



To: Town Council  
Fr: Paul Bockelman  
Town Manager  
Dt: September 5, 2019  
Re: Town Manager Report for September 9, 2019

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### **Town Manager Update:**

- Coffee with Town Manager: The next coffee Cuppa Joe with Paul will be on September 13<sup>th</sup>. I will be with Human Resources Director Evelyn Rivera-Riffenburg at Amherst Coffee from 7:30 – 9:00 a.m.
- Bulletin Board: Town staff have established an official “Town Bulleting Board” as referenced and defined in the Town Charter. This is the place where the Town Clerk posts official notices of meetings and upon which other official Town notices are posted on the Town website. We have established a new, all-in-one-place, easy-to-find repository of these notices which can be found at [www.amherstma.gov/bulletin](http://www.amherstma.gov/bulletin). People may also subscribe to receive notices of posting on the Bulletin Board. This will not be a substitute for meeting postings on the calendar, but will serve to meet the requirements of postings as determined by the Town Charter. I have attached a chart that shows the Charter posting requirements.
- Massachusetts Municipal Association:
  - The MMA’s legislative breakfast meetings will be on September 20<sup>th</sup> in Becket and Wilbraham. These are useful events to hear from the MMA staff and local representatives on events at the State and Federal level.
  - The MMA Annual Meeting and Trade Show is on January 24-25 in Boston. Like last year, Town staff will register Council members and Council members will be responsible for arranging for accommodations.
  - The Massachusetts Municipal Councilors’ Association (MMCA), of which all Town Councilors are members, is holding its next meeting on September 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at Northeastern University in Boston. The topic is climate resilience and registration is free but they ask that you pre-register. See the article in the most recent edition of The Beacon.
  - The MMCA is seeking councilors for its Board of Directors. Applications must be submitted by October 18<sup>th</sup>. Board responsibilities include attendance at MMCA and MMA board meetings and participation in the planning of MMCA meetings.
- Schools:
  - Sean Mangano announced his resignation from the School Department as its Finance Director. He will continue to serve the District and the Town until December 31<sup>st</sup>. Sean is

a talented leader, amazing communicator, and supremely calm presence in a very difficult job in a challenging community. We have all benefitted from Sean's work and he is one of the best people to work with. We will miss him immensely.

- The Amherst and Pelham Regional School Planning Committee concluded its work and issued a report. The report concluded that the regionalization of the two local school districts of Amherst and Pelham regionalization was not in the interest of both towns at this time. The full report was sent to the Town Council directly. The Board is now completed its mission and has demised.
- The new school year kicked off on Tuesday, August 27<sup>th</sup> with the First Day Celebration on the Town Common. It was a great success with terrific attendance.
- Public Shade Tree: The Planning Board and Tree Warden conducted a public hearing on the request to remove about ten trees, including one magnificent catalpa tree that is in declining health, from the public way on South East Street near the intersection with College Street. A resident submitted a letter of opposition which generated an automatic appeal. The appeal, according to the Town Attorney, is to the Town Manager. I attended the public hearing and am reviewing the information submitted and will render a decision shortly.
- Training: The Town will be hosting a "Boards and Commissions" training session on October 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the Bangs Community Center. The training will be organized and presented by the Inspector General's office. Information on the training can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/are-you-a-member-of-a-public-board-or-commission-know-your-responsibilities>
- Appointments:
  - I will be referring the Disability Access Advisory Committee, Board of Registrars, Agricultural Commission, and Personnel Board appointments shortly.
  - We are interviewing for the Public Art Commission, Council on Aging, and Water Supply Protection Committee.
  - We are advertising for the Cultural Council, CDBG Advisory Committee, Community Preservation Act Committee, Munson Library Building Trustees (South Amherst residents preferred per the committee charge), and Transportation Advisory Committee.
  - I am also seeking a student member for the Human Rights Commission and just had a resignation from the LSSE Commission and we are seeking interested volunteers for that committee.
- Craig's Doors Shelter: The State Division of Housing and Community Development, the primary source of funds for the Shelter, made a site visit and is working with the Craig's Doors Board of Directors on an improvement plan for the Board. The Town is actively assisting the State and the Board as they explore multiple options for ensuring that the Shelter is able to reopen on time November 1<sup>st</sup> under the same model as in prior years. This is a very large challenge that and Town staff are fully engaged in the process. The Town's Health Director has taken the lead on this situation.
- Community Participation Officers (CPOs):
  - CPOs were a strong presence at the First Day Celebration on the Town Common. They partnered with the Town Council and the Ranked Choice Voting Committee to help educate residents on that process.
  - CPOs will be at the BID Block Party working with other Town staff and the Energy and Climate Action Committee and the Ranked-Choice Voting Commission. They are able to provide support to the Town Council for whatever the Council needs for that evening.
  - CPOs are working with the State to offer an electricity supplier awareness/equity forum.

- Town Hall and Workplaces:
  - We are evaluating options to rehabilitate the front doors of Town Hall, which are original to the building and suffering from wear and tear.
  - We will be updating the Town website to bring it into compliance for those with disabilities and to design it with an eye toward “mobile first” which is how more and more people are accessing the website. In this process, we will be seeking members of the public to advise on the project.
- Town-Gown:
  - The University’s new school year will kicked off with the annual Community Breakfast on Tuesday, August 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 a.m.
  - The University of Massachusetts welcomed an entering class of approximately 5,800 students, an increase of 790 compared to last year. Along with the first-year class, nearly 1,050 transfer students will be on campus this Fall.
  - I met with Hampshire College’s new president, Ed Wingenbach and we discussed the opportunities, challenges, and values that the Town sees in the College and its land holdings. He and his family, including two school-aged children, are living in South Amherst.
  - Strategic Partnership Agreement:
    - Staff are meeting internally and with representatives of the University on a renewal of the Strategic Partnership Agreement negotiations.
    - The School Superintendent has been engaged in the process.
    - Discussions have revolved around four basic areas: Town services (schools, public safety, etc.), communication, economic development, and one-time benefits.
- Library:
  - A large oil painting that hung in the Jones Library at the entrance was damaged by a vandal. The oil painting, Portrait of a Nobleman, was originally acquired by Amherst businessman William Burnett. He had plans to establish a free public arts gallery in town and built the gallery behind his house. His sudden death in 1924 halted his plans, but his children donated 117 paintings as well as sculpture and furniture to the Jones Library in 1926 as a way to keep alive Burnett’s dream of providing art to Amherst residents. When the Jones Library was completed in 1928, the William Beechey painting (Portrait of a Nobleman) was one of several hung throughout the library.
  - The painting is currently at the conservator’s studio and we expect it to return to the library in October when it will be put back on display. The Library is making the best of this unfortunate occurrence by using it as an opportunity to relocate the painting to another location, something they had wanted to do for several years so that the first thing people see upon entering the Jones is not an English Earl often mistaken for Lord Jeffery Amherst. Because of its size and weight along with the delicate nature of the frame, Library staff haven’t wanted to risk moving it in the past. Since it had to be taken down to be repaired, they now have the perfect opportunity to make the entranceway more inviting.
- Economic Development:
  - The Downtown Parking Working Group held a public forum on parking in the downtown area on August 28<sup>th</sup>. The consultants are reviewing the comments received and finalizing the final report. They are scheduled to present to the Town Council on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The draft report and slide decks from the public forums can be found here: <https://www.amherstma.gov/2241/Downtown-Parking-Working-Group> A copy of the

final report will be placed in your packet prior to the 23<sup>rd</sup>. I encourage you to review the draft report in advance as I don't anticipate the final report from the consultants will be ready until a few days before your meeting. No action is expected of the Town Council on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

- The Amherst Business Improvement District's new executive director, Gabrielle Gould, started work on August 26<sup>th</sup>. A recent Amherst transplant, Gould has extensive executive leadership background in the nonprofit sector with significant fundraising experience and a record of success in building successful organizations. Along with her husband, she has started and operated two successful small businesses on Nantucket and served as a vice president for business development at Nantucket Bank. She is reaching out to the Town Council to meet and discuss your visions of the downtown business sector.
- The Economic Development Director will be speaking at the Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education forum entitled, "'1st Look" at What Municipal Counsel Needs to Know When Cannabis Comes to Town" on October 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Public Safety:
  - The Police Department will have added patrols to educate and enforce safety around crosswalks and speeding on Town roads. This is funded through a Federal grant obtained from the Executive Office on Public Safety.
  - The Police Department will have a detail officer at the intersection of Meadow Street and Route 116 in North Amherst to assist pedestrians who may seek to cross the road. This will be in response to the recent opening of the recreational marijuana facility. The officer will be there during the times that Rise is open. The Police Chief will evaluate the need for an officer after this weekend.
  - A former employee wanted to recognize the incredible service provided by our emergency medical personnel. Specifically, she noted that Matt Sposito, Nick Chirekos and Adam Cormier saved her sister-in-law's life by their quick response and for the successful lifesaving efforts they performed after her relative suffered a cardiac event. Her heart actually stopped on the way to the hospital. The incredible news is that the patient walked out of the hospital with no deficits which is a direct result of the pre-hospital care the patient received from our paramedics.
- Human Resources:
  - Two Town employees, Clerk to the Council Athena O'Keeffe and Public Health Nurse Jennifer Brown, will be enrolled in the Leadership Institute for Political and Public Impact (LIPPI) program sponsored by the Women's Fund. The program consists of about a dozen classes that focus on skill building and leadership skills. Congratulations to these young leaders for continuing to hone their skills.
  - Candidates are being interviewed to serve as minutes-takers for the Town Council committees. I anticipate we will conclude the process within the next 2-3 weeks. The School Department has hired one of the pool for their meetings.
  - The Town Clerk search continues and the interview team is interviewing.
  - Principal Assessors David Burgess will continue to serve in this role part-time until the end of the calendar year. We are actively searching for his successor.
  - Human Resources are rolling out a series of trainings for staff this fall including Customer Service, Communications, Supervisory Training, and Performance Reviews.
- Public Works:
  - I anticipate more road work will be initiated in the coming weeks. Likely projects will include Pelham Road, Henry Street, or South East Street.

- Town crews will be doing sidewalk enhancements with the work Mill Street to continue the multi-use path from the bridge to State Street.
- Community Services:
  - Senior Center: Our new Director of Senior Services has been busy meeting people in the community, reviewing the Senior Center's operations, and developing her ideas on new directions. This is a time of change for the Senior Center and, with change, comes new ways of doing things. It is important to do and I and other staff have been supporting the Director on her new initiatives. She had her first meeting with the Council on Aging and I have attached her statement to this report.
  - Health Department:
    - We are now at "Moderate" Risk for EEE transmission. Granby has been designated as Critical Risk. Belchertown, Chicopee and Ludlow are at High Risk. There are no actions needed in Amherst at this time. The Health Director is in close contact with the Superintendent of Schools, University and colleges.
    - The Director of Public Health is working with the Superintendent of Schools to support the Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools in the exploration of potential partnerships and opportunities to support early childhood education expansion in the district.
    - The Director of Public Health has taken the lead on addressing numerous challenges that revolve around how the Town addresses its responsibility to those experiencing homelessness including actively engaging in the future of the Craig's Doors shelter and concerns about uninvited camping on private property. She works closely with the Police Department, other public entities, and private organizations.
- Conservation and Development:
  - Electric Charging Stations: Construction continues on electric vehicle charging stations. In addition to the charging station in the lower level of the Boltwood Garage, there will be a second dual-head charging station. Stations have been added to the Pray Street lot. And stations are under construction or soon will be under construction on the upper level of the Boltwood Garage and in the Kellogg Street parking lot.
  - Four affordable rental units that were created as part of the development at 70 University Drive have been added to the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory.
  - Kendrick Park Playground: We are waiting to hear on the Town's application for a PARC grant for \$400,000 from the State.
  - The Planning Board and Tree Warden held a joint public hearing on the removal of shade trees on South East Street on August 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:05 p.m. I attended this hearing as the Town Manager is where appeals to decisions are lodged.

**Delegated Authority (August monthly report):**

- Short-Term Event Uses of Town Commons:
  - Friends of the Council on Aging, September 14, 2019 (rain date, September 21)
  - Big Brothers Big Sisters Daffodil Run, April 26, 2020 (annual road race)
- Short-Term Parking Requests:
  - Pray Street lot, September 3-4, 2019 (installation of electric vehicle charging stations)
- Short-Term Road or Sidewalk Closures:
  - Overlook Drive (between #60 and #75), October 6, 2019 (Block Party)

- Charter Requirement 7.6: Candidate Statements on Town Website. Submitted a list of legal questions to Town Attorney for review. Still awaiting a response from the Town Attorney.
- Charter Requirement 10.12(a): Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator. I have had conversations with the Town staff and met with the Disability Access Advisory Committee on August 6<sup>th</sup>. The DAAC had two comments. First, they did not see the need for a full-time position and thought it would be a waste of taxpayer's money. Second, they thought having a designated person on staff who was the designated ADA coordinator would create an advocate within the Town government and that would be a good thing. They hoped such a person would be more proactive in advancing the cause for moving beyond the basic legal requirements for ADA access. Currently, the Town Manager is the ADA coordinator. I do not think the Town should have a full time Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator. However, I will be evaluating options to delegate that responsibility to an appropriate staff person.
- Charter Requirement 10.12(b) and (c): Permitting Non-citizens to vote and hold elective office and lowering the voting age for Town elections. See attached legal letter from the Town Attorney.

### **Major Capital Projects:**

- North Common Restoration/Main Street Parking Lot: On hold.
- Groff Park: The contractor is making good progress, with play structures being installed and landscaping taking shape. We are hoping for a formal ribbon cutting at the end of September.
- DPW/Fire: Town staff are reviewing comments received as a result of the public meetings.
- Schools: Awaiting word from the MSBA, which is due in December. The Superintendent and I agree that it is the best course of action to prepare to bid the Crocker Farm School study and initiate the study if we are admitted into the MSBA process this year. We anticipate the study will take about two months to complete.
- Library: Two grants were awarded by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. That moves the Jones Library up and this project is now number two on the waiting list

### **Project Update:**

- East Street School: We have issued an RFP for development of the school and adjacent property for affordable and market housing. The deadline for responses is October 1<sup>st</sup>. We have been asked to extend the deadline so that developers have adequate time to respond.
- Downtown Parking: The public meeting was held on August 28<sup>th</sup>. After taking into consideration comments at that forum, the consultants will be scheduled to make their final presentation to the Town Council on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- North Amherst Library: An anonymous resident has offered a substantial challenge grant to make the building accessible and add bathrooms. I have released funds and authorized Kuhn-Riddle to develop schematics, which will help determine the true cost of such a project.
- Solar on the Landfill: The project is moving into the permitting phase with engineering plans expected to be submitted this week.
- Marijuana:
  - The Police Chief required a detail police officer at the intersection of Route 116 and Meadow Street last weekend during the move-in period at the University and first weekend of students on campus. There was very little foot traffic. This weekend he will

again have a detail officer and will determine the need going forward based on foot traffic this weekend.

- The Town received four applications from Recreational Marijuana Retailers seeking to open retail establishments in Town. This is the second request the Town has issued. The first request resulted in the award of three host community agreements. The proposals are reviewed by a Town Review Team that includes the Economic Development Director, Health Director, Planning Director, Police Chief, and a former member of the Select Board who had continued her service on the Review Team for this round only.
- I have selected two entities to work with on Host Community Agreements. At this point, it is my intention to only consider retail operators who are local, social equity candidates or those that would provide a significant benefit to the town, but will not conduct another “round” of submissions.

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

- September 17<sup>th</sup> – Joint Meeting with School Committee on Fort River School study
- September 21<sup>st</sup> – Town Council retreat
- September 23<sup>rd</sup> – Town Council meeting
- October 7<sup>th</sup> – Town Council meeting
- October 14<sup>th</sup> – Indigenous People’s Day holiday
- October 21<sup>st</sup> – Town Council meeting
- December 2<sup>nd</sup> – State of the Town

### **Other events:**

- September 13<sup>th</sup> – First Responders Picnic
- September 19<sup>th</sup> – BID Block Party
- October 3<sup>rd</sup> – Annual Chamber A+ Awards
- October 24<sup>th</sup> – Chamber Legislative Breakfast
- November 7<sup>th</sup> – Chamber Forum on Marijuana
- December 6<sup>th</sup> – Merry Maple Lighting
- December 11<sup>th</sup> – Chamber Annual Holiday Party
- January 24-25, 2020 – Massachusetts Municipal Association Annual Meeting and Trade Show

Thank you Paul

I am humbled to have been entrusted with directing the future course of senior services for the town of Amherst. And to be working at the senior center which has a sound foundation thanks to Nancy's work.

#### WHAT HAVE I DONE?

I have spent the last several weeks getting to know most of you and the community.

I've been meeting, listening, observing and taking measure of where we have been and residents' suggestions for future direction.

I've been to Cuppa Joe with the Town Manager, met with business leaders and community organizers. Reached out to public safety personnel. Recruited college students last Saturday on the sidewalks of Amherst as they toured downtown for the first time, and had dinner with the LGBT Rainbow Supper Club last night.

Just as the town chose me for this position, I chose Amherst. And in my time here thus far, I have been impressed by the kindness and collaborative spirit shown to me. I am thrilled to be part of a community that is highly engaged, thoughtful and deliberative, and reflects core values of acceptance and inclusion.

#### WHO AM I?

For those of you who are not familiar with my background, I find myself drawing daily on the skills I have developed in my career as a lawyer, social worker, ELL teacher and mindfulness instructor.

I have years of experience directing investigations of abuse, including elder abuse which means I am particularly attentive supervising the work of our social work staff and the myriad issues they daily resolve from homelessness, food insecurity, to health care access. With years of investigations in my background, I listen with a keen ear; I also listen for what is not being said, as well as noticing whose voices are missing that ought to be a part of the conversation. I am skillfully reviewing, analyzing and suggesting policies needed to effectively accomplish and promote our work - identifying issues of liability and risk management along with public need and impact.

As a social worker, I strive to understand other's perspective and be respectful of divergent opinions. I understand varying degrees of readiness for change. And I am a strong advocate for elder residents' rights.

My experience teaching English language learners shows up in the altering environment of the center - you may have noticed signs now include pictures to help ELL's decode the environment.

And my mindfulness and yoga teaching is a helpful bridge to community. I've taught a yoga class at the center to get to know residents in a sustained way.

Sharing who I am and what I bring to the table would be incomplete if I didn't also mention the work by the strong staff here at Senior Center. Without their effort and dedication the Senior Center would not function. Our effectiveness is defined by the strength of our team. The social workers, Helen and Michele, represent over 70 years of combined social work expertise. I've worked with them to implement new Intake procedures, storage and access to confidential records in compliance with the law, and case management reviews to enhance their professionalism. Jennifer the administrative assistant draws on her



deep knowledge of the community and keeps programs running smoothly amidst a robust schedule of events while serving as a vital conduit of communication with volunteers and residents. The maintenance staff is an integral part of the delivery of our services and provides a safe and welcome atmosphere. And our volunteers are the heart and soul of our community, weaving a network of movement and enrichment opportunities for residents to commune, grow, and access support. We are located at the senior center, but more importantly we are a community of people.

So, what's next?

Our task ahead is to clarify our mission and widen the circle.

I'd like to take a second to ask you to recall a time at the senior center when you felt engaged, when your work felt most meaningful – it could be an exchange with a resident, or even a volunteer -----  
Everyone have one? Now share with a partner...

Connecting with the meaning of our work reconnects us to why we are here and helps us to stay engaged serving elders. I asked you to do that exercise because it exemplifies our task to remain engaged with the mission of the senior center to serve elders even as we shift, even as we experience change, and we widen the circle.

You might have noticed that the Town Manager shifted the title of my job to Director of Senior Services, which conceives a more expansive role in the community. Who we are serving and where we are providing services is broadening.

In my time here, I have discovered the following:

Who we are: We are elders. And - we are also adult caretakers, and long distance adult children trying to care from afar. We have diverse cultural backgrounds and speak multiple languages. We identify as LGBTQ. We are even college students whose lives have been effected by aging grandparents. Aging effects whole family systems and we need to engage with all those constituencies.

Where we are serving: We need programs that support all those impacted by aging including residents living in parts of town beyond the senior center. We need to expand intergenerational programs. We can harness technology to record programs and present programs so working family members can access support with issues regarding aging.

How will we do it?

Meeting more residents, especially those who have been historically underrepresented.

Creating relationship. Developing trust and safety.

Engaging in listening and observing practices at the Senior Center.

Actively reaching out to stakeholders – old and new partners. We need to recognize that partnering, identifying mutual interests, and leveraging them brings the highest quality services to the residents of Amherst.

This may sound like a lot of change; it is and it isn't.

In 1958 AARP was founded by Ethel Percy Andrus who believed that in order to live life to the fullest the rules of aging had to change.

Ethel illustrated that conceptions of aging alter through time.

So I ask that as we seek to refine our mission you keep in mind your own meaningful moments of connection at the senior center like a talisman to stay focused on the MISSION and the important work that lies ahead.

My promise to you in return is that I will hew to Ruth Bader Ginsberg admonition which in essence is: Work for the change you think is important, but lead in a way that makes others want to follow.

There were several issues that rose to the surface upon my arrival.

1. Communication – Residents are interested in the newsletter which is our primary form of communication being revised. We have begun culling samples of other senior centers to improve and comport with age-friendly ideals and looking at adding real time forms of communication.
2. Travel trips – I have been researching best practices for travel clubs and am looking forward to working with the Friends and those interested to form a travel club to keep this program going.
3. Medical equipment – We are working to identify how to strengthen the program.

I hope you will see in the months ahead that I am devoted to leading a collaborative effort leading our mission to meet the evolving need in the community while we widen our scope and impact.