



Town Administrator's Report Select Board Meeting of September 27, 2021

Matthew Coogan

Lockwood Lane emergency culvert work

We posted earlier this week on the town website and Facebook page that, in the next few weeks, the culvert and headwalls will be repaired on Lockwood Lane. Town Engineer/ DPW Superintendent Chris Olbrot received the emergency certification from the Boxford Conservation Commission to proceed and is waiting on ordered material to arrive. [Link to announcement.](#)

National Grid Stray Voltage Issue

I was notified today that National Grid replaced the transformer on Janes Road last Wednesday. Unfortunately, this has not had an impact on the stray voltage issues at 38 and 40 Janes Rd. I will reach out to Joe Muraco on next steps.

National Grid has also delayed the replacement of a collapsed culvert located on the Rail Trail near Georgetown Rd. It will be rescheduled in the next few weeks. When it is replaced, the Rail Trail will not be passable during construction.

New Speed Signs

Chief Riter received his order for the two new solar powered digital speed signs. They will be installed at two locations - Ipswich Road near the Spofford/ Herrick Rd intersection and Georgetown Road just before Elm St when heading into East Village. Chief Riter will be working with the DPW on scheduling installation.

Parks Program

Parks Program Director requested to be on Monday's agenda to discuss the Park Program. For discussion is the conclusion of the 2021 Parks Program season, a succession plan for a new director, and finding a new site for the Parks Program during the construction of the school site projects potentially slated for next summer.

27 Main Street – Environmental Assessment

For the Board to consider is a negotiated license agreement between the Town and the owner of 27 Main Street granting the Town access to conduct an environmental assessment of the 27 Main Street property.

As the Board is well aware, 27 Main Street, a 3.5-acre parcel of land that runs along almost the entire back lot line of Cole School, was put on the open market this spring. The Town has long been interested in the property, and at Town Meeting this past June, the voters approved Article 8 to borrow and appropriate the sum of \$465,000 to authorize the Select Board to acquire the property for general municipal purposes. Due to the discovery of the arsenic nearby on the Cole School soils, the Finance Committee required that soil testing occur prior to the Town acquiring the land. We have negotiated a license agreement with the owner of 27 Main Street that grants the Town access to conduct environmental testing on the property. Weston and Sampson is prepared to conduct a full environmental assessment of the property and their proposal was reviewed by the owner. It includes a Phase 1 and Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) report and will cost \$16,950. The entire process is expected to take around 11 weeks.

With the Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports, the Town would have the necessary information to determine whether to proceed with acquiring the property at a price of \$410,000. I'm recommending the Board approve the license agreement.

Municipal Aggregation

Good Energy's service contract for municipal aggregation is ready for the Board to sign. I have included a memo in the agenda packet with the contract for some background information.

For background, at the February 11, 2020 Special Town Meeting, voters authorized the Select Board to initiate a municipal aggregation program to aggregate the electrical load of interested customers and to utilize a consultant. Last winter, the Boxford Sustainability Committee vetted three experienced broker consultants with strong track records of implementing municipal aggregation programs in Massachusetts. The committee recommended Good Energy because of their success working with municipalities, as well as their experience developing aggregations that support more local renewable generation through Massachusetts Class 1 Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) while maintaining price stability and affordability.

Good Energy will work with Boxford to develop a successful aggregation plan that achieves three main goals: 1) Competitive electric supply pricing, 2) price stability, and 3) increased renewable energy. Bringing all rate payers to market in aggregate, Good Energy has the expertise to secure savings in electric supply compared to the basic supply service provided by National Grid over the course of the aggregation program, typically one to three years. The supply rate is locked in over the duration of the aggregation as opposed to the variable basic supply. Furthermore, Good Energy works with the Green Energy Consumers Alliance to allocate a portion electric supply savings to purchase more MA class 1 RECs at a percentage above National Grid's legal obligation, making the electricity source greener. Residents have the ability to forgo any savings and purchase up to 100% renewable-sourced electricity,

or can opt-out of the program entirely without penalty. Good energy will be compensated at \$0.001 kWh of electricity purchased for the duration of the aggregation.

Upon approval of the service agreement, Good Energy and the Town will develop an aggregation plan through a public process. They suggest completing the plan to submit to the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) for its review and approval by the end of the calendar year. Joining DPU's queue by the end of the year would allow the Town to proceed with aggregation by next fall 2022, as long as market conditions are advantageous.

Border to Boston Trail Update

I was part of a Zoom with representatives of MassDOT, Betsy Goodrich of MVPC, Al Nierenberg, Christina Eckert, and Dave Read for an introduction to the Border to Boston Trail and the efforts underway in Boxford. We are waiting to hear on whether a federal earmark request of \$1.2 million from Rep. Moulton's office for the B2B trail will be funded. A portion of this request will go towards funding the 25% design of a segment of trail in Boxford between Bare Hill Rd and Georgetown Rd. The 25% design would then be programmed in a future TIP for MassDOT to construct, potentially 2027. There are many issues to address prior to design, including working with the abutters on access to the trail at the Kelsey Rd crossing. If Boxford does receive the funding there will be outreach to the neighborhood and direct abutters that will dictate how we proceed with MassDOT on design. The 25% design of the trail north of Georgetown Rd heading into Georgetown is already completed and the project is on the TIP plan for MassDOT to construct in 2025.

ARPA Committee

The ARPA Committee held its third meeting earlier today and continues to consider general framework for the planned use of the Town of Boxford's allocated federal Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to recommend for the Board. The Committee's recommendations will be ready for discussion at the Select Board's October 25th meeting.

Eagle Scouts

Boxford newest Eagle Scouts Samuel Burnham and Vitalij Markuns will be attending this evening's Select Board meeting to present their community Eagle project. Their Code of Honor event was held this past Saturday at Boy Scout Park. Congratulations to Samuel and Vitalij!

"First 100 Days" Plan and Progress

I'm wrapping up my first eight weeks of the job and September 28th will be my 50th day as Town Administrator. My five main goals for my first 100 days:

- Build Relationships Select Board, Department Heads and staff

- Attend at least one meeting of all boards and commissions for introductions
- Meet with community institutions and key stakeholders
- Implement a Communication Strategy to provide more information to residents
- Obtain my Massachusetts Certified Public Procurement Official (MCPPO) designation

I will continue working with the Board to review my goals and provide any comments or thoughts, including suggestions for different or additional goals.

Personnel

Building Dept. Administrative Assistant – As I mentioned, our administrative assistant in the Building Department has resigned from her position, effective September 29th, to take a Confidential Assistant position with the Wenham Police Department. We wish Kirsten Stickney the best of luck. Assistant Town Administrator Susan Inman and I continue to work on the transition plan for the building department that will include filling this vacancy.

Inspector of Buildings – Peter Delaney’s contract is in the agenda packet and ready for the Board’s approval. He will officially start on October 18.

Career Firefighter Opening – Chief Geiger is currently reviewing candidates for the vacant full time firefighter position.

Police Officer Openings – Chief Riter has a new officer vacancy due to a recent resignation. He will be beginning the hiring process to replace this vacancy this week. This is one of two vacancies in the department, the second an ongoing vacancy that the Chief intends to fill at a future time.