**Town Manager Update**

*November 12, 2024*

As you heard earlier, I’ve been trying to move ARPA projects forward and making plans for the remainder of the funds. I believe I can come up with some categories of spending that the Select Board can approve and we can continue to wrap under budget projects into expenses through December.

Procurement activity: we received a quote for the Town Hall plumbing upgrade for $23,000 from Hill Engineering and will go ahead with that. We also received three bids for the garage roof replacement and accepted one for $146,400, from Larochelle Construction in West Springfield. The DPW stormwater and employee handbook bids are scheduled to be opened tomorrow, and the police station feasibility study on Wednesday, November 20.

We’re also making progress on the new website, which we had hoped to be up a couple of months ago. Various delays and holding the contractors fairly strictly to our proposal have meant a delay in implementation but I believe the final result will be worth it.

Dalton will be recognized at the Green Communities Summit on November 22, 2024, for its success at reducing municipal energy use by 20% since our Green Communities baseline year. The Summit is being held at Devens and I have asked the Green Dalton Committee whether any of them would like to attend on behalf of the Town.

There’s one final step to prepare the Orchard Road project for bidding, and Town Counsel is in communication with DEP and MDAR regarding permission to re-work the drainage on APR-protected land and I replied to an e-mail I got today. We believe that since it’s not a change in use it will be a relatively straightforward approval.

Regarding the newly funded conservation agent—I did not believe it was appropriate to propose a new position at a STM, but that meant we allocated the funds to the expense account rather than the salary account, and the only candidate is treated as an employee in the other towns she works for. Therefore, I’ve asked Richmond, one of the other towns the candidate works in, if they would consider an intermunicipal agreement (IMA) with Dalton for the rest of FY25.

I will note that Pleasant Street is now paved. Together with the re-paving of Sleepy Hollow Drive, Frederick Lane, and Whippoorwill Drive, that wraps up the major paving work of this construction season. Of course, we look forward to Orchard Road being paved starting April 1.

Regarding land which the Town foreclosed on in the past, including the Bardin land, DOR has clarified that the recently passed Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2024, Section 212, includes a limit on retroactive claims, saying that “no claim for the return of excess equity may be asserted by any party where a Land Court judgment of foreclosure was entered and not appealed, on or before May 24, 2021.”

I have asked the Assessors to calculate how much it would cost the Town to adopt the provisions of the HERO Act, which include raising the tax exemption level for real estate for disabled veterans.