



TOWN OF IPSWICH
25 Green Street
IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS 01938

Stephen Crane
Town Manager

p: (978) 356-6609
f: (978) 356-6616

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Members of the Select Board
FROM: Stephen Crane, Town Manager
Mary Gallivan, Assistant Town Manager
DATE: December 5, 2022
RE: Town Manager Report

Holiday Hours for Town Hall

- Friday, December 23 – Town Hall Closed – Christmas Eve
- Monday December 26 – Town Hall Closed – Christmas Holiday Observation
- Tuesday, December 27 – Town Hall Closes at 4:00PM

Town Clerk

The Town Clerks Office will need to close at noon on Tuesday, December 6 and all day Wednesday, December 7 for the recount of the Representative in General Court race. The recount will be in the Town Hall Gym starting at 9AM on December 7.

Tax Rate

The FY 23 tax rate was certified on November 30 by the Bureau of Accounts at \$12.23. The Tax rate has been declining in recent years: FY 20=14.02, FY 21=13.22, FY 22=12.86. The values of properties have steadily increased with new growth during this same time so, although the tax rate has decreased, the average tax bill increased because of the rise in property values.

Public Safety Building

On November 23, the Public Safety Building Committee (PSBC) working group received the construction cost estimates for the current schematic design; one estimate prepared for the architect and one for the owner's project manager (OPM). Unsurprisingly, the impacts of inflation are abundantly clear in the cost estimates: the estimates were around \$26,500,000 and \$27,500,000; the budgeted amount is \$22,000,000. While many projects have been anecdotally reported to be 30% higher than just a year ago, not all aspects of construction have increased at the same rate of inflation. For example, mechanical costs (mostly heating and cooling systems) are 50% higher than a similar fire station that was bid in March of this year. The design team will work with the OPM will meet to reconcile the differences in the estimates and present the findings to the PSBC.

As a result of the estimates, the working group is actively engaged in simplifying the design even further than has been done in past efforts to reduce cost. The primary goal remains building a project that will meet the public safety needs of Ipswich for many years to come but the cost pressures, which are beyond the Committee's control, will likely result in some very difficult decisions. Moreover, simplifying the building layout may come at the expense of the most efficient use of the site. The PSBC will continue to

work to balance the essential public safety needs of the community with the cost of the project and will provide updates as this process continues.

Assistant Town Manager

The position of Assistant Town Manager/HR Director has been created and HR Director Mary Gallivan has been promoted to it. This decision is based on several factors including the size and complexity of the organization, the growing needs and opportunities for Town services, and the skills and experience Mary demonstrated during her tenure as Interim Town Manager. The position will continue to be responsible for the current duties of human resources, payroll, and benefits. As Assistant Town Manager, Mary will also have additional responsibilities shadowing those of the Town Manager including assisting with budgeting, working on establishing goals, objectives and procedures for Town departments, and participating in broader town-wide planning and special projects.

Her salary will be increasing from \$86,700 to \$109,000 to reflect the increased work load and extra time she will be dedicating to this additional role. This salary adjustment was reached by researching comparable communities with the same role and also comparing it to other Ipswich department directors. The effective date is December 1, 2022 and the job description is attached.

Health Department

To help support residents and business operators, the Public Health Department wants to announce the continued availability of free at-home COVID-19 test kits. The tests can be completed at home, results are available in 15 minutes and samples do not need to go to a laboratory. The tests are for any individual regardless of vaccination status or whether they have symptoms. The at-home rapid antigen tests from iHealth Labs may be picked up at Ipswich Town Hall from the Public Health Department during Town Hall operating hours. The test kits have an expiration date that has been extended from what is printed on the box and are currently approved for use through January 2023 and further extensions are possible. Individuals can look up new expiration dates and check for possible additional extensions at ihealthlabs.com/pages/news.

Fire Department

Members of the Northeast MA Technical Rescue Team were in Ipswich on November 28 and 29 at Miles River Sand and Gravel (MSRG) training on trench collapse rescue. The team is comprised of approximately 80 firefighters from Essex County and the North Shore. These firefighters work full time for municipalities, and respond (many times off-duty) when the Team is activated for a rescue. They train twice a month to keep their skills sharp. They are experts in confined space rescue, high-angle and low angle rope rescue, wide-area search, structural collapse, and trench rescue. Ipswich FD is fortunate to have four members on the Tech Team. The team is thankful to MRSG for hosting the training at their facility at no cost.



Planning Department

Ethan Parsons has tendered his resignation as Director of Planning and Development effective January 10 to pursue an opportunity to the Commonwealth. His knowledge and commitment will be difficult to replace.

Boards/Committees

I met with members of the Climate and Resiliency Committee to discuss HVAC options for the public safety building amongst other sustainability topics. As noted above, I continue to attend the Public Safety Building Working Group and Committee meetings and also participated in a meeting of the Public Safety Reuse Committee.

Invitation

