

# **Town of Hamilton**

# Town Manager Report

Week of December 2, 2024

Department/ Project	Weekly Update (New Information in Green)	Timeline	Status
Town Manager's Office			
1. FY 2026 budget challenges	1. During the annual Five Boards meeting featuring representatives of the Hamilton Select Board and Finance and Advisory Committee, the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee and the Wenham Select Board and Finance Committee, the five boards laid out the early challenges they are facing in planning for the Fiscal 2026 year, set to begin in July, 2025 and which will be voted at Town Meeting on April 5, 2025. Due to inflation beyond local control, and projected wage and salary increases in both towns and the schools, the fiscal 2026 budget for Hamilton, which includes roughly ½ the cost of the school budget. is currently projecting a several million dollar shortfall. The five boards have all pledged to work within the established systems to bring that deficit in-line to avoid an operational override for FY'26. Residents are encouraged to participate in the process early, so town leaders can represent their goals in the budget that ultimately will get proposed at the Town Meeting.	1. Through April 5, 2025	1. On-going
2. Town Hall - Interior demolition has begun	2. On Monday, December 2, 2024 interior demolition of walls and removal of old fixtures began on all three levels of Town Hall.	2. 12-15 months	2. Construction starting
3. Hamilton will begin a search for a new police chief	3. Hamilton Police Chief Russell Stevens is in the final six-months of his contract and has announced his intention to retire at the end	3. 3-5 months	3. Starting soon

	of that contract. Long-time officer and Police Captain Scott Janes, whose contract also ends in June 2025, has also announced his intention to retire. As a result the town will begin a search for a new police chief, with the goal of having the new Chief on-board on or about July 1, 2025.		
4. Staff Holiday Party	4. The Town Manager's annual Staff Holiday Party is Thursday December 19, beginning at 12:30 P.M. As has been our practice to ensure all staff are included, all town offices, except public safety, will close at Noon that day and re-open the following day, Friday, December 20 at 8 A.M.	4. Dec. 19	4. Planned

## **Public Works** <u>Timeline</u> <u>Status</u> 8 A.M. - 12 Planned 1. UpComing Events E-Waste Day 11 | 21 | 2024 P.M. Planned Leak Pick-Up Day 12 | 07 | 2024 Bags curbside before 7 A.M. Hamilton Town Hall Start 12 | 01 | 24 Final Town Hall The Town Hall project is officially underway. Clean Out Demolition started with site work to begin next week. DPW offices have moved temp. to 587 Bay Road, Unit B. During this construction period, services for DPW and the Hamilton Water Dept. will be by-appointment only. Mattress stickers are still only available at DPW (by-appointment). Bulk stickers will not be sold at DPW during construction and can be purchased at



Crosby's Market and Hamilton Convenience

store.

Memorial Room



Former DPW/Water Dept

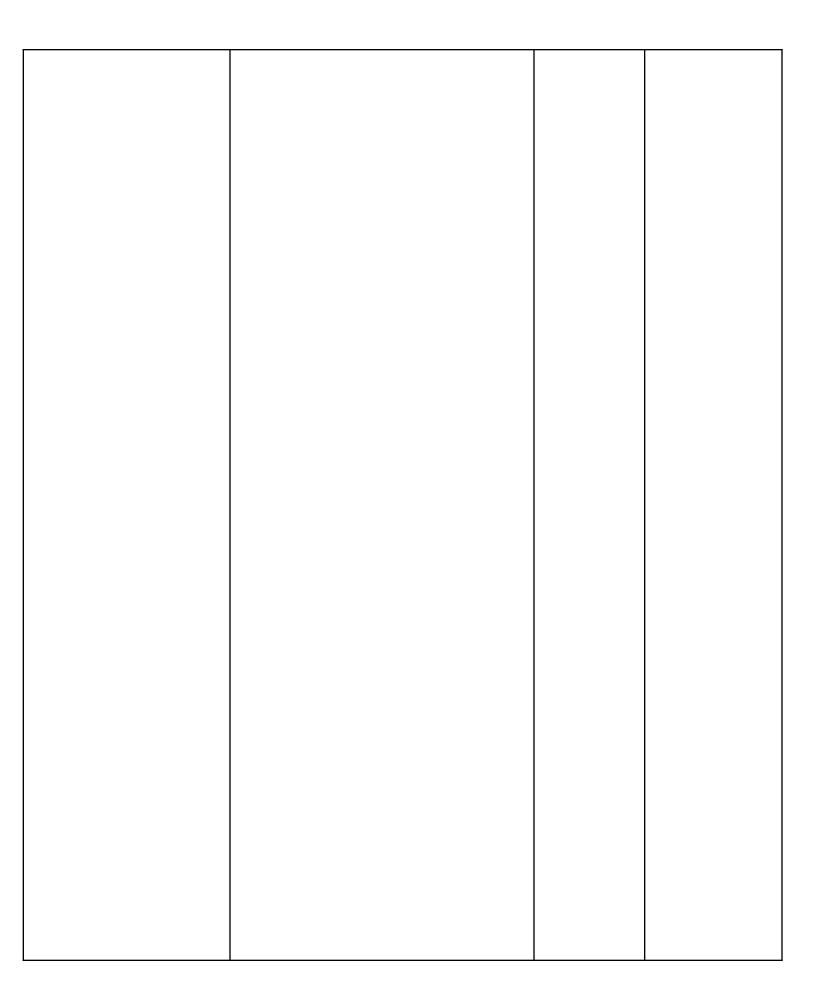
		ı	Т
2. Facilities	2. Replacement of AHU1 Cooling System—DPW solicited bids for the replacement of the AHU1 cooling system at the PSB on 9   10   2024. The town received one bid from Ultra Services, Inc. for \$66,384.00. Equipment has been ordered to convert the old R-22 system to R-410A. Work to AHU1 is planned for January 2025.	2. Winter 2025	2. Equipment ordered
	Patton Homestead Pavilion—Hamilton has contracted with EJ+P, Inc. for design services necessary for the Homestead Pavilion project. Design Plans are underway for site plan review. Soil testing is scheduled for 12   17   24 for foundation design.	Fall 2024 Const. Spring 2025	Under Agreement
3. DPW Administration	3. Employment Opportunities OPEN - Secondary Operator - Water Dept. Email Tim Olson, tolson@hamiltonma.gov for position details.	3. Open	3. Open
4. Highway Department	4. Essex Street Drainage—DPW continues to communicate with the engineering consultant and owner of 470 Essex Street in hopes of a collaborative effort to address drainage upgrades along Essex Street near Appaloosa Lane.	4. On-going	4. Waiting for owner and development submittal
	Roadway and Sidewalk Improvements—The Town recently bid-out the 2024 Roadway Improvements Project that will include Mill and overlay of Bridge Street from School Street to Essex Street, reconstruction of a portion of Greenbrook Road, a new sidewalk along Essex Street, between Forest Street and School Street, and some miscellaneous drainage improvements. This project was awarded to D&R Paving in the amount of \$871,972.56. Work is planned for this spring.	Spring 2025 Const.	In-progress
	Route 22 Paving—Hamilton was chosen as a MA community to have Route 22 paved under the MassDOT Municipal Pavement Program. The full extent of the project and schedule have not yet been released from MassDot.	Spring/ Summer 2025	Selected by MassDOT
5. Vehicle Maintenance	5. New Purchased Vehicles DPW received the 1st of two front-line sander.	5. Complete	5. Received
6. Cemetery	6. Mower	6. Complete	6. Received
	I	1	l

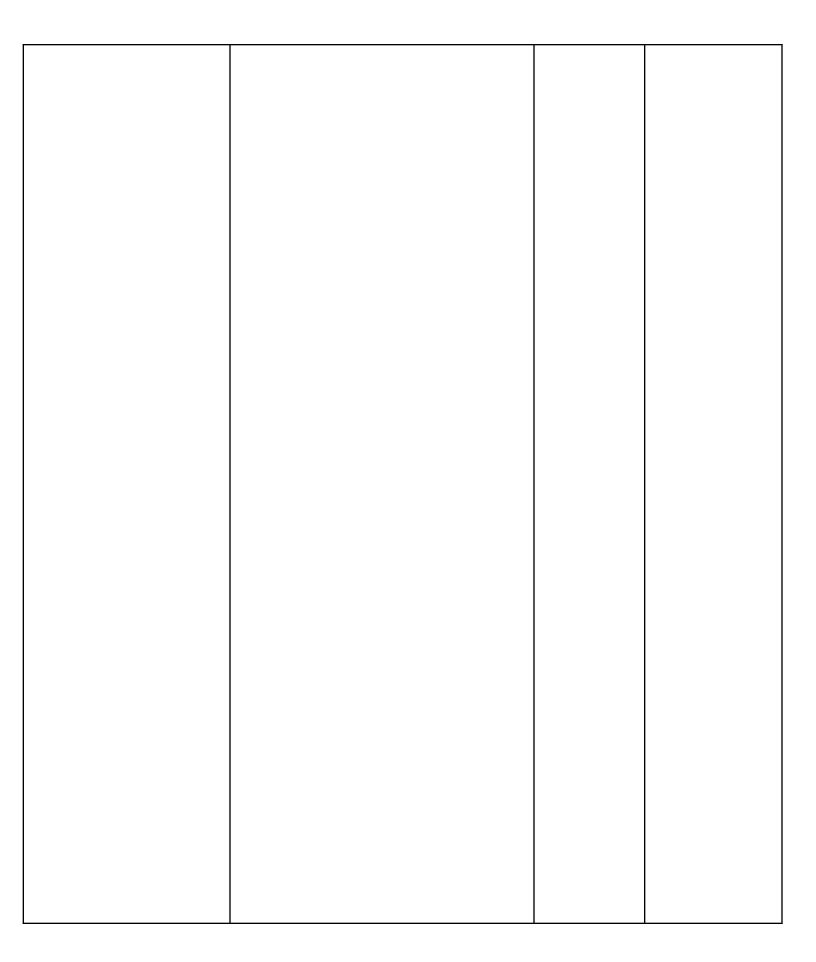
	T	T	
	DPW has purchased a new Walker Mower for the Cemetery using Perpetual Care Funds.		
7. Sanitation	7. No Sanitation Updates		
8. Parks and Grounds	8. Patton Park Improvements—The DPW and Rec Departments have re-engaged CBA Landscape Architects to discuss the first phase of drainage and park improvements as outlined in the Patton Park Master Plan. Conceptual cost estimates were discussed at the May 6 Select Board meeting. High priorities from the Patton Park Master Plan were drainage improvements and pathways.	8. Winter 2024/25	8. Preliminary Discussions
9. Energy	9. Solar on the DPW Garage—The Town is actively pursuing the installation of a solar array on the DPW garage building. On 2   06   2024 DPW and HEIC met with Senator Bruce Tarr to discuss the solar project as well as the Town Hall Renovation project.	9. Included in Town Hall project	9. Under design
10. Water Department	10. MassDEO Lead Service Inventory & Assessment—The Hamilton Water Department successfully submitted the mandatory Water Service Line Inventory to MassDEP prior to the October 16, 2024 deadline. However, there are still items to complete. Hamilton and its' hired consultant, Stantec Engineers, have complied all the inventory data which is available on the town website at <a href="https://www.hamiltonma.gov/government/water-department/lead-copper/">https://www.hamiltonma.gov/government/water-department/lead-copper/</a> Residents received 1 of 4 letters depending on the results from the inventory and the additional items still needed. The first 3 paragraphs include the information needed. Call the Hamilton Water Department at 978-626-5226 or email Hamilton's DPW Director at tolson@hamiltonma.gov with questions.	10. In-process	10. Working on data from public—Continue reaching out to private owners for cooperation.
	GIS Asset Management—The town has contracted with Dewberry Engineers to assist with establishing a GIS water asset management program. This GIS will initially be geared to the Hamilton Water System but will then be populated with other attributes i.e. storm water, roadways etc. in the future. Currently our GIS consultant is working on a work order solution within the GIS platform that will allow citizen or department requests	In-process	Gathering field data for system wide information

to be tracked and documented in GIS when completed.		
Well Maintenance—The HamiltonWater Department has contracted with Maher Services in the amount of \$91,000 for the FY25. Plateau Well and Idlewood #2 were recently redeveloped and brought back on line.	On-going	In-progress
line.  Water Improvements (Phase 5)—Stantec Consulting Services is underway with the design for the Phase 5 Water System Improvements that will be concentrated along Fox Run, Tally Ho, Oak, Plum, Chestnut, Pine, and other surrounding streets. The construction phase timeline will be contingent upon available funding and Town Meeting appropriation. Stantec has assisted the town with the first 4 successful phases.	Design by Fall 2024 Construction TBD	Agreement Signed

Police		<u>Timeline</u>	Status
1. Full-Time Hire	Assagi (Guy) Wynter—Guy comes previously worked for Boston University's Police Department. Officer Guy has begun the Field Training (FTO) Program and is currently working the day shift. As part of the FTO program, he will be required to work all 3 shifts.	1. Sept. 1	
2. Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission	2. Completed accreditation assessment and approved for State Re-Accreditation. Official award received October 30.	2. Oct. 30	
3. Congratulations	3. Sergeant Matt Donovan promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. Lieutenant Donovan has been a member of the Hamilton Police Department for approximately 30 years and holds a Masters Degree in Criminal Justice. Lieutenant Donovan replaced Steve Trepanier, who retired in July.	3. Nov. 1	
Fire Dept			
1. Department Stats	1. The Hamilton Fire Department responded to the following calls over the previous 2 weeks: 11 fire related calls, 23 medical calls, 0 mutual aid calls, 3 MVA, 5 brush and 5 public assists and conducted 13 inspections fire prevention activities.	1. On-going	

		T T
2. Maintenance	2. Fire personnel will be checking hydrants throughout the Town for water that hasn't drained properly. When a hydrant is found with water still in the barrel it will be pumped out and winterized for the season.	2. On-going
3, DFS Grant	3. HFD applied for a \$15,500 Department of Fire Services equipment grant. If awarded, the money will purchase specialized firefighting gear and equipment.	3. Next 3 months
4. Hazardous Mitigation Grant	4. Last year we applied for a grant to update the Town's Hazardous Mitigation Plan and subsequently received it. This plan is designed to aid us in the response to all types of natural disasters and emergencies. The plan was last updated in 2019 and under the Hazardous Mitigation Act 0f 2000 it must be updated every five years. We are presently working with a consulting firm to update this plan.	4. On-going
5. Severe drought	5. At the present time the entire State is under a severe drought condition and we are in a red flag warning for fire. Many communities around us have had extensive brush fires recently. All types of outside burning is prohibited at this time, this includes the use of SOLO stoves in your backyard. Call 911 if you see or smell smoke in wooded areas.	5. On-going
6. Recruits	6. Nicolia Sims and Jack Hope have started the Massachusetts Fire Academy Class 117—an intense part-time program through March 3, 2025. When they graduate from this program they will be Nationally Certified Firefighters.	6. On-going





Planning and Inspectional Services		<u>Timeline</u>	Status
1. Master Plan	MP document has been reviewed/edited by Planning Board. Will be available on the town website soon.	1. On-going	1. On-going
2. Planning Board considering Form Based Zoning (FBZ) along with 3A; consultant hired (Utile).	2. The work will include a new zoning for the downtown area, with public engagement along with an approach to 3A zoning. Public forums on June 12 and July 25.	2. Two zoning articles for public/town meeting vote are expected April 2025. Planning Board meetings on 3A and Form Based Zoning starting 11 26 24; additional meetings 12 19 24, 1 7 25, 2 4 25 and 2 25 25.	2. Ongoing
3. Planning Board evaluating various amendments to the zoning bylaw - inclusionary housing, accessory dwelling units, various other specifics as well as zoning bylaw text.	3. Expect town meeting zoning articles.	3. On-going	3. On-going

Public Health Department		<u>Timeline</u>	Status
1. Health Related	Reported 1 case of influenza, 8 confirmed cases of Coronavirus and 1 case of Salmonellosis.	1. On-going	
	A Public Health clinic administering flu shots took place October 29.	Completed	
	Covid test kits available in COA building. Limited supply of single use gloves and bandages available.	On-going	
2. Food Permitting and Inspection	2. Permitting of food establishments/food trucks is on-going for the 2024 year. Round-2 of food establishment inspection is on-going in accordance with appendix 5 of the 2013 food code.	2. On-going	
3. Septic	3. Soil tests, plan reviews and septic inspections are on-going along with permitting of septic haulers. We have processed 183 septic pumping reports, licensed 13 septic installers, 5 septic haulers, 8 title inspectors and 1 maintenance provider. We have completed 59 plan reviews, 25 Title 5 Reports, 4 soil tests and issued 9 certificates of compliance.	3. On-going	
	The Health Dept. is on the verge of rolling out a new low-interest betterment loan program that would benefit residents whose septic systems have failed and are in need of replacement. The application process will soon be complete.	Coming Spring 2025	
4. Animals/Tobacco	4. Permitting of Animals—Permitting is on-going. Barn inspections have begun and the barn book will be completed and filed with the state. In accordance with Board of Health regulations, the new expiration date for animal keeping is August 31. BOH is in process of updating the Keeping of Animals regulation (last updated in 1989), in collaboration with neighboring communities. A draft regulation has been assembled and passed at the last BOH meeting. In an effort to update Board of Health regulations, the board is investigating to draft a private well regulation and will have a decision coming soon.	4. On-going	
	this year - added recently is the ban on menthol flavored products (all tobacco sale		

	permit holders have been inspected for such products).	
5. New Programs	5. Sharps—collection/disposal program is on-going. Sharps collection container can be obtained at the COA (299 Bay Road) taken home, filled and returned for disposal free.	5. On-going
6. Public Health Concerns	Blood pressure screenings are ongoing at Lamson Hall on the 2nd Wed. of each month from 3:30-5:30 P.M.	On-going
6. FUDIIC HEGIITI CONCEINS	6. Recalls—There's been a recall of more than 600 varieties of frozen waffles, pancakes and Belgian waffles made by TreeHouse Foods because they may be contaminated with <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> .	On-going
	EEE—There is still a threat of mosquito borne illnesses until the winter season. There is a reported EEE fatality in Hampstead, NH and positive cases reported in Plymouth county.	On-going
	Norovirus—Is up 5%. Wash hands frequently - hand sanitizer is NOT a substitute for proper hand washing. Call Dennis Palazzo, Director of Health, with questions at 978-417-6118.	On-going

_		<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Status</u>
<u>Finance</u>			
1. FY24 Audit	1. Clifton Larson Allen is finishing the final stages of the FY24 Audit to prepare the Audited Financial Statements and present them to the Select Board and FinCom.		
2. FY24 Free Cash Certification	2. The FY24 Free Cash was certified by the MA DOR Division of Local Services in the amount of \$4,512,906 and Retained Earnings for the Water Enterprise of \$1,683,010.		
3. FY26 Tax Rate Setting	3. Finance is working on the FY26 estimated revenue in preparation to set the Tax Rate in early December.		
4. FY26 Budget Preparation	4. Finance is in the beginning stages of the FY26 Budget preparation.		
<u>Treasurer/Collector</u>			
1. Tax Title	1. We fell a little behind schedule with FY23 Tax Title. We are down to just 3 parcels. With being short staffed we have decided to wait and process FY23 & FY24 tax titles together. Working on a small balance letter for FY24 Real Estate & Personal Property preparing to start Tax Title. Also paying close attention to new legislation regarding Tax Titles. We have sent out the first letters in our tax title process. We have decided to send letters to all parcels outstanding at this time. Hoping to generate a response before sending out legal letters.		
2. Billing	2. Water bills are now past due but are working to keep up with late payments in anticipation of outstanding water bills being liened and moved to 3rd & 4th qtr Real Estate tax bills.  Actual tax bills will be generated on the 13th in preparation to mail out by the end of the month.		
3. Month-end	3. Balancing receivables, bank statements, and cash. Julie's first month has gone extremely well with payments and month end balancing.		
4. Benefits /Payroll	4. Sue has been busy establishing benefits with several new hires and people leaving. Sue is preparing for year end payroll with senior work off, fringe benefits for employees and preparing for w2's.		

5. Regional school	5. Working on the POS statement for the school's upcoming Bonding. BOS statement has been sent to Locke & Lord.	
6. Town Borrowing	6. Working on a requirement letter for BOND Council for upcoming CPA borrowing. Bond Council had a few follow up questions that they hoped to wrap up this week. Bond council is all set with our requirement letter. Just need to mail all original documents at this point.	
7. Misc.	7. We are very happy to announce we have filled the position in our office. Julie Petipas (see profile highlights online) joined our finance team Nov 4th. Julie is settling in nicely. The training process has been going very well.	

#### Parks & Recreation

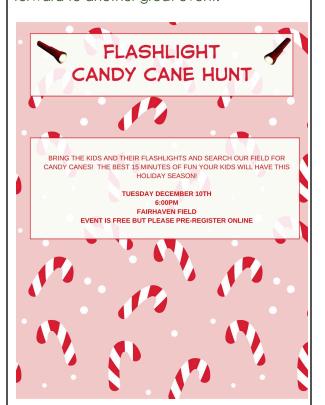
1. Winter Program Registration

1. Resident Registration for our Winter Programs opened on Tuesday, November 19th. Since Tuesday, we have had close to 300 individual registrations for our programs, trips, events, etc..

Non-Resident registration for programs will open on Tuesday, November 26th.

Please visit our website <a href="https://www.hwrecreation.com">www.hwrecreation.com</a> for information and to register.

2. Flashlight Candy Cane Hunt 2. Our popular Flashlight Candy Cane Event is scheduled for Tuesday, December 10th, 6 P.M. at the Recreation Center. This is a free event which averages close to 175 participants each year. We are looking forward to another great event.



3. Patton Park Summer Program

3. Included in our Winter Brochure is registration information for the Patton Park Summer Park Playground for the summer of 2025. Registration will be held on the evening of Tuesday, February 4th. Specific Information will be provided by mid January.

### <u>Timeline</u>

1. On-going

<u>Status</u>

1. On-going

4. Family Gingerbread House Workshop

4. We will be hosting a Family Gingerbread House Workshop on Friday, December 20th at the COA Buidling. Registration is available on our website <a href="https://www.hwrecreation.com">www.hwrecreation.com</a>



#### **Council on Aging**

1. Programming

2. SHINE Program

- 1. December programming is in full swing. This month we are have KevTech coming in twice. We also are bringing back our popular Baked Potato Bar. Our Friends Group is busy planning our Annual Holiday Party on Tuesday December 17th at 12:00pm. Registration is required for this. We also have several holiday programs coming up this month. Including Gingerbread Houses, holiday movies and New YEars Even Celebration.
- 2. Open Enrollment is coming to an end this week. Shine has met with over 175 residents between the October 15 and December 7. We were able to save residents anywhere from a couple of dollars to \$5,000.

Call for Volunteers - AgeSpan in Lawrence provides free training to become a certified SHINE counselor. In an effort to recruit volunteers with this growing need for Hamilton residents, Hamilton's COA is now offering travel scholarship\* funding to reimburse the transportation costs of driving to and from the Lawrence training center for new volunteers.

#### **Timeline**

December 24

Status

	*Travel scholarships must be pre-approved before training begins and include a commitment to support the Hamilton COA. Visit Outreach/SHINE - Town of Hamilton, MA for information.	
3. Owl System	3. Owl system has been purchased and will be set up in the upcoming weeks. We will start hybrid programming the beginning of the year in order to bring residents at home online with our programming	
4. Grants	4. No change in grant. Quarterly report was completed and submitted to the state. We have given out an additional 5 chromebooks/ipads. We have hired an instructor that will be helping at both Rowley and Hamilton. Residents will be able to go to either class. We are also looking into purchasing a drawing app and apple pencils through the grant so that we can offer more. Tablets have been purchased and should be here within the next couple of weeks. We are scheduling an information session at the beginning of April so that we can distribute them to interested residents. There will be a sign-out procedure. April 1, 11 A.M. is the tablet talk.	
4. Newsletter	Newsletter was just put in the mail for December. The electronic version went out a week prior to the paper copy. I would encourage residents to sign up for the e-version so they can get it in a timely manner.	

Human Resources		<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Status</u>
1. Openings	<ol> <li>Current Openings: For more information, see Career Opportunities on the Human Resources page of the Town Website</li> <li>Principal Assessor         <ul> <li>Conservation Agent (Shared service with Manchester-by-the-Sea)</li> <li>OPEN - Secondary Operator - Water Dept*</li> <li>Planning and Conservation                 Coordinator</li> <li>Regional Public Health Nurse: Towns of Hamilton, Essex, Wenham, and Rockport*</li> <li>Regional Health Inspector: Towns of Hamilton, Essex, Wenham, and Rockport*</li> <li>(pending)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Working with the Regional Coordinator on the Regional Public Health Nurse and Regional Health Inspector positions.</li> </ol>	1. Regional Public Health Nurse pre-screen interviews are in process.	
2. Collaboration	2. Working with the DPW Director on incentive options to attract qualified candidates.		
3. Employee Engagement	3. Create employee engagement holiday recognition handouts for team building and appreciation.		

		Τ	
4. Notifications	4. Working with MIIA on Health and Wellness programs and virtual events for town employees.		
	Attending a Racial Equity Advancement & Collaborative Hub (REACH) program in Boston. Hosted by the Metropolitan Planning Council.  • Next meeting scheduled 12/13		
Town Clerk's Office		<u>Timeline</u>	Status
1. Conflict of Interest Annual Filings, MGL C. 268A	1. 2004 Training All municipal employees (including board and committee members) received an email from the State Ethics Commission regarding Ethics on-line training requirements. EVERY municipal employee MUST acknowledge receipt of the summary EVERY YEAR. Several are delinquent.	1. Jan - Dec	1. Year round
	2025 Conflict of Interest Training In Jan, 2025 the Office sends emails to all employees, appointed, and elected officials regarding the 2025 training requirements.	Jan - Dec	Year round
2. 2024 Dog License Renewals MGL C. 140 s.137, 137A	2. In 2023 we issued 962 dog licenses for 2024. The office has issued 979 through September. Late fees kicked-in in June 2024. Some residents are delinquent.	2. Jan - Dec	2. Year Round
3. DBA MGL C. 110 s.5	3. "Doing Business As" renewals due every 4 years; approx 40 to be renewed in calendar year 2024. We issued 49 in 2023. We have issued an additional 28 in 2024.	3. Jan - Dec	3.Several more expected
4. Mail - Patton Homestead	4. The Town Clerk's office stops at the COA/Public Safety Building parking lot's drop box every day to gather all mail from the Town dropbox and bring it to Town Hall/Patton Homestead. Staff also drop off and pick up mail at the post office.		
5. 2024 Election Season is DONE = 4 Elections	5. 2024 election dates: March 5 Presidential Primary, April 11 Annual Town Election; State Primary Sep 3 (the day after Labor Day); Nov 5 State/Presidential Election.	5. Nov. 2024	
	NOV 5 RECAP: OFFICIAL RESULTS Official results show voter turnout at 82.5% or 4839 voters. Early ballots (mailed and in-person) accounted for 50.5% of the ballots cast on election day.	Nov 2023 - Nov 2024	

VOTE BY MAIL We mailed 1924 ballots for the election; 1524 (79%) were returned.  IN PERSON EARLY VOTING Between Sat., Oct. 19 - Fri., Nov. 1, 2024, 890 residents voted early in person.  6. Hamilton Census/Street List process MGL C.51 s.4  6. 2024 The Census Form was mailed to 2,822 households mid-January. Forms were due back in 10 days. The mailing included the dag license renewal form and the 2024 trash schedule. Staff have updated 1995 forms in the voter system. Approximately 30% of forms have NOT been returned. Staff have manually updated information for all residents living at the Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary campus.  2025 Census forms will be mailed mid-December with the Trash Schedule and the 2025 Dog License application.				
	process	We mailed 1924 ballots for the election; 1524 (79%) were returned.  IN PERSON EARLY VOTING Between Sat., Oct. 19 - Fri., Nov. 1, 2024, 890 residents voted early in person.  6. 2024 The Census Form was mailed to 2,822 households mid-January. Forms were due back in 10 days. The mailing included the dog license renewal form and the 2024 trash schedule. Staff have updated 1995 forms in the voter system. Approximately 30% of forms have NOT been returned. Staff have manually updated information for all residents living at the Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary campus.  2025 Census forms will be mailed mid-December with the Trash Schedule and the 2025 Dog	Dec. 2024 and	
1				