

TOWN HALL MONTHLY: June

Flood response is still the first item on every Selectmen's meeting agenda and in May we made progress on all of the flood repair projects.

As our Emergency Management Director (EMD), Jennifer Bland has been the Town's main point of contact for coordinating repair work between FEMA, the State, engineers and contractors. During May Jenn worked to secure engineering contracts which would meet FEMA requirements for roads effected during the 2023 flood and as a result of her earlier work the Town received its first reimbursement for 2023 emergency repairs of approximately \$44,000. This is a significantly faster reimbursement rate than the Town experienced for 2021 repairs.

Because completion of Crane Brook Road will take a few years, FEMA agreed to the Town creating a temporary opening which was completed in May over the length of the road. Since this is not the permanent repair it is marked as 'Travel at your own risk'.

On May 1 the Governor's Council approved \$371,000 in grant funding to restore Bowers Brook in South Acworth Village to its pre-2023-flood channel. The Town is serving as the local coordinator for the Departments of Transportation and Environmental Services which are permitting and budgeting for this project. The Town advertised, interviewed and contracted with local contractors to complete the work which was scheduled to begin May 20 and run about 3 weeks.

In other Town matters, Town Treasurer Melinda Loiselle completed the Department of Revenue's MS-535, Financial Report of the Budget, for 2023. The 535 is DRA's annual audit of the Town's accounts. One of the things it shows is our Fund Balance. Fund Balance is a margin between our income and expenses which DRA requires us to have in the event of an emergency. In 2021, Fund Balance was what covered the cost of the first emergency repairs to that year's flood.

In the office, Charlotte has been working with our assessors on annual spring assessment updates. These include building permits and lot changes which took place during the year. Spring tax bills are usually mailed in early June with an early July due date. This year the bill envelope will include a notice about signing up for the NH Emergency Notification System which we wrote about last month. Charlotte and Jenn are still working on an official Town Facebook page for non-emergency Town notices. It is worth repeating that other social media sources do not necessarily relay accurate information regarding Town government activities and that if you ever have a question, it is best to call our office.

The Planning Board (PB) hosted a Joint Boards Meeting on May 21. PB chair, Mike Aron, noted the board's current work on a Master Plan update and there was discussion about potential Zoning Ordinance updates concerning the definition of a dwelling. Conservation Commission (CC) co-chair, Gregg Thibodeau noted the Master Plan questionnaire responses supported both land conservation and water quality and there was consensus that PB and CC will work together incorporating their work. State Rep Judy Aron spoke about budget challenges looming at the County level.

All Town boards' meetings are posted on local bulletin boards and our website and our office is only a phone call away.

See you soon, Kathi