Select Board Minutes
Tuesday, June 6, 2023
7:00pm

The Select Board Regular Meeting was held virtually in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2023 to Provide for Supplementing Certain Existing Appropriations and for Certain Other Activities and Projects, and signed into law on March 29, 2023, this meeting was conducted via remote participation.

Select Board participants:
Rich Maiore, Erin McBee, Charles Oliver, Don Ludwig, Kara Minar
Town Department participants:
Town Administrator Tim Bragan, Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro and Executive Assistant Julie Doucet, Fire Chief Rick Sicard
Additional participants:
Beth Williams, John Lee, Jane Biering, Dolores Lee, Stu Sklar

Interview of volunteers for the Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
The Select Board conducted interviews of candidates interested in serving on the CPC. Each applicant was given time to explain why they are interested in serving on the CPC and answer questions from the Select Board members. The two incumbents Beth Williams and John Lee were first with new applicants Jane Biering, Dolores Lee and Stu Sklar next. Applicants are all long-time residents of town. The Select Board will make appointments to the CPC at their June 20th meeting when all annual appointments are handled.

Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) for the Community Harvest project orchard
Peter Dorward from the Harvard Conservation Trust came to request signatures form the Select Board to assist in finalizing the restriction. He indicated the document needs to be signed within the fiscal year and must happen prior to the closing.

Minutes
By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve minutes from 5/9, as presented.

Harvard Climate Initiative Committee update (Attachment A)
Chair Ellen Leicher came to give a status report. The report included highlights and their progress in the following areas outlined in the Climate Action Plan:

- Buildings
- Energy
- Transportation
- Natural Resources
- Agricultural
- Preparedness

Pubic Communication
Planning Board member Stacia Donahue reported finalization of the special permit for 203 Ayer Road is imminent. She asked former Planning Board members who are now serving on the Select Board to consider attending their meeting on the 12th to assist with the draft decision language.

Stacia Donahue also noted the Planning Board is supportive of the request from the Transportation Advisory Committee to seek quotes on a possible shuttle service in Harvard. Charles Oliver is interested in any data collected regarding interest in this type of service.

Staff Report/Updates (Attachment B)

Committee Charges
Open Space Committee
Current Chair Peter Dorward and SB member Rich Maiore proposed decreasing the membership to resolve quorum issues. The Select Board members were receptive to the changes however suggested the current membership have an opportunity to offer their perspective. The board decided to revisit at their next meeting.

Harvard Devens Jurisdiction
Rich Maiore proposed the committee members serve three-year terms with an opportunity for re-appointment and expanding the HDJC purview to include exploring additional options for deposition of land formerly under Harvard's jurisdiction. Kara Minar questioned the purview being revised as it was established based on the Devens non-binding referendum question from the April 2017 town meeting.

QUESTION #4 – DEVENS NON-BINDING REFERENDUM Should the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Harvard begin planning for and initiate discussions with appropriate parties with the goal of presenting a plan to the Town of Harvard voters to resume jurisdiction over the land which is part of Devens formerly under the jurisdiction of the Town of Harvard, provide services to the residents of such area and collect property taxes?

The board members decided to vote on the membership and revisit the topic of Devens in more detail at their Strategic Planning Session.

By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Oliver – aye, Ludwig – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted to change terms as listed.

Transfer Station Committee
Rich Maiore was seeking feedback on a committee tasked with assessing the long-term plan viability or the Transfer Station and to investigate townwide private pick up. The members decided to discuss Devens at their Strategic Planning Session.

Discuss proceeding with an RFP to investigate available parcels for Fire Station project
Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro reported the Permanent Building Committee suggested issuing a Request for Proposals to identify any available parcels in town. The board members agreed this is a good first step to take and will be beneficial to the process.

Act on Worcester County Retirement 2% cost of living adjustment
By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Minar – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to approve the additional one-time cost of living adjustment for retirees.

Act on asset cap for senior tax program
By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to increase the asset cap for the senior tax program to $250,000.

Act on increasing the PEG Access Operating Support percentage
Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro reported the current Charter Communications contract allows the town to request an increase in the access support fee in the last year of the contract. Therefore, they are recommending an increase to 4.85%. By a roll call vote, McBee – aye, Minar – aye, Ludwig – aye, Oliver – aye, Maiore – aye, the board voted unanimously to increase the PEG Access Operating Support percentage from four and one-half percent (4.5%) of Gross Revenue to four and eight-five hundredths' percent (4.85%) of Gross Revenue beginning January 1, 2024.

Summer Schedule
The board will meet on July 18th, Aug 8th, and August 22nd. They will also meet the week of July 10th during the day for any year end transfers that are required.

Select Board Reports
Erin McBee said she will attend the June 12th meeting of the Planning Board.

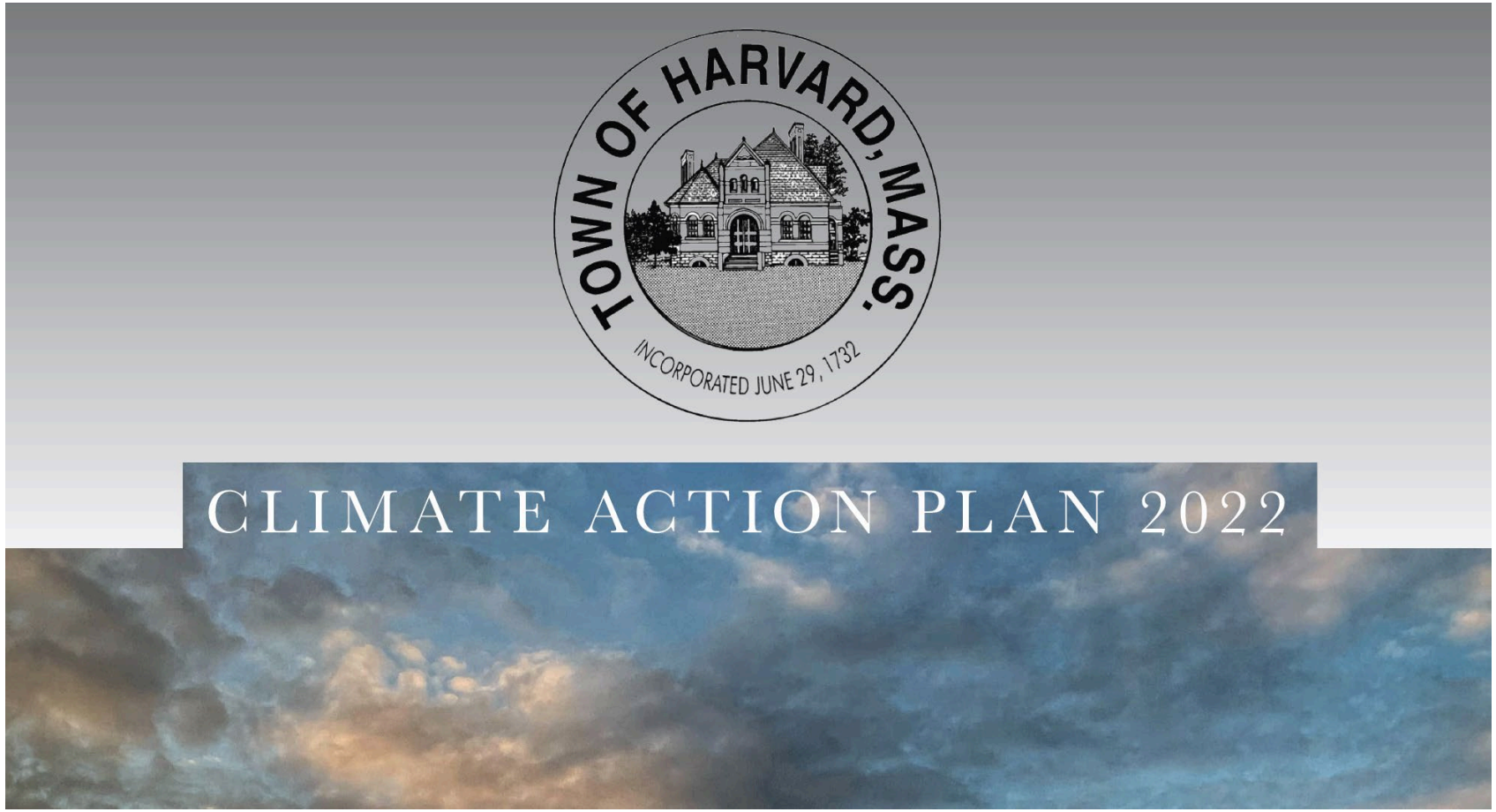
The meeting was adjourned at 9:40.

Documents referenced:
Volunteer forms - Beth Williams dated 2.14.2023
John Lee dated 3.9.2023
Jane Biering dated 5.1.2023
Dolores Lee dated 2.15.2023
Stu Sklar dated 3.23.2023

APR materials – dated 6.1.2023
HCIC presentation – dated 6.6.2023
Open Space charge – 5.30.2023
HDJC charge – dated 6.1.2023
Transfer Station draft charge – dated 6.1.2023
PEG letter – dated 5.30.2023

Attachment A

HCIC Status Report to Select Board – June 2023



Highlights

- ✓CAP Implementation Roll Out
- ✓Grant Applications
  - North Central County Community Foundation - $1500
  - MVP – 2 submittals – Open Space Committee, HCIC
  - MRPC – support to identify potential grant opportunities
- ✓Tax bill survey results
- ✓Baseline Data – solar, EVs, heat pumps
- ✓Successful Earth Day Show and Tell Around Town
- ✓Upcoming
  - Energy Coaches Public Meeting
  - Resident Forest Management Panel
  - Exploring Climate Stories Event

Data: How are we doing and how much interest is there?

- Baseline
  - 100 air source or ground source installations since 2012
    - Decarbonization Plan –need 120 per year to meet 2030 state goals
  - 205 residential, 10 commercial solar installations since 2006 and 60 participants in community solar garden
  - 249 EVs or hybrid EVs (4.5% of all cars) as of Feb, 2023
    - Decarbonization Plan –need 116 (19.%) EVs per year to meet 2030 state goals

- Tax Bill Survey
  - 16% interested in heat pumps
  - 21% interested in solar
  - 21% interested in purchasing EV or EV hybrid

Progress to Date on CAP Focus Areas

- Buildings
- Energy
- Transportation
- Natural Resources
- Agriculture
- Preparedness

Buildings

	Goal: Convert Harvard's municipal buildings from carbon-based fuel combustion to high efficiency electric heating	Target Date	Status – May 2023
Municipal	Develop a detailed electrification, upgrade and financial analysis plan of municipal heating systems - Engineering review by building - Financial review by building	Phase I: 2023	HEAC Decarbonization plan complete. Building Electrification Phase 1 - Bromfield Heating System - Air Handler Retrofit with Heat Pumps for significant emissions reduction. Initial study complete. Next step: Schools to issue RFP for detailed design. Target 2023 for Engineering Design and Cost Proposal.
	Adopt the updated Massachusetts Stretch Energy code	2024	One educational meeting held with several boards/committees. Next step for boards/committees to discuss at their meetings.
	Goal: Reduce waste in town operations through recycling and reuse		
	Reduce municipal town waste by reusing and recycling construction, office and school supplies and materials by 10% per year	10% per yr	No progress to date. Meeting with Town Admin scheduled for June. Need baseline data
	Expand purchasing of recycled office supplies through joint purchasing across all municipal and school departments	10% per yr	No progress to date. Meeting with Town Admin scheduled for June. Need baseline data

Buildings (continued)

	Goal: Replace residential building's fossil fuel consumption with high efficiency electric heating and cooling	Target Date	Status – May 2023
Residential	Educate and assist homeowners to evaluate the costs and benefits of efficient electric heating and cooling systems including available financial incentives.	2023	Earth Day education. Newsletter info. on up to date incentives. Energy Coaches in place and helping residents. Hosting energy coach public meeting on June 10
	Goal: Reduce waste through recycling and reuse		
	Encourage residential composting at home, by requiring private haulers to provide the option, and/or by providing a facility on town-owned land	2024	Newsletter on composting coming out. Looking at options with haulers, Black Earth, local pig farmer.
	Significantly reduce residential waste through changes to consumption practices and by supporting options to "buy local," recycle and reuse/repair.	2023	Several newsletters on buy local. Green Team batteries recycling. New sign at Transfer station on battery recycling. Changes in state law re. fabric/clothes recycling

Energy

	Goal: Convert all electricity to 100% renewable energy sources	Target Date	Status – May 2023
Municipal	Negotiate a 100% renewable energy electricity supply contract for all municipal use.	ongoing	New contract to start in Nov 2024
	Increase the number solar installations on municipal buildings or property, either as directly owned or leased (such as power purchase agreement (PPA).	3 by 2025	COA. HEAC creating plan for other sites 2025 may slip dependent on National Grid ability to accept into the grid.
	Add battery storage to PV solar systems.	2026	No progress to date
Residential	**Goal: Increase the number of residential solar arrays and battery storage systems**		
	Assist homeowners to evaluate the costs and benefits of PV solar and battery storage systems and educate homeowners on available grants and incentives	ongoing	Solar part of Earth Day. Some homes showed battery storage options
	Advocate for use of community solar for homeowners to receive credits or offsets on electricity bill from a solar system installed at another location.	2025	EnergySage, Nextamp have community solar options. More to come on this.

Transportation

	Goal: Convert Harvard's municipal vehicles from carbon-based fuel combustion to electric vehicles or other low carbon options	Target Date	Status – May 23
Municipal	Implementation of a de-carbonization plan for the town's municipal vehicle fleet, including: • Conversion of light-duty vehicles to EV's • A mid- to long-term strategy for heavier-duty vehicles • Explore options for electrification of school buses	2040	• Several hybrid vehicles purchased or in process for police dept. • Decarbonization plan lays out timetable • Grant dollars available to cover partial cost
	Develop and implement a community-wide plan for public EV charging stations.	2025	Charging station plans under development by HEAC
Residential	**Goal: Reduce the climate impact of Harvard's residential transportation activities**		
	Encourage the adoption of electric vehicles amongst residents and businesses through education on incentives and options, promotional events, and expediting permits.	2035	Earth Day EV petting zoo. Newsletter articles on EV incentives
	Develop a high quality, high frequency regional electric shuttle service to and from town center, commuter rail stations, and future park-and-ride locations.	2025, 2027 electric	Estimate of cost of service requested of MART
	Explore options to increase adoption of school busing over individual cars	2024	No progress to date
	Improve the reach of Harvard's bicycle and walking paths to provide a realistic, healthy, and zero carbon alternative to driving.	2030	Participated in Nashoba Regional Greenway project to identify bike and pedestrian routes

Natural Resources

	Goal: Increase the resilience of Harvard's ecosystems and community through the coordinated implementation of nature-based solutions	Target Date	Status – May 2023
Municipal	Preserve Harvard wetlands through the following: • Update the Harvard Wetlands Protection Bylaw and/or regulations to reflect and adapt to changing climate conditions • Educate and advise residents on the management of private land near/in wetlands • Protect wetlands from road run-off	2025	• Land Agent attended workshop on bylaw options • Applied for MVP grant application for outreach • No progress on road run-off protections
	Amend erosion control by-law to include tree clearing	2025	Applied for MVP grant for bylaw development
	Address Invasive plants and insects: • Develop or expand best management practice programs for Bare Hill Pond, Town conservation land, and other municipally controlled lands where invasives are a risk • Educate and provide resources to residents to manage invasives on private land	2024	• Educational program being planned on invasive species management for 2023
	Improve soil health through education and best management practices	2024	Education through Earth Day event
	Improve habitat for pollinators and beneficial insects with protection and cultivation of native plants	2023	Education through Earth Day event
	Implement flood control through ranking and prioritization of replacement and upgrade of town-owned culverts	2024	No progress
	Monitor for water health, algae blooms and biodiversity of waterways. Provide education and outreach to the public regarding these issues.	ongoing	Pond testing continuing by BoH

Natural Resources (continued)

	Goal (Land Use): The Town's plans, policies, bylaws, and regulations encourage sustainable land use and development	Target Date	Status – May 2023
Municipal	Rewrite the Protective (Zoning) Bylaw and include: • Local resilience and carbon reduction • More zoning districts that are sustainable and smart growth models • An updated Open Space Residential Development Bylaw that promotes open space and natural resource protection	2026	• MVP grant application submitted for OSRD bylaw review and outreach for fall 2023 Town Meeting • Planning Board working on bylaw balancing smaller homes with open space preservation
	Educate and inform the public about sustainable land use patterns	2025	Forest management – see below
	Include climate change and sustainability as a consideration in all future Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Parks and Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, and Open Space Committee proposals and decisions.	2023	Select Board sent a memo re. climate and sustainability. More work needs to be done.
	Ensure land use and transportation planning are coordinated	2028	No progress to date
Residential	**Goal: Reduce the climate impact of our homes and yards on the local environment.**		
	Educate residents on sustainable practices for lawn care, landscaping, tree care, invasive species management, and water management during drought conditions	2024	Forest Management on private land program in planning stage
	Encourage the conversion of lawn care equipment from gas-powered to electric.	2025	All electric equipment on display at Earth Day.

Agriculture

	Goal: Support the sustainability of the agricultural community and implement the 2020 Agriculture Climate Action Plan	Target Date	Status- May 2023
Municipal	Determine next steps on implementation of the 2020 Agriculture Climate Action Plan: • Grant writing assistance • Prioritize municipal initiatives to promote the economic sustainability of our farms • Review Harvard's zoning laws to allow flexibility for farm-related uses	2025	• Consider collaborations with Open Space, ComCon, HCT re. land use • Need support of grant writing
	Commit to "Buy Local" for town events and in Harvard's schools	2024	Requesting data from HPS to create baseline
Residential	**Goal: Strengthen community support for Harvard's agriculture and encourage innovative approaches to farming**		
	Establish a forum for the sharing information and best management practices on: • Regenerative farm practices • Soil, pest, and disease management • Sustainable pasture management • Water management	2025	• Education on regenerative farm practice and soil, pest and disease management at Earth Day event. • AG Commission educational forum in planning for farmers and homesteaders in 2024. Several topics under discussion (soil health, pasture management, etc.)
	Support "buy local" for local farms	2023	New signage on many roads re. buy local and right to farm. HCIC e-newsletter and social media used to promote local farms.

Preparedness

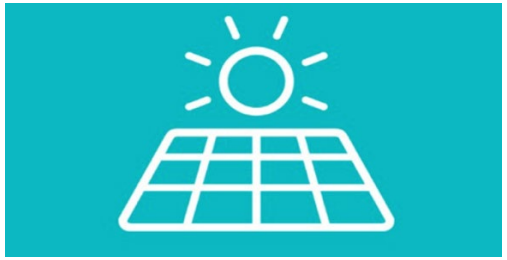
	Goal: Prepare for and reduce the risk of impact to people, property and natural resources from storms, fire, flooding, vector borne diseases and other hazards	Target Date	Status – May 2023
Municipal	Identify and prioritize vulnerable populations for outreach and assistance regarding mitigation and preparation.	ongoing	Ongoing
	Formalize which town buildings will be used as a cooling and warming center for residents and their pets.	2023	Bromfield remains cooling and warming center
	Support the implementation of climate-related priorities in the Hazard Mitigation Plan	2027	No progress to date
Residential	**Goal: Educate residents on how to prepare for impacts of climate change to mitigate negative outcomes**		
	Educate residents on preparations (72 hour and 7 day emergency kits) for natural hazards, the availability of town services and neighborhood approaches to mutual assistance and protection of vulnerable residents.	2023	No progress to date
	Educate residents about how to mitigate risk to themselves and their properties such as vector borne disease protection, care of wells and septic systems, water use/preservation and wildfire risk	2023	BoH addressed ticks, water use and preservation at Earth Day and in Harvard Press. More outreach will be done in next fiscal year when funding is available.

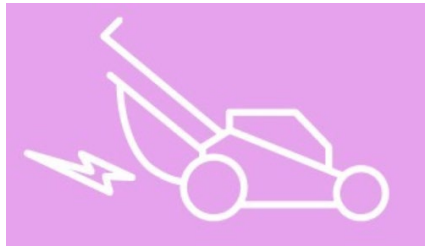
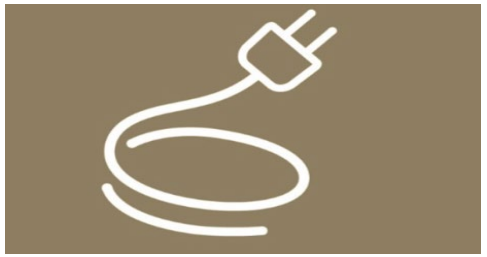
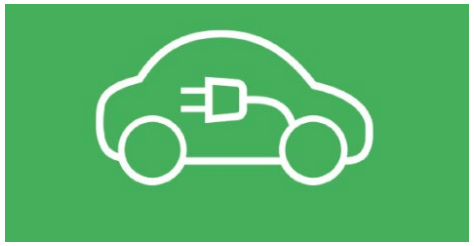
What can the Select Board do to help?

- Continue to include addressing climate change in annual goals
  - Reiterate request to boards and committees to work with HCIC on the CAP implementation
  - Include climate implications in the work that is done by Admin and Boards & Committees and ask that they seek input and help from HCIC
  - Prioritize climate considerations for building projects earlier in the planning process
- Reconsider a grant writer
- Attend a climate event to show support
- Tackle at least two climate actions, write testimonial and display a flag
- Share our newsletter with others and encourage others to get involved and take steps

Harvard Energize

https://community.massenergize.org/HarvardMA/



Attachment B

Staff Report
June 6, 2023

1. Miscellaneous:

   a. The Town Moderator, Bill Barton, has re-appointed Eric Ward to a 3 year term, has appointed Bob Thurston to a 1 year term, and Hady Lattouf to a 3 year term.

   b. Mr. Medjanis of the TAC is looking for the Board's support to get quotes from MART for possible two routes to Littleton T station. This will be added to the next agenda so that the Board can discuss and vote on it.

2. State Fiscal Notes of Interest: (State House News Service)

   a. The Senate approved its version of the State Budget at an amount nearing $56 billion. This included ~$575 Million for tax relief without any approved details. The Senate's version of the budget did not include on-line lottery sales and this will be one of the topics the joint House and Senate Committee will work out over the next few weeks.

   b. State lottery sales rebounded last month but profits decreased due to big prizes.

   c. Massachusetts competitiveness is taking a hit not just because of taxes but also due to higher cost of living and traffic congestion. This is causing an outmigration of residents and workers to other states.

   d. UMASS is experiencing budget woes due to declining enrollment and increasing employee expenses. It will be interesting to see if this will have the legislature use any of the new millionaire surtax on this issue.

   e. The new Secretary of Housing, Ed Augustus (former Worcester City Manager) was sworn in at the end of May and has been quoted as saying "we need more housing faster". This will be interesting to see what the new approach will be given the Secretariat level position.

   f. The Annual Comprehensive Financial report for fiscal 2022 is extremely late. This report provides bondholders, the federal government, taxpayers and residents an easy and consistent way to look at the State's finances. It was delayed due to late reporting by the State College Building Authority and the Department of Unemployment Assistance. The State is not concerned about the tardiness (due in December) as it has been late for the past 8 years and will show the State has a strong financial picture.

g. A recent yearly audit at the state found a $2.5 billion mistake was made in 2020 when the State used $2.5 billion in pandemic-era relief funds were used to pay off unemployment benefits. This is a significant sum of money and the Governor, House, and senate are all looking at the situation and will try to find the least impactful way to deal with this issue. State business groups are maneuvering to make sure the State does not make this a problem for local businesses as it would further add to the non-competitive financial picture for both businesses and the state.

3. Buildings and Fields:

   a. Field Needs Assessment received 2 responses; Finalist(s) will be determined on June 5, with the intent of having an executed contract by June 19.
   b. The DPW Phase 1 (Schematic Design) RFQ is out to 18 architectural/engineering firms, responses due Wednesday, 6/7.
   c. The Council on Aging will be moving to 16 Lancaster County later next week; outstanding items are final inspections, a CO, and transfer of the operating manuals.
   d. The Town is exploring working with PowerOptions for the COA Solar.

4. Personnel Related:

   a. The Personnel Board updated its stipend rates for Summer 2023 Beach Staff, given feedback from the Interim Rec Director.
   b. Employees sought! At the DPW, there is a vacancy in the Laborer position, and a vacancy for Truck Driver/Laborer. At the COA, they're seeking part-time (2-3 days/week) van drivers. Please see the Town website for details.

5. Notice, Reminders, and Updates:

   a. People can sign up for Beach and Boating lessons now by going to the Town website for more information.
   b. Strategic Planning Session is June 21, 2023 from 1 to 4 PM.
   c. Wednesdays in June from 6 to 7 PM there will be Yoga on the Common as a fundraiser for Loaves and Fishes or Nevins Farm (participants choice).
   d. Transfer Station users will need to have a new sticker on Saturday, July 1; avoid the rush, purchase your stickers on-line at https://www.harvard-ma.gov/home/news/transfer-station-stickers