

# Report of the Acting Town Manager

June 23, 2015

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## **1. General-**

Over the past two weeks I have been familiarizing myself with the Town staff, organization structure, ongoing projects and issues facing the community. Obviously, this will be an ongoing process over the next several weeks and I am endeavoring to resolve immediate issues keeping the Town moving forward with its short and long term initiatives while simultaneously giving some thought to more strategic advice that I can provide relative to processes and policies, organizational structure, the development of a financial roadmap, and ideas for long term community development. It is my hope that these ideas can be provided to the Board of Selectmen in a consolidated report in the late summer/early fall.

## **2. Financial Updates-**

- a. FY15 General Government Budget –** The resolution of FY15 budget issues has been my primary focus for the past several days beginning with an answer to the SPED transportation bill that was laid before me on the first day, followed by closing various budgetary deficits in unemployment, veterans' benefits, and snow and ice costs. I am happy to report great progress in these areas with the article for the June 30<sup>th</sup> Special Town Meeting that will transfer monies into these accounts via identified savings in the health insurance premium account. The remaining issue(s) from FY15 will be the remaining snow and ice deficit and the deficit in the health insurance trust fund. Some or all of this amount will be funded through additional deficit borrowing allowed through the special legislation. However, we are working to minimize this amount.
- b. FY16 General Government Budget-** The secondary financial issue that has required our attention is dealing with an anticipated deficit in FY16 which is primarily attributable to a miscalculation of the allowable Proposition 2 ½ levy limit. This problem currently stands at about \$63K plus any amount of snow and ice deficit that we wish to raise in FY16 (not funded through deficit borrowing). We are currently combing through the FY16 budget to find possible budget reductions and/or available revenues. Until that process is complete we are carefully reviewing all implementation of the approved FY16 budget.
- c. FY16 Cash Flow-** Another immediate issue facing the Town is cash flow for the first few months of the fiscal year prior to the first quarter tax receipts and local aid payment. At this point we expect a short term Revenue Anticipation borrowing which we will use to stabilize our cash flow and hopefully eliminate this problem moving forward.

**Action Requested:** None Requested.

## **3. Personnel Updates-**

- a. Town Manager Finance Assistant –** Ms. Sheryl Wright, Town Manager Finance Assistant - I appointed Ms. Wright to the position of Town Manager Finance Assistant effective June 8, 2015. The action will be funded from the line items in the existing budget for the Town Manager.
- b. Town Manager Search-** It is imperative that we move as soon as possible to begin the search for a new permanent Town Manager with a hope that we can have an individual in place by September/October. Such a timetable is aggressive however, I do believe it is important to have someone in place to take over following any Fall Town Meeting and before FY17 budget preparations begin in earnest.

I am interested in assisting with the recruitment of a new Town Manager and am prepared to provide the Board of Selectmen with a proposal for said services. I would recommend that any recruitment firm engaged for this purpose work with a screening committee separate from the Board of Selectmen. The Committee would narrow the field of candidates to 3-5 finalists from which the Selectmen would then make the final appointment.

**Action Recommended:** The Board through its Chairman, or a Sub-Committee should work with the Executive Assistant to seek proposals from recruiting firms for this service for final review by the Board of Selectmen for award and contract. I would also ask that the Selectmen vote to designate the Acting Town Manager as a Special Municipal Employee under MGL, Chapter 268A in order to allow a proposal from me to be considered.

### **3. Project Updates-**

- a. Police Station Project-** Previously reported we are approximately \$80,000 short of being able to award the contract. The third round of bids is in process and due out in the near future. It is necessary to phase some of the work in order to get the department moved into the new space and then work in the subsequent phases thereafter with any combination of Monty Tech services, Prisoner labor and staff and citizen contributions.

**Action Requested:** None Requested.

- b. Town Solar Farm -** I will be following up with more information on the status of this project for a report at a subsequent meeting.

**Action Requested:** None requested

- c. Municipal Aggregation -** As you know, I am currently a Principal in a consulting firm which provides services to various municipal, non-profit, and municipal entities. One such entity that I began working with several months ago is Colonial Power Group (CPG), which works with municipal clients in setting up community aggregation programs. CPG is under contract with the Town of Winchendon for its aggregation effort. As such I cannot participate in this effort and hereby notify the Board of my recusal in this matter and hereby delegate Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant, to execute any and all documents associated with this program.

**Action Requested:** None requested

- d. Brandywine Farms, Inc. -** The Tax Increment Financing agreement for this project will be reviewed by the Commonwealth on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. I will provide an update as it becomes available.

**Action Requested:** None requested

### **4. Miscellaneous Updates-**

- a.** Janet Godin's complaint at the BoS meeting of June 8, 2015 regarding her driveway at 55 Highland Street was reviewed by Town personnel and I concur with the opinion presented. Please see attached memo and photo.
- b.** Turning Technologies – Electronic Voting Devices – The Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation approved a grant to purchase electronic voting devices for Town Meetings and will be used for

the first time at this Special Town Meeting on June 30, 2015. The STM will be supervised by the company of the devices, Turning Technologies. All devices will be numbered and assigned to register voters as they check in. Town Meetings will be more efficient and hopefully it will encourage more citizens to attend

**Action Requested:** None Requested