



MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

TO: Select Board

FROM: Evan Brassard
Town Administrator

RE: Administrator's Weekly Report

DATE: April 9, 2021

IMPORTANT NOTICES TO ALL DEPARTMENTS

- Town Meeting will be held on June 5th at 11:00 a.m. on the Grafton High School Football field.
- The Local Election date has been moved to Saturday, May 22nd. Polls will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Polling locations remain the same.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

This week the TA's Office continued to refine budget figures. We are much closer to finishing out the budget process and appreciate the help of many Town departments.

Similarly, we have been working diligently to develop the Town Meeting Warrant. The focus of this year's warrant, besides the governmental banality, is to create a document that is more transparent and accessible for the public.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

Town Accountant

- Attended MCPPO Seminar, topic of discussion Exemptions & Exceptions to MGL CH30B.
- Continue working with our auditors Scanlon & Associates, Auditors are wrapping up FY21 Financials and should have complete Audit report within a couple of weeks.
- Continued working on revenue projections and salary budgets.
- Continued to assist TA with Police Alliance and GMEA Union negotiations.

Treasurer/Collector

- Tax Advertisement hit the Grafton News on Thursday April 8th. 83 Parcels were advertised for outstanding 2018-20 real estate taxes. Tax taking will be 10:00 a.m. on April 26th.
- Q4 RE/PP bills have been mailed out and are due 5/3.
- Coordinated the signing and sealing of the closing documents for the Town's April 13th Bond/BAN closing
- The office continues to field calls for 2020 tax information for residents filing income taxes.
- Steady stream of MLC requests continue to flow in as residents continue to buy/sell & refinance.

Principal Assessor

- 1) Board of Assessor meeting held on 4/6/2021. Completed all exemptions for 2021.
- 2) Received ATB filing notice for FY 2021 on 3 Glenwood Drive, date not scheduled at this time.
- 3) Preparing 2nd notices for late Income and Expense filings.
- 4) Processing MV abatements and fielding calls for MV excise taxes.
- 5) Started 2020 sales analysis for FY 2022 values.
- 6) Continuing field inspections for cyclical, building permits and sales verification.

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk's office is busy preparing for the Annual Local Election postponed to Saturday, May 22. Updated information has been posted to the website and shared with local media outlets. A mailer will be sent to voters in the upcoming weeks to notify them of the charter change question and seats up for re-election that will appear on the ballot in addition to updated election/town meeting information.

Mail in voting envelopes have been prepared awaiting ballots, that will be ordered on April 16th, for any voter wishing to vote by mail. In addition, storage containers are set up in the vault in anticipation of the returned ballots.

Wave 2 of dog licensing for 2021 has begun. The 2020 dog licenses expired March 31st, but dog owners can register their dog without a late fee before June 1st.

Reminders to staff and board/committee members were sent to complete and submit their conflict-of-interest certificates, sign off and open meeting law sign off due Friday, April 9th. We have many board/committee members who have not completed the training and sign off forms.

Finishing touches are being made to a voter survey created to capture information from voters about civic engagement and voter participation. Data collected will be used to help select how to utilize the money awarded from Senator Bertonazzi for having the highest voter turnout. We hope to share the survey next week on the town website, social media and with local media outlets for higher participation.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Department 3/28/21 – 4/3/21)

399 log entries were made including 48 - 911 calls, 13 alarm calls, 25 ambulance calls, 7 animal complaints, 134 business/area checks, 10 disturbance call, 4 fraud/ID theft complaints, 6 motor vehicle accident, 3 arrest, 39 motor vehicle stops and 5 well-being checks.

4 License to Carry Firearms applications were received. Weekly Chief's Column posted on Unsafe Drivers. Training included MPTC online in-service training for all officers, Legal Updates and Roll Call Bulletins.

Officers continue to attend the Fair and Impartial Policing (FIP) program hosted by the MPTC being held at the Southbridge Hotel and Conference Center.

Fire Department

No Report Submitted

Department of Public Works (Including Engineering, Cemetery & Sewer)

Public Works

The Highway division of the DPW has relocated the new facility at 64 Old Westboro Road. Residents should be aware that the administrative office which was at the town hall has also relocated to the new facility. The Brush Dump will be open starting April 3rd. The recycling drop off area will operate (Saturdays only) at the Upton Street facility.

Main Street Improvements Project Easement compensation checks were sent to affected property owners. If residents have any questions, they should contact the DPW Director. The Select Board voted to approve the takings at their meeting held on February 16, 2021. Checks were mailed March 25th. Project related utility work will be happening on random days over the next few weeks.

Highway Department

Routine Operation and maintenance of town owned infrastructure and equipment. The recent warm weather has created many pot holes which the staff continues to repair, please call the DPW office to report any pot holes. The staff has begun street sweeping operations, drainage system repairs, and winter damage repairs.

Cemetery and Parks

Routine department functions in including, trash pick-up, construction and painting of replacement fencing, grounds maintenance. Provided services for one funeral. Continue to repair areas from winter burials. Asst. recreation dept with park improvements.

Sewer Department

Routine operation and maintenance of the towns wastewater treatment and collection system. Routine administrative functions including quarterly billing, collection issues, final billing, and resident questions and requests. Provided inspection services and reviews for new service connections and new subdivisions.

Engineering

- Continue to work keeping Main Street Project moving forward. Advertising for bid to be forthcoming,
- Yearly road work contracts have been prepared and have gone out for bid,
- Milford Road sidewalk project bids are due on April 15,
- Continue working on Fitzpatrick Road culvert project. Notice of Intent being filed with Conservation,
- Jay, Kay, Elizabeth, Francis, and Martin Streets are scheduled for road work to begin the week of April 19,
- Continue to work with town staff and departments on other projects and day to day activities.

Health Department

As of April 8, Grafton has been informed of a total of 1,104 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases since case tracking started in early 2020. As of the Commonwealth's last weekly COVID-19 risk report (dated April 8), Grafton is still at a YELLOW status this week, and a similar level of cases continues to occur in many surrounding communities.

The Worcester DPH nursing staff contacts any confirmed positive cases to review the protocols for proper isolation and quarantine with the cases and monitor each case per protocol. The nurses also contact any close contacts of each case regarding the appropriate protocols.

For more information on the vaccine eligibility timeline and updated groups for Massachusetts, visit <https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine>

The regional site at Worcester State University has offered to provide 25% of their weekly allotment (approximately 6,000 doses) for Worcester and the Alliance to hold special clinics. This is in addition to the special teacher and staff 4 days of clinics they are providing to the Alliance. Karyn Clark (Alliance) will be having weekly meetings with the groups leading this site to discuss planning special clinics based on those who are still having difficulty securing a vaccine or one near our geographical area (as well as all eligible phases and those coming on line as eligible soon), with more information to come once logistics of these clinics and communication methods for them has been finalized.

Other smaller locations (e.g., additional CVS locations) continue to come online and offer vaccine appointments based on vaccine availability.

There are continued concerns across the Commonwealth and country with the very limited vaccine dose availability.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Building/Zoning

The building department has been issuing building, electric, mechanical, gas and plumbing permits.

With the additional plan reviewer, we are starting to catch up on our backlog of permit applications. Just to inform our select board and others: several months ago, the Electrical Board of Examiners had issued a memorandum, requiring that the Inspector of Wires must perform a rough inspection of unpermitted work, including work that was recently discovered. In layman terms that means, if the work was covered with sheet rock or concealed, that wall or ceiling coverings must be removed so the Inspector of Wires can perform his duties. We do realize that this is putting a burden on the residence of Grafton who have constructed projects without the proper permits. We are doing our best to inform the public on this new rule.

Planning

This week, the Planning Department completed administrative tasks for the Planning Board and Affordable Housing Trust. Staff is continuing review of the RFP proposal received for the 17 & 27 Upton Street DPW facility in coordination with the Town Administrator's office and local Boards and Committees. In addition, staff is coordinating with CMRPC to submit the revised OSRP per the comments provided by Melissa Cryan, Grant Programs Supervisor.

On April 2nd, staff conducted a site visit in coordination with the project Consultant for the Local Rapid Recovery Plan Program. Per updated program guidance, the focus area has been reduced to the sections of Rt. 140 and Rt. 30 from High Street to Rt. 122. It was determined that this section captures a diversity of business types within a continuous village business node. Upon completion of the program for this area, The Planning Department and Economic Development Coordinator will evaluate opportunities to conduct a similar process for additional business nodes throughout the community. A survey for business owners and managers in the designated study area is available at the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LRRPBiz>. Additional information will be added to the Town website and distributed via email and mail shortly.

As a correction to the previous weekly report by the Planning Department, we note the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) request of \$4,500 for further development of the draft Mill Overlay Zoning was reduced to \$3,000 with additional hours to be made up via Local Planning Assistance (LPA), rather than the previously stated \$3,500.

Conservation

Staff prepared for the Commission's 4/6 meeting, attended, and worked to issue the resulting documents. Phone calls and emails were fielded from residents and applicants. The Agent conducted site inspections and worked on the Green

Communities and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant applications. The Green Communities grant application will be submitted today for the following projects: purchasing two hybrid police cruisers, retrofitting three police cruisers with idle-reduction technology, weatherizing the Middle School, and installing a new energy management system and associated controls at the Middle School.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Recreation Department

Registration is open for spring programming for preschoolers to adults; esports, April vacation programs, yard game rentals, hiking trips, and more. View the brochure [HERE](#). Our summer brochure has arrived! View the brochure [HERE](#). Information on the operation of Silver Lake plans to be announced later this spring. Summer job openings have been posted [HERE](#) and include Beach Directors and Supervisors, Lifeguards, and Summer Program Counselors. Make sure to follow us on [Facebook](#) for the latest updates.

Council on Aging

Completed and submitted a Fallon Health Grant application for funding to continue to offer free medical rides for Grafton seniors and those disabled. Completed and submitted the Quarter 2 SNAP claims documentation for reimbursement. Approximately 45 seniors celebrated the Boston Red Sox with a drive thru Grab 'N Go lunch of hot dogs, baked beans, vegetable, and fresh fruit. Each senior also received a baseball gift bag which contained popcorn, peanuts, and Cracker Jack, as well as baseball candy and a magnetic File of Life card. Everyone who came for lunch took a guess at how many foiled chocolate baseballs were in a mason jar (122). The winner received a gift card. Staff is still assisting seniors and those disabled make COVID-19 vaccination appointments. Pay as You Throw bags were distributed to those individuals who are part of the low income PAYT program. **Support continues to be provided to seniors daily.**

Library

The Library celebrated National Library Week with a proclamation from the Select Board, a gift from the Friends for staff, and giveaways and incentives to patrons including a coloring sheet, word search, bookmark, and pen in all curbside pickup bags this week.

Community Read books are still available – please call 508-839-4649 or email info@graftonlibrary.org to request – community read details are online at www.graftonlibrary.org/communityread.

The Library Director attended the Select Board meeting Tuesday evening and was grateful to learn the “Marbles” television production, filming locally, is donating \$5,000.00 to the Library. The production centers around a television series that was a book series first! If you love true grime or gory police

procedurals, [click here](#) for eBook and eAudio versions, and music from the series at <https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/10905547>.

We are debuting remote printing! Visit print.princh.com or download the PRINCH app on our mobile device to send and pay for printouts – we will leave them for you on the curbside pickup porch once digital payment comes through.

Staff received training in how to run reports through Evergreen, our Library database.

Veterans Services

No Report Submitted

GCTV

This week's activities include, two episodes of Bus Stop Weather hosted by Julia Koshivos. Business to Business with Jay Hunter was put on hold due to Jay's trip to Florida. Jack Kelley recorded a new GCTV Update highlighting upcoming new shows. Bob recorded a "Show Us Your Mask" video with the good people at the Town Clerks Office. GCTV Staff continues to maintain coverage for all GGTV Gov. events whether LIVE or on Zoom, and all special events or projects for the TA's office.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Library project

- Interior painting 90% complete
- Electricians are installing light fixtures and other finish items. Lights have been turned on.
- Ceiling grid is complete, ceiling tile installation is ongoing.
- Ceramic wall tile is complete, floor tile now being installed in bathrooms.
- Millwork installation ongoing - cabinets, countertops, window seats.
- Slate roof has been re-installed around new roof hatches
- Precast concrete benches are installed.
- Granite curb is installed, sidewalks are being prepped.
- Slope at south edge of site has been graded

Municipal Center guardrail/ramp project

- Project bids were received on 4/8, a total of 3 bids. The qualified low bidder was within the project budget and was awarded the job.

Common Improvements project

- Project bids due 4/21; total of 6 plan holders to date.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Upcoming Select Board Meetings

April 13th (Workshop)

April 20th (Business Meeting)

May 4th (Business Meeting)

Upcoming Department Head Meetings

April 21st at 10:00 a.m.

May 5th at 10:00 a.m.