

# Report of the Town Manager

September 9, 2013

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## 1. Personnel Updates-

- a. **Board of Assessors-** As earlier advised (email of 8.27.13), the new GIS and property card web application is up in test format. This is not yet live and public as there is still a bit of GIS text conversion work to be done but I earlier provided you each with access information to get a sneak peek. I hope you have had an opportunity to log on and explore the tool. This will markedly change the way in which we serve the public from the Assessor's office as the public will now have access to our property maps and cards from anywhere in the world with a simple internet connection. Progress!

Action Requested- None at this time.

- b. **Board of Assessors-** I have appointed two people to fill two of the vacant seats on the Board of Assessors. Harald Sheid and Jeff Reynolds both possess the requisite experience and state certifications for these appointments and filling these seats will allow us to move seamlessly into the phase of the year where the tax rate is set.

Action Requested- If it would please the Board, a vote to affirm the appointments of Harald Sheid and Jeff Reynolds to the Board of Assessors.

- c. **Town Hall Positions-** We have now completed the process of advertising and interviewing for three town hall positions. They are as follow-

- **Planning Agent (20 hrs.)-** After a review of the resumes submitted, and interviews being conducted by John White, Planning Board Chair, Gerry White, Director of Development and me it is our unanimous position that the offer go to Ms. Tracy A. Murphy of Petersham, MA (resume enclosed). Accordingly, I have appointed Ms. Murphy to the position of Planning Agent.

Action Requested- If it would please the Board, a vote to affirm the appointment of Ms. Tracy A Murphy to the position of Planning Agent.

- **Assistant Town Clerk (20 hrs.)-** After a review of the resumes submitted, and interviews being conducted by Town Clerk Judy Rushcioni and me it is our unanimous position that the offer go to Ms. Debra Skinner of Winchendon, MA (resume enclosed). Accordingly, I have appointed Ms. Skinner to the position of Assistant Town Clerk.

Action Requested- If it would please the Board, a vote to affirm the appointment of Ms. Debra Skinner to the position of Assistant Town Clerk.

- **Floating Clerk (37 hrs.)-** After a review of the resumes submitted, and interviews being conducted I have appointed Ms. Ashlyn White of Winchendon, MA (resume enclosed).

**Action Requested-** If it would please the Board, a vote to affirm the appointment of Ms. Ashlyn White to the position of Floating Clerk.

## 2. **Financial Updates-**

- a. **Year End-** Our new Town Accountant Donna Allard has been experiencing the proverbial “baptism by fire” since starting with us. As you are aware, Donna was originally going to have the benefit of working alongside our longtime and retiring Town Accountant Charlotte Gallant for the better part of a month. As you are further aware, this overlap has not been possible and Donna has been going it alone. While we have called upon and received assistance from both the Town Accountant in Ayer and the Treasurer in Gardner, the task ahead is still quite daunting. While I am certain that she is up to the challenge, it is none the less not quite what she had bargained for at sign-up. There are still a great number of matters to be resolved as we move along in the financial calendar year toward close out.

**Action Requested-** None.

## 3. **Project Updates-**

- a. **Police Station-** I offer the following report pursuant to your voted direction that I facilitate the ministerial matters remaining involving the planned purchase of the former Winchendon Courthouse for the use as a new Police Station. I note that my role continues to be one of a ministerial nature and that all substantive discussions and/or negotiations in this matter are still being conducted by our Town Counsel with consultation of the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen as may be required. As earlier reported, the town has an executed purchase and sales agreement (P&S) with Winchendon Court, LLC to purchase the building and two adjacent parcels of vacant land. A part of the P&S gave the town the right to have additional hazardous materials testing performed and to the extent that anything was found to require remediation at the owner’s expense. Such a study was performed by our town on-call engineering firm, Tighe and Bond, and as expected based upon earlier studies, there were several areas in which asbestos or asbestos containing materials were located. I can report that as of last Thursday that the owner’s contractor’s finished the remediation work and that we have our agent going back in for compliance retesting next week. The target closing date is set for the middle to the end of next week and is still being finalized between the respective counsels.

**Action Requested-** None.

- b. **Route 140-** The project of resurfacing and safety improvements to the section of route 140 from the Gardner city line to the intersection of Teel Rd, approximately 2.2 miles is well underway. As earlier reported, the work includes pavement milling and resurfacing, widening for construction of turning lanes, intersection and driveway improvements, pavement markings and the installation of an intersection control beacon and traffic signs in the area of the Irving Station. I am advised that the project is well ahead of schedule though no projected completion date is available.

Action Requested- None.

4. **Miscellaneous Updates-**

- a. **) Hall Road Right of First Refusal-** Please see the attached memo for an update on this matter. While there is a greater level of detailed information available for discussion, it would be only appropriate to have such a dialogue in an executive session and such a session is not posted for this evenings meeting. I would be pleased to speak with you individually at your request.

Action Requested- None.

- b. **Municipal Electrical Aggregation-** As earlier reported, there is now just one matter that is specific to Municipal aggregation still awaiting ruling from the Attorney General's office. As such, we remain in a holding pattern. I will advise once the final piece is addressed and when it is that I believe that we can roll out this program to the benefit of our local electricity users.

Action Requested- None.