**Town Manager Update**

*January 27, 2025*

The Governor has joined cities and towns in asking the Legislature for a multi-year increase in Chapter 90 funds--$300 million per year over five years. That said, the Legislature has rejected a three-year commitment of $300 million per year before, so we’ll have to wait and see how they approach this advocacy.

We have received notice from our insurer, MIIA, that medical insurance rates will be going up considerably. For the current year, FY25, we are paying $870,639. The minimum percentage rise MIIA is projecting is 9.92% and the maximum is 19.92%, with Dalton’s percentage rise expected to be close to the high end due to our three-year look-back experience. A 20% rise would be $174,126, and we expect Dalton’s rise to be close to that amount. After this year, we expect our three-year look-back experience to be better.

In slightly better news, it looks as though our sewer treatment cost will be going up only about 8% rather than the 16% it rose last year. This means an increase of about $124,000 rather than $249,000.

Please note that just the two items above will raise the Town’s operating budget by about $298,000—almost $300,000.

A number of pieces of legislation that could help the Town are scheduled for the upcoming session. The include establishing a municipal building fund, making the remote meeting option permanent (it expires in March), municipal control over the number of liquor licenses available, along with a number of local revenue option initiatives. I’ll let you know if any of these need your advocacy as the session advances.

I’m moving forward with arranging an informal meeting for Dalton and Pittsfield residents to meet regarding the reconstruction of Division Road, with the goal of getting general agreement on the need and our general direction for a plan. This comes at the 10% design phase, with a formal meeting scheduled for the 25% design phase. I’d like to thank John Boyle for assisting in contacting the Pittsfield City Councilors who represent the area and looking into possible venues. The target date for the meeting is February 19th.

Jeff Burch as Safety Officer and I met with MIIA to go over our Action Plan, a document containing both mandatory and recommended actions, which MIIA has required for several years due to a high cost of claims (mainly from one accident). There is a three-year lookback, so our cost of coverage should be reduced after that, but we are still subject to the costs and the action plan this year. We should have no trouble meeting the required actions in the plans, which consist solely of trainings.