



# TOWN OF BOXFORD

*Chris A Olbrot, PE*  
*Superintendent of Public Works/Town Engineer*  
7B Spofford Road  
Boxford, MA 01921

[colbrot@boxfordma.gov](mailto:colbrot@boxfordma.gov)

Tel: (978) 352-6555

Fax: (978) 352-5558

## MEMORANDUM

To: Select Board

From: Chris Olbrot

Date: November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022

RE: Department Update

### **DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE:**

#### **Culvert Design and Permitting**

DPW contracted with TEC to provide design and permitting for three critical culverts identified within the 2020 survey. These are on Glendale Rd., Ipswich Rd., and Middleton Rd. In addition to the utilization of local and ARPA funding, I worked with the Ipswich River Watershed and Ross Povenmire to obtain **\$275,000** in funding for the design and permitting of three other Culverts in town. They are located on Pye Brook Ln, Georgetown Rd., and Herrick Rd. These culvert replacements are critical to improving our stormwater resiliency, maintaining safe and adequate drainage, and keeping our roads operational. Existing conditions surveys and subsoil investigations are taking place this fall and permitting will be through the winter months. It is expected that the Glendale Rd. culvert will be replaced first followed by Ipswich Rd. next construction season. This is subject to change as need be, however.

### **BUILDINGS:**

#### **DPW Fabric Membrane Building**

We are preparing for the erection of the building this month. It is expected that the foundation will be installed the week of 11/14 and the building being delivered on 11/21. It is a two-week project to have the building erected.

#### **Building Maintenance Software - Operations Hero and ALPHA**

Contracts have been signed with our vendors and we are commencing the implementation of this building maintenance online portal. This project is going to be a vast technological improvement

over our current system of building maintenance. ALPHA is a company that will come into town and assesses the buildings and all appurtenances within the buildings, such as HVAC, electric, walls, walks, roof, plumbing, etc. in order to have an idea of the current backlog of maintenance and replacement costs. This will help us understand our need for capital expenditures to keep our buildings operational and safe. This information will then be married to Operations Hero online software that will act as the vessel for work orders and facility maintenance activities. Paul Anastasi, our part-time facility maintenance hire has been an integral resource and continues to help us with this important goal.

### **East Fire Bathroom Renovations Project**

I organized a pre-construction meeting in late October to begin this important renovation project for a women's shower/bathroom at the East Fire Station. Unfortunately, at that meeting we were all informed that the town's plumber does not have the capacity to take this work on due to a worker's injury. We are now in the process of securing another option. The first option is to have the students of the Tech to do the work under the strict supervision of their instructor/master plumber and the Town's GC on the project, Jason Kamps. The second option would be to utilize another plumber either known through Jason Kamps or through the town's carpenter, Shadrack Construction. I will keep the Board informed on the steps as they are realized to ensure this project stays on track and gets completed as soon as possible.

### **RECREATION and FIELDS:**

#### **Athletic Field Maintenance**

DPW worked much of the fall to improve the athletic fields and prepare them for the 2023 athletic season. The largest effort was put into the natural field at the Commons. The extreme drought caused significant challenges to maintaining that field this summer and fall. That said, RAD Sports (the original installer) has agreed to make good on its original commitment of 4 years of soil amendment activities. Since they did complete this effort in 2019, they will owe us this fall and the next two years at a minimum. In addition to the aeration, we also top-dressed, slice-seeded, and deep-tine aerated the entire field. In addition to that, we plan on a more deliberate and aggressive soil amendment nutrient and weed prevention plan.

We have utilized the newly purchased "seedavator" attachment on our tractor. This attachment allowed the Town to aerate all of our playing fields while also dropping fresh seed in behind the perforations. Introducing oxygen and grass seed into the soil will allow for a better and safer playing surface. The staff has given me very positive feedback on its ease of use and performance and will be a great addition to our field maintenance equipment for years to come.

#### **Border to Boston Trail Improvements off of Pye Brook Rd.**

In late summer we were able to install the stone dust trail. Utilizing a sidewalk paver, we were able to efficiently and effectively spread the stone dust and compact with a vibratory compactor. I walked the trail with a few of the B2B Trail Committee members and they were very pleased with the outcome. There may be a few areas that the DPW can help with in the future should some erosion and other issues present. However, it is expected that this was largely a one-time commitment utilizing CPA funding.

## **MISCELLANEOUS:**

### **Hiring of HEO-1**

After many months and two postings for this position, I am happy to report that we have made an offer to a resident of Georgetown with experience in landscaping and snow plowing. We are now going through the pre-employment protocol, and we hope the candidate will come aboard as a Laborer and, once he has passed the necessary licenses, will be promoted to Heavy Equipment Operator – 1. I am hopeful to have a full staff for the first time since I joined Boxford.

### **Plow Rates and Fuel Adjustment**

In early October we began to reach out to our plow contractors. It was immediately clear that just about everyone we spoke to had sincere reservations about this winter's operations. Many spoke about the standard rates, but all of them referenced the volatile fuel market and were unsure if they would be able to profit due to that volatility. Locally, diesel is about \$5.99 gallon, and the state average a year ago was \$3.54. Many are predicting that diesel could spike to over \$7 a gallon this winter.

I propose that we again bring the rates up to our surrounding town's average. In addition, for this year only, to address the volatility of the diesel market, I propose a graduated diesel surcharge to provide compensation for the likely case that diesel fuel spikes this winter. I have attached these two spreadsheets for our in-depth discussion. The first reflects the new proposed plow rates and the second is for a discussion on a fuel surcharge.

The Town has just about 100 miles of roadway that we need to maintain with a crew of 6 trucks. The 16-mile plow routes take approximately 2 hours when taking into account load times and clearing both lanes. There are many times when one truck may need to be serviced and another truck has to cover that route as well. Without the help of contractors, the town is at a great disadvantage to keep the roadways safe and clear.