**TA Update 10-01-18**

**Committees, etc.**

I got a complaint from an electrician about items being stored in the boiler room—currently both Council on Aging medical equipment for loaning to seniors and I believe some Festival of the Hills chairs—and we have been told previously by our building inspector that we have to clear it out and not use it as a storage room. I have notified both parties; since the Festival chairs are presumably Town chairs, as they predate the separation, I may have to get those moved myself. The Council on Aging had stored their materials in the Town Office basement before, and although the chair believes a shed near the Rose property would work, I have heard that it is not suitable for storage, so we’re still in the process of sorting that out.

**Departments**

Tax bills should have been received today, payable November 1—that is, on time. There was some last-minute rushing, as we had to wait for both the tax classification hearing and the results of the special Town Meeting before submitting our FY 2019 tax recap to the Department of Revenue. (The results did not affect the tax rate, but all spending must be accounted for.) It then took the DOR some time to certify the proposed tax rate, but the Treasurer, Tax Collector, and my Assistant were able to get the bills printed and mailed in time.

I have a correction to some information I’ve been interested in: a number of towns have hit their levy ceiling, the maximum amount they can levy according to Proposition 2½ . This does not mean they have tax rates of $25.00 on the thousand. It does mean that their ability to raise funds is strictly limited by the formula in proposition 2½, which is that percentage of growth, plus new growth, plus any extra state revenue. It also means they cannot pass an override. In FY 2018, according to DOR, 5 cities hit their levy ceiling, and 17 cities and towns approached it (7 were at 95% or more and 7 from 90-95%). If home values don’t rise while spending grows, these figures will grow.

I attended the fall conference of the Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association and brought back several items that will strengthen our system, one of which has already been implemented. The new Equal Pay law prohibits asking job applicants for prior earnings, so my hard-working assistant has removed that from our job application and re-posted a complaint version on the web site. Asking during job interviews is also prohibited, by the way.

We have received a $7,500 grant to update our hazard mitigation plan, which enables us to apply for FEMA hazard mitigation grants (such as work on Delabarre Ave.). Since we did not go forward with the grant-match article, I have asked the Finance Committee for a reserve fund transfer of $2,500. I intend to propose the grant match article again this spring.