

## May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Town Administrator Update

### Boards & Committees

**Board of Assessors:** Chief Bates and I would like to request of the BOA that they change their policy and allow property owner names to be listed on the GIS map for Conway. This information is already available on other apps as well as on the town website through the property tax information. RRG is replacing Steven KaCey and we should know later this week who our new administrative assessor will be.

**Personnel:** Phyllis Craine, Alan Singer and I met with EANE to go over their comments on the town's personnel handbook. There were a lot of good suggestions, and overall I was very pleased to see that no new sections were suggested, so Conway has been providing proper information which has now been updated. Phyllis will be incorporating Personnel's comments into the draft and then we will send the draft to town counsel. Once that's done the cleaned up copy will be brought to the Selectboard for discussion and adoption.

### Departments

**Highway:** Work has begun on Shelburne Falls Road. Other roads slated for repairs this season are: Baptist Hill, Cemetery, Delabarre, Elm, Ives, Manning, Orchard, Parsons, Reeds Bridge and Upper Baptist.

**Town Clerk:** Vote by mail ballots - mailing will begin as soon they are in from the printer and should be completed by the end of next week.

### Grants updates

**LifePath grants:** I found out through an acquaintance about [Valley Neighbors](#), which is a non-profit aimed at helping people stay in their homes. It serves Whately, Sunderland and Deerfield and was started in 2018. Perhaps Conway could look into the possibility of joining? I have reached out to them to find out about possibilities.

### Miscellaneous

The same acquaintance who told me about Valley Neighbors also told me about an app called '[Seeing AI](#)'. When you open the app, it turns on a light and reads whatever is in front of it. I think this could be incredibly useful for many folks and will mention it in my next Notes from the Town Administrator.

On Saturday I attended the Rural and Western Mass conference in Holyoke. We had a trainer talk to us about how to '[Save Your Town](#)' by creating an 'idea friendly' approach which allows people to follow ideas which motivate them and spur them to action. Their three recommended steps are to 1) gather your crowd, 2) build connections and 3) take small steps. This is recommended as an alternative to the usual form a committee, develop a report, put the report on the shelf approach. We also had a legislative update from MMA, Sen. Paul Mark and Rep. Aaron Saunders. One point made is that the state budget is \$61.4 B, and federal funds make up \$15 B of that. Also, the advice about the Chapter 70 formula is not to try to change the formula: given that Boston has 19 reps it's likely that any changes would not be in our favor. Rather they are trying to push for additions such as rural school aid which are targeted specifically to our needs. There was also a presentation on regionalizing EMS services.