

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT



Ryan M. McLane

April 11, 2023

Town Events and Town Hall News

Town Hall improvements continue as we move towards creating standardized and functional employee work spaces and a welcoming and professional environment for dedicated volunteers and visitors. Here are the latest improvements:

- AI started painting shared areas and hallways to update the colors in spots where residents and staff often frequent. He also commissioned work to replace the floor in the upstairs kitchen. You will see things coming off the walls, but please know we will put it all back up and honor Carlisle's history. Additionally, AI is working to place seating in the lobby that assists our residents who need comfortable seating between their interactions with departments.
- We completed our last employee desk move, securing space for our last orphaned employee and expanded areas for record storage and Town Clerk activities. Our second-floor employees are not yet in their final cubicles, but once we settle from the move, cubicle installation will begin.
- Our IT department and Jenn worked with Harbor Networks last week to begin the new phone system installation. Initial work includes establishing Town Hall infrastructure and designing the actual system. The installation of this system will be completed in May.
- Records management efforts continued to clean up spaces and make us more compliant. Nearly 60 boxes at the DPW found homes or were released and records assigned to the historical commission and housing authority were catalogued and stored.

Records management next steps include:

- Clearing out the Parlin Room for more functional space.
- Clearing out unnecessary cabinets
- Focusing on land-use files and maps for proper storage

- Preparing file sections for digitizing
- Upcoming projects:
 - Fish-Bowl Rooms – May 2023
 - Land-use file project – May/June 2023
 - Cubicle installations phases 1 (finance and planning) + 2 (land-use)
 - Historical decoration of walls and space

Human Resources Update from the ATA

We are delighted to announce Carol Grueneich as our next Council on Aging and Human Services Director. Carol is currently serving and succeeding as the Interim Director and is highly recommended by Joan Ingersoll, our former director, and the Council on Aging and Human Services Board. We will start searching for Carol's replacement immediately.

We would also like to congratulate Jim Young and Scott Grierson for their promotions to DPW Heavy Equipment Operators! Jim has been with the Town of Carlisle since 2005, and Scott Grierson has served Carlisle since 2006. Foreman Jim Hall has submitted strong recommendation for them and lauded their knowledge and work ethic. We are interviewing candidates for the two open Driver/Laborer positions.

Finance Information

The Finance Committee met Monday and recommended the proposed FY24 budget endorsed by the Select Board. The consensus budget will now head to the Annual Town Meeting. Budget highlights include meeting the town's educational requirements, investing in the town's employees, fulfilling fixed cost obligations, and an initial investment in the town's sustainability efforts. A less exciting, but important highlight of the proposed budget is structural changes that will allow town officials to offer the town an effective and more transparent budget.

The Finance Committee recommended town reserves and town overlay policies for your final approval. I attached drafts to this report and will seek input and approval at an upcoming meeting. The final FY22 Audit recommendations, available shortly, revealing no material weaknesses in Carlisle financial management, named finishing our financial policy review as a top priority.

The Finance Team held their monthly meeting and offered a final vetting of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The group recommends the warrant article language in your April 11th meeting packet. The team also discussed the conclusions of the FY22 town audit and recommended versions of the town's investment and debt management policies.

Procurement Updates

Here is an update on current procurement efforts:

1.) I issued the town's 2023 Road Repair and Reconstruction IFB this week. We will hold a pre-paving conference on April 17th and will receive all bids for summer road repair by April 24th. We are pleased to report several firms are already registered bidders for the project. The IFB includes road work as follows:

- Repair Patch Meadow Lane. Repair includes leveling and new paving. The section of road to be addressed is 16' wide by 1,300' long. The paving depth will be no less than 1.5 inches.
- Repair Pine Brook Road. Repair includes leveling and new paving. The section of road to be addressed is 18' wide by 1,500' long. The paving depth will be no less than 1.5 inches.
- Repair Rutland Street. Repair includes leveling and new paving. The section of road to be addressed is 18' wide by 6,900' long. The paving depth will be no less than 1.5 inches.
- Repair East Street. Repair includes milling and new paving. The section of road to be addressed is 30' wide by 5,600' long. The paving depth will be no less than 1.5 inches.

MAPC Shared Services Study Grant

Our MAPC partners informed us this week that we received a grant for full funding of the initial Shared Services Feasibility Study. We applied for this grant in January and are now ready to start working with MAPC to better understand how towns like Carlisle address sharing/regionalizing services. Here is a summary from the grant application - this study will aim to provide the Carlisle Select Board and Town Administrator with information on the types of service areas that can be or are often amenable to sharing with other communities, including examples of successful collaborations in Greater Boston and the types of services already being shared in Carlisle's more immediate region. This will help the Select Board and Administrator determine whether there are certain service areas for which shared services with neighboring communities could be worth exploring further.

Community Choice Aggregation Contract Working Group (wording and research for this section provided by Bob Zogg)

Carlisle's Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) contract will expire on January 1st, 2024. The CCA program allows Carlisle to procure electricity on behalf of Carlisle's electricity customers. Eversource continues to deliver the electricity under the CCA. The MA Department of Public Utilities oversees the program. Our energy consultant (aka, broker, Colonial Power Group) assists us in securing electricity supply contracts, supporting customer communications, and maintaining a webpage allowing customers to enter or leave the program. As compensation, our broker collects a \$0.001/kWh fee on electricity purchased through the CCA.

The CCA working group that I appointed (Sue Thomas, Glenn Reed, and Bob Zogg) is working with our broker to prepare recommendations for our new contract. Consistent with the approach taken with our current contract, the working group is pursuing three product options:

- Standard (default): Includes the level of MA Class I renewable content that roughly matches (as best we can estimate/predict) the price of Eversource Basic Service. (Under our current contract, we include 15% more MA Class I renewable content than MA requires.)
- Optional Basic: Provides the lowest price, just meeting MA requirements for renewable content
- Optional Green 100: 100% MA Class I renewable content.

Our broker is urging us to act quickly based on current favorable pricing trends that may not last long. Our broker recommends securing indicative pricing from competing suppliers by April 21. Assuming the indicative pricing is favorable, our broker will secure executable pricing on April 26. Once we have executable pricing, we will have but a few hours to accept a bid and either lock in a new contract or reject the bids and repeat the process at a later date.

We anticipate requesting indicative pricing for the product options outlined above, and a contract term of 3 years. Our broker may recommend securing pricing for shorter contract terms as well.

I am asking your permission to work with the broker and the CCA working group to secure indicative and executable pricing, and then execute a new contract on April 26 (if pricing seems favorable). You may also want to appoint a Select Board representative to participate in the decision-making process on April 26.

Assessment Working Group Update

My appointed workgroup met for the second time and agreed to work on the following categories for eventual Select Board recommendations:

- Better understand/improve the “Deckhouse Model” as it relates to the variation between deckhouses in town. By better defining the model inputs, we can better account for the differences within the category.
- Improve the town’s assessment data and invest in its correction.
- Establish Triggers/Guardrails for use by the Chief Assessor and BOA for further Investigation and report prior to setting the tax rate. Discussions included
 - A trigger/guardrail for when a particular group far outpaces other increases (this year’s deckhouse change for example)
 - Individual outliers in the assessment model for homes that are seemingly extremely under or overvalued.
- Improve communications during the assessment process. Discussions from today and previous meetings include:

- Issue and advertise a notice of values prior to setting the tax rate for public review. Establish procedures for mitigating issues prior to billing.
 - Create FAQs and other mechanisms for sharing information about the assessment process (see attached). Update annually.
- 5.) Address apparent land value issues across categories

Action Items

1.) CCA Contract

I am asking your permission to collaborate with the broker and the CCA working group to secure indicative and executable pricing, and then execute a new contract on April 26 (if pricing seems favorable). You may also want to appoint a Select Board representative to participate in the decision-making process on April 26.

2.) Concord Youth Theatre Beer and Wine Application

The Concord Youth Theatre Group is seeking your approval for a 1-day license to hold a wine tasting event and fundraiser at FRS on May 5, 2023. Your packet includes an application, verified TIPS certification, and a review and recommendation from Chief Fong. According to the Chief, this event does not require a detail.

3.) Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) Sign Approval

The BFRT approved a final design for the standardized rules and regulations sign to be found all along the BRFT. As your representative, I am recommending that the Board approve this sign for use in Carlisle. I further recommend that we request one sign and size it to 18x24. We can request more than one sign, but given our short section of trail, one should be sufficient.

Staff Recognition

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

I would like to thank Gretchen Gallimore for her work on cleaning up the town website and making it more user friendly. Gretchen, in addition to her regular duties, worked to streamline the notification and calendar areas to make it easier for residents to understand what is happening in Carlisle. Additionally, she continues to analyze and correct areas of the website that need updating or clarification. The result of this work is a transparent and easy to use website that extends our ability to assist residents beyond Town Hall working hours. It is hard to overstate Gretchen's impact on our staff and her willingness to wear so many hats in service to the town.

[Click here to see the new design!](#)

I would also like to thank our Recreation Director Holly Mansfield and our Children's Librarian Jenn Buliszak for their work securing a grant for a Carlisle Summer Music Series for Kids & Families. This grant came from the Massachusetts Cultural Council for their Festivals & Projects initiative offered this winter. This grant will be used to bring a series of children's music performers to Carlisle children and families for outdoor front-lawn performances in June 2023.

The following three concerts will take place for Carlisle kids and their families this summer. I applaud Holly and Jenn for their above and beyond work securing multi-generational programming for Carlisle.

Plum Island Pans

<https://www.plumislandpans.com/>

Plum Island Pans will offer a family concert with four steel drum players. They will talk about the history of Steel drumming and how the steel drums are made.

Otha Day

<http://drumtothebeat.com/otha-day/>

"Otha facilitates fun and lively drum circle events from the deep belief that rhythm has the power to build community, promote well-being, and create joy". He will lead a hands-on drum circle with our participants.

Sulhina Trio

<https://www.sulinha.com/sulinha-for-kids>

"Sulinha's trio performs educational children's music influenced by traditional Brazilian music. The trio uses traditional instruments from their native country like Berimbau, Cuica, pandeiro and Surdo. Sulinha received the Parents Choice Award for her two previous albums."

Upcoming Select Board Dates of Interest

Tuesday-Wednesday, April 11-12, 2023: TA Military Training
Friday, April 14, 2023: TA Military Training
Monday, April 17, 2023: Town Hall Closed – Patriots Day
Tuesday, April 25, 2023: Regular Select Board Meeting
Monday, May 8, 2023: Town Meeting
Tuesday, May 9, 2023: Regular Select Board Meeting
Tuesday, May 16, 2023: Town Election
Monday-Friday, May 22-26, 2023: TA Vacation Time (Out of Office)
Monday, May 29, 2023: Town Hall Closed, Memorial Day

Future Agenda

See attached