

Town Manager Report to the Board of Selectmen –
Mon., October 26, 2020

Mask Up Hamilton! – The town has launched our new public service campaign, which is aimed at reminding people to take precautions when in public this fall.



Images like these, and a half dozen others, were created for Hamilton and Wenham by Flat Rock Media, a Massachusetts based marketing firm. We have printed some of these images in hard copy to be displayed in public buildings, but will mainly be trying to share these images through our town website and social media sites to help remind residents to be safe, practice social distancing and Mask Up HW! during this next phase of the pandemic.

Special Town Meeting planning – Beginning last Friday the town created a survey through Survey Monkey, to ask residents how they would most be likely to attend/participate in Special Town Meeting.

We currently have two options, an indoor option at the Regional High School Gymnasium, which can adequately accommodate more than 250 socially seats on the gym floor, providing a recently upgraded HVAC/air handling system and lots of extra space, or an outdoor tent option, with sides down, hanging space heaters and room for about 150 people.

The survey will be up through Thursday and we will be closely watching the long range weather forecasts, trying to balance the survey responses against the chances for inclement weather and the need to provide the safest environment possible.

I do note that Board of Health Chair David Smith has been part of the planning for the STM, just as he was during the planning for the Annual Town Meeting in June and he has endorsed both plans as being compliant with the CDC guidelines for such meetings.

A final decision on when, where and how to hold the Special Town Meeting will have to be made by Friday, October 30, particularly if we're going to have the meeting outdoors under a tent.

Downtown Parking Study – The long anticipated parking study for downtown Hamilton will be kicking off this Thursday afternoon with the steering committee and the consultant meeting virtually. This study will look at the current inventory of parking spaces, how parking is managed in the downtown and what the short-term and long-term needs for parking in the downtown area are.

New Public Health Nurse – During this evening's meeting we will be introducing Michelle Brailard, our new Public Health Nurse, who started in her new position with us today.

Michelle has had an impressive career in nursing prior to joining the town staff. More recently she has been a school nurse in the HW Regional School District and has worked with Wenham PH Nurse Marybeth Ting, as a contact tracing nurse throughout the pandemic.

Michelle will be taking over for Christine Lee, while the town reviews how to reorganize our health department to more fully serve the needs of the community.

Christine Lee, who has been such a wonderful public health nurse for Hamilton for several years, has decided to return to mother and infant nursing, which is a passion of hers and we wish her all the best. Christine's dedication and willingness to step up at the outset of the pandemic is a primary reason, along with the efforts of the volunteer Board of Health, we feel that Hamilton has done so well throughout this unprecedented time.

We're sad to see Christine go, but are excited to welcome Michelle to the town and look forward to working with her going forward.

Preparing for the new budget cycle – Though we haven't even gotten to the Special Town Meeting yet, we will begin the process of scheduling the budget preparations and Town Meeting planning calendar for the FY'22 Annual Town Meeting, which this year will be held on Saturday, May 1, 2021.

I will be preparing draft budget guidance, which I will share with the FinCom and Selectboard at an upcoming meeting, prior to sending to Department Heads and initiating budget discussions with the Regional School Administration.

Among the likely topics to be discussed with Department Heads will be the need to review operations as we plan the FY'22 fiscal year budget. Our local health reorganization, coupled with reviews of regional efforts such as the Inspectional Services Agreement with Wenham and the Human Resources Agreement with Manchester and Rockport will all be reviewed to ensure that we are providing the best services we can in the most efficient manner possible.