

TOWN HALL MONTHLY: May

In April the Town completed repayment of the \$2,100,000 loan which was voted for during the November Special Town Meeting in 2021, the year of the first flood. Repayment of that loan has been a constant worry for all of us and this is a big relief. The loan was repaid with FEMA reimbursements for 2021 projects completed. There are five 2021 projects still in process with FEMA. These include a project for reimbursement of the loan interest and reimbursement for Town administrative time. Total reimbursement for the five remaining projects is estimated at just over one million. We hope to receive those reimbursements in time to put them toward repairing damage from the 2023 flood.

To prepare for the 2023 repairs, Charlotte and Selectmen have worked with HEB Engineers, an employee owned company based in North Conway. HEB will work with the Town on FEMA flood repairs and on the Forest Road Bridge replacement. The firm was hired by following FEMA and State Bridge Program (SBP) guidelines which required broadly advertised RFPs and interviewing of respondents. HEB has experience working with both FEMA and SBP on projects similar to ours.

Working within FEMA's hiring guidelines, the Town has also engaged Daniel's Construction to create a temporary opening of Crane Brook Road which will be eligible for FEMA reimbursement. People have questioned the need for a temporary opening and the reason is the amount of time the permanent repairs will take. Permanent repairs to Crane Brook Road will take at least two years which poses a hardship to everyone who uses that road. The Town, FEMA and the State Department of Environmental Services are seeking an alternative to the pre-flood configuration of Crane Brook Road and Crane Brook. This is necessary because FEMA will not continue to fund repair of reoccurring damage in the future if some hazard mitigation steps are not taken.

Aside from our ongoing flood response, Selectboard agendas have included normal spring business like permits for new building and logging, updating Exemptions and Veteran Credits, and renewing contracts. Gregg Thibodeau is working with the Department of Environmental Services and Crescent Lake residents to make needed improvements to the boat launch. New on our agendas is the work Charlotte and Jenn Bland are doing to involve the Town with the NH Emergency Notification System. This is just what the name implies, a way for residents to receive notifications about emergencies including road closures. To participate, residents will need to provide their contact information. There will be information on how to sign up on the website and literature available around Town. The target date to go live is May 1. In another effort to increase our outreach, Charlotte and Jenn are creating an official Town Facebook page. The new page will be limited to notices coming from the Town office.

The State effort to repair flood damage to South Acworth Village is moving forward. Acting in partnership with the Department of Environmental Services, the Selectmen advertised for and interviewed contractors. Contractor and abutter pre-construction meetings will be held during the end of April and grant funding is to be reviewed by the Governor's Council on May 1.

The Planning Board and Conservation Commission continue to work on the Town Master Plan and the Conservation Plan, respectively. After Covid disruptions, there was music in the Town Hall each month over the winter thanks to Lillie Leblanc and her Coffee House cohort. We are so fortunate to have all of this. There's a lot going on. Check the website schedule and come.

See you soon, Kathi