

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Heather M. Munroe, Town Administrator

January 30, 2023

BOARD/COMMITTEE OPENINGS

Boards, Committees, Commissions

See the Town's Website for openings.

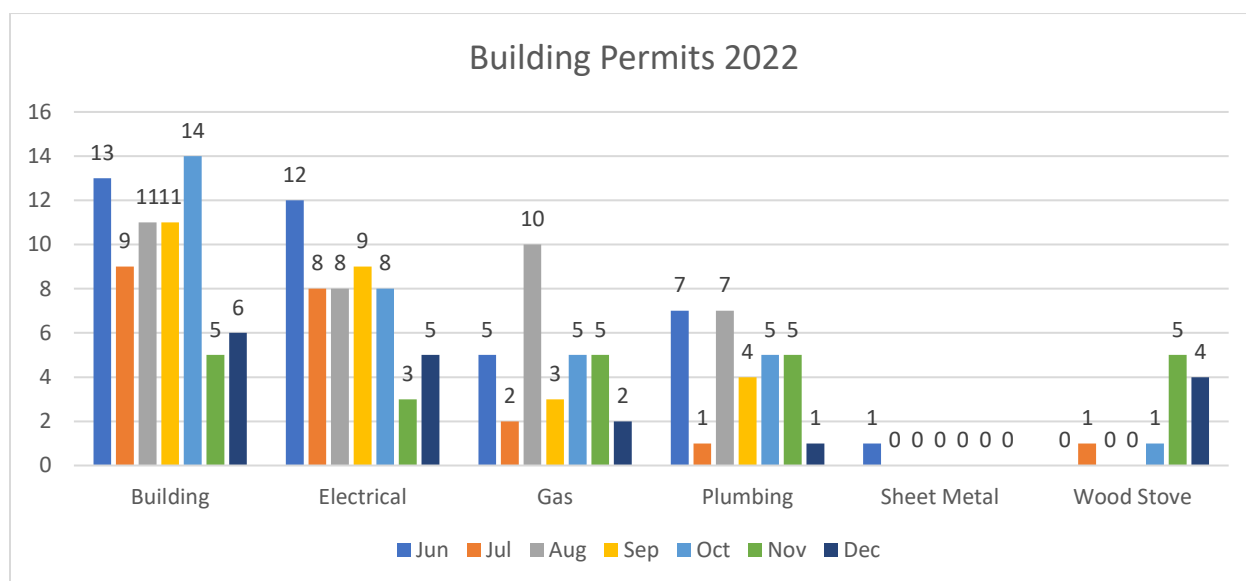
COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

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

DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

Building Department

In December we saw permits drop slightly below November, with a total of 18, six being building permits. Of those building permits, one is for a new home on Grove Street, the remainder are for basements, windows, shed, etc. In comparison to the year prior, when we look at September through December for both 2021 and 2022, we were down 30 total permits in 2022 (at 101) compared to 2021 (at 131).



Public Safety Building

Beginning in March of 2023, the Public Safety building lobby will be unlocked from 9 am to 3pm Monday through Friday. Eva, the Police Admin, will be serving the public at the newly installed window for all Police business. Sheryl, Town Services Coordinator, will be relocating to the old dispatch room and assisting folks with land use business from 9 am to 3pm Monday to Thursday.

The Select Board have begun to use the Public Safety Building Training Room to host and broadcast the Select Board meetings live.

Town Administrator

Over the past few weeks that Town has experienced some strong weather systems bringing snow and ice and resulting in tree damage. The DPW, Light, Fire, and Police have been working additional hours to keep up with demand and retain open roadways for the public. As a result of the most recent storm, DPW has hired an outside contractor to assist with tree debris removal from Town properties and trees that have fallen into the roadways.

FINANCES

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. **Update - Funds will be required to be used and projects completed by June 30, 2026.**

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.

Procurement:

Completed:

Pending:

- ✓ **Security Cameras (Paxton Center School)** – Working with the School to complete this outstanding project and purchase from the State Bid list.

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

Town Hall

Conservation Agent- Members of the Con Com have interviewed a candidate and are waiting on reference checks to report back to the full Commission.

PROJECTS

Updates

Town Building Phone Upgrade – We are now working directly with TPX on this project. The phones will be arriving early February and we should have training and a complete switchover prior to the end of February.

Cybersecurity- We will be meeting internally this week to discuss the Town's current cybersecurity measures. We will be implementing Multifactor authentication as well as utilizing phishing tests (paid for through a MIIA grant) for all employees with emails.