

Town Manager Report

Town of Lunenburg- June 18, 2024



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Meetings, Events, and Other Announcements:

- Town offices are closed tomorrow, June 19th, in observance of Juneteenth.
- The Town Beach opens up June 24th and will close on August 25th. The hours of operation will be Monday-Friday 10:00am-7:00pm and Saturday-Sunday 12:00pm-6:00pm. Swim lessons will be held on weekdays. Session 1 will be Monday, June 24th until July 5th (except July 4th) and Session 2 will be Monday, July 22nd until August 2nd.

Board/Committee/Commission Vacancies:

The following is a list of current vacancies on the following boards/committees/commissions:

- Agricultural Commission (1vacancy)
- Architectural Preservation District Commission (1 vacancy)
- Board of Health (1 vacancy; Joint Appointment with Board of Health until next ATE)
- Council on Aging (1 vacancy)
- Cultural Council (3 vacancies)
- Green Communities Committee (2 Associate vacancies)
- Open Space Committee (1 Member at Large vacancy)
- Parks Commission (1 vacancy, Joint Appointment with Parks Commission until next ATE)
- Personnel Committee (5 vacancies)

- Sewer Commission (2 vacancies, Joint Appointment with Sewer Commission until next ATE)
- Interested persons can find Volunteer Applications on the Town Website and completed forms can be sent to the Select Board's Office. Anyone that has any questions on volunteer opportunities can contact the Select Board's Office at (978) 582-4130 x 144.

Employment Opportunities with the Town:

The following is a list of current employment opportunities with the Town:

- Administrative Assessing Assistant (32 hours/week)
- Assistant to the Sewer Business Manager (19 hours/week)
- Interim Town Manager (contractual)
- Land Use Director (40 hours/week)
- Network Administrator (40 hours/week)
- Public Safety Desk Clerk (40 hours/week)
- Seasonal Cemetery Laborer (hours vary)

More information on each position can be found on the website under job opportunities.

Staffing Updates

Since the IT Network Administrator has left, we have posted the position and we have increased our service level with Suzor IT to have one of their employees on site five days a week. We will continue doing this until this position is filled.

Conservation Department: Backlog of Applications

Recently the Conservation Commission Chair sent me an update of all the outstanding Wetlands Protection Act Decisions that needed to be issued by the Conservation Department to applicants. As of June 5th, it was estimated there were 23, yet this is likely to increase as the Conservation Commission issues between 2-3 decisions per meeting. Under his new role as Land Use Manager, Brian Gingras begun working with the Conservation Department to put together a complete list of all filings and their statuses that is due to him this Thursday. He will then meet with the Conservation Administrator and Administrative Assistant to develop an action plan with hard deadlines to address the backlog.

Brian also directed the Conservation Department to begin using our online permitting software, Opengov, to track all Request for Determination of Applicability filings starting June 17th and July 1st is their deadline for all Notice of Intent filings in Opengov. This includes entering any paper applications they receive.

The current Conservation Administrative Assistant has been working 9 additional hours a week beyond her normal 10 hours in order to address the administrative backlog in that office. The Building Department Administrative Assistant has also offered to assist in administrative work as time allows in her schedule. I have asked for an update from Brian after his meeting with the Conservation staff this Thursday and will share this with the Board and ask Brian to communicate the update to the Conservation Commission Chair.

DPW Updates:

- Construction Kick-off Meeting for Flat Hill Culvert Project: There was a construction kick-off meeting with the Contractor for the Flat Hill culvert project led by the DPW Director this past Thursday that our engineer, representative from Fire, Conservation, and I attended. The bridge is expected to be closed starting in October when the water level in the lake is lowered and is estimated to be closed for 2 months.

- This week PJ Keating paved Elmwood Road (from Flat Hill Road to the Gravel Section) and West Groton Road (the section of road parallel to Route 225).
- The Highway Crew has been busy repairing road defects, using the new rotary mower on a lot of roadsides around town, cleaning catch basins, sweeping roadways, repairing signs, and more.

Police Department Mental Health Co-Response Clinician

The Police Department was notified this week that they received a \$206,000 grant from the Department of Mental Health that will be used for personnel costs and equipment to hire a co-response mental health clinician that will be shared between the Towns of Lancaster and Lunenburg. This is a two year grant and will be in addition to the \$40,000 that will come out of the Opioid Stabilization Account towards the cost of this program. Many thanks to our Police Department, especially Officer Brad McNamara who was instrumental in submitting this grant.

Request for Proposals/IFB

- On June 11th we received 2 bids for Landscaping Services for town properties. The bids have been reviewed and a Notice of Award will be issued to Lakeview Landscaping.
- On June 12th we received 1 bid for the Hazardous Materials Cleanup at the Woodruff Property. The bid came in at \$185,000 and therefore exceeds the \$100,000 appropriation available for this expense. The first time we bid this project there were no bids. The Town will need to make a decision on whether or not additional funds will be appropriated at a future town meeting in order to re-bid this project.
- The Facilities Director, Assistant Town Manager, and I have completed the review for the Library Solar Shade Invitation for Bids and this will be going out to bid on June 26th.
- The Facilities Director, Assistant Town Manager, and I met last week to review all the pending projects that are in different stages of developing the bid package. For Facilities there are a total of 12 projects that need to be put out to bid once the scope of work and specifications is finished and a full review of the IFB/RFP is done. This does not include any additional IFB/RFPs associated with Marshall Park or any other park. The Assistant Town Manager works with the appropriate department/board on the bid package until it gets to the point where it is ready for the review and then I do a review and any further questions or amendments are worked out between myself, the Assistant Town Manager and department/board until it reaches final form.

Trash & Recycling Contract Update

Last month DPW Director Bill Bernard, our Trash & Recycling Coordinator Jamie Toale, and I met with the Municipal Manager from EL Harvey. He brought forward a proposal that was less than previously discussed as they purchased newer used trucks instead of brand new trucks that would have driven up their overhead costs. We have reviewed the impact of this revised proposal on both the operating budget and the enterprise (recycling) and based on our historical tonnage, the impact would exceed our appropriation. Due to this, the Assistant Town Manager has advertised this for bids released on Monday and they will be due mid-July. In the meantime we will attempt to negotiate further with EL Harvey to see if we can come to a price that falls within our appropriation or get a further extension beyond September 30th.

FY24 4th Quarter Tax Bills with Exemptions

A letter was sent out today to all property owners that had exemptions on their FY24 4th quarter tax bills to address the error in the total taxable value caused by a sequel error in the town's accounting software. A copy of the Vision Property Card with the correct total taxable value will be included with the letter. All other information in those tax bills, including the payable amount, was correct. A ticket has been submitted with Munis, our accounting software company, to correct this error for future tax bills with exemptions.

FY25 Q1 & Q2 Tax Billing Update

As discussed last week, we began the tax bill process to create the FY25 preliminary bills this past Friday with a member of the tax team from Tyler Technologies, and as a back-up had a second outside contractor, not from Tyler, scheduled to complete the process yesterday. There were issues with the personal property file that caused errors during the process on Friday in the training environment but the outside contractor was able to work with Tyler to complete the process for the commitment in the live environment yesterday. Tickets were created with Tyler by our outside contractor yesterday and the process was documented as well.

The Finance Team and I agree that we should hire this outside contractor to work with the Town to perform the preliminary work to prepare sewer utility bills and actual tax bills this upcoming fiscal year. This will ensure that staff that is spending an incredible amount of time dealing with software issues and different support people at Tyler, is able to address their other duties that are falling behind due to the extraordinary time that has been spent on dealing with the current software company.

FY25 Grant Services Process

As discussed during the development of the FY25 budget, when the idea of appropriating funds for grant services was introduced and presented, I recommended developing a process to allocate the \$50,000 in this year's budget towards different departments, boards, and committees. The intent is so that the funds are allocated proportionally amongst the requestors. At last Thursday's Finance Committee meeting Tiffany Tavares offered to assist me in developing a process. I spoke with Tiffany today and we are going to brainstorm through email and I have also reached out to my association to see if any other community has an established process or experiences to share that would inform our process.



Heather Lemieux

Heather is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters