



MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

TO: Select Board

FROM: Evan Brassard
Town Administrator

RE: Administrator's Weekly Report

DATE: September 24, 2021

IMPORTANT NOTICES TO ALL DEPARTMENTS

- Town Meeting will be October 18th 7:30 p.m. at the Grafton High School Auditorium.

Town Administrator

- Library is progressing and moving towards opening. Much of the shelving is in and items are put away. Landscaping of the front will begin next week, weather permitting.
- Worked to finalize IT purchases for Library.
- The Common brickwork is complete, and the area has been seeded. We are waiting on a change order to begin the Gazebo work.
- Met with IT regarding a number of projects and began work on the Commonwealth Compact IT Grant.
- Met with CIPC regarding Capital Budget and October Town Meeting.
- Met with representatives from MassDOT.
- Reviewed resident complaints and responded to correspondence with same.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

Town Accountant

- Accountant's Office is currently in the process of closing FY21 books and concurrently working on the Combined Balance Sheet submission.
- Accounting Office is in the procedure of starting to complete the required forms in the Tax Rate Recap.
- Met with Chuck Patterson from Bartholomew & Company to go over the yearly review of Town of Grafton's Trust Funds.
- Met with MIIA Insurance team along with Town Administrator and Chief of Police to go over the Injured-on Duty (IOD) program, MIIA rewards, and MIIA Grant.

- Accounting Department had its first kick off call with Vadar. Have sent in data request files to Softright for Account & Meter information along with Account History and Balances for Utility & Tax.
- Attended ARPA Committee. This was the first committee meeting. Meeting was to set up chair, vice, and clerk. Discussion points were on how much money is the Town of Grafton receiving, help in managing the funds, and best way to solicit feedback from the department heads and community for ARPA projects.

Treasurer/Collector

- Q2 RE/PP billing file was sent to the printer and proofs were reviewed. Mail date is 9/29 and bills are due 11/1.
- 50 MLC requests have been received/processed in the last two weeks.
- Cleaning up FY21 RE receivables and preparing to send a courtesy letter to those with outstanding amounts.
- Will begin reviewing older personal property tax that may be uncollectible.

Principal Assessor

- 1) Updated 2nd Quarter bill file with new owners and changes of addresses.
- 2) Uncollectable excise abatements were processed for 2014 thru 2017. A total of 467 abatements, totaling \$ 34,554.78 in uncollectable excise.
- 3) Received and reviewed 9 personal exemption applications.
- 4) Received and reviewed 16 Chapterland applications. All applications due October 1st.
- 5) Chapterland properties 111,117,121 George Hill Road, were inspected with a full measure and listed to verify the correct classification of the properties.
- 6) 26 Deeds were recorded this week and owners have been updated.
- 7) Processed 6 Abutters request.
- 8) Processed 21 MV abatements.
- 9) Field inspections for 22 cyclicals, 32 building permits and 16 sales verifications.
- 10) Tammy attended DOR workshop "What's New in Municipal Law".
- 11) Submit request to DOR for Record Disposal.

Town Clerk

Approximately 525 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 [here](#). An interactive map to view Grafton data or by city/town can be found [here](#).

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 (9/5/21 – 9/18/21)

768 log entries were made including 104 - 911 calls, 53 alarm calls, 59 ambulance calls, 8 animal complaints, 199 business/area checks, 13 disturbance calls, 7 fraud/ID theft complaint, 15 motor vehicle accidents, 45 motor vehicle stops and 7 well-being checks.

13 License to Carry Firearms applications were received. Weekly Chief's Column posted on Staying Safe When Encountering Foxes or Coyotes and How to Start a Neighborhood Watch. Officer Alves attended School Resource Officer training mandated by the Police Reform Law. Lt. Minardi attended SWAT in-service training. Officer Coggans and Zita attended K9 in-service training. Officers received legal updates on current court decisions and roll call notices including Commonwealth Fusion Center bulletins.

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 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 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 five funerals. Asst. recreation dept with ongoing park improvements and seasonal programs.

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.

Engineering

- Eversource continues doing gas work on Main Street.
- Milford Road sidewalk project is progressing. Only punch list items remaining.
- Continue working on Fitzpatrick Road culvert project.
- Sunrise/Powerline area has been paved. Hand work is progressing.
- Magnolia Lane has been milled in preparation of resurfacing.
- Annual NIFTYS report has been completed.
- Stowe road culvert contract has been approved by the Selectboard. Project updates will be made available through the Town website and social media.
- Continue to work with town staff and departments on other projects and day to day activities.

Health Department

As of September 23, Grafton has been informed of a total of 1,334 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases since case tracking started in early 2020. The number of new cases continues to increase in Grafton, surrounding communities, and the State compared to recent weeks. Individuals are strongly advised to continue to exercise precautions (e.g., wearing masks, social distancing, frequent hand washing), 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 [here](#).

As a reminder, the mosquito and tick season is still upon us. Grafton was notified a few weeks ago 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

These two weeks, the Planning Department completed administrative tasks for the Planning Board and Affordable Housing Trust. Staff finalized a first draft Complete Streets Policy to be reviewed by the Planning Board prior to final referral to the Select Board.

Staff attended a Listening Session webinar regarding ARPA funding, hosted by CMRPC. Staff also participated in a site visit to Rt30 and North Main Street to review proposed intersection improvements, as well as a site visit to MJ's Market to review construction

progress. Additionally, staff met with representatives of KARP Strategies regarding the Local Rapid Recovery Plan Draft which will be presented at the Planning Board's September 27th regularly scheduled meeting, prior to finalization.

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.

Conservation

Staff prepared for and attended the Commission's 9/21 meeting. After the meeting, staff began issuing the resulting documents. Staff worked with VHB on the town's annual report for compliance with the MS4 Permit. Site inspections were conducted and inquiries from residents and applicants were fielded.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Recreation Department

Fall programming has begun; last week adult fitness and afterschool programs started, this past weekend flag football held its first games as well as tennis, soccer, and street hockey, and this week the Recreation Director led a hike. View a brochure with upcoming offerings [HERE](#) with youth afterschool, weekend and vacation week programs, and all your favorite events! First up, the Scarecrow Building Contest on October 17!

Please contact the department with any questions at recreation@grafton-ma.gov or 508-839-5335 x1156, visit our website at GraftonRec.com, and follow us on Facebook (@GraftonRecDept) for the latest updates.

Council on Aging

Attended a webinar on "Promoting Social Engagement in Senior Centers". Attended a Lion's Club sponsored senior cook-out at the Lion's Club Pavilion which included bingo and raffle prizes. It was a well-attended event and many thanks to the Lions. Participated in the Massachusetts Council on Aging Annual Fall Conference which was held virtually. Different one-hour sessions on topics relating to Council on Aging were held Monday through Thursday. Lisa Kelley and I met virtually with representatives from UMASS Medical and DTA (Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance) for an annual SNAP audit. For our first year as a SNAP intake site, we were extremely pleased to receive an "excellent" audit. Met with the Advertising Sales Executive from LPi Publishing who is working on securing more sponsors for the Senior Center's monthly newsletter. Started searching for a yoga instructor to replace one of our current instructors who will be leaving to pursue a new career. Support, advocacy, and guidance was provided to seniors daily.

Library

The Library received a certificate of substantial completion from the architect on Wednesday evening. We are still waiting for phones, fax, alarm system, completion of gates installation, shelving (which is prohibiting us from accepting returns) and IT.

We are hoping to open to the public the first or second week of October to circulate items.

Beth was out sick most of the week. She attended a Board of Library Trustees meeting and worked on the ARIS financial report. She worked on procurement with William Blake and reviewed names for the Donor Wall.

Jen, Sarah, and Cyndi pulled prizes for an upcoming Break in Bag program, moved CR furniture to further increase flow and usability, did role playing exercises about approaching patrons about masks with the Adult Services staff, and discussed what would need to be done in the CR before opening.

Sarah and Allison met to create a program order for the upcoming WRP. Mare and Cyndi attended the Paralibrarian statewide meeting and continued to work on the next step in their certification process. Kristin attended Libraries and Reading: New Service Models for Patrons with Intellectual Disability and worked on planning the upcoming October virtual Book Clubs.

Sarah spoke to the construction team regarding concerns in the CR, practiced collection maintenance, spoke with Apple Tree Arts and Mr. Kim about upcoming programming, attended and iREAD State Partner webinar, attended "Mathical Books: Inspire Joyful Curiosity in Math-Themed Kids' Literature", attended "Gender Diversity & The Importance of Pronouns with Boston University's Shannon Peters, communicated with patrons and staff, and assisted contracted workers as needed.

All Borrower's Services staff shifted nonfiction books; shelved audio; processing 15 bins of materials from delivery; workflow meeting; creating LOT shelves. Allie worked on the October Newsletter, a painting project; alphabetized the Library of Things, designed signage, and worked on a Readers Advisory project. Ranjita emptied boxes and shelved in items in the Local History Room; shelved seasonal books; deleted several boxes of material from storage and prepared them for Friends Book Sale. Jane attended a webinar: Let's Learn Tech: IT for Low Income learners; New York Times bestseller list; Ingram training. Sandhya updated the website, worked on returns to libraries outside of the C/W MARS network, shelved overflow books and seasonal materials and responded to Facebook messages. Susan purchased Audiobooks, Large Print books, DVDs, and Fiction; served as a liaison for A/V assessment and training for an upcoming program for the Small Stones Festival of the Arts organized deletions; delivered 11 items to Homebound patrons and ordered supplies.

Allison continued to work on winter reading program logistics and planning, worked on new book order, and wrapped up summer reading (stats, prizes, etc).

Veterans Services

No Report Submitted

GCTV

This week's activities included interviews with Congressman Jim McGovern, we chatted about some topics he cared deeply about, and his experiences during the Jan. 6th. riot. Jason Wright came in for a TV chat. He is raising awareness for his 5k walk event honoring his nephew, Michael Cherry. We produced 2 Bus Stop Weather segments this week, hosted by Freshman Sophie Kling. High School Junior Cadence Tucker has continued to join us behind the scenes as she hopes to gain experience for her pursuit of a film career.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Upcoming Select Board Meetings
September 28th (Business Meeting)
October 5th (Business Meeting)
October 12th (Workshop)

Upcoming Department Head Meetings
October 6th at 10:00 a.m.