

## Eliot Town Manager Report

August 3, 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.

### Town Hall Project.



The process of refining the Town Hall/Community Center Project continues. The modification from previous plans has required a shrinking of the foot print to keep the project within budget.

The primary goal of expanding and making the meeting space more functional and adding other meeting space options has been

met in the latest draft. The new “hall” will be more than double the size and is intended to accommodate more activities (i.e., voting, community events, programming). The Aging in Place Committee is already building programming demand with a couple of different offerings this Fall. Community Service will also be considering some programs for the new space. Having a space for communal activity has been a consistent request during the Comp Plan process and expressed by others as well.

The draft plan would also add two smaller meeting spaces on would accommodate about eight to ten people and the other eighteen to twenty-five attendees. Each room will have technology to accommodate the new world of remote attendance and streaming. These areas will be situated so they can be easily used with approval when the Town Hall is not open for other services.

The second major goal was to update and increase space for the Town Clerk operation, this plan will include more customer service space, more protected storage space and innovative customer service options (i.e., drive-up window, self-service space). There will also be some re-organized staff space.

In order to reduce the costs by reducing square footage we need to make some tough decisions. The Community Service Department will need to stay at Eliot Elementary School, which has some practical sensibility in that regard and we will not need the expanded General Assistance space as we move towards the regional partnership with Mainspring. These also allowed the space and therefore the project cost to be reduced dramatically.

The present footprint is a little over 4,000 sq ft., the earlier versions were over 9,000 sq ft. The largest concept would have been well over \$5.5 million and been more costly to maintain long term. I would

not argue that the larger space would not have provided the citizens with “more”, but it would have come at a cost. We now have the construction only estimate down to \$3.6 million, I do think that may increase and we will be very tight at \$.5 million for the TH Reno and the PD repairs, but we will do everything we can to deliver on budget.

### **Transfer Station.**

We recently Director Greg L’Heureux from EcoMaine pay us a visit at the Eliot Transfer Station to provide us with some expert advice on operations. Greg is legend in the industry for his work in South Portland and Westbrook. He both bolstered some of the ideas we have been working on to improve service at the Transfer Station and control cost.

One of those issues is switching the PAYT bag system to a sticker instead of a bag payment. The bags continuously seem to have quality issues, the consumer is paying a premium for the bag beyond the fee and Mr. L’Heureux alluded to some very successful programs which have switched to the sticker method.

The resident would be able to buy any brand of bag within a size range and there would be sticker they could purchase to affix to the particular sized bag. There are some different concepts we need to work out and once we have more context and content for a this and other changes, we will formalize the adjustments into policy with ample time before we implement. I feel we are getting closer.

One other concept the Director suggested, again something we were considering to have all the payments made when the resident enters as opposed to when they leave. On so many levels that just makes sense and as other Towns have been successful in implementing that method with equal or less staff, limitations and challenges, I am confident Eliot can do it as well.

We also are seeing great results with our new relationship with CLYNK taking deposit cans people throw away. This was something former Director Steve Robinson initiated prior to his passing, today we see yet another example how Steve continues to contribute to Eliot. He is missed by all!

### **Water and Sewer Expansion Project**

Well, the blasting along Beech Road has started. The contractor and the engineer Bob Daigle have done an incredible job responding to some of the issues and concerns, the blasting is no exception. The calls or emails coming in are being addressed quickly and the residents continue to be very understanding.

We have even intervened on a couple of unresolved problems from DOT paving projects and are happy to help when we can.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan

Town of Eliot, Manager