

TOWN HALL MONTHLY: November

Along with regular Town business, in November we move into budget season. Charlotte has requested draft 2023 budgets from all Town boards and departments and the Planning Board will be finalizing its Capital Improvement Plan recommendations. Those recommendations are a building block for the new budget.

During October Selectmen reviewed building permit applications, Intents to Cut and to Excavate and worked to keep noncompliant properties moving toward compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. A third crew member was hired for the Highway Department and feedback from the Department is very positive. Our trucks have been inspected and the crew is prepping our equipment for winter maintenance.

We meet with FEMA on a weekly basis and hope by November to have provided all the data they need to submit the past year's flood repair work for reimbursement. Our initial repair loan from Mascoma Bank is nearly expended and we have extended the due date an additional twelve months while we wait for reimbursement to begin. We know that remaining repairs including Forest Road and Bridge and paving Crane Brook Road will reach into multiple millions of dollars and that it will take a few years for the Town to be able to fund that amount. The Bank has recommended we fund repairs annually with separate loans as needed. With that in mind the 2023 work will likely need to be funded by a second, smaller loan which will need to be approved by the voters at the March Town Meeting. Each loan will be repaid by the reimbursements for the repairs covered by that loan.

The Planning Board's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) working draft resumes the road projects program which was interrupted last year by the July flood. Completion of the paving of Cold Pond Road is showing as a CIP recommendation at this time. Until FEMA reimbursements actually begin there continues to be a level of uncertainty as to how much money the Town can apply to non-disaster projects. If FEMA funding falls short the Town will need to assume more of the loan repayment burden which will limit what can be spent on non-disaster projects.

As of this writing we are waiting for the Department of Revenue to set our 2022 tax rate. Once that rate is set Marianne can begin printing and mailing bills. We like to get this done in November before we all want to have thoughts of the holidays. If you haven't received your property tax bill by December, please let us know.

This is a difficult year for many and that is definitely on our minds as we begin the next year's budget. The 2021 July flood can seem like a distant memory, however, its effects will be with us for some time.

Come out and vote on November 8. There will be great food and you will see your neighbors. The polls are open from 10AM to 7PM. And then, have a lovely Thanksgiving.

See you soon, Kathi