

January 16th & 22nd, 2024 Town Administrator Update:

Departments/Committees

I was involved in multiple department budget meetings all last week with a few more in the next week or two. So far requests are coming in mostly level funded, with increases due to postage increases or equipment/software cost increases.

The Public Buildings committee: there was a delay in going out to bid as the team gathers more information on specifications. We hope to have the bid out again at the end of January which would likely make a March 1st deadline for bids.

Accounting: The FRCOG let the seven towns who use accounting services through the COG know that costs would be going up for FY25. Our town accountant works for both Conway and Buckland, so Heather Butler and I have been speaking with Mike Koceila about his willingness to continue on as the accountant for each of our towns but be paid directly instead of through the COG. Mike has indicated his willingness and Jan and I have been working on details of accounting contract with Mike Koceila to put forth to the selectboard in the near future.

Miscellaneous

I attended a two hour Floodplain Administrator training offered through the COG which was led by state officials and also watched the recommended FEMA training video.

Phil and I met with Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer, Oleander Stone and Kristen Eleckho to discuss the recent flood events in Conway and give input on how the state can best help in these situations, for instance in allowing municipalities to 'build back better' instead of just to prior conditions.

I have been invited to join the new Community Climate Advisory Council at EEA, described as follows:

The Community Climate Advisory Council is a group of engagement experts from municipalities, regional planning agencies and community organizations across the state who are advancing local climate action and will help support the EEA Climate team in two distinct ways. The first is to help provide feedback on a variety of initiatives the climate team is working on. These topics could include:

- Developing Climate Resilience Metrics
- Climate Team Environmental Justice Strategy
- MVP Action Grant 2.0
- Updating Resilient Mass Resource Database
- Resilience Playbook
- Climate Leaders Program (Green Communities)
- Municipal Energy Assistance Grants
- Regional Energy Planning Assistance Grants

Second, the Community Climate Advisory Council will provide input on the EEA Climate Team's equitable engagement strategy. The Advisory Council will reflect on who are the voices that need to be centered in communicating about climate and what are some innovative strategies that we can use to gather this feedback and build reciprocal relationships. Examples of guiding questions the Advisory Council could hold are;

- What are key barriers that communities face in climate planning and action, and how can state programs better address these barriers and build local capacity?

- How can the state keep networks informed of climate initiatives, support equitable resource distribution, and build community power to support informed decision making?
- How do we better guarantee that the multitude of voices that comprise our communities are heard and considered when developing climate policy and programs?

I have signed up for FY25 Inland Dredging Pilot Round to find out more about this potential for the Conway Station Road dam.

“The Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) is pleased to announce the opening of the FY25 Inland Dredging Pilot Round of the Massachusetts Dredging Program. This round offers final design and construction grants to Massachusetts municipalities to support dredging of freshwater lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and drinking water reservoirs, as well as dredging required for the removal of municipal dams.”

I included pictures of the Conway flag to seek the board’s opinion about having an actual flag made for the town to fly on the pole, perhaps in front of town offices and also one for parades.