

Eliot Town Manager Report

November 6, 2023

Submitted by

Michael J. Sullivan to the Eliot Selectboard

Honorable Select Board, this is an abridged accounting of some of the projects and issues I and the dedicated municipal staff have been working on lately for the benefit of the Town of Eliot and its citizens.

Veteran's Day.

Thank you to Marshwood Middle School for taking the lead to honor Eliot and South Berwick Veterans on November 10th. As Veteran's Day falls on a weekend day, policy calls for staff to have the Monday immediately following as a day off. Thank you to all that have and are serving to protect our freedoms.

Please note the Town Hall and Public Works Operations will be closed on Monday November 13 and will re-open Tuesday November 14 at 8:30 AM. Just as a reminder we do accommodate appointments outside our business hours (8:30 AM – 3:30 PM) and we always encourage citizens to call in advance to ensure the department you are looking to access is available.

Budget FY 2025.

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with Budget Committee Chair Jeff Leathe about the upcoming annual schedule for the budget process, the progress being made, and some preliminary expectations were discussed. I sincerely appreciate the progress Chair Leathe has made with the assistance of his Budget Committee colleagues in evolving the elected bodies approach and tenor. While there is still separation in terms of opinion, as there normally is in any group discussion, I feel there is a new level of acceptance in terms of change of form for Town of Eliot governance.

As was established during the FY 23 budget process we will continue to be ultra transparent with spending and receipts. Every expenditure, every check written will be disclosed publicly at each Select Board Meeting and available for public review in every packet published for each Select Board Meeting on the website. Every revenue received will be reported monthly to the Budget Committee and the Select Board and available to the public, as well.

The human resource specialist for Asst. Town Manager Melissa Albert, Finance Director Kristin Maher and I have been reached out to the health insurance professionals to explore ways we may slow the cost escalation for health insurance. Calendar year 2024 the health insurance will increase 4.2%, we also need to annually evaluate the potential for existing or recently hired employees accessing the benefit and budget ramifications of those changes.

In respect to the Eliot Police Department budget, we will be proposing to add two more positions to the department and reassessing the needs for an additional sworn officer in administration.

You may have noticed in respect to the Water and Sewer Expansion Project there was rarely (if ever) an Eliot Police Officer available to work the detail. It was primarily Wells, Kittery and York officers who were able to earn additional income from the contractor. These are lost opportunities for our officers to gain intimate knowledge about a community project and add to their compensation.

While we have two officers in the academy (and doing well) who are expected to return to full time service this month, it has required an unsustainable effort by the dedicated Eliot police to provide 24-hour emergency service. There have been a number of times where occurrences only through department skill and experience averted a clamorous situation. The addition of two more officers would give some level of increased officer and public safety. It also could have an affect on overtime by lowering it slightly.

Risk Management.

I met with James Toman, our MMA Loss Control specialist on Tuesday November 7th to review our policies and property in terms of keeping our workers safe. Unfortunately, there is a lot of work to do, particularly updating or creating damage or injury reports and increasing training for safe workplace practices.

There were areas where we made improvements, but they were modest. The security camera system, the replacement of the damaged walkway on the north side of the building and this year all the battery-operated emergency lights actually worked. These were admittedly not enough or even close enough to be proud of in terms of progress.

It goes without saying I failed to provide the necessary leadership in this area over the last year. I need to redouble my efforts and call on my team for support. I can put forth a slew of excuses, some even are valid, as to why I did not execute, but at the end of the day the mirror does not lie, I need to do a better job and with a better effort it will happen.

Respectfully submitted (albeit late)

Michael J. Sullivan

Town of Eliot, Manager