

## Town of Auburn, Massachusetts

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Town Manager



February 21, 2016

Madame Chair and Members of the Town of Auburn Board of Selectmen:

I am pleased to present this evaluation report to the Board of Selectmen which provides an update on my fifth year as Auburn's Town Manager. This report covers the period from January 31, 2015 through January 30, 2016.

Throughout the past year, I undertook a number of initiatives and projects, in addition to the goals established by the Board of Selectmen, many of which were designed to reduce costs for residents and businesses and to enhance the quality of life for all in Auburn. Among the highlights of these initiatives was the bond rating upgrade to Aa2 received from Moody's Investor Services which reflects the Town's diligence in addressing fiscal issues, developing and implementing strong financial policies, increasing reserves and addressing pension and healthcare liabilities.

After working on pursuing municipal aggregation for two years, the Town's Community Choice Power Supply Program received approvals from the State's Department of Public Utilities and Department of Energy Resources which enabled the Town to implement its municipal aggregation program. After receiving competitive bids, Constellation Energy Power Choice, Inc. ("Constellation") was chosen as the supplier. The contract provides Auburn residents and businesses with a fixed electricity supply rate of 9.522 cents (\$0.09522) per Kilowatt Hour (kWh) for 12 months which began in December 2015. This rate is 100% renewable, which means that the electricity is being supplied through national wind Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) from farms throughout the continental U.S. Residents participating in Auburn's Municipal Aggregation Program will benefit from a rate that is 27% lower than National Grid's (NGrid) DPU-approved winter rate of 13.038 per kWh.

Construction on the new Middle School was completed on time and under budget, thanks to the diligent efforts of the School Building Committee, the Massachusetts School Building Authority and the project team including OPM Skanska USA, Lamoreaux Pagano and Associates, and Fontaine Brothers, Inc. in conjunction with town administration and our boards and commissions. The state-of-the-art facility opened its doors at the beginning of the academic year. The completion of the new middle school triggered the closing of two long-standing elementary schools – Julia Bancroft and Mary D. Stone. The Elementary School Advisory Committee did a great job analyzing the options for the two closed elementary schools and provided its recommendations to town administration. Town administration undertook further analysis following that report and the evaluation, including financial and operational, is still underway to determine the best options for re-use of those properties.

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In October, the Attorney General approved the Town's new omnibus General and Administrative By Laws, representing the culmination of a process that spanned more than three and a half years. Town administration worked diligently to research State laws and develop a proposed new Schedule of Fees and Schedule of Fines that encompasses all of the fees and fines associated with the General By Laws and organized those fees and fines into user-friendly tables. This was presented to the By Law Review Committee and approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Following a thorough analysis by town administration and approval of the budget and capital requests at the Fall Town Meeting, the Town assumed the operations, management and maintenance of the golf course on January 1, 2016. New rates, new logos, and a new web site were developed and a Holiday Special Season Pass was launched in November. DPW began improvements to the facility, including renovations at the club house and infrastructure improvements to the course, which have given a fresh new look to the facility. To provide guidance to Town administration, I created and appointed a Pakachoag Golf Course Advisory Committee to work on various aspects of the course including marketing and promotions.

I organized an "ALICE" Training" for all of our boards, commissions and committee members to provide them with current tools and techniques for dealing with an active shooter or intruder. "ALICE" is an acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate, the five strategies to deal with an active shooter or attacker. Town administration held this training to provide our volunteers and employees with tools and strategies to be prepared should an incident ever occur. Approximately 30 attendees from boards, commissions and committees participated in the two-hour training held in March.

One of the goals I assigned to various division heads was to create a coordinated calendar of events to make it easy for the public to see the various Town events each month. As a result, the new "Town of Auburn Coordinated Calendar of Activities" was developed that provides a listing each month of all of the programs offered at the Auburn Public Library and the Lorraine Gleick Nordgren Senior Center, as well as all Recreation and Culture programs. This community calendar facilitates the ability for residents to access information on the many programs and activities that are offered through the Town at multiple locations. In addition to providing a valuable resource for residents seeking to participate in various recreation, culture, senior center and library events, the Coordinated Calendar of Activities also provides a mechanism for the departments and divisions to coordinate activities, share resources, and eliminate duplicity.

During the year, I worked with three abutting communities -Charlton, Oxford and Southbridge – to form a Veterans' Services District under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 115. The new South Central MA Veterans' Services District (SCMVSD) will enable the participating communities to expound coverage to our veterans and provide back-up assistance when needed.

I was appointed to the newly established Worcester Regional Tourism and Visitors Corporation, now called Discover Central Massachusetts, to advocate and plan for tourism and economic development initiatives which will boost local business. I also continued to serve on the Central Massachusetts Region Homeland Security Council as the municipal representative through which the Town has secured several grants for regional use in protecting public safety.

The fiscal condition of the Town remained stable during the year. Free cash increased, excess levy capacity increased, and reserve levels increased while the FY'16 Budget remained below available Proposition 2 ½ limits. Adherence to the financial policies has enabled the Town to allocate \$500,000 annually into the OPEB fund to address future liabilities. It has also enabled the Town to purchase smaller capital items rather than borrow funds in order to manage debt service levels. We continue to

plan for implement reforms to control costs and address current and future operational and capital needs.

The Department of Public Works continued implementation of its multi-year, multi-million dollar Roadway Improvement Program. In Fiscal Year 2015, the Town began construction on a \$3.4 million project to reconstruct 8 miles of roads. This was accomplished through \$1.56 million in Chapter 90 funds from FY15 and FY16 and \$1.84 million in Town funds from FY15 and FY16. As part of the new Auburn Middle School project, the Town invested in a \$1.06 million roadway improvement project along West Street. This work included construction of sidewalks and widening of the roadway to accommodate an additional travel lane near the intersection of West St. and Route 12. The Town remains committed to this program and will continue to advocate for and secure funds to continue its aggressive infrastructure improvements.

The Recreation and Culture department organized and implemented numerous programs and events throughout the year which appealed to residents of all ages. The Town's signature events include the Annual Tree Lighting, Independence Day Celebration, Fall Festival, Holiday Craft Fair, and the twelve-week Summer in the Park Concert Series. The Independence Day Celebration attracted an estimated record crowd of 10,000 who came to listen to great music and to enjoy food vendors, games and rides. The festivities culminated with a spectacular fireworks display.

The Department of Development and Inspectional Services conducted health, code and building inspections, issued a record number of permits, and addressed code violations. The Department also provided planning assistance and undertook several economic development and green energy initiatives. The Department also provided staff support to the Town's regulatory boards and commissions including the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Energy Committee, Economic Development Committee, the Board of Health and the Open Space and Recreation Committee. The Department coordinated and participated in the Development Coordinating Group (DCG) which met with numerous applicants during the year to facilitate development projects ranging from start-up companies to business expansions and housing developments. Several planning projects were undertaken by the Planning Division in conjunction with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, while numerous green energy projects were implemented to save both energy and costs. The Division of Public Health provided critical educational and prevention programs to residents of all ages.

The Information Technology Department completed the transition to a virtual system, which reduces the need of physical servers required for the Town's computer-based functions. The Department utilizes a cloud-based backup to protect the Town's critical data. The Department also created a banking terminal to secure banking transactions related to the Pakachoag Golf Course. In addition, the Department created a technology replacement cycle plan and replaced about 1/3 of desktop computers. The Department held computer classes for employees and seniors as well as provided troubleshooting assistance at all levels and across all departments.

The Fire Rescue Department responded to a record number of calls this past year. The department continued to provide fire education and outreach to the Auburn community, performed inspections, and participated in training activities to reinforce their skills. The Police Department provided excellent public safety services to the community and handled numerous challenging and sensitive issues with professionalism and efficiency.

The specific goals that the Board established for Year 5 of the Town Manager's contract were:

1. Initiate the Process to Update the Town's Master Plan – Appoint Committee and Research Funding
2. Initiate the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee – Form Committee and Start, through the Committee, to Develop a Tentative Timeline for the Process
3. Rejuvenate the Open Space Committee to undertake the analysis of and recommendation for the use of town-owned property, focus on recently acquired 61A land first - Find Members to Start Process to Review Open Space Property

The categories of the evaluation form are:

- A. Relationship with the Board of Selectmen
- B. Town Administration
- C. Budget and Finance
- D. Community Relations

The following report details the accomplishments that I have made towards achieving those goals as outlined in the Town Manager Evaluation Form.

#### **A. Relationship with the Board of Selectmen**

##### **1. Keeps Board members informed on the issues, needs, and significant issues of the Town departments.**

Throughout the year, I continued to keep the Board of Selectmen informed of major issues such as emergency weather situations, legislative updates, grant activity, new initiatives and significant issues in the administration. This includes electronic email communications to inform the Board of various issues or concerns of which they should be aware so that they can respond to constituent inquiries. During the course of the year, those communications included numerous storm updates, roadway projects, public safety issues, community events, development projects and issues of concern that residents or businesses have brought to my attention. I also keep Board members informed of important meetings or significant projects that the administration is working on.

In addition to these communications, I have also provided numerous reports, information and updates to the Board at Selectmen's meetings and in Executive Sessions throughout the year.

I am always available to meet with Board members. I reach out to and inform the Board of legislative matters, policy issues, financial challenges, and significant issues that may impact the Town. I also provided responses to members' questions regarding projects, operations, budgets and policies. To protect the rights of employees under the law and to protect the town from liability, I have kept the Board apprised of personnel matters to the extent possible within the law.

I meet regularly with the Chair of the Board of Selectmen to review Board of Selectmen agendas, discuss policy issues, and keep him apprised of situations, issues and needs within Town government, the community and town departments. I communicate with the chair regularly and have always responded to his requests for information, research or follow-up action.

I strive to be responsive to the Board, and to have the administration be responsive, and to provide information that will help guide and inform their decision-making and policy-making. By providing

members with the appropriate information, they can better answer questions from residents on issues of concern.

## **2. Offers professional advice on the issues requiring BOS action with appropriate recommendations.**

During the year I conducted extensive research on numerous issues and provided the results of that research to the Board for their deliberation and/or information. This included research and the development of a proposed policy for the Board's consideration on Remote Participation; guidance and information needed in relation to funding decisions for the purchase and use of the 61A property on Southold Road; research and guidance on the Municipal Aggregation program in order for the Board to make an informed decision; research and information on the Pakachoag Golf Course; analysis of annual legal costs; information on the process and substance of the proposed new (now approved) General By Laws; research and analysis of proposed By Law Schedules of Fees and Fines; and research and analysis of the re-use options for the Mary D. Stone School.

Additional areas in which I have conducted research and analysis, collected data, and provided information to the Board includes research on local and state requirements for Planning Board alternates, zoning by laws, warrant articles, local and state budget issues, housing and economic development legislation, Massachusetts General Laws and other regulations, and information on projects, parcels, applications and policies that I believe the Board should be aware of or in response to their inquiries.

Throughout the year, I followed up on numerous requests for information or action from members of the Board who sought my assistance on specific constituent concerns and questions, providing data and information that will assist the Board in responding to citizens and understanding issues. I have proactively provided the Board with information and I have been responsive and timely in responding to requests for information from the Board.

## **3. Open to direction and suggestions by the Board members.**

I am responsive to direction and suggestions by Board members. Whether guided by a formal vote of the Board or an informal suggestion by a Board member, I remain open to new ideas and strategies and I am always willing to discuss alternative options and methods to achieve common goals. I have met individually with Board members when requested to discuss specific issues and concerns that I subsequently address.

While I strive to effectively oversee and manage the daily operations and administration of town government, I have never hesitated to seek Board input, advice or guidance when appropriate or to inform them of critical or time sensitive issues that arise and discuss the handling of those issues. I have been and remain open to direction and guidance by the Board and I work diligently to provide feedback and implement those suggestions provided by the Board whenever possible.

When the Board makes a recommendation or requests information from town administration, I coordinate with the appropriate town employees and departments to provide feedback in a timely manner.

## **4. Provides liaison to Town Counsel and Labor Counsel to protect the town and drive efficient use of legal funding appropriations.**

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Since becoming Town Manager, I have worked diligently to keep the legal fees for both Labor Counsel and Town Counsel at a minimum wherever possible, recognizing that when there are serious issues or complicated legal issues that require either Labor Counsel or Town Counsel participation in order to protect the Town, I will seek their legal guidance, opinion or advice. Since then, I have been very effective at reducing the annual legal costs to the Town.

I employ the services of both Town Counsel and Labor Counsel only when it is deemed necessary to do so. I have also worked with the unions directly to resolve grievances without Counsel wherever possible. Likewise, department heads have been diligent about the need to contact Town Counsel or Labor Counsel which is done only after consultation with the Town Manager.

The Town's legal costs continued to decline as evidenced by the annual cost analysis. Over the seven year period from FY09 to FY15, the FY15 total legal expenditures represent a 63.54% decrease. There has been a 51.90% decrease over the five year period from FY11 to FY15. An analysis of the legal expenditures for Town (General) Counsel shows expenditures in FY15 of \$93,604.96. This represents a seven year decrease of 26.87% since FY11. While Town Counsel expenditures decreased each year from 2009 to 2014, the expenditures in FY15 increased by \$22,697.46 over FY14. This is due to several major legal matters in FY15, particularly the Chapter 61A land purchase on Southold Road and the General and Administrative By Law Review process. Labor Counsel expenditures in FY15 totaled \$24,095.68. This represents a significant five year decrease of 82.62% from FY11 to FY15. Labor Counsel expenditures decreased 76.48% over the seven year period from 2009 to 2015.

Town Counsel and Labor Counsel have and continue to provide excellent legal services to the Town. They are available whenever needed and extremely responsive to the Town's requests for assistance.

## **B. Town Administration**

### **1. Executes efficiently all the provisions of the General Laws, of the Town Charter, votes of Town Meeting and votes of the BOS that are in her purview.**

On a regular basis, I reference and review the Town Charter, Massachusetts General Laws, Town of Auburn By-Laws and Board of Selectmen votes as these laws, regulations, policies and votes pertain to a specific issue, policy, or procedure. In order to keep track of Board of Selectman votes, I created a document to track all votes by date or subject matter that have occurred since I became town manager in order to make it easier to research and find Board votes.

In 2015, the three and a half year By Law Review Process concluded with the approval of the omnibus new General By Laws by Special Town Meeting in March and approval by the State Attorney General in October. This was a major undertaking involving all departments in the Town as well as careful coordination with Town Counsel, the Moderator, and the By Law Review Committee. This process culminated in the development of new General and Administrative By Laws to replace by laws that were no longer applicable under Massachusetts General Law or the Town of Auburn Charter. This project was a priority for me as the General By Laws are the local laws by which the Town is governed and thus it is critical to have updated and current By Laws.

As per one of the goals for the past year established by the Board of Selectmen, I researched and undertook the establishment of a Zoning By Law Review Committee to tackle the Town's Zoning By Laws in a manner similar to the General and Administrative By Law Review process. (See Goals below.)

At times I have been asked by certain boards or commissions to speak to them or explain to them certain aspects of the By Laws, Charter or Massachusetts General Laws. This assists those boards and commissions in their roles and provides the resources they need to be effective. On an annual basis, I hold a Board, Committee and Commission Training with Town Counsel and the Assistant Town Manager/CFO to provide board, committee and commission members with the tools needed to perform their roles and to clarify local and state laws and regulations that impact their respective entities.

When necessary, I seek Town Counsel advice to provide a legal opinion on matters involving the Town Charter, a Town By-Law or Massachusetts General Law in order to ensure compliance with the laws governing the Town and municipalities in the Commonwealth. I have also reached out to our legislative delegation and state and federal agencies to seek their assistance in identifying or implementing various state or federal laws or regulations. When there is a question on the interpretation of various state laws or regulations that can be answered by the Attorney General's Office or the Inspector General's Office, I request opinions from their respective legal staff. I have also encouraged the management team to do so as well when appropriate. While all department heads and employees must seek and receive permission from the Town Manager to contact Labor Counsel or Town Counsel on matters requiring legal counsel, I have supported those requests when deemed appropriate.

## **2. Monitors the condition and maintains town facilities as financial conditions allow.**

Prior to 2011, many of the Town's buildings and facilities had not been maintained regularly for years which resulted in the need for major repairs or total replacement, such as doors, windows, roofs or flooring. In order to facilitate those repairs and building projects that could be done without having to go out to bid and incur debt service costs, it was necessary to develop the capacity in-house. Thus, as part of the Reorganization Plan, I established a Facility Management Unit within the Department of Public Works to enable the Town to provide for the general maintenance and upkeep of our Town facilities, including the Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, Police Station and Fire Stations. While maintenance of School properties is handled by school department staff, certain building and rehabilitation projects in the schools have been undertaken by Facility Management staff in conjunction with school department staff. Likewise, School staff works on and repairs Town facilities as well. This Town-School partnership has enabled both the Town and the School Department to repair and improve various buildings utilizing Town and School employees rather than having to contract the work to outside vendors.

The DPW Facility Management Unit continued to make improvements to Town properties throughout the year, including renovations at Town Hall, the Police Station, Fire Headquarters, the Animal Compound, DPW, the Senior Center and at various parks.

In January of 2015, as part of the Year 4 goals, I created a Five-Year Facility Improvement Plan. Throughout the year, town administration undertook the implementation of this comprehensive Plan which provides a multi-year strategy for improvements, major maintenance and repairs to all Town of Auburn municipal facilities. This document is reviewed regularly to determine whether any projects should be expedited based on emerging needs or available funding, or whether any projects should be reprogrammed for a later date based on newly identified and urgent priorities.

Through the annual CIP process, each department is asked to evaluate their respective facilities and make recommendations on maintenance, repair and upgrades that are needed now or anticipated to be needed in the near future. Those items that can be handled by the Facility Management Division are addressed, or scheduled to be addressed, in order to reduce the need to outsource the work. Those smaller projects that can be funded through capital as opposed to incurring debt and interest payments are handled through the capital account. Larger capital projects are planned as part of the annual CIP process.

It is vital to continue to evaluate the condition of all town properties and to plan for the necessary resources to maintain and repair those facilities as needed.

### **3. Supervises procurement/central purchasing for greatest savings.**

In overseeing all procurement for the Town under Section 3.06 of the Town Charter, which deems the Town Manager as the Chief Procurement Officer, I seek to procure materials, supplies and equipment through the most cost effective means under state procurement laws. This includes utilizing firms, supplies and products on the State bid list, seeking quotes for purchases under best practices, contacting other communities to suggest joint purchasing, and seeking quotes as prescribed under Massachusetts General Laws.

Since becoming Town Manager, I have continually evaluated contracted and out-sourced labor, services and goods to determine cost effectiveness and to consider whether alternative mechanisms could be used to accomplish the same or better service at a reduced rate. As a result of this analysis, many services previously outsourced or contracted services were brought in-house while other services remain contracted as the cost to provide those services in-house would exceed the contracted amount. Those services brought in house include custodial services, facility maintenance, vehicle repair services, and the majority of snow removal operations. Those contracted services for which we have identified alternate mechanisms to generate savings include the purchase of fuel and oil, electric generation, and road salt.

The Facility Management Unit within the Department of Public Works continued to be very busy throughout the year working on various improvement projects in town buildings and properties. Since 2011, the Town has saved over \$650,000 by using in-house labor and other volunteer labor. The Unit will continue to undertake additional projects currently on the CIP and on the Facility Improvement Plan so that the Town does not have to borrow for those projects or bid the project to outside contractors at a much higher cost.

The Fleet Maintenance Unit within DPW, also created in the Fall of 2012, was fully operational in 2013. The Unit handles vehicle repairs and maintenance for most town vehicles including police, fire and public works. This work had previously been outsourced to private vendors. Bringing these repairs and maintenance in-house have resulted in an annual savings of approximately \$70,000 and will continue to result in significant savings.

Town administration continued to develop and implement various green initiatives designed to promote energy efficiencies and conservation, reduce energy costs, and support the use of alternative energy both as a municipality and as a community. The Town will save money on its utility costs due to the implementation of two green initiatives that came to fruition in 2015: the Net Metering Credit Agreement and the conversion of Town Hall to gas. The Net Metering Credit Agreement with SunEdison was initiated with the completion of SunEdison's solar facility in Rutland. The Town will begin receiving

credits from the project in early 2016 which will reduce its electric costs. Through a second competitive Green Community Grant from the Department of Energy Resources, Town Hall was converted from oil to gas, connecting to the gas line that was installed on Central Street through a public-private partnership with the Town, RH White and NStar. The conversion is anticipated to save the Town over \$7,000 annually. The Green Community Grant also provided funding to address energy saving systems at the police station.

In January 2015, the Town hired a part-time Energy Manager using grant funding obtained from the Department of Energy Resources. The Energy Manager is responsible for investigating, overseeing and implementing the Town's green initiatives and energy reduction goals. The Town anticipates increased savings will result from dedicated staff focus on energy reduction.

#### **4. Oversees the preparation and presentation of the Town Warrant.**

During 2015, I oversaw the preparation and presentation of the Town Warrant for the Special Town Meeting in March, the Annual Town Meeting in May, and the Fall Town Meeting in October.

The preparation of the warrants include internal review by the affected department heads, the CFO/Assistant Town Manager, Town Counsel review, and coordination of the Town Warrant with the Town Clerk, Town Moderator and Town Counsel. Certain warrant articles also required review by our financial advisors at Unibank and bond counsel. The final Town Warrants were then distributed to Town Meeting members. This was accomplished within the time frame established and specified under the Town's By-Laws. Per discussion of the Board to make efforts when possible to send the Warrant out earlier than required under the By Laws, the Annual Town Meeting warrant was mailed earlier and the Fall Town Meeting warrant was opened earlier than usual. Additionally, town administration increased its outreach efforts to boards and committees to inform them of the warrant timeframe.

I developed and provided a presentation at the Annual Town Meeting that contained an overview of the fiscal year with highlights of projects, initiatives and plans since the last Annual Town Meeting. This presentation is designed to provide Town Meeting members with information and data needed to make informed decisions on the warrant articles and the budget. I also gave a presentation at the Special Town Meeting to explain the multi-year By Law Review process and the proposed new General By Laws for which we were seeking Town Meeting approval. The Assistant Town Manager/CFO also provides a detailed presentation at the Annual and Fall Town Meetings on the budget and any revisions that may be proposed through warrant articles. Department heads are also present at each Town Meeting to respond to any specific questions that Town Meeting members may have on warrant articles. I am always available, as is my entire team, to respond to any questions that Town Meeting members may have related to the warrant or any other issues.

My office is responsible for making all arrangements to hold each Town Meeting including coordinating the availability of the room at the High School and ensuring the availability of the Town Clerk, the Town Moderator, Town Counsel and the School Superintendent in addition to ensuring a quorum of the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee and the School Committee.

#### **5. Maintains strong working relationships with Auburn's Legislative representatives at the state and federal level.**

Throughout the course of the year, I continue to communicate with Auburn's state and federal legislative delegation to keep them apprised of key initiatives and projects in Auburn. This communication includes contacting either the federal or state legislators' offices when the Town submits a grant in order to keep them apprised of the grant application and to request their support for the grant at the state or federal level. Copies of *The Auburn Account*, the town's quarterly newsletter, are distributed to our state and federal legislative delegation each quarter to keep them apprised of the activities in Town. I also inform the members of the legislative delegation of significant events in Town and invite them or their designee to attend and participate on their behalf.

As a result of the Chapter 61A process that the Town was involved in beginning in late summer of 2014 and continuing until mid-2015, I had met with Senator Moore's legislative and legal staff in Boston to request that the Senator consider filing legislation to amend Massachusetts General Law Chapter 61A, Section 14 to extend the period of time under which municipalities have to waive, assign or exercise their right of first refusal to purchase Chapter 61A land under the state-regulated notification process. I also recommended additional amendments to the Chapter as well to ease the burden on municipalities and enhance the requirements of the Chapter 61A land owner. Senator Moore reviewed the request and subsequently filed legislation proposing these amendments. I tracked this legislation and attended a public hearing held by the joint committee in the Statehouse to testify on behalf of the legislation and submitted written testimony as well. I also sought and received support from the CMRPC Legislative Committee to advocate on behalf of the bill.

I submitted requests to both Representative Frost and Senator Moore for funding various projects in Auburn under the Environmental Bond Bill and the Transportation Bond Bill. The newly constructed playground at the Dr. Arthur and Dr. Martha Pappas Recreational Complex was funded in part by an \$80,000 grant from the State obtained through this request process and due to the efforts of Senator Moore and Representative Frost.

Through the maintenance of a strong working relationship with Congressman James McGovern and his staff, I keep apprised of federal legislation and initiatives that may have an effect on the Town of Auburn.

Both myself and other members of the town administration attend the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) annual Spring Legislative Breakfast meeting and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) annual Legislative Breakfast meetings in order to hear updates on critical legislative issues that our state and federal legislative delegation in the Central Massachusetts region provide and to have the opportunity to ask questions or provide feedback to the delegation. These meetings provide a tremendous opportunity for local officials to network with legislators from the Central Massachusetts region to discuss legislative priorities, municipal challenges, and budgetary issues.

As a member of the MMA and the Massachusetts Municipal Managers Association (MMMA), I attend regular meetings throughout the year in order to stay apprised of pertinent legislative initiatives and to work with the MMA to lobby for or against legislation that impacts the Town of Auburn. I am also on the MMA's Policy Committee on Municipal and Regional Administration which meets monthly to address issues of critical importance to cities and towns including regionalization issues, local planning and zoning issues, state legislation, and local and state policies. This provides the opportunity to meet with legislators who have sponsored bills as well as with state officials who are developing policy that affects cities and towns. Through participation this Committee, I remained active in legislative affairs, including providing testimony on behalf of various bills to the Legislature. Bills that would benefit the Town for

which I provided testimony included economic development legislation and an amendment to Chapter 61A which was filed by Senator Michael Moore upon request of the Town.

Last summer, I worked with the State to host a meeting with the Department of Revenue's Senior Deputy Commissioner of Local Services in which several town managers and administrators in the region attended a meeting held at Auburn Town Hall for the opportunity to learn about state programs and services available to municipalities.

I was elected to the Massachusetts Municipal Managers Association (MMMA) Executive Committee as the District 2 Representative in January 2016. The MMMA Executive Committee consists of 13 members, including five District Representatives covering five regions of the State. While I also served on the Executive Committee in 2015, I served as an At-Large Member. This provides a unique opportunity to meet with legislators from across the state regarding legislation that affects municipalities and to participate at public hearings on legislation.

I also continue to serve on the Department of Energy Resources statewide Green Communities Division Advisory Committee as one of four municipal district representatives in the Commonwealth. The Advisory Committee consists of 9 members who are appointed by the DOER Commissioner. This statewide advisory panel provides input and advice to DOER's Green Communities Division regarding current procedures, proposed policy changes, legislation, new initiatives, and other issues to advance clean energy and energy savings for Massachusetts' cities and towns.

I continue to serve as the municipal representative to the Central Massachusetts Regional Homeland Security Council which provides the opportunity to discuss emergency management and security issues with representatives from law enforcement agencies, fire officials, and local and state officials and to keep apprised on legislation affecting security and emergency management funding.

## **C. Budget and Finance**

### **1. Prepares and presents the Annual Budget and capital outlay program.**

In accordance with the Town Charter and applicable By-Laws, I work with the Chief Financial Officer to prepare and present the annual budget to the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and Town Meeting. I also work with the CFO to annually update and amend the Five Year Capital Improvement Program. This involves numerous meetings over a several month period with each department head to review current CIP items, future projected needs, and developing strategies to fund those priority items. This year, we initiated the FY'17 budget process early in an effort to provide a budget to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee a couple of weeks earlier than required under the By Laws.

The Town's bond rating was upgraded to Aa2 by Moody's Investor Services which reflects the Town's multi-year commitment to implementing its financial policies, building reserves and addressing pension and healthcare liabilities. The upgrade will result in lower borrowing costs for the Town's current and future debt needs, which translates to savings in taxpayer dollars. The rating from Standard & Poors was also excellent as the agency reaffirmed the Town's AA+ rating, which is one step from the highest rating that a municipality can receive. These ratings are reflective of the Town's adoption and implementation of strong key management practices and key financial policies, including long range financial forecasting of both revenue and expense for operational and capital budgets.

The fiscal condition of the Town remains stable due to conservative budgeting and the implementation of continued reforms which result in savings and efficiencies. The Town's strong reserves, coupled with continued investment of \$500,000 annually into the OPEB Fund and continued growth of the Stabilization Fund, as well as the implementation of solid financial policies, enabled the Town to achieve the bond rating upgrade and maintain its strong AA+ rating from Standard & Poors.

Following adoption of the two new financial policies that the Town administration presented to the Board in January of 2015, those policies were adopted by the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee. These new policies were added to the written financial policies adopted in 2012.

## **2. Works closely with department heads to prepare annual budgets.**

In order to prepare the annual budget and the Five Year CIP, I work with the CFO and individual department heads to identify departmental priorities, evaluate those priorities within the context of overall Town goals and priorities, and develop the final departmental budget that is submitted to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, and ultimately submitted to Town Meeting. When appropriate, meetings are also held with the relevant board, commission or committee to discuss and determine their budgets. Budgets are prepared to reflect departmental needs, Town goals and priorities, balanced with fiscal responsibility. This process takes several months, beginning in the fall, in order to have the Budget ready to submit to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee in accordance with Town By-Laws. This past year, town administration made strong efforts to start the budget process early and intends to finish its work on the budget early in order to provide the budget to the Board of Selectmen early for transmittal to the Finance Committee..

I also meet with the CFO, School Superintendent and School Business Manager regularly throughout the year to discuss various financial issues that may impact the budget or the Capital Improvement Program. Through collaborative efforts, we strategize to develop financial plans and funding mechanisms to achieve our collective town-school goals.

Each year, I work with the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, School Committee, School Department and CFO to schedule a joint meeting to discuss the upcoming budget in preparation for finalizing a budget to submit. This joint meeting was held in September of 2015 in preparation for the FY'17 Budget.

## **3. Works with department heads throughout the year to evaluate and prioritize departmental needs and financial requests.**

In addition to working with department heads during the annual budget preparation process and CIP process, the CFO and I evaluate and prioritize the capital and operational needs of each department through ongoing dialogue with each department head throughout the year. Recognizing the need to be flexible and adapt to changing situations, collectively working with department heads we identify their needs, evaluate the options for addressing those needs, and determine the best mechanism to proceed. This happens on a formal basis as well as an impromptu basis as the need arises.

As certain challenges arise, such as broken equipment, employee injuries or illnesses, new regulations or requirements, or unpredicted weather-related problems, each department head keeps me apprised as to the issues. Then, we meet to develop strategies to address those needs in the short-term and long-term. As appropriate, budgets are amended, transfers are requested, and staff is re-allocated to address any deficiencies or gaps to allow for continued operations.

**4. Aggressively pursues available state and federal grant monies in support of the capital and operational needs of the town.**

During calendar year 2015, town administration applied for 27 grants totaling \$433,535.14. Of those applications, 24 were received totaling \$322,803.14 and 3 are pending. Grants received have provided emergency equipment, planning assistance, walking trails, land use analysis, and police and fire training and equipment. Grants have also provided funding for Senior Center and Library programs, CodeRED, personnel and equipment for the Police Department's communication center, public safety training and enforcement, and green energy initiatives.

Since becoming Town Manager in January of 2011, the Town has applied for 119 grants totaling \$8,395,303.53 in funding requests. Of those, through December of 2015, 98 grants have been awarded, 9 are pending, and 12 were denied. Total value of the grants awarded since 2011 through December of 2015 is \$2,376,821.53. Of that amount, 5 regional grants were awarded totaling \$768,675.00.

All department and division heads are encouraged to continually seek alternate funding sources to augment their programs and services, a goal which is incorporated into each evaluation form. We will continue to seek and secure grant and foundation funds to support the priority needs and goals of the Town.

**D. Community Relations**

**1. Interacts positively with the public, responding to questions and requests in a timely, constructive manner.**

Throughout the year, I meet or speak with many residents, property owners and business owners to listen to and address matters that they are concerned about and to address any problems or issues they may have. I make every effort to respond to phone calls, emails, visits and letters in a timely fashion and to resolve issues whenever possible.

When necessary, I bring in the appropriate department head to meet with the resident or business to resolve the situation.

Over the past year, I received and responded to 6,709 emails to the Town Manager account, which generally come from residents seeking assistance or identifying an area of concern, sent 11,856 emails, answered myriad phone calls and met with residents, businesses, developers and visitors. I will continue to be accessible to the residents and businesses in the community and will strive to be responsive to inquiries in a timely manner.

In order to enhance transparency in government, communication with the public is critical. I continue to utilize various forms of communication and technology to outreach to the public, keep residents and business informed, and provide the public with easy access to important information regarding town government. In July of 2013, I developed and launched the Town's first social media sites – Facebook and Twitter. I created these pages to communicate information, updates, news and events to residents, businesses, visitors and the general public. Through the ongoing use of social media, we have increased our outreach and communication efforts to a broader section of the population. The Town of Auburn's official Facebook and Twitter pages, as well as our official Town web site and Auburn Cable Television, are used to provide updates and information regarding Town sponsored events, activities and initiatives,

and to feature economic and community development initiatives such as events, activities, new business openings, expansions and projects.

The Fire Department and the Emergency Management Department use their Facebook pages to enhance communications with the public and to provide timely information regarding town issues to the public, while the Police Department has been very active in their use of Twitter to keep residents informed of public safety issues.

The Auburn Police Department launched two social media sites in 2015 to enhance communications with the public. The Department's social media sites on Facebook and Twitter provide real-time updates to the public, reach a demographic of the population that other media does not, and engage the residents and businesses in dialogue. It is part of the Town's overall communication strategy to enhance outreach and communication to the residents and businesses in Auburn.

Electronic distribution of ***The Auburn Account*** continued, a quarterly municipal newsletter created during my first year as town manager to keep residents, businesses and property owners informed about town projects, programs and services. The newsletter is also available in hard copy at Town offices and is sent to over 3,400 parents and families of school children through the School Department. The Auburn Account is also posted on the Auburn Chamber of Commerce's web site.

CodeRED, a web-based emergency communication system implemented in December 2011, was used throughout the year to keep residents and businesses informed of critical emergency related information. The CodeRED community messaging function, which is optional, was used to communicate information on community events to those who signed up to receive this optional service.

We also continue to develop and air Public Service Announcements on Auburn Community Television to keep the public informed of critical issues such as public health and public safety. Auburn Community Television continued to televise as many board and commission meetings as possible to inform the public and provide access to meetings for those who cannot attend in person.

I speak annually at the November meeting of the Auburn Chamber of Commerce to keep the local business community updated on the plans, initiatives and projects of the Town. I meet with local boards commissions and committees as requested to provide information to them that may impact their activities. I also meet individually as requested with residents and business to address specific issues or concerns they may have. I continued to provide reports and updates to the Board of Selectmen at their meetings to inform the public of pertinent issues and activities that the administration is undertaking.

## **2. Works with local business owners and appropriate town departments to promote industrial and commercial growth.**

Business development, which includes business retention, expansion and the attraction of new businesses, continued throughout the year. Town administration worked to facilitate the opening of several new businesses in the past year and the expansion of numerous existing facilities in Auburn. These efforts have helped to facilitate the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties and provide support to those businesses that are expanding their operations in Auburn.

During the past year, I continued to work with the Economic Development Committee, the Business Roundtable, and regulatory boards and commissions, as well as with local business owners and entrepreneurs to facilitate development in Auburn. Throughout the past year, I continued to meet with

the Business Roundtable participants who consist of business and commercial/industrial property owners, presidents and general managers in order to solicit valuable input and feedback on the strengths and challenges of doing business in Auburn, identify issues that impact business, and identify programs and/or services that would assist or enhance their operations. We utilize the input of the Business Roundtable to formulate strategies to meet the needs of the business community and to stimulate economic development. The Business Roundtable has fostered communication and dialogue between the Town and the business community. I have been working with the Economic Development Committee to develop a video to market Auburn to business and industry in order to attract new commercial and industrial activity to Town.

I continued to partner with the Auburn Chamber of Commerce and its leaders to collectively work towards the Town's priorities and to strengthen the business environment in Town. I have spoken at Chamber meetings to provide information on plans and initiatives in Auburn. Building relationships and communicating with businesses in Town is a key component of creating economic development capacity.

The Department of Development and Inspectional Services (DIS), within which the development and permitting functions, building permits, inspections, planning and regulatory services and staffing of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Conservation Commission were consolidated, provides a single point of contact for businesses seeking to establish or expand their facilities. The Development Coordinating Group (DCG), which consists of department heads from DIS, Police, Fire, and DPW, met monthly during the year to review numerous projects, plans, applications and license renewals submitted by entrepreneurs, developers and businesses. The DCG provided valuable feedback and guidance on the development process to several project proponents.

In 2015, several projects were completed. These projects will create new jobs and generate tax revenue for the Town. This includes new business openings and expansions, housing developments, and the new playground at the Dr. Arthur and Dr. Martha Pappas Recreational Complex.

During the past year, several companies have expanded, new businesses opened, and new developments were proposed. (See list below).

**Completed:**

**R.H. White Construction:**

Auburn is home to the headquarters of R.H. White Construction, one of the largest contractors specializing in construction for utilities in New England. With a highly skilled, trained workforce of over 500 employees, 300 employees are located in the company's Auburn headquarters. The company purchased the abutting property, previously owned by the Knights of Columbus. After demolishing the existing building, R.H. White constructed a brand new, multi-million dollar facility to hold its training programs onsite while providing additional space to accommodate its growing operations. The new, state-of-the-art facility was opened in December. The new building will enable the company to hold its training programs onsite while providing additional space to accommodate its growing operations.

**Pappas Playground:**

The new playground is an approximately 100' x 100' handicapped accessible area located adjacent to the Riley-Pappas Performance Pavilion and offers a place for children of a variety of ages to play. Fundraising for the project was boosted when the Governor approved the Fiscal Year 2015 State Budget which included a line item in the amount of \$80,000 for the playground which had been submitted by Auburn's state legislative delegation, Senator Michael Moore and Representative Paul Frost. This, in combination with \$30,000 raised by the Friends of the Pappas Recreation Complex, triggered a matching

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challenge grant donated by the Pappas family in the amount of \$100,000. Thus, with all required funding in place, the project was completed in June 2015.

**BJ Gas Station:**

BJ's completed construction of a Member's Gas Station on a lot on the corner of Sibley Street and Route 20. This service station has 8 fuel islands containing 16 pumps serviced by a 400 square foot kiosk in the back of the lot. The project has two egresses (both onto Route 20), a paved service area with two parking spaces, new site lighting, and a stormwater management system that includes drainage improvements to Sibley Street. The business opened in December 2015.

**Bells Lawn and Garden Center:**

The new commercial nursery stand for the sale of produce at property located at 282 Southbridge Street is complete. The project took place on an undeveloped parcel next door to Colonial Glass. The business includes the sale of flowers and other various garden or nursery-related products.

**TD Bank Relocation:**

TD Bank received Site Plan Approval to relocate their Auburn facility to a new property. The construction approval includes leasing a pre-existing 3,500s.f. building with the addition of a drive-up ATM. This relocation fills a vacancy within the front-facing 3-tenant retail space that includes the aforementioned ReadyMed at 460 Southbridge St and has prime visibility on a main thoroughfare. The bank opened in September 2015.

**Deer Run Estates:**

This development consists of a new 800-foot road servicing 9 single-family houses on a 38-acre parcel. The lots contained in this subdivision have a minimum lot size of 60,000 square feet with a minimum frontage of 180 feet. The homes in this development will range from 2,300 to 3,500 square feet. As part of the design, the developer has placed a conservation restriction on approximately 20 acres for the purpose of preservation of habitat for flora and fauna of special concern. The project was completed in April 2015.

**Underway:**

**Windmill Estates:**

Windmill Estates is a 12-lot subdivision for two family homes within a condominium association for ages 55+ located at 50-94 Prospect Street. A definitive subdivision application was approved by the Planning Board in January 2016. The private neighborhood also received a Special Permit from the Board for an open space residential development which requires 30% of the property to remain open space to keep in character with the surrounding neighborhood. Construction has begun in February 2016 and is estimated to take 2-3 years to complete.

**Whitetail Run Subdivision:**

Whitetail Run is a 9-lot subdivision with 8 new homes proposed. This development is an Open Space Residential Development. The potential builder for this development is the same as the Deer Run Estates subdivision nearing completion on Barnes Street. It is expected that the houses will be similar and valued in the \$400,000 to \$600,000 range customized to the potential buyer's preferences. Construction began in the summer of 2015 and is estimate to be completed in 2-3 years.

**Diamond Auto Group:**

New construction is underway at Diamond Auto Group, a Chevrolet, GMC, Buick and Cadillac dealership located at 768 Washington Street. Diamond is building a 16,650 square foot facility with 4,000 square feet of office space and 12,650 square feet of repair bays to expand its service center. There will be 374 new parking spaces for inventory storage, customer and employee parking. Diamond Auto Group estimates that an additional 25 to 30 jobs will be created as a result of the expansion project. This project is the second of three phases in a redevelopment of the existing dealership.

Herb Chambers Toyota:

Herb Chambers Toyota completed a small employee parking area on Appleton Road and has received approval for a 2-phased project at the corner of Route 20 and Prospect St. The initial phase will consist of major site work including retaining walls, drainage work and landscaping resulting in a vehicle storage lot that will host 480 first line inventory vehicles. Phase 2 will include the addition of a service facility for the adjacent Toyota dealership.

Pakachoag Acres Day Care:

Pakachoag Acres is an existing childcare facility that is located in a space they have outgrown in a location that has limited accessibility for parents. The development and construction of a new facility includes razing the building that had previously been used as a gas station and then as a restaurant. Once the old building was demolished, construction began on a new building designed specifically to meet the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> century childcare provider. The project includes significant site work including the installation of stormwater collection and infiltration systems, new parking areas, play areas and formalized access and egress to Auburn Street.

**Proposed:**

Auburn Mall Movie Theater – 385 Southbridge Street:

Simon Properties held a preliminary concept meeting with Town officials in February of 2015 to introduce a large expansion project that includes a movie theater and a detached restaurant. The proposed 55,000 s.f., 12-screen cinema would replace the 87,000 s.f. Macy's Home Store located at the eastern end of the mall. The stand-alone restaurant would be located close to the intersection of Auburn Street and Brotherton Way. Since finalizing their proposal and applying for local approvals, Simon Properties Management has received approvals from the ZBA, Conservation Commission and Planning Board as of January 2016 and is in the process of filing applications for building permits. Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in Spring 2016 with plans to open in the summer of 2017.

Hamlet Estates Subdivision:

Hamlet Estates is a 5-lot subdivision for 5 new homes located at 127 & 129 West Street. The owner of the property received preliminary and definitive subdivision approval from the Planning Board between October 2014 and July 2015 but is still in the process of securing a performance bond for the road improvements. Construction could begin as early as Spring 2016 for this development.

The administration will continue to work with developers and business owners to facilitate their permitting, financing or expansion projects.

## Report on the Three Specific Goals for Year 5

I am proud to report on the three goals established by the Board of Selectmen upon which my efforts and those of my administration, in particular the Town Planner, were focused throughout the year to augment the daily ongoing operations and administration of town government. Each of those goals has been met. Those goals are:

### **1. *Initiate the Process to Update the Town's Master Plan – Appoint Committee and Research Funding - COMPLETE***

In order to initiate the Master Plan update process, I reached out to three entities (two planning consultant firms and CMRPC) to request estimates on preparing all or a portion of the Town's Update Master Plan. Based on the estimated quotes received, I determined that the Town could not allocate those significant resources in the FY'17 budget given the challenging financial impacts we anticipated in the budgets. Thus, after many months of researching possible funding sources for the Master Plan, which included research into state, federal and quasi-public sources as well as foundation funding, I was not able to identify any available grant programs. However, after Governor Baker unveiled his new Community Compact Program in the summer, I began to delve into whether this program could potentially provide the Town with financial or technical assistance in its Master Plan update process. The Community Compact is a voluntary, mutual agreement entered into between the Baker-Polito Administration and individual cities and towns of the Commonwealth. In a Community Compact, a community agrees to implement at least one best practice that they select from across a variety of areas. The State provides various resources to the community to implement and achieve those best practices in partnership with the State.

After meeting with various state officials, and attending a full day conference in November on the Community Compact, I applied for the Community Compact Program as a means to obtaining state assistance in two major components of the Master Plan – the economic development plan and the housing plan. As two of the three so-called “best practice” areas allowable under the Community Compact, I submitted the application along with a third best practice, an early childhood education initiative in conjunction with the School Department. While the announcement that the Town had been approved for all three best practice areas in its Community Compact came after the term of this specific contract year (which ended January 30, 2016), it is important and exciting to note that the State did approve our application and we signed the Community Compact on February 16<sup>th</sup> at a signing event in Town Hall with Lieutenant Governor Karen Polito. The details of the assistance we will receive from the State have not been released yet but it is assumed that the assistance will come in the form of both financial and technical assistance.

After researching Massachusetts General Laws and speaking with planners at the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) to determine the legal procedure for undertaking the Master Plan process, and looking at best practices from other communities in the State, I developed a structure for the Master Plan Committee membership. Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 41, Section 81D sets forth the requirements of a municipal master plan and identifies the Planning Board as the entity to create that plan. As such, I sought and received Planning Board approval to appoint the Committee on behalf of the Planning Board.

After determining which regulatory and advisory boards, committees and commissions should have representation on the Committee, we requested each entity to recommend a member for appointment to the Committee. After hearing back from each board and commission, and advertising seats for

residents, including meeting with Auburn Mass Daily to request that they run an article on both the Master Plan and Zoning By Law Review Committees to generate interest amongst residents, I appointed a Master Plan Committee to undertake the Master Plan update. The 9-member Committee consists of the following residents (if representing a board or commission that affiliation is noted):

Gregory Bohling, Chairman (resident)  
Mark Imse, Vice Chairman (resident)  
Wendy Steinhilber (Planning Board representative)  
Meghan Roche (Zoning Board of Appeals representative)  
Carolyn Corriveau (Conservation Commission representative)  
Matthew Benoit (Town Planner and resident)  
Daniel Carpenter (resident)  
Mary Hanlon-Stepanski (resident)  
John Gannon (resident)

The Committee has met twice since its inception and will continue to meet throughout the coming months and years until the process is completed.

We have developed a timeline for the Master Plan process which will guide the process and the Committee. A copy of that timeline is attached (Attachment I).

The Master Plan Committee is comprised of a diverse and talented group of residents, each of whom has many skills and experience to contribute to the effort. I am looking forward to working with the Committee on this critical project.

## ***2. Initiate the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee – Form Committee and Start, through the Committee, to Develop a Tentative Timeline for the Process - COMPLETE***

The Board had asked me to look into whether the Master Plan update process and the Zoning By Law Review process could be undertaken by one Committee or whether two separate Committees would be more appropriate to complete these tasks. Prior to appointing the Zoning By Law Review Committee, I researched other communities, met with planning consultants, and met with CMRPC to determine the best mechanism to undertake both the master plan update and the comprehensive zoning by law review process. It was highly recommended and ultimately determined that there needed to be a separate committee to take on each process. Both processes are lengthy and extremely time-consuming and will require dedication, commitment and extensive time of the members of each Committee and Town administration.

Similar to the Master Plan Committee, after developing a committee structure and determining which regulatory board and commissions should have representation on the Committee, we requested each identified entity to recommend a member for appointment to the Committee. We also heavily advertised vacant seats for residents to apply for, which included an article on the new Committee courtesy of Auburn Mass Daily. After hearing back from each board and commission, I appointed the Zoning By Law Review Committee. The 7-member Committee consists of the following residents (if representing a board or commission that affiliation is noted):

Michael Marin, Chairman (ZBA representative)  
Eric Chilton, Vice Chairman (Economic Development Committee representative)  
Jonathan Weaver (Planning Board representative)  
Robert Tatro (ZBA representative)

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Dennis Natoli (resident)  
Nicholas Lynch (resident)  
Paul Hurteau (resident)

We have developed a tentative timeline for the process which is attached (Attachment II). As with the General By Law Review process, the timeline must remain flexible as there are multiple variables that could impact every step of the process. For instance, creating a new zoning by law will require far more time than amending or revising an existing by law. In general, I believe that the process will mirror the General By Law Review process and follow a similar timeframe. The development of new zoning by laws or the revision of existing by laws is governed by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A, Section 5.

I am very pleased to have appointed such a diverse and talented committee to undertake the Zoning By Law Review process. Each member brings a unique perspective and skill set that will benefit the process tremendously. I am grateful these residents have made the commitment to undertake this work and I look forward to collaborating with them on the Zoning By Law Review initiative.

**3. *Rejuvenate the Open Space Committee to undertake the analysis of and recommendation for the use of town-owned property, focus on recently acquired 61A land first - Find Members to Start Process to Review Open Space Property - COMPLETE***

The Open Space Committee was rejuvenated with the appointment of additional members. The current members of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee are:

Ann Weston, Chair  
Louise Downie, Vice Chair  
Alex Kulesa  
John Anderson  
Mark Binall

The first task the rejuvenated Committee undertook was to review, analyze and evaluate the recently purchased 50 acres of former Chapter 61A land off of Southold Road. That land was purchased by the Town in March 2015. The Committee held several meetings and solicited input from residents throughout the process. The Open Space Committee worked diligently to make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen in early summer, prior to the scheduled borrowing in August to permanently finance the \$2.87 Million bond to fund the acquisition. The Committee's report that was presented to the Board of Selectmen on July 27, 2015 is attached herein (Attachment III).

After presenting its findings and preliminary recommendations to the Board on the Southold Road property, the Committee began to review other town-owned property, a process which is still ongoing. The Committee has reviewed every vacant town-owned parcel that is over 10,000 square feet and is currently in the process of finalizing its review. The attached spreadsheets (Attachment IV) do not reflect an official recommendation from the Committee at this time, but represents its progress-to-date on this major undertaking. As reflected in these charts, the Committee has made significant progress on this task and will continue to review these parcels in order to make a final recommendation.

I want to thank the members of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee for their hard work. The Committee has undertaken important issues for the future of Auburn's open space and recreational goals and strategies.

## Conclusion

While this report has been prepared for the Board of Selectmen's evaluation of my achievements, it is important to note that these accomplishments are the result of the collaborative work of the entire management team and town employees. As such, I want to acknowledge the hard work, dedication and efforts of the department and division heads who administer the day-to-day operations that enable the Town – and me - to accomplish our collective goals, priorities and vision. I am proud to work with such a talented, skilled and professional team of managers and employees. I am fortunate to work with each of them and the community is fortunate to have them here. All of the Town's employees are dedicated to providing quality services and addressing issues and concerns on behalf of Auburn's taxpayers, residents and businesses.

I would like to extend my gratitude and thanks to the Board of Selectmen for their guidance and direction throughout the year. The Board established clear goals for me in Year 5 of my contract and provided thoughtful input throughout the year on issues that enabled me, and the entire town administration, to focus our collective efforts to achieve. As Town Manager, I encourage the entire administration to continually strive for excellence in public service. I am grateful to the Board for its support in this endeavor.

I am also appreciative of the strong relationship that town administration has with the School Superintendent and her leadership team, and for the collaborative efforts with the School Committee throughout the year, as we all work together to benefit Auburn's youth and families.

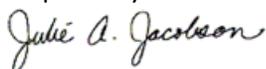
It is also important to recognize all of our board and commission members who volunteer to serve the Town. The regulatory and advisory boards and commissions are an integral part of town government. The experience and knowledge that the members bring to their respective boards, committees and commissions is impressive. Town administration appreciates their work and continues to work with these entities to achieve our goals. I want to thank Town Meeting members as well for their support and the work they did last year to review and act on the warrant articles at the Annual Town Meeting, Special Town Meeting and Fall Town Meeting. Also, thank you to our state and federal legislative delegation for their support and advocacy on behalf of the Town of Auburn.

As Town Manager, I will continue to strive to provide quality services, programs, events and infrastructure to support a thriving and safe community of which we can all be proud. While much was accomplished this past year, some of my proudest accomplishments continue to be the professional and effective team that we have built, the strong relationship that we have established with the school department, and the partnerships we have nurtured within the community.

It is an honor to serve the Auburn community as Town Manager. Together with town and school administration, our elected and appointed officials, boards and commissions, we will continue to advance our goals and enhance the quality of life in the Auburn community. I look forward to the coming year.

Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,



Julie A. Jacobson  
Town Manager

## **ATTACHMENT I**

### **Master Plan Proposed Timeline**

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**ATTACHMENT II**

**ZONING BY LAW REVIEW PROCESS**  
**TENTATIVE TIMELINE**

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**ATTACHMENT III**

**Open Space Committee Report**  
**Provided to the Board of Selectmen**  
**July 27, 2015**

**ATTACHMENT IV**

**Open Space Committee**  
**DRAFT Analysis of Town-Owned Properties**

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