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MEMORANDUM

TO: Athol Board of Selectmen
FR: Shaun A. Suhoski, Town Manager
RE: Town Manager's Report
DT: August 2, 2016

Dear Board: Please see the following report for your agenda tonight:

Transportation Funding: According to the Montachusett Regional Area Transit Authority (MART), the efforts of Senators Stanley Rosenberg and Anne Gobi, supported by Rep. Whipps Lee, were successful in retaining a \$400,000 earmark to continue the shuttle bus/van service in Athol and Orange from 6am to 6pm.

The parties have agreed upon a three-year phaseout of the remaining earmark with MART committing to taking on a larger portion of the operational costs in the coming years, according to Mohammed Khan, MART Administrator. He expects the earmark to be reduced by 100K-125K each year going forward.

For historical context, after the federal funding obtained through former Congressman John Olver dried up, the state stepped forward with subsidies in the following amounts:

2012- \$950,000
2013- \$770,000
2014- \$700,000
2015- \$400,000
2016- \$400,000
2017- \$400,000 (anticipated pending close of Legislative session)

While this will not revert to the "door-to-door" program from years past, it does ensure an important transportation option and linkage between the communities and beyond through other bus routes.

Payment Received: The Town has received payment of \$11,880 from the Commonwealth for the land conveyed to Mass. Division of Fisheries & Wildlife for future preservation. This is for the property off of Gulf Road.

Regional Dispatch Planning: Gardner and Athol officials to continue to alternate monthly meetings geared towards developing a regional dispatch center. It is becoming increasingly evident that the Commonwealth will be favoring and even incentivizing communities to move towards the regional model.

Most recently, I have had initial meetings with the SEIU (dispatch) and IAFF (firefighter) unions with a commitment towards active planning and involvement (and eventual negotiation) going forward.

If everyone collaborates in good faith – without personal agendas – I am convinced the Athol and Gardner will become the “book ends” of an even larger regional dispatch model as surrounding smaller communities either join or are forced due to economics into the regional model.

Currently, the Chairman and I had discussed bringing a full update to the Board at one of your September meetings; and I would respectfully request we schedule a formal discussion on your September 20 agenda.

Miscellaneous Items:

- Held Finance Team meeting; looking forward to Monday start of new Treasurer/Collector
- Confirmed support letters for new Route 2 exit at South Athol Road, and for TIP funding for “Five Points” intersection improvements on file with MRPC and the MPO
- Participated in Safety and Development Team meeting
- Attended Athol EDIC meeting including Executive Session regarding strategy with respect to real estate in vicinity of Exit 18
- Attended Mass. Police Training Committee’s July meeting along with Chief Kleber
- Met with Gardner Mayor and Police Chief with new Chief Kleber
- Further worked on draft RFP for elementary school buildings and completed report on recommended options for disposition of the various properties