



The Town of Barnstable

Office of Town Manager

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April 23, 2024

To: Barnstable Town Councilors

From: Mark S. Ells, Town Manager

RE: Town Manager update for April 3 through April 23, 2024

1. We are proceeding with the budget action calendar for FY 2025. A public fee hearing was held on March 19, 2024 for the proposed changes to FY 2025 fees. Comments were accepted through April 19, 2024. The FY 2025 proposed fee changes were approved on April 22, 2024. The FY25 proposed capital program and FY25 to FY29 Capital Plan has been submitted to the Town Council and is available on the town's website for viewing. Public hearings on the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) orders are scheduled to begin April 25, 2024. At their April 3, 2024 meeting the School Committee voted to recommend the school department's Fiscal Year 2025 proposed operating budget. The vote was unanimous with all five members present voting in the affirmative. The School Department's Fiscal Year 2025 proposed operating budget totals \$92,269,656. I have forwarded this proposed budget to our Finance Director and it will be incorporated into the Town of Barnstable proposed FY 2025 Operating Budget for consideration by Town Council. For information on our fiscal year budgets please view the Town's Open Budget website at <http://budget.townofbarnstable.us>.
2. As previously reported and in response to requests by Town Council and the public regarding monitoring the activation of the Vineyard Wind cable landing at Covell's Beach, I continue discussions with Vineyard Wind regarding regular communication with the Town of Barnstable on safe and compliant operation of their system. Vineyard Wind is developing informational signage to be installed at the site to illustrate location and other project information so that those who visit Covell's Beach may have access to such information. The informational signage will be installed in spring 2024. They are preparing a means of public access to information regarding issues of concern such as Electromagnetic Frequency (EMF) as well as other safety compliance aspects so that the public will know that the system is functioning in a safe and compliant manner. The Assistant Secretary for Government Affairs at the Executive of Energy and Environmental Affairs called regarding providing verification from state officials that the Vineyard Wind project is in fact safe and compliant with all state permitting. I await further action by state officials. In addition, the Town of Barnstable has met with an independent third-party expert to assist in verification of such safety issues. We will keep you informed of the progress on this matter.

3. On April 4, 2024 I sent a letter to our Governor regarding concerns the Town of Barnstable has regarding the safety and compliance of wind projects as they land in and traverse through communities such as Barnstable, as well as other large-scale electric generating projects. In recent conversations with State Senator Julian Cyr and State Representative Kip Diggs, I have raised my concerns regarding a community's liability and risk in the event of a catastrophic failure of any of the physical components of these large-scale electric generating projects, particularly their substations, which use large volumes of oil and hazardous materials. We believe the state, as the permitting entity, for these generating projects should be responsible for taking an active role in ensuring project compliance with all permitting requirements, including designating a state compliance officer for such projects. We further believe that the state should affirmatively agree to back-stop the project owner by being prepared to undertake an immediate emergency response and be responsible for the costs of responding to and remediating any catastrophic event in the event the project owner does not or cannot do so. I did receive a call from the Governor's Office as a follow-up to our request asking for specifics as to the types of assurances the Town would recommend. We have taken this under advisement and will provide a response in the near future.
4. Since our presentation on Groundwater 101 and a subsequent special meeting on PFAS, the Town Council President and I have been in discussions regarding the establishment of a Water Quality Advisory Committee to provide the Town Manager and Town Council with advice and information necessary to ensure the protection of the quality and quantity of water within the Town. I will keep you advised as this effort advances.
5. On April 19, 2024, the Director of Public Works shared two videos explaining the Town's proposed Nitrogen Improvements and New Headworks Facility Project which is currently ranked #1 on the Clean Water State Revolving Fund 2024 Draft Intended Use Plan. Below you will find two videos DPW prepared that help provide context and education regarding the project and need. These videos are intended to answer questions that you may have about the project.

1. Water Works – Water Pollution Control Division Facility Tour

Link to view: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6zQwOyJo8o>

Duration: 19:50

As a follow-up to the previous treatment plant tour, Department of Public Works Communications Manager Kelly Collopy revisits the facility four years later to discuss with Water Pollution Control Division Supervisor Andrew Boule how treatment technology is evolving. Mr. Boule provides a refresher on the current wastewater treatment process while identifying areas of the treatment plant that need significant upgrades. Together, Mr. Boule and Ms. Collopy shed light on how Barnstable is pursuing next generation wastewater treatment through the Town's proposed Nitrogen Improvements and New Headworks Facility Project.

2. Water Works – A Conversation About Wastewater

Link to view: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccmeCNGRGBs>

Duration: 35:05

Department of Public Works Communications Manager Kelly Collopy sits down with Department of Public Works Assistant Director Robert Steen, P.E. and Water Pollution Control Division Supervisor Andrew Boule to discuss the next generation of wastewater treatment being pursued in Barnstable. Together the group works through common questions heard from the community regarding the costs associated with expanding and upgrading our wastewater infrastructure, the timing, the role of alternative technologies, and effluent. The conversation also includes a look at how upgrading the current wastewater treatment facility will position the Town well for addressing future needs, such as contaminants of emerging concern.

We hope this information is helpful as we proceed with these complex projects in our continued efforts to remain compliant with regulatory requirements and protect our environment.

6. On January 30, 2024, the Town of Barnstable hosted a workshop as part of our Opioid Settlement Funds Community Engagement Process. Over 80 people were in attendance who contributed their time, energy, experience, insights, and ideas. We are still in the process of gathering community input so we are not yet synthesizing our data. The Town Council was previously forwarded the raw output of the workshop. If you were unable to attend the workshop in January, or if you know someone whose voice should be included, please see the attached invitation for our upcoming focus groups. We are gathering the following groups over the next few weeks:
 - Community Groups and Service Providers, April 24th, 5:30-7:30 PM
 - Barnstable Public Schools Staff & Administration: Monday, April 29th, 7:30 AM
 - Loved ones of folks who have struggled with Opioid/Substance Use Disorder, May 1, 6-8 PM
 - Individuals in recovery from Opioid/Substance Use Disorder: May 6, 5:30-7:30 PM

Groups are limited to 20 people. RSVPs are required: <https://tinyurl.com/mpz7ws5r>

7. Town staff, in cooperation with Town Council leadership, discussed the status of the Housing Production Plan. Subsequent to the Town Council meeting, an updated draft of the plan will be available on the Town's Housing website for review. We will issue communications to inform the public of its availability and invite comment. The updated draft will be presented to the Housing Committee for feedback. Public comments will be gathered and posted, and amendments will be put forward for consideration. Following this, the draft plan will be forwarded to the Planning Board. The plan will then proceed to the Town Council 'Committee to Assess and Recommend Strategies for Housing Creation Within the Town' and the Town Council for final adoption.
8. Kelly Collopy, Communications Manager for the Public Works Department, will provide an update on Water Resource Management planning including the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan.