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## REPORT OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

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**TO:** SELECT BOARD  
**FROM:** JACQUI BEEBE, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR  
**SUBJECT:** TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT  
**DATE:** JANUARY 24, 2022



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### UPDATES

#### COVID Home Test Kits

- **The Town was able to procure a pallet (15,120) COVID home test kits** under a special procurement the state offered to the municipalities. Shana handled the procurement and we offered test kits to each Outer Cape Town. Provincetown bought 4,000, Truro 3,500, Wellfleet 1,620 and we retained 6,000. They arrived on January 11 and distributions began immediately in all the Towns. Eastham gave away 2000 tests on Saturday 1/15 at Little Creek parking area. We had over 20 staff (Health, Police, Fire, DPW and Administration) as well as two Select Board members, staff spouses, and a couple of community volunteers. It was an amazing and efficient operation from procurement to distribution. Really proof of an amazing team from the Select Board down. Thank you!
- **The second distribution date was Friday 1/22 from 12-2 pm same location.**
- **The Board of Health has also continued the Town mask mandate to February 24, 2022**

#### BUDGET

- **The Finance Committee will be reviewing Departmental Budgets** and we would like to invite Board members to attend if you would like. Laurie can post any as joint meetings, if we can get a count at least 3 days prior. Of special note is March 16, where all school budgets will be discussed. Meetings are on the following dates, all beginning at 5 pm:
  - February 2: Library, Recreation, COA, Health
  - February 9: Community Development & Fire
  - February 16: Police & Dispatch
  - February 23: DPW, Highway, Natural Resources, Sanitation, Maintenance & Water Enterprise Fund
  - March 2: CPA Articles
  - March 16: All school budgets

## LEGAL

- **The Town of Eastham opted into the Opioid Litigation from the start of the lawsuits in 2018.** At this time, we do not have any idea of what the settlement may be but believe it will be modest. Currently, the settling defendants will have until February 25, 2022, to review the number of participating local governments to determine if a critical mass has been reached to continue forward with the settlements. So, we will have another update most likely in March.
- **Tax Takings-** We have sent several properties to our Attorney's to begin the legal process of taking. So far, the notice given has resulted in payments for several delinquent tax bills.

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

- **Water**
  - **We are well underway with contract 2C,** which includes three water main contracts. The contracts are roughly 70% complete, with remaining work on dirt roads continuing this winter and paving of all roads in the spring.
  - **Contract 2D** which includes the new well off of Nauset Road and two water main contracts will go out to bid this spring for construction starting in fall of 2022.
  - **The water system construction project, Eastham's largest project, will start its eighth year of construction in July 2022.** So far, the Town has won five awards for the design and construction and one award for operations (water quality). We are excessively proud of this project, as in the beginning, there was little faith that Eastham had the capability to manage such a huge project. I have been with the project from the beginning of construction and have been privileged to work with such a talented internal (Police, Fire, DPW, Health, Administration & Finance) team, as well as the external team of engineers from Environmental Partners Group that has executed the construction so brilliantly. It has been an enormous amount of work, planning and executing each step, but well worth the effort for our community now and into the future. The project continues to be on/ahead of schedule and trending consistently under the budget of appropriations, now by roughly 12 million dollars.
  - **Water Operations-** We currently have 1,580 customers with 200 applications pending.

## SOLAR PROJECTS

- At your next meeting, Rich Bienvenue will present detail, including maps, for the solar projects and review the proposed contract terms.

## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

### Community Development

- **North Eastham Village Center Master Plan** - The Request for Proposals (RFP) process for the North Eastham Village Center Master Plan has concluded and we have selected consultant team from Union Studio to work with us on this important project. The team brings a blend of expertise in architecture, construction, site use planning, and housing, among other areas. In their application, they described themselves as, “a mission-based firm that is passionate about the design of timeless places that bring together housing options for all, economic vibrancy, recreational opportunities and environmental sustainability.” In the interviews with our panel, it was obvious that they were the most cohesive and experienced team and would be the perfect partners for this exciting project. The North Eastham Village Master Plan will focus on the T-Time and Town Center Plaza properties, with the goal of identifying site use options to improve walkability, aesthetics, and business opportunity in the North Eastham area. The project will be guided by the T-Time Committee's recommendations as well as additional community input, resident needs, and Town budget realities. The final Master Plan is expected to be completed by the end of 2022 and will include site development plans for T-Time and Town Center Plaza, conceptual designs and renderings, a detailed cost estimate for build-out, and a recommended timeline and phasing strategy. We are executing a contract now and expect to have our first meeting with the new team in February.
- **Route 6/Governor Prence Signal Work**-The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) had a crew in Eastham the week of January 10<sup>th</sup> to remove an overhead flashing light at the intersection of Governor Prence Rd. and Route 6. This flashing light is separate from the Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (a.k.a. HAWK signal) installed in August of 2020. The removal of the redundant flashing light is the first in a series of improvements that Mass DOT will make to address Town safety concerns and motorist confusion related to the Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon at this intersection. Mass DOT has agreed to take ownership of the signal and crossing, and will be installing new signage, including a radar speed sign, to better alert motorists to slow down as they approach the crossing. All work is expected to be complete by Memorial Day of this year.
- **Outdoor Dining Bylaw** -Staff from Community Development, Police, Fire, Health, and Building Inspections are working to develop local regulations for outdoor dining that will replace the temporary outdoor dining permit used the last two summer seasons. Our current temporary permit was made possible through special COVID-specific state authorization, which is due to expire in April. Without local regulations, our restaurants with temporary outdoor dining permits would not be able to keep their outdoor dining spaces – and we will not be able to permit new areas for the upcoming summer season. With the ongoing impacts of COVID on our local

businesses, this is a critical and straightforward step the Town can take to provide restaurants with more flexibility and options to ensure public safety and comfort. Outdoor Dining regulations are also aligned with Eastham's Strategic Plan goal to "support, expand, and sustain local businesses" through coordinated and streamlined permitting processes (Chapter 2, Additional Strategy 2). Draft regulations are due to be reviewed by the Planning Board in the coming months, after which they would be placed on the warrant for voter consideration at this year's Town Meeting.

- **Business Support/ Exterior Improvement Program**-In addition to the regulatory support for businesses proposed through the Outdoor Dining Bylaw, Town staff are working on details for an **Exterior Improvement Program, which would provide funding for eligible external improvements to business properties in Eastham.** This program concept was presented to the Board in October as part of Eastham's Local Rapid Recovery Plan (available via the State's website at [Rapid Recovery Program \(RRP\) Final Community Plans | Mass.gov](#)), and is a key component of the Business Support, Recovery, and Resiliency Program identified for implementation in the Select Board's 2021-22 Goals. The initial pilot year of this program would support improvements - such as exterior painting, siding, landscaping, or outdoor dining upgrades - for up to four businesses. Participating businesses would be required to contribute 20% of the total project cost. It is anticipated that COVID relief funding, for example through ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act), could cover Town costs for this program, as it would help address negative economic impacts of COVID on small businesses.
- **Strategic Plan Update**-Town staff across all departments are helping to compile the annual update for Eastham's 5-Year Strategic Plan. This annual process is necessary to keep the plan current and track our progress on the Town's major goals and objectives. The annual update captures the status of all actions, metrics, and ongoing initiatives outlined in the plan, and will result in an updated Strategic Plan document, to be shared via the Town website, and an FY21 Community Update publication, which will be included as an insert in the Town Meeting warrant.
- **Housing Update**
  - The Town has taken possession of both properties on State Highway acquired by tax title taking. We are completing an assessment of both units, which we will retain for affordable/workforce housing. New Housing Coordinator Rachel Butler will manage this project.
  - The Town has requested CPA funds to pay the debt service on the two properties that are under contract for purchase. We have requested \$25,000 per year in debt service for 580 Massasoit under the Historic Preservation category, and \$45,000 per year for the purchase of 2550 State Highway for affordable housing.

## **Council on Aging**

- **Strategic Plan/Needs Assessment-** We have just signed a contract with the University of Massachusetts Boston Gerontology Department to do the Needs Assessment for the Council on Aging, which will include surveys and community outreach to determine what the needs of the community are for programs and services. The COA Director & Board & will present to the Select Board prior to the kick-off of this community initiative.
- **Building Assessment-**The Architectural firm of K&K has been hired to complete an assessment of the current Senior Center on Nauset Road and make recommendations.

## **Fire Department**

- The Fire Department just received a **\$15,500 grant to upgrade our Training and Operations software.**
- The Department was able to acquire a **free pickup truck for the DPW through the US Forestry Service “Surplus equipment program”.**