

Eliot Town Manager Report

January 4, 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.



Skating Pond @ Hammond Park

There have been a few days where skating was safe on the pond behind the Police/Fire Station. It thankfully fell partially in the school vacation week.

Fortunately for home heating, but not so much for skating the weather has been very temperate so far this season. However, it was nice to see and hear the sounds of family fun right outside our windows in Town Hall.

At this point the ice is not safe for skating and we would encourage everyone to stay off the ice until we get a stretch of at least four cold nights (10 degrees or colder with day time highs of no greater than freezing to ensure the ice is thick enough to support the activity.

If the rink is snow covered, please be patient as our first order of business is to get the roads cleared, then when able we turn our attention to recreation and other areas. Please stay safe!

Wreaths Across America

Congratulations to everyone who contributed their time and money to this wonderful event for Eliot. Mel Bates from VFW Post 9394 kept us well informed in Town Hall about the event although this year it was exceedingly busy in TH, so not many of us even got a chance to take part.

There were some complaints about access being difficult for people trying to do business in Town Hall and we apologize for any inconvenience. We certainly hope to do a better job communicating the traffic interruption this wonderful community event may cause next year and assist those who need to access Town Hall in making other accommodations.

Congratulations to the Eliot Select Board for recently honoring our Veterans by proclaiming the Town of Eliot a "Purple Heart" community. We have ordered the signs and look forward to having a ceremony in the Spring in coordination with VFW Post 9394. Thank you to all that serve or have served!

FY 24 Budget

The budget season is in full swing and I encourage the public to review the material associated with the FY 24 budget <https://www.eliotmaine.org/town-manager/pages/town-manager-budget-proposal-fy24>

As more material becomes available including questions and answers posed to the Town Manager from the Budget Committee, Select Board and the public (send questions to townmanager@eliotme.org.) I will answer to the best of my ability and post on the Town web site accordingly.

There are many challenges when creating a municipal budget, chief among them is the fact the foundation of our historical data from over a year prior to predict costs and needs eighteen months or more in the future. The complexity is compounded when relying on data that has significant unknowns. The present budget was built the cost of diesel fuel was \$2.64 a gallon, it was recently \$5.11 a gallon, this is just one example of a component cost having an effect on costs.

The Town of Eliot being substantially behind on the FY 2021 audit has had a domino effect on the FY 22 audit and therefore impacts assumptions needed to be made on both the revenue and expense side of the FY 24 budget. Central to any predictive municipal financial planning is the undesignated fund balance, which is a fund that all unexpended funds from previous fiscal years closes out to. In this instance and for a number of factors the undesignated fund balance is not quite as solid as one could hope, at least to the point of allocation.

Once we have a more dependable undesignated balance, we will need to reconstruct some reserve funds as proper reserve accounts according to our auditors. This will require a vote from the Town Meeting to allocate the funds. The “dependable” balance will come by way of the FY 22 audit which is presently underway and should be completed by early March.

As apart of the budget process I will be recommending two considerable projects which I would recommend bonding. The first would be for the long-contemplated improvements to Town Hall. It would bring up to code the present building, double the square footage to accommodate more uses (i.e. voting, drive up services, activities, etc.). The second would be a self-funding bond (from fees) for improvements to the Boat basin (i.e., security cameras, parking lot repaving, stair railing replacements, etc.). Each initiative would add value to the community and produce dividends to the residents of Eliot.

York Regional Chamber of Commerce

Recently I was honored to be asked to serve on the York Regional Chamber of Commerce recently. I also appreciate the encouragement I received from the Eliot Select Board Chair and Vice Chair to accept the invitation.

Having been involved with different Chambers over my career I have witnessed how communities can benefit from the type of business to government relationship a Chamber can foster. I look forward to participating and exploring how my involvement in the YRCC can directly benefit the Town of Eliot.



Photo by Bob Spiegel - www.firenews.org

Eliot Fire Department

Let's take a moment to thank the members of the Eliot Fire Department for their brave and selfless service to this community. There has been a number of significant house fires in Eliot recently causing hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage to property. The members of Eliot's Fire Service continue to perform at a high level to prevent further damage and most importantly to protect lives in these incidents. The department is vital in performing

rescues, addressing hazardous material situations, and of course suppressing a fire. The challenge goes way beyond the “scene”, it is the training, the preparation for the unknown and all that entails, the commitment is a credit to all members of the department.

I know Fire Chief Jay Muzzeroll takes training and equipment preparedness to be a top priority and as each of us should be is extremely proud of the professionalism the department exudes. Eliot is very lucky to have such an accomplished volunteer department.

We need to do all we can assist them in the common mission of keeping Eliot’s residents safe. Please go to eliotfire.com/ to see how you can stay safe or seek more information about fire safety or the services provided by the department. You can also email the department at eliotfiresecretary@gmail.com to see how you may participate in protecting Eliot. There is no age limit to public service!



Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan

Town of Eliot, Manager