

To: Salem Town Council
From: Joseph Devine, Town Manager
Date: November 18, 2024
Re: Town Manager's Report

MEMORANDUM



News and Noteworthy:

General Election

On Tuesday, November 5th the community came together with a total of 18,713 ballots cast for the General Election which represents approximately 88% of our 21,941 people on our voter checklist. 8% or 1,811 of the ballots were done through the absentee process with the remaining 16,902 ballots cast in person. I want to thank our Town Clerk, Moderator, Supervisors of the Checklist, Election Workers, Police Department, Municipal Services Staff, Town Councilors, and the School District for all of their hours of preparation and service on Election Day.

State/Federal Election - November					
Year	Ballots	Absentee	Voters	Percent	Checklist Total
2024	16,902	1,811	18,713	88%	21,941
2020	12,388	5,660	18,048	70%	25,659
2016	14,939	1,483	16,422	72%	22,613

Community Choice Electric Aggregation Plan

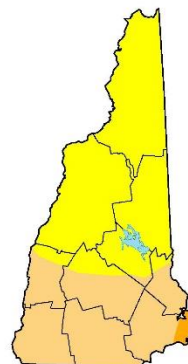
December 2, 2024 at 7:00 PM the Electric Aggregation Committee will hold its second public hearing at the High School Media Center for the purpose of taking testimony on the process for joining the adoption of a Community Choice Aggregation Plan. If adopted following these public hearings and a town wide vote on March 11, 2025 residents currently utilizing Liberty Utilities for their power supply would be automatically switched to Community Power unless the opt out of the program. Residents with any questions about electrical aggregation are encourage to attend one of the hearings.

Drought Update

Drought conditions have significantly expanded in NH and Bedford is now categorized as having Moderate Drought. All but about 8% of NH is categorized as at least "Abnormally Dry" and 42% of the State is now Moderate or Severe. I would encourage all residents to conserve water as much as possible. It is expected that conditions will remain generally dry for some time.

U.S. Drought Monitor New Hampshire

November 12, 2024
(Released Thursday, Nov. 14, 2024)
Valid 7 a.m. EST



Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

Richard Tinker
CPON/AARWS/NCEP



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Departement Updates

Municipal Services

Framing of the new DPW northerly wing has been completed including interior layout. Next steps will be roofing, windows, and interior rough of electrical and plumbing. The former central maintenance area has been gutted with removal of the slab, reinforcement for the foundation, and under slab plumbing work. The new slab will be poured the week of November 18th



The Old Town Hall Project is winding down with the recent completion of the floors in the main room and the central office. The floors were replaced with real wood that has an antique finish complimenting the historical integrity of the building. The underlayment was leveled and removed much of the sagging within the original clapboard floor.



The secondary cleanup of the property of the former WWTF is well underway. The contractor will be working through the end of the year to remove the PCB/PFAS contaminated soils which are being hauled to certified landfills in Indiana by rail. The lesser level contaminated soils or those under EPA regulations are being trucked to New York.

Police Department

The Salem Police Department was recognized by the New Hampshire Office of Highway Safety as the top law enforcement agency in impaired driving enforcement. Members of the agency received the recognition at the annual conference held on November 4, 2024.

The Salem Police Department successfully passed our first-year policy assessment from CALEA. The assessment occurred during the second week of September and included a review of 25% of our policies and procedures. In addition to the policy review, there were four interviews with staff on topics chosen by the assessor. This year's topics included police pursuits, use of force, written directive system, and internal affairs investigations. The review and exit interview with the assessor were overwhelmingly positive.



Police Department Staffing - Four candidates are in the background process for FT police officer positions. If all remain in the process this will bring our staffing level to 68 FT police officers. Assistant prosecutor was hired and will begin on November 18, 2024. A new dispatcher has been hired and will begin on December 2, 2024.

Fire Department

For the month of October SFD responded to 509 calls. This ranged from everything between slips and falls to structure fires. During this time our simultaneous call rate remained high at 65%

We have made a lot of process with updating our Dispatch Center Consoles. Our old consoles were outdated and inefficient. The new workspace is almost complete and will be a big improvement.

Preliminary Meeting with HVAC company for replacement at Station 2 was held. HR assisted us with job posting.

Monthly Snapshot For October 13 – November 13

- Fire Permit 65
- Inspections 77
- Revenue \$4,655
- Burn Permits 34
- Inspectional Services Permit 255
- Inspections 282
- Revenue \$93,805.55
- Health Inspections 113
- Revenue \$5,405
- Well/septic Permits 27
- Revenue \$2,060

Human Services

As the colder weather and holiday season approach, the Human Services Department has seen a significant increase in community needs. We're currently experiencing a rise in requests related to electric shutoffs, overdue rent, and a recent uptick in fuel assistance needs.

To support families in need during the holidays, we are actively sharing information on how residents can access Thanksgiving baskets. Additionally, we're collaborating with the Fire Department, the Christmas Fund, and the Rotary Club to compile a list of residents who may benefit from Christmas gift cards. The Fire Department will handle the delivery of these gift cards to ensure they reach families in time for the holiday season.

Since November 1st, the Human Services Department has been actively assisting residents facing financial and housing challenges. Here is a summary of recent activity:

- **Client Interactions:** We received 21 phone calls, conducted 5 initial client meetings, and held 3 follow-up sessions.
- **Assistance Provided:**
 - **Electric Bill Support:** Paid \$200 through Salvation Army vouchers to assist with electric bills.
 - **Gas Voucher:** Provided \$40 in gas vouchers for transportation needs.
 - **Rent Assistance:** Contributed \$1,150 toward rent payments to help prevent homelessness.
 - **Temporary Housing:** Paid \$222 to cover a 3-night hotel stay for emergency housing.
- **Negotiations:**
 - Worked with Liberty Electric to restore power for 2 residents and prevented shut-off for another.
 - Successfully negotiated with a landlord to prevent the eviction of a resident, even after the case had progressed through the courts.

Community Services Department

Thanksgiving Celebration

Our annual Thanksgiving party for seniors is set for November 22, 2024, at Castleton, with entertainment provided by the B Street Bombers. We're expecting 185 seniors to attend this festive event. Program Director Maria Augeri has also been collaborating closely with the Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels Coordinator to increase congregate meal participation. Since this partnership began last summer, attendance in the congregate meals program has risen by 240%, helping to restore participation levels that had declined significantly after COVID-19.

Upcoming Events

- **Fall Fest** – November 16, 2024, at Hedgehog Park, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Enjoy craft vendors, family activities, and a scarecrow contest.
- **Firemen's Luncheon** – December 9, 2024
A special luncheon in appreciation of our firemen and their service.
- **Winter Fest** – December 19, 2024, at the Ingram Senior Center, 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM
Join us for holiday cheer with craft vendors, photos with Santa, a sleigh ride, and activities for the whole family.

Winter Recreation Programs

- **Pat's Peak Ski Program:** Registration is now open for the 5-week program starting February 14, 2024. More details and registration information are available at Salemnh.myrec.com.
- **Winter Sports Clinics:** Information on Adaptive Basketball, Winter Flag Football Clinic, Dodgeball, and other winter recreation programs will be posted on the Recreation Department's Facebook page and website on November 15.

Human Resources

In the week of November 4, 2024, HR launched the Annual Open Enrollment (OE) process for the 2025 benefit year. Following feedback from employees about the 2024 CIGNA Dental Plan—specifically regarding changes in provider networks—HR advocated for an alternative through discussions with HUB and coordinated with four unions. All unions expressed support for switching to Delta Dental, similar to the coverage currently offered under the Police Department's Collective Bargaining Agreement. We were pleased to announce during this year's OE that Delta Dental will be available as the Town's dental provider for 2025, and employee feedback on this change has been very positive.



The graphic is a vertical banner for 'OPEN ENROLLMENT 2025'. On the left, a dark blue sidebar lists 'Employee Benefits' categories: Retirement Information & Resources, Workplace Discrimination Guidance, CHIPRA Notices, Family Medical Leave, Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, and Open Enrollment 2025. The main area has a light blue background with a large graphic of a building and a clock. Text includes 'OPEN ENROLLMENT IS HERE' in large blue letters, the dates 'November 1, 2024 – Friday, November 22, 2024', and 'Don't Miss Out –'. Below this, several paragraphs of text provide details: 'Open Enrollment is passive this year...', 'Flexible spending account (FSA) and health saving account (HSA) elections are the exception...', 'As a reminder, employees pay for insurance coverage one month in advance...', 'Effective January 1, 2025, the Town is changing Dental Insurance providers to Delta Dental from Cigna Dental for all eligible employees.', and 'We are pleased to announce the return to Delta Dental.'

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EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

New Hampshire Commission
For Human Rights
Concord, NH 03301

For information call:
603.271.2767
nh.gov/hrc

If you wish to submit a complaint, please refer to the Employment Intake Questionnaire. Once completed, send the questionnaire to the New Hampshire Commission for Human Rights located at 57 REGIONAL DRIVE, SUITE 8, CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03301

Call: (603) 271-2767
FAX: (603) 271-6339
TTD ACCESS: RELAY NH 1-800-735-2964
Email: humanrights@nh.gov

Resource:
[New Hampshire Employment Law Discrimination Poster](#)

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

General information about the laws EEOC enforces and/or about filing a charge, call: 1-800-669-4000, 1-800-669-6820

(TTY for Deaf/Hard of Hearing callers only), 1-844-234-5122 (ASL Video Phone for Deaf/Hard of Hearing callers only), or email: info@eeoc.gov.

Need to find an EEOC office? See the [EEOC Office List and Jurisdictional Map](#)

Resources are available below:

[FAQs about Federal Laws Prohibiting Discrimination](#)

[Know Your Rights Poster](#)

◦ [KnowYour Rights Poster](#)

In compliance with state and federal regulations, HR has also created a new “Employment Discrimination” webpage under Employee Resources, which went live on November 13, 2024. This page provides essential resources, posters, and information to support compliance and employee awareness.

To strengthen the Town of Salem's branding in recruitment, HR has developed updated job announcement templates for the Salem Fire Department and Town Hall positions. Additionally, HR is collaborating with Police Chief Joel Dolan to create a new recruitment flyer for the Police Department, with an expected rollout in December 2024. Updates to the Town's HR Employment webpage have also been completed to reflect the new branding in online job announcements.

Upcoming Events and Meetings

November

- **November 18** - Town Council Meeting
- **November 28 & 29** - Town Hall Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

December

- **December 1** - Holiday Parade
- **December 2** - Town Council Meeting
- **December 4** - Tree Lighting at the Town Common
- **December 5** - Carols & Cocoa with the school
- **December 16** - Town Council Meeting
- **December 18** - Town Hall Closed from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM for the Holiday Party
- **December 24** - Town Hall Closing at Noon for Christmas Eve
- **December 25** - Town Hall Closed for Christmas
- **December 31** - Town Hall Closing at Noon for New Year's Eve

Items Signed on Behalf of the Town Council Since Last Update:

- Payroll Register No. 45 (11-04-24) - \$344,744.51
- Payment Check Register (11-05-24) - \$3,894,347.41
- Payment Check Register (11-12-24) - \$1,688,674.19
- Payment Check Register (VOID) (11-12-24) - \$70.00
- Payroll Register No. 46 (11-12-24) - \$392,494.09