



The Town of Barnstable

Office of Town Manager

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November 5, 2024

To: Barnstable Town Councilors

From: Mark S. Ells, Town Manager

RE: Town Manager update for October 23 through November 5, 2024

1. We continue with the preparation of the Capital and Operating Budgets for FY 2026. Town Council conducted a joint meeting with the School Committee on October 24, 2024 in accordance with the Town Charter to review financial conditions and financial policies of the Town. The Town Manager and School Superintendent have met and agreed to proceed with the 60/40 split as in years past for the proposed FY 2026 Operating Budget. For information on our fiscal year budgets please view the Town's Open Budget website at <http://budget.townofbarnstable.us>.
2. As stated in my last communication, the Finance Department will present the FY 2025 tax levy shifting options at the November 7, 2024, Town Council meeting. The Finance Director has pre-recorded the presentation for viewing prior to Thursday evening's presentation. The objective of the presentation is to illustrate the impact on tax bills when deciding on a minimum residential factor, commonly referred to as splitting the tax rate, and the adoption of a residential exemption. The Fiscal Year 2025 property values are currently being updated and the presentation will include the proposed values, subject to the MA Department of Revenue (DOR) review and approval. The proposed values could change slightly but should not have a significant impact on the tax rate or tax levy. Property values must be approved by the DOR before the Town Council can vote on these two options. We anticipate DOR's approval of the Fiscal Year 2025 property values before the November 21st Town Council meeting. We anticipate including these two votes on the November 21st agenda for Town Council action.
3. We are pleased to announce the opening of the Town of Barnstable Opioid Abatement grant application process. Details of eligibility for this grant are contained in the attached application and can be found on the Town Manager's website. In 2025, RIZE will award \$1,250,000 to municipalities in one-year matching grants. In 2026 and 2027, RIZE will also award \$1,250,000 per year. The total program funding is \$3,750,000. The program seeks to match municipal opioid settlement funds in cities and towns that are 1) using best practices to end the overdose crisis, 2) utilizing [Care Massachusetts](#) resources, 3)

conducting community outreach and needs assessments, and 4) collaborating with others, particularly those that are pooling funds. Opioid settlement funds offer a unique opportunity for communities to bolster their capacity to address the overdose crisis through strong government and community collaboration and to expand interventions that have proven to save lives. For those organizations that may be looking to apply for RIZE matching grants (<https://mosaic.rizema.org/grantmaking/apply-for-a-grant/>) the Town of Barnstable will be supplying a commitment letter for applicants to use during the RIZE application process. We will keep you advised as we progress with this program.

4. Our Information Technology Department is planning to replace the Town's network firewall in the coming weeks which will require a scheduled downtime of the Town's outside internet connection for an approximately 2–3-hour maintenance window. This maintenance will occur on a weekend to minimize disruption to Town operations. During the maintenance window, the following systems will be affected:
 - The Town website will be inaccessible
 - Internal users within the Town network will not have access to the internet
 - Remote workers will not be able to connect to the Town network

Further updates will be provided once a specific date has been set for this upgrade.

5. On November 1, 2024, Senator Cyr shared the news that S.2746, An Act exempting the position of police chief in the town of Barnstable from the civil service law, was signed into law by Governor Healey as Chapter 227 of the Acts of 2024. Our Legal and Human Resources departments have taken this under advisement. I will advise the Town Council on how we will proceed relative to this Act in the near future.
6. As previously reported, on September 10, 2024, I sent two letters regarding the recent Vineyard Wind turbine blade failure. One letter was sent to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) expressing concern about the impacts of the turbine failure on the marine environment and the lack of information provided to date on those impacts by regulatory agencies overseeing the project. The other letter was sent to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) asking questions regarding many areas of concern, including state jurisdiction on this matter to public safety risk on our beaches. On October 7, 2024, I met with State officials regarding the letter sent to EOEEA and on October 11, 2024, I received a letter from BOEM in response offering a “virtual briefing to discuss processes for offshore wind development and actions in response to the Vineyard Wind blade incident”. On October 25, 2024, we communicated with BOEM regarding their offer of a virtual briefing and are awaiting a response to when and how such a meeting might occur. On November 1, 2024, I met with representatives of the state, including a representative from the Department of Public Utilities, and we continued to discuss issues surrounding offshore wind in

Barnstable and Massachusetts. I did share the Resolve passed by Town Council on October 24, 2024 with state officials. I expect an ongoing dialogue with state officials to continue. I will keep you advised as this matter progresses.

7. The Town of Barnstable will be partnering with Cape Cod Community College's (CCCC) newly formed Social and Economic Justice Institute to create internship opportunities and an eventual pathway to public service for CCCC students. Commencing in mid-January of 2025, the Town will be hosting one of the first Social and Economic Justice Fellows. The Fellow will be working for 15 weeks in various departments of the Town looking at municipal programs and services through a social and economic justice lens. Both the Town and the Institute are excited about this program and are committed to using this as a first step to build a formal "Pathway to Public Service" between our two organizations.
8. The Town of Barnstable and the Cape Cod Community College have entered into a short-term license to use a small portion of the building at 200 Main Street for their expanding school offerings. The up to three years agreement allows the community college to look into possibilities for using a major portion of the building to support their growing marine technology offerings. This partnership with the college could help shape the future of the 200 Main Street location as Town employees and Town operations consolidate back to the Town Hall campus. The goal is to examine strategic partnerships that promote possible reuse of Town assets to support the community. The college may have classes on a limited basis as soon as January of 2025 at the 200 Main Street location.
9. Recreational oyster season begins on Wednesday, November 6th. To find out more information please see the Town of Barnstable's Marine and Environmental Shellfishing webpage or call 508-790-6272. Our shellfish resources in Barnstable have ecological, commercial and recreational importance. They filter our coastal waters and provide a harvestable resource to our commercial shell fishing industry and well as recreational harvest by our residents. The Town's Natural Resources staff is responsible for the sustainable management of this vital resource. We appreciate the efforts of our staff and thank the community for its continued support of this program.
10. The Hyannis Youth and Community Center is excited to provide an opportunity for The Cordial Eye, Amplify POC, People of Action and The Arts & Justice Collective to install a mural inside the gymnasium at the Hyannis Youth and Community Center. The proposed mural was approved for installation at the HYCC by the Recreation Commission at its meeting on Monday November 4, 2024.
11. James Kupfer, Director of Planning and Development, will provide an update on the Local Comprehensive Plan, Marstons Mills School Property Master Plan meeting; and upcoming Digital Equity Plan events.

Local Comprehensive Plan

The Local Comprehensive Plan Committee (LCPC) is met this past week to update the future land use map. That update is ongoing and the Public Comment period will be extended until December 2nd to gain additional insight and input from the community. The LCPC is looking to have a meeting in December and will publicize the date as soon as possible.

Marstons Mills School Property Master Plan

The Town of Barnstable is seeking to create a Master Site Development Plan for the 14.2 acre parcel formerly the site of the Marstons Mills Elementary school. As part of the ongoing planning process, the Town of Barnstable will be hosting a **public meeting in the Barnstable Town Hall Hearing Room (367 Main Street Hyannis) on Thursday, November 14th at 6:00 PM** to present three draft design concepts for the Marstons Mills School property (2095 Main Street) for public review and comment.

Digital Equity Plan

The Town of Barnstable is working with the Cape Cod Commission to develop a municipal digital equity plan to assess the digital divide across the community and to identify opportunities to advance digital equity. The goal is to better understand the challenges that community members face with the internet and technology and to identify solutions that ensure all have access to the information technology needed to fully participate in our community.

Community participation is a critical component of this planning effort. Residents, businesses, and organizations are invited to attend an upcoming event to learn about the digital equity plan and contribute to the development of the plan through group exercises and conversations. Discussion topics will include internet availability, affordability, and reliability; technology and devices necessary for civic, social, and economic life; and skills to participate safely, confidently, and effectively online.

- ***Connectivity and Creativity: Digital Equity Community Workshop***
Tuesday, November 12, 2024 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Cotuit Center for the Arts; 4404 Falmouth Road, Cotuit MA
- ***Digital Equity Pop-Up***
Thursday, November 14, 2024 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Hyannis Youth and Community Center; 141 Bassett Lane, Hyannis MA
- ***Community Digital Equity Workshop***
Tuesday, November 19, 2024 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM
West Barnstable Community Building; 2377 Meetinghouse Way, West Barnstable, MA