

Town of Hamilton

Town Manager Report

Week of January 6, 2025

Department/ Project	Weekly Update (New Information in Green)	Timeline	Status
Town Manager's Office			
1. Quick Chronicles	1. Beginning this past week, our Communications team of Cyndi Farrell and Bobby Gates have created a new feature on our town website and through our social media accounts to highlight different projects or programs or just interesting stories we feel our residents should know about. Quick Chronicles debuted last week on the website, with some promotion through our social media channels and Cyndi and Bobby are planning newer features going forward. We hope you will check it out on the website.	1. Newly created	1. On-going
2. FY 2026 budget preview	2. As noted previously, town staff and committee members have been working on the creation of a fiscal year 2026 budget proposal since November. This year's budget has been among the most difficult we have had to work through since I came to town in the fall of 2018. The FY'21 budget was made difficult by the COVID 19 Pandemic, but this is the first time in several years that market factors beyond the town's control and our limited financial resources have combined to create a very difficult budget for FY2026. Looking further down the road, FY2027 looks to be even tougher. We won't know for sure where we stand until the School Committee votes on their final FY'2026 budget recommendation on January 16 - but for the moment we are projecting to be able to propose a balanced FY'26 budget, depending on how the School Department proposes funding its	2. Through April 5, 2025	2. On-going

FY'26 budget. We ask all residents tol review the proposed budgets and ask questions or make suggestions. Our goal is to provide a budget that continues to deliver the level of services that Hamlton residents expect and do so within the constraints of Proposition 2 1/2.

3. Town Hall - updates

3. Progress Photos



3. 12-15 months

3. Construction has begun



The pictures above show some of the progress at the Town Hall on Bay Road. The top picture shows where work crews are preparing to dig for the future elevator shaft and to drill for the geothermal wells. The second picture shows the stripped back second floor meeting room, which will soon see workers strengthening the building envelope, through structural improvements in the floor of the second floor.

4. Police Chief search begins

4. The position description for the next Hamilton Police Chief has been posted with the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association (MCOPA) and the Human Resources department is now accepting applications, consistent with the process

4. 3-5 months

4. Position posted

	that was outlined by Chief Stevens during the last Select Board meeting on December 16. We will continue to provide updates to the community about the process.		
5. Local Licensing Authority	5. The Mass Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC) licenses report for calendar year 2024 has been submitted - required as a Local Licensing Authority. The report reflected 23 Special One-Day Licenses and 11 annual ABCC licenses (combined on & off premise). Total revenue \$14,500.	5. January 8, 2025	5. Complete
	The Select Board approved 11 ABCC license renewal applications on December 16, 2024. Licenses to local businesses were mailed to applicants.	January 9, 2025	Complete
	The Select Board approved 16 Common VIcular's Licenses renewal applications on December 16, 2024. Licenses to local businesses were mailed to applicants.	January 9, 2025	Complete
	The Select Board approved 2 Entertainment Licenses on December 16, 2024. Licenses to local businesses were mailed to applicants.	January 9, 2025	Complete
	The Select Board approved 1 Class II License on December 16, 2024. License to local business was mailed to the applicant.	January 9, 2025	Complete
6. Upcoming meetings	6. The Select Board votes to open the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) warrant at its meeting on January 6. This will officially start the preparation for ATM on April 5, 2025. In the month ahead the Select Board, Planning Board, Finance and Advisory Committee and School Committee will all be meeting to begin planning for ATM as well some of the upcoming meetings below:	6. Through the end of January	6. On-going
	Tuesday, January 7 - Planing Board Wednesday, January 8 - Finance and Advisory Committee Wednesday, January 15 - Five Boards (with Wenham and the Hamilton Wenham RSD) Thursday, January 16 - Hamilton Wenham Regional School District Tuesday, January 21 - Hamilton Planning Board		
	TUesday, January 21 - Joint Meeting of the Select Board and Finance and Advisory Committee to receive the FY'26 Town Manager's budget proposal		

All board and committee meeting agend are posted through the Town Clerk's office and advertised on the town website on the Events Calendar. Please be sure to check the website for changes in real time.	e ne
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Public Works

1. Town Hall Renovation

Hamilton Town Hall
The Town Hall renovation started. 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

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.

<u>Timeline</u>

Start 12 | 01 | 24

<u>Status</u>

Clean Out completed

2. Winter 2025

2. Equipment ordered

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2. Facilities	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.	2. Spring 2025	2. 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 DPW has purchased a new Walker Mower for the Cemetery using Perpetual Care Funds.	6. Complete	6. Received
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.	8. Winter 2024/25	8. Preliminary Discussions

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	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.		
9. Energy	9. The EV Charging station at the high school/middle school is closed temporarily due to due to safety precautions related to the proximity of the temporary boiler for the High School/Middle School. For everyone's safety, we ask that you please NOT use this charging station until it is officially reopened.	9. On-going	9. Signage posted and SM messages went out to the community.
	The EV Charging station at Town Hall is closed temporarily due to construction.	On-going	On-going
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 https://www.hamiltonma.gov/government/water-department/lead-copper/ 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 to be tracked and documented in GIS when completed.	In-process	Gathering field data for system wide information
	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	On-going	In-progress

	recently redeveloped and brought back on 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>	<u>Status</u>
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	Completed accreditation assessment and approved for State Re-Accreditation. Official award received.	2. 2024	
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. On-going	
1. Department Stats	1. The Hamilton Fire Department responded to the following calls over the previous 2 weeks: 7 fire related calls, 15 medical calls, 3 mutual aid calls, 3 MVA, 0 brush and 3 public assists. We also conducted 6 inspections.	33	
2. Maintenance	2. Fire personnel will be checking hydrants throughout the Town for water that hasn't drained properly. When a hydrant is found	2. On-going	

3, DFS Grant	with water still in the barrel it will be pumped out and winterized for the season. 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. Safe Grant	4. The HFD applied for a SAFE (Student Awareness of Fire Education) grant and a Senior SAFE grant in the amount of \$6800. These funds are used to promote fire safety programs for students and senior citizens.	4. 3-4 Months
5. Misc.	5. The Town of Hamilton is developing an update to their Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan details all the natural hazard risks that may impact the Town and includes a list of potential actions to mitigate those risks. The Town of Hamilton hopes you will join our first of two Public Meetings on January 28, 2025, at 6 P.M. Contact Chief Raymond Brunet, Fire Department Chief and Emergency Management Director, 978-468-5550 or rbrunet@hamiltonma.gov to sign up for the task force.	5. January 28, 2025

Planning and Inspectional Services		<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Status</u>
New Home for the Building Department	1. After more than a year of hard work and sweat, renovations to the building housing the Building Department have been completed. The facility is conveniently located directly behind the Council on Aging building at 299 Bay Road to assist the public. Staff appreciates the efforts of DPW who assisted with the work.	1. Completed	1. Completed
2. Fire Safety for Solar Panels and Generators	2. Dennis Curran, Hamilton's Electrical Inspector, will be presenting to the Fire Department regarding the fire and electrical safety of solar panels and generators.	2. On-going	2. Short-term
3. Master Plan (MP)	2. The Planning Board is working with staff to place finishing touches on the Master Plan so that the exciting work of implementation can begin. The Master Plan is the Town's comprehensive long-range planning document.	3. January	3. On-going
4. MBTA Communities zoning	4. The Supreme Judicial Court issued a decision this week in the Attorney General v. Town of Milton case involving the MBTA zoning requirements. The Planning Board will be coordinating with the Select Board in regard to next steps moving forward.	4. January	4. On-going
5. Zoning Amendments for Town Meeting	5. The Planning Board is hard at work preparing articles for consideration at April Town Meeting. A complete list of articles will be finalized in January.	5. Jan April 2025	5. On-going
6. Conservation Commission	6. The Town is anxious to welcome a new Conservation Agent. A candidate has been identified and is anticipated to start in February.	6. February	6. On-going

Public Health Department 1. Health Related	1. Reported 4 case of influenza, 5 confirmed cases of Coronavirus and 1 case of Salmonellosis.	Timeline 1. On-going	<u>Status</u>
T. Healiff Kolaica	Covid test kits available in COA building and at Town Hall (Patton Homestead reception). Limited supply of single use gloves and bandages available at COA.	On-going	
2. Food Permitting and Inspection	2. Permitting of food establishments/food trucks is on-going for the 2025 year. Round-2 of food establishment inspection is completed 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. has rolled out a new low-interest betterment loan program for 2025 that would benefit residents whose septic systems have failed and are in need of replacement. Contact bohadmin@hamiltonma.gov for information.		
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 has updated 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	
	Tobacco sales regulation updated in 2024 - Added in 2024 is the ban on menthol flavored products (all tobacco sale permit holders have been inspected for such products).		
5. Program Initiatives:	5. Sharps—collection/disposal program is on-going. Sharps collection containers can	5. On-going	

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Sharps/Blood Pressure Screenings	be obtained at the COA (299 Bay Road) taken home, filled and returned for disposal free.		
	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. Public Health Concerns: Norovirus across US	6. Norovirus cases are up 30% in parts of the U.S., per the CDC. This highly contagious stomach bug causes sudden vomiting and diarrhea, with symptoms appearing 12–48 hours after exposure. Most recover in 1–3 days, but it leads to 900 deaths and 109,000 hospitalizations yearly, mainly among adults 65+ and young children. There's no treatment, so rehydration is key. Seek medical help if symptoms of dehydration appear, like dizziness or decreased urination. Prevent infection by washing hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for 20 seconds and disinfecting surfaces. Stay safe and healthy this winter!	6. On-going	

<u>Finance</u>		<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Status</u>
1. FY24 Audit	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			
4. FY26 Budget Preparation	3. Finance is working on the FY26 estimated revenue in preparation to set the Tax Rate in early December.		
	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 2 parcels. We will 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 legal letters are required.	1. In-process	
2. Billing	2. Water bills are past due but our staff is 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.	2. On-going	
	FY 2025 Actual tax bills have been mailed. Tax payer should have received bills at this time. The FY 2025 Tax Rate: \$15.65	December 27, 2024	
3. Month-end	3. Balancing receivables, bank statements, and cash for December 2025.	3. On-going	
4. Benefits /Payroll	4. The Assistant Treasurer/Collector has been busy establishing benefits with new hires and departures. Working on year end payroll preparing for W2's for calendar year 2024. Workers Comp audit began this week and is on-going.	4. On-going	

5. Regional school	5. Working on the POS statement for the school's upcoming Bonding. BOS statement has been sent to Locke & Lord. Received continuing Disclosure for Town starting to work on that project	5. On-going
6. Town Borrowing	6. Working on a requirement letter for BOND Council for upcoming CPA borrowing for 2025. 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.	6. On-going

Parks & Recreation		<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Status</u>
1. Winter Programs Begin	1. A number of winter programs will begin this week. We are offering close to 50 different programs, events, and trips. Programs include but not limited too Adult Pickleball Play Adult Pickleball Lesson	1. On-going	1. On-going
	 Adult Boot Camp Adult Water Exercise Adult Lap Swim Adult Walking Pass Adult Volleyball Various Youth Sports Programs Youth Pickleball Lessons Youth Chess Lesson Youth Stem Challenges Youth Pokemon Club Youth Ice Skating Lessons Youth Gymnastics Youth Field Hockey Youth Tennis Lessons 		
2. 2025 Patton Park Summer Park Program Information and Registration	2. The 2025 Patton Park Summer Park Program Information Packet is now online. Registration for the Program will be held on the evening of Tuesday, February 4th.	2. Feb. 4, 2025	2. Registration starts soon
3. Recreation Center HVAC Replacement	3. The Recreation Center is undergoing an assessment of the electrical infrastructure and building envelope in regards the potential of converting to a heat pump. The replacement of the HVAC system at the Recreation Center was approved as a capital expenditure at this past Town Meeting.	3. On-going	3. In-Process
4. Patton Park and Veterans Memorial Pool Security Cameras	4. Installation of the security cameras at Patton Park and Veterans Memorial Pool is complete. Some minor electrical work is still needed for the cameras to go live at Patton Park, this work will be completed shortly.	4. January 2025	4. Complete
5. Patton Park Master Plan	The second phase of the Patton Park Master Plan will be starting shortly. This includes technical detailed plans for drainage, gazebo improvements, and accessible walkways and paths throughout the park. Public engagement will be included in this phase which will be occurring over the next couple of months.	5. February 2025	5. In-Process

Coursell on Anton		<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Status</u>
Council on Aging 1. Programming	1. January programs are underway, including a movie screening of Boys in the Boat with a potential guest speaker. Upcoming events include KevTech, Lunch with Police, and regular programs. We're also planning February and March schedules. The New Year's Eve Party was a success, with 15 residents a picting of Chinase.	1. End of January	1. On-Going
	with 15 residents enjoying trivia and Chinese food.		
2. SHINE Program	2. Shine appointments continue to be scheduled. Appointment availability is limited and a wait list is available.	2. January 2025	2. On-Going
	Call for Volunteers - AgeSpan in Lawrence provides free training to become a certified SHINE counselor. Hamilton COA now offers travel scholarships for volunteers attending free SHINE counselor training in Lawrence. Scholarships require pre-approval and a commitment to support Hamilton COA Visit Outreach/SHINE - Town of Hamilton, MA for information.		
3. Owl System	3. The Owl system will be set up in the coming weeks, and hybrid programming will begin early next year, starting with computer classes for residents at home	3. January 2025	3. On-Going
4. Grants	4. No changes in grant. Quarterly report was completed and submitted to the state.	4. January 2025	4. On-going
5. Newsletter	COA has provided five additional Chromebooks/iPads for residents and hired an instructor for classes at Rowley and Hamilton, which residents can attend at either location. We're exploring purchasing a drawing app and Apple Pencils through the grant. The tablets are expected to arrive in a couple of weeks, with an information session scheduled for April 1 at 11 A.M. to distribute them to interested residents, following a sign-out procedure. 5. We are working on the February newsletter and have seen an increase in residents requesting it via email, which helps reduce mailing costs. We encourage more people to sign up for the email version, as our monthly mailing costs are \$430 and continue to rise.	5. Feb. 2025	5. On-going

		<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Status</u>
Human Resources 1. Openings	 1. Current Openings (descriptions online): Principal Assessor Conservation Agent (Shared service with Manchester-by-the-Sea) OPEN - Secondary Operator - Water Dept* Planning and Conservation Coordinator Regional Public Health Nurse: Towns of Hamilton, Essex, Wenham, and Rockport* Regional Health Inspector: Towns of Hamilton, Essex, Wenham, and Rockport* (pending) 	1. Regional Public Health Nurse pre-screen interviews are in process.	
2. Collaboration	2. Working with the Regional Coordinator on the Regional Public Health Nurse and Regional Health Inspector positions. 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.		
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.		
Town Clerk's Office		<u> Timeline</u>	Status
1. Conflict of Interest Annual Filings, MGL C. 268A	2025 Conflict of Interest Training All municipal employees (including board and committee members) are subject to Conflict of Interest (Ethics) training. In Jan, 2025 the Office sends emails to all employees, appointed, and elected officials regarding the 2025 training requirements.	1. Jan - Dec	1. Year round
2. 2025 Dog License Renewals MGL C. 140 s.137, 137A	2. In 2023 we issued 962 dog licenses and in 2024 issued 983 in. Renewal applications were included in the 2025 Census mailing.	Jan - Dec	Year round
3. DBA		2. Jan - Dec	2. Year Round

MGL C. 110 s.5	3. "Doing Business As" renewals due every 4 years. We issued 49 in 2023 and 32 in 2024.		
4. 2025 Town Election (ATE) and Town Meeting (ATM)	4. ATM will be held Sat, April 5; 2025 ATE will be held Thu, April 10, 2025. Vote by mail will be available for the ATE. There will be 11 positions on the ballot: Select Bd 2; Planning Bd 3; School Committee 3; Moderator; Assessor; and Library Trustee. Election dates and deadlines are posted on the Clerk webpage.	4. Jan - April	
	Emails were sent to all elected officials with expiring terms. Nomination papers will be available Mon, Jan 13.		
	The final 2024 Campaign Finance report is due Jan 21. Emails were sent to all elected officials reminding them to file.		
5. Hamilton Census/Street List process MGL C.51 s.4	5. The 2025 Census Form was mailed to 2,894 households late Dec. Forms are due back no later than Jan 31. The mailing included the dog license renewal form and the 2025 trash schedule.	5. Jan. 2025 - Dec. 2025	