reducing our MIIA premium—and attended a Small Town Administrators’ lunch meeting and the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association. I also attended the MMA Annual Meeting, hearing from Senators Elizabeth Warren, Ed Markey, and Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll, recently Mayor of Salem.

I also heard at the trade show that the state would be looking for state-owned land to use for renewable energy projects (though not forest or park land), and I have asked the Assessors for a list of state-owned land in town in case there is any that might be useful, such as the Fish and Wildlife property.

I’m sorry to report than an excellent prospect for Town Planner declined a job offer, but not for reasons of salary. She decided that her ties to the Boston area were too strong, and her work for the upcoming semester too demanding, for her to move to the Berkshires at this time. I said that the position is open until filled, so if she feels differently anytime soon she should get in touch, which she said she would consider. I also met a planner looking for work at the trade show and promoted the position; perhaps I’ll hear from her later this week.

My intern for the semester came to town last week and I introduced him to a number of staff members. He also attended a meeting of the Emergency Management Advisory Committee at which our Emergency Management Director introduced some ideas for staff training. He is in his senior year at Westfield State University and has been accepted into their Public Policy graduate program. He’ll be working with me mostly on Thursdays, or remotely, on both some internal organizational matters and some financial analysis.

Tighe and Bond, who worked on the Sewer System Evaluation Survey, have signed a contract to do the engineering and construction oversight of the necessary repairs. This is the beginning of the project funded by both ARPA and the Sewer Stabilization Fund.

The Planning Board will be holding a public hearing for the Warren property solar project on Wednesday, February 15. Letters have gone out to the abutters and the ads will be in the Berkshire Eagle according to the requirements of the law. A paper copy is available in my office and an electronic version will soon be on the Planning Board website, with a news notice on the front page.

We have received a report from Hill Engineers regarding the library roof. Unfortunately, it looks as though it would not support added weight for heat pumps.

I have also signed the contract for Shire Forestry to create a Forestry Plan for The Pines, a priority of the Open Space and Recreation Commission. This complements the agreement with Greenagers to makes The Pines trails more accessible.