



Report of the Town Manager

March 13, 2017

1. Financial Updates-

- a. I have completed my recommended FY18 budget. During the week of March 13th I will be completing my transmittal memo and PowerPoint presentation for the March 20th Board meeting. Just a reminder that the Finance Committee will also attend the March 20th Board meeting on the budget presentation.
- b. I have been in communication with Onyx Energy regarding the landfill solar project and the estimated electricity savings for FY18. Onyx is estimating an annual savings townwide of \$105,000. Approximatley half of the savings will benefit the School Department. I am using $\frac{3}{4}$ of the estimated savings in my FY18 budget.

2. Personnel Updates-

- a. Chief Walsh and I interviewed the two candidates that passed the Lieutenant's exam. Both candidates did a terrific job during their interview. The Chief and I chose Kevin Wolski to be the next Lieutenant.

With the recent graduation of Joe Champney III from the Reading Academy on February 16th, the Police Department is now fully staffed. Patrolman Champney will be assuming a split shift patrol position on evenings and overnights. His graduation allowed the Detective position to be filled full time. Officer Alan Ross, a veteran officer and presently a dayshift Patrolman, has been chosen to fill the Detective position. Chief Walsh will bring Lieutenant Wolski, Detective Ross and Patrolman Champney to the March 20th Board meeting for introductions.

3. Project Updates-

- a. The Onyx Energy project is moving forward rapidly. The solar panel frames are being installed currently. Below is a picture of the project taken Wednesday.



Onyx anticipates the project being completed in May.

- b. The Building Commissioner continues to complete inspections on multifamily properties. To date 40 properties have been inspected with an additional 12 to be inspected in the next couple of weeks. Four property owners have not been cooperative and will be brought to court to comply in the coming months.
- c. The bid opening for the High Street bridge is set for Wednesday, March 15th.
- d. The FY17 CDBG grant application was filed on Friday, March 10, 2017 by Glenn Eaton at MRPC. The National Objective met for this application was declared as Slum and Blight rather than the typical Low/Moderate Income (LMI) Objective. LMI means that at least 51% of the population that all projects proposed in the application must serve low to moderate income earners. While I believe our application remains competitive, DHCD earmarks a higher percentage of the funds to those applications that aim to satisfy the LMI National Objective.

Winchendon's application status had to be modified due to the results of the income surveys conducted on Chestnut St. Of 12 dwelling eligible units, 8 responded to the income survey. Of the 8 that responded, 6 qualified as LMI. Two of the 4 that didn't respond are vacant and thereby had to be counted as non-qualifying units. Of the remaining 2 properties that did not respond, one unit refused to give income information and the other never responded to the numerous attempts to gather the information. Because the two properties did not respond, they needed to be counted as non-qualifying units, making the final LMI income survey result 50% where 51% LMI is required.

4. Miscellaneous Updates –

- a. I will be attending a meeting Thursday at MassDEP to discuss the Giovanoni's request to breach the White's Mill Pond Dam. I will update the Board on the meeting at Monday night's meeting.
- b. Chief's Walsh and Smith and I met with representatives from MassDOT and the City of Gardner Monday afternoon to discuss the safety concerns on Rte. 140. MassDOT committed to reviewing the options available to them to improve safety. Some of the improvements suggested were eliminating some areas where passing is allowed but have a history of accidents, installing rumble strips in the center lane and installing signs. Longer term improvements could include more lighting (cost incurred by communities) and the installation of jersey barriers.

DOT indicated they would meet, discuss the options internally, and respond with their intentions in writing in the next month or so.

- c. I met with Representative Zlotnik on Tuesday to discuss requests for the Commonwealth's FY18 budget. I suggested that the Blair Square roundabout continue to be requested along with funding for safety improvements on Route 140.
- d. Title work has been completed by Town Counsel on the ownership of the Red Dam and Great Dam. Specifically, the Giovanoni's purchase of the property does include the right of reverter; however, the Town has not violated the reverter clause which would enable the Giovanoni's to enforce the reverter language. Counsel is recommending that the Town file suit challenging the reverter language has not been violated.
- e. Community Development was contacted by Cumberland Farms representatives who stated they would like to begin construction in April rather than July. Tracy Murphy is scheduling a meeting with appropriate Town staff and Cumberland Farms representatives during the week of March 20th.