

Town Manager Report


Town of Lunenburg-April 7, 2020





Contact Information

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Announcement on Existing Vacancies:

The following is a list of vacancies on the following committees:

- Agricultural Commission (2 alternate vacancies)
- Americans with Disabilities Act Commission (1 vacancy)
- Architectural Preservation District Commission (1 design professional; craftsperson or building contractor familiar with historic renovation)
- Finance Committee (1 position appointed by the Finance Committee Appointing Committee)
- Open Space Committee (1 vacancy-citizen at large)
- Planning Board (1 position appointed by the remaining members of the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen until the next Annual Town Election in May)
- Zoning Board of Appeals (2 Associate vacancies)

Talent bank forms can be obtained on the Town Website and forwarded to the Board of Selectmen's Office.

Update on Saliba Property Grant Requirements:

The deadlines for the LAND and PARC grants that the Town received towards the purchase of the Saliba Property on Northfield Road will not be extended beyond the June 2020 deadline. We are on

track for a May closing date on the property and are in the process of doing the following:

- I coordinated the hiring of an environmental consultant to perform an environmental assessment on the property and this will be completed by the end of April;
- The Conservation Administrator will coordinate the purchase of a sign designating the name and how it was cooperatively purchased with the Commonwealth;
- The Conservation Administrator will create a management plan that will need to be submitted to the State;
- The Open Space Chairman, Brandon Kibbe, will send an updated Open Space and Recreation Plan to the State, as this is a requirement of the grant as well.

Employee Dental Insurance:

Through our insurance broker Cook & Company, we solicited proposals from our current dental insurance company Altus and through MIIA for Blue Cross Blue Shield Dental Blue. Our original proposal through Altus came in at a 7% increase over FY20's rates and after both company's submitted competing proposals and two conference calls with members from the Public Employee Committee, all agreed that switching to MIIA's BCBS Dental Blue Plan would benefit employees the most. The proposal from MIIA was a 5% increase over the FY20 rates and locks in the rate for 2 years, provides added features, and a larger provider network. This information will be sent out to employees at the end of the month in time for the Open Enrollment period during May and will go into effect on July 1st. This is a completed employee funded optional insurance.

Green Communities Competitive Grant:

Prior to the closing of town facilities, the Green Communities Task Force had been meeting to discuss various projects to submit for this year's Competitive Grant including LED lighting project at the Middle School, replacement of appliances with energy efficient appliances at Turkey Hill, replacement of appliances at various town buildings with energy efficient appliances, and funds towards the purchase of hybrid police cruisers. I am working on trying to get estimates related to a Retro-commissioning Report that was done during the last Green Communities Grant that had a number of recommendations to be done at the Public Safety Building that would result in energy savings. We have until May 1st to submit an application.

Neighborhood Clean-up of Roadside Trash:

The DPW is providing regular trash bags to volunteers that wish to participate in helping clean up their neighborhoods by picking up roadside trash. Once the bags are full, volunteers can contact the DPW to pick up the bags at an identified location. Please contact the DPW to request bags at 978-582-4160.

FY 2020 Updates:

The Finance Director and Treasurer/Collector put together a projection of revenues for the remainder of this fiscal year and based on their projections using FY19 revenue figures, which would be conservative for the remainder of the third quarter and the entire fourth quarter of FY20, there would be a positive cash flow for the remainder of the fiscal year.

FY 2021 Financial Updates:

There was a virtual economic roundtable scheduled for this morning with the Chairs of the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means, the Secretary of the Executive Office of Administration and Finance and other guests such as the State Treasurer, President of the Boston Federal Reserve, the MA Taxpayers Foundation, and others to discuss the impact of the current public health crisis on the Massachusetts economy. Due to technical issues with the broadcasting system, it is being postponed until next week to ensure that the system is fixed and they are able to broadcast a live feed. Based on today's weekly briefing with the Lieutenant Governor, the Senior Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Local Services Sean Cronin, and officials from MEMA and the Department of Public Health, the State has not formalized any revenue projections and they are continuing to monitor, plan and advise as they develop their analysis.

As I relayed to the Finance Committee at their meeting on Thursday, my approach to revamping the FY 2021 budget will be to reassess our revenue projections and FY21 expenditures as follows:

- I have asked RRG, our assessing services firm, to work with the Land Use Director and Building Department to review the projected New Growth figure, even though that has been reduced twice during the development of the FY21 budget.
- To use a level funded amount from FY20 for State Aid;
- To use a level funded amount from FY20 for Local Receipts and examine if these need to be pulled back further.
- To postpone the hiring of additional staff and additional hours for certain positions and health insurance costs;
- To review the Capital Plan and possibly reduce the available amount for the Capital Plan in order to reallocate the tax revenue portion towards the operating budget.
- At the Finance Committee meeting on March 12th I had indicated we could reduce the Allowance for Abatements/Exemptions amount in FY 2021 and this would create an additional \$55,000 available for the operating budget.
- Overall, the approach will be a conservative approach on our revenue estimates so we can possibly readjust at the Fall Special Town Meeting after seeing how the first quarter revenues of FY21 come in.

Other Department Updates:

- The Assistant Town Manager and I are assisting the Assessors Department in putting together an RFP for Tax Assessment Services, as well as drafting a position description for a Principal Assessor. The plan is to go out to bid for Principal Assessing Services at the same time as advertising for a Principal Assessor and based on the response to both the RFP and to the Principal Assessor position, determine the best course of action for that department.
- Due to the notice from Solid Waste Sewer Services that they are terminating their contract with the Town, the DPW Director secured a new firm that will provide this service until June 30th. In the interim, a RFP is being developed by the DPW Director and Sewer Business Manager that will go out to bid and secure a firm for the start of the new fiscal year on July 1st.

Meetings, Events and Other Announcements:

- Town Counsel is holding his office hours via Zoom tomorrow with everyone that signed up through the Doodle Poll and office hours in May will be on May 20th 12-4 p.m.
- Disposal of Yard Waste at the old landfill off of Youngs Road will commence Saturdays from 9a.m. until 4 p.m. on April 11th until May 16th.

- I will participate in the Board of Assessors meeting tomorrow, Wednesday, April 8th at 1 p.m. via Zoom.
- The School Committee is meeting tomorrow, Wednesday, April 8th at 7:00 p.m. via a Zoom meeting.
- I will participate in the Finance Committee will be meeting on Thursday, April 9th at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.
- I will participate in the Sewer Commission's meeting on Tuesday, April 14th at 3 p.m. via Zoom.