**Town Manager Update**

*February 10, 2025*

We have been working for some time on arranging Town participation in a completely State-funded digital equity program, involving mostly the Senior Center, the Dalton Housing Authority, and the CRA. Dalton will be provided with a “digital literacy associate,” who will reach out to residents of Pine Grove and Pomeroy Manors and the Senior Center. The Associate will also provide “train the trainer” programs at the Senior Center and CRA to give residents the ability to continue digital literacy training after the grant term has expired (in March of 2026), and will, through BRPC, take care of all required State grant reporting and close-out activities.

The Finance Committee has been looking at five years of budgets and seeing where typically budgeted amounts have not typically been fully spent. Based mostly on that analysis, they have been voting relatively small reductions in the requested amounts. At its last meeting, $500 was taken from the Traffic Commission, $500 from Forest Warden expenses, $500 from the Tree Warden’s planting line, $500 from the Historical Commission’s purchased services line and $500 from its “other supplies” line; $300 from Cultural Activities for Dalton Day; $350 from Memorial Day supplies (the request was up $950); and $1,000 from Central Supplies, from its office supplies line.

The Transfer Station upgrade design and cost estimate will be ready for consideration at Town Meeting if the Board wishes to include it on the warrant for this year. I assume it would be a borrowing.

There was considerable project-driven interest in the Stormwater Commission last week. However, the Building Commissioner had offered the Conservation Commission the opportunity to take on the duties of the Stormwater Commission, as other towns have done, and I am waiting till I hear from the Conservation Commission before proposing members to the Stormwater Commission. We have notified all those wanting to be on the Stormwater Commission of the situation and expect a reasonably quick resolution.

DDR meeting w designer and Pittsfield City Solicitor, DPW head, and a number of MassDOT staff. The project is currently scheduled to go out to bid in March of 2029. The group discussed the preferred plan, rights of way and the upcoming public information session on February 19, at 7 p.m. at the community building at 115 Red Barn Road.

I have been working on bringing the Massachusetts Municipal Association to Dalton for one of its semi-annual legislative breakfasts, on Friday, March 7. The Senior Center is confirmed as available. This is an opportunity for local officials to hear the status of the Municipal Empowerment Act, the state budget, and other relevant legislation and policies. We hope to have our local legislators there and of course there will be an opportunity to greet municipal officials from Berkshire County and beyond. Unfortunately, with limited space, this is an invitation-only meeting, not open to the public.

We’ve gotten our health insurance increase—19.7%, or $171,516. The Town Treasurer informs me that this is our second-largest increase since a 30+% increase in 2005-06. If the schools end up with the same increase as last year, 1.8%, that would be $160,344, so the total of those two lines would be $331,860.