

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Heather M. Munroe, Town Administrator

December 12, 2022

BOARD/COMMITTEE OPENINGS

Boards, Committees, Commissions

See the Town's Website for openings.

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

Tree Lighting and Fire Station Santa Visit

The tree lighting event held by the Recreation Department was well attended and excellent. This past weekend Santa at the Fire Station was also well attended.

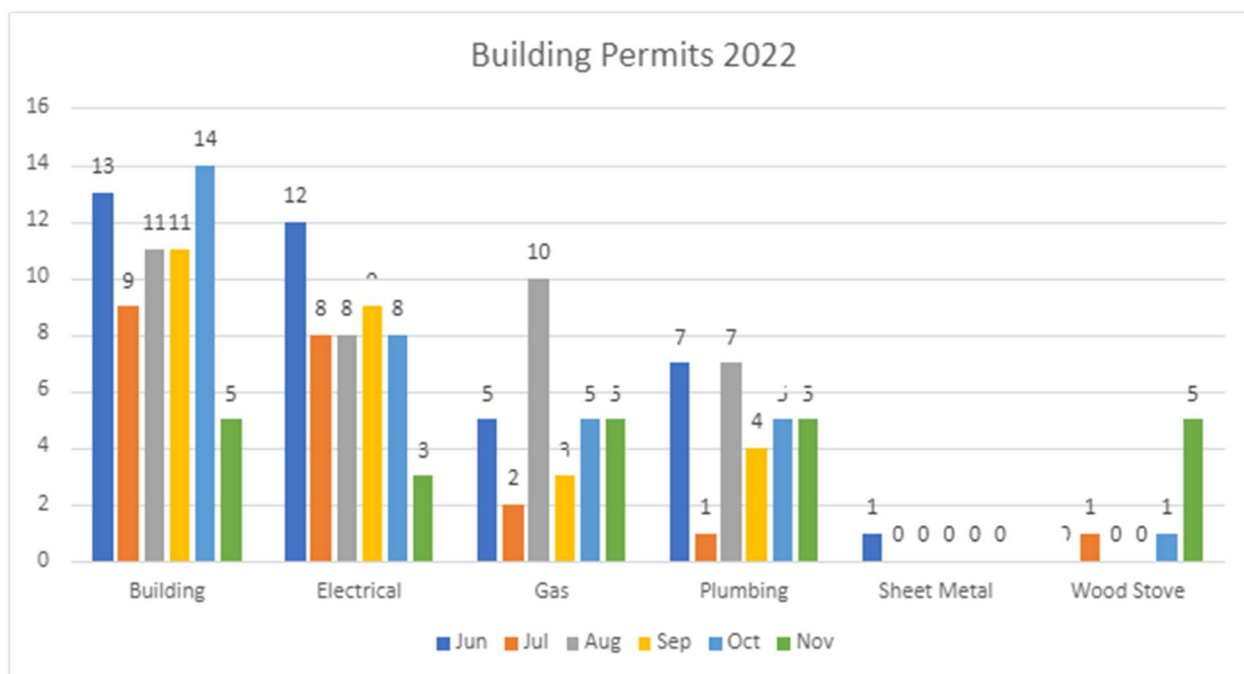
DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

Assessor's Office

The tax rate was approved December 12, 2022. The FY23 tax rate has been set at \$17.58.

Building

We had 23 building permits pulled in November, down from 33 in October.



DPW

The DPW has been busy and has a lot of different projects they are working on:

- **Tree Work** – The Tree Company has been busy at work removing dead/dying trees around Town. They expect to be done this week, several weeks ahead of schedule.

Town Administrator's Office

I have taking self-paced procurement training courses over the past two months. I have completed the Bidding Basics class. I have a live webinar this week to finish the Design and Construction class. Then, I have the self-paced Goods and Services piece and a live webinar left, which should be completed by month's end.

FINANCES

Grants

Newly Awarded:

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.

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

MHA 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.

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

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.

Active/Status Update:

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

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 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.

Shared Streets Grant- In Progress.

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

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:

ADA Grant – Applied for COA building automatic door opener and other miscellaneous safety enhancements for the total amount of \$25,461.61 in September.

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.

Procurement:

Pending:

Security Cameras (Paxton Center School) – This is now back in our hands to further pursue and procure.

To do:

- ✓ **Cable Access Software**
- ✓ **Records Building – Fence**

- ✓ **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 – Our shared municipal assistant left in November and we are hiring under that budget line item for two positions, one being for the Assistant Treasurer Collector. This position will be generally 8 hours per week, with additional hours available during tax months and to cover absences. This position is posted on the website and Indeed. We expect to begin interviewing next week.

Assistant Town Clerk – Our shared municipal assistant left in November and we are hiring under that budget line item for two positions, one being for the Assistant Town Clerk. This position will be generally 8 hours per week, with additional hours available during certain months (elections) and to cover absences. This position is posted on the website and Indeed. We expect to begin interviewing next week.

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.

PROJECTS

Updates

Town Building Phone Upgrade – We have met with IT and the vendor and are moving forward on this project. We should breakeven with the cost of our current phone bills and should have remaining funds left over from the ATM article for phones to return to the Town at year end. We are still hopeful that the phones will be up, running, and folks will be trained by calendar's end.