**TA Update**

**10/15/19**

**Committees**

The Open Space Committee has been working with the Highway Department around their needs and desires regarding mowing.

**Departments**

The first two Town Academy sessions went well. The first had a total of 20 attendees, of whom 11 were not there in an official capacity, which I believe is a very good number. The second had 17, 9 of whom were not there in an official capacity. This Thursday is Public Works, followed on October 24 with Public Safety—Police, Fire, and Ambulance.

We received an update on our OPEB liability. It is slightly down, from $1,490,637 to $1,469,196. If we continue to invest $20,000 per year into the fund, it would take about 75 years to reach that number. At a $50,000 annual investment rate, it would take about 30 years. The arguments in favor of funding OPEB at a greater pace include a better bond rating (OPEB has a weight of about 5% in a bonding agency’s rating). The main arguments against more OPEB funding is that Conway can easily pay as we go, and it ties up taxpayer money, though the savings could be a windfall in the case of a major change to the structure of health care funding.

The state Rural Policy Advisory Commission published its rural policy plan October 2, which is available on the FRCOG website; it documents rural disadvantages and proposes a State Office of Rural Policy. As of 2:30 p.m., the report had was still not been posted on the state’s Rural Policy Advisory Commission website, perhaps demonstrating the need for a state office.

I submitted a grant application for the Town Hall lift to the Massachusetts Office on Disability; we will need Town match of $50,000 to get $75,000 from the state, a 60/40 match ratio.

I also submitted a grant proposal for a Community Compact IT grant, for $76,250, for the Assessors, for both hardware and software that will make their work easier and provide more information available to the public.

We received the very first version of a new DOR-DLS long-range financial planning tool. It is quite complex, but DOR is more than willing to help walk the Town through the spreadsheets. I have contacted them to ask for proposed training dates.

FRCOG traffic counts for Elm St and Reed’s Bridge Road are in and I have forwarded them to the Police and Highway Departments. They will help show any future changes in traffic patterns around the center of town.

A recent article in Recorder on Community Development Block Grants did not mention the one Conway participates in, which is through the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority; to set the record straight Conway has assisted, and continues to assist, low- and moderate-income homeowners in need of housing rehabilitation.