



To: Town Council
Fr: Paul Bockelman
Town Manager
Dt: September 29, 2022
Re: Town Manager Report for October 3, 2022

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

Outreach and Advocacy

- Cuppa Joe with Paul:
 - The last Cuppa Joe was on September 15th at the Bangs Community Center and featured our Public Health Team, Director Jennifer Brown and new Public Health Nurse Olivia Peters. We had an excellent, informal conversation on public health trends in Amherst. Plus, we were able to discuss numerous other topics brought to the coffee by residents. We were also able to distribute free COVID-19 tests!
 - The next Cuppa Joe will be held at the end of October. Special guest to be determined.
- Speaking Engagements:
 - International City Management Association (ICMA):
 - I represented Massachusetts on the Conference Planning and Evaluation Committee for the ICMA annual international conference in Columbus, Ohio. The conference was held September 17-21. I also organized and introduced a session titled "A Community Driven Approach to Police Reform" and introduced a session titled "An Introduction to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's Infrastructure Resilience Planning Framework".
 - Communications Director Brianna Sunryd was a speaker at the ICMA conference on Looking Forward: Using Technology and Communication Tools Creatively to Improve Digital Services and the Civic Experience in Your Community. The session focused on emerging engagement strategies for staff members tasked with



improving digital service delivery and the civic experience for community members. The session also shared examples of creative new ways of engaging the community, including innovative approaches and uses of technology. The session attracted a large number of attendees and was a success.

- MMMA Boot Camp: I served on a panel at the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association's (MMMA) "Boot Camp" on September 29th in Sharon, Massachusetts. The topic was "Challenges & Opportunities: The Future of the Profession". The Boot Camp was organized by Communications Director Sunryd who co-chairs the MMMA committee organizing the event.
- MMMA Monthly Meeting: The Director of Community Responders and I will make a presentation to the MMMA at its meeting on October 20th in Bridgewater. The topic is "Community and Public Safety: the Origins and Development of Community Responders in Amherst".
- Outreach:
 - Mandela Washington Fellowship Reciprocal Exchange: Building on the visit by Mandela fellows this summer, the Town has applied to participate in an exchange to expand our relationships.
 - The goal of the project is to improve the leadership skills of 50 elected and appointed officials in Gwagwalada Area Council and Abuja Municipal Area Council in Nigeria to transform local priorities into action. Activities would include a 1-day workshop on open governance, responsive representation, accountability and ethical leadership.
 - The ultimate objective of the project is to provide a valuable opportunity for local elected officials in Nigeria to adapt a set of citizen engagement and responsive governance tools and strategies while learning from the Amherst context. Methodology.
 - The Town of Amherst will participate virtually while Nigerian participants will converge in a physical location in Abuja.
 - The project will offer the Nigerian officials the opportunity to interact with the officials of the Town of Amherst and share knowledge on governing processes in Nigeria and Amherst.
 - Mandela Washington Fellow: Ojooluwa Ibiloye, through his organization; RuralPro Nigeria, will collaborate with Brianna Sunryd and other Town officials (including Town Councilors) to implement the project.

COVID-19

- Update:
 - World Health Organization Director General Tedros stated: "We have never been in a better position to end the pandemic. We are not there yet, but the end is in sight. (But)... a marathon runner does not stop when the finish line comes into view. She runs harder, with all the energy she has left... Now is the worst time to stop running." (September 14, 2022)
 - The Town's Health Director reports that this winter we will have a clearer picture if we are still in an "emergency" phase of the pandemic. Cases of BA.4.6 have started rising while the highly transmissible BA.5 cases have started falling. Epidemiologists do not believe BA.4.6 will cause a large wave because it does not have mutations on the spike

protein to escape immunity. But if it combined with behavior that increases spread and cold weather changes, cases may rise.

- There are still unknowns : There are new subvariants of Omicron on the horizon with concerning mutations for antibody escape, for example BA.2.75.2 or BQ.1.1, we do not know how mRNA vaccines will hold up, nor do we know if these variants will take hold.
- Data and Wastewater Monitoring:
 - The Town continues to collect and publish COVID case counts on the COVID webpage along with daily case counts and weekly data from the State Department of Public Health (DPH). The case count data comes predominately from PCR testing, PCR testing is performed with less frequency and antigen results do not need to be reported, so numbers are not representative of true illness in Town. DPH posts COVID case data weekly now instead of daily. Other public health indicators are analyzed to understand COVID burden in the community and assist in determining if mitigation strategies are needed. Other indicators include hospitalizations, hospital capacity and deaths, the indicators and metrics used by the Amherst Health Department and Board of Health to assess risk can be found at <https://www.amherstma.gov/1312/Board-of-Health>
 - The Town started wastewater testing in May of this year through a grant from DPH and in collaboration with Town's Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Health Department. DPW collects one 24-hour combined sample that is representative of all buildings, homes, and businesses that contribute wastewater to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, including Amherst College, Hampshire College and the University. Results are posted as we receive them and can be found at <https://www.amherstcovid19.org/surveillance>.
 - Wastewater data can help track trends in the number of people that have COVID-19 in a community. However, the data cannot identify the number of infected persons corresponding to a particular concentration of GCEs detected in wastewater. [One recent study](#) suggested that an individual's contribution to wastewater can vary from 1 million to 1 billion gene copies of virus/person/day. This value varies with symptom severity, disease progression, water use and individual differences. One person with very high levels of virus in their waste may contribute more virus to the wastewater than hundreds, or even thousands of people who excrete less virus. It is therefore not possible to estimate active infections in a community from wastewater concentration data.
 - Interpreting wastewater is different from other data. Some other published wastewater reports use data smoothing, for example a "5-day trimmed average," removes the highest and lowest values from each 5-day period and averages the 3 remaining points. Amherst reports un-smoothed, single-day data, therefore one point cannot be over-valued or definitive, trends and data sustained over several days is better indicative of COVID in the community.
 - The University is reporting similar data that it is collecting independently on its website here: <https://www.umass.edu/coronavirus/covid-19-testing/umass-amherst-covid-19-dashboard>
 - The campus utilizes 24-hour passive samplers, which are deployed in main sewer lines on campus and in North Amherst and South Amherst and collected three times each week.

- It is challenging to compare data between testing locations. Differences in sampling protocols, viral RNA isolation and concentration methods, and signal amplification can all yield differences in absolute concentration produced by these methods. However, general assessment in the rise and fall of the trends can be useful in noting potential increases and decreases in community prevalence. While trends can be qualitatively compared across sites, absolute concentrations from different sites — or even the same site using different sampling techniques and viral isolation and concentration protocols — cannot be directly compared.
- Testing:
 - The Health Department received from DPH a 4th shipment of Rapid Antigen Tests on September 22nd. We received 10,150 Rapid Antigen Kits (2 tests/kit = 20,300 tests of iHealth) with an expiration date of January 2023. State wide antigen distribution started with the sunsetting of the PCR program in December 2021, this is our largest shipment yet and gives the Town a total of 28,880 kits/57,760 tests.
 - Rapid Antigen Tests can be picked up for free at the Bangs Community Center, Monday – Friday 10:00 – 2:00 and will be distributed to the community through our partners such as the Amherst Survival Center, Craig’s Doors, Family Outreach of Amherst, restaurants and bars, events, and other means.
 - An informational flyer is available at the Health Department and will accompany cases of antigen tests. The information includes:
 - a. When to test (after an exposure test on day 5, before a social event, or when symptomatic).
 - b. What to do with results – negative results need an additional test in 48 hours, a positive test must follow isolation guidelines that are found at Your COVID Plan: <https://www.amherstma.gov/3650/Your-COVID-Plan> , and there are simple, graphic instructions how to use, available in additional languages.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): The Town received additional PPE for distribution including temporal thermometers, band aids, hand sanitizer, and adult and pediatric masks.
- Vaccines:
 - All boosters for those 12 years and older are the new bivalent vaccine. The bivalent booster is made up of two mRNA components, original Wuhan strain of COVID and the Omicron BA.4 and .5. We had been relying on mice data to show that bivalent BA.4/5 vaccine works, but now there is research with human subjects that is reassuring. The findings showed antibodies were very high, and were high against the Omicron subvariants studied. This means that the bivalent booster will enhance protection against Omicron that will help prevent infection and transmission.
 - The CDC renamed what it means to be ‘up to date’ with COVID-19 vaccines. You are up to date if you have completed a primary series and received the most recent bivalent booster dose (for 12 and up).
 - Everyone ages 12 years and older should receive a two dose primary series of covid vaccine using the monovalent vaccine, and should receive 1 bivalent mRNA booster dose regardless of primary series or monovalent boosters.
 - Everyone ages 6 months and older should receive a COVID-19 primary series vaccination with the monovalent mRNA vaccines. Children ages 5-11 years are recommended to receive 1 monovalent mRNA booster.

- The bivalent booster can be administered 2 months after the last monovalent booster dose. Questions regarding other spacing of the booster should be between you and a provider, for example waiting 2 or 3 months after an infection, or a longer delay after vaccination. Spacing longer than the CDC recommendation may take into account individual risk, such as age and illnesses, or the need for immunity before an event, and the amount of risk taken during the day.
- The flu vaccine and COVID vaccine can be given at the same time, and the Health Director recommends that they while they can be administered in the same arm, one in each is recommended.
- The Health Department offers COVID vaccine, primary series and the bivalent booster for ages 12 and up Thursdays, 12 – 2:00 (larger clinics took place the last month). Registration is preferred, there are limited walk-in appointments. We will be doing outreach to our partners mentioned earlier. The COVID booster is available in many places locally, CVS, Walmart in Hadley for example. Locations can be found at <https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/>
- Advice from the Health Director:
 - Have a Plan – have a trusted provider, one who knows your medical history, one you can contact if you are sick or have questions. Keep what you need in your house if you have to isolate. If you need help finding health insurance and finding a provider, contact the Health Department.
 - Have a Back Up Plan – If you are heading out and assess a situation as greater risk than you had anticipated, have an alternative plan...including leaving.
 - Use the Right Tool at the Right Time – a procedural mask may be sufficient in the grocery store where you can keep distanced, a KN95 for more crowded, poorer ventilated rooms. Antigen tests work to determine if you are infectious, know what to do with results. Consider Paxlovid, an antiviral, when appropriate.
 - Ventilation is key
 - Get boosted this fall.

Colleges and University

- Amherst College:
 - New President: Michael Elliott assumed the role of President of Amherst College at the beginning of August. The College has scheduled President Elliott’s inauguration for October 29th. Member of the Town Council have been invited to attend the inauguration.
 - Covid-19: The College continues to report its status on its dashboard which can be found here: <https://www.amherst.edu/news/covid-19/dashboard>
 - Schedule: Commencement is May 28th.
- Hampshire College:
 - Schedule: Commencement is May 20th.
- University of Massachusetts at Amherst:
 - COVID-19:
 - The latest COVID-19 data for the University is being shared with the campus community weekly and will be updated every Wednesday on the [university’s COVID-19 dashboard](#). The dashboard includes positive test results and wastewater testing results.

- This dashboard, updated each Wednesday, includes positive polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test results, consistent with local state and federal reporting. However, unlike most publicly accessible COVID-19 dashboards, it also includes self-reported positive results from antigen (at-home) tests from members of our campus community.
- Schedule: Commencement is May 26-28.
- Outreach: The University's Off-Campus Student Center held outreach events at three locations:
 - Farview Neighborhood Resource Fair: September 22nd at the Valley Lane cul-de-sac
 - Fearing Neighborhood Resource Fair: September 23rd on Allen Street
 - Grantwood Neighborhood Resource Fair: September 29th on Forestedge Road cul-de-sac
- Changes in UMass Transit Bus Service: UMass Transit has not reached its projected driver hours for fall 2022. As a result, actual available driver hours are not adequate to ensure reliable service on all routes. UMass Transit has reviewed each route to ensure it can continue to provide the most effective service across its service area, while attempting to minimize the impact on passengers. Here are updates for the rest of the semester:
 - Effective starting on Monday September 19, the Route 34 Northbound Campus Shuttle will end operation on [weekdays](#) at 12:15 p.m. (earlier than previously scheduled). The campus currently operates two campus shuttles over the same roads, but in opposite directions. The [Route 35](#) Southbound Campus Shuttle will not be impacted, so passengers will still have an afternoon campus shuttle option covering the same areas as Route 34.
 - Effective starting on Saturday September 24, the Route 33 Puffer's Pond/Shopper Shuttle will operate on [Saturdays](#) using the Sunday schedule (running every 80 minutes).
 - Campus [Accessible Van Services](#) are not impacted and will remain available to members of the campus community with mobility issues.
 - UMass Transit continues to recruit and train new student drivers. It offers paid training, frequent raises, flexible hours, and promotional positions with real-world supervisory, management and technical experience.

Racial Equity

- Community Responders Program:
 - The Responders are now headquartered in their new offices in the Bangs Community Center. They are following a program of meeting with community members, assisting where they can, continuing outreach efforts, and responding to calls as requested.
 - The Director of Community Responders and I will make a presentation to the MMMA at its meeting on October 20th in Bridgewater. The topic is "Community and Public Safety: the Origins and Development of Community Responders in Amherst".
- DEI Department:
 - The Director has been developing a strategic plan for the Department, developing a plan for implementing the Police Residents Oversight Board, meeting with staff, and stepping into many levels of management for the Town. The Director has also developed a draft

timeline that would have a Resident Oversight Board begin in FY24. The development and implementation of such a Board would have budgetary implications that would be included the FY24 Town budget, if approved by the Town Council.

- An inaugural Latinx celebration will be held at Kendrick Park on **Saturday, October 15th** from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM.
- Reparations: The African Heritage Reparation Assembly is holding its first listening session on **October 27th**. This event is open to all community members and will center Black and African heritage voices. For more details visit: www.engageamherst.org/AHRA

Department Updates

- Town Clerk/Elections:
 - Elections:
 - November 8th In-person early voting:
 - The Town Council will be asked to approve the Election Warrant at its meeting on October 17th.
 - In-person early voting for this election will be held in the First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall at 4 Boltwood Avenue on the following dates:

○ Saturday, October 22	9:00 am – 4:00 pm
○ Monday, October 24	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
○ Tuesday, October 25	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
○ Wednesday, October 26	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
○ Thursday, October 27	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
○ Friday, October 28	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
○ Sunday, October 30	9:00 am – 3:00 pm
○ Monday, October 31	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
○ Tuesday, November 1	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
○ Wednesday, November 2	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
○ Thursday, November 3	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
○ Friday, November 4	8:00 am – 4:30 pm
 - September 6th Primary Report:
 - The breakdown of voting for the September 6th Primary was:

● Early Vote by Mail:	2,143
● Early Vote In-Person (both AV and EV):	190
● Election Day:	<u>1,525</u>
○ Total Votes Cast:	3,858
▪	(27.08% of the registered voters)
 - More detailed results of the Primary election can be found online here: <https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/63200/Official-9-6-22-State-Primary-Results>



in

DO YOU...
*Identify as Black/of African heritage?
 Live in Amherst?*

JOIN US for a listening session
October 27th, 6:30pm-8pm
Hitchcock Center, 845 West Street

INCLUDE YOURSELF
 to learn more about a historical reparative justice initiative underway for residents of African heritage in Amherst.

Inclusion Portal www.engageamherst.org/AHRA

- Ethics: The State Ethics Commission is hosting free, bi-monthly training seminars for municipal employees to learn more about the restrictions imposed under the conflict-of-interest law, G.L. c. 268A. These two-hour seminars present an opportunity for the Town’s boards and committees to receive important training on the on the law. Seminars are conducted remotely via Zoom. The next training is Thursday, December 1st. [Register for the December 1, 2022 seminar](#)
- Health:
 - Flu Vaccine: The flu vaccine is also now available. You can receive the flu vaccine and COVID vaccine at the same time. You can combine most procedures, screenings, and vaccinations at the same appointment when you get your COVID-19 vaccination. Talk to your healthcare provider if you have questions.
- Finance:
 - New Designation! Treasurer/Collector Jennifer LaFountain is now a Certified Massachusetts Municipal Treasurer. She completed a series of classes and successfully passed an arduous examination. She will be awarded the designation at the Massachusetts Association of Treasurers and Collectors at its formal meeting on November 17th. Congratulations, Jennifer!
 - Parking Permits: The application for Town Center Parking Permits is now available for the upcoming permit season. Residents may visit the [Permit Parking](#) webpage for full details such as cost, parking map, subscribing to parking alerts, and to apply for your permit online.
 - ARPA:
 - The Town prepares quarterly reports on ARPA funding which are posted online here: [ARPA Quarterly Reports](#)
 - ARPA Highlights:
 - The Town has allocated funds to award grants to both current and new [Early Education Programs](#) (center and family daycare), to expand or start a new program. The goal of these grants is to support Amherst providers in increasing the number of Early Education slots available to families. The Early Education Expansion RFP (Request for Proposal) has been released. Deadline to apply is 2:00 PM on Monday, October 31, 2022 <http://www.amherstma.gov/bids>
 - The [Small Business Grants](#) program is being managed by the Business Improvement District under specific criteria with a target of at least 50% of awards allocated to BIPOC, LGBTQ, women, or other marginalized community owned.
 - Existing Business Grants: 19 applications; 10 awards. Criteria – located in Amherst, brick & mortar, existing business model, application submitted by deadline, detailed post-pandemic recovery project description with cost, brings foot traffic & economic



development to Amherst, and good standing with taxes and the Town.

- New Business Grants: 18 applications; 3 awards. (Second round this winter) Criteria – located in Amherst, brick & mortar, new business (open less than 90 days to public), signed lease, application submitted by deadline, brings foot traffic & economic development to Amherst, LLC, bank account, business plan, good standing with taxes and the Town, capacity to stay open (1-year minimum).
- Technical Assistance: 9 applications; 3 awards (Funds still available) Criteria – located in Amherst, brick & mortar, new business (open less than 90 days to public), location under negotiation, application submitted by deadline, brings foot traffic & economic development to Amherst, LLC, bank account, business plan, direct need for technical aid, good standing with taxes and Town, capacity to stay open (1-year minimum).

- Resident Emergency Aid is up and running.



- The Town is encouraging applications to the ARPA-funded Resident Aid program designed to assist residents who have overdue rent/mortgage/utilities. Here is the link to the program information:

- <https://www.amherstma.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=3172>

- Flyers were handed out at the Business Improvement Block Party, posted at numerous locations, and promoted through agencies and social media.

- As of September 26th, 13 recipients received \$25,564.65. All 13 recipients were members of Marginalized Communities (BIPOC, women, LGBTQ, other)

- Other Commitments:

- Four additional EMT/firefighters have been hired and are working to keep the Town safe.
- Premium pay awarded to essential municipal employees with the greatest risk of exposure.
- Funds awarded to the Survival Center to provide funding for meal delivery for the next 2+ years.
- Funds awarded to the BID to engage in economic empowerment activities. The BID has hired Lizzie Alwan to support these activities which include building partnerships with the colleges and the University, supporting entrepreneurs, and local cultural organizations.
- Public Health funding used to hire a fulltime public health nurse and to provide administrative support to the health department for COVID-19 related tasks.
- Community engagement funds supporting ambassadors, outreach, and other engagement tools.

- Funds awarded to the school department for sixth grade transition are being used for planning.
 - CRESS Implementation funds have been used minimally so far because the Town has received other grants to cover these costs.
- Public Safety:
 - Fire: The Fire Department was awarded a \$15,500 grant for communications equipment from MEMA Emergency Management Performance Grant. These funds will be used to purchase communications equipment to enhance the already excellent equipment on the Town's public safety vehicles.
 - Police: The Police Department worked with the University to hold three neighborhood meetings to provide an opportunity for dialogue among neighbors to help set the expectations on quality-of-life issues for the coming year. In addition to the Police Department, representatives from Code Enforcement, Off-Campus Housing, student legal services, Community Responders and other entities participated. Thanks to the University for taking the lead in organizing.
- Public Works:
 - Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day:
 - The Town's annual public household hazardous waste collection was held on Saturday, September 24th at Fort River Elementary School.
 - Solar and Water Supply: The Water Supply Protection Committee has a draft White Paper on Large-Scale Solar Array Installations and Potential Impact to Amherst's Drinking Water. This document, once finalized, will be shared with the public and the Solar Bylaw Working Group.
 - Roads:
 - Sidewalks:
 - Work on Kellogg Street sidewalks has been delayed due to supply chain issues with granite. Work has begun on sidewalks on Taylor and Gray Streets. Roadway reconstruction on Mill Lane, between Groff Park and West Street is nearing completion.
 - The Town's contractor, Taylor Davis, will begin sidewalk replacement work on McClellan Street on Friday, September 30th. Work is expected to last 2-3 weeks. On-street parking will be restricted. Northern Tree Service is expected to remove three white pines early in the week of October 3rd to allow for sidewalk reconstruction.
 - Road Paving: Road paving is ramping down as the weather starts to change.
 - Northampton Road: Caracas Construction continues to work on road construction along Northampton Road. This project is part of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation roadway reconstruction project that extends between University Drive and South Pleasant Street.
 - West Pomeroy Lane: We anticipate this road will be paved in the first half of 2023.
 - Bus Stops: Pioneer Valley Transit Authority received \$490,394.00 to improve bus stops including sidewalks, ADA-compliant ramps, crosswalks, pavement markings, signage, shelters, benches, and other amenities at fifteen locations in Amherst and other communities in the region. Bus stops on West Street at Potwine Road are scheduled to be

improved for the Town of Amherst. This work is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2023.

- Projects:
 - West Street Bridge: The rails on the east side of the West Street Bridge at Mill Lane are scheduled to be replaced. Town funds will be utilized. The project is set to be bid with an expected cost of about \$100,000. Bids are expected to go out shortly.
 - West Street Sidewalk: The collapsed sidewalk will be replaced with a small bridge. The bridge has been purchased and the project is going through permitting with the Conservation Commission during the Summer.
- Economic Development:
 - Block Party: The Business Improvement District held a very successful Block Party on September 15th. The event required the closure of North Pleasant Street from Amity Street to Pray Street.
 - Small Business Permitting Guide: Under a grant from the Town, the BID has drafted a guide for small businesses. Town staff are now reviewing the publication.
 - Grants: The Town allocated \$25,000 to help small, brick and mortar, storefront businesses throughout the Town with project-based grant assistance. A "Project" can be, but is NOT limited to: exterior upgrades such as paint, lighting, or awning replacement; interior upgrades such as paint, shelving, internal branding/marketing; Marketing Technology needs such as branding, logo upgrades, web design, social media training. The program is being managed and overseen by the Business Improvement District
 - Economic Empowerment: The Town, in partnership with the Business Improvement District (BID), has allocated \$250,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support small business empowerment and economic development over the next two and a half years. The program will be created and overseen by the Amherst BID in collaboration with the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce. The program will make connections with both existing and prospective businesses, the local colleges, and University and work to sustain local businesses, artists, cultural organizations, and entrepreneurs.
 - Events: Upcoming events include
 - UMass Wind Ensemble Bandtoberfest on the Town Common on October 2nd
 - Halloween downtown on October 30th
 - Holiday Event on December 2nd
 - Gift Card Day on December 3rd and 4th
 - Holiday Stroll and Sip on December 15th
 - Luminaria on February 4th
 - Ice Sculpture Festival on February 11th
- Conservation and Development:
 - Sustainability:
 - Solar Bylaw Working Group:
 - The Town has issued a Request for Proposals to hire a consultant who can conduct a community-wide solar assessment. Responses to the RFP are due in the next week.

- Town staff are working with the Town Attorney in developing a solar bylaw with the Working Group.
- Community Choice:
 - The group working on this (including representatives from Northampton and Pelham) have selected a consultant (Mass Power Choice) and have had initial meetings with the consultant.
 - The three communities have worked on a draft Education and Outreach Plan that is a significant piece of the CCA process viewed carefully by the Department of Public Utilities which must approve the work. Community Outreach will be a very significant portion of this effort and is where we will begin.
 - The group is working on the language with the respective communities' attorneys in forming the Joint Powers Agreement.
 - Water supply protection committee - attached
- Energy Efficiency in Rental Units:
 - The Town and partner organization, Family Outreach of Amherst, were awarded \$25,000 to conduct tenant outreach to understand renters' concerns and ideal outcomes for their homes regarding energy efficiency in Amherst.
 - The project outcome will be a white paper summarizing the renters' concerns and priorities, which will be used to inform the design of innovative programs or policies in Amherst such as rental efficiency standards.
 - The funding was awarded through the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's (MassCEC) EmPower Massachusetts Program and provided by both MassCEC and the Department of Energy Resources (DOER).
- Planning:
 - FEMA Flood Maps: Here is what still needs to be done:
 - CRC to complete public hearing on zoning amendments related to FEMA Flood Maps, and make recommendation to Town Council.
 - CRC to complete review of FEMA Maps and Flood Insurance Study, and make recommendation to Town Council.
 - Planning Board to complete review of zoning amendments related to FEMA Flood Maps, and make recommendation to Town Council.
 - Town Council then needs to hold 1st & 2nd readings and vote on:
 - Zoning amendments related to FEMA Flood Maps – Article 16, FEMA Floodplain Overlay District and Official Zoning Map changes
 - FEMA Flood Maps and Flood Insurance Study
 - The deadline for completing this process is February 9, 2023.
- Sheltering:
 - Craig's Doors: On November 1st, Craig's Doors will transition individuals from Knights Inn in Hadley to the Lutheran Church congregate shelter. The

organization will continue to utilize the University Motor Lodge for additional shelter space.

- Housing:
 - Ball Lane: Valley CDC is moving forward with its project on Ball Lane. The project will offer 30 first time homebuyer condominiums that will include 15 duplexes and 10 market rate units. Valley CDC had a neighborhood meeting and presented its development proposal to the Affordable Housing Trust and were at the District One Neighborhood Association community picnic on September 11th.
 - East Street/Belchertown Road: The Town is working with the chosen developer on a land development agreement.
- Community Services:
 - Senior Center:
 - Medicare Open Enrollment begins October 15th if you're turning 65 it's time to consider your options. Medicare can be complicated to navigate so join Greg Keochakian, a specialist in the senior market, as he helps you take the guess work out of your health insurance benefit options. Dates: Tuesday September 13th at 11:00am and Wednesday September 28th at 1:00pm.
 - The full Senior Center Calendar [here](#)
 - Recreation Department:
 - Salsa at Kendrick Park: The Recreation Department a very successful "Salsa in the Park" event, free and open to the community. A local DJ played tropical and salsa dance music at Kendrick Park and there was much dancing with dance lessons. Future dates will be October 8th.
 - Halloween: The Department will be offering its annual Halloween Spooktacular on Sunday, October 30th. More details to follow.
 - Veterans: The Veterans Services Department will work with other Town departments to sponsor a special breakfast for veterans on November 11th (Veterans Day) followed by the traditional ceremony on the Town Common.



Delegated Authority:

- Short-Term Event Uses of Town Commons (Section 1a of the Town Council Policy):
 - Sustainability Festival by Town Staff (South Common): April 22, 2023
 - Cider Run by Amherst A Better Chance: October 13-14, 2023
- Short-Term Parking Requests (Section 2a of the Town Council Policy):
- Short-Term Public Way Closures (Section 3b of the Town Council Policy):
 - 7 North Pleasant Street: partial reservation of sidewalk so owner can repair building; ADA width sidewalk to be maintained: October 5-19, 2022
- Placement of Road and Temporary Signs (Section 3d of the Town Council Policy):
 - Hartford Half-Marathon: November 6, 2022 (From Haigis Mall to Norwottuck Rail Trail)

Major Capital Projects:

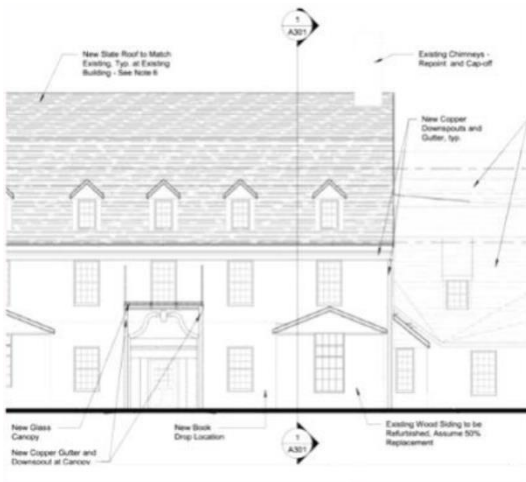
- Jones Library: Up-to-the-minute updates can be found here: <https://www.joneslibrary.org/buildingproject>

- MBLC:

- There are 12 communities, including Amherst, that applied for \$96.3M worth of Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program grant funding. Due to the pandemic, the total cost of construction for these 12 projects has escalated from \$235.5M to \$323.2M. The grant funding is awarded as a percentage of the total cost of each project. Due to cost escalations, the grant funding has gone from providing on average 41% of the cost of the projects down to 30%. These 12 libraries, including Amherst, collectively sent an appeal to the governor and lieutenant governor requesting an additional \$87.7M in ARPA money earmarked for library construction projects in the supplemental budget now being created to bridge the cost gap created by the pandemic. The impacted libraries are actively working with their legislators. Both Senator Jo Comerford and Representative Mindy Domb have been working hard on behalf of our libraries, and you too, can help too by clicking on this link and advocating with the legislature to provide additional funding for these important projects across the state. Take Action For Massachusetts Libraries!

- Amended Memorandum of Agreement (MOA):

- On April 5, 2021, the Town Council authorized the Town Manager to enter into a MOA with the Jones Library, Incorporated whereby the Trustees agreed to raise the Library’s share of the project costs of \$6.6M. Due to the projected escalation in the project cost, it was determined that this MOA signed last year, should be amended. On September 19, 2022, the Town Council voted to authorize the Town Manager to amend the existing MOA to include a bridging agreement for the time period through the bidding phase of the project. This MOA will enable the project to proceed to a point when cost certainty can be obtained. Although the Library has committed to raising the additional needed funds, the Town will still need to authorize borrowing for



the project. Once the bids are unsealed and the actual project costs are known, the project will go back before the Town Council to authorize any additional borrowing, if required.

- Value Engineering Update:

The Design Subcommittee met with the designer and the Owners Project Manager (OPM) on August 30 for a more in-depth review of the proposed value management cuts to the hard costs of the project. The Design Subcommittee then put forth a recommendation of proposed cuts to the Jones Library Building Committee (JLBC), which met on September 8. The JLBC approved \$1.9M in cuts. In addition to the \$1.9M in cuts, the JLBC approved changing the roofing on the 1928 building from slate to synthetic slate. It is

anticipated this will achieve an additional savings, but the estimated savings has not yet been provided by the cost estimators and OPM. Value Engineering Cuts to Furniture Fixtures & Equipment (FF&E) The JLBC met again on September 22 to vote on the proposed \$1M cuts to the FF&E budget. (As outlined in Newsletter #9 - FF&E is a separate line item in the budget from the hard costs.) A designer will be hired to plan the actual purchasing and layout of FF&E, but the OPM was asked to give the committee a sense of what the \$1M in cuts might look like for the project. The OPM provided a sample FF&E cut based on other projects to help give a general idea of what the cuts might look like. The JLBC voted in favor of cutting the FF&E budget by \$1M.

- Updated Project Timeline:
The updated MOA is expected to be signed in early October at which point Schematic Design will be finalized and the project will move into the Design Development phase. The OPM shared an updated project timeline which now reflects the grand reopening of the library in October of 2025.
- DPW Building/Fire Building:
 - Staff continue to explore multiple options for a new site for the Department of Public Works.
 - We are exploring options of working with the University of Massachusetts architecture department (and former Town Councilor Steve Schreiber) to work with graduate students who will be working on a competition to design a fire station. The competition is sponsored by the Metal Building Manufacturers Association (think “Butler building”), thus the assumption is that the proposed designs will be metal buildings.
- Elementary School Building Committee:
 - The Town submitted the Preferred Schematic Report to the Massachusetts School Building Authority on June 27, 2022. The very large report can be found here: <https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/62350/DRAFT-of-Preferred-Schematic-Report-as-of-6-24-2022>
 - The MSBA Board of Directors voted to move the Fort River Elementary School into the Schematic Design phase. In the Schematic Design phase, the MSBA and the Town will look at possible options to consolidate the existing Fort River Elementary School and the Wildwood Elementary School and construct a new facility serving grades K-5 on the site of the existing Fort River Elementary School. The next step is for the MSBA to work in collaboration with the Town to produce detailed designs for a potential project.

Projects Update:

- North Common Restoration/Main Street Parking Lot:
 - The Town was selected by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the National Park Service to receive up to \$827,065.50 in federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant assistance for the revitalization of the North Common in Amherst.
 - The project will completely transform an approximate 1-acre area of the Town Common bounded by Spring Street, South Pleasant Street, Main Street and Boltwood Ave. The effort is the result of years of public input and will activate the area for residents, visitors, downtown businesses, and the broader community.
 - The work includes adding new accessible walkways, improved lighting, gathering areas with tables and chairs, central space for small performances, a plaza in front of Town

Hall, planting of new shade trees, rain gardens/storm water infiltration areas, and spaces for public art.

- The Public Shade Tree Committee voted to support the Tree Warden’s recommendation to remove the tree. I anticipate the tree will be removed prior to Thanksgiving. A suitable recognition of the prominence of the tree in the Town’s history will be developed.
- North Amherst Library:
 - Work continues on the renovations to the North Amherst Library.
 - The Library has secured donated space to offer services in the Mill District which is now open to the public.

- Hickory Ridge:

- The Town of Amherst was successful in obtaining a State grant to improve the Town’s recreation facilities, the third in the past five years. This year’s grant, an award of \$280,000, will go toward trail improvements at the former Hickory Ridge golf course. The two previous grants created the popular new playground at Kendrick Park and the exciting new splash pad at Groff Park.
- The grant was awarded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs’ (EEA) Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC)



- program. The funding leverages Town Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to support the design and construction of a natural-surface looping trail that utilizes some of the existing cart paths and a new stretch of trail running along the scenic Fort River.
- The trail will be designed and constructed to meet or exceed the US Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines to allow users of all ages and abilities to enjoy the trail. A new and improved system of walking trails was one of the most frequent comments suggested by community members to Town staff during a series of community engagement events and an online survey focused on the Town’s acquisition of Hickory Ridge and how to best utilize this new public resource. Based on this feedback, Town staff in the Conservation and Planning Departments have been developing plans for new trails and seeking funding for their construction.
- The existing allocation of \$150,000 in CPA funds allowed Town staff to apply for the PARC grant with the necessary funds to provide the Town’s required 30% match. With the PARC grant awarded, it is expected that design of the trail will begin in early 2023 with trail construction beginning in the summer of 2023. Hickory Ridge, at 191 West Pomeroy Lane, is a 150-acre former golf course in South Amherst which was acquired by the Town in March 2022.
- With over a mile of river frontage on the Fort River, many acres of floodplain and sensitive habitat, much of Hickory Ridge will be permanently protected conservation land

- to protect sensitive habitats and species. Walking trails and other passive recreation uses, such as walking, birding, picnicking, fishing, etc. will be allowed in this area as well.
- Meanwhile, the Town is also exploring which parts of the property could be developed with buildings, and the type and intensity of potential development, balancing community needs with the adjacent neighborhoods and sensitive habitat on the site. A key goal in the Town's acquisition of the course is the opportunity to connect South Amherst neighborhoods, previously disconnected by a private golf course, with each other and to the Pomeroy Village Center.
 - Now publicly owned land, Hickory Ridge stitches together multiple neighborhoods, including Orchard Valley to the south, Mill Valley and the Brook to the north, and homes along West Street to the east. The Pomeroy Village Center, which will be revamped with a new roundabout intersection next summer, is in the southeast corner of Hickory Ridge, and the new trail system at Hickory Ridge will help the surrounding neighborhoods connect to the jobs, services, and businesses in the village center.
 - Town staff are working towards the development of a land-use and management plan for Hickory Ridge which will outline various options for the types of activities and uses which can take place at Hickory Ridge and how the site can be maintained and managed to best serve the community and the sensitive habitat on the site.
 - Stay tuned for more information about the plan development and how to stay engaged with the project.
 - Town staff are preparing an assessment of the existing structures to determine which are usable and which are not.
- Pomeroy Village MassWorks Grant: The Town received bids for the Pomeroy Village Roundabout and associated work and has awarded the contract to move the project into construction. Some work will begin this fall but the real construction will begin in 2023.

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- October 10th – Indigenous People's Day
- October 17th – Town Council Meeting
- November 7th – Town Council Meeting
- November 11th – Veterans Day
- November 21st – Town Council Meeting
- November 24-25th – Thanksgiving Holiday
- December 5th – Town Council Meeting
- December 19th – Town Council Meeting
- December 23rd – Christmas Eve observed (half-day holiday)
- December 26th – Christmas Day observed
- January 2nd – New Year's Day observed