



MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

TO: Select Board

FROM: Evan Brassard
Town Administrator

RE: Administrator's Weekly Report

DATE: September 3, 2021

IMPORTANT NOTICES TO ALL DEPARTMENTS

- The Selectboard will hold a public hearing to receive comments relative to the Grafton / Upton Railroad.
- Warrant articles from town departments, boards, committees, and commissions due into the TA's office by September 17th preferably sooner rather than later.
- Fall Town Meeting Warrant expected to be signed by the Select Board on September 21st.

Town Administrator

- Began work on Fall Town Meeting Warrant
- Completed rough drafts of two SB policies for review
- Met with Residents of George Hill Rd regarding drainage issues
- Scheduled mosquito spraying for WNV
- Utilize CodeRED, FB and Website
- Attended swearing in of new GPD Officer
- Met with landlord of Grafton Public Library – Temporary Location
- Initiated targeted technology upgrades for Municipal network

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

Town Accountant

- Accountant's Office has rolled forward fund balances into FY22. Please review your Grant Funds, Revolving Funds, Capital Funds, and Special Revenue Funds balances for accuracy.
- Accountant's Office is currently in the process of closing FY21 books and concurrently working on the Combined Balance Sheet submission.

- Attended FinCom meeting to review new Vadar Financial Software, and to go over the Public Hearing schedule for the FY22 Fall STM.
- Working with HR Analyst in setting up new features in our Harper's Payroll software system. We will now add the onboarding and employee self-serve products. Employee Self Service: Employee Forward empowers employees to make changes to their personal information in a controlled manner. Employees can change demographic information such as home address, phone numbers or email address, change items such as W4 withholdings and add or change direct deposit accounts. You will have the ability to access your payroll stubs and your yearly W-2. The Onboarding feature will welcome new hires and allow them to complete all new hire paperwork and documentation necessary from your main office, remote office or independently.
- Working with Assessor and Treasurer & Collector on a policy regarding uncollectible excise. The Board of Assessors will act upon any notifications and shall certify a settlement of the levy in writing which will remove the excise from the ledger; yet the procedures for collection through the deputy collector and RMV will continue.

Treasurer/Collector

- 4,749 Q1 Sewer Bills are being approved today and will be mailed out Mon., Aug. 30th and are due Wed., Sept. 29th.
- 17 MLC requests have been received/processed this week.
- Our Tax Title Attorney provided us with a collections report detailing over \$3.1 million collected and 371 properties returned to the active tax rolls since FY 2010. Those are truly great results and a testament to our fantastic working relationship with our TT Attorney's office.

Tax Title Collected – Town of Grafton

| <u>Total Tax Title Collected</u> <u>Fiscal 2010 – Fiscal 2022 (to-date)</u> | | |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Fiscal Year (July 1-June 30) | Amount Collected | Number of Properties |
| 2010-2015 | \$1,913,384.82 | 213 |
| 2016 | \$310,930.38 | 41 |
| 2017 | \$187,413.35 | 36 |
| 2018 | \$299,694.05 | 32 |
| 2019 | \$156,640.04 | 19 |
| 2020 | \$33,125.95 | 6 |
| 2021 | \$107,253.77 | 8 |
| 2022 | \$134,910.40 | 16 |
| Totals: | \$3,143,352.76 | 371 |

These collections included tax title principal and interest and other overdue municipal delinquencies that were collected at the time of payment. Such items sometimes included unpaid current fiscal year taxes and unpaid water/sewer bills. This chart also includes the proceeds of the Town two successful tax title auctions conveying four parcels.

8/31/21

Principal Assessor

- 1) Verified and created file for Income & Expenses Liens for FY 2022
- 2) Received and reviewed 14 personal exemption applications.
- 3) Received and reviewed 4 Chapter land applications.
- 4) 54 Deeds were recorded in August and owners have been updated.
- 5) Processed 3 Abutters request.
- 6) Processed 9 MV abatements.
- 7) Field inspections for 11 cyclicals, 4 building permits and 10 sales verifications.

Town Clerk

Approximately 475 dogs have been registered since sending out the licensing reminder mailer from Animal Control. Our Animal Control Officer will begin visiting households of any unregistered dogs to date in attempt of getting them licensed.

Census 2020 data from Umass Donahue Institute is available at:
<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/census2020/index.html>. An interactive map to view Grafton data or by city/town can be found at:
https://donahue.umass.edu/data/pep/dashboards/census2020_dashboard.html.

Indexing of vital records is ongoing and we have started organizing our plans and map file with help from our long-term helper, Olie, with the Senior Work Off program.

Committee/board members are taking their oath of office as re-appointments or new members.

2021 Street Lists are available for purchase for \$10.00 a book. An electronic version is available for any departments who would like a copy.

We continue to assist many residents and individuals with vital requests, dog licensing, marriage licenses, business certificates, public records requests, notaries, and town related information.

We still have several board/committee members who have not completed the conflict-of-interest training and sign off.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Department Activities (8/22/21 – 8/28/21)

401 log entries were made including 54 - 911 calls, 25 alarm calls, 26 ambulance calls, 1 animal complaint, 164 business/area checks, 10 disturbance calls, 1 fraud/ID theft complaint, 9 motor vehicle accidents, 15 motor vehicle stops and 4 well-being checks.

2 License to Carry Firearms applications were received. Weekly Chief's Column posted on Bicycle Safety Tips – Basic Rules of the Road and Safe Bicycle Clothing. Officers received legal updates on current court decisions and roll call notices including Commonwealth Fusion Center bulletins.

Classes started this week and School Resource Officer Alves visited all GPS buildings to ensure an orderly beginning to the school year. Officers also monitored traffic in school zones in an attempt to keep everyone safe. We want to remind motorists to slow down, use caution and be watchful for students at bus stops or walking/riding their bikes to school.

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. Starting September 7th, the Brush Dump is open Monday-Friday 10am- 1pm and Saturdays 9am-1pm. 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. Seasonal paving continues on several streets in all areas of town. The Milford Road sidewalk installation is underway and should be completed by the end of September. 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. The staff continues street sweeping operations, drainage system repairs, grass mowing, roadside brush mowing, and line painting. Staff continues clean-up from the past weeks rain and windstorms, and temporary drainage improvements on George Hill Road.

Cemetery and Parks: Routine department functions in including, trash pick-up, construction and painting of replacement fencing, and grounds maintenance. Provided support for two funerals. Asst. recreation dept with ongoing park improvements and seasonal programs. Our seasonal staff member is off to college, and we wish Joe well with his new adventure.

Sewer Department: Routine operation and maintenance of the towns 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. Continue clean-up related to the past heavy rain events.

Engineering

- Eversource continues doing gas work on Main Street,
- Milford Road sidewalk project is progressing,
- Continue working on Fitzpatrick Road culvert project,
- Messier, Murray and Farnum Streets hand work has begun,
- Magnolia Lane has been milled in preparation of resurfacing,
- Streets within the Sunrise and Powerline neighborhood have begun paving,
- Working on development of new street paving list for 2022,
- Continue to work with town staff and departments on other projects and day to day activities.

Health Department

As of September 2, Grafton has been informed of a total of 1,267 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases since case tracking started in early 2020. The number of new cases continues to increase some in Grafton, surrounding communities and the State compared to recent weeks. Individuals are strongly advised to continue to exercise precautions, especially given the Delta variant circulating throughout the country and increasing case counts.

Worcester County and surrounding areas are considered to be “high risk” areas for COVID transmission per the CDC’s classification methods. Given this elevated risk level, the CDC advises that all individuals wear face masks when indoors in public places (regardless of vaccination status). In addition, Massachusetts released a mask advisory

that fully vaccinated individuals are advised to wear face masks when indoors (and not in your own home) if you have a weakened immune system, or if you are at increased risk because of your age or an underlying medical condition (or if someone in your household falls into those criteria).

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.

As of April 19, all people age 12+ who live, work, or study in Massachusetts are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. For more information on the vaccines and how to find a vaccination location, visit <https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine>. Vaccination is strongly recommended.

The FDA recently authorized and the CDC also recommended that individuals who are moderately to severely immunocompromised receive an additional dose of mRNA vaccine COVID-19 vaccine after the initial 2 doses. More details can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/immuno.html>.

As a reminder, the mosquito and tick season is still upon us. Grafton was notified this week of a mosquito in Grafton that tested positive for West Nile Virus. Please visit <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/home/news/press-release-west-nile-virus-found-mosquitoes> for more information and the expected spraying area.

- For mosquitoes, please remember the 5 D's. Dress in long sleeves and pants, when possible, especially during periods of mosquito activity. DEET is an effective repellent. Dawn and Dusk are the most active periods for mosquitoes. Drain water from containers regularly. Please visit the Grafton Board of Health website for more information, helpful tips, and information on the services the Central Mass Mosquito Control Project offers.
- For ticks, use DEET or another effective repellent. Do a tick check on each person in your family who has been outside, especially the hard to see areas (e.g., hairline, scalp, armpits). If you have pets, check them for ticks after each time they have been outdoors.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Building/Zoning

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

Planning

This week, the Planning Department completed administrative tasks for the Planning Board. Staff is developing a first draft Complete Streets Policy to be reviewed by the Planning Board prior to final referral to the Select Board, and completed reviewing the Planning Board's proposed amendments to the Subdivision Rules and Regulations.

Staff attended a pre-construction meeting with representatives of the Town and Developer for the project at Fisherville Terrace. Staff also participated in site visits to Lake Ripple and Fisherville Pond to identify existing invasive species noting significant levels of water chestnut, milfoil and fanwort. Staff will be reviewing strategy and grant opportunities to address potential for future treatment. Additionally, staff met with representatives of the Affordable Housing Trust and the TA's office to discuss affordable housing opportunities related to the recent awarded 17&27 Upton project.

Staff continues to coordinate processing of the 43D application for 244 Worcester Street, and is working on "Request for New Units" applications to the Department of Housing and Community Development on behalf of the Zoning Board of Appeals in order to add recently completed projects to the Subsidized Housing Inventory. Staff is also working to reconvene the Hazard Mitigation Plan Committee in order to proceed with the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. A preliminary kickoff meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2021, at 10am via zoom.

Conservation

Staff worked to issue the resulting documents from the Commission's 8/17 meeting. Staff reviewed applications filed for the Commission's 9/21 meeting. Site inspections were conducted and inquiries from residents and applicants were fielded.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Recreation Department

No Report Submitted

Council on Aging

The August Worcester Regional Transit report was completed and emailed to the WRTA. For August 2021 the Senior Center provided 484 rides; compared to 393 rides for the month of July 2021 and 125 rides for August 2020. Worked with Elder Services of Worcester on multiple issues several seniors were facing. Traffic from the High School end of the day pickup has started to become an issue again. Parents are parking in the back parking lot for pickups to avoid waiting in line at the High School. One senior complained that she was almost hit while walking into the Municipal building. It also appears there are more cars than usual parking by the back fence behind the Senior Center before 8:30 am. Support, advocacy, and guidance was provided to seniors daily.

Library

Beth was a panelist on the topic of Leading with Compassion for a New England Library Association Advocacy Day. Beth worked on punch list items and led a tour for Tower One with Captain Michael Killen – the firefighters saw the Knox Box, alarm panel, sprinkler room, electrical rooms, and orientation for sprinklers, fire extinguishers, and AED locations. She met with architects, a building committee member, and gave a tour. She had phone meetings with Board of Library Trustees and MBLC. She did more clean up at St. Andrews – the container garden, book drop, a Xerox, and 4 boxes, need to be moved still. The refinished antique tables were returned Thursday. The interior ramp was worked on Thursday. Phone testing was scheduled for next Friday. Some of the remaining furniture should be arriving and installed next week. We are still waiting for items to ship.

A part-time administrative assistant position has been posted. <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/human-resources/pages/employment-opportunities-now-hiring>. Circulation staff spent the week further organizing our workroom, supplies, and our public printing area; figuring out kinks and practicing with Princh; and had a staff meeting.

In addition, Jane organized webinar and training session notes. Sandhya updated our website, made new signage for the drop box at the church and for the front door, adjusted shelves to accommodate newspapers, and updated Tixkeeper and public Museum Pass information.

Allie continued to work on our Mind, Body and Spirit display, which is looking quite beautiful! She has been figuring out the best materials to use, preparing the canvases, and affixing them on the display boards with lots of attention to detail and optimal placement for the overall design. She also worked on the newsletter, Princh testing and training, and creating signage for the Reading Room.

Ranjita took some vacation days, and jumped into the organizing tasks on return! She attended two webinars: Neurodiversity @ the Library – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqwHV46q5z0> and Get Started with new Libby <https://resources.overdrive.com/getting-started-with-libby/> Taylor continues to work on shelf-reading the entire adult collection (an enormous job!) and moved some checked in material from the sorting room upstairs to shelves.

Susan worked on plans for off-desk assignments for Adult Circ staff; created tutorials for some ongoing Circ tasks; submitted a ticket for the AMH (out of service mode is timing out!) and the Self-Check (we think it's confused by a new IP address); ordered supplies; oversaw the shelf-reading project and delivered materials to Homebound patrons.

Heidi answered reference questions, questions about the Senior Book Club, Libby, library accounts, museum passes, holds (why can't I place them?), and where they can return materials. She also updated library accounts and made new ones for patrons.

Donna, Heidi, Jane, Sandhya and Ranjita washed a LOT of Grafton Public Library china

and put it away.

Allison met with Sarah and Heidi to continue planning for the winter reading program. Other time this week has been spent on additionally WRP planning and making the fall challenges on Beanstack live.

Sarah, Allison and Beth interviewed two candidates for the Children Library Assistant vacancy and Jen and Cyndi provided tours of the library building.

Sarah, Allison, and Heidi met to discuss the library's upcoming Winter Reading Program and Grafton Celebrates the Holidays.

Children's Room staff began to plan fall programming. Summer Reading ends September 4!

Sarah met with a member of the Friends to discuss next summer's reading program and fundraising opportunities. She also compiled SLP statistics for the ARIS report and the MLS end of summer library survey and continued to refurbish library carts.

Kristin began planning for fall book clubs, set up her work computer, and scheduled her weekly LEGO at Home social media posts.

Veterans Services

No Report Submitted

GCTV

This week's activities included discussion with Dana Wilson regarding coverage of the Small Stones Art Festival. I chatted with Jason Wright about promotion of the Michael Cherry Memorial 5K Walk, and a GHS Junior who wants to explore volunteer opportunities at Grafton TV. More details will be available in the next report.

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

September 7, 2021 – Business Meeting

September 14, 2021 – Workshop

September 21, 2021 – Business Meeting

Upcoming Department Head Meetings

September 8th @ 2:00 p.m.

September 22nd @ 10:00 a.m.