

Town Manager Report to the Board of Selectmen – Mon., Nov. 4, 2019

- The budget process is getting underway. Selectman Hubbard, Finance Committee member Christina Shenk Hargrove, Finance Director Marisa Batista and I participated in a joint subcommittee meeting of the Hamilton—Wenham School Committee’s Finance and Capital subcommittees, with our counterparts from Wenham last week and the meeting served to set the tone for budget discussions and sharing of information during this budget process. The meeting was collaborative and positive, but we should note that both the school district and the Town of Wenham are facing significant budgetary pressures, which will likely impact Hamilton. The School District, for instance, has already identified a structural deficit in their current year budget, which they are seeking to close, but which will have to be accounted for in the upcoming budget season, as we plan for fiscal 2021.
- As part of the budget process, I have shared my DRAFT budget guidance document and draft budget calendar with the Finance and Advisory Committee and it is on the agenda for the Board of Selectmen to discuss here this evening. I have already had some comment back from Mr. Wanger of the Finance and Advisory Committee and will seek to collate that feedback with whatever advice you offer tonight.
- The town does have a few open positions, which we will be working to finalize job descriptions and postings for this week, so we can get those advertised. Existing open positions include the part-time Conservation Agent and a part-time Senior Services Program Coordinator, both of which are budgeted for in this fiscal year. We also have the part-time Community Projects Coordinator, which I think should be restructured into a full-time position, by taking advantage of some budgetary savings and redistribution. I will be circulating a plan to review that position and how we could fund the transition to a full-time position with the addition of some other duties, without adjusting the overall budget. I plan to have this restructuring be reviewed both with the Board of Selectmen and the Finance and Advisory Committee, before making the hire.
- I want to take a moment to congratulate Fire Lieutenant Robert Wallace who has recently completed training to be a certified Fire Prevention Officer through the Massachusetts Fire Academy and has also received his certification as a Fire Instructor well. Congratulations to Lt. Bob Wallace.
- Please remember to sign up to participate in FlashVote Community surveys – the town is currently in the process of establishing a virtual panel that can be invited to participate in one minute surveys four to six times per year. The important step now is to sign up to be a part of the panel by going to: www.flashvote.com/hamiltonma so that your voice can be heard. The occasional surveys will be developed with the help of FlashVote and will be designed to help town government understand the general attitude of the town toward different projects and issues facing the community.
- Update on Town Manager Goals:
 - Self-Sufficiency of the Patton Homestead – There is nothing new to report here since your last update by Patton Homestead Director Kaleigh Pare at the last Board of Selectmen’s meeting on October 21.
 - Chebacco Road/Well Exploration and Manchester – Planning for roadway construction on Chebacco Road is continuing and we expect that we’ll be having another public meeting on this project shortly. The goal here is to design and

permit over the winter and be ready to pave in the spring/summer time. As for well exploration, DPW director Tim Olson shortly and will provide an update to the board soon. In the meantime, I wanted to advise the Board that Planning Director Patrick Reffett and I met briefly with a representative of a company that is in due diligence to purchase the land at 133 Essex. It was a productive meeting and the town's concerns with the property and the process for permitting at the site were discussed in detail. At this point the sale has not been finalized, so I will refrain from naming the company publicly. They were simply doing fact finding, but the meeting was positive.

- Master Planning/ Housing Master Plan updates – The Housing Master Plan is still being revised to incorporate comments from the public hearing. Planning and Inspections Director Patrick Reffett is looking to get a final vote from the Planning Board shortly and we may need to request a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board to adopt the final plan. We'll keep you informed as we get closer to having the plan completed. Though this phase of the planning project seems to be nearing completion, it brings to light that a more complete planning process seems to be appropriate and I will be looking to discuss this more fully as part of the budgeting process.
- Town Hall Renovations – The Town Hall Building Committee will be meeting next Wednesday, November 13, the time, location and agenda will be posted to the town website and on the bulletin board at Town Hall in advance. At this point, the THBC is working with the Hamilton Historic District Commission and other concerned residents to fully develop the option that was approved at Town Meeting.