

TOWN HALL MONTHLY: October

In September work continued on this year's two large road projects. Selectmen entered a contract with JP Trucking for the replacement, this fall, of culverts on Cold Pond Road and three proposals for the Derry Hill reconstruction project were received and reviewed. The Board voted to award the Derry Hill project to Bazin Brothers and we expect a contract ready for signing at our next meeting. That project will take place in 2026.

During the September 15 Selectmen's meeting Jennifer Bland provided an update of our outstanding FEMA projects. Derry Hill reconstruction and Crane Brook Road paving both date from the 2021 flood and FEMA funding for both has been obligated. Crane Brook Road engineered drainage and Thayer Brook Road reconstruction both date from the 2023 flood and are waiting for planning completion in order for funding to be obligated. The Town's cost share of these four projects is likely to be part of our annual budget for the next three years. To date, the State's cost share due to the Town is \$117,646 for 2021 and \$90,876 for 2023. We have petitioned NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management for those funds, which were voted by the State legislature, and have been assured they are being reviewed by that department's director. Separately, reconstruction of the Forest Road Bridge is in its engineering phase through the State's Bridge Program.

In other recent business, Selectmen reviewed this year's tax deed recommendations from the Tax Collector and heard an inquiry about installing a cell tower on Town owned land. Tax deeding follows a statutory process which includes numerous notifications and payment opportunities for property owners. Cell tower inquiries follow a process outlined in the Town's Telecommunications and Zoning Ordinances which are overseen by the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen.

Building the 2026 budget begins this month. During October and November all Town boards, organizations and individuals are asked to submit their budget requests for the next year to the Town office. At the same time the Planning Board will be working on an update to the Town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP lists recommended road projects and large equipment purchases. During December Selectmen use all that information to formulate their budget which then goes to the Budget Committee for review during January. Follow progress on the evolving budget at our meetings or in our minutes which are in the Acworth Newsletter and on our website. Separately, the Fall Mountain School District continues to debate the withdrawal of member towns. We expect a decision in October. Withdrawal of any member town will have an impact on the Local Education portion of all of our tax bills.

We are all holding the Aron family in our hearts as Mike Aron recovers from a serious heart attack. Take care everyone, Kathi.