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MEMORANDUM

TO: Athol Board of Selectmen
FR: Shaun A. Suhoski, Town Manager
RE: Town Manager's Report
DT: May 17, 2016

Dear Board: Please see the following updates for your meeting tonight.

Treasurer/Collector Search and Transition: As you know, former Treasurer/Collector Eileen Bristol's last day of work was on May 12. She has taken a position as tax collector in the city of Marlborough and we wish her well.

Eileen and I worked to provide as smooth a transition period as possible with the vacancy notice and advertisements issuing prior to her departure with a priority deadline date of May 12.

Town Accountant Christine Mailloux and Principal Assessor Lisa Aldrich agreed to assist me in vetting the candidates. As of the priority consideration date, the Town had received 20 applications (one more since) of which four were selected for preliminary interviews. Two of the top four candidates have already secured other positions and the team selected another person for a preliminary interview held this afternoon.

My hope is that one of these individuals will demonstrate experience, knowledge, aptitude with accounting or bookkeeping and strong management and training skills so that we can lift the overall efficiency and performance in this department. Ideally, we would have a new Treasurer/Collector on board by the first of July.

During the interim, Assistant Treasurer Bridget Jowder and Assistant Collector Susan Sargent have agreed to take on additional duties and hours for a modest weekly stipend associated with working out of grade. I appreciate the willingness of both Bridget and Susan to step up their efforts during the vacancy.

Weekly oversight of operations will be provided by Barbara Barry, the Finance Director (also Treasurer/Collector) in the town of Sturbridge, who will work in Town Hall on Tuesdays with the staff at a consultant rate of \$75 per hour, which is substantially less than retaining a financial services company during the interim period.

During this period of short-staffing, the office will not open to the general public until 9AM so that staff can complete daily tasks. Please plan accordingly.

Lastly, where the workload is challenging for the remaining staff, I am asking the residents of Athol for their patience and understanding as we seek to fill the department head position.

Once fully staffed, I pledge improved efficiency and service to the public we serve.

Miscellaneous Items: It has been very busy of late with confirming budgets, Town Meeting articles, staffing issues, economic development agenda, etc. Following covers some of the activity of the past two weeks.

- Introduced planner Eric Smith to Mark Wright and Mia Haringstad of North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau; discussed potential shared intern with Chamber and town of Orange within our shared office space.
- Participated in strategic planning session for Athol Public Library along with FWAC chairman Ken Duffy, BOS chairman Lee Chauvette and many other interested parties.
- Greeted and met with Congressman McGovern at Chamber of Commerce offices thanking him for his role in advancing tourism marketing campaign at Logan International Airport.
- Conducted monthly department head meeting.
- Met with SEIU union to develop transitional staffing plan for Treasurer/Collector's office.
- Met with Town Clerk, Director of Planning and Development and BPCD chairman to discuss internal office and filing procedures and updating of same.
- Conference call with Town Counsel and attorneys/agents for Mr. Mike's to finalize Town Meeting materials for parcel assembly for redevelopment.
- Greeted guests from MassDevelopment at meeting with Director of Planning and Development.
- Welcomed legislators and guests to oversight hearing on proposal to place timber rattlesnakes on Mt. Zion in Quabbin Reservoir.
- Convened town staff (DPW; Planner) to join realtor and investor-owners of former Silver Lake School to discuss options allowed under zoning (note: all back property taxes must be paid prior to issuance of any building permits).
- Reviewed Town Meeting warrant articles with Finance and Warrant Advisory Committee; obtained reserve fund transfer for \$17,550 to pay unanticipated tuition costs for two local students attending Franklin County Tech.
- Finalized and executed contract and amendment with incoming Police Chief Russell Kleber; met with incoming Chief.
- Held final meeting with Guardian Energy and NGRID representatives; executed agreement to convert all lighting at Senior Center (interior and parking area) to LED fixtures (payback less than five years; cuts energy use by whopping 74 percent). Negotiating similar change-out at Town Hall; need further subsidy, but, making progress.
- Participated in AOTV/WJDF broadcast for Foodathon.