



Date: May 13, 2024

Subject: Colin Loiseau Performance Review FY2024

Additional feedback from Eric Eldridge, Select Board Chair

Summary

Colin provided an incredibly detailed self-evaluation which covers most of the key items that I identified. While Colin took over a position that was well run before, there are always some transitional challenges, and he did inherit some situations that needed particular attention. Colin is meticulous, diligent and has the personality necessary to excel in his role as Town Manager. I agree with Colin's assessment of his performance over his first 8 months as Town Manager being "excellent". He has exceeded lofty expectations, and we look forward to having that continue.

Here are my additional comments on Colin's performance with focus on some areas that I think are important to the role.

- **Performance:**

- **Budgeting and Planning:** Colin has maintained a good balance between current needs and future planning while budgeting. Communication regarding budgets, rationale, and impact has been delivered with improving clarity for residents, which has been mentioned on multiple occasions to me.
- **Day-to-day operations:** Colin has worked well with department heads to ensure they have the necessary resources and regularly provides them guidance on key areas of focus.
- **Projects:** Colin has coordinated many key projects that resulted from Town Meeting votes and Select Board delegations as he outlined in his self-evaluation. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Design and implement DPW roles and responsibilities.
 - Winslow school abatement and relocation – two separate, but large projects.
 - Bicentennial fields irrigation.
- **Staff:** Colin has coordinated team building activities with Brigette Bell that help improve retention and collaboration. As part of the transition to Colin as Town Manager, having minimal turnover at Town Hall was particularly important to town operations and the stability Colin provided was key to that success.
- **Negotiations:** Colin has provided fair opportunities for staff while maintaining fiscal responsibility in times where this is critical.
- **Addressing problems:** Colin has addressed the free cash certification, which was a large issue since it was impacting the Town's ability to operate and could have impacted our bond rating. Colin addressed the issue of getting free cash certified, helped identify the root cause, and put procedures in place to help ensure that we are not in this situation again in the future.
- **Leadership and Communications:** Colin has taken a strong leadership role in being the "face" of the administration. He is accurate and projects confidence,

which is important in his leadership role. Colin has expanded media options to include a podcast and the Neighbor-to-Neighbor newsletter, and has continued with social media updates, which provide the necessary transparency to residents and staff.

- **Connecting with the community:** Colin has been responsive to requests from residents and is a regular attendee at almost all town events. The residents know Colin and find him very approachable, which is especially important in his role.
 - **Supporting the Select Board:** Colin has cooperatively coordinated the agenda and shared content in a timely manner.
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- **Improvement/Training needed:** Colin would like to focus on continued growth in finance areas. The Board should assist in providing formal and informal training in this area along with providing third-party expertise in situations like financing for the Middle School debt.
 - **Changes to the job description:** At this point, we have not identified any that would make Colin or the administration more efficient or effective.
 - **Mutually agreed upon goals:** A process is in place for setting goals at the beginning of the fiscal year and will be one of the first activities of the newly constituted Select Board.

Date: April 15, 2024 -

Subject: Town Manager Annual Evaluation FY24
Colin F. Loiselle, Town Manager

The purpose of this evaluation is to:

- a) review performance;**
- b) determine if any improvements and/or training are required;**
- c) determine any changes needed in the job description;**
- d) develop mutually agreed upon goals.**

This evaluation covers the time period of approximately September 20, 2023 through June 30, 2024.¹

Part A: Performance

My employment contract categorizes options for my performance evaluation as either “*needs improvement, satisfactory performance, or excellent performance*”. I believe that my performance has been **excellent** in accordance with the requirements of the positions as outlined in the job description and other tasks as they have been assigned to me. It is worth noting that the successes outlined in this report represent a tremendous level of team work both by Town staff and the members of the Select Board and other Boards and Committees. The most basic role of the Town Manager is coordination and proper coordination coupled with the hard work of our staff is the foundation of the successes outlined herein.

Some key takeaways and successes of the past year include the following items:

- Establishment of a working group to implement the DPW Special Act to ensure that all departments that will fold into the DPW are prepared and that there is unity and efficiency on day one.
- Successful negotiations with all relevant bargaining units to establish conditions that will be necessary for the successful launch of a DPW (i.e.- implementation of new SOPs and policies, changes to admin support position, and organizational shift to allow the combination of the existing Town Engineer position with the new Superintendent position)
 - Continued work on the proposed pre-engineered steel building that will house the DPW including the Sewer Dept. The project is now in the design phase and work on the site has begun with the help of the Highway Dept.
- Utilizing a scope of work developed by my predecessor, awarded a contract for the abatement of hazardous materials at the Winslow School which was required regardless of the outcome of the

¹ The performance period is shorter than the full fiscal year because the incumbent manager's term did not begin until September 20th.

building. The project was awarded under budget and is in the final phases of work as of the date of this draft.

- Coordinated the design phase of the \$1.5M partial demolition and renovation of the Winslow School Project with the project designer, SOCOTEC. At the conclusion of the design phase at some point in May, the Town will have a firm cost estimate to determine whether or not the project is feasible at the approved budget and construction documents should it be feasible to move forward.
- Continued to emphasize the importance of economic development by meeting with potential developers, navigating permitting challenges with Inspectional Services, and working with the Economic Development Director and Assessor to negotiate a TIF with a potential large developer.
- With substantial support from the Select Board, work with Town Counsel to negotiate a resolution to the pending challenges between the Town and the Dracut Water District including the Middle School project System Development Fee and the Road Impact Fee.
- Using completed design documents from my time as the Assistant Town Manager, put the Bicentennial Field Irrigation project out to bid. When the first round bids came in higher than budgeted, worked with the project designer to redevelop the scope to match existing budget which was graciously increased with support of the Select Board and Capital Asset Management Committee. Project was awarded to Corbett Inc. this spring with work to be completed by the Fall. This project has been in the conceptual phase for more than 10 years.
- Upon the identification of substantial challenges within the Finance Department when I began in September, worked collaboratively with the Select Board, the Finance Director, and Town staff to get the bottom of the challenges, identify solutions, and hired a consultant to help delineate roles and responsibilities. The culmination of this work is not just increased efficiency and operational success but the ability of the Town to get free cash certified ahead of May Town Meeting.
- Successfully settled three collective bargaining agreements with two additional remaining. The remaining two will hopefully be settled with one-year contracts to align all public safety contracts rather than having five CB agreements expire in one year. The contracts that were settled reflect fair adjustments to salary that highlight the role our staff play in Town government and balance the Town's budgetary constraints.
- Following the conclusion of the work of the Public Safety Building Study Committee, identified the need for a comprehensive capital plan for the existing Police and Fire headquarters to help maximize the existing buildings and ensure we're properly planning for future capital projects. Contract awarded to an architect to perform that work and by June the work will be complete.
- At the request of the Select Board, explored and developed a policy/program for the use of public facilities for community groups who have space needs but no budget to support rentals. As of April 1, community groups have access to regular meeting space at no per-use cost.
- Fiscal Year 2025 Budget – Presented a balanced budget to the Select Board for adoption at Town Meeting that leverages our existing resources to maximize service delivery, includes modest growth in areas where growth is most needed, and protects the Town's financial stability ahead of the impact of a \$1M general fund contribution to the Middle School debt in FY26.

- The budget process this year evolved to a more transparent process that included deeper breakdowns on revenue and expenditures, the launch of “budget office hours” to better educate the community, and increased communication to residents about the budget.
- Communications – The last six months have seen a tremendous increase in all forms of communication and outreach to residents to really enhance transparency and bring more residents into the fold. We’re doing more on social media, we’re publishing the Town Manager’s Report in the Neighbor to Neighbor, thanks to the Media Department, it is also a podcast, and we’re maximizing the use of the new Town website which is a complete credit to the IT department.

Daily Operations: Per the Town Manager’s job description, the role and responsibility of the position is to “oversee the daily operation of Town government; manage employees and projects; ensure that deadlines are met and goals are achieved.” Although this is a difficult item to add metrics to, I believe that my work in ensuring smooth operations as outlined below demonstrate excellent performance.

- 1) I have established a well-known open-door policy whereby staff and residents alike have unfettered access to me to help brainstorm solutions to challenges, address problems, and provide information that might otherwise go unshared.
- 2) I have adopted one-on-one meetings with all department heads (vary in frequency) which has allowed me to really dive into the daily operations of our various departments, provide feedback for enhanced efficiency, and work to create cohesion amongst all departments especially when working toward shared goals.
 - a. I believe this approach to management has also allowed me to get into the weeds on some of the larger projects that our staff are undertaking and provide feedback and help navigate challenges as they come up.
 - b. This has also allowed me to ensure that town-wide we’re meeting goals and deadlines and has allowed me to keep the Board apprised of what is going on in Town.
- 3) I believe I have demonstrated the ability to handle the daily challenges of a municipal operation without having to involve the Select Board when not necessary. I have done so while balancing the need to keep the Board apprised of the various challenges.

While I had the fortune of inheriting a well-oiled machine, I think the fact that our operations continued in a very orderly fashion while the Town underwent transition in leadership is evidence of the success of my leadership, especially in the area of the day-to-day operations of the Town.

Financial management and leadership: In Fall of 2023, it became apparent that we had a substantial challenge in our finance department that was largely the result of key staff turnover and confusion over roles and responsibilities. This resulted in our free cash not being certified in May 2023 or in October of 2023. One of my first tasks was to get to the bottom of the issue, identify the path forward, and ensure that all staff have the resources, training, and support to get the issue corrected and continue on the right

path. Through lots of work between the Town Manager's Office, the Finance Director, and the HR Director, we were able to identify the issue, provide training and support to correct the issue, and are now working to implement organizational changes in that area to help prevent this from happening in the future. While we still have a lot of work to do, I believe that we've made substantial progress towards correcting the issues and developing a sustainable operation in that area (completing the FY22 audit, bringing on a new firm for the FY23 audit, correcting the cash book issue that led to free cash not being certified, and the use of an outside CPA firm to audit the roles/responsibilities of the Treasurer's office).

The development of a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2025 comes with the backdrop of economic and financial challenges for nearly all of our neighboring communities and cities and towns across the Commonwealth. It also comes on the heels of a \$1M general fund contribution to offset the impact of the Middle School debt on the taxpayer. Despite these pressures, we've presented a balanced budget that resulted in no cuts to service, modest growth in key areas identified as priorities by the Administration, and that leaves moderate excess levy capacity to absorb potential shortfalls in FY26. As an added layer of protection, at the advice of our Finance Director, I'm asking Town Meeting to adjust the distribution of marijuana excise to put 25% into a debt stabilization account to further absorb the \$1M impact moving forward. The budget process became more transparent and more iterative to really make this a community driven budget. I believe this approach and strong management will build on our financial success and set us up for future success in the coming years.

Grants: It would be unfair to include grant receipt as a measurement of the performance of the Town Manager since most of the grant seeking is done at the department level. This approach to aggressive grant making is a long-standing tradition in Tyngsborough that continues today. While the Town Manager does do considerable amount of grant review and grant management, this is not something that falls squarely in the Town Manager's Office. To date, Tyngsborough has received more than \$3.8M in grants in FY24 including some as large as \$2M and some as small as \$4500. One item to note is that the availability of and accessibility of grants did become a central point of the FY25 budget process. In fact, we were able to cut two items out of the IT recommended budget because we identified state grants that we were eligible for and that we were confident we'd be able to get.

Closing: I believe that during the period of this review I have demonstrated the skills, knowledge, and motivation of a talented Town Manager and that the results are evidenced in the operation of the Town. I believe I have demonstrated not only a willingness, but an ability to deploy innovative and new techniques to deliver service to residents. Further, I believe that I have made communication a cornerstone of my leadership. This includes communication with the Select Board through regular updates, with Town staff through one-on-one meetings, open door policy, and written communications, and with residents through new and exciting mediums. Finally, I believe that with my leadership, the

Town has weathered all of the challenges that came our way and remains a strong, viable, and vibrant community.

Part B: improvements/training

1. This fall, I completed a certificate through Suffolk University in the field of “Data-Driven Leadership” as I work to bring organizational change necessary to adapt to our current situation.
2. I participated this Fall in the MMA’s “Effective Constituent Communication” series to help improve communication strategies across municipal government.
3. I have participated in more than 16 webinars offered by the Division of Local Services, the Massachusetts Municipal Association, and other related agencies. This is on top of the regular classes I am required to take to maintain my designation as a certified public purchasing official (MCPPO) in the Commonwealth.
4. One area I continue to seek training opportunities is in the area of finance and finance law. This has been particularly helpful as we navigated the challenges that we saw this fall. The DOR has several training modules which I continue to complete as time allows.

Part C: changes to job description

1. I believe that the job description is accurate and reflects the intent of the Town Manager Special Act.

Part D: Goals

The Select Board annually creates a list of joint goals with the Town Manager in June and July, after the annual election and the new Board is seated. In FY24, the Select Board and my predecessor compiled a list of 13 comprehensive goals. A list of the goals and relevant updates is attached as Exhibit A. A full presentation and update of these goals was presented to the Board at its meeting on April 8th.

Given that these goals were established prior to my tenure, I believe that we hit the ground running working toward these goals and continuing to address challenges as they arose and deliver the level of service that the Community expects.

I believe this to be a fair assessment of my performance for the period of September 20, 2023 – June 30, 2024.

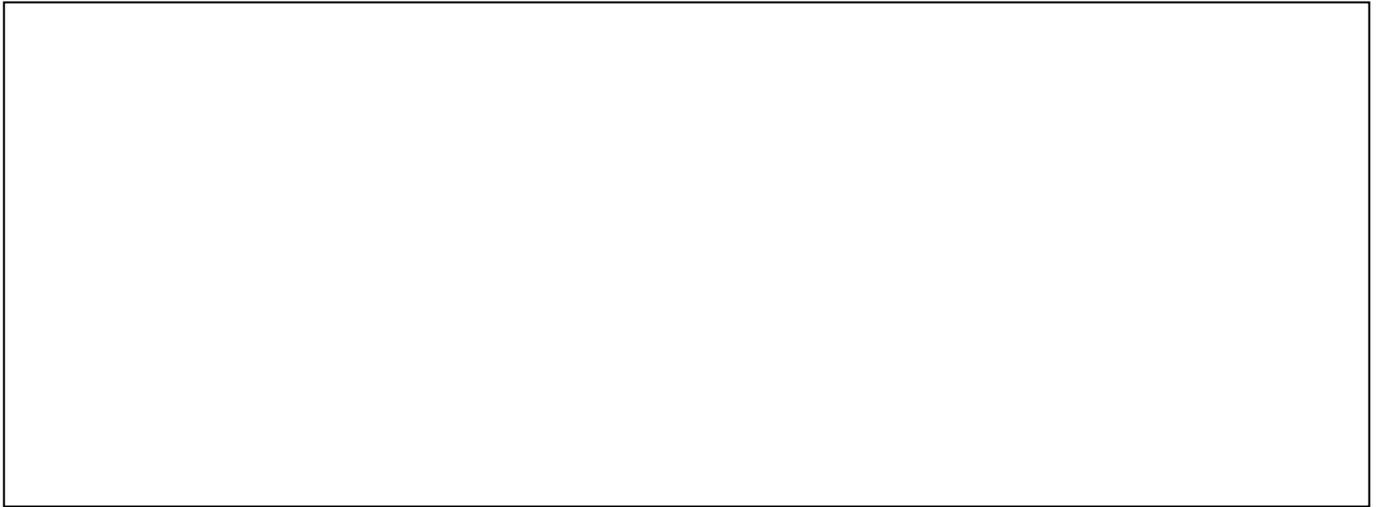
Sincerely,

Colin F. Loiselle

Colin F. Loiselle
Town Manager

Voted and approved the Select Board on May 13, 2024

Additional Comments from Select Board (attached)





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FY24 Select Board & Town Administration Goals and Priorities (in no particular order)

#	Description	Responsible Entity
1	<p>Review inventory of town-owned land and buildings to determine a plan or future use for each asset. This should include, but may not be limited to, the Winslow School/Littlefield Library site, former Council on Aging building, and former Recreation Center. For any building that will remain, create a plan, with budget, for properly maintaining the asset, including a timeline if necessary.</p> <p>4/8/24 Update:</p> <p>Ahead of the October Town Meeting, Town Manager created a visual inventory identifying the current buildings, their use, and overview of physical condition.</p> <p>Town Administration is working through the Winslow School design project to determine feasibility & intends to use that outcome to guide future discussions.</p> <p>May Town Meeting to consider free cash article to demolish the 180 Lakeview Ave building due to deteriorating condition.</p> <p>Select Board adopted a policy that enhanced the use of the Council on Aging after hours to address need that existed in the community for community groups.</p> <p>Upcoming Items</p> <p>1) Work with the Media Department to identify current costs of a PEG center and identify next steps for the \$800k remaining that was allocated for the PEG center back in 2019.</p>	Town Manager with input from Select Board



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	<p>2) Begin to develop options for consideration of the future of the 120 Westford Road Rec Building as the Rec Dept. gets situated in the new clubhouse on Sherburne Parcel.</p> <p>3) Once DPW is established, work towards establishing a facilities division and developing a town-wide maintenance schedule as opposed to the very isolated process that exists today.</p>	
2	<p>Develop a 5-year plan for staffing, services, equipment and infrastructure for each department, with specific focus on DPW, Police and Fire Departments</p> <p>4/8/24 Update: In February, the Town Manager awarded a contract to Lavallee Brensinger Architects to conduct a thorough facilities assessment of both the Police and Fire Departments (central station) to identify 5-year capital plan, space needs, and determine overall condition to help guide future discussions.</p> <p>Fire Chief has worked to identify current staffing approach, analyze the right path for future staffing, and has collaborated with Town Manager. Currently looking at SOPs and department structure.</p> <p>Upcoming Items:</p> <p>1) Work with the report from Lavallee Brensinger to present a comprehensive facilities assessment to the Select Board to talk about long term planning for those buildings (including a comprehensive capital plan)</p> <p>2) Continue to work with Chief Russell on the strategic planning he's already commenced for the Fire Department.</p>	Town Manager



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	<p>3) Review existing planning with the Police Department for future growth and staffing.</p>	
3	<p>Improve communications with residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide clear understanding of how their taxes are calculated and assessed ● Provide clear understanding of where revenue is generated and tax money is spent with specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schools ○ Public safety ○ Roads <p>4/8/24 Update:</p> <p>Town Manager to host three (3) budget office hours with the goal of making the budget easier to understand and more accessible to residents.</p> <p>FY25 budget presentation took a deep dive into the category of expenditures, staffing, and the breakdown of revenue.</p> <p>Upcoming Items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Town Manager’s Office working to redesign a “budget book” that will be available ahead of Town Meeting to better present the Town’s FY25 budget beyond the spreadsheet that we’re used to seeing. 2) Work with the Information Technology Department to identify ways that we can use our current website to present the budget in a more transparent manner, and explore third party software options for real time reporting directly on the website. 	Town Manager
4	<p>Improve operational efficiencies in departments and effectively account for costs and non-tax revenues</p>	Town Manager with support and input from the Select Board



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and explore new or alternative revenue sources to support capital and ongoing programming and services. <p>4/8/2024 Update:</p> <p>Town Manager and Finance Director along with HR Director coordinated the use of a consultant to analyze the operations of the Treasurer/Collector office to identify areas for improvement both in terms of efficiencies but also best practices. The fact-finding portion of the project was complete last week and we'll now begin to look at his recommendations for improvements.</p> <p>Upcoming Items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Town Manager & HR have begun the conversion with Unions about using the summer to review the job descriptions that were created during the Collins Center Study last year to go department by department and ensure job descriptions match the work each employee is doing and in doing so look to find operational efficiencies and reduce redundancies across government. 2) Conduct revenue analysis to ensure we're maximizing the revenues we currently receive. Part of this will include looking at neighboring communities. 	
5	<p>Create an economic development strategy with input from the Planning Board and relevant stakeholders, which may include the Re-establishment of an Economic Development Commission (EDC) or Business Association to further improve the economic development of the town.</p> <p>Upcoming Items:</p>	<p>Select Board with support from the Town Manager</p>



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	<p>1) Develop strategy for the potential appointment of an economic development advisory sub-committee of the Planning Board & Select Board to develop a long-term strategy that could include the establishment of an EDC or a Business Association.</p> <p>2) Conduct outreach to local businesses to ensure that we're offering an economic development environment that works for small, medium, and larger businesses.</p>	
6	<p>Support the development and implementation of a new website and connect with goals around better navigation, accessibility, and communications with residents. 4/8/2024 Update Complete.</p>	Town Manager
7	<p>Plan for affordable housing, including approach for addressing MBTA Adjacent Communities legislation and reviewing/updating the 2020-2024 Housing Production Plan.</p> <p>4/8/2024 Update:</p> <p>Town Planner and Zoning Review Committee have worked diligently with NMCOG to put together draft zoning to comply with the MBTA Communities Act for consideration at the May Annual Town Meeting.</p> <p>Tyngsborough awarded a DLTA grant with NMCOG to have NMCOG help us with our Housing Production Plan Update</p> <p>CPC authorized funding to help preserve an affordable unit that is being foreclosed.</p> <p>Upcoming Items:</p>	Town Manager and Town Planner with input from the Select Board and Planning Board



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	<p>1) Work with NMCOG to begin the process of updating the Housing Production Plan which will involve input from Select Board, Planning Board, AHT, and the community.</p>	
8	<p>Monitor the plans for the extension of the commuter rail from Lowell to Nashua and explore ways to leverage the proposed expansion to benefit Tyngsborough.</p> <p>4/8/2024 Update: Congresswoman Trahan’s Office contact the Town Manager last month to share information that the NH Congressional Delegation was advancing a push for this extension. Her office will keep us updated and inform of us of future input opportunities.</p>	<p>Town Manager and Town Planner with input from the Select Board, EDC, and community stakeholders</p>
9	<p>Define Department of Public Works Roles & Responsibilities and implement a DPW organizational structure.</p> <p>4/8/2024 Update</p> <p>Town Manager formed a DPW Implementation Working Group this fall that is working towards ensuring a smooth transition once that act passes. This includes the creation of an org chart that all stakeholders have reviewed and approved.</p> <p>Town Manager and HR Director have created a job description for the new Superintendent of Public Works position.</p> <p>Upcoming Items:</p> <p>1) Upon the passage of the act, appoint a DPW Superintendent and work with that person to develop a short and long-term planning approach to ensure that the DPW is built correctly understanding that as we continue</p>	<p>Town Manager</p>



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	<p>to grow, the plan may need to adopt. Will involve continued stakeholder engagement and conversations with this Board.</p> <p>2) As the above described plan is establish, develop a budget strategy for future DPW growth.</p>	
10	<p>Assess feasibility and funding options for solar panel installation and other energy saving measures at Town Hall, new DPW garage, and additional town buildings.</p> <p>4/8/2024 Update</p> <p>Town Manager has met with Invaleon Technologies, a municipal solar company to develop a plan for an RFP that would see the installation of solar on municipal properties in which the Town receives a lease payment instead of credits. The Town currently has an abundance of credits from the Charles George Solar project.</p> <p>Upcoming Items:</p> <p>1) In April, Town Manager to conduct walk of municipal sites to identify areas that are already solar ready (Town Hall, COA). This could include solar canopies in municipal parking lots and of course buildings.</p> <p>2) Future installations are planned for the new Middle School and the new DPW building.</p>	Town Manager
11	<p>Review options to determine if Tyngsboro should have a representative on the Dracut Water District Board and if all Dracut Water district customers should be allowed to vote for the Water District Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review current water supply offerings to determine if they will meet the town's long-term needs. <p>4/8/2024 Update:</p>	Select Board with support from the Town Manager



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	<p>Select Board, through Mr. Eldridge, have been working on addressing pending challenges with the district and rebuilding a good working relationship. This item may be resolved by the resolution of the outstanding items based on current display of cooperation by both sides.</p> <p>Upcoming Items:</p> <p>1) Town of Tyngsborough to ratify new service agreement with the Dracut Water District for service to Tyngsborough residents. This could be an opportunity for the Town to address other areas.</p>	
12	<p>Continue to pursue State and Federal grant opportunities and increase guidance, training, and resources to staff to reduce time spent on applications and improve the likelihood of success.</p> <p>4/8/2024 Update:</p> <p>This is an on-going effort as highlighted by the grant slide in the budget presentation.</p>	Town Manager
13	<p>Develop a personnel recruitment and retention strategy for HR and administration.</p> <p>4/8/2024 Update</p> <p>This will become a focus on the job description/org structure analysis that takes place this summer.</p> <p>The Town’s approach to collective bargaining this year has been focused on affordability and ensuring competitiveness with our peers.</p>	Town Manager