

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Heather M. Munroe, Town Administrator

January 9, 2023

BOARD/COMMITTEE OPENINGS

Boards, Committees, Commissions

See the Town's Website for openings.

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

Check out the Town's Website for the latest programs.

DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

Finance Department

The Town Auditors will be on site for the next few weeks working with the Finance Departments on the FY22 Audit.

Public Safety Building

There has been a lot of action over at the PSB this past week. The Cable Access Committee has had a company installing new cameras and wires over in the Training Room. Our first trial run of the Select Board meeting being held in that room is on target for the end of January.

With the use of gift funds, the front lobby is getting a facelift with some fresh paint and more customer friendly access. Our goal is to still move our Land Use Coordinator to the old Dispatch area, now estimated to be around February 1st. There is now a customer window direct access for the police admin. Once the Land Use Coordinator moves, public will be able to enter the public safety building lobby without ringing a door bell and receiving direct service.

Town Administrator

FY24 Budgets

I have been working with meeting with Departments on their FY24 budgets.

Procurement Certification

I have completed all three required courses that were held online over the course of a few months by the MCPPO to request MCPPO certification from the State.

FINANCES

ARPA

Two projects have now been completed with remaining funds that need to be returned to ARPA's available funds. The first is the Police Bridge Academy project is completed, with a total of \$4,628.60 to be returned to the ARPA available funds. The second is the Water Tower Generator project with a total remaining balance of \$5,624.44. This brings the total amount to be returned to ARPA at \$10,253.04.

Currently, there are still 10 projects that are outstanding, with two winding down. The electronic signs project should be completed within the next few months, if not sooner; and Tree Removal and Trimming should be complete once we receive the final bill. That leaves the following projects still underway: the West St Water Main Engineering; Food Pantry; Assistance to Households; West St Stormwater Management; Library Internet; MS4 Compliance; Fire Truck; Public Health Nurse.

FY23 Budget

This update will cover the FY23 year until December 31, 2022, our halfway point.

Revenues

To date, are revenues are only updated through the end of November 30, 2022. The revenues typically do not get updated until mid-month after interest rates and bank statements are in. In the future, we will shoot for budget updates at the second meeting of the quarterly month to have these up-to-date. I will only cover items that are not reported as of November 30, 2022 between 45-50%.

- ✓ **Cemeteries (34%)** – These are lower than expected, but as much as we estimate, this will vary each year.
- ✓ **Fines & Forfeits (51.60%)**
- ✓ **Investment Income (92.86%)** – Interest rates are back up on general accounts.
- ✓ **Misc Recurring (Teacher Retirement) – (0%)** – This comes from the State and had not been received by the Town to date.
- ✓ **MV Excise (38.60%)** – This is still on target as our major excise billing goes out in February and is due in March. This should be close to budget come our 3rd quarter report.
- ✓ **Other Misc. Not Estimated (Sale of equip)** – (\$8k) This was for the sale of fire truck earlier this year.
- ✓ **Payments in Lieu of Taxes (0%)** – We have a PILOT with Worcester and Leicester with land they own in Town. These assessments went out this past week and should be accounted for in the third quarter report.

- ✓ **Rentals (10.53%)** – This is for the 10 West Property which we rent. A few months of rent were forgiven as there was a purchase that was made for the building directly by the tenants.
- ✓ **WRSD Maintenance Account (61.68%)**

Expenses

We are holding our own with expenses in FY23. To date, there are not any major concerns with our budget and ability to stay on track for the remainder of FY23. A few things that we will be watching very closely are: the retirement board and votes that could impact our assessment midyear; and heating oil use and costs.

- ✓ Under Budget
 - **Central Purchasing (33.97%)**– So far so good. However, it has only been a few months of oil use.
 - **Con Com (6.5%)** – Con Com Agent position vacant for most of the year. Con Com had a new employee that resigned before the start of the fiscal year. Con Com met with Rutland's Con Com to review possible sharing of position and ultimately determined they were looking for employees with different skill sets (agent vs admin). We have now posted the position and Con Com will be moving the process forward after their next meeting on the 12th.
 - **Debt Borrowing costs** – We have not had to use this at all to date.
 - **Employee Benefits** – With some folks coming off and going onto the health insurance plans, we are currently experiencing a bit of a savings.
 - **Historical Commission (0%)**
 - **Historical District Supplies (0%)**
 - **Insurance Premiums (91.54%)** – We pay most of this at the beginning of the fiscal year and get adjustments with changes as the year progresses (add vehicle, subtract, etc).
 - **Legal (22%)** – Well within budget and on target.
 - **Plumbing Inspector** – We currently pay the plumbing inspector per inspection. This amount suggests the possibility that we may have to come to the reserve fund as the year proceeds if we have more inspections that are needed than we have funds to cover inspections. For FY24, we are looking to work with the Boards and Inspectors and make this into a revolving fund, so as we generate revenue and the need for inspection, we will always have the exact amount we need.

- **Public Building Maintenance (22%)** – We have not currently hired a custodian, waiting to see if we can combine a few buildings work at the same time before we do so.
- **Regional Dispatch (0%)** – This funding is for the fiber contract to maintain our connection between the Town and Holden, to the tune of \$8k a year. The contract is paid between Dec and Jan each year and we just received the bill.
- **Retirement Assessment** – We will need to keep a close eye on what happens with Worcester Retirement Board and if a new assessment is issued midyear.
- **Short Term Interest** – We have not had to use this at all to date.
- **Snow & Ice** – We are doing really well so far, due to luck, with limited events.
- **Town Reports (0%)** – We expend this towards the end of the fiscal year.
- **Wachusett Greenways (44%)** – Reimbursements submitted as projects happen.

✓ Over 50% Budget

- **Animal Control Officer (55.96%)** – We paid the annual, prorated, cost for this service through Rutland a month of so ago. The only reason there are still funds, is because we switched from an employee to a service after the fiscal year began and required a reserve fund transfer into the account to cover the cost. Once May presents itself, we will be able to transfer the \$8k and some change out to another line.
- **Assessors** - Payment to Vision for services
- **Fin Com (59.27%)** – Dues
- **Municipal Info Services** – Purchase of all computers that we planned on purchasing
- **Regional Planning Assessment (99.97%)** - Upfront
- **Town Clock Purchased Services (61.11%)** – As needed
- **Tree Warden** – Purchases most of services at beginning of the year.

FY24 Budget

Grants

Newly Awarded:

None at this time.

Active/Status Update:

Community Compact (IT) Grant – Grant funds were awarded in December in the amount of \$115,000 to support conversion to records management system, including scanning and electronically filing many of the Town’s files to relieve storage burden and make files more user friendly and searchable.

Community Compact Grant “HR Procedures” – Turnover in staff at Collin’s Center. Working with them to finish up the project. In Progress

DFS Firefighter Safety Grant – FD was awarded for \$15,500 for a grant for turnout gear which they applied for in October.

Early Education & Care – The Recreation Department has received a grant for \$3,250 a month towards the Before/After School Program starting in October. (9/2022)- In Progress

MIIA Risk Management Grant – We were awarded half of the funding for the cost of chain saw safety kits (chaps, etc.), bucket truck communication gear, and cybersecurity simulation and testing costs for staff for a total of \$5626.53 out of the total \$9,237.50 applied for in September.

MIIA Wellness Grant – Partially Complete.

Office of Grants & Research – The Police Department received a grant with funding from the National Highway & Traffic Safety Administration in the amount of \$19,921 (9.2022) – In Progress.

SAFE Grant – FD applied for and were awarded a grant in the amount of \$5,400 for safety education.

Shared Streets Grant- In Progress.

Small Bridge Grant (2019) – Planning Grant Black Hill Road, in progress.

State Earmark of Funds – Senator Gobi and Representative Ferguson had contacted my office early this summer to inquire if there were projects related to economic development in which we could use funding. They submitted legislation that would support \$75k for redoing our Zoning Bylaws and \$125k related to our DPW building. We received notice on Friday that the earmark totaling \$200k was approved.

United Way – The Recreation Department applied for and were awarded funds in the amount of \$5000 for additional after school/out of school programming.

Wachusett Reservoir Watershed Salt Reduction Grant – We were awarded the 50/50 matching grant for a polar flex system, that if awarded would reduce the cost of the item, which is originally \$6,700, in half.

Applied for:

Ambulance Certified Public Expenditure Program – FD applied for reimbursement for Medicaid/Mass Health ambulance billings for the prior Fiscal Year 2022, with the amount requested at \$62,566.

Assistance to Firefighters Grant- FD applied in January 2021 for \$450,000 for a Water Tanker. Funding to awarded through December, no word yet.

GAP II Grant – The DPW applied for the GAP III grant for funding for the Water Department’s Pump stations for energy efficiencies, in the amount of \$50,000 in August. **Unfortunately, in January we received notice that we did not receive this grant.**

Procurement:

Completed:

Pending:

None at this time.

To do:

- ✓ **Cable Access Software**
- ✓ **Records Building – Fence**
- ✓ **Security Cameras (Paxton Center School) –**
- ✓ **Town Common area drainage (WRAP funding)**
- ✓ **Trash Collection**
- ✓ **Tivnan Field Lights (materials only)**

JOB OPENINGS

DPW

Temporary Employee – With an employee out on leave for the next 12 weeks, we have posted for a temporary employee to assist the DPW with regular tasks and snow responsibilities.

Town Hall

Assistant Treasurer Collector – We have offered this position to a candidate at the end of last week. We are waiting to see if the employee accepts.

Conservation Agent- This position has been vacant for a few months. The Con Com met last week to review the job description and posting and is for four hours a week. Once posted, this should be placed on the website and indeed. The Con Com is planning to meet on the 12th to determine how to proceed.

PROJECTS

Updates

Town Building Phone Upgrade – We are now working directly with TPX on this project.