



**Shaun A. Suhoski**, *Town Manager*  
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### **MEMORANDUM**

TO: Athol Board of Selectmen  
FR: Shaun A. Suhoski, Town Manager  
RE: Town Manager Update – Week Ending 1/2/15  
DT: January 5, 2015

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Dear Board,

While the holidays have limited time in the office there is much happening.

**Budget Concerns:** As you may be aware, generally the Governor will submit their proposed budget before the end of January. In the case of a new incoming Administration, however, the budget is not due until early March so that may delay finalization of the Town's operating budget unless the revenue consensus meeting between the House, Senate and Governor also yields estimated state aid figures.

Department budget requests are due on Thursday. I have requested that departments seek to maintain "level services", however, I have a concern that health insurance premiums could increase in double-digits this year. MIIA will announce the 'cap' – or highest rate of increase – at the MMA Annual Meeting later this month.

With the four union contracts currently under negotiation, and the obvious financial linkage between health insurance costs and wage adjustments, I believe that final negotiations will need to await the news on the Town's insurance costs.

This month I will be meeting with the FWAC, Memorial Building Committee and Capital Planning Committee for preliminary discussions on the budget forecast, potential adoption of rooms and meals excises, cost of repairs to the Town Hall and working towards a predictable capital plan funding mechanism.

As stated previously, FY16 looks to be similar to the current budget year, which is pretty lean. The longer-term outlook is more favorable in my opinion.

### **Miscellaneous Items:**

- Continued work on ground rules, proposals and health insurance issues as part of pending contract negotiations with fire, public works, town hall and police unions.
- Worked with Town Counsel and auctioneer to finalize associated documentation in advance of town-owned property auction on Thursday. Also, made outreach to media to promote event.

- Held a telephone conference with Tata & Howard engineers, the DPW Superintendent and Water Division foreman regarding the water pressure concerns stated for a group of residents along Templeton Road. A meeting with the residents will be held before a written report is provided to the Board.
- Held Finance Team meeting. Note that a report is being prepared for the Board's review concerning outcomes and status of the Mass. DOR recommendations. The Team is pleased that the tax rate certification and mailing of all tax bills was completed timely.
- Met with Planning Board concerning ANR approval for outlot at Lake Ellis Road (the portion of Lyman Ward being retained for potential realignment of roadway). Planning Board signed the ANR plan and Town Counsel will record on Wednesday.
- Met with Mohammed Khan, MART Administrator; George Kahale of MRPC and Bruno Fisher of MART concerning transit and transportation matters that may be forthcoming from Athol.

W/E	SAT.	SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WEDS.	THURS.	FRI.	TOTAL
1/2/15			8.0	11.0	8.0	8.0H	5.0	32.0 40.0