

Town Of Hartford
Town Staff
Significant Activity Report, February 1 – 14, 2017

TOWN MANAGER HIGHLIGHTS

- Respectfully submitted for your consideration.
- The Town Book has been finalized and it is at the printers. We are reviewing the proof today. We expect the book will be back by the end of next week. Copies will be available at the Budget/Candidate's night event. There is a copy posted online for review.
- The Town Clerk's office will be closed on Tuesday, February 21st from 8 AM to 1PM. We have posted a note on the door and will publicize through various electronic means.
- On Tuesday, February 7th, the Selectboard Chair and I attended the Vital Communities hosted Municipal Manager's Meeting in Lebanon. The discussion focused on Household Hazardous Waste, Composting and Fire Apparatus. There was no resolution, just a continued discussion on the way forward.
- We had a meeting with the engineering firm that originally did the work for Wright's reservoir. It appears that the cost will be somewhere between \$650-750K; not over \$1M as originally thought. The original assessment/estimate was done when the reservoir was full, this added to the complexity and scope. They will provide us with an updated estimate and scope. Once we have this we will be able to better recommend a way forward.
- We had a meeting with the Engineering professor from Norwich University concerning the concerns at Fairview Terrace. The students did a great job and provided a couple of great solutions. The professor actually has a significant amount of experience in wall retention. There is a technique that can be used called steel tie back walls. This is a long lasting less intrusive technique that is typically 33-66% cheaper than gravity or concrete solutions. We will reach out to a Vermont firm that has worldwide experience with this technique. One we have done that we will come back to the board with a recommendation.
- As you know, we just passed the second tax date of 2017. We have 679 delinquent properties for a total of nearly \$1.7M. Folks are contacting us to pay those taxes and penalties. I do have some concerns about our processes and options for those taxpayers who feel they have a legitimate reason for being late. The biggest issue appears to be with those who have purchased their property within the last year.

- I will be meeting with the Executive Director of Health Connections of the Upper Valley to renew our conversations about flavored tobacco use and sales in the Town. We will look at the whole gamut of options from sales to content neutral advertising. Several municipalities have taken action of some type. We will come to the board soon with options for them to consider.
- As you may be aware, the governor has proposed closing a prison facility in Windsor. This affects us as this is where we and several other organizations in the area get assistance through inmate labor program. This could have a serious financial impact on the town should the program be impacted.
- I received a call from the Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Transportation, Joe Flynn, about the Suicide Prevention efforts on the Quechee Gorge Bridge. He was concerned that there might be the perception of a lack of transparency about the efforts by his office. This was focused on the last minute addition of the temporary mesh fence solution. I told him that it was unfortunate that it came about after the public meetings, but that I thought they had done a good job of getting the information out as best they could. I did voice that we did not like that as a solutions and were concerned that it could turn into something more permanent which could have a significant impact on the business community. I have also spoken to the Executive Director of the Hartford area Chamber of Commerce on the issue.
- Listed below are those highlights pulled from each Department Head's report. Further under are the full highlights from each Department.

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

- Fire Department has begun discussions with the Vermont Transportation Board regarding the railroad bridge that accesses John Hazen Ln.
- IT investigated a citizen's report of a Town phone number potentially being 'spoofed' (i.e. Caller ID shows it's the Town calling when it's actually a sales or fraudulent call). It appears to be an isolated event but the phone company and police department have been notified in case similar incidents are reported.
- Eagle Scout project to restore all benches at Veterans Park will be completed by Troy Potter. Project entails replacing the bench slats.
- State Designated Downtown Program Annual Report – completed and submitted 2016 statistics on public and private investment, job creation and events in

Downtown WRJ. Results: 17 buildings and 8 facades renovated by private sector at an investment of \$4,434,361; 11 new business opened creating 33 jobs; 3 businesses expanded, creating 12 new jobs; and 22 new housing units completed.

- February 10th – The Police Social Worker and Chief met with Emergency Room staff at the Mt. Ascutney Hospital to discuss a common protocol for the voluntary/involuntary evaluation of mental health patients.
- The Highway Department responded to 4 winter storms the week of Feb 5 including a major Nor-Easter. On February 12 a second major storm visited Hartford and highway staff was again called out over the weekend:
 - o 2/6/17: Dusting of snow
 - o 2/7/17: Dusting of snow
 - o 2/8/17: 1"-2" heavy snow/ice/sleet
 - o 2/9/17: Sharp temperature drop and 6" of light snow
 - o 2/12 to 2/13: 9" of snow

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Assessor:

- Vision is the process of doing the second round of inspections. There has been a good response to the requests.
- Continue to work on sales, sales verifications and land adjustments.
- Continue to work with vision in setting new rate tables, etc. for the revaluation.

Finance:

- January Month End Close Out – Working to close out January Financials. Working to schedule reviews with Departments
- Worked closely with Public Works and Planning & Development to prepare applications for possible loans for the Quechee Mapping Project and the WRJ Storm Water Project.

- Working with the Treasurer and the staff to ensure a smooth transition of services to Mascoma Savings Bank

Fire:

- Responded mutual aid for the Hanover Fire Department to Stevens Rd for a residential house fire. Hartford Engine Company assisted with the extinguishment of a fully involved house fire.
- Responded mutual aid for the Hartland Fire Department for a 6-bay garage fire. Hartford Engine Company assisted with the extinguishment.
- Attended the monthly State EMS Meeting
- Met with the Norwich Fire Chief to discuss the options for an acquired building live burn. The tentative date for the training is schedule for March 25 and will include Lebanon and Hanover.
- Posted the opening of a Captain position within the fire department. This vacancy occurred as the result of an internal promotion to Assistant Chief. The deadline for resumes is March 6th. The successful candidate will assume the shift commander role on D Shift.
- On Thursday, February 2 at 10:08 pm the Hartford Fire Department responded to a reported building fire at the Fredrick Johnson Pianos, Inc. located at 344 N. Hartland. The Hartford Dispatch Center received a 911 call from the VA Police Department advising that there was heavy smoke coming from the building and that there was a fire in basement of the building. First arriving fire units arrived and confirmed that there was a well advanced fire in the basement of the building. Crews attempted to gain entry to extinguish the fire, but were quickly driven from the building due to the intensity of the fire. Elevated master streams were set-up and placed into operation to extinguish the fire. Due to the complexity of the building, extinguishment was difficult. The fire investigation was conducted by the Hartford Fire Department along with members of the Vermont State Police Fire Investigators and the State of Vermont Division of Fire Safety Fire Investigation Unit. The cause of the fire was determined to be an overloaded electrical extension cord that was being used to power two portable space heaters. The building was a total loss.
- Fire Union contract was ratified by all parties. Expires 6/30/18.
- Engine 1 is tentatively scheduled to be picked up from Cummins on 2/15.

- The installer of the new Station Alerting System began installing conduit for the system.
- Demolition of the N. Hartland Rd fire building should begin in the next few weeks.
- Attended a USAR meeting with the State coordinator to discuss current MOU.
- Scheduled a meeting with the Vermont Dept of Health to discuss our Closed POD MOU. Our previous representative is no longer with the agency.

Information Technology:

- NSTR.

Parks and Recreation:

- Red Zone 5K run was held Saturday 2/4 – 58 participants.
- Valentine Dance (father/daughter) was held Friday 2/10.
- Up-coming event: Free family show “An Interactive Bubble Show” Friday 2/24 1:00PM At WR Elementary School.
- Tickets are now on sale for the annual bus trip to the Boston Flower Show. Trip is scheduled for Tuesday, March 23, 2017.
- Due to the influx of weather temps, the Frost Park skating surface area was reduced. There is still a skating area to enjoy.
- Transition from contracted to in-house snow removal and sanding went smoothly at the West Hartford Community Center and Library.
- WABA hosted the annual Ray Roy Snow Much Fun Coed Softball Tournament Saturday/Sunday 1/28 & 1/29 – event raised over \$5,000 to benefit Prevent Child Abuse of VT.
- People wishing to voluntarily obtain a membership to the Watson Dog Park may do so on-line at www.hartfordrec.com. Membership fee is \$25.00.
- Anne Hanson Curtis, Hartford High School Class of 2005, will run the Hyannis Marathon on February 26th, 2017 to raise funds for the Hartford Recreation

Department scholarship fund. She will be running in honor of her late brother, Brian Hanson.

- The 2016 Parks and Recreation annual report is now available on-line or a copy may be obtained at Recreation Office.
- 2017 Parks and Recreation community survey went live (on-line) as of Monday, February 6, 2017.

Planning and Development:

- Energy Plans/Audits – Continued working towards completion of the contract. Expect to brief the Selectboard in the next couple of meetings.
- Bridge and Main Affordable Housing Project – Developer received additional tax credits, and approval of supplemental VCDP funds pending. Anticipate construction to begin in April.
- Quechee Pocket Park – Working with Holden Engineering in finalizing engineered plans for March bid process.
- Planning Commission/Zoning Board of Adjustment – Working with Waldorf School to finalize application for review by the ZBA on February 22nd and PC on February 28th. Applicant requesting Waiver from the SB for access permit for Bluff Road.
- Regional Plan Update – Continuing review process of proposed changes to the Energy, community health, history and land use sections.
- WRJ Parking – Completed biannual parking counts and summary report. Shows a notable increase in parking occupancy in Downtown. Working on revision to Draft Parking Study report.
- Watershed Grant – Partnering with TRORC and other regional towns on a grant to study the Ottauquechee Watershed. Includes Hartford Conservation Commission and Hartford Community Resilience Organization.
- AirBnB – Researching how works in relation to traditional B&B, at local and state levels. Coordinating with Hartford Fire Marshal.
- Bus Stops – Reviewed report from TRORC, VTrans and Advance Transit regarding the existing conditions, future needs and recommendations for all bus stops in Hartford and Norwich.

- GMEDC VCDP Planning Grant – Submitted annual report, and proceeding with grant closeout and final requisition for feasibility study for a commercial-industrial park on Sykes Mt Ave.

Police:

- January 28th – Patrol Officers and Investigators served a Search & Seizure Warrant at an apartment on Latham Works Lane. Personal use quantities of heroin and related paraphernalia were recovered. Tenant was cited and released pending trial.
- January 30th – Patrol officers responded to a call of a deer that had been shot to the rear of a home in the 400 BLK of Connecticut River Road. With the help of Fish & Game Police, a man from a neighboring residence was found intoxicated nearby and admitted to shooting the deer. Suspect was arrested by Fish & Game Police.
- February 2nd – Emergency communications personnel assisted the Fire Department with a multiple agency response to a structure fire at a business in the 300 BLK of North Hartland Road.
- February 6th & 8th – Patrol officers assisted the Public Works Department with Winter Parking Ban Enforcement.
- February 6th – Patrol officers investigated a report of stalking, which led to the arrest of a 44 year old Randolph man after a GPS tracking device was found on a vehicle belonging to his estranged wife.
- February 8th – Patrol officers responded to several weather related traffic accidents and hazards. Emergency communications staff was active with increased emergency call volume due to poor road conditions.
- February 10th – The Police Social Worker and SIU Detective attended the regular meeting of the Hartford Area Child Protection Team.
- February 11th – Patrol officers assisted Probation and Parole with arrest of Wilder resident for Violation of Probation.
- February 12th – Patrol officers responded to reports of a domestic altercation at a home on Sugar House Road. Investigation led to the arrest of a 26 year old West Hartford man for Domestic Assault and related charges.

Public Works:

- Ridge Condo Pump Station: On Friday, Feb 10th both pumps at Ridge Pump Station in Quechee went down. An electrician determined that it was not an electrical problem. The crew pumped over the weekend and will be bringing one of the pumps down to the Flyght dealer in Massachusetts on Tuesday (2/14) to trouble shoot.
- The hydraulic hammer for the backhoe was put out for quotes a couple of weeks ago. The bids are due on Tuesday, February 14.
- Highway staff assisted the Solid Waste Department in diagnosing and repairing an alternator/charging and battery issue with the Solid Waste loader.
- Highway staff began interviewing applicants for the highway operator position that was vacated in January.
- DPW has been working with the finance office to complete two low interest loan applications for State Revolving Loan (SRF) funds. One is for the Downtown TIF approved storm water improvements (\$700,000), the other is for the Quechee mapping project (\$300,000). The Quechee mapping will include over \$100,000 in wastewater and drainage TV work.
- DPW staff completed the paperwork to close out the Bridge Underpass project that was completed several years ago. This locally managed project was completed entirely with State and Federal funds.
- DPW reviewed the Quechee Pocket Park progress plans and specifications prepared by the Holden Engineers. DPW will expedite the turnaround of final bid plans to facilitate putting the project out to bid in February/March.
- The Solid Waste Department received informal notification of award that the High Meadows Fund for Organics will be granting Hartford approximately \$4,200 for food waste activities required by Act 148. Town staff has collaborated with High Meadows staff and other grant awardees (via conference call) to discuss bulk and mutual purchase of materials that will be funded by the grant. Hartford will be using the grant to purchase over 400 kitchen food scrap containers to give away to residents. The facility will also be purchasing 35 gallon roll carts, educational material and pay for organics tipping fees with the grants funds.