

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

1. SEPTEMBER 11TH REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

The public is invited to gather at the Dennis Fire Headquarters Station for a remembrance ceremony to honor the lives lost during the 9/11/01 attacks on Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at 9:30 am.

The ceremony will be held in front of the Dennis Fire Department Headquarters, located at 883 Main Street (Route 28) West Dennis, MA.

All are welcome to attend.

2. WASTEWATER IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

I would like to update the Select Board and the public on several recent developments regarding Dennis' wastewater project.

First, I am pleased to report that we had a very successful Wastewater Wednesday Workshop at the Dennis Center for Active Living, where we engaged with residents, provided them with the latest information, and answered important questions about the project heading into Town Meeting. The discussion was lively once again, and it's clear that the community is eager and excited to participate in this important process. As you know, this was the third recent workshop, following the previous ones at the Dennis Police Station and the Dennis Public Library. And quickly, if anyone was unable to attend these series of workshops, it is currently running on Channel 8, the Town's Website, and on the Wastewater Wednesday Facebook page.

Second, I am happy to report that last week Dennis received the draft groundwater discharge permit, a significant milestone in our collaboration with Mass DEP. This is another critical step in ensuring the project aligns with DEP's environmental goals and regulatory requirements.

Additionally, I would like to inform the Board that the General Contractor bid openings for the wastewater project are scheduled for next week, likely on the 17th. This is an exciting step as we move closer to making the project a reality and follows what you have already heard about which was that the bids from the subcontractor openings came in right below our engineer's estimates.

Lastly, I want to remind everyone that the wastewater article — Article 9 — is on the warrant for the October 1st Special Town Meeting. I encourage residents to attend and participate in this important decision for the future of Dennis. I would also like to remind everyone that there will also be a ballot question for this project on October 8th and Town Clerk Terry Bunce is preparing for that, she has indicated that there will be absentee voting available for this vote.

3. NATHANIEL H. WIXON SCHOOL STATUS – 901 ROUTE 134, EAST DENNIS

Update on the Wixon School appropriated articles and status of ongoing evaluations. There are currently two articles that are funding ongoing expenses and building evaluation. One approved at the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) held on May 2, 2023 and the second at the Special Town Meeting (STM) held on November 9, 2023. Currently this is the breakdown of expenditures:

ATM 5-2-23 (Article 32) – Appropriated \$300,000 – Building Expenses

- \$23,827 clean up from vandalism – discharge of fire extinguisher throughout building
- \$10,511 removal of historic US Flag – stored in art vault at Manse Museum
- \$10,441 utilities

- \$6,918 disposal of heating oil in underground storage tank
- \$4,180 mowing
- \$2,969 misc. parts and materials (i.e. electrical, signs)
- \$2,505 alarm
- \$1,500 elevator – scheduled inspection may need repairs to pass inspection
\$62,851 currently spent (\$237,148 remaining)
- \$647,000 Asbestos Abatement Estimate for known ceiling tiles – Rowse Architects (4-17-24). This is the estimated cost to remove all the known asbestos ceiling tiles/disposal and replace lighting.
- \$30,092 underground fuel storage tank removal quote received State bid FAC110. The Dennis Fire Department (DFD) has found abandoning in place not an option, removal required. DFD contacted MA DEP and they have been told abandoning in place would not be approved. This is being scheduled for removal. Inspections will be carried out as part of Environmental Site Assessment (STM article).
- \$18,000 Routine maintenance check of Generator requires repairs prior to use (notified 11-15-23). Generator currently offline.
- \$5,000 Lighting Repair Auditorium, currently not functioning.
- \$2,000 Boiler Pressure Relief valve
- \$TBD Implementation of Asbestos Management Plan (plan pending)
- \$TBD Proposed cost of repairs to septic system
- \$TBD Elevator requires inspection
- \$TBD Fire extinguishers require inspection and replacement

STM 11-9-23 (Article 23) – Appropriated \$300,000 – Survey & Building Evaluation

- \$144,542 – Nitsch Engineering (under contract \$157,761)
 - Existing Conditions Survey
 - Approval Not Required Plan
 - Septic Inspections
 - Phase I Environmental Site Assessment
 - Phase II Environmental Site Assessment
 - Asbestos Management Plan
- Additional items TBD
 - Cost of evaluation of scope/design/repair of septic system
 - Cost of inspection of underground storage tank
 - Any further evaluation of any hazardous waste

Currently there is \$142,239 uncommitted. That being said there are costs to the pending additional items listed above, which will continue to be utilized.

Pending Immediate Issues:

- Asbestos Management Plan – must be completed and implemented prior to any proposed use
- Septic Condition – system(s) need to be repaired prior to any proposed use – currently working with Rowes Architect to further evaluate scope with the intent to receive estimated cost of repairs
- Removal of Underground Storage Tank and subsequent inspection

Please note the operational expenses, we have no staffing allocated for this 100,000 +-sq ft building (eight Senior Centers could fit within this footprint to give scope of magnitude). It has been reported repeatedly that the DY School District was spending the following annually (2021):

- \$1,400,000 = \$650,000 operational expenses + \$550,000 maintenance staff (O&M estimate) + \$200,000 asbestos management cleaning/management. To date there is no budget for staffing and actual O&M.

4. 187 UPPER COUNTY ROAD FORMER CATHOLIC CHURCH PROPERTY

Last Friday we held the bid opening for the demolition of the church located at 187 Upper County Road in Dennis Port. We experienced significant interest in this project from potential bidders. Five bids were received ranging between \$229,700 to \$377,000. This is incredibly favorable pricing for the Town substantially less than the original estimates. Currently we are reviewing the low bidder's references and submittals to ensure they are complete and the lowest responsible bidder to recommend an award.

5. DAVIS BUSH PROPERTY BUILDING UPDATE

We have made progress on the environmental permitting for the demolition of the single-family home on the Bush property. This property is located within an environmentally sensitive resource area under the jurisdiction of the Mass Wildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP). This has resulted in significant delays and additional costs to attain their approval. All of the required studies have been completed and we are expecting the formal approval any day now. Dennis Conservation Commission has also recently given their approval. The building's demolition permit is in place. With the exception of the septic tank and system removal our intention is to complete the demolition work with Public Works' staff. By doing so we will substantially reduce the cost to get this done. Currently we are scheduling to accomplish this work late fall or early winter.

6. PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

At this time, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health reports that the towns of Sandwich, Falmouth, Mashpee, Barnstable, Yarmouth, and Dennis remain at a moderate level of risk for transmission of West Nile Virus. Risk level for EEE remains remote or low in all Cape towns. Risk levels are updated routinely by MADPH and can be viewed at the Massachusetts Arbovirus Surveillance Dashboard. Massachusetts arbovirus update | Mass.gov

Cape Cod Mosquito Control submitted 37 pools of mosquitoes to the state lab this week for arbovirus testing. Two samples of mosquitoes collected in Barnstable County tested positive for EEE and one sample of mosquitoes tested positive for WNV this week. As we head into fall the birds are moving around and carrying these viruses to different areas.

Current information on mosquitoes, animals and humans with positive WNV or EEE results can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-arbovirus-update>

Mosquito populations in our area continued to decline this week. While there are less mosquitoes biting, the risk of disease transmission is increasing each week until we get a hard frost as the mosquitoes that are flying are getting older and more likely to be carrying a disease.

Potential disease vectors for WNV are active at dusk and after dark so precautions should be taken to avoid mosquitoes at these times. The species that transmit this disease prefer to lay their eggs in man-made containers like tires, tarps, gutters, and children's toys that hold water after a rain event. People can reduce the mosquito population in their area by checking their property for standing water and dumping it out.

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient, such as DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), or oil of lemon eucalyptus (p-menthane-3,8-diol (PMD) or IR3535) according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used

on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30 percent or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning in areas of high risk.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Wearing long sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

[Mosquito-Proof Your Home](#)

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty unused flowerpots and wading pools and change the water in birdbaths frequently. Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly fitting screens on all windows and doors.

[Protect Your Animals](#)

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs provide excellent mosquito breeding habitats and should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent West Nile virus (WNV) and EEE. If an animal is suspected of having WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to the Department of Agricultural Resources, Division of Animal Health by calling 617- 626-1795, and to the Department of Public Health by calling 617-983-6800.

[Barnstable County Arbovirus Webpage](#)

With another case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) diagnosed last week in Plymouth County, Barnstable County's Department of Health and Environment has created the [Arbovirus Summary for Barnstable County webpage](#).

The webpage includes information on EEE and West Nile Virus (WNV) reports, transmission risk assessment and tips to protect yourself from bites and your home and property from infestations. Dashboard maps are included for the most up-to-date reporting data.

7. TRAFFIC ADVISORY: SEVERAL MONTH CLOSURE OF ROUTE 6A

DENNIS- The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is announcing it will be closing Route 6A (Main Street) from Scargo Hill Road to Sesuit Neck Road in Dennis for several months, beginning on Wednesday, September 4, at 7:00 a.m. The roadway closure is scheduled to be in place until April 2025. MassDOT must close this section of Route 6A to facilitate the replacement of two existing culverts under Route 6A at the Sesuit Creek. The roadway will remain open to residents residing within the closed section of Route 6A.

Traffic management will consist of a temporary detour as follows:

[Drivers traveling eastbound on Route 6A](#)

- Turn left onto Sesuit Neck Road
- Turn right on Bridge Street
- Continue on Bridge Street to Route 6A (Main Street) intersection

Drivers traveling westbound on Route 6A

- Turn left onto Scargo Hill Road
- Continue straight onto Old Bass River Road
- Continue on Old Bass River Road to Route 6A (Main Street) intersection

Drivers who are traveling through the affected areas should expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution. Appropriate signage, law enforcement details, and advanced message boards will be in place to guide drivers through the work area.

All scheduled work is weather dependent and/or may be impacted due to an emergency situation.

For information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to:

- Download the Mass511 mobile app or visit www.mass511.com to view live cameras, travel times, real-time traffic conditions, and project information before setting out on the road. Users can subscribe to receive text and email alerts for traffic conditions.
- Dial 511 and select a route to hear real-time conditions.
- Follow @MassDOT on X, (formerly known as Twitter), to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

John Goggin

MassDOT Communications Office

8. TOWN OF DENNIS CHILDCARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Funding was approved at the Dennis May 2, 2023 Annual Town Meeting to pay the costs of funding and administering a childcare subsidy program for birth through 5-year-old children of Dennis residents to attend a state-licensed childcare program.

The Town of Dennis Childcare Subsidy Program was funded to provide financial assistance for 50 local families with children who are under five years old as of August 31, 2024, for the program period September 1, 2024 -August 31, 2025.

A subsidy in the form of direct payment of \$200 per month to State licensed childcare providers for up to 50 full time, year-round residents of Dennis (maximum of \$2,400 per household) will be provided for one eligible child and meets a threshold of 81% to 150% Average Median Income parameter. Child must be enrolled a minimum of two days per week for eligibility.

Included below are a Childcare Subsidy Program Overview, an Application Form, and a Required Documents List. The [Application Form \(PDF\)](#) includes questions to obtain information for verification of eligibility.

Applications and required documents must be completed fully and returned to:

Dennis Town Hall

Attention: Childcare Voucher Program

685 Route 134

South Dennis, MA 02660

Or may be scanned and emailed to DennisCSP@town.dennis.ma.us with the subject line "CSP."

FY 2024	HOUSEHOLD SIZE							
INCOME CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
LOW								
80% Income Limit	\$70,960	\$81,080	\$91,200	\$101,320	\$109,440	\$117,560	\$125,640	\$133,760
81% Income Limit (DENNIS MINIMUM)	\$71,847	\$82,093	\$92,340	\$102,586	\$110,808	\$119,029	\$127,210	\$135,432
AVERAGE MEDIAN								
100% Income Limit	\$88,700	\$101,350	\$114,000	\$126,650	\$136,800	\$146,950	\$157,050	\$167,200
150% AVERAGE MEDIAN 150 % Income limit (DENNIS MAXIMUM)	\$133,050	\$152,025	\$171,000	\$189,975	\$205,200	\$220,425	\$235,575	\$250,800

9. REMINDER SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

Special Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 1st, at 7:00PM at the Dennis-Yarmouth Intermediate School located at 286 Station Ave. S. Yarmouth, MA. 02664

The Dennis Select Board will review a draft Town Meeting warrant at their meeting on August 27, 2024 and will finalize the warrant by early September.

September 20, 2024 is the last day to register to vote in the Special Town Meeting.

10. NEXT MEETING DATES OF THE DENNIS SELECT BOARD

The Dennis Select Board will meet on September 24, 2024 for regularly scheduled business. Upcoming meeting dates of the Select Board can be found on the [Town of Dennis website here](#).

All are welcome to attend and participate in our open and public meetings. The agenda for each meeting is posted 48 business hours prior to the scheduled meeting time and can be accessed through the Select Board’s webpage or the Town calendar webpage.

Attend in-person at the Town Hall, Stone Meeting Room. Or for alternative public access join the meeting online via zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7660036712> or participate by phone by dialing 1-646-558-8656 and entering Conference ID 766 003 6712 #.

11. JOIN THE TEAM – THE TOWN OF DENNIS IS HIRING

Are you or someone you know looking for work? The Town of Dennis is hiring! Several full and part-time positions available. Apply and view current job openings [here](#).

Respectfully,

Elizabeth C. Sullivan, Town Administrator