



Town of Weathersfield

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Brandon W. Gulnick
Town Manager

March 4, 2021

Weathersfield Select Board
5259 US Route 5
Ascutney, VT 05030

Re: March 2021 Town Manager Report

Dear Select Board Members & Weathersfield Residents:

The following will keep you up to date on various topics.

COVID-19 & Emergency Management

It has been a full year since Governor Phil Scott declared a State of Emergency in Vermont due to COVID-19. Weathersfield, similar to most cities and towns in the United States, has been required to change the way we operate. In the beginning of the State of Emergency I appointed David Fuller as the Emergency Management Director. Throughout the pandemic Mr. Fuller and I have worked closely together to create and maintain our response to COVID-19 as it relates to Weathersfield. This is an annual appointment that expires on April 6th of this year. I am requesting that Mr. Fuller remain in this position for an additional year to see the pandemic through with our Administration. Despite the great difficulty we have experienced because of the pandemic, and the various road blocks we have hit over the past year, it has been a pleasure working with the Weathersfield Emergency Management Team. There is still a great deal of work to do in Town as it relates to Emergency Management and Emergency Preparedness. I want to thank our entire Emergency Management Team for all of your hard work through this very difficult unprecedented time. I also want to thank all Weathersfield Residents for your patience, understanding and support through these difficult times.

Tenney Tree Project

In August of last year, the State of Vermont Highway Division reached out to our administration to discuss the fate of the Tenney Tree, which is located in the Park & Ride on 131. Attempts were made to extend the life of tree and to minimize the risk to life and property as a result of the tree remaining in place. Lee Stevens, the certified arborist recommended by the Town, emailed a revised analysis of the tree describing how the tree declined over the summer of 2020. Mr. Stevens explained that it may be too late for any last-ditch efforts to prolong the life of the tree and that the liability had also increased.

The Weathersfield community has expressed interest in establishing a memorial in this location to celebrate the life of Romaine Tenney. Our Administration held a joint meeting with members of the Conservation Committee (Heather Shand & Jeff Pelton) and Historical Society (Ginger Winberg). The consensus of this meeting was to work with Tenney relatives to learn what they would like to see as a memorial for Romaine Tenney. We held

meetings with Lori & William Tenney, Joe Michaud, and Brandon Tenney. During these meetings we learned a great deal of what Romaine Tenney stood for in addition to their long family history in Weathersfield. Romaine Tenney was a farmer here in Town and should be remembered for his dedication to agriculture, farming and the Town of Weathersfield.

The consensus of the Tenney family members we met with at Martin Memorial Hall was the following:

- + Move forward with the removal of the Tree.
- + Request funding from the State of Vermont to build a Tenney Memorial.
- + If funded, hold workshops with Tenney relatives and others interested in the design of the Memorial to develop the plans for such.
- + If funded, construct a Gazebo Style Memorial with Romaine Tenney Informational Display Boards

Our administration took this information back to the State of Vermont Highway Division and negotiations resulted in a \$30,000 grant award to the Town for tree removal and the construction of the above-mentioned memorial. We have scheduled the following meeting dates & times:

+ **Kickoff Meeting**

- o March 25th, 2021 @ 6:00PM
- o Martin Memorial Hall (Downstairs)
 - In person attendance prioritized for Tenney Relatives
 - ZOOM Attendance Permitted

+ **Workshop #1 - Project Design**

- o April 8th, 2021 - 6PM - 7PM
- o Martin Memorial Hall (Downstairs)
 - In person attendance prioritized for Tenney Relatives.
 - ZOOM Attendance Permitted

+ **Workshop #2 - Construction Review**

- o May 6th, 2021 - 6PM - 7PM
- o Martin Memorial Hall (Downstairs)
 - In person attendance prioritized for Tenney Relatives.
 - ZOOM Attendance Permitted

Anyone interested in attending these meetings should RSVP to Olivia Savage at osavage@weathersfield.org. Please add "Attention Tenney Memorial" in the subject line.

Fire Department Contracts

The Selectboard, Administration, and the Fire Departments have worked closely together for the past year to develop a Fire Department Contract to provide Fire Services to Weathersfield residents. The Selectboard approved this contract with amendments requested by each Fire Department. The Contract has been updated to reflect these amendments and has been reviewed from a legal perspective. Our administration will be meeting with both departments individually next week to review the approved contract and work through any Q & A. We anticipate the contract signing to be held on April 5, 2021.

RFP - Town Auditing Services

Our contract with Sullivan Powers & Co., P.C expired last year. Their final audit for the Town was the FY20 Audit that was recently completed. An RFP for the Town Audit was advertised on March 1, 2021. Bids are due no later than 4:30PM on March 26, 2021. A Public Bid Opening will be held via Zoom in the Town Clerk's

Office at 10:00am on Thursday, April 1, 2021. The bid packages we receive will be presented to the Selectboard on April 5, 2021.

Employee Performance Evaluations

Performance evaluations have been scheduled with all Town Staff throughout March and the first half of April. Anyone with feedback regarding an employee of the Town should submit this information to my attention at townmanager@weathersfield.org. Performance evaluations are a critical component of a successful team that provide a stepping-stone for the employee and supervisor to identify and discuss areas where performance can be improved. After a thorough review of employee performance in Town over the past year I expect these evaluations to be productive.

Solid Waste RFP

The Southern Windsor/Windham Counties Solid Waste Management District (District) is a legal entity consisting of towns in the east central portion of Vermont along the Connecticut River: Andover, Athens, Baltimore, Cavendish, Chester, Grafton, Ludlow, Plymouth, Reading, Rockingham, Springfield, Weathersfield, West Windsor, and Windsor. There are currently five transfer stations located in the District: Cavendish, Ludlow, Rockingham, Springfield, and Weathersfield. In 2019, 2643 tons of MSW and 1542 tons of C&D was collected at District transfer stations. The total amount of MSW collected in the District was 16,355 tons. In 2020, 2424 tons of MSW and 1625 tons of C&D was collected at District transfer stations. The total amount of MSW collected in the District was 17,521 tons and 8080 tons of C&D. The District will hold a remote informational meeting via ZOOM due to COVID-19 pandemic precautions on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. Interested parties must call or email to notify the District of their intent to participate. Prior notification will enable the District to contact interested parties with the ZOOM link, and in case of change of time or date. Proposals are due on or before 3:00 p.m. Thursday, March 25, 2021. Proposals will be accepted via email, USPS mail, FedEx, UPS or by hand delivery. It is the responsibility of the proposer to confirm the receipt of the proposal. The proposals will be opened and read aloud. Any proposal received after the 3:00 p.m. deadline will be rejected.

Small Business Development Initiative

Selectboard Representative to Economic Development Michael Todd and I have had productive conversations regarding smart business growth in Weathersfield. Over the next several months our administration will be connecting with existing Weathersfield business owners to create a network in Weathersfield and a small business panel that meets quarterly. The goal of this panel will be to further the interests of businesses in Weathersfield and learn how we can assist them. There may be things that we can do that we do not know about because communication has not taken place. This is also a good opportunity for small business owners to network and help each other grow.

ATA Agreement

The Ascutney Trails Association (ATA) has proposed a formal partnership with the Town of Weathersfield through a contract that describes the responsibility of the Town and the Association to maintain, develop, and promote the wise use of non-motorized multi use trails, side trails, and related facilities referred to as the ATA Trails System. Nothing in the agreement is construed as obligating either by the ATA or the Town to expend labor and funds in excess of allotments or appropriations authorized by the Town or ATA policies. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns please contact us. We anticipate this being on a future Selectboard agenda for discussion.

Highway Department Awarded Grant Funding

Congratulations to our Highway Superintendent, Ray Stapleton, and Team. In September of 2020 Mr. Stapleton submitted a grant application for \$29,300 to strengthen our hydraulically connected roads. We received notification on February 24th awarding the Town of Weathersfield with this funding. This funding will allow us to complete 7 segments of high risk hydraulically connected roads in Weathersfield. Over the last three years the Highway Department completed 20 segments of high-risk roads. We are also waiting to hear back from the state regarding a \$23,000 grant to complete 4 more segments. This project will consist of installing new culverts for drainage to alleviate washouts and reestablish ditches.

Vacancy Applications

We created a Vacancy Application form and added it to the Website. This form highlights the interests and qualifications of Weathersfield registered voters willing to volunteer to serve our community. These applications can be found on the Selectboard page. Anyone interested in being appointed to a position in Town should fill out this application and return it to the Town Office via Email at osavage@weathersfield.org, mail (PO BOX 550, Ascutney, VT 05030) or in person delivery at 5259 US Route 5, Ascutney, VT 05030.

Appointed Committee Policies and Procedures Handbook

We are in the process of assembling a handbook for new board and committee members. This is intended to be a general guidance document that will aid in decision making when serving in an appointed role. The categories we are recommending include the following: 1) Committee Function & Formation (role of appointed committees, committee appointment, duration of term and reappointment, certification, attendance guidelines, resignation, and committee officers; 2) Conduct and Policies (conflict of interest policy, budget and fundraising, sexual harassment, misuse of position, use of town equipment and facilities, annual town report, 3) Meeting and Procedures (meeting definition, attendance and quorums, public hearings, open meeting law, posting of notice of meetings, control of meetings, audio and video recording, no votes by secret ballots, executive sessions, meeting minutes, open meeting law enforcement, meeting schedule, and meeting rooms. If anyone has any comments, recommendations, or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

Town Website

We have been transitioning to our new website over the past month and anticipate the transition extending for several more months. As we update the Town Website, I will notify the public in Town Manager Reports to explain these changes. If you have any recommendations, comments, or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us!

Notable Website Updates

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| Selectboard Page | 5 Pages created in sidebar (Board, Committee, Commission Vacancies, Guidance to Remote Meetings, Notices, Town Policies, and Vacancy Application) |
| Town Manager Page | 2 Pages were added (Town Manager Reports & Town Reports). This is where all Town Manager Reports will be located moving forward. |
| Finance Page | 1 Page was added (Monthly Financial Reports). This is where monthly finance reports will be located moving forward. |
| Front Page | Emergency Alerts Added - This is where any urgent notifications will be located moving forward. In this case we added a Town Meeting alert. |
| Animal Control | 6 Pages were added (Animal Bite Reports, Animal Control Ordinance, Animal Cruelty Ordinance, Lost My Way Animal Shelter Facebook Page, Lucy Mackenzie Humane Society, and a "Prevent your dog from biting" page. |

Website Changes Coming Soon

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| Transfer Station | Swap Shop Page - A page where residents can list items, they no longer need that will be disposed of at the Transfer Station. If the item is in working condition and another resident can use it a resident can request this item be added on this page. This page will be shared on social media from time to time. |
| Ascutney Water District | Full Development Required |
| Highway Department | Development Required |
| Emergency Management | Full Development Required |
| Finance Department | Inclusion of previous audits and budgets required |
| Fire Departments | Development Required |
| Health Department | Development Required |
| Human Resources | Development Required |
| Listers | Development Required |
| Police Department | Development Required |
| Tax Collector | Development Required |
| Town Clerk | Development Required |
| Treasurer | Development Required |
| 1879 School Committee | Full Development Required |
| Cemetery Commission | Full Development Required |
| Parks & Recreation | Development Required |
| Planning Commission | Development Required |
| Prudential Committee | Development Required |
| Veterans Memorial Committee | Full Development Required |
| Resident Resources | Development Required |
| Business Resources | Development Required |

As time progresses our administration will keep you informed regarding the abovementioned topics and other topics. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Brandon Gulnick

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Town Manager