

## Eliot Town Manager Report

March 3, 2022

Submitted by

Michael J. Sullivan to the Eliot Selectboard

Please accept this abridge report of activities and projects I and the dedicated staff have been working on in Town Hall these past weeks.

**236 Sewer Project;** After five years and this long-awaited project has taken some very important steps towards being real this week. Through herculean efforts from Planner Jeff Brubaker and with the assistance of Underwood Engineering the SRF application was submitted to the Maine Municipal Bond Bank and the bid documents for selecting a contractor were published and circulated to the construction community.

We hope we will all see some substantial progress by late spring early summer. The next step will be to solicit interested parties for an owner's project manager (OPM) to give us high level technical and oversight support. Having an OPM on a multi-million-dollar project is a prudent measure, particularly in a complex project such as this one.

**Maine Turnpike Authority;** I recently had the opportunity to meet with Erin Courtney and



Peter Merfeld from the Maine Turnpike Authority in regards to some temporary changes to I-95 Exit 1 as there will be some shoulder work being done later this year which will cause some closures.

The "Eliot" Exit 1 signage will be changed to encourage Eliot traffic to get off at Exit 3. This will make it safer to perform the necessary work, lessen the traffic using 103 and inspire travelers to use 236. The original plan was to close Exit 1 altogether, but Maine Turnpike listened to the concerns of our State Representative Meyer and Town Managers from Kittery and Eliot and the plan was amended to avoid a complete shutdown, but allow measures to reduce traffic, accommodate "local" use and keep the exit operating to the greatest extent possible.

Needless to say, there will be a great deal of roadwork in and around Eliot this construction season. We will do our best to make the public aware of the interruptions and as always, we will beg your patience.

**Retirements;** We have had a couple of retirements come to light recently Laura Bragg in the Town Clerk's Office will retire at the end of March and Police Office Mike Grogan left after 32 of service to Eliot, both will be missed.

Officer Grogan was a respected colleague and was known from what I am told for his dogged enforcement along Harold L Dow Highway. He has said he will pick up some part-time work once he settles in, but for now just wants to take a well-deserved breather from the routine. We thank him for his commitment to the community.

Laura Bragg's upbeat attitude, pleasant demeanor and willingness to pitch in will be a loss for Town Hall. Her career in municipal service includes work in Lebanon and Eliot and is highly regarded in both communities. I am sure Laura's grandsons will be checking off the days they will have her all to themselves.

We will look at each position carefully and see how we can use these misfortunes for the organization (even though we are very happy for the retirees) can be spun into opportunities. Looking at what will be needed to serve the public going forward in balance with how we have done the job in the past.

How responsibilities can be retrenched, what components can or should be or must have more automation or self-service, what are we missing, in tech, in customer service, in other areas of opportunity and other process parts of the organization will be part of our consideration when considering need and fulfillment. With today's growing demand for "on-line" services while maintaining that excellent customer service is delicate balance, which we will make part of the calculus.

As we have discussed training up staff becomes critically important and increasing retention is critical to the future of any municipal operation. As we increase the value of our human capital asset it will become apodictic to use compensation to protect and preserve that investment in staff.



**Green Acres Robert Sapiro;** I recent had the pleasure to meet with Robert Sapiro who directs Community Outreach for Green Acres Bahai Center for Learning. The Bahai have facilities and land holdings along Main and Moses Gerrish in Eliot.

Mr. Sapiro allowed me to learn more about the Bahai faith and following here in Eliot and throughout the world. As many of you know there is a long and important history regarding the Bahai presence in the community.

Robert's message was in regards to how Green Acres may better serve the larger community of Eliot. We discussed the possibility of using their commercial kitchen when it is not being used for conferences as a community kitchen for residents to experiment with pickling, making jams or jellies or salsas from locally sourced food. The possibility of using the grounds for some of our future training of staff. I appreciate the outreach and I look forward to continuing the discussion.

**Cyber Security;** We have recently substantially increased our cyber security and will be developing some staff trainings to further protect our system from attack. Our IT partner Stellar has seen as has other organizations increased attempts by bad actors (who are good at their craft) trying to breach governments, businesses, non-profits and every other technology user.

The cost of these breaches is enormous. There are the stories about Atlanta and Baltimore breaches costing tens of thousands of dollars in ransom, but smaller communities were attacked over two thousand times last years costing millions in ransom, system rebuilds and loss of service.

We have asked for additional funding and we will be asking for more in the final analysis. However, we are all fighting on the new battlefield. Some of the improvements I am told are unwise to discuss openly, but suffice to say I would rather spend tax dollars elsewhere, but this is the world we live in.

Respectfully submitted;

Michael J. Sullivan

Eliot Town Manager