



To: Town Council
Fr: Paul Bockelman
Town Manager
Dt: February 25, 2022
Re: Town Manager Report for February 28, 2022

All Town Manager Reports are available on the Town's website here:
<https://www.amherstma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=240>

COVID-19

- Update from the Health Director and Town Manager:
 - The Town of Amherst, with our surrounding communities, has managed the pandemic remarkably well since the first case here in March, 22, 2020. With the continuous introduction of new information, we have had to become comfortable with assessing and changing our mitigation strategies. Some tools were discovered to be ineffective (cleaning grocery bags) and some have stayed steady and effective especially when layered – social distancing, testing, mask-wearing. We now can add ventilation, good quality masks worn properly, and antiviral medication to our methods. But vaccination remains our most important tool and Amherst's vaccine rate are calculated to be 88% for fully vaccinated, this high number is in part thanks to UMass Amherst student's vaccine rate of 97.8% and Amherst College at 99%.
 - Now, as we see the Hampshire County and State data dramatically subsiding, our numbers have taken an upward bump. With the large concentration of college students, and the comprehensive testing requirements at the colleges and University, Amherst is unique in the number of Town residents who are being tested on a regular basis. As expected, this extensive testing reveals mild or asymptomatic cases that otherwise might not be reported.
 - Amherst's recent increase, and previous numbers since early February, has consistently shown that approximately 84% of the cases fall into the 17 – 22 year-old age group, and 2 – 5% are in the 23 – 27 year-old age group. Contact tracers report that transmission has reflected the social activities of these age groups, such as clubs, sports and small gatherings. In general, these types of groupings suggest less community spread and more behavior related spread. The numbers in other age groups has been < 1.2% and has not wavered.

- We have aligned ourselves with Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the State-level are public health experts who draw knowledge from, and base policy on, scientific consensus. We, as a Town, balance their guidance with our unique community situation. In two weeks, on March 10th, the Board of Health will meet to interpret COVID statistics and decision points. Updated data will be reviewed at that meeting and public health strategies will be decided.
- The Town updates the public dashboard daily during the week, so please feel free to check here <https://www.amherstcovid19.org/home>
- The Town has links to the websites of all three institutions of higher education here: <https://www.amherstcovid19.org/schools>
- **Bangs Community Center**: The Bangs Community Center reopened its doors last week so that people can access Town services more easily. The building will observe basic business hours so residents and others can access the Senior Center and Health Department directly.

University/College Relations

- **University of Massachusetts**:
 - Strategic Partnership Agreement: Active discussions with the University for a Successor Strategic Partnership Agreement continue.
- **Amherst College**:
 - Strategic Partnership Agreement: Active discussions for a Strategic Partnership Agreement with the College continue.
- **Hampshire College**:
 - Strategic Partnership Agreement: Active discussions with the College about its needs and the Town's needs continue as the College reviews its options for its assets. A discussion on a Strategic Partnership Agreement with the College is initiating.

Racial Equity

- **Reparations**:
 - The Town has contracted with the Economic and Public Policy Research group (EPPR) at the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI) to help provide basic demographic and geographic data and relevant maps on the African-American/Black population in the Town. This work will begin in mid-March and end several weeks later.
- **Community Responders Program**: See attached report.
 - Harvard JFK School:
 - The Town is participating in the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government's Government Performance Lab Community of Practice meetings.
 - The Town's consultant's report [The Amherst Community Responder Report](#) was featured at the last meeting. Prepared by Law Enforcement Action Partnership in November of 2021 the report was shared by the Town with the larger Community of Practice group. Of particular interest to the group was the fact that, "It contains a robust set of recommendations about call types for alternative response, training and staffing. Relevant to our last session, the report notably contains an analysis for staffing needs utilizing call volume data by day/time. It also contains sample evaluation questions for the Amherst pilot." It was noted by the organizers that, "It's so comprehensive and the recommendations around staffing and training are

some of the most robust I've seen thus far in a preliminary analysis." Kudos to the Community Safety Working Group and our Implementation Team for their hard work.

- The next session is about community involvement and we expect to hear from peer governments who will share examples of how they have engaged the community in planning and implementation of alternative response models.
- DEI Department:
 - The interview team has been established and will be reviewing candidates for the DEI Director.
- CSSJC: Interviews for the Community Safety and Social Justice Committee are now scheduled. I asked the same group that interviewed for the AHRA and the CSWG to interview applicants for the CCSJC. They are Barbara Love, Sid Ferreira, and Keisha Dennis. This group will work with me to determine if the applicant pool is sufficient to move forward with interviews.
- Advocacy: With many other municipal managers and mayors, I will be participating in a virtual summit to combat antisemitism in Massachusetts communities. The summit is sponsored by: Lappin Foundation, the Foundation to Combat Anti-Semitism, ADL New England, AJC New England, Teen Antisemitism Task Force, and Holocaust Legacy Foundation.
- CSWG Recommendations: See update at the end of this report.

Outreach

- ICMA Conference: I and Police Captain Gabe Ting will be speaking at the International City Management Association (ICMA) Regional conference on April 7th. Out session topic is titled: "Organizational Change in Policing"
- Elementary School Building:
 - Website: The Elementary School Building Committee website can be found here: <https://www.amherst-school-project.com/>
 - Community Forum: Community forums will be held virtually on **March 2nd** at 6:30 p.m.
- Community Chats: A Community Chat was held on February 17th. The Chat focused on the Elementary School Building project with guests ESBC chair Cathy Schoen and School Committee chair Allison McDonald. A recording of the session can be found here: [Community Chat Link](#)
- Translation Services: The Town received a grant of \$80,000 for "Translation, Civic Engagement, and Participation" efforts by the Town. These are funds that were secured by our State Representative and State Senator in the State budget. The purpose of the funds is to "support translation services, promote engagement and inclusion, and facilitate participation in civic activities for BIPOC and ESL communities." The Community Participation Officers are developing a plan with the Finance Director for the allocation of these funds.
- Walking Challenge: The Town joined Walking Challenge with 3 Other Amherst Communities in February.
 - The Town of Amherst was challenged by other Amherst municipalities in New York, New Hampshire, and Nova Scotia to a friendly competition. Initiated in 2021 by the Town of Amherst, Nova Scotia in an attempt to keep people active during the winter weary second month of the year, each town will ask their community members to help them be the Amherst with the most miles at the end of February.

- At the end of the month, the number of miles each community travels will be added up and the winner will be determined on a miles per capita basis.
- Recordings of Meetings:
 - We have established a system to ensure that all meetings that have been recorded on Zoom are uploaded to the web in a timely manner. Every Friday, I.T. staff will upload all meetings from the previous week to the Town's YouTube channel.
 - In 2021, our most popular playlists were (note: Town Council meetings are recorded and managed by Amherst Media):
 - Elementary School Building Committee
 - Community Chats
 - Community Safety Working Group
 - Planning Board
 - Zoning Board of Appeals
 - So far in 2022, our most popular playlists have been:
 - Elementary School Building Committee
 - African Heritage Reparation Assembly
 - Planning Board
 - Jones Library Building Committee
 - Board of Health

In the Wings

- Water Regulations: Updated and revised water regulations are prepared and will be presented to the Town Council on Monday.
- Sewer Regulations: Updated and revised sewer regulations are being prepared and will be scheduled to be presented to the Town Council in March.

Department Updates

- Finance:
 - ARPA Update:
 - Agreement with the Amherst Survival Center for \$150,000 over three years to continue their grocery delivery program for Amherst residents adversely affected by the pandemic that was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds will help the Survival Center deliver monthly groceries to 600-800 Amherst residents of low- and moderate-income or that experienced unemployment or food insecurity due to the pandemic, increase the quantity of food to a full two weeks of groceries to all households, expand diversity of food options to provide more culturally appropriate food, and expand the prevalence of doorstep delivery routes to accommodate more locations and schedules.
 - Agreement with Amherst Business Improvement District for \$100,000 for the following:
 - Startup Grants: \$40,000 of the funds will be allocated as startup grants for new businesses. The BID will advertise the availability of these funds and develop an online form for submissions. BID staff will review submissions and make awards. The maximum grant will be \$10,000 per business.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that they are an individual in need of economic assistance due to unemployment, or that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted their ability to start a business, such as through difficulty accessing credit, loss of a funding source, or increased startup costs, and how the funds will directly contribute to the establishment of the business within six months.

- Growth Grants: \$25,000 will be reserved for growth grants to existing businesses. The BID will advertise the availability of these funds and develop an online form for submissions. The BID will oversee the process to review submissions and make awards. The maximum grant will be \$5,000 per business. Applicants will need to demonstrate how their business was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and how the funds directly contribute to increased sales or economic activity.
- Technical Assistance: \$35,000 will be awarded to the BID as a sub grantee to manage a fund for technical assistance. This program will focus on providing an initial review of available downtown space by various professional consultants to ensure it meets the needs of prospective businesses and may also include other services to support business planning.
- Economic Empowerment: Agreement with Amherst Business Improvement District for \$250,000 Economic Empowerment Officer/Contracted Service. Funds will be used to actively promote development and opportunities for entrepreneurs, artists, and cultural organizations impacted by the pandemic. Approximately one-half of the resources will be dedicated to engaging BIPOC entrepreneurs and artists along with Cultural Organizations.
 - The Finance Department is in the middle of reviewing capital and operating budgets with departments.
 - The Finance Department is implementing initiatives under ARPA.
 - Small Business Grant Program: Complete package ready. Includes a project overview needed for ARPA and the grant agreement to the BID to manage the program.
- Information Technology:
 - The I.T. Department is rolling out new, digital phones having deployed 80 to date with 40 more to go.
 - Thanks to the I.T. Department for its work in establishing a procedure for uploading recordings of meetings.
- Public Works:
 - There has been an explosion of potholes in our Town roads as a result of the freeze/thaw cycles of the winter.
 - Town staff will be making a presentation on the Town's roads at an upcoming TSO Committee meeting. We will also be discussing sidewalk paving at this meeting.
 - I recently signed a contract with a surveying company to survey a substantial part of East Pleasant Street for a new sidewalk. The surveying and research will take about 12 weeks.

The survey and research will help establish the scope of a construction project and impact on neighboring properties. We hope to obtain costs estimates, as well.

- Economic Development:
 - Wi-Fi Downtown: The Town has been awarded a FY22 Community Compact Cabinet IT grant in the amount of \$74,625 to undertake the construction of a downtown public Wi-Fi network. This will supplement and, in some cases, supplant the existing Wi-Fi network.
 - The Drake: The new downtown performance venue – The Drake – is looking to open in May. The Downtown Amherst Foundation has been successful in raising nearly 70% of its ambitious \$1.3m fundraising goal.
 - Performance Shell: The BID anticipates the performance shell would become a reality in 2023 or 2024.
 - Small Business Grant Program: Utilizing ARPA funds, the Town is working with the BID to develop a program that would support small businesses develop proposals for retail establishments and navigate the permitting system.
 - Economic Empowerment: Utilizing ARPA funds, the Town is developing options for adding contracted staff to support economic development. See above for these last two items.
- Public Safety:
 - Police:
 - “First Weekend in March”: The Town and University are preparing for the possibility of events that have historically occurred on the “First Weekend in March”, March 5th. The University will maintain restrictions on visitors to residence halls and the Town and University will determine appropriate staffing levels in advance of the weekend.
 - Accreditation: The Police Department underwent an on-site assessment by the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission. This is a necessary step to continue to be recognized as an accredited agency.
 - Assessors examined the Department’s policies, procedures, facilities and equipment.
 - The assessors were in Town from January 17-19th.
 - I anticipate we will have a very strong, favorable report once the Commission votes on the staff report.
 - Fire:
 - Fire Pumper: The Town appropriated funds for a new Fire Truck. The costs truck exceeds the appropriation, requiring staff to seek additional funds from the Town Council. I have signed the contract and the order is in, which will take up to 15 months for delivery.
- Town Clerk:
 - Reprecincting:
 - The reprecincting maps prepared by the Town and submitted to the State have been approved by the State. The Local Elections Districts Review Commission informed the Town that the Town’s reprecincting meets the requirements of State law. The effective date of the reprecincting is December 31, 2021.

- We have received the Secretary of State’s update of the Voter Registration Information System (VRIS). Town Clerk and I.T. staff are reviewing the update for accuracy. The State will make the changes in the resident/voter database, and then we’ll be able to get the census form mailing out.
- The Town will then review the Secretary’s work to confirm its information with our data to ensure all voters are assigned to the correct precinct.
- Once this is updated, all residents of the Town will receive a mailed notice of their precinct and voting location. All residents will have new voting precincts due to the renumbering of the precincts (from precincts being numbered 1-10 to precincts being numbered 1a, 1b...5a, 5b). We hope to do this mailing in March or April.
- The Town Council will be asked to review and confirm the voting locations at an upcoming meetings.
- Human Resources:
 - The H.R. Department has been busy recruiting for the numerous openings in the Town including the two newly created department head positions.
 - In addition, the department continues numerous ongoing collective bargaining negotiations including preparing for collective bargaining for FY23 and addressing impact bargaining rights of the employees as we discuss ARPA premium pay and introduce the new CRESS Community Responder program and Police Resident Oversight Board.
 - The H.R. Director has also initiated discussions with collective bargaining units to meet the requirement to conduct impact bargaining with several bargaining units as we work through the details of establishing the CRESS program.
- Conservation and Development:
 - Planning:
 - Parklets Grant: The Town was awarded a Regional Economic Development Organization Grant (REDO Grant) for \$80,750 to install two ADA accessible parklets in downtown Amherst in order to create permanent outdoor dining/retail spaces. Each 36 foot long parklet would take over two on-street parking spaces in front of a restaurant or retail shop. The adjacent sidewalk to each parklet location will be maintained as a pedestrian pathway. This grant is administered through the MA Office of Business Development and Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts (EDC). The selected sites, if intended to be permanent, would be reviewed with the Town Council.
 - Making It Public Grant: The Town was recently selected as one of eight municipalities in Massachusetts to participate in Making it Public, a free training designed to equip administrators to strengthen local capacity to support, create, and promote public art. At the conclusion of the training, participants will have the tools needed to create their own Call for Temporary Public Art and will be eligible to receive a \$10,000 grant from the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA). The two Town representatives who will participate in the program are William Kaizen, Chair of the Public Art Commission, and Maureen Pollock, the Town Planner. Making it Public in MA is a dual-track professional development series, designed and facilitated by Forecast Public Art, to foster more equitable opportunities for public art making while also preparing more artists to respond to calls for public art across Massachusetts.

- CDBG Grant:
 - The Town was awarded \$825,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). DHCD made 45 awards across the State through a competitive application process for the 2021 CDBG program.
 - Based on the advice of the CDBG Advisory Committee, the Town's funding will be used to support important and exciting projects such as the Amherst Survival Center Food Pantry, youth mentoring with Big Brothers Big Sisters, adult education offered by The Literacy Project, family stabilization services with Family Outreach of Amherst and funding to Amherst Community Connections to assist those experiencing homelessness. Information on the projects being funded can be found here: <https://www.amherstma.gov/3632/2021-CDBG-Recommended-Proposals>
 - The CDBG program will also support the development of a trail system on Hickory Ridge that connects the East Hadley Road neighborhood with the Pomeroy Village Center, new accessible sidewalks and crosswalks along Kellogg Avenue, and exterior improvements to units at the Amherst Housing Authority.
- Architectural Barriers: The Town was awarded a \$75,800 grant to eliminate architectural barriers found at the main entrance to the Bangs Community Center, including auto door controls, entrance improvements, and signage. This work will be done after we exit from winter.
- Flood Maps:
 - The Town is updating its Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and Flood Insurance Study (FIS). Maps have been available for review since July 2020 and are now in a 90-day statutory appeal period, which ended on December 9th.
 - FEMA now has a 60-day period to conduct quality review of the maps.
 - On Monday, Town staff will present an updated overview of the project to the Town Council.
 - After FEMA's review, there will be a six-month compliance period during which the maps, zoning bylaw text, and Flood Insurance Study Report will be presented to the Town Council for adoption.
 - The Town expects the flood-mapping project to be concluded by the summer of 2022.
- Sustainability:
 - CAARP: The Town is seeking funding to develop and implement an innovative rental efficiency policy, one of the five priority initiatives in the Town's Climate Action Adaptation and Resiliency Plan. We are very pleased the Town was selected to receive a \$25,000 state META grant to develop an outreach program to survey renters and landlords about complex and multi-unit building efficiency which will result in a white paper that will help guide the town in developing a

building efficiency disclosure policy. CHD's Family Outreach of Amherst is a partner in this initiative.

- Solar Study: I will be submitting a charge for the working group that will be studying solar siting in the very near future.
- Charging Stations:
 - The Town was awarded a \$43,000 grant from the State Department of Environmental Protection's Electric Vehicle Incentive Program - Direct Current Fast Charging Grant program.
 - The station with two ports will be located in the Town's Kellogg Street Parking lot.
 - The station will join the seven Level 2 charging stations with 13 ports available to the public that are owned by the Town.
 - Three stations are at Boltwood Garage – one upper level and one lower level (dual ports); one port available to the public on the town's dedicated dual port charging station also located in the lower level of Boltwood garage
 - Pray St – one dual head station
 - Kellogg Street lot – one dual head station
 - Town Hall – parking lot has a dual head station
 - Middle School – one dual head station
 - The Town is recognizing that, as it invests in electric vehicles, it will need to continue to expand its infrastructure for its municipal vehicles, most importantly at the Police Station.
- Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) Update:
 - The three communities (Amherst, Northampton and Pelham) have temporarily shifted from entering into a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order to move the CCA process forward – specifically to enable signing a contract with a consultant that will oversee development of the CCA. The CCA Advisory Working Group will continue drafting the JPA while the CCA effort is under development. The goal is to have the JPE established in time for submission of the draft CCA agreement to the DPU.
 - We have conducted a procurement process and the consultant has selected. We are now moving forward to identifying the most appropriate pathway to engage their services. Development of the MOU decided as the best option to engage the consultant with Amherst serving as Lead Community.
 - Upon legal review of the JPA, questions arose that will require further consideration. So as not to prolong the CCA process any further, the communities are finalizing a draft MOU.
 - Pelham's next Select Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 7th at which time they will review and hopefully approve the draft for legal review. Pelham has authorized Amherst to initiate legal review of the draft MOU on its behalf.

- The Northampton and Amherst representatives will submit the draft to the Northampton Mayor and Amherst Town Manager after review by the Town Attorney. Draft is currently under review by Northampton’s City Solicitor - if you pass the draft along to K-P Law we can say ours is, too.
 - The goal is to have the three communities sign the MOU and enter into a contract with the consultant in early March. Still a goal if we can get legal to turn the document around quickly!
 - Development of the CCA will take at least a year, which is usually driven by the Department of Public Utilities’ review of the Agreement.
 - During this time, the consultant will be working with all three communities to conduct outreach efforts and engage and educate residents and businesses about the CCA.
- Sheltering:
- Lutheran Church:
 - Craig’s Doors is operating its Congregate site at the Lutheran Church up to a maximum number is 23 guests.
 - The Church continues to permit the building to be used 24 hours/day so guests can remain safe, warm, and fed.
 - University Motor Lodge: The motel is at capacity with 34 guests.
 - Unitarian Church: The Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst is providing space at its location at 121 North Pleasant Street as an overflow shelter with a focus on sheltering women. There are 14 beds available at this location.
 - VFW: Craig’s Doors is operating the former VFW building on Main Street as a day shelter for those experiencing homelessness. It is not getting much use, with the other two shelters available for guests during the day.
 - Town Support:
 - The Town’s Health Department holds regular vaccination clinics at Craig’s Doors shelter.
 - The Town’s Health Department has been providing Craig’s Doors with rapid antigen tests so that staff and guests are forewarned if someone presents has COVID-19.
 - The Town is committing \$1 million for permanent shelter/supportive housing and \$1 million for affordable housing. We continue to have productive conversations with the leaders of Craig’s Doors about possible locations.
 - Census: The Three County Continuum of Care at Community Action Pioneer Valley is in the process of conducting its annual “Point-In-Time Count” of all homeless persons in the region including people living outdoors, people in shelter or transitional housing programs, people who are couch surfing, people who are experiencing homelessness but staying in a program or institution temporarily, and a variety of other settings where someone may be without a safe place to stay. They conduct this count annually in order to get a better understanding of the amount of unmet need in our communities. The count began on February 23rd and will continue until March 2nd.

- Conservation:
 - Fearing Brook Floodplain Creation Project: The Town received a grant of \$227,606 from the State Nonpoint Source Pollution Competitive Grant program. Work has been progressing and is nearing completion.
- Community Services:
 - Senior Center:
 - The Senior Center received a \$15,000 grant from the State for exercise equipment thanks to the advocacy of State Representative Domb.
 - Livable Amherst Community Survey Age & Dementia Friendly Community Project:
 - The Town is working with staff from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission who are assisting with the project. Additionally, the Town is forming a working group to provide oversight of this work. The working group will assist with community engagement strategies and development of a community assessment and action plan. The working group will meet monthly throughout 2022.
 - The Town held its kick-off working group meeting on January 20th. This meeting provided an overview of the project, project timeline, and answered questions.
 - The Town, with the assistance of the working group and volunteers, is distributing surveys targeted to older adults in Amherst and caregivers to assess the areas where older residents may be facing the greatest challenges. The survey will be posted online soon and will also be available in hard copy form. Everyone who completes this survey by March 31st will be eligible for a drawing for five \$50 Gift Cards generously contributed by the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce. (Surveys will still be accepted after March 31). The results of this survey will be used to develop a Community Assessment and Action Plan that will serve as a road map for making Amherst an Age & Dementia Friendly Community.
 - The working group will host a series of listening sessions (via Zoom until further notice) to engage older adults. Stay tuned for more information.
 - There is also a page on our public participation platform **Engage Amherst** where you can check for updates and engagement opportunities, which can be found here: www.engageamherst.org/agefriendly
 - Their next meeting is on February 28th at 10:30 AM, more details [here](#).
 - The Town has developed a site on **Engage Amherst** site for the Age-Friendly and Dementia-Friendly initiative where people can check for updates and engagement opportunities. It can be found here: www.engageamherst.org/agefriendly
 - Health: See above.
 - Recreation:
 - The Recreation Department and Business Improvement District brought back the ice sculptures on the Town Common February 18-21. Private funding supported this program.

Delegated Authority:

- Short-Term Event Uses of Town Commons:
 - August 22-29, 2022: Community Fair by Amherst Rotary Club (South Common)
 - May 18-20, 2023: Plant Sale by Garden Club of Amherst (South Common)
- Short-Term Parking Requests: None
- Short-Term Road or Sidewalk Closures: None
- Anticipated: The Town Council will review a request from the Amherst Farmers Market for the 2022 season at an upcoming meeting.

Major Capital Projects:

- Jones Library: The Jones Library Building Committee is meeting every two weeks.
- DPW Building/Fire Building: Staff are exploring multiple options for a new site for the Department of Public Works.
- Schools: The Elementary School Building Committee is meeting every two weeks. Updates can be found on the project's [new webpage](#).

Projects Update:

- Dog Park: No updates.
- North Common Restoration/Main Street Parking Lot: No updates.
- Hickory Ridge: An important regulatory approval was received last night. We are moving even closer to a final closing on the site ownership.
- North Amherst Library: Bids are out. Pre-bid conference was held on site and there seemed to be a fair amount of interest. When bids are submitted, we will review for compliance with procurement procedures and the requirements of the bid. Then we will review the bids with the advisory committee.
- Pomeroy Village MassWorks Grant: Additional design work by the Public Works Town Engineer has addressed most of the concerns of the abutting property owners. Plans continue to be developed.
- Solar on the Landfill: The work will be able to continue through most of the winter.
- Belchertown Road/East Street School: Bids are being reviewed by a review team with assistance from financial experts who reviewed the finances of the proposals. I anticipate a bid award within the next week or so.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- March 7th – Town Council meeting
- March 21st – Town Council meeting
- April 4th – Town Council meeting
- April 18th – Patriots Day holiday
- April 25th – Town Council meeting
- May – Memorial Day holiday
- June 19th – Juneteenth celebration
- June 20th – Juneteenth holiday

Status Report
Community Safety Working Group Recommendations

February 28, 2022

| Recommendations | Status | Next Steps |
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| <p>Create Community Responders for Equity, Safety, and Service (CRESS) program</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Manager presented reorganization plan to Town Council • Town Council approved creation of Department on December 13, 2021 • Implementation Team established and worked with consultant support • Identifying roles and responsibilities of CRESS program • Worked with dispatch to establish protocols • Implementation Team identified calls designated to be directed to CRESS • Funds allocated: Town, ARPA, State grant • Financial accounting system accounts established • Grant secured from State • CRESS Director position description written, candidates recruited, and candidates reviewed and interviewed • Designed, contracted, and funded development of office space at the Bangs Community Center • Researched purchase of a vehicle • Technology needs identified and are being procured • Contracts being signed with ADHMA and YSET providing free mental health and free case management services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint CRESS Director (March) • Town Council approval of appointment of CRESS Director (March) • Prepare entry plan for new director • Impact bargaining with collective bargaining units • CRESS Director to review and approve job descriptions for CRESS responders and administrative assistant positions • Recruit and hire CRESS responders and administrative assistant team (March - June) • Purchase vehicle • Purchase technology needs • Identify and prepare swing space until offices are complete • Demolition and construction of office space at the Bangs Community Center, CRESS, ADHMA, and YSET (March-April) • Meeting with social service agencies with ADHMA and YSET (March) • Continue program design – Implementation Team with new CRESS Director • Prepare FY23 budget (February – April) • Finalize dispatch protocols • Establish training program for CRESS responders and dispatch and procure training services |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADHMA and YSET met with staff from schools, library, recreation, senior services, health • Developed and published web site for CRESS Department • The Town is participating in the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government's Government Performance Lab Community of Practice meetings on Community Responders | |
| Create Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Manager presented reorganization plan to Town Council • Town Council approved creation of Department on December 13, 2021 • Funds allocated: Town, ARPA • Financial accounting system accounts established • Assistant DEI Director appointed January 3, 2022 • DEI Director position candidates recruited • Identified and preparing office space in Town Hall for DEI Department • Identify and procure technology needs for department including phone lines • Developed web site for DEI Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEI Director position candidates reviewed and interviewed (March) • Appoint DEI Director (March - April) • Town Council approval of appointment of DEI Director (March-April) • Prepare FY23 budget (February – April) • Prepare entry plan for new director • Publish web site for DEI Department |
| Create Youth Empowerment Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TM proposing funding using ARPA funds • Assigned Recreation Director to lead effort for Youth Empowerment Center • Included Youth Empowerment Center on draft Capital Improvement Program without funding identified | |
| Create BIPOC Cultural Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included BIPOC Cultural Center on draft Capital Improvement Program without funding identified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint DEI Director to lead effort for BIPOC Cultural Center |
| Reduce the size of the Amherst Police Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council approved FY22 budget with reduction of two positions | |

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| <p>Create Community Safety and Social Justice Committee</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Manager created committee charge • Town Council voted SME status October 4, 2021 • Recruitment efforts begun and extended • Assemble applicant pool • Established Interview Team (Barbara Love, Sid Ferreira, Keisha Dennis) • Interviews scheduled (February - March) • Assigned DEI Director to support committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint members to committee (March) • Town Council reviews and approves appointments (March) • Organize and initiate first meeting (April – May) |
| <p>Establish Police Resident Oversight Board</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions started | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize charge (Town Manager or Town Council) • Review charge with key constituents, participants (police, CSWG, etc.) • Review charge with Town Attorney • Impact bargaining with collective bargaining units • Present charge to Town Council • Town Council vote SME status • Determine need for General Bylaw for committee • Determine stipends and policy on stipends for committee and other Town boards • Develop training plan (introductory and ongoing) for members of committee members • Recruit applicants for Board • Assemble applicant pool • Established Interview Team and interview applicants • Assign DEI Director to support committee • Appoint members to committee • Town Council reviews and approves appointments |
| <p>Policies: a. Rewrite the APD “use of force” policy b. Prohibit APD consent searches of</p> | <p>a. Use of Force: Current “use of force” policy is aligned with policy developed by State Police Reform Commission Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission which is creating a mandatory certification process for police officers, as well as processes for decertification, suspension of</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed review of all policies by Police Resident Oversight Board • Prioritization and recommendation for any recommended changes • Legal review • Possible collective bargaining implications • Possible general bylaw changes |

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| <p>vehicles, either by rewriting APD policy or by town by-law</p> <p>c. Prohibit APD “low-level and pretextual” traffic stops, either by rewriting APD policy or by town by-law</p> <p>d. Make other recommended updates and revisions in APD policies</p> | <p>certification, or reprimand in the event of certain misconduct.</p> <p>b. Consent Searches: Requires change to current policy. Changes would need legal review and possible Town Council bylaw approval</p> <p>c. Traffic Stops: Requires change to current policy and agency practice. Changes would need legal review and possible Town Council bylaw approval</p> <p>d. Other changes: Current policies have been reviewed by Massachusetts Police Accreditation Board</p> <p>All policies are public documents and available on the Police Department website</p> <p>All policies are reviewed by the Massachusetts Accreditation Commission</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make review of these specific policies a priority of Police Resident Oversight Board |
| <p>Practices:</p> <p>a. Add “checkbox” to vehicle stop report form – “Was this stop ‘intelligence-led?’”</p> <p>b. Create an online “dashboard” to give the public access to monthly data on APD traffic stops by race</p> | <p>a. Checkbox: To be determined</p> <p>b. Dashboard: Completed</p> | <p>a. Checkbox: Police Chief to investigate and make recommendations/decisions on change in practice</p> <p>b. Dashboard: Continue to review and improve presentation of information (Police with Communications Manager)</p> |

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| Negotiate recommended changes in the APD officers' contract in the next contract negotiation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiations have not initiated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and review contract proposals |
| Create an unarmed, non-police, division of traffic control and enforcement, leaving only arrestable traffic offenses to the APD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding not available to create a new department | |
| Engage the community in an extended process of racial healing and visioning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned to DEI Director | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEI Director to initiate • Consult with CSSJC, Human Rights Commission, Town Council |
| Develop an anti-racism departmental culture in the APD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigned to DEI Director • Generalize to all departments and incorporate into hiring practices and operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEI Director to initiate • Consult with CSSJC, Human Rights Commission, Town Council |