*Town Administrator update*

**Town Meeting: Budgets and Warrant**

Budgets: Several departments are still working on their budgets: The Town Clerk (along with Elections) and the Assessors. The Town Clerk and Assessors budgets will have substantial changes based on providing back-up for their positions of responsibility. As per my budget memo, I have submitted level-funded budgets for rest of those that have not been submitted: the Moderator, Select Board, Reserve Fund, Town Audits, ZBA, AgCom, EMD, and Historical Commission.

For the Veterans account (543, under the “540 series” of Human Services), we are currently providing Chapter 115 benefits to only one veteran, at a cost of $4,284. I am planning to budget conservatively for two veterans in case someone getting benefits moves into the community, raising last year’s benefits budget of $5,500 to $8,568. I am also going to start including the cost of two grave flag medallions per year ($50) as part of the veterans’ graves flag sub-account, based on conversations with Don Graham, our Veterans’ Flag Officer.

As you know, Gov. Baker has signed the short-term rental legislation. We can now move forward with setting a “occupancy excise” rate for short-term rentals. We will need to make a policy decision regarding whether and how this would affect licensed and permitted B&Bs (it could be an incentive to get Airbnb units licensed and inspected). One question is whether we want to simply use the maximum rate set by the state—6%—or whether we need a broader conversation, perhaps including people who run bed-and-breakfast operations as well as those who use Airbnb or similar services. This could lead to a warrant article for the upcoming Town Meeting. For your easy reference, Town Meeting approved the article:

To see if the Town will vote to adopt M.G.L. Part I, Title IX, Chapter 64G, Section 3A and 830 CMR 64G.3A.1, **Local Option Room Occupancy Excise**, as amended, for short-term (under 90 days annually) rentals, and an Occupancy Excise on short-term rentals in excess of 90 days annually, not exceeding 6%, but that no excise shall be imposed if the total amount of the rent is less than fifteen dollars ($15.00), or take any action thereto.

**Departments**

I have signed up for the two remaining three-day procurement classes this spring for my MCPPO designation. One is at the beginning of February, one is at the end. They are in Lowell and Boston, and I plan to pay for my own accommodations rather than commute.

The Conway Grammar School water tank is now slated to be re-lined next summer. Since the tank was meant to be lined, I have an e-mail out asking whether MassTank can assure us that using an unlined water tank for five or six months will not compromise the integrity of the tank.

I have been discussing the possibility of a shared human resources function with the four Frontier towns and the Superintendent. Without objection, I’d like to apply as the lead town for a state “efficiency and regionalization” grant to study the possibility.

**Other**

The new FRCOG wage and salary survey is out if anyone would like to look at it. I have an electronic version I can send and one paper copy here; just let me know.