

Fiscal Year 2020
Town Manager's
4th Quarter Goals Status Report

June 25, 2020

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Town Manager

Develop Overarching Vision, Values and Mission Statements for the Town of Chelmsford. Establish and initiate execution path for maturation into an overarching Strategic Plan.

This is a joint goal with the Board of Selectmen.

- A six-member Values and Vision Committee has been established.
- A survey was conducted in January and the results compiled.
- An initial public input session was held on January 29th.
- The Committee has created Draft Values and Vision Statements.
- A second public input session held on March 4th.
- The Committee is scheduled to meet on July 1st to prepare a presentation to the Board of Selectmen.

Identify and track parameters to monitor the effects of the split tax rate. Such parameters may include relevant assessors' data, data obtained through the Town's new business development initiatives, and public input.

The Town Manager established and is working with an ad-hoc advisory committee composed of the following individuals:

- Board of Assessors Chairman Sam Chase
- Business Development Director Lisa Maroney
- Chief Assessor Frank Reen
- 2018 Tax Classification Committee Chairman Michael Rigney
- Economic Development Committee Chairman Donald Van Dyne.

Identify and track parameters to monitor the effects of the split tax rate. Such parameters may include relevant assessors' data, data obtained through the Town's new business development initiatives, and public input.

The committee has met on four occasions. Preliminary findings are:

- The split tax rate has not been in existence long enough to ascertain any meaningful impact.
- Board of Assessors is not the proper authority to participate in determining the economic outcomes that may or may not be related to Board of Selectmen policy.
- Abatement requests are not relevant in establishing the economic impact of a split tax rate.

Identify and track parameters to monitor the effects of the split tax rate. Such parameters may include relevant assessors' data, data obtained through the Town's new business development initiatives, and public input.

- Although C/I abatement requests were significantly higher in FY2019 (first year of tax split), the number of abatements did not increase. In FY20, the number of abatement applications fell towards the normal level. This suggests that commercial property owners were reacting to the substantial tax increases that they received because of the 1.27 shift and not because they were questioning the property valuations.
- Many other economic and business factors contribute to continued business viability, and that it is hard to isolate these to determine the impact of just property tax.
- With the Small Commercial Exemption (SCE) in place, it may be easier to track the arrival and departure of small businesses.
- The economic impact from the COVID-19 pandemic may cloud the analysis for some time.

Assess fire station combinations (numbers and locations) to understand impacts or possible enhancements to response times and safety of first responders.

- Public safety and analytic services consultant Travis Miller d/b/a Criterion Associates presented a fire station location study at the November 4, 2019 Board of Selectmen meeting. The study examined the Chelmsford Fire Department's response date for the past three years.
- The study presented alternatives for 3 and 4 fire station configurations.
- The North Fire Station would remain in any station configuration.
- The Town Manager tasked the Permanent Building Committee with examining a renovation and addition to the North Fire Station.
- The Permanent Building Committee can provide a presentation regarding a renovation and addition to the North Fire Station at a future Board of Selectmen meeting .

Provide Egress from Vinal Square municipal parking lot to Wotton Street.

- The property owner of 20-22 Wotton Street is not interested in providing the Town with an easement or the sale of a portion of the property for use as an egress from the municipal parking lot across the privately-owned adjacent property to Wotton Street. The property owner has expressed an interest in selling the entire parcel and buildings to the Town.
- The two-family residential condominium building and land located at 20-22 Wotton Street is assessed at \$362,100.
- Board of Selectmen received an update on June 15th in Executive Session.

Strengthen the leadership presence with and support for the Town's economic development initiatives with focus on the Crossroads at Route 129 along with other areas of importance. Help elevate communications about such initiatives and their progress. Effort should be given to all who vacant space or business needs.

- The Town Manager secured \$200K in funding for business development in the State's FY20 operating budget.
- Director of Business Development Lisa Marrone provided quarterly business development updates to the Board of Selectmen on July 29, November 4, and February 10.
- The Chelmsford Crossroads at 129 website is operational.
- The Town has awarded a \$100K Business Amenity Incentive Grant for the establishment of a significant restaurant at 330 Billerica Road.
- The Town has awarded a \$100K grant to Camoin 310 Ltd for the branding, marketing, and re-imaging of the Route 129 corridor in this evolving post-COVID-19 work environment.
- The Business Development Director coordinated the Art on the Brook event in the Center Village and numerous ribbon cutting events.
- The Business Development Director has updated the Board of Selectmen on pending redevelopment along the Route 129 corridor including 150 Apollo Drive, 197 Billerica Road, 330 Billerica Road, 10 Elizabeth Drive, 220 Mill Road, and 278 Mill Road.
- The Town Manager, Business Development Director, and Community Development Director have promoted the redevelopment of the Odd Fellows/Fiske House site.
- The Town's business development team has rapidly responded to assist businesses in re-opening under the State's COVID-19 pandemic guidelines.

Develop and initiate execution of a Communications Enhancement Plan for the Town and its residents. Research municipal websites and recommend/implement new website with improvements. Continue efforts to improve community outreach efforts by utilizing social media, local news resources, and any other methods to provide our residents with up-to-date information.

The Town Manager has established and is working with the following ad-hoc committee to update the Town's website:

- Support Services Coordinator Kristina Bruce;
- Town Clerk Patricia Dzuris;
- Assistant Library Director Brian Herzog;
- Business Development Director Lisa Marrone;
- Board of Selectmen Vice Chair Pat Wojtas;

This team has launched a new Town website.

The Town has also provided timely information to residents and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic through social media and the Town's website.

Continue to work with residents and the State on traffic concerns across Town with consideration to more formalized and routine communications allowing public input and coordinated communications on status of issues.

- The Board of Selectmen held a traffic input session on June 12, 2019 at the Senior Center.
- The Town Manager's Office has addressed many of the items from the hearing, as described in the status reports at many Board of Selectmen meetings.
- The Town Administration is working with members of the Board of Selectmen to address truck traffic concerns in the Route 40/Ledge Road area.

Continue to work with residents and the State on traffic concerns across Town with consideration to more formalized and routine communications allowing public input and coordinated communications on status of issues.

The Town Manager has established and is working with the following ad-hoc traffic safety advisory committee to identify and address traffic safety concerns in the community:

- Department of Public Works Assistant Director Steve Jahnle
- Assistant Town Manager Michael McCall
- Department of Public Works Director Gary Persichetti
- Fire Chief Gary Ryan
- Police Chief James Spinney

The traffic signalization improvements in the town center and the modification of traffic flow at the Town Common are examples of this work.

Identify and execute measures to help assure maximum participation in the 2020 Census.

The Town Manager established and worked with the following 2020 Census Complete Count Committee:

- Town Clerk Patricia Dzuris
- Town resident/US Census employee Michael Kowalyck
- 2010 Census Committee Member Michael Rigney
- Board of Selectmen Vice Chair Patricia Wojtas

Identify and execute measures to help assure maximum participation in the 2020 Census.

The 2020 Census Complete Count Committee utilized the following methods to promote awareness and participation in the 2020 Census:

- Social media;
- Cable access;
- Flyers, signs and other display materials;
- Town bills and other mailings;
- Schools;
- Faith Community;

Chelmsford's response rate (79.9%) has been at the head of the pack with respect to our neighboring, comparable communities.

Review the Town's current revenue sources to include taxes, local receipts, fees, state aid, and grants with consideration to priorities or additional ways to grow the Town's revenues.

- The Town Manager's Office presented a review and market comparison of Board BOS license fees on September 23.
- The Town Manager kept the Board of Selectmen informed regarding the proposed legislative changes to the State's education funding law.
- The Town Manager secured \$100,000 in earmark funding for business development grants in the State's FY20 operating budget and obtained an additional \$100,000 in funding for that purpose in the State's FY19 supplemental budget.
- The COVID-19 pandemic economic fallout has disrupted revenue sources.