



# The Town of Barnstable

## Office of Town Manager

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August 13, 2024

To: Barnstable Town Councilors

From: Mark S. Ells, Town Manager

RE: Town Manager update for July 17 through August 13, 2024

1. I plan to withdraw Agenda Item 2025-006 a Supplemental Appropriation Order in the amount of \$35,000 proposed for the purposes of paying for outside counsel expenses of the Town Legal Department. These funds were proposed to allow the Town Legal Department to work with outside counsel to develop a legal strategy to oppose the planned landing of cable from an offshore wind project at Dowses Beach in Osterville. Town Council has a scheduled workshop on August 15, 2024 to receive a briefing from legal department on the status of that project and to discuss future potential action by the Town relative to that matter.
2. On July 30, 2024 I received an email from John Cox, President of Cape Cod Community College, as follows: Monday, July 29, marked a truly historic moment in our College's history, and the history of public higher education in Massachusetts, with Governor Maura Healey's signing of the FY2025 State budget. This landmark legislation enacts universal free community college across the Commonwealth. The new program, MassEducate, pairs with the existing MassReconnect program to allow all Massachusetts residents who have not yet earned a Bachelor's degree the ability to attend community college for free. Under this model, students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Massachusetts will cover any remaining balance after applying all federal aid and grants determined through FAFSA and scholarships awarded. Last year, the elimination of financial barriers for our students aged 25 and older proved transformative. Cape Cod Community College welcomed 1,444 students who attended tuition-free: 933 received a combination of federal aid, grants, scholarships, and MassReconnect funding, while 511 attended entirely on federal aid, grants, and scholarships. The introduction of free college without age restrictions promises to create even more opportunities, allowing students to pursue their higher education goals and improve their lives and the lives of their families. To learn more about free college in Massachusetts, including eligibility for the program, please see [www.capecod.edu/free/](http://www.capecod.edu/free/).

3. A budget calendar for the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget and Capital Improvements Plan will be prepared and issued by the end of August. We begin Capital and Operating Budget preparation discussions in September. Town Council conducts a joint meeting with the School Committee typically in October in accordance with the Town Charter to review financial conditions and financial policies of the Town. The Town Council Strategic Plan is a fundamental part of the basic assumptions and will be used as policy guidance in staff's development in the FY 2026 Capital and Operating Budgets.
4. The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced that the Town of Barnstable will receive a \$42 Million Award for Barnstable Renewable Powered Microgrid Project. The award is from the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Transmission Siting and Economic Development (TSED) grant program, which is funded by the Inflation Reduction Act. The Town, through Sean Hogan, our Environmental and Sustainability Manager, partnered with the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to apply for this grant. Working with DOER, we are in the process of reviewing the grant award documents to fully understand the obligations within this grant and to determine the future reporting requirements associated with this project. When we have a more thorough understanding of the terms and conditions of the grant, we will bring forward a formal presentation to the Town Council for acceptance. This project, when implemented, is expected to lower energy costs, improve indoor air quality and Strengthen Climate Resilience for the Town. As has been reported by the State and by local information outlets, the microgrid will include Barnstable High School, Intermediate School and Barnstable Adult Community center install a renewable-powered microgrid at the Barnstable High School and Intermediate School Complex, serving over 2,400 students.
5. Beach Operations & Update. As summer winds down, the Town has begun consolidating beach operations. In addition to the previous lifeguard reductions at Sandy Neck, Loop and Hathaway's Pond, the last day for lifeguards at the following beaches is listed below:
  - Kalmus Beach: Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Veteran's Beach: Saturday, August 17<sup>th</sup>
  - Dowse's Beach: Tuesday, August 20<sup>th</sup>
  - Covell's Beach: Thursday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>
6. We continue to closely monitor our beaches and waterways for any signs of debris resulting from the Vineyard Wind turbine incident. Marine Environmental Affairs and Community Services personnel are prepared to respond accordingly. We urge any member of the public that spots any debris in the water or onshore to report it to the Debris Reporting Hotline 833-609-5768.

7. We encourage residents and visitors to download the MyBarnstable app from the Apple or Google Play store. The app provides updates on a wide range of information in Town including traffic advisories, beach updates, Sandy Neck off-road availability, and more.
8. On Wednesday, August 14, 2024, the Barnstable Police Department along with Hyannis, COMM, Cotuit, Barnstable, and West Barnstable Fire Departments will be hosting the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Kids Day Celebration at Barnstable High School from 10:00am – 2:00pm. The free event will include demonstrations and displays from several fire departments and law enforcement agencies. There will be hot dogs, ice cream, and drinks as well as a number of fun activities. The day kicks off with a parade of emergency vehicles and bagpipes at the east end of the school near the football field promptly at 10:00am. Everyone is welcome!
9. Town Clerk Ann Quirk provides a summary of the primary election vote by mail and in person voting.
10. James Kupfer, Acting Director of Planning and Development Department, will provide an update on the Local Comprehensive Plan and the Greening the Gateway Program
11. Kelly Collopy, Communications Manager for the Public Works Department, will provide an update on Water Resource Management planning including the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan.