



MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

TO: Select Board

FROM: Evan Brassard
Town Administrator

RE: Administrator's Weekly Report

DATE: March 5, 2021

IMPORTANT NOTICES TO ALL DEPARTMENTS

- Articles for the Spring Town Meeting accepted through March 26th, end of business day.
- March 6th Drive Thru Re-Use & Recycle Event (electronics, furniture, textiles & more) This event will be held from 10-1 p.m. behind the Municipal Center

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Grafton has returned to the green for COVID numbers. The Municipal Center will reopen to the public on Monday, March 8th. It is still recommended that residents conduct business remotely or via the drop boxes to reduce the amount of in-person contact.

Much of this week is still factfinding with staff, assessing current conditions, and prioritizing what needs to be accomplished in short order. The budget remains a priority and great progress has been made in this area. Department Head/Finance Committee meetings begin in earnest on Saturday and I am looking forward to being a part of this process.

I was also able to tour the new library with Andy Deschenes and William Blake. What a beautiful space! The blending of the original historic building and the new areas is phenomenal. The building is on target to reach substantial completion on June 8, 2021 and we are all very much looking forward to that date.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

Town Accountant

- Attended MMAAA annual education program Week 1 of 3. This week's sessions include DOR Law & Legal Review.
- Continue working on OPEB 2020 audit with Treasurer/Collector & H/R.
- Continue working with our auditors Scanlon & Associates. Auditors were onsite to collect more data.
- Reviewed CPA Fund balance with CPC Treasurer.
- Met with NFP consultants to go over medical renewal costs.

Treasurer/Collector

No Report Submitted

Principal Assessor

- 1) Working with Auditors for FY 2020 audit. Providing requested documentation for TIF on 105 Worcester Street, Apportioned Betterments, and abatements after June 20, 2020
- 2) 3 ABC filings due March 1st complete.
- 3) Cody attending Course 5, Mass Appraisal, 2/25,2/26,3/4,3/5 via Zoom. Test will be given on Monday, 3/8.
- 4) Processing MV abatements and fielding calls for MV excise taxes.
- 5) Entered Deeds and mail sales questionnaires.
- 6) Form of Lists for businesses being reviewed and data collected
- 7) Data entry in Vision from inspections.
- 8) Training Chris, Assessor in Shrewsbury on the new Vision 8 software.

Town Clerk

The annual census form for 2021 has been mailed out. Forms should be returned within 10 days and can be submitted by mail, drop off in the Clerk's red drop box out front of town hall or by email. Please email census forms to our dedicated email at census@grafton-ma.gov.

2021 Dog Licenses are now available. Requests can be returned with completed census forms, mailed, dropped off in the Clerk's red drop box out front of town hall or online through our online payment center <https://unipaygold.unibank.com/customerinfo.aspx>. Online requests can only be completed as long as a current rabies certificate is on file with the Clerk's office. If you are registering your dog for the first time, please contact the office to ensure all required forms are on file to avoid delays or a refund of payment.

Nomination papers for the upcoming Local Election on Tuesday, May 18 will be available on Monday, January 25. Interested candidates must make an appointment in advance to obtain papers by email (preferred) at clerks@grafton-ma.gov or calling the office at 508-839-5335 X1195.

- Any registered voter of Grafton may pull papers
- Papers must be returned to the Registrar of Voters, through the Town Clerk's office, by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30th for certification. An appointment in advance will be required to submit papers due to current events
- Nomination papers must contain the names of at least 50 registered voters of Grafton, but candidates are urged to submit more than the minimum number required in case some names or signatures cannot be verified
- Candidates may withdraw their nomination papers up until 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 15th
- The Local Election is on Tuesday, May 18th from 8 am-8 pm
- The seats available are:
 Select Board – (1) – 3-year term available
 Board of Library Trustees – (3) – 3-year terms available (REVISED 2/11/2021)
 Grafton Housing Authority – (1) – 5-year term available
 Planning Board – (2) – 3-year terms available
 School Committee – (2) – 3-year terms available
 Town Moderator – (1) - 2-year term available (to fill a vacancy)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Department (2/21/21 – 2-27-21)

353 log entries were made including 37 - 911 calls, 9 alarm calls, 23 ambulance calls, 5 animal complaints, 117 business/area checks, 2 disturbance calls, 4 fraud/ID theft complaints, 5 motor vehicle accidents, 2 arrests and 41 motor vehicle stops.

5 License to Carry Firearms applications were received. Weekly Chief's Column posted on National Teen Dating Violence Awareness & Prevention Month. Training included MPTC online in-service training for all officers, Legal Updates and Roll Call Bulletins.

Fire Department

No Report Submitted

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

No Report Submitted

Engineering

No Report Submitted

Health Department

As of March 4, Grafton has been informed of a total of 991 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases since case tracking started in early 2020. As of the Commonwealth's last weekly COVID-19 risk report (dated March 4), Grafton is at a GREEN status this week, and a

similar lower 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.

Effective March 1 the Commonwealth moved into Phase 3 Step 2 of the reopening process. This move primarily impacts the capacity limits at a number of business types. In addition, restaurants no longer have a percent capacity limit but rather will revert back to the 6 foot distance separation requirement (may be closer if tables are separated by non-porous barriers not less than 6 feet high), with the maximum table size remaining at 6 people and the 90 minute time limit still in place. Restaurants may also have musical performances again (with appropriate distancing), but singing is not permitted indoors at this time.

All other public health orders and requirements remain in place (e.g., public and private gathering limits, mask order).

For more information on both the move into Phase 3 Step 2 on March 1, and the tentatively planned move into Phase 4 Step 1 (planned for March 22 depending on public health data) [click here](#). As always, there are sector-specific standards that each business type must follow, and those standards were updated to reflect the move into Phase 3 Step 2. The updated sector-specific standards are available [here](#).

Based on the Federal government's push to have teachers and early educators vaccinated as soon as possible, vaccine locations that are part of the Federal Retail Pharmacy COVID-19 Partnership Program (e.g., CVS) have started allowing "Teachers K-12, daycare and preschool workers, and staff" to book vaccine appointments in locations across the country (where vaccine appointments are being conducted). Massachusetts announced that effective March 11 teachers, early educators and school staff will be eligible to book vaccine appointments in Massachusetts.

The super site at Worcester State University has opened and is able to vaccinate eligible individuals from across the Commonwealth. There is also a mass vaccine site that opened at the Natick Mall which is available to vaccinate eligible individuals across the Commonwealth. The CVS in North Grafton continues to offer vaccine appointments based on vaccine availability, and other smaller locations (e.g., additional CVS locations, Price Chopper/Market 32, Walgreens) continue to come online and offer vaccine appointments based on vaccine availability.

Discussion and planning by a cross-functional group (e.g., Board of Health, Alliance, Council of Aging, Housing Authority) is continuing around conducting a vaccine clinic for individuals who live or work in the affordable/low-income senior housing facilities in Grafton. Hopefully the requested allocation of vaccine doses will be approved by the

Commonwealth (unknown timing). Once confirmation is received for the requested allocation of vaccine doses, final plans can be developed around timing and logistics for this clinic.

There are continued concerns across the Commonwealth and country with the very limited vaccine dose availability, even with the recent emergency authorization of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Building/Zoning

The Building Department has issued various permits this week including building, electric, plumbing, gas, fire, zoning, wood stove and request for public inspection.

Planning

This week, the Planning Department completed administrative tasks for the Planning Board and Affordable Housing Trust. Staff is continuing coordination with representatives of the GSX, LLC Development Team to discuss possible project adjustments and assist in formulating a strategy to move through the local permitting process and is also reviewing the RFP proposal received for the 27 Upton Street DPW facility in coordination with the Town Administrator's office. In addition, staff is coordinating with CMRPC, the Grafton Land Trust and the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee to finalize submission of the revised OSRP per the State comments and anticipates resubmitting shortly.

Additionally, staff attended the Webinar, "Planning Board Forum: Housing Choice Legislative Changes" hosted by Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) regarding the Governor's bill adjusting Chapter 40A, and coordinated with residents, developers, and National Grid on a number of ongoing development projects. Staff also conducted a site visit in coordination with DPW at 46 Adams Road to assess the viability of the structure and are available to provide a report of findings upon request. Staff also attended preconstruction meetings for 274 Providence Road and Prentice Place (40B), as well as held Development Team Meetings with 130 & 134 Worcester Street and the State Police Museum.

The Planning Department is pleased to announce that the Town was awarded \$60,000 in relation to the Local Rapid Recovery Program, which will develop an assessment and strategy to assist local businesses in their continued recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. This plan will be custom tailored to Grafton's local context and will be developed in coordination with KARP Strategies. A memo was circulated with additional information with additional details forthcoming.

Conservation

Staff worked on issuing the resulting documents from the Commission's 3/2 meeting. The Agent conducted site inspections. Phone calls and emails were fielded from

residents and applicants. The Commission concluded the process of reviewing updates to the Stormwater Bylaw & Regulations per requirements of the MS4 Permit. These updates will be sent to Town Counsel for review.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Recreation Department

Registration is open for spring programming for preschoolers to adults, yard game rentals, hiking trips, and more. View the brochure [HERE](#). Registration is open online at GraftonRec.com or email our office to pay by cash or check. Summer programming is expected to be announced mid to late March. Make sure to follow us on [Facebook](#) for the latest updates. The Recreation Commission held a regularly monthly meeting on Monday and the Director met with the Select Board on Tuesday to discuss beach fees for this summer.

Council on Aging

Completed and emailed the Senior Center's February 2021 operational report to the Worcester Regional Transit Authority. Distributed PAYT bags to those individuals who are part of the low income PAYT program. Received notification Monday evening, March 1st, that seniors who were signed up to receive their second dose of the COVID vaccine on Tuesday, March 2nd had to be rescheduled to March 10th because the vaccine was not available. Everyone was called and notified of the change. The Senior Center is still receiving calls every day for assistance in getting a vaccine appointment. Seniors are not able to get appointments through the COVID vaccine website vaxfinder.mass.gov and are very frustrated. The Senior Center is keeping a list of people inquiring about the vaccine should a supply become available for Grafton senior residents. Support continues to be provided to seniors daily.

Library

We put out 212 bags for curbside pickup from Friday 2/26-Thursday 3/4, and we delivered 18 items to four homebound patrons.

Staff are working on creating demonstrations of learning for the professional development undertaken during the pandemic. Check out the first one, by Donna Bates-Tarrant, on Ancestry.com! <https://graftonlibrary.org/2021/02/28/become-a-time-traveler-like-donna/> A book that makes animal noises had staff on site looking for a live, trapped cat in the building – some unexpected drama around the periodic, realistic meowing noises! No cat was actually in the building.

The Director met with the architect project manager and furniture/shelving vendor to finalize the quote for these two pieces of the Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment scope for the construction project. The Library Planning and Building Committee's Interiors Subcommittee meets Thursday 3/11 to review and vote on the shelving and furniture package.

The Director met with the new Town Administrator to give a quick tour of the temporary library and talk shop.

We had a remote session with Zoll to test our AEDs. Both are functional and the batteries are up to date.

The Friends launched a Bunny & a Book fundraiser in lieu of the annual Easter Egg Hunt on the Common. Each Book and Bunny gift bag set is \$15. Multiple Bunny & Book Bags are available and additional books are available at low cost. Bunny & Book packages will be delivered to your home address in time for Easter! Proceeds benefit the Grafton Public Library. Purchase at <https://www.jotform.com/form/210545040322035>

Veterans Services

No Report Submitted

GCTV

No Report Submitted

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Library project:

- Ceiling installation continues, both floors
- Painting/finishing of walls is ongoing.
- Installation of windowsills and trim is 75% complete, 2nd floor
- Cabinet installation has started on 2nd floor
- Electricians are pulling wire, various locations.
- Permanent power was turned on.
- HVAC registers and grills are being installed.
- Alum/glass main entrance is 90% complete.
- Ceramic tile and interior glass has been received.
- Elevator cab is being built on site.

Common Improvements project:

- Bid documents are expected to be complete by 3/12/21

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Upcoming Select Board Meetings

March 9th (Workshop)

March 16th (Business Meeting)

April 6th (Business Meeting)

Upcoming Department Head Meetings

March 17th @ 10:00 a.m.