

Town Manager Report

May 2020

- Collective Bargaining:
 - Preliminary handshake agreement reached
 - Component “tentative agreements” have been drafted, and meetings continue to ensure both parties agree on the specifics
 - Concurrently, a master draft of changes is being prepared. Once this draft master document is completed and agreed to, it will go to the Union for review and ratification and then to the Board for final approval.
 - Contract document agreement is targeted for the end of June. So, ratification, approval, and signatures hopefully will occur in July.
- Mediation – Great River Hydro, LLC Appeal – at this time, information remains confidential. However, action by the Board may be possible after Executive Session on June 10. (Confidential information already has or will be sent to the Board in advance of the June 10 meeting to aid in the Board’s Executive Session discussion.)
- Personnel Issue – at this time and for the foreseeable future this item remains confidential.
- Continued weekly Leadership Training.
- Continued to search for financial training for Board approval. Found one via University of Georgia that seems to touch based on all the aspects of local governmental finance.
- Financial Reporting:
 - Pulling together trends in cash flow for the 1st six months of the fiscal year, by month
 - Monthly reporting
 - April report, including balance sheet
 - Researched March report questions, provided response to Board
 - Pre-audit work, including a checklist of items provided by the auditor (e.g., county tax verification, updating fixed asset inventory, status of grants, sample expected for use during audit, etc.)
 - Joint meeting with Town and school officials and House legislative delegation to discuss status of finances, tax rate, payments, etc.
 - Unfortunately, it’s apparent that state delays in providing school tax rates for Homestead and Non-Residential properties will result in a chain reaction of delays, including: 1) delay in setting overall tax rate, 2) delay in preparing and sending out tax bills, 3) delay in the August 14th property tax installment due date, and, most importantly, 4) delay in receipt of related property tax revenue that funds municipal and school services/expenses. At this time, it’s unclear whether or not the Town/Schools would have to borrow funds in anticipation of tax revenue. The school finance office will provide some insight during the Board’s June 10 meeting, and the TM/Board will continue to discuss the Town side of the equation.
 - FYI, the VT Legislature passed temporary legislation allowing Town’s to alter their voter approved deadlines for tax payments (August 14, 2020 and February 12, 2021) without having to have additional voter authorization. The Legislature also passed some temporary legislation granting municipalities the ability to

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waive penalty and interest charges related to tax payments should they wish.

Both are important considerations as the Town enters fiscal year 2020-21.

- Have requested dept heads to get final invoices, as applicable, into Finance so we can close out FYE 2021 as soon as possible after June 30.
- Finance Director advertising, appointing review team, shared resumes with team, additional work forthcoming. Also, discussed with the Town auditor the option of to outsource the Finance Director duties, and the governmental accounting program offered by Accufund®.
- Developed Norwich Safety & Health Work Plan as required by VOSHA. Also, updated it, as applicable. Also, working closely with Rec Department to ensure individual programs have applicable (or similar) plans in place prior to approval of programs.
- Update to the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is underway with help from the TRORC.
- Finished (and adopted) annual update to the Local Emergency Management Plan.
- A box culvert on Route 132 near Bowen Hill Road is failing. Do not be surprised in the near future if you see Route 132 reduced to a signalized, single lane for an extended period of time. At this time a request for proposals is being prepared to replace the box culvert. As applicable, an update will be provided during the June 10 meeting.
- Departmental strategic plans continued to be worked on; P&Z Director delegated to pull it together for TM review
- Solicited RFP's for Brown Schoolhouse Bridge design-build project. Seven proposals received. An appointed team will be reviewing and ranking the technical proposals. Once ranked the cost proposals will be opened. The preferred contractor generally will be based on the highest ranked, least cost proposal. Target goal is to have preferred consultant recommendation for the Board for the June 24 meeting.
- In case you haven't heard, there is another bridge project going on in Town, too. The Rec Department is trying to move forward with replacement of the pedestrian bridge that was lost connecting Huntley-Meadow Rec Fields with the Beaver Meadow Road neighborhood. While Brie Swenson is heading up the project, Don McCabe is "project champion" especially in identifying funding sources, especially donations. If you are interested in donating, please reach out to Don. If you can't track him down, both the TM and Brie can be reached at their Tracy Hall phone numbers. Thanks!
- Administrative work prepared for VTrans MAB re: Beaver Meadow Sidewalk Scoping. Work resulted in Town's ability to develop the contract between DuBois & King (already approved by the Board). Scoping work will occur this summer/fall. Note: the TM and DPW may approach the Board for a contract amendment to include an additional component related to an improved citizen participation/input process.
- Spending an inordinate amount of time completing a formal request for information from Doug Wilberding re: proposed Tracy Hall renovation project.
- Worked with DPW Director on preparing documentation/insight for the Board re: the replacement of several trucks.
- Scheduled meeting with Rob Gere to work on developing hardware/IT plan for Tracy Hall, based on assessment by SymQuest. Again, the plan is to prepare an RFP/RFQ, but insight from the

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Board is being sought as to whether this will be an “all in” or a phased process. (Note: the assessment remains confidential given the system and its possible vulnerabilities identified.)

- Updated the TM COVID-19 Contingency Emergency Plan, as necessary and applicable.
- As usual, addressed numerous questions, concerns issues identified by the public at-large.
- In lieu of participating in Green Up Day this year, the Town Manager sponsored a free trash day on May 30. The TM would appreciate any insight as to whether that was a good idea and, if so, how could the logistics be improved.
- REMINDER: IF YOU USE THE TRANSFER STATION, IT’S THAT TIME OF YEAR, AGAIN, TO PURCHASE YOUR ANNUAL STICKER. 😊
- ALSO, THE TRANSFER STATION HAS STARTED ACCEPTED REFUNDABLES CANS/BOTTLES, AGAIN. YOUR DONATIONS CONTRIBUTE TO THE NORWICH CADET PROGRAM AND TO THE CITIZEN’S ASSISTANCE FUND (WHICH HAS TAKEN A COUPLE OF “HITS” RECENTLY DUE TO COVID-19). YOUR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IS APPRECIATED. THANK YOU!
- Though we’ve been immersed in COVID-19, the issue of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has not gone away. June is the beginning month when the EAB beetles emerge. Please adhere to the state’s rules on the transporting of any wood type (e.g., firewood) and not just Ash. For additional information, click on the following link: <https://anr.vermont.gov/content/help-slow-spread-emerald-ash-borer-beetles-emerge-soon>