



Shaun A. Suhoski, *Town Manager*
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Athol Board of Selectmen
FR: Shaun A. Suhoski, Town Manager
RE: Town Manager's Report
DT: August 7, 2018

Dear Board: Please see following update for tonight's meeting which begins at 6:00 p.m.

Proposed Host Community Agreement – Elev8 Cannabis: If approved and eventually licensed by the state Cannabis Control Commission this would be one of a maximum of two adult use (recreational) marijuana dispensaries allowed under our zoning. Cultivation, processing and medical use establishments are not subject to the quota.

Seun Adedeji of Elev8 Cannabis LLC will be present at your meeting to answer questions. The site proposed is the former "Mr. Mike's Mobil" station at 243 Main Street and the operation has received a special permit from the Board of Planning and Community Development to operate at this site.

The Host Community Agreement is a requirement for licensure by the Commonwealth. The HCA proposed follows essentially the same format as two agreements approved for cultivating/processing facilities at the former Union Twist Drill mill site and the former Agway site. For this first retail operation the agreement would provide – in addition to the statutory three percent local option sales tax approved by Town Meeting – the following mitigation incentives to the Town:

- 1) Annual payment equal to three percent of gross revenues to a maximum of \$275,000
- 2) An advance annual payment of \$15,000 due three months after the facility opens (will be offset against paragraph 1 above)
- 3) Subsequent annual payments due on anniversary date of advance payment
- 4) Annual charitable donations in aggregate amount of \$10,000 with consideration to recommendation of Board of Selectmen or its designee, if any, and
- 5) One-time payment of \$5,000 in consideration of Town's legal and technical assistance costs tendered within 60 days' of operations

Town Counsel is on vacation this week but has already reviewed the proposed HCA and approved it as to legal form. I would recommend voting to approve this Agreement.

Fire Chief Search: The Fire Chief Search Committee is fully composed as follows and has been provided cover letters and resumes from over 20 candidates that responded by the priority consideration deadline:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Appointed by</u>	<u>Name</u>
Board of Selectmen:	Board of Selectmen	Rebecca Bialecki
Citizen-at-Large:	Board of Selectmen	Barbara Savoy
Finance Committee:	FWAC chairman	Ken Duffy
Department Head:	Town Manager	Cathy Savoy
Fire Chief:	Town Manager	Chief Paul Zbikowski

Under the Town Charter, the Town Manager is the appointing authority for this position. For this search, I believe having a committee representing the community is a valuable tool not only to assist me, but more importantly to achieve community “buy in” and support for the selected candidate. I have requested the FCSC to review, vet and rank the top three candidates best suited to be the next Chief of the Athol Fire Department. I requested the committee to meet with the local firefighter’s union to hear their perspective on the traits and attributes they believe would embody a progressive and professional successor to Chief Duguay. Otherwise, the committee will operate independently though Bridget and I are available to provide support as requested.

Ken Duffy graciously agreed to schedule the first meeting of the group to organize their process and that will occur on tomorrow. My hope is that the FCSC will be able to complete its work within the next 45 days as it is my intent to select the next Chief from their top-three ranked finalists.

Former Landfill – Solar RFP Selection Process Update: Working with energy consultant Beth Greenblatt of Beacon Integrated Solutions the RFP review team has narrowed the solar vendors to a pair of promising candidates. A final set of detailed questions has been issued and final interviews will occur next week. The team will bring a recommended vendor for a land lease to the Board of Selectmen for further discussion and to potentially execute a lease agreement as authorized by the Annual Town Meeting.



I want to recognize Doug Walsh, Steve Raymond and Eric Smith for their participation in all phases of review and also Bill Caldwell for assisting with interviews at the semi-finalist and finalist stage.

Acting Police Lieutenant Appointment: As the Board is aware, Ronny R. Cote has been appointed Acting Police Lieutenant effective August 1. This provides a clear chain-of-command to be in place when Acting Chief Anderson leaves on August 10 at which time Lt. Cote will assume day-to-day command of the Athol Police Department operations and administration as per the position description.

Lt. Cote has over 31 years of experience including 12 years as a patrol officer and nearly two decades as Detective before a recent promotion to sergeant. He has received 19 letters of commendation, two distinguished service awards, a Mass. State Police Division Commander’s Commendation and a Medal of Merit. In 2014 he was named the town of Athol’s Employee of the Year. I feel confident that Lt. Cote’s substantial experience will lend itself well to his new position.

Miscellaneous:

- Conducted Department Head meeting; participated in pre-development meetings
- Met with Director of Planning and Development, staff from DHCD’s downtown initiative and staff from MassDevelopment to discuss downtown planning and potential strategies
- Additional discussion with police, fire and dispatch management and personnel regarding staffing needs relative to call volume and radio transmission activity at central dispatch