

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Heather M. Munroe, Town Administrator

February 13, 2023

BOARD/COMMITTEE OPENINGS

Boards, Committees, Commissions

See the [Town's Website](#) for openings.

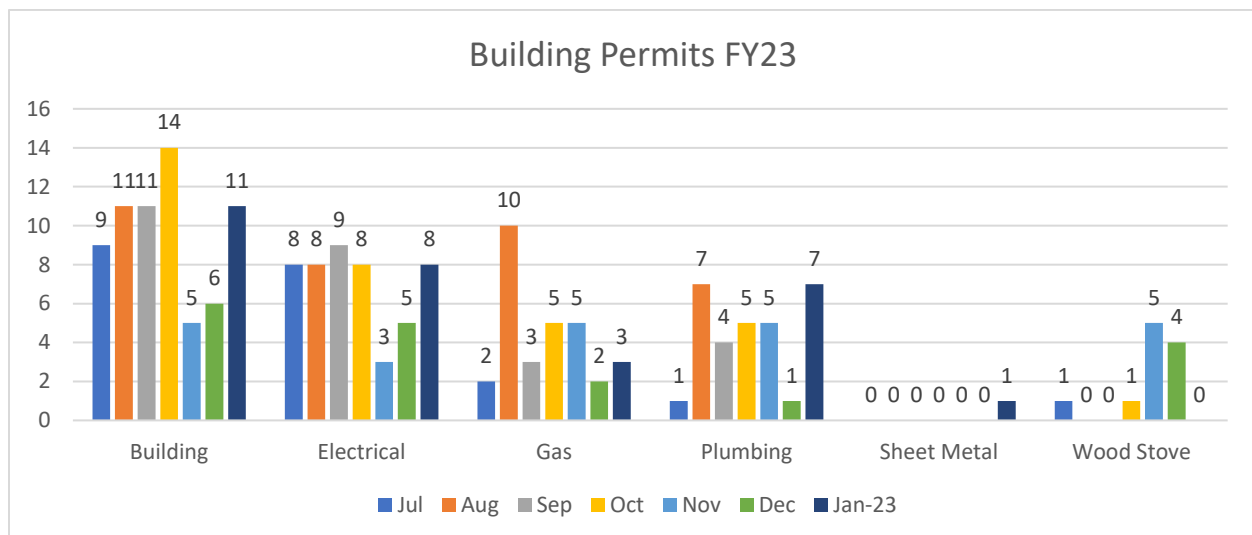
COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

Check out the [Town's Website](#) for the latest programs.

DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

Building Department

In January we saw an increase in permits from December's low of 18 up to 30 in January. Of those permits, 11 were building related. In FY23 thus far we have had 68 building permits pulled.



Conservation Commission

The Con Com has voted to make a contingent offer for the Conservation Agent position to Doug Dillon. Doug will begin the position with the Town late February.

Public Safety Building

The Select Board have begun to use the Public Safety Building Training Room to host and broadcast the Select Board meetings live. On February 8, the Finance Committee held their first meeting at the Public Safety Building. The policy on use of the Training Room can be found on our website [here](#).

School Budget (WRSD)

The Town's Town Administrators involved sent a letter to the WRSD Superintendent this past week, advising that the Towns' had a limited bandwidth for no more than a 4% assessment increase. WRSD is holding a joint meeting on the 27th to review their budget with all Towns, TA's, and Fin Coms.

Town Administrator

The DPW hired an outside contractor to assist with tree debris removal from Town properties and trees that have fallen into the roadways. The Paxton Municipal Light Plant was kind enough to let us use their chipper to catch up on tree branches that had fallen during the last storm.

During the weekend of the 4th, we had some cold temperatures that caused several pipes to freeze in residences and which resulted in substantial flood damage. The Building Commissioner condemned one such home that currently had no occupants on the 7th. Our Fire, DPW, and Building Commissioner have been working with other related matters as they arise.

FINANCES

Annual Audit

Our Auditors completed their Audit of our FY22 books in early February. We will be setting up a meeting for the Auditor to visit with the Select Board and Finance Committee to review their findings. After this meeting, the Audit documents will be made available on the Town's website for anyone to view.

Bond Rating

In February, Donna Couture (Treasurer) and Larissa and I met with our Moody's representative to complete an interview and allow an opportunity for Moody's to apply their new formulas to the Town of Paxton. Moody's issued their official report on the 7th and scored Paxton the same as previous, Aa3 rating. To view the official press release from Moody's, please click [here](#).

FY24 Budget Process

The FY24 budget process is well underway. The Finance Committee has started reviewing budget and met with the Library and COA on the 8th at the Public Safety Complex for the first time. Our staff have been working on updating and obtaining the most current information and figures for the 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. 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:

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

Police Officer (x2)

PROJECTS

Updates

Town Building Phone Upgrade – We are now working directly with TPX on this project. Phones are installed in most offices. We are working on navigating any wiring challenges, as well as confirming the correct accounts and lines to port over. 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 implementing Multifactor authentication as well as utilizing phishing tests (paid for through a MIIA grant) for all employees with emails.