

Report of the Town Manager

February 11, 2013

1. Personnel Updates-

- a. Planning Agent- Longtime Planning Agent Ellen Decoteau has resigned her position with us effective last week. Ellen, as you are all likely aware, was an exceptional employee of the town and her efforts will be greatly missed. For the interim period, until I have better budget clarity, I am not filling the position. In an effort at keeping all of the pieces moving, however, I have formalized the hours of the Planning Department's part-time 10 hour a week staff person such that she will be there Mon-Thu from 2:30pm to 5:00pm. Additionally, I have authorized two current town hall employees to work a few extra hours (non-overtime) to help reorganize the office and its systems.

Action Requested- None requested.

- b. Animal Control- As I earlier reported, we joined Ashburnham and Westminster in issuing a joint request for proposals for a regional Animal Control Service. The deadline for submittals came and went and no one submitted a proposal. We have rewritten a portion of the RFP based upon comments from the Police Chiefs of the respective communities and it will be issued again this week.

Action Requested- None requested.

2. Financial Updates-

- a. Murdock Middle High School Debt Exclusion Tax Impact Discussion- As per my communication with each of you over the past several weeks, I am enclosing a copy of a document that I prepared in an effort to address a question raised by a citizen regarding the impact that the retirement of the MMHS debt has had on the tax rate.

Action Requested- None requested.

- b. FY 14 Budget- Department Heads are working on their budgets and each is due to be submitted to my office no later than this coming Thursday, February 14, 2013. The Governor released his FY14 budget proposal on January 24, 2013 and addressed the opening session of the MMA. While his proposal shows a slight increase in general government local aid, I am not factoring it into our budget work because it is predicated upon tax increases and casino revenues that I cannot reasonably assure will come to pass. I will have more for you as the voted town meeting calendar dictates.

Action Requested- None requested.

3. Project Updates-

- a. New Commercial Industrial Development Proposal- We convened a Development Review Group consisting of the Building Commissioner, Conservation Agent, Planning Board Chair, Police Chief, Health Agent, Development Director and me on

Wednesday. We heard from a property owner who is proposing to develop his 21 acre parcel of land on Rt. 140. (see enclosed plan) He proposes a 50,000 s.f. building within which he will repair, refurbish and recycle large trucks. He proposes that ALL repair, refurbishment and recycling work will be contained inside of the building. He plans to seek a Class 2 permit from your board to enable him to sell a limited number of vehicles from his location. He advises that he plans to employ 25 people initially with the potential to add more as his business grows. He is preparing to go before the ZBA for a special permit and expects to move rapidly from there if he is successful.

Action Requested- None requested.

4. Miscellaneous Updates-

- a. Housing Authority- We were once again the grateful recipients of pieces of valuable and useful equipment from the Housing Authority last week. (see enclosed newspaper account). I cannot emphasize enough the value of having a locally managed, locally grown and locally connected Housing Authority. As you are likely aware, the Governor has filed legislation to abolish local Housing Authorities and put six uber-Authorities in their place. While I support our Governor and have appreciated all that he has done for cities and towns in the Commonwealth since he has been in office, make no mistake about it...this is a proposal that is NOT friendly to us and is definitely NOT in our best interest. I plan on inviting our local Housing Authority and Executive Director into your next meeting to discuss this very important issue.

Action Requested- None requested.

- b. Municipal Electricity Aggregation Request for Proposals for Consulting Services- The advertisement for the RFP for soliciting a consultant to develop a program to aggregate the electrical load of electricity users within the Town, both residential and commercial, was published and bids are due this coming Thursday, February 14, 2013.

Action Requested- None.

Executive Session:

Criminal Investigation #5