

Town Administrator Report
February 9, 2021

The following is a summary of the major activities of the Office of the Town Administrator for the previous week.

- 1. Budget Process Update** – I am continuing to work directly with the Finance Committee as they move toward wrapping up the review process for the proposed FY 2022 budget. Last Thursday we met with County officials and all of the Human Service agencies supported by the Town. This is always a critical meeting in the overall budget review process, as these do not represent traditional Town departments, but rather are private companies providing direct services to local residents and funded by the Town. This coming Thursday we have scheduled the Wastewater Department and a second meeting with the Fire-EMS Department. This will be an important meeting with two of our major departments, and it will also mark the completion of the departmental meetings with the Finance Committee and will signify a transition into the recommendation and Town Meeting preparation phase of the budget process. Overall, the numbers have remained constant from the original recommendations with the exception that the certified High School numbers are slightly higher than estimated and the health insurance numbers are slightly lower, which will essentially cover each other. Overall revenues remain sufficient to cover the proposed recommendations and I have every confidence the Finance Committee will be prepared with sound and affordable budget recommendations for Town Meeting. I will continue to coordinate with and assist the Committee throughout their review. One issue that has come up for discussion has been the need for additional candidates for the Finance Committee for the upcoming election. If you may know someone interested in serving on the Finance Committee, now is the time to come forward as papers are due this month.
- 2. Rapid Recover Grant Program Award** – I am very pleased to report that the Town has been awarded a Rapid Recovery Grant from the Massachusetts Downtown Initiatives Program. This grant will provide the Town with consulting assistance to assess the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on local downtown businesses and to explore solutions and projects designed to revitalize local businesses as a way to plan for economic recovery in a methodical and coordinated way with the local business community. I am very proud of the Town's efforts to seek these resources to develop outreach and initiatives to work together with our business community to identify ways to support local businesses. We can expect many visitors this summer season and it will be extremely important to have plans in place to support business activity in a safe and responsible manner that benefits our local business community. The State will be engaging consultants to be assigned to communities to help us through the outreach and planning process, and I encourage strong local government leadership to ensure that we make the most of this opportunity.
- 3. Shared Winter Streets Grant Program Award** – I am very pleased to report that the Town has been awarded a Shared Streets and Places Grant in the amount of \$210,000. These funds

will enable the Town to make sidewalk and lighting improvements and upgrade the bus stop in the area of the Oak Bluffs Skateboard Park. These improvements will also include ADA compliant sidewalks to link the paths providing access to the YMCA, MV Ice Arena, MV Community Services and the High School. This will represent a significant public safety improvement for the area and will be a big improvement to the transportation network for this area of Town. Special thanks and acknowledgement go to Angie Gompert and the Martha's Vineyard Regional Transit Authority who worked with Ewell Hopkins and the Planning Board to design this project and to prepare the grant application. I am happy to support the project, and I thank them for their great work in identifying a problem and working together to find a great solution, along with the funds to complete the improvements.

- 4. Affordable Housing Technical Assistance Grant Award** – I am please to report that the Town has received official word of the approval of our Affordable Housing Technical Assistance Grant from MassHousing to conduct the outreach and planning for the development of housing on the 8-acre parcel on Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road. The Town has been assigned the firm of JM Goldson to provide technical Assistance to move the project forward. The Affordable Housing Committee would like to conduct a kickoff session for Tuesday, February 16 at 2:30 via Zoom. The Board of Selectmen is cordially invited to attend the kick-off session. Attached is the first draft project timeline which takes us through the community outreach process and RFP process over the summer to select a developer to move the project forward. Jennifer Goldson did a great job coordinating the outreach for the development of the Housing Production Plan (HPP) and I think she is a good choice for working with us to organizing this project in a way that we can all move forward together. I look forward to this technical assistance playing a critical role in the successful planning and implementation of this project in the smoothest way possible, and I encourage all of the involved boards to work hard together to make this project happen.
- 5. Complete Streets Technical Assistance Program** – I am currently preparing an application to the Mass DOT for technical assistance funds in the amount of \$50,000 to assist the Town in the preparation of a compliant Complete Streets Prioritization Plan that will enable the Town to begin to receive direct construction funding from the State in order to implement local roadway and transportation improvements. The Town has already prepared and submitted the complete streets policy that makes us eligible to enter the program. However, the Town will not be eligible to receive construction funds until our prioritization plan is completed. The plan requires detailed analysis and budget development that serves as an obstacle for smaller towns without engineering staff. For this reason, the DOT makes this program eligible for smaller communities to prepare the studies needed to be successful in the complete streets program. Once the Town has a certified prioritization plan, we will be eligible to receive hundreds of thousands of dollars in complete street funding.