

# TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

## MARCH 1, 2022

### **1. CYBERSECURITY: REMINDERS FROM THE IT DEPARTMENT**

With so much going on in the world – COVID, Russia and Ukraine, political unrest – it is even more important than ever to protect your digital privacy both at work and at home. Cybercriminals take advantage of these situations and prey on fear and insecurity. Protect yourself by following these tips from the National Cybersecurity Alliance:

- Only share what is necessary when signing up for online accounts. Give a lot of thought if a site asks for personal information that does not seem to be necessary or safe.
- Check your privacy settings on your laptop, desktop, tablet, phone, and online accounts. There are ways to limit how much information you share, and it is worth the extra time to review your settings periodically.
- Protect your data – keep it secure by using long, unique passwords and storing them in a password manager like 1Password.
- Use multi-factor authentication whenever possible – Google and Microsoft both offer free authenticator apps.

### **2. EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (EOHED) MASS DREDGING PROGRAM GRANT ROUND ANNOUNCED**

The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) is pleased to announce the opening of the 2022 grant round of the Massachusetts Dredging Program. One-year construction grants will be competitively awarded for saltwater dredging with a focus on shovel-ready projects that contribute to the economic vitality, recreational value, public safety, and/or environmental resilience of the Commonwealth's coastal harbors. Dennis has previously been awarded grant funding through this program for our dredging operations and we will be seeking funding this year.

We will update on the status of the grant application as information becomes available.

### **3. RETIREMENT**

*DPW Director David Johansen*- Sharing some bittersweet news with the Community. David Johansen the Director of the Public Works Department, previously announced his formal intent to retire effective March 4, 2022. The Board was previously made aware.

Director Johansen has provided leadership for the Department of Public Works and the Town of Dennis that has gone above and beyond. His career spans over 30 years, and our municipality has benefited greatly by David's 19 years of public service and dedication to the Town of Dennis. David has always worked together with the union and management to ensure labor negotiations were as efficient as possible. David has been an instrumental part of the senior leadership team serving Dennis and his presence will be missed. With well over 39 years of public service in several municipalities I could not be prouder of his public service career.

We will all miss David but, know that he deserves time with family and travel and so much more.

Recruitment for the upcoming vacancy has commenced.

#### **4. BAKER FILES SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET WITH FUNDS FOR CH. 90, WINTER ROAD REPAIR, MVP**

Gov. Charlie Baker announced today that he's filing a \$2.4 billion spending bill that includes funding for critical municipal programs, including a \$100 million supplemental distribution for the Chapter 90 local road and bridge program, \$100 million to help municipalities repair winter road damage, and \$150 million for climate change grants, including the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program.

The governor's bill draws from two revenue sources: fiscal 2022 state tax collections, which have far exceeded initial expectations, and \$800 million in federal COVID recovery aid.

"Massachusetts remains in a strong fiscal position, which enables us to use surplus fiscal year 2022 revenues to sustain our efforts to respond to COVID-19 and invest in areas like early education, human services, housing and more," the governor said in a prepared statement.

##### **Chapter 90**

A \$100 million supplemental [Chapter 90](#) distribution would provide a much-needed infusion to this important program, according to the MMA and local leaders across the state. [Base Chapter 90 funding has been level-funded](#) at \$200 million since 2012, while road construction costs have increased by 42% over that period.

Baker's bill would use \$100 million from the state's revenue surplus to provide an immediate boost to Chapter 90 that can be put to work right away, with the construction season about to begin in just a few weeks. The MMA, meanwhile, will continue to advocate for timely enactment of a separate Chapter 90 bond bill this spring that provides \$300 million in fiscal 2023 so that long-term repairs can get underway as well.

##### **Winter Road Repairs**

The governor's bill includes \$100 million for grants to municipalities for a winter recovery assistance program. Funds could be used for projects including the rehabilitation, reconstruction, resurfacing or preservation of roadways. Grant funds could also be used for the repair or replacement of traffic control devices, signage, guardrails, storm grates, road striping or painting.

##### **Environment and Climate**

Baker's bill includes \$150 million to fund climate change resiliency initiatives, including the [MVP program](#). To date, 93% of Massachusetts municipalities are enrolled in the MVP program. In the most recent MVP grant funding round, \$20.6 million was distributed through both planning and action grants.

With such a high engagement rate and thousands of priority projects identified through the planning process in communities across the state, requests for action grants far exceed available funding (from the Global Warming Solutions Trust Fund).

The governor's proposed spending would enable more projects to be approved in each MVP grant round and provide a stable source of long-term funding as the program expands its reach.

#### **5. GOV. BAKER SIGNS COVID BILL WITH PUBLIC MEETING PROVISIONS**

On Feb. 12, Gov. Charlie Baker signed a \$101 million bill supplementing certain fiscal 2022 appropriations in response to the current phase of the COVID-19 public health emergency and extending certain authorizations related to public meetings.

The law extends pandemic-related authorizations related to public board and town meetings that either had expired or were due to expire soon. The following options are now available through July 15:

- **Remote option for public bodies:** The law extends authorization for virtual public meetings, first enacted at the beginning of the pandemic in April 2020.
- **Open town meeting quorums:** The law allows select boards, in consultation with their town moderator, to lower the quorum requirement for open town meetings to not less than 10% of the existing quorum level. The quorum provision includes a seven-day notification requirement before any select board vote.
- **Remote representative town meetings:** The law allows representative town meetings to have the option to meet remotely, if approved by the select board and town moderator, as well as the town meeting when it meets.

## **6. TOWN OF DENNIS SEASONAL POSITIONS NOW OPEN**

*Town of Dennis is Now Hiring for summer seasonal positions, including Lifeguards, Police Community Service Officers, Natural Resource Monitors, Golf Rangers and Laborers, Beach Attendants, and Recreation Counselors and Instructors.*

Applications are open for the 2022 Summer Season. Application deadline is March 19th, 2022. Apply online at <https://dennis.munisselfservice.com/employmentopportunities/default.aspx>

## **7. TOWN AND SCHOOL BUDGET MEETING DATES**

Both the Cape Cod Regional Technical and Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High Schools are coming before the Select Board on March 15, 2022. The Finance Committee has scheduled their budget review meetings for March 8, 14, 22 and 24.

Respectfully, Elizabeth C. Sullivan, Town Administrator