

Eliot Town Manager Report

March 17, 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.

King Information Systems. This project to will be a major step towards transforming the record storage methods and practices in Eliot Town Hall. This system will address records which no longer are necessary to keep, create a safe work process and add a retrieval system which will save time and effort.



We recently began discussing workplace safety with MMA our Workmen's Comp and Property & Casualty Insurance carrier. This system is just one of the many improvements we will start to make throughout Town properties to protect the workplace. These investments will pay key dividends through reduced premium assessments. MMA was impressed that we already started to implement impressive safety measures, but noted we have a long way to go.



These pictures on the left show two of the storage spaces presently in Town Hall are less than fully functional. They are cluttered, have boxes which could cause injury, are mismatched and only institutional knowledge allows navigating the present system. However, they are certainly not uncommon in municipalities, matter of fact Eliot is in better shape than many.

Below you can see a before on the left and an after on the right of another municipality. One of the most compelling features is that for a very small cost there is an annual clean up by a King technician. They come in and remove all documents which are aging out according to the state schedule and to add new records into the system properly.



Between savings from risk avoidance, time on task and reducing the need for storage space in this or even a new building this exercise will pay for itself!

The project will start April 26 and take about seven business days. This is an ARPA grant funded project.



I would like to thank Town Clerk Wendy Rawski, Assistant to Management Melissa Albert, Land Use Assistant Kearsten Metz and everyone in Town Hall for their cooperation and preparation for this project. Thank you to the Select Board for signing off on the grant funding.

Law Enforcement Wellness and Resiliency. The Town of Eliot should be extremely proud of the efforts and changes being implemented by Police Chief Elliot Moya and his department in regards to mental

health and resiliency, both their own and the public they serve. Your Chief and your department are on the cutting edge of innovative approaches in address this crisis and are look to as such.

These challenging issues are finally being acknowledged throughout the U.S. as one of the greatest public safety threats we face in our communities. A conference was organized by the Eliot PD at the Regatta held on March 10 and was attended by departments from the Boston area to Augusta. The speakers and panelist were celebrated members of their respected fields. They discussed critical topics such as stress management, family support, behavioral health and communication styles and techniques.

It was also nice to see a baby step towards “normal” in respect to having professionals in the same room to have a peer-to-peer conversation directly.

Reform Physical Therapy. I recently had the opportunity meet with Jill Partridge from Reform Physical Therapy one of Eliot’s newest women owned business. She has 18 years’ experience in the PT field and the Eliot Commons location is a fully renovated space. They also have locations in Topsham, Kennebunk, Yarmouth and Freeport.

There was a ribbon cutting ceremony held on March 15. In attendance was Fred Forsley (owner Eliot Commons) and a number of Eliot business owners and contractors who have either provided services to Reform or played a part in the build out. The five member staff were also on hand.

Don’t wait until something breaks before you check them out, tours are free! All in all, it was good day for business in Eliot.

Fiscal Year 2023 Budget. The Eliot Select Board continued their review of the Town Manager’s proposed budget for FY 23 at their most recent meeting. There has been only minor changes made and the public is encouraged to go to the town website (<https://www.eliotmaine.org/home/urgent-alerts/town-managers-fy-23-budget-information-updated-03032022>) to review the information and see the responses to the questions posed by the Budget Committee.

Some of the central focus of this year’s budget is to invest in Eliot with double to amount going to road repairs, funds going to the train and retain staff and centralize administrative oversight of personnel functions.

It also ends the practice of paying salaries with funds from projects supported by borrowing. The Town voted to bond to expand the sanitary sewer along 236 and some adjacent streets back in 2015, often referred to as the TIF project (which it does have a Tax Incremental Finance or TIF component). It will allow expansion of business and industry along 236 which is rapidly becoming a substantial secondary suburban artery for the region.

It is important not to see this as a golden goose to keep tax revenues artificially low by essentially putting salaries on a credit card. A fundamental rule of municipal or any financing for that matter is not to put reoccurring costs on one-time sources. In this instance debt should be considered clearly a one-time source. I appreciate the SB sound judgement in supporting a correction to the past practice of using enterprise funds before the project is even built to pay salaries, it is a recipe for disaster.

Community Solar. This project is on the upcoming agenda and I put a copy of Ampion’s Powerpoint in the SB packet. I am anxious to have this in place for the municipality, while there will be little overall

savings for the town (\$240 or so a year, more savings off the CMP bill if cost increase) it will allow Eliot to move to a renewable source for power. Hey, twenty bucks a month is still twenty to the good.

The Ampion will also make a \$100 donation to Eliot Connects once an agreement is in place. The program is open to all CMP customers, although Ampion is not affiliated with CMP. For every customer in the community who signs up for the Community Solar project Ampion will donate \$100 to Eliot Connects or your favorite non-profit, besides saving you on your e-bill.

Tidy -Up Task Force Meetings. We have instituted regular meetings of department managers to address distressed properties. These properties which are in have detritus or other obvious defects which are adversely affecting neighbors in various ways. None of these cases are ever an easy fix and they tend to blossom in the spring.

The Task Force participants are the Code Enforcement Officer, Police Chief, Public Works Director, Town Manager, Land Use Assistant, Health Officer (when available) and General Assistance Director. We will be meeting regularly to discuss the various properties which have been brought to our attention and look to use all means to bring the properties into compliance when there is a violation or to understand the importance for a town to have good neighbor relations.

The results for individual properties or numerous properties will be slow, as there is only so much authority a government has or can have over private property. The challenge is acerbated when a property owner is uncooperative with the municipality and or eventually the courts. It is not uncommon for these disputes to be enforced and or litigated over years. We will do our best to make a difference, but we do have limited powers.

Respectfully submitted

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Town of Eliot, Manager