

MEMORANDUM

To: Bedford Town Council
From: Rick Sawyer, Town Manager
Date: October 8, 2020
Re: **Manager's Report**

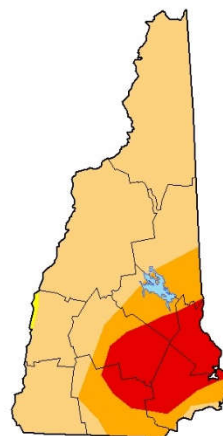


News & Noteworthy:

- 1) The last day to register to vote prior to the November 3rd General Election is Wednesday, October 28, 2020. Residents may also register and vote at the Polls on Election Day. Applications for absentee ballots are available on the Town website and can also be picked up at the tent at the Town Office Building parking lot.
- 2) The Federal and State Election will be held on November 3rd at the Bedford High School from 7 AM - 7 PM. Over 6,200 absentee ballots have been requested and mailed out so far and over 4,500 people have been returned. Given the tremendous volume and foot traffic at the Town Office Building, the elections team has been utilizing the Town's emergency shelter in the Town Office parking lot for as much of the registration and absentee voting process as possible. I'd like to thank the elections team for their hard work and countless hours dedicated to making all 4 elections this year as easy as possible for the voters.
- 3) The Tax Rate has been set at \$20.02 up from \$18.95 or \$1.07 (5.65%). The Town is up to \$4.24 from \$4.14 last year. The school saw an increase of \$1.06 increasing their rate from \$11.65 to \$12.71. County is down \$0.05 to \$1.07. State Ed is down \$0.04 to \$2.00. Tax bills will be out by the end of the month with a December 1st due date.

- 4) Drought – **Bedford** and a large portion of southeastern NH **remains in the condition defined as "Extreme Drought"** with nearly all of the rest of the state being in "Moderate" or "Severe Drought". We are aware of Bedford residents having water supply problems. It is imperative that all residents and businesses implement water conservation measures immediately like only watering vegetable garden crops. Merrimack Village Water District has implemented an outdoor watering ban which impacts those in Greenfield Farms, Cabot Preserve, Jenkins Road, and the Brick Mill Road area who receive their water from Merrimack through Pennichuck Water Works.

U.S. Drought Monitor New Hampshire



October 20, 2020
(Released Thursday, Oct. 22, 2020)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

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 <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

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National Drought Mitigation Center



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

- 5) COVID-19 Pandemic – Bedford unfortunately has seen an increase in the number cases recently with **55 current COVID-19 positive patients**. It is my understanding that the majority of these cases are within one long term care facility but that we do have many cases in the community as a whole which means we need to continue to be a cautious as possible when out in the public. I strongly encourage all residents to follow the CDC and State of NH recommendations for protecting yourself including wearing a face covering and washing hands as often as possible. Organizationally we continue to have employees out due to being positive or having family members who are or due to exposures to positive people. We are also working collectively to assist those with students at home or in hybrid situations.
- 6) Bedford Cares – continues to provide an incredible service to members of our community who are in need of assistance with such things as shopping and picking up of prescriptions. If you need their support please reach out to them at 792-1319 or on <https://www.facebook.com/BedfordNHCares/>.
- 7) Trick-or-Treating is scheduled for Saturday, October 31st from 6–8 PM. Participation is completely optional and we encourage those who participate to do so in a safe manner following CDC guidelines. This should include all participants wearing cloth face masks, traveling with ONLY members of your own household and social distance from all others keeping 6 feet away. Anyone not wishing to participate please indicate by leaving your house lights off during this time period.
- 8) National Drug Take Back Day – Saturday, October 24th between 10 AM and 2 PM. Residents can dispose of their prescription drugs at the Bedford Police Station, 55 Constitution Drive 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, but we bring special attention to issue on the National Drug Take Back Day.
- 9) National Red Ribbon Week October 23-31, 2020, “Be Happy, Be Brave, Be Drug Free” is the theme this year. Please join us in recognizing this week by decorating your home, mailbox or fence. Several Town buildings and grounds will be illuminated in red during the week.
- 10) PFAS – NHDES and Saint Gobain have restarted testing private wells in southeastern Bedford now that the PFAS standards have been adopted into law. It is unknown how long it will take before we know what solutions will be proposed. If you have received a request for well testing it is critical that you sign the agreement and return the paperwork as soon as possible.
- 11) The period for citizen petition zoning amendments runs between November 9th and December 9th. Anyone interested submitting a petition is encouraged contact the Planning Department for assistance.



- 12) The Bedford Winter Parking Ban begins on November 1st, which requires no parking on public roads between midnight and 8 AM.

Project Updates:

- 1) 2020 CIP & Budget – The Manager and Finance team have been working on revenue projections, fund balance standing, and tax impacts of the proposed budget. The budget will be presented to the Council on October 28th.
- 2) Right to Know Request – The Planning Staff, Town Manager team, and IT Manager have spent numerous hours responding to Right to Know requests filed by the proponents of the Market and Main development. It is expected that the complete response will take numerous weeks of total personnel time.
- 3) 2020 Roads Program – Work continues with the major focus being on Gage Girls Road and completing final pavement on roads that we initiated this year prior to winter conditions.
- 4) Sportsman Field reconstruction has been initiated with all necessary demolition having been completed and grading work initiated.



- 5) The Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Emergency Operations Plan updates both continue to have meetings and will be completed over the next several months.
- 6) The State of NH Retirement System has completed an audit of our last 3 years of reporting and we have received a clean report but with some work to do with the re-coding of some of our pay codes.
- 7) Personnel: Our last Police Officer position has been filled by a certified officer from Massachusetts. Our top candidate for the IT position has turned down the offer so we will be deciding how to move forward in the coming days. Our top candidate for Building Code Official has turned down our offer and we are making an offer to our next individual. We have filled our open truck driver position and an offer is currently pending for our equipment operator position. We will be advertising for our 4 firefighter positions that come available on January 1st.

Events:

- October 31st - Trick or Treating will be on Saturday, 6-8 PM.
- **November 3rd – General Election, Bedford High School, 7 AM – 7 PM**
- November 11th – Veteran’s Day, Town Office, Library, Transfer Station closed
- November 26-27 – Thanksgiving Holiday, Town Office, Library, Transfer Station closed. The Library closes at 5 PM on the 25th.

Upcoming Meetings:

- ~~October 26st – 7:00 PM, Planning Board~~
- ~~October 27th – 7:15 AM, Highway Safety Committee~~
- October 27th – 7:00 PM, Conservation Commission
- **October 28th – 7:00 PM, Town Council**
- **November 7th - 8:00 AM, Town Council Budget Workshop**
- November 9th – 7:00 PM, Planning Board
- November 10th – 7:00 PM, Historic District Commission
- November 12th – 7:45 AM, Water and Sewer Committee
- November 17th – 7:00 PM, Zoning Board
- **November 18th – 7:00 PM, Town Council**
- November 19th – 11:30 AM, Telecommunications Subcommittee
- November 19th – 7:00 PM, Energy Commission
- November 23rd – 7:00 PM, Planning Board
- November 24th – 7:15 AM, Highway Safety Committee
- November 24th – 7:00 PM, Conservation Commission

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