



MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

TO: Select Board

FROM: Evan Brassard
Town Administrator

RE: Administrator's Weekly Report

DATE: February 25, 2022

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

Town Administrator

- Continued refining budget, predominately revenue updates
- Presented South Grafton Community House Project to CPC
- Met with Worcester Health Alliance regarding business plan
- Reviewed complaints regarding truck traffic on Soap Hill and George Hill
- Interviewed Benefits Coordinator Applicants
- Met with Fire Chief Search Committee

Finance Director/Town Accountant

- Continuing to work on budget adjustments and revenue projections for FY23.
- Accounting Office is concurrently working on setting up ClearGov checkbook. This feature allows the Town to share check level expenditure details with residents. This new tool will allow taxpayers and internal stakeholders to explore expenditures by specific transactions and to see every check the town has issued to vendors.
- Interviewed candidates for the Benefit Coordinator position this week. This newly created position will help with onboarding process, benefit administration, and withholding reconciliation.
- Continued meeting with Department Heads to discuss their current capital, grants, and special revenue accounts. In meeting with departments, I have found a lot of stagnant accounts. All in active accounts will be either transferred into the general fund or will submit STM warrant articles transferring balances into active accounts where the funds can be utilized for future purposes.
- Met with School Department regarding changes to the current turnover and online banking process.

- Continuing working with Vadar on the chart of account conversion. As February 23rd we're officially "frozen" in Softright, we have sent Vadar the data files which are with development for review and conversion. Working with Vadar to set up a Betterment application module in place for current betterments and potential future projects.

Treasurer/Collector

- Preparing for April BAN Renew
- Sewer C3 approved and mailed 2/28 Due 3/30
- Met with Finance Committee members to go over budget
- Working with lockbox on bill file conversions
- Working with UNIPAY payment file conversion
- Pulled all collections conversion files with SoftRight and prepared for VADAR
- Prepping tax title for Vadar conversion
- Worked with school on streamlining turnover and wire processes to be in effect 3/1
- Worked with Finance Director/Accountant to implement a new voids process in effect 3/1
- Reorganized all staff desks/cabinet layout of t/c office for better work flow and interaction
- 11 MLC requests have been received/processed.
- 2 Betterment release request
- 1 Tax Title Certificate of Redemption processed
- January cash reconciliation on track for submission to accountant
- Heavy surge of call and payment/request traffic online and in house
- Accepted into MMA Municipal Finance Management program to begin Friday 3/4/22 (5weeks)

Principal Assessor

1. Field inspections for 4 building permits.
2. Processed 3 abutters requests.
3. Processed MVE abatements.
4. Receiving and processing Income and Expense forms
5. receiving Forms of List
6. Training office staff
7. Map updates
8. Data entry

Town Clerk

No Report Submitted

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire Department

Open Burning Permits are available at Grafton Fire Headquarters 26 Upton Street. Open Burning continues Monday- Saturday until May 1st at the discretion of the Fire Chief. The Grafton Fire Department is always looking for residents interested in becoming a call firefighter. Please see the Fire Department page on the town web site for an application or call the fire department office for more information or speak to any current member of the dept. During the past week the department responded to 7 alarms sounding, 1 reported natural gas odor/leak, 1 power line arching, and 1 fuel spill. The inspectional services division performed 4 inspections, plan reviews, and continued follow-up services for ongoing property issues. 2 fire fighters also attended a weeklong Arson Investigation Training.

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

Public Works: **With the recent warm weather potholes have started to open, please contact the DPW Office to report any potholes (508) 839-5335 x 1124. Resident sand and salt mix is available at the DPW facility, the stockpile is located outside the fence at the entrance closest to the MA Pike ramp.** The recycling drop off area is located to 64 Old Westboro and operates Saturdays 8:00am-1:00pm and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00am-2:00pm. Main Street improvements project related utility (gas, electricity, communications) work will continue on random days.'

Highway Department: Routine Operation and maintenance of town owned infrastructure and equipment. Maintenance staff continues to maintain and repair equipment for winter operations. Staff provided road treatment and plowing operations for 3 winter weather events. Please see the DPW page on the towns website for the snow and ice policy.

Cemetery and Parks: Routine department functions including, trash pick-up, construction and painting of replacement fencing, and grounds maintenance. Provided support for three funerals. Asst. Highway Department with plowing operations. Maintain the ice rink at Mill Villages Park.

Sewer Department: Routine operation and maintenance of the town's wastewater treatment and collection systems. 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. Assist the highway dept with plowing operations.

Engineering

No Report Submitted

Health Department

As of February 24, Grafton has been informed of a total of 3,056 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases since case tracking started in early 2020. The number of new cases continues to be at a lower level than during the recent surge in Grafton, surrounding communities, the state and the country, but the Omicron and Delta variants are continuing to circulate throughout the US. Individuals are strongly advised to continue to exercise precautions (e.g., mask wearing, social distancing, frequent hand washing) In addition, individuals are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated and to get a booster (if they are eligible).

Effective February 18, the local indoor mask mandate has been rescinded by the Board of Health. The local mask mandate was not applicable to schools and school property as the mask requirements for those are governed by DESE at the state level and the local school committee. Although the local mask mandate will not be in effect as of February 18, businesses and other facilities may choose to require employees and/or patrons wear masks (e.g., town-owned buildings). The Board of Health strongly recommends all individuals continue to wear masks, especially in heavily populated indoor locations and for those individuals who are or come in contact with high-risk individuals (e.g., immunocompromised). We will continue to monitor the ongoing case count trends.

The CDC advises that all individuals wear face masks when indoors in public places (regardless of vaccination status). In addition, Massachusetts released an advisory that all residents, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask or face covering when indoors (and not in your own home) if you have a weakened immune system, or if you are at increased risk for severe disease because of your age or an underlying medical condition, or if someone in your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or is unvaccinated. In addition, all unvaccinated individuals should continue to wear a mask or face covering when indoors with others.

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 the latest information on the COVID-19 vaccines and boosters, eligible populations, and how to find a vaccination location, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html> and <https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine>. Vaccination and boosters (if eligible) are strongly recommended.

Flu shots are available at pharmacies and other locations (e.g., doctor's office).

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Building/Zoning

No Report Submitted

Planning

This past week, the Planning Department completed administrative tasks for the Planning Board. Staff is continuing coordinating with representatives of the 244 Worcester Street 43D application, continuing development of a number of proposed zoning changes for the Spring Town meeting. Staff is continuing to meet with a number of developers regarding potential projects in Grafton.

Conservation

- Issued documents from the Commission's 2/15 meeting
- Updated templates and workflows in Viewpoint
- Worked on Green Communities grant projects
- Worked with Recreation on 95 North Street
- Attended fourth session of open space webinar series and MSMCP webinar on running an efficient conservation office
- Met with Fin Com rep regarding FY23 budget
- Conducted site inspections
- Fielded inquiries from residents and applicants

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Recreation Department

Make plans for the kids during April Vacation! We have Outdoor Adventure, Horse Lovers, Horse Buddies, and Soccer Skilz. Registration is now open for all our spring and summer offerings, too. Check out the spring and summer brochure [HERE](#).

The ice rink at Mill Villages is still not skateable but looks to have one more possibility during the middle of next week. Offer letters are being sent to last year's summer staff with hopes that they'll return and any open positions will be posted by mid-March. The Department is excited to have its new Recreation Coordinator come on board, welcome Cody Herd. The next scheduled Recreation Commission meeting is March 14.

Council on Aging

The March Senior Center newsletters were sealed, labeled, and mailed. In anticipation of the snow scheduled for Friday, AARP provided free tax service for seniors on Thursday instead of Friday. For seniors who are signed up to receive Senior Center announcements, a robocall was sent indicating that the Center would be closed Friday because of weather conditions. Attendance at the Senior Center continues to increase. One exercise class had 30 seniors participate this week. To date, the Senior Center has received over \$1,000 in donations made in memory of Tom Mara who passed away February 6th. Applications for fuel assistance and SNAP continue to be processed.

Wellness checks, support, advocacy, and guidance was provided to seniors daily.

Library

The Library was closed in observance of President's Day on Monday and closed to the public due to inclement weather on Friday, with staff telecommuting and responding to patron requests remotely from 10am-4pm. It's unclear at time of this writing if the lot will be plowed and walkways deiced for 10am opening on Saturday as scheduled. The Library's website and social media is the best place to check for closing information.

We had 462 visitors on Tuesday and Wednesday, issued 28 new library cards, circulated 3,037 items, added 103 new items, placed 485 item requests, and sent 547 items in delivery and received 493 items this week to [date.ac](#)

Completion of the Construction Punch List continues. This week we took care of electrical work, carpeting and flooring issues. Beth approved design for a folding doors for the Maker Space and Presentation Space in the Community Room and received a draft patio layout from DRA. Our two OWL meeting devices arrived for remote and hybrid meetings – thanks to the Friends for funding! Beth scheduled panic button testing for next week.

Beth and other staff completed interviews for two of the three position vacancies and will be extending offers to candidates for the Reference and Teen Librarian positions. She attended a construction meeting and posted agendas for Board of Library Trustees and Library Planning and Building Committee for next week. Beth also chased down Conflict of Interest forms, and delegating to Sarah to turn them in to the Clerk – 100% completion, on time. Beth also worked on the Library newsletter, managing donations, website updates, and procurement, including a nonfiction book order.

The mask mandate has been dropped for all spaces except the Children's Room – thank you for continuing to mask to protect our most vulnerable population.

With the unmasking, a food and drink issue has developed. We currently allow food and non-alcoholic beverages throughout the library with ONE exception the Children's Room, due to the current mask requirement for that room. Staff do not want to be the "food police" confronting everyone with a cup of coffee or bag of Cheerios. We don't want to deny hungry children their afterschool snack, or busy adults a meal. While we want to protect our new building and assets, we can replace a keyboard with a drink spilled in it, or a stained carpet tile easily. We know people, including staff! eat and drink around library materials at home (and at work) and items that get damaged are easily replaceable. If smell is an issue, we will have to ask patrons to eat outside and return when done, and we can empty stinky leftovers into the outside receptacle or dumpster. If cleanliness is an issue, we will offer wipes and ask people to clean up after

themselves. We have trash and recycling bins and cleaning supplies throughout the building. If the smell and mess of food in the library continues to be an issue, it is a privilege we will have to limit to designated areas, such as the Friends Corner, or eliminate altogether, with the Board of Library Trustees revisiting the Code of Conduct. Borrower Services reports Microsoft Office has been installed on the four public internet computers. Faxing remains unresolved, Xerox is working on it. The Lobby materials return has been disabled so we can keep the exterior one open 24/7 so we are now back to collecting returns in a bin and hand checking them in while we wait for a replacement computer to arrive. Our romance sticker project is finished, so fans of that genre can find romance novels at a glance as they browse for books. We've started on a historical fiction stickering project next.

The Overdrive app has been officially decommissioned, so delete it from your device and download Libby instead for e-content! Download Libby at www.overdrive.com/apps/libby. Updated brochures on accessing OverDrive content from your device will be available soon; you can always go to cwmars.overdrive.com to access and read on a computer. Sandhya worked on museum passes and processed ILLs. Jane worked on identifying gaps in our collection from the *New York Times* best-seller lists, and researched databases we might want to offer. Ranjita worked on Library of Things and *New York Times* best sellers. Allie worked on the March newsletter, edited the A-C Historical Fiction list for sticker placement, and did some troubleshooting with Bibliotheca over books getting stuck on the belt. Susan placed orders for audiobooks and DVDs and Blu rays. She worked with Eileen to hand over the task of ordering supplies and ran transit and missing lists.

Sarah met with Bev at Willard House and Clock Museum to discuss partnership opportunities, packed grab and go kits, assisted patrons in the children's room during a busy school vacation week, created signage for mask requirements in the CR, communicated with staff, communicated with NGES parent volunteer regarding a 2nd grade field trip, and worked on collection development.

Jen packed and prepped grab and go kits, coordinated with volunteers, worked on the March newsletter, and assisted patrons in the children's room during a busy school vacation week.

Cyndi packed and prepped grab and go kits, coordinated with volunteers, and assisted patrons in the children's room during a busy school vacation week. Mare communicated with volunteers and assisted patrons in the children's room during a busy school vacation week. Stacie planned March room decorations and displays and assisted patrons in the children's room during a busy school vacation week. Kristin ran a successful bedtime-themed storytime and prepped for her March book clubs.

Our pajama drive continues through March 31—thanks to all who have donated!

Veterans Services

No Report Submitted

GCTV

There are no studio activities to report this week. As always, 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.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Upcoming Select Board Meetings

March 1, 2022 (Business Meeting)

March 8, 2022 (Workshop)

March 15, 2022 (Business Meeting)

Upcoming Department Head Meetings

March 2, 2022 @ 10:00 a.m.