



# Amherst Massachusetts

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

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June 8, 2015

TO: Select Board

FROM: John P. Musante, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Self-Evaluation & FY 15 Town Manager Performance Goals – Progress Report

As part of my annual performance evaluation, as requested by the Select Board, I have prepared a Self-Evaluation Summary for your review and discussion at your June 15 meeting. The second part of this memo contains an update to my February 2015 report regarding progress on FY 15 performance goals.

## **Self-Evaluation Summary**

I would like to list what I believe are the key highlights and accomplishments over the past year. Many of these would not have been achieved without the skill and dedication of the Town staff, the ongoing support and encouragement of the Select Board, and the input from and support of Town Meeting members, the hundreds of community volunteers on Town boards and committees, and the community at large.

- The adopted FY 16 Town budget growth is smaller than increases in the past three years. Long-term planning and ongoing initiatives have reigned in growing health insurance and other benefits costs and delivered services in as cost-effective manner as possible.
- The Town was awarded a \$1.5 million Mass Works infrastructure grant to bury 4000 feet of primary and secondary electrical, cable and telephone wires on East Pleasant, North Pleasant, Triangle, and Pray Streets to facilitate new multistory development, including Kendrick Place slated for occupancy this summer and a second project One East Pleasant, a 84-unit mixed use structure at the former Carriage Shops. North Downtown offers a wonderful opportunity for Amherst to redevelop a very important section of downtown into an economically vibrant, 21st century innovation district for our knowledge-based economy, anchored by new housing and innovative collaboration and live/work spaces.
- In December, the Town-Gown Steering Committee received a final Housing & Economic Development Plan from our consultants U3 Advisors. The 22-member committee cited the analysis provided by consultants U3 Advisors this fall as a “valuable starting point” and recommended creating a University-Town of Amherst Collaborative (UTAC) to coordinate continuing efforts. The committee also recommended hiring an economic development director, exploring mixed-use development sites, pursuing public-private development partnerships, and creating a university “anchor strategy” for segments of the local economy.

My recommended FY 16 municipal budget which was approved by Town Meeting included funding for the Town's first full-time Economic development Director, who will report directly to me. The chancellor and I will be announcing appointments to UTAC and its three subcommittees later in June.

- In my recommended (and ultimately adopted) FY 16 budget, I asserted that good customer service is fundamental to good government. The department that is most often contacted by the public is the Department of Public Works. I recommended the addition of a DPW Administrative Analyst position, which will both provide additional staff support to respond to residents' questions, and more importantly, work on systems to push information out to our customers before they have to make a call to DPW.
- On January 30, I announced that Standard & Poor's Ratings Services (S&P) reaffirmed its long-term rating on Amherst's general obligation bonds at AA+. The AA+ rating is the second highest rating S&P assigns.
- At your June 15 meeting, Facilities Director Ron Bohonowicz and I will present our first town-wide Building Assessment Report briefly summarizing current uses and long-term recommendations for use/disposal of each building. The report will be updated regularly and contains a summary list of municipal buildings and one-page profiles of each.
- We have reached a major milestone in our efforts to locate a community health center in the Bangs Community Center. In late May, I completed negotiations with the Hilltown Community Health Center and signed a license (lease) agreement to locate a satellite health center in the Bangs Community Center in ground floor space currently occupied by LSSE. HCHC submitted a federal HRSA grant application to fund the interior retrofitting of the space at Bangs for use as a medical/dental clinic.
- In my dual roles as Town Manager and chair of the PVTA Advisory Board, I worked with community stakeholders including the Town's Public Transportation and Bicycle Committee and the Amherst Survival Center to offer input to the PVTA's 2014 Comprehensive Service Analysis of regional public bus transportation services, including suggestions to modify or enhance bus service in Amherst and the region. In September, improved PVTA bus service to North Amherst and across Town was launched at less cost to the Town and resulted in an approximately 13% increase in ridership in the first six months of enhanced service.
- The Town's Sustainability Coordinator Stephanie Ciccarello helped to secure a second Green Communities grant for energy efficiency upgrades to the Town Hall, Police Station, and North Fire Station. She also led a new grant-funded initiative to purchase an electronic vehicle and install multiple charging stations in the downtown.
- Last summer, the Town was the recipient of a Housing Hero Award from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership in recognition of the Town's successes creating and preserving affordable housing units at Olympia Oaks and Rolling Green Apartments. In January, DHCD notified the Town that with the addition of 42 affordable units at Olympia Oaks and the preservation of units at Rolling Green, the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) of low and moderate income housing units for purposes of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40B Sections 20-23 has increased to 1,076 units, or 11.18% of all units.
- Last month, Town Meeting approved Article 21 which authorizes the Select Board to file a Special Act with the State Legislature to provide local property tax incentives to property owners who build affordable units in Amherst.
- I used the preliminary staffing plan analysis developed in 2014 to identify and prioritize my recommended staffing levels in the FY 16 budget proposal submitted in January, which was

ultimately approved at Town Meeting. Priority positions recommended for funding were two additional police officers, an Economic Development Director, and a DPW Customer Service Analyst. Also per the staffing analysis, I recommended a reclassified Public Health & Community Services Director position (formerly the Health Director), who will take an active role working with the Senior Center, Veterans' Services Department, other non-profits, and in the future a satellite Community Health Center in the Bangs Center to ensure that our citizens and neighbors receive quality health services, preventive services, and other advice and counseling.

- Last September, staff working with my appointed Transportation Plan Task Force hired Nelson/Nygaard, a nationally-known consulting firm, to work with them to prepare a Transportation Plan for Amherst. The plan was completed this spring and I have extended the appointment of Task Force members to help us with implementation.
- The Town is working closely with the Amherst BID and Five Colleges, Inc. to explore an exciting opportunity to bring super high speed internet in an initiative called Amherst Downtown Gigabit. I recommended and the BID agreed to fund an engineering study to create specs and a preliminary cost estimate. A report is expected this summer.
- In 2014, the Town successfully launched our Residential Rental Property Permitting Program per recommendations from our Safe & Healthy Neighborhoods Work Group. We have achieved 100% compliance with the Residential Rental Property Permitting Bylaw with support from landlords and tenants to document and resolve building and sanitation code compliance issues and improve parking plans on or near the property.
- Last year, I supported the university's decision to hire former Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis to develop strategies to prevent occurrences such as the pre-St. Patrick's Day disturbances known as the "Blarney Blowout" from happening in the future and pledged cooperation of Town and public safety leaders to review strategies and tactics with a completely open mind to how collectively we can each contribute to workable solutions. The Davis Report was completed in September. The combination of Town and Gown strategies implemented on March 7, 2015 resulted in a safe environment free from any large-scale disturbances. This success was due to the team effort from the Town, UMass administration, UMPD, students, Amherst police and our mutual aid partners, apartment complex owners and managers, downtown bar owners, and businesses. For the weekend of March 7-8, there were only 9 arrests.

### **FY 15 Town Manager Performance Goals – Progress Report**

My input follows each of the fifteen performance goals, shown in italics, developed last fall. The Progress Report includes initiatives, challenges, and accomplishments to date on the specific goals that also pertain to areas from the evaluation tool's Composite Evaluation section (Fiscal Management; Relationship with the Select Board and Town Meeting; Long Range Planning; Staff and Personnel Relations; Community and Intergovernmental Relations).

### **Fiscal Management**

1. *The Town Manager shall address the ongoing budget challenge by:*
  - a. *Generating new revenue;*

- In October, the Town was informed that it would once again be designated a Mini Entitlement recipient of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for at least the next few years for social and non-social services activities primarily benefitting low and moderate income citizens. The Town, following an extensive public process facilitated by the CDBG Advisory Committee, submitted an application in February for Federal FY 15 funds totaling \$825,000.

*b. Reducing expenses through efficiencies in Town structure and service delivery, including regionalization of services where appropriate;*

- The Town's IT Department was awarded two additional Community Innovation Challenge (CIC) grants: Munis financial management software host sharing for the City of Northampton and hosting the property assessment database for the City of West Springfield. Both projects will generate recurring annual host fee revenues to the Town to support the operating budget.
- An analyst from the Collins Center at UMass Boston is completing an updated analysis in the on the feasibility of creating a regional public safety dispatch operation hosted by Amherst for the towns of Amherst, Hadley, and Pelham.
- The adopted FY 16 Town budget growth is smaller than increases in the past three years. Long-term planning and ongoing initiatives have reigned in growing health insurance and other benefits costs and delivered services in as cost-effective manner as possible. Employee/retiree health insurance rates will remain unchanged in FY 16 in contrast to industry trends. The total health insurance appropriation in the General Fund is virtually level funded from FY 15. This is the direct result of proactive multi-year efforts by the Town to stabilize employee health care costs by eliminating the costly indemnity plan, adding HMO's and the option of purchasing lower cost Canadian prescription drugs, increasing employee contributions, and increasing premiums to appropriate levels to pay claims and restore reserve levels in the Health Claims Trust Fund to required levels.

*c. Negotiating contracts through the collective bargaining process that are reflective of the community's capability and willingness to support, and mindful of reasonable and cautions projections for the next few years;*

- The Town has collective bargaining agreements in place for the 3-year period ending June 30, 2016 with all but one bargaining unit, the Police Supervisors. We are in a mediation and arbitration process with the assistance of the state Joint Labor Management Committee.

*d. Pursuing increased economic development to increase the tax base and reduce the burden on residential property taxpayers.*

- On October 21, Governor Patrick came to downtown Amherst to announce that the Town had been awarded a \$1.5 million Mass Works infrastructure grant to bury 4000 feet of primary and secondary electrical, cable and telephone wires on East Pleasant, North Pleasant, Triangle, and Pray Streets to facilitate new multistory development, including Kendrick Place slated for occupancy this summer and a second project One East Pleasant, a 84-unit mixed use structure at the former Carriage Shops. Across from Kendrick Park, North

Downtown offers a wonderful opportunity for Amherst to redevelop a very important section of downtown into an economically vibrant, 21st century innovation district for our knowledge-based economy, anchored by new housing and innovative collaboration and live/work spaces. Burial of utility wires will be completed in 2015.

- In December, the Town-Gown Steering Committee received a final Housing & Economic Development Plan from our consultants U3 Advisors and forwarded it and a letter to UMass Amherst Chancellor Kumble Subbaswamy and myself. The 22-member committee cited the analysis provided by consultants U3 Advisors this fall as a “valuable starting point” and recommended creating a University-Town of Amherst Collaborative (UTAC) to coordinate continuing efforts. The committee also recommended hiring an economic development director, exploring mixed-use development sites, pursuing public-private development partnerships, and creating a university “anchor strategy” for segments of the local economy. My recommended FY 16 municipal budget which was approved by Town Meeting included funding for the Town’s first full-time Economic development Director, who will report directly to me. The chancellor and I will be announcing appointments to UTAC and its three subcommittees later in June.

2. *The Town Manager shall develop strategies for the long term financial health of the Town.*

- a. Developing strategies for handling long range post-employment obligations;*
- b. Developing strategies for maintaining an excellent bond rating;*
- c. Engaging the legislature to adopting to create helpful policies.*

- Over the past three years, Town Meeting has supported my recommendations to put \$2.1 million into the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Fund for the Town, including the School Department. In my proposed FY 16 budget, we will again appropriate funds for the Town and Schools for OPEB in the regular budget. The Water and Sewer Funds, and for the first time the Transportation Fund, will cover their Annual Required Contributions for OPEB, an amount that funds its approximate 15% share of the Town’s long-term liability. We will also recommend again earmarking federal Medicare Part D reimbursements to the OPEB Trust Fund.
- On January 30, I announced that Standard & Poor's Ratings Services (S&P) reaffirmed its long-term rating on Amherst’s general obligation bonds at AA+. The AA+ rating is the second highest rating S&P assigns. Standard & Poor’s analyzed the Town’s finances on five major criteria and based its rating on its assessment of the following factors for the town:
  - A strong economy, with access to the broad and diverse Springfield metropolitan statistical area (MSA), and anchored by the University of Massachusetts-Amherst;
  - Strong budgetary flexibility, with available reserves above 10% of general fund expenditures for the most recent three audited years;
  - Strong budgetary performance on a total governmental funds and general fund basis;
  - Very strong liquidity, providing very strong cash levels to cover both debt service and expenditures;
  - Very strong management conditions led by good financial policies; and
  - A very strong debt and contingent liability position characterized by low debt service as a percent of total governmental funds expenditures.
- Last fall, I was elected by my city and town manager peers to serve on the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association’s (MMMA) Executive Committee in 2015. In that

capacity, I serve as a voting member of the Massachusetts Municipal Association's (MMA) Board of Directors to offer guidance on statewide municipal needs and to foster a positive and productive working relationship with the State Legislature and newly elected Governor Charlie Baker. I also participate in Boston at the State House several times per year on the Local Government Advisory Commission (LGAC) chaired by Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito.

3. *The Town Manager shall, in the preparation of the annual budget, assure conformance with the Select Board Budget Policy Guidelines.*

- The adopted FY 15 budget is in conformance with the Select Board Budget Policy Guidelines. In January, my proposed FY 16 municipal budget was funded at \$21,599,749, an overall increase of 2.5%. It exactly met the Finance Committee's guideline of a 2.5% increase from FY 15. My proposal was also responsive to the Select Board's FY 16 Budget Policy Guidelines to the Town Manager dated December 21, 2014. My recommended FY 16 budget proposal was balanced and used conservative revenue and spending assumptions while still being able to prioritize social services funding, restore two police officer positions to the Amherst Police Department that had been cut several years ago, and hire an Economic Development Director to identify building and business opportunities that build upon the economic engines of our local colleges and university, our highly educated population, and our unique community environment. At the 2015 Annual Town Meeting, a floor amendment was approved that added \$105,000 to the Community Services budget.

4. *The Town Manager shall properly administer the adopted budget.*

- Quarterly budget/actual reports are presented to the Select Board and Finance Committee including staff reports on issues, trends, and results.

### **Relationship with the Select Board**

5. *The Town Manager shall maintain a professional and effective relationship with the Select Board by:*

- Providing regular communications to the Select Board about matters relevant to their responsibilities and concerns including the consideration of changes and additions to Town programs and initiatives;*
- Responding to communications from members of the Select Board;*
- Recognizing issues or changes with a direct or significant impact on the community, and falls within the Select Board's authority to provide feedback;*
- Allowing the Select Board opportunity to provide feedback on policy/practice initiatives and changes before implementation;*
- Involving the Select Board in the determination of collective bargaining strategies for the current contract process, and keeping us updated on its progress;*
- Informing the Select Board regarding litigation strategies and proposed settlements of litigation, and keeping us updated on the progress of litigation;*
- Ensuring that all members of the Select Board are aware of anything significant before it appears in the newspaper.*

- I have continued my practice of email and phone alerts and have offered more detailed reports and project updates at Select Board meetings. I have met regularly with the Select Board in executive session to keep you updated on collective bargaining strategy, efforts to facilitate and ultimately preserve affordable housing at Rolling Green Apartments, and on real estate matters.
6. *Develop a unified process and communication strategy for responding to public inquiries and requests.*
- I have charged Assistant to the Town Manager Debra Puppel to have the Town Manager’s Office coordinate with department heads and staff to respond more timely and effectively to citizen inquiries and requests for service.
  - In my recommended (and ultimately adopted) FY 16 budget, I asserted that good customer service is fundamental to good government. The department that is most often contacted by the public is the Department of Public Works. I recommended the addition of a DPW Administrative Analyst position, which will both provide additional staff support to respond to residents’ questions, and more importantly, work on systems to push information out to our customers before they have to make a call to DPW. The analyst will also implement a substantially improved work order system and build upon our successful launch of Amherst Stat, our performance measurement program developed with the Collins Center at the University of Massachusetts Boston.
  - In January, the IT Department launched an improved Town website [www.amherstma.gov](http://www.amherstma.gov). Improvements and goals of new website include:
    - Mobile optimization (for handheld and tablet users);
    - Simple more minimalistic look and feel;
    - Simple homepage navigation showcasing the most used portions of the website;
    - Improved solution for the public to submit and track requests through integration of SeeClickFix technology [www.seeclickfix.com](http://www.seeclickfix.com), a solution we have named “Amherst Connect” that includes a simple yet powerful mobile app that provides tools for submitting and tracking requests.

### **Long Range Planning**

7. *The Town Manager shall provide the Select Board with a detailed assessment of Town-owned buildings regarding their current use, and anticipated future benefit and liability. He will make recommendations on whether or not it is in the Town’s best interest to maintain ownership of each one. If any recommendations are to repurpose a building or not maintain its ownership, he will suggest how best to proceed.*
- At your June 15 meeting, Facilities Director Ron Bohonowicz and I will present our first town-wide Building Assessment Report briefly summarizing current uses and long-term recommendations for use/disposal of each building. The report will be updated regularly and contains a summary list of municipal buildings and one-page profiles of each.
  - Detailed individual project proposals for many Town-owned buildings are included in our ongoing five year capital planning process. For example, renovations are underway for

handicapped accessibility at the East Street School to accommodate the relocated LSSE program and administration. CDBG funds for barrier removal were included on our February application for major upgrades to Bangs Community Center public restrooms and restoration of an outdoor patio on the southwest corner the building for senior and other programming needs.

- We have reached a major milestone in our efforts to locate a community health center in the Bangs Community Center. In late May, I completed negotiations with the Hilltown Community Health Center and signed a license (lease) agreement to locate a satellite health center in the Bangs Community Center in ground floor space currently occupied by LSSE. The initial lease will be a 5-year term commencing January 1, 2016 with rent adjusting upward annually. The January 1 date fits well with our calendar for relocating LSSE to East Street School and for HCHC's fundraising and project planning calendar. HCHC submitted a federal HRSA grant application and have included the signed license agreement and letter of consent as part of their application. The grant would be used to fund the interior retrofitting of the space at Bangs for use as a medical/dental clinic. Staff work on this project has been outstanding. Julie Federman, Ron Bohonowicz, Dave Ziomek, Nate Malloy, Rob Morra, and Debra Puppel have assisted with great skill. Shirin Everett at Kopelman & Paige helped tremendously with the license agreement and letter of consent.
  - I have just awarded a contract to Weston & Sampson, a full-service engineering firm, to complete a public works facilities needs assessment. The study to be completed in 2015 will give the Town sufficient information on DPW facilities needs and potential costs. I plan to use it alongside the facilities planning analyses already completed or underway for a new Fire Station headquarters, Jones Library renovation/expansion, and Wildwood School renovation/expansion, to construct a detailed town-wide project sequencing and financing plan by early 2016.
  - The Amherst Public Art Commission asked me to work with them to invite arts, community, higher education, and business leaders to a special meeting on October 23 to discuss and help prioritize how Amherst should approach the development of public art in its downtown. The group is helping the Town consider whether and how to:
    - establish a Cultural District in Amherst, as outlined and designated by the Massachusetts Cultural Council;
    - create a Percent for Art program to raise funds to support and maintain a public art program;
    - coordinate the art efforts of such entities as the Amherst Art Walk, the Amherst Public Art Commission, the B.I.D., and the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce;
    - conduct a series of representative focus groups on what Amherst residents would like to see happen regarding the arts for Amherst.
8. *The Town Manager shall help Amherst become a greener, more sustainable community by initiating and advocating for new "green" efforts and programs, and he shall inform the Select Board and the community about these efforts and their results.*
- In my dual roles as Town Manager and chair of the PVTA Advisory Board, I worked with community stakeholders including the Town's Public Transportation and Bicycle Committee and the Amherst Survival Center to offer input to the PVTA's 2014 Comprehensive Service Analysis of regional public bus transportation services, including suggestions to modify or

enhance bus service in Amherst and the region. In September, improved PVTA bus service to North Amherst and across Town was launched at less cost to the Town and resulted in an approximately 13% increase in ridership in the first six months of enhanced service.

- The Town's Sustainability Coordinator Stephanie Ciccarello helped to secure a second Green Communities grant for energy efficiency upgrades to the Town Hall, Police Station, and North Fire Station. She also led a new grant-funded initiative to purchase an electronic vehicle and install multiple charging stations in the downtown.
- In addition to energy efficiency initiatives, the Town's sustainability efforts include our project planting 2,000 trees over three years that is being led by DPW Director of Parks and Grounds Alan Snow and his crew.
- The Town and its original project partner BlueWave Capital are not proceeding with the originally conceived project to install a ground-mounted solar array at the old landfill on Belchertown Road. BlueWave submitted the project for Solar Renewable Energy Credits under a state program called SREC1. That program has since expired. Because of the litigation surrounding this project, BlueWave could not move forward with permitting and construction. WMECo removed this project from their approved list in June 2014. The Town is considering next steps, including the possible issuance of a RFP for prospective roof and ground mounted solar on municipal properties and buildings.

9. *The Town Manager shall focus attention on affordable housing needs in Amherst by:*
- a. Supporting the preservation of current affordable housing and the creation of more housing that is safe, decent and affordable for individuals and families at low and moderate income levels;*
  - b. Keeping the Select Board and the larger community apprised of Amherst's status on the State's Subsidized Housing Index (SHI) and factors impacting our SHI percentage in the short-and long-term;*
  - c. Reporting periodically on the status of the seasonal shelter and recommending changes to that agreement as needed.*

- Last summer, the Town was the recipient of a Housing Hero Award from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership in recognition of the Town's successes creating and preserving affordable housing units at Olympia Oaks and Rolling Green Apartments.
- Staff and I worked with developer HAP Housing on Olympia Oaks, a 42-unit affordable housing complex on Town-owned land at the end of Olympia Drive, and welcomed its first families as tenants in September 2014.
- Throughout 2014, staff and I worked to preserve affordable units at Rolling Green, a 204-unit mixed-income community. The Town of Amherst demonstrated its support for this important affordability preservation project by committing to provide \$1,250,000 in CPA funds. To prevent eventual conversion to entirely market rate units, I helped to facilitate the sale of the property by EQR to Beacon Communities, a well-respected owner and manager of affordable housing. Beacon owns and manages 12,000 apartments throughout the northeast and has extensive experience in affordable and mixed-income housing. I expressed my strong support for Beacon Communities' One Stop application to the MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for \$1.67 million in annual Massachusetts State Low Income Housing Tax Credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation, and preservation of Rolling Green at Amherst. In October, we celebrated DHCD's grant award with

Undersecretary Aaron Gornstein, Beacon Communities, and tenants at Rolling Green. Making state tax credits available to the project will ensure that the necessary improvements are undertaken that will allow Rolling Green to continue to provide high quality affordable housing to residents of the Town of Amherst. Beacon has committed to lease 20% of the units (41) to tenants at 50% of area median income (AMI), with 5 of those units restricted at 30% AMI.

- Using Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding Town Meeting approved in May 2014, two affordable units will be constructed by Habitat for Humanity in 2015 at the Hawthorne property on East Pleasant Street. The property was acquired by the Town a couple of years ago with CPA funds for affordable housing, open space, and recreation purposes. A community meeting is planned for later this month.
- In January, DHCD notified the Town that with the addition of 42 affordable units at Olympia Oaks and the preservation of units at Rolling Green, the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) of low and moderate income housing units for purposes of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40B Sections 20-23 has increased to 1,076 units, or 11.18% of all units.
- Last month, Town Meeting approved Article 21 which authorizes the Select Board to file a Special Act with the State Legislature to provide local property tax incentives to property owners who build affordable units in Amherst. Staff and I will review the language of and seek the Select Board's approval at your June 15 meeting to file the Special Act. It is hoped the Legislature could act upon it sometime this year.
- Craig's Doors, the operator of the seasonal overnight emergency shelter at the First Baptist Church on North Pleasant Street, was able to secure \$200,000 in operations funding in the current year state budget. These funds, coupled with a 3-year United Way commitment, other state grants, and private fundraising, has allowed the shelter to cover all of its annual operating costs for the first time without Town funds. The Town provided \$70,000 last fall to Craig's Doors to allow them to purchase a large on-site trailer to provide guest in-take counseling and a warm space to serve an earlier evening meal prior to the shelter opening at 9:30 p.m. Craig's Doors received all local permits and began serving meals in it in April, prior to the end of this year's shelter season.

10. *The Town Manager shall maintain, through consultation with each department's staff, a recommended staffing plan that suggests the optimal number and types of positions in each department to best address current service levels and key needs. This will provide a framework for prioritizing recommendations for future hiring. Such future recommendations should address the full cost of each position, including post-employment benefits.*

- I used the preliminary staffing plan analysis developed in 2014 to identify and prioritize my recommended staffing levels in the FY 16 budget proposal submitted in January, which was ultimately approved at Town Meeting. Priority positions recommended for funding were two additional police officers, an Economic Development Director, and a DPW Customer Service Analyst. Also per the staffing analysis, I recommended a reclassified Public Health & Community Services Director position (formerly the Health Director), who will take an active role working with the Senior Center, Veterans' Services Department, other non-profits, and in the future a satellite Community Health Center in the Bangs Center to ensure that our citizens and neighbors receive quality health services, preventive services, and other

advice and counseling. The Bangs Community Center already offers programs and services to seniors, veterans, and other underserved populations and co-locating a Community Health Center there could enhance services to these groups and others.

11. *The Town Manager shall keep the Select Board apprised of the plan and processes for improving the public infrastructure.*
  - a. *Prioritizing and implementing repairs to sidewalks, multi-use paths, roadways, parking areas and intersections;*
  - b. *Developing a strategy for evaluating traffic infrastructure;*
  - c. *Planning and implementing improvements to public areas; parks, commons, greenways so that they function well and contribute to the overall aesthetic and welcome of the town;*
  - d. *Planning and policy for down town and village centers;*
  - e. *Working with the BID to evaluate and recommend improvements for the Downtown.*
- DPW Superintendent Guilford Mooring, Assistant Superintendent Amy Rusiecki, and Town Engineer Jason Skeels, with assistance from our IT GIS Coordinator Mike Olkin, are implementing new pavement management software to quantify road conditions by type of road, estimated costs for repair/reconstruction, and development of a prioritized paving plan for 2015 and the years ahead.
- I am pleased that Governor Baker in January released an additional \$100 million in Chapter 90 road maintenance funds (to a total of \$300 million) as has been championed by the Legislature. This comes after multi-year lobbying efforts by cities and towns and the MMA and fulfills a campaign commitment he made. Amherst will receive \$1,260,346 in 2015, a 50% increase of \$420,115, which will allow the Town to undertake crucial road repairs in our neighborhoods.
- Last September, staff working with my appointed Transportation Plan Task Force hired Nelson/Nygaard, a nationally-known consulting firm, to work with them to prepare a Transportation Plan for Amherst. The plan was completed this spring and I have extended the appointment of Task Force members to help us with implementation. Transportation Plan Goals are to:
  - Determine the most optimal, cost-effective, and practical strategies and policies;
  - Protect town from traffic and parking pressure from future developments;
  - Improve connections between village centers;
  - Elevate profile of alternative travel options;
  - Enhance regional connections;
  - Create safer streets that support an economically and environmentally sustainable future for Amherst.
- Improvements to the Amity Street parking lot and repairs to Boltwood Garage concrete walkways are recommended to be undertaken in 2015 with funds from the FY 16 Transportation Fund capital budget. I am exploring resubmittal of a state PARC grant application in July for improvements to the North Common adjacent to the Main Street lot. The needed Main Street parking lot rehabilitation could be undertaken with FY 17 Transportation Fund capital appropriations in coordination with a PARC grant project in calendar 2016.

- I provided staff support for Downtown Parking Forums co-sponsored by the Select Board and Planning Board. The goal of the first forum on September 23 was modest – to provide an overview and allow for public comment. The second forum in January was intended to confirm the issues raised and begin to analyze and categorize the issues - and begin to consider potential solutions. All of this is intended to be a community dialogue about how and what changes might be needed. There was good turnout and constructive input at both forums on both broad concepts and specific topics, such as:
  - Consider meter rates and increase predictability;
  - Acknowledge the shortage of parking downtown for use by customers and patrons;
  - How and who should create new parking; where and how much?
  - Seek better management of existing parking lots both private and public;
  - Evaluate capacity of permit parking; is there room for expansion?
  - Review Municipal Parking District; Does it need to be changed to require parking?

At Forum #3, community members prioritized potential improvements to our parking system as part of a facilitated event. Senior Planner Jeff Bagg is summarizing the community feedback and results from the forums in a report to the Select Board and Planning Board. He plans to present his report at the June 15 Select Board meeting.

- I am working with staff for the Select Board, Planning Board, and Public Works Committee on a co-sponsored series of “community conversations” about the main intersection and infrastructure in North Amherst between Pine/Meadow Streets and the Mill River. The Town has invested significant time and energy on various projects during the past 18 months including Pine Street paving, upgrades to water and sewer capacity, paving and sidewalk upgrades to Sunderland Road, and bus service improvements. The first forum is scheduled for June 24 and will be similar to the structure of the Parking Forums.
- On December 1, the Amherst IT Department (outgoing IT Director Kris Pacunas, incoming IT Director Sean Hannon, staff members Mike Olkin, Maria Racca, Bill Glover, Rich Dudkiewicz, Gabe Owen) earned the 2014 Best in Massachusetts – Excellence in Technology Award in the Improving Government Services category at the 4th Annual Massachusetts Digital Government Summit in Boston. The award highlighted IT’s successful launch of the largest and fastest free municipal downtown wifi network in the Commonwealth, our Open Gov to the Max initiative that includes an interactive online Open Checkbook, and our leadership collaborating with regional partners on IT services and solutions.
- In September, I completed negotiations with the Downtown Amherst Business Improvement District (BID) and signed new 3-year MOU for the period July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2017. This continues the Town’s successful partnership with the BID along with UMass and Amherst College who have executed similar MOUs. Key elements of the renewed MOU are:
  - Caps annual Town contribution at \$30,000/year (funded in Transportation Fund);
  - In-kind support for one large event per year (Celebrate Amherst Block Party – this year held on Thursday, September 18 from 5-9 pm on North Pleasant Street); old MOU said up to 4 events/year;
  - Town/BID collaboration on downtown maintenance and landscaping programs; ex. 3 new tree boxes installed to beautify Main Street;
  - Collaboration on planning future transportation (PVT/BID Trolley), parking, public rest room options in the downtown; capital planning for streets, sidewalks, parks, intersections.

- The Town is working closely with the Amherst BID and Five Colleges, Inc. to explore an exciting opportunity to bring super high speed internet in an initiative called Amherst Downtown Gigabit. I recommended and the BID agreed to fund an engineering study to create specs and a preliminary cost estimate. A report is expected this summer.

### **Staff and Personnel Relations**

12. *The Town Manager shall manage Town staff and improve their effectiveness in delivering the services our community relies on and shall keep the Select Board informed with periodic updates about the implementation progress of action steps identified in the Human Resources Audit.*
  - a. *Maintaining high staff morale by working toward a positive work place culture and providing adequate resources for staff to be effective and successful;*
  - b. *Increasing communication between himself and staff at all levels, to inform, engage and solicit feedback;*
  - c. *Encouraging a workplace culture of civility, mentoring and receptivity to new ideas and innovations for improved service delivery;*
  - d. *Ensuring that staff has the necessary tools to work efficiently;*
  - e. *Recruiting, retaining and assigning the best qualified personnel;*
  - f. *Foster attitudes of helpfulness and courtesy toward the public.*
- I appointed Public Health Nurse Jennifer Brown to chair an employee-driven fitness and health initiative begun last fall that they have named AmFit. Over 300 active and retired employee members of the Town’s health insurance plans purchased discounted Fitbits that monitor and encourage mobility. Walking groups, swimming, and other activities and programs are being brainstormed by a very enthusiastic employee team.
- Amherst Stat – The Town retained a UMass Boston Collins Center analyst to work on DPW performance measurement and improved work order system.
- I have made a point to offer staff recognitions in meetings, televised Select Board meetings, and via email to staff for exemplary service.
- On December 17, the Personnel Board voted to recommend to the Select Board to amend the Personnel Procedures Manual to provide a Sick and Personal Leave benefit to a group of employees currently defined in the manual as Part-Time Without Benefits. This benefit would provide up to 60 hours of Sick and Personal Leave per fiscal year on a prorated “hours worked” basis to part time employees who work an average of 10 hours per week year round. The Select Board approved this policy change in February effective July 1, 2015. I am working with staff, the Personnel Board, and citizens whose Town Meeting petition article this spring was referred to the Personnel Board to make further refinements to the policy.

### **Community and Intergovernmental Relations**

13. *The Town Manager shall continue to strengthen relationships with UMass, Amherst and Hampshire Colleges and engage them in;*
  - a. *Mitigating the impacts of a significant student population: on neighborhoods, on demand for public safety resources, on parking and traffic issues, and municipal issues;*

- b. *Developing our partnership and strategies, through regular meetings, with Amherst College that reflect shared interests and concerns;*
  - c. *Developing our partnership and strategies, through regular meetings, with Hampshire College that that reflect shared interests and concerns;*
  - d. *Pursuing issues of mutual benefit to the Town and the academic institutions including cooperative approaches that encourage “spin off” business development, the Innovation Economy, and the arts and culture in Amherst;*
  - e. *Working with the institutions to facilitate the development of new student housing off-campus and on-campus;*
  - f. *The Town Manager shall report periodically on the ongoing efforts and plans of the University for improving the campus and campus life to encourage a constructive relationship between the students and the Town and, as importantly, to discourage their occasionally more dangerous behaviors;*
  - g. *Reporting on the Strategic Partnership agreement.*
- In 2014, the Town successfully launched our Residential Rental Property Permitting Program per recommendations from our Safe & Healthy Neighborhoods Work Group. We have achieved 100% compliance with the Residential Rental Property Permitting Bylaw with support from landlords and tenants to document and resolve building and sanitation code compliance issues and improve parking plans on or near the property.
  - Last year, I supported the university’s decision to hire former Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis to develop strategies to prevent occurrences such as the pre-St. Patrick’s Day disturbances known as the “Blarney Blowout” from happening in the future and pledged cooperation of Town and public safety leaders to review strategies and tactics with a completely open mind to how collectively we can each contribute to workable solutions. The Davis Report was completed in September. The Town supports recommendations that are focused on prevention strategies, and mitigation if those are inadequate, including best practices for police response. The report recommends a number of actions to be taken by the university and the Town. I applauded the chancellor for having the wisdom and courage to pursue initiatives like reasonable guest policy restrictions, alcohol enforcement, and the hiring of neighborhood liaisons. I committed the Town and Police Department (APD) leadership to working with UMass and do our part to increase and improve APD/UMPD communication/collaboration thru joint planning in advance of major events and joint EOC/command as needed. APD is committed to community policing and is taking proactive steps including additional joint training with UMPD on implementation of additional community policing techniques, relationship building with students, and hiring of additional police officers to fully embrace the community policing model. Police resources are a priority for the Town and we secured local and state resources for training and manpower for large events, including preparing for this March 7. The combination of Town and Gown strategies implemented on March 7 resulted in a safe environment free from any large-scale disturbances. This success was due to the team effort from the Town, UMass administration, UMPD, students, Amherst police and our mutual aid partners, apartment complex owners and managers, downtown bar owners, and businesses. For the weekend of March 7-8, there were only 9 arrests.
  - In December, the jointly funded Town-Gown Study to develop a Housing & Economic Development Plan was completed. Recommendations to the chancellor and I include:

- Creation of a body to oversee and facilitate the joint work on these continued housing and economic development efforts, along the lines of the University - Town of Amherst Collaborative (UTAC) recommendation;
- Further exploration by such a body of the sites identified for potential mixed-use development: University Drive, Mass. Ave., and the North Pleasant St. corridor
- Utilization of a Master Plan or similar model;
- Focused pursuit of the use of public-private partnerships for addressing potential development;
- Creation of an “Anchor Strategy” by the University that embraces the Town of Amherst, and includes arts and culture plans, encouraging academic research spin-offs to locate in town, incentivizing faculty and staff housing in town, and creating more opportunities for local restaurants;
- Hiring of an Economic Development Director by the Town of Amherst.
- New LEED-certified student housing is under construction for fall 2016 occupancy. Olympia Place will house approximately 260 beds in suite-style dormitory apartments in a complex located near the UMass campus at the end of Olympia Drive. Ground floor space will include an on-site management apartment.
- Staff and I are working with Amherst College on the coordination on building projects and campus planning efforts that include development a long-term facilities and grounds plan.
- Hampshire College is pursuing two on-campus building projects, the RW Kern Center and a partnership with the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, by taking the “Living Building Challenge”, the highest standard for sustainability in the built environment. The two buildings will achieve net zero energy through on-site renewable energy and energy efficient design strategies and net zero water through an on-site rainwater recapture and reuse system and composting toilets. Town public works and health staff are working with Hampshire to review/revise Town drinking water and health codes and practices to recognize this leading edge construction method.
- Working with student leaders from UMass, Amherst College, and Hampshire College, I convened this spring a Student Town Advisory Board which shall meet twice per semester and more often as needed. The agenda for each meeting shall include a feedback opportunity for Town issues impacting, or of interest to, students.
- On June 2 at the International Town-Gown Association’s Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., I joined UMass’ Associate Vice Chancellor for University Relations Nancy Buffone, Director of Community Relations Tony Maroulis, and Amherst BID Executive Director Sarah la Cour on a panel presentation about how the active participation by the Town, UMass, and Amherst College in the success of the Amherst BID is an effective economic development tool.
- I am working with the chancellor to finalize terms of a successor Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Town and university to details fiscal and other support on a host of Town-Gown issues including public safety, water and sewer, economic development, and others. Terms from the existing agreement remain in force.

14. *The Town Manager shall actively engage the community, and the media, to provide information about Town successes and challenges.*

- I utilize weekly briefings with members of the print media and also use Twitter to help keep the community informed.
- The Town-Gown Study Steering Committee that I appointed was broadly representative of the community and involved key stakeholder groups to work with me and staff to develop housing and economic development strategies. In 2015, I will work with the university and the community to launch UTAC, the University-Town of Amherst Collaborative.
- I am working with School Superintendent Maria Geryk on a joint initiative we are calling “Amherst Together” to try and bring together Town and School leaders, residents, and businesses committed to action steps to build greater equity and inclusiveness through community collaboration.

15. *The Town Manager shall maintain an awareness of developments and planning in nearby jurisdictions and report on their relation and effects on Amherst.*

- Two examples are my work as chair of the PVTA Advisory Board to develop and implement service improvements in Amherst and the region, my participation on the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) ranking and advising Mass DOT on transportation funding priorities for Western Massachusetts.