



To: Town Council  
Fr: Paul Bockelman  
Town Manager  
Dt: June 30, 2019  
Re: Town Manager Report for July 1, 2019

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### **Town Manager Update:**

- Coffee with Town Manager: The last Cuppa Joe with Paul was on June 14<sup>th</sup> at Jakes at the Mill with Assistant Town Manager David Ziomek. The next one will be on July 12<sup>th</sup> with location and guest to be determined.
- Appointments:
  - I have referred my appointments for the Historical Commission, Human Rights Commission, LSSE Commission, Local Historic District Commission, Affordable Housing Trust, and Public Shade Tree Committee to the Town Council.
  - I have appointed Town Clerk Management Assistant Athena O’Keeffe as the Temporary Clerk of the Council for period beginning July 1, 2019 in accordance with Section 3.3(b) of the Amherst Home Rule Charter. She will serve until the position of Clerk of the Council is filled by the Town Council in accordance with Section 2.9(a) of the Charter.
  - I have appointed Assistant Town Clerk Sue Audette to be the Temporary Town Clerk in accordance with Section 3.3(b) of the Amherst Home Rule Charter. She will serve as the Temporary Town Clerk for period beginning July 1, 2019 until the position is filled.
  - I have appointed Public Health Director Julie Federman to be the Temporary Senior Center Director in accordance with Section 3.3(b) of the Amherst Home Rule Charter. She will serve as the Temporary Senior Center Director beginning June 29, 2019 until the position is filled.
- Community Participation Officers (CPOs):
  - CPOs participated/organized the following community building events:
    - Juneteenth Celebration – Jones Library on June 19<sup>th</sup>
    - Flag raising to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stonewall uprising on June 28<sup>th</sup>.
    - Multiple outreach meetings and door-to-door discussions for community projects including an outdoor information session on June 29<sup>th</sup>.
    - The annual reading of Frederick Douglass’ speech, “The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro” on July 5<sup>th</sup> at the Jones Library.
  - CPOs have been attending meetings of the Residents’ Advisory Committee.

- Town Hall and Workplaces:
  - The Town's Safety Committee continues to focus its efforts to ensure Town staff are safe in their work areas. Some of the steps we have taken include regular fire/evacuation drills, threat trainings, wound management, and others.
  - The Police Department is prepared to do trainings for the Town Council and other boards and committees at a time that is convenient for the Council.
  - The Police Chief will be conducting an assessment of public areas of Town Hall and the Bangs Community Center. We will use this information to make further improvements.
- Town-Gown:
  - Staff are meeting internally and with representatives of the University on a renewal of the Strategic Partnership Agreement negotiations. This will not be completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>, so we are discussing an extension with the University.
- Economic Development: The Economic Development Director is leading a discussion among staff to determine steps the Town can take to become, and be perceived as, business-friendly.
- Public Safety:
  - Police will have added patrols during the Independence Day festivities. The Town of Hadley and State Police will closed down Route 116, a popular viewing spot for the fireworks in past years. This will likely cause additional traffic congestion. Added police will be on duty to assist with traffic control.
  - The Police Department has conducted its sergeant's test and I will be interviewing the six candidates this week who have scored the highest.
  - We have hired three police officers who will start at the Police Academy on July 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - Three new firefighters will be sworn in on July 1<sup>st</sup>. This will help address some of the staffing issues that occur whenever there are new hires that need to be trained and when there is an unexpected resignation or leave of absence.
- Human Resources:
  - Town Clerk and Clerk to the Council Margaret Nartowicz resigned effective June 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - I appointed Sue Audette to serve as Temporary Town Clerk and Athena O'Keeffe to serve as Temporary Clerk to the Council in accordance with Section 3.3(b) of the Town Charter.
  - Director of Senior Services Nancy Pagano retired at the end of the month after 47 (!!!) years of service to the Town. I have appointed Health Director Julie Federman to serve as Temporary Director of Senior Services until a permanent replacement is hired.
  - Principal Assessor David Burgess will retire in two weeks. He will return to work part-time post-retirement. This is a great benefit to the Town.
- Public Works:
  - The Town's annual Water Quality Report has been released. It is a very interesting report – did you know that five gallons of water costs about a penny? The brochure type report can be found here: <https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/47640/2018-Water-Quality-Report>
  - Work on the multi-use path on East Hadley Road continues. One of the goals is to create a safe route for users to get to the newly renovated Groff Park.
  - Assistant Superintendent Amy Rusiecki graduated from the MMA-Suffolk University Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management program. This 25-week program covers a broad range of municipal issues. The graduation speaker was former Representative Ellen Story and the event was featured in the June edition of the MMA publication The Beacon.

- The Town and its Complete Streets policy was featured in the June edition of the MMA publication, The Beacon. The Town was recognized for its eighth place finish in the National Complete Streets Coalition’s ranking of the best local “complete streets” policies of 2018.
- Community Services:
  - LSSE:
    - Independence Day Fireworks will bring a lot of changes. Due to construction behind the stadium at the University, the viewing area has been moved to south of the stadium. LSSE, Police, Fire, and the University are reviewing traffic plans. LSSE is exploring the option of a beer garden that would be segregated from the viewing area but open to the public. It would be located in the Town of Hadley, so permits will be sought from that town. The University is supportive of this effort. It will be managed much like the beer garden at the Taste of Amherst.
    - Outreach: Special efforts to create programming in the community continues.
    - The Town’s two outdoor pools are open for business!
  - Senior Center: The retirement reception for Director Nancy Pagano was held on June 14<sup>th</sup> and was attended by well over 100 people.
  - Health Department: The Health Director has taken a leadership role in the search for a new Director of Senior Services and will be supportive during the transition. I have named her to be the Temporary Director of Senior Services.
- Conservation and Development:
  - Flood Mapping Project: The Town is updating its Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), a process that has been going on for several years now. Maps have been prepared by the Town’s consultant, AECOM. A public meeting was held on June 25<sup>th</sup> and about twenty people attended. The Town will continue to accept public comments until July 18<sup>th</sup>. After the public comments, any changes will be published which will be followed by a 90-day appeal period, ending in mid-October. The Town Council, at that point, will be asked to review and adopt maps within six months (April 2020). If the maps are approved, the Zoning Bylaw and Wetlands Bylaw will need to be amended. Material can be found on the Town’s website here: <https://www.amherstma.gov/2261/FIRM-Revision-Project---2019-Update>
  - Kendrick Park Playground: A public meeting was held on June 27<sup>th</sup>, which was attended by about 20 people. The purpose of the meeting was to seek public input on ideas for a playground in the Park, which was envisioned in the original Kendrick Park study. The public outreach was a precursor to the Town applying for a PARC grant from the state in mid-July.
  - 133-143 South East Street: The owner has applied for Site Plan Review approval from the Planning Board for a mixed-use building behind Florence Savings Bank in East Amherst. The proposal calls for 62 apartments, 68 parking spaces, and some retail space on the ground floor. There would need to be some improvements to town right-of-way, which will need to be reviewed and approved by Town Council. There are also some issues with trees that the owner is hoping to remove that are on Town property. The Planning Board’s public hearing is scheduled for July 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - MVP: In 2018, the Town received a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Planning Grant to develop ways to build community resilience in the Town. Working with a consultant, the Town brought together a core team of Town staff to plan the Community Resilience Building Workshops; develop maps and reference materials; facilitate the two

half-day workshops; and develop a package materials and summary report. The workshops were attended by a range of Town staff, representatives from key institutions, organizations, and businesses, as well as town members invested in community resilience. In addition to focusing on a range of infrastructural and environmental concerns, the group emphasized the importance of rethinking models of Town and community engagement to address longstanding inequities and make participation more inclusive, accessible, and relationship-focused. Staff is now working with community members on designing a set of public follow-up meetings as a way to pave the way for meaningful collaboration around building community resilience. A copy of the report will be available in the near future.

**Delegated Authority** (June monthly report will be presented in the next report):

- Short-Term Event Uses of Town Commons: None
- Short-Term Parking Requests: None
- Short-Term Road or Sidewalk Closures: None

**Major Capital Projects:**

- North Common Restoration/Main Street Parking Lot: On hold.
- Groff Park: Construction work continues and we are still targeting opening this summer.
- DPW/Fire: Developing options for a site for the DPW.
- Schools: Awaiting word from the MSBA, which is due in December.
- Library: The Trustees of the Jones Library received a bequest of \$273,000 and the Trustees voted to use the funds for the building project.

**Project Update:**

- East Street School: With the Council's vote on the East Street School, we are preparing a Request For Proposals, which is being reviewed and should be ready to be released this month.
- Station Road Bridge: The temporary bridge has been purchased and delivered. DPW has done the preparation work including the pouring of concrete footings to support the bridge. The concrete has to set before further work can continue. We are awaiting final approval from the State Department of Transportation.
- Downtown Parking: The public meeting in June was postponed due to poor timing and illness. It will be rescheduled. The issue will likely come to the Town Council after Labor Day.
- Puffer's Pond Parking and State Street Changes: Work on the new road configuration on State Street is complete. DPW did a good job of paving, lining, and posting the road. Police have been conducting periodic patrols to ensure compliance.
- North Amherst Library: No developments.
- Downtown Recreation Working Group: The Regional School Committee held a meeting on this topic on June 25<sup>th</sup>. The final report of the Group can be found here:
- Dog Park: The proposal is being reviewed by the Planning Board and is on the agenda for the Town Council for an easement on the Town public way.
- Solar on the Landfill: No updates.
- Medical Marijuana: No updates.
- Recreational Marijuana:

- Next round for retail were announced in April with proposals due by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Utilizing the same process, we intend to be making decisions in July.
- The cultivation facility on Belchertown Road is moving forward with the applicant formally purchasing the land.

### **Finances and Budget:**

- Amherst Community Television: The Council President and Councilor Steinberg and I met with Amherst Community Television to discuss cable casting and recording Town Council meetings and committee meetings. We will be adjusting the contract to take into consideration the change in government.
- FY19 Budget: FY19 will be closed with a balanced budget.
- FY20 Budget: All budget requests have been acted on by the Town Council. Budget information has been entered into the system and we are ready to launch our new fiscal year.

### **Upcoming Meetings and Events:**

- July 4<sup>th</sup> – Independence Day Holiday
- July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 p.m. – Town Council meeting
- August 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. – Town Council meeting
- August 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. – Town Council meeting
- September 2<sup>nd</sup> – Labor Day Holiday

### **Other events:**

- July 18 – BID Summer concert series
- July 25 – BID Summer concert series
- July 26 – Community Band concert
- August 1 – BID Summer concert series
- August 8 – BID Summer concert series
- August 16 – Community Band concert
- August 27 – First Day Celebration
- September 19 – BID Block Party