

# TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT



**Ryan M. McLane**

February 28, 2023

## **Town Events and Town Hall News**

We began moving employees this week into our new configuration, setting up the Building Department in the Nickles Room. This will free up space to consolidate finance staff on the second floor and eventually to consolidate all land-use departments into a usable space. This space will include a conference area. Staff, boards, and residents should note that the Parlin room is available for meetings that typically take place in the Nickles Room. The main restriction will be larger meetings (10+); however, the largest space demand in Town Hall during my six months here is the need to house 1-2 people for focused work. Larger meetings will need to reserve space in the Heald or Clark Room moving forward. We plan to place signs around Town Hall directing traffic until all moves are complete and we add final signage.

The Board will note new faces in Town Hall as we continue to fill vacancies like the Assessing Assistant and Assistant Treasurer Collector positions. We are using the vacancy fills to address space and IT needs in each area of Town Hall with the goal of integrating furniture and equipment into a larger plan for improving inventory.

## **Human Resources Update from the ATA**

Ryan and I have consulted with COAHS board members and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Select Board. We have agreed on the search process for the next Director of the COAHS. The Board is reviewing the job description, and I expect to finalize it this week. I will handle the posting and other administrative details, and Ryan and I will conduct the initial review of resumes received. A small screening committee, including several COAHS Board members and one SB member, will help narrow the pool to 1-3 candidates to be submitted to the Select Board. We anticipate a late spring/early summer hire. An interim director will be appointed from within the current staff, and I will have more to report at the next SB meeting.

The Police Chief Screening Committee held several meetings with Public Safety Consultants during the recent candidate review process. The Screening Committee is on track to present finalist(s) to the Select Board on March 14th. Current candidates are going through a writing and

interview assessment. The final batch of candidates will take part in a rigorous screening center to see how the potential Chiefs will handle scenario-based interview questions.

The Board of Assessors appointed Frank Schembari as the town's Assessing Assistant. He is scheduled to start March 1st. Frank was serving as an Administrative Assessor in the town of Pepperell prior to accepting our offer.

We are excited to present to the Select Board Sandra Nason as a candidate for the vacant Assistant Treasurer Collector position. Sandy has served as the Treasurer Collector in Hubbardston since 2017. Her first day will be Monday, March 6th.

We are also ready to present to the Select Board Shawn Brewer as our newest dispatcher. Shawn possesses a tremendous amount of dispatching experience, most recently serving for the town of Chelmsford.

We are set to start our launch of BambooHR within the next few weeks. The module will streamline time off requests, timesheets, and create a time off calendar for Town Hall employees. This will free up administrative time in our finance departments, better allow for office hour scheduling, and create a stronger understanding of our accrual liabilities.

### **Finance Information**

Governor Healey released her budget for FY24 (see attached) and our initial focus turns to her state aid estimates. The budget provides relatively modest increases for Carlisle, totaling just under 3.2%. While these numbers often change as the state budget progresses, these are underwhelming numbers for unrestricted aid, school aid, and the state pilot program. The estimates built into our current budget accounts for a 3% state aid increase so there is no impact to our current projections or your discussions with the Finance Committee.

### **Procurement Updates**

Here are updates on our current procurement efforts across the town:

- 1.) The library's PFAS treatment system procurement closes March 1<sup>st</sup>. We will quickly award this contract and set a timeline for installing this system in the library.
- 2.) Your Designer Selection Committee will meet next week to analyze applications for our house doctor on-call designer services. We aim to appoint at least two designers per discipline, giving us maximum flexibility for ongoing town maintenance projects. We will bring final recommendations to your meeting on March 14<sup>th</sup>.
- 3.) We will finalize the annual recreation maintenance bids next week after the bid date closes on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The recreation commission and I will finalize this contract in preparation for an active spring and summer season.

4.) Steve Bastek and I finalized the sole source procurement of an in-duct smoke detector for the library RTU unit.

### **Deck House Assessment Working Group**

I am requesting the ability to appoint a working group to assist the Board of Assessors on their evaluation of the FY23 valuation process, specifically regarding deck houses. The goal of this working group is to better understand deck house homes and their classification in Carlisle. The working group will consist of myself or a delegate, the Chief Assessor, a member of the Board of Assessors, and if you are willing to assign someone, a member of the Select Board. Additionally, the Board of Assessors recommended five deck house owners to help advise the group.

#### *Proposed Actions:*

- 1.) Authorize me to appoint this working group and charge it with learning more about Carlisle deck houses and the valuation process.
- 2.) Recommend a Select Board member to serve on my working group.

### **FY24 Health Insurance Contributions (see attached)**

We received our FY24 MIIA health renewal proposal indicating a 7.2% increase in health insurance costs for the town and our employees. As you know due to our ongoing budget discussions, we currently split costs with employees 55/45 (town/employee). We are continuing to gather data about this employee benefit, but here is a quick breakdown of the cost impacts to our employees. The following chart shows 3% COLA increases at various salary levels. The chart shows the monthly employee contribution change from FY23 to FY24 with an annualized total in the far-right column. If you take the \$60,000 employee and compare the COLA to the cheapest family plan, it reduces the impact of the COLA from a 3% increase to a 1.8% increase. This is a complicated topic, but an important conversation piece as the Board continues to grapple with employee retention decisions.

Employee Compensation (Estimated)					
Wages	COLA (3%)				
\$ 50,000.00	\$ 1,500.00				
\$ 60,000.00	\$ 1,800.00				
\$ 70,000.00	\$ 2,100.00				
\$ 100,000.00	\$ 3,000.00				
		Monthly	Individual		Change
			FY23	FY24	Annual Impact
Blue Care			\$ 448.65	\$ 481.05	\$ 32.40 \$ 388.80
Network Blue Select			\$ 312.30	\$ 334.80	\$ 22.50 \$ 270.00
Network Blue NE			\$ 358.65	\$ 384.75	\$ 26.10 \$ 313.20
		Monthly	Family		Change
			FY23	FY24	Annual Impact
Blue Care			\$ 1,197.00	\$ 1,283.40	\$ 86.40 \$ 1,036.80
Network Blue Select			\$ 833.40	\$ 893.25	\$ 59.85 \$ 718.20
Network Blue NE			\$ 957.60	\$ 1,026.45	\$ 68.85 \$ 826.20

## Upcoming Topics

Here are a few topics coming to the Board for consideration:

The Middlesex County Retirement System (MCRS) is looking for the Board to accept Chapter 269 of the acts of 2022 (see attached). Accepting this local option grants retirees, a one-time COLA increase from 3% to 5% of the system's \$16k COLA base. The MCRS needs 2/3 of participating Select Boards to approve this measure. There is nuance to this decision, including comparison to other retiree COLAs (like social security) and its impact on the system's unfunded liability. The arguments for accepting this provision include increasing pay for low-income retirees. Arguments against include rising costs for towns. Please review the attached material to better understand your position. The MCRS is asking the Select Board to vote on this by the end of the Fiscal Year.

Per your last meeting, I am working with Chief Sorrows, the PSFTF, and a local design firm to craft a scope for your review regarding the fire and police department renovation projects. This work will result in a scope and cost estimate for board review. I expect to have a draft by your March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Board will not be locked into an agreement based on this work but can decide to move forward with the designers proposal and cost.

The town can opt-in to the statewide opioid settlements with Teva, Allergan, CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart. According to Town Counsel, this settlement would allow Carlisle to receive funds to be used for opioid remediation purposes in exchange for releasing past against Teva, Allergan, CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart concerning their role in the opioid crisis. The Board has until April 18<sup>th</sup> to vote and authorize me to turn in the required paperwork. The total settlement, spread over several years, grants the town \$88,630.22 over a 15-year span. For more information about this settlement to include a FAQ, [visit this site](#). If the Board decides to opt-in to this fund, we should engage the Resident services team to devise a multi-year strategy for employing the funds in the community.

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Distribution</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
Walmart	\$13,002.60	6 years
Teva	\$17,358.15	13 years
Allergan	\$10,341.16	7 years
CVS	\$22,960.82	10 years
Walgreens	\$24,967.49	15 years
<b>Total</b>	\$88,630.22	

### **Staff Recognition**

This week I would like to recognize the following town employees:

Special thanks to Jenn and Anush for hosting yet another successful employee luncheon. These small gatherings continue to allow us as a staff to better get to know each given the influx of new employees (including myself). It is impressive to see the effort than Jenn and Anush put in on their off time to making sure morale in Town Hall is high. Our town offices are a much nicer place to work thanks to their efforts.

Although he not an employee, I'd like to thank Assessor Chair Ken Mostello for going above and beyond in the last couple months to work with Brian, analyze data, and even volunteer time on a holiday to try and find ways to communicate with the public and address valuation concerns. This effort mirrors the dedication of our Chief Assessor Brian MacDonald who has been the hardest working employee in town hall for the past few months. I am confident in Brian's ability to continue to address resident concerns and improve our town data. I learn something new from Brian almost every day and appreciate his dedication to the municipal craft.

A very quick, but important thanks to our DPW for their work during the storm last week. The winter is almost over, but their place in our public safety efforts is always appreciated.

### **Upcoming Select Board Dates of Interest**

Friday, March 3, 2023: Military Training (TA)

Monday, March 13, 2023: Finance Committee Public Budget Hearing

Tuesday, March 14, 2023: Regular Select Board Meeting

Friday, March 17, 2023: Legislative Breakfast (ATA, TA, SB)

Thursday, March 24, 2023: Professional Development (TA, ATA)

Tuesday, March 28, 2023: Regular Select Board Meeting

### **Future Agenda**

See attached