



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Selectmen

FROM: John C. Curran, Town Manager

CC: Susan Aker, Cathy O'Dea

SUBJECT: Town Manager's Report, April 8, 2019

DATE: April 5, 2019

The Commons

The Town and all regulatory divisions within the Town took a tour of the building on April 1st. A plan was put in place to get 42 of the 60 tenants back in place by the weekend. Fire, Police, BOH, building and this office worked with the Management team to expedite this outcome. These units will be reoccupied over the weekend. The remaining units will require several months to renovate. This office has been in touch with the Management staff at the Commons. Karen Charette has been constantly working to ensure that all tenants are safely placed in a temporary housing arrangement. To my knowledge all tenants have been temporarily relocated. Most tenants are covered through renters insurance policies. Affordable units, however, are not covered. There are 9 affordable units and only one carries renters insurance. The management company has been working with these tenants to ensure that they have temporary accommodations.

At this time there is no need for the Town to provide shelter for any displaced residents. This office will be monitoring the situation closely as it is possible that the Commons may terminate the leases with these tenants in accordance with their interpretation of the lease language. This will possibly result in several legal actions of which the Town is not a party too. I have contacted the Attorney General's Office and Community Teamwork. Both entities are working with the displaced tenants to help them with their relocation efforts.

Dementia Friendly Training

The Town conducted a Dementia Friendly Training on March 22nd. It was provided by Daria Rabkin of Bright View Senior Living. Two sessions of the training were held at 10AM and again at 1PM. These were required trainings for everyone in Town Hall. Also Ms. Rabkin conducted a virtual reality demonstration to help us better understand what a person with dementia deals with on a daily basis.

Veteran's Director

Sadly Ken Buffum, the Veteran's Director, has passed away after 40 years of service. It will be difficult to replace him. Serving veterans was always Ken's first priority. This position has been posted and this office will be accepting resumes for two weeks. The goal is to hire a director that will be able to serve young and old veterans alike. This individual will be expected to have the capacity to implement the state software program in the Town. It is also expected that this individual will be familiar and willing to assist veterans with social service needs.

BMHS Preschool Wing

Part of the new high school opened on Monday. The preschool which is located on the first floor of the academic wings opened this week. It also houses Special Education offices and Information Technology.

Permit Alley

The furniture and the carpet have been installed. Power and Data is expected to be installed this weekend. The new storage rooms for both the schools and the Elections Division are nearly complete.

Fire Station Interviews

A meeting was held this week to give potential bidders an opportunity to tour the existing facilities and ask questions. Three firms came to the meeting and seven firms requested bid packages.

IUPE Contract

Both Parties have agreed to a one year contract with a COLA of 2.8 percent. This will stagger the contract terms which is a benefit to management. The Union body has ratified the contract.

Tour of New High School

Last week the Board of Selectmen was taken on a tour of the New Billerica Memorial High School by myself, Superintendent of Schools Tim Piwowar, Left Field, and Shawmut. The tour was taken the day prior to the preschool moving in. The Preschool worked extremely hard to have everything in place before the start of school the next day. Shawmut has vacated their old office to prepare for demolition of the old building. It was amazing to see the progress of how quickly the site has come together. Currently the project is still on time and on budget. I look forward to taking the Board on another tour towards the end of the summer.

Pothole Patrol

The Town created a Facebook group over the past few weeks to start a resident priority list of potholes. After the first initial onslaught of streets and potholes it has quieted down considerably. The Town sends a list over the highway multiple times a week to stay on top of the potholes. It was a tough winter with the constant freezing and thawing. This did considerable damage to many roads over the winter. I want to take a moment to commend the Highway Department and their response to the potholes. Over 80 roads were sent in the first weeks and they did a fantastic job according to many residents.

Recreation Department Update

The first ever Mother/Son Dance tickets go on sale Tuesday, April 9th. There seems to be a lot of buzz already and tickets are expected to go quickly there is a limit of 350 tickets. Recreation will be offering a couple of different April Vacation programming options, including an art program, Lego Civics program, All Sports program, and a golf clinic. Registration is ongoing.

CPC

The CPC had their public hearing on April 4th in regards to the projects being sent to Town Meeting. Three of the four projects were approved unanimously. The Billerica Affordable Housing Trust identification and purchase funding was also approved by a vote of 6-1. The projects include the Preservation of the Great Deed, Restoration of the 1926 Maxim Fire Truck, The First Unity Church Spire Restoration, and the BHA/BAHT purchase money for affordable housing units.

Budget Update

FinCom has met multiples times over the past few weeks. All budgets so far have been approved by the Finance Committee except for Recreation. The budget number has not changed since the initial meeting with the Selectmen. At the time of the meeting Recreation has not met with them yet. The Finance Committee has also started the process of reviewing warrant articles. All of the DPW borrowing articles have been approved. Both Enterprise budget warrant articles have been approved. Fincom has not acted on the school budget yet.