

# Selectboard Town Manager Report | April 1, 2024

Below please find the summary of the agenda items.

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- A Public Hearing to Review and Amend Ordinance No. 41, Parklets

#### **Item #7: Business Requiring Action**

- A. Approval of items i to v By Consent

### 2. Town Manager Monthly Report

## Agenda Items

### **Item #2: Public Hearings**

A Public Hearing for Approval and Adoption of the FY25 Budget

*See attached memos (two memos and one spreadsheet) that will be provided and uploaded on Friday.*

A Public Hearing for Adoption of Collective Bargaining Agreements

*Town staff will present collective bargaining agreements that have been discussed with the Selectboard in nonpublic since November and which have been ratified by the respective unions.*

A Public Hearing to Review and Amend Ordinance No. 41, Parklets

*Discussed at the prior meeting. See attached memo and requested redlined ordinance.*

### **Item #5: Business Requiring Discussion**

- a. **Town Meeting/Election.** Town staff and officials have been working on ways to address some of the feedback from last year's Town Meeting. We will present some of the status of the discussions and ensure they are in line with the Selectboard's goals. If there is a Selectboard member who would like to make the time to participate in the subsequent staff meetings so that they can ensure everything is connected back to the Selectboard, we would welcome that participation.

## Item #7: Business Requiring Action

### A. Approval of items i to v By Consent

- i. **Approve Classification of new Accounting and HR Analyst position.** After discussion with the Finance Committee and Selectboard, we included a new FTE in the FY25 budget – Accounting and HR Analyst. The job description is attached. It was sent for review to the Finance Committee before posting and no major issues were expressed. Due to the urgent nature of the issues, not having adequate staff capacity to address them in a timely manner, and based on available funds due to vacancy, we would like to begin the hiring process now. A few months head start will make a significant difference, and without this, it may delay several other programs, such as an earlier start to FY26 budgeting including capital planning. Any candidate accepting the position would be informed that the continuation of the position is contingent on approval at Town Meeting. We anticipate this being granted, but recognize it isn't guaranteed. This is a new FTE and would be grade 18 on our current step scale. It is being advertised currently due to the timing concerns, though no candidates will be reached out to until the Selectboard approves the position. We would like to have someone in place by May.

Action Requested: Approve the classification of this position as described.

- ii. Approval of Minutes – February 26, 2024, February 27, 2024, February 28, 2024 and March 18, 2024
- iii. Approval of Elderly Exemption – The Assessing Office has received and recommends the approval of an Elderly Exemption Application. Because this application contains financial information, it has been provided to the Selectboard under separate cover.

Action Requested: Approve the Elderly Exemption Application.

- iv. Appointment – Evan Gerson has requested to be an alternate on the Hanover Bike Walk Committee. Additional information has been provided to you under separate cover.

Victoria Gohl has been selected as the Tax Collector and Associate Town Clerk and requires an Appointment by the Selectboard to perform these duties.

Action Requested: Appoint Evan Gerson as an alternate to Hanover Bike Walk Committee. Appoint Victorial Gohl as the Tax Collector and Associate Town Clerk.

- v. Banner Request – Upper Valley Walk to End Alzheimer's has requested to hang an overhead banner to promote their annual fundraising walk from September 15, 2024 to September 22, 2024. If approved, we can accommodate this request.

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley has requested to hang an overhead banner to promote their Pods for the Pulpit Annual Crafts Fair from November 24, 2024 to December 1, 2024. Per the Selectboard's request from the March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, the UUCUV has added to their banner proof that the proceeds from this craft fair benefit the Upper Valley Haven. If approved, we can accommodate this request.

Action Requested: Approve the overhead banner requests from the Upper Valley Walk to End Alzheimer’s and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley on Monday evening.

# Town Manager Monthly Report

## February and March’s Report

*Have been extremely behind with the budget and everything else that is going on. Here is the latest report!*

Upcoming events & dates	<p>Howe Library’s event calendar: <a href="https://www.thehowe.org/events/events-programs/">https://www.thehowe.org/events/events-programs/</a></p> <p><b>Etna Library events:</b></p> <p><b>Virtual Trivia Night</b> Monday, March 18 @5:30pm (via Zoom)</p> <p>Join the Etna and Plainfield Public Libraries for another virtual trivia night. Try your hand at answering questions about every imaginable topic in this fun online battle of useless facts!</p> <p><b>Explain Pain</b> Wednesday, March 27 @6:30pm (at the Library)</p> <p>This talk by Jackson Penfield-Cyr, owner and clinician at Upper Valley Integration Therapy in Hanover, will explore how recent advances in fields such as neurophysiology, brain imaging, immunology, psychology and cellular biology can help us transform the experience of pain from one of fear to one of empowerment.</p> <p><b>Solar Eclipse Preparation Party</b> Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup> @10am (at the Library)</p> <p>Prepare for the total solar eclipse occurring on April 8th by joining us at the Etna Library on the 7th! We'll have lots of fun eclipse-themed activities including a solar clock craft, an eclipse photo booth, free eclipse viewing glasses to take home, moon pie and solar sugar cookie snacks, and informational packets on the eclipse.</p>
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	<p>Etna Library’s event calendar: <a href="https://www.etna-library.org/events">https://www.etna-library.org/events</a></p> <p>HPR’s EGGSTRAVAGANZA EGG HUNT on 3/30 is just about sold out.</p> <p>Spring Music Festival on Allen Street on 4/19, a collaboration with the Music Department at Dartmouth.</p> <p>Parks and Rec event information: <a href="https://www.hanovernh.org/672/Parks-and-Recreation">https://www.hanovernh.org/672/Parks-and-Recreation</a></p>												
Human Resources & Personnel	<p><b>Staffing Challenges and Pay Scale.</b> We provided a brief memo to the Hanover Finance Committee about some of the staffing challenges that lead to the Retention and Recruitment study, as well as the new policies and budget items proposed this year. It has been attached to the packet as well.</p> <p><b>Numbers:</b> Since last report we have had three employees leave employment and four start – Welcome Meghan at Parking, Ronald at Public Works, Hannah at Parks and Rec, and Victoria at Clerk/Tax Collector/Admin Services!</p> <p><b>Current Openings.</b> Currently we have 15 open positions, with two more being added after this report is being published but before our Selectboard meeting (Employee Wellness and Engagement Coordinator in HR and Accounting and HR Analyst in Finance/HR) to make 17 (two listed below are the same position) positions we are currently hiring for.</p> <p><b>It should be noted that this means that more than 10% of non-seasonal Town positions are currently vacant or being hired for.</b></p> <p>All open positions are shown below and available here: <a href="https://www.hanovernh.org/employment">hanovernh.org/employment</a>.</p> <table><tr><td><a href="#">Water Distribution Technician</a></td><td>\$22.66 - \$34.29 Hourly</td><td>Public Works / Water Treatment</td></tr><tr><td><a href="#">Mechanic</a></td><td>\$25.51 - \$34.29 Hourly</td><td>Fleet Services / Public Works / Vehicle Maintenance / Automotive</td></tr><tr><td><a href="#">Summer Camp Lead Counselor</a></td><td>\$17.00 - \$19.00 Hourly</td><td>Parks and Recreation / Athletics &amp; Fitness / Community and Social Services / Child Care</td></tr><tr><td><a href="#">Summer Camp Counselor</a></td><td>\$15.00 - \$16.75 Hourly</td><td>Parks and Recreation / Athletics &amp; Fitness / Child Care</td></tr></table>	<a href="#">Water Distribution Technician</a>	\$22.66 - \$34.29 Hourly	Public Works / Water Treatment	<a href="#">Mechanic</a>	\$25.51 - \$34.29 Hourly	Fleet Services / Public Works / Vehicle Maintenance / Automotive	<a href="#">Summer Camp Lead Counselor</a>	\$17.00 - \$19.00 Hourly	Parks and Recreation / Athletics & Fitness / Community and Social Services / Child Care	<a href="#">Summer Camp Counselor</a>	\$15.00 - \$16.75 Hourly	Parks and Recreation / Athletics & Fitness / Child Care
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<a href="#"><u>Program Specialist</u></a>	\$20.53 - \$21.34 Hourly	Parks and Recreation / Community and Social Services / Child Care / Program Management
<a href="#"><u>Counselor In Training</u></a>	\$0.00 Hourly	Parks and Recreation / Athletics & Fitness / Community and Social Services / Child Care
<a href="#"><u>Summer Grounds Crew Worker</u></a>	\$18.00 Hourly	Parks and Recreation / Maintenance / Grounds & Landscaping / Building & Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance
	\$63,378.59	
<a href="#"><u>Sustainability Coordinator</u></a>	- \$96,060.80 Annually	Planning and Development / Organizational Development
<a href="#"><u>Parking Facility Cashier</u></a>	\$16.84 - \$17.68 Hourly	Public Safety / Law Enforcement
<a href="#"><u>Community Nurse</u></a>	\$35.16 - \$37.34 Hourly	Health Services / Public Health / Nursing / Human Services / Health Education / Community and Social Services / Health Care Support
<a href="#"><u>Police Officer</u></a>	\$22.66 - \$34.32 Hourly	Public Safety / Law Enforcement / Community and Social Services
<a href="#"><u>Communications Officer</u></a>	\$20.74 - \$31.40 Hourly	Public Safety / Law Enforcement / Dispatch / 911 Telecommunications
	\$72,000.0	
<a href="#"><u>Industrial Pre-Treatment Coordinator</u></a>	0 - \$88,000.0 Annually	Engineering / Public Health / Public Safety / Public Works / Water Treatment / Wastewater
	\$51,502.7	
<a href="#"><u>Rental Housing Inspector &amp; Health Officer</u></a>	4 - \$78,060.9 Annually	Code Enforcement / Planning and Development / Public Health / Customer Service / Project Management
	\$52,000.0	
<a href="#"><u>Entry Level Police Officer</u></a>	0 - \$78,748.8 Annually	Law Enforcement
<a href="#"><u>Certified Police Officer</u></a>	\$57,387.0 0 - \$78,748.8	Public Safety / Law Enforcement

0  
Annually

### Retention/Recruitment Study:

See slides from Day Three budget presentations that help summarize the takeaways. There have been a few changes that we'll discuss on Monday night from what we last discussed, such as moving back to 2% "Merit Step" increases instead of a flat rate, based on feedback from our employees.

## Retention and Recruitment Study Takeaways



### Agenda

Project history and overview  
Methodology and data  
Needs and Goals  
New Pay Matrix  
Cost of living  
Merit  
Benefits and Policies

February 2024



## Brief Project History

R&R Study Initial  
Takeaways



**2021/2022** - Town commits to market salary update

**Fall/Winter 2022** - Town surveys staff (75 responses) on compensation, benefits, workplace. Responses discussed with Selectboard.

**Summer 2023** - Town brings on consultants from UMass Boston's Edward J Collins Center for Public Management

**Summer/Fall 2022** - MRI collects market data - delivers unusable results/report

**Fall/Winter 2022** - Town holds several open meetings for any employee about **FY 23-24 compensation**

**Summer/fall 2023** - Town holds over 65 meetings with staff to take feedback and discuss needs/goals

**Fall 2022** - Town commits to broader "Phase Two" study for following year

**Winter/spring 2023** - Town begins planning for full "Retention and Recruitment" study

**Fall/winter 2023** - Study finishes and new policies begin to be proposed and discussed with Selectboard, other key stakeholders

# Team & Market Evaluation

R&R Study Initial  
Takeaways



## Team

Town of Hanover

Alex Torpey  
Town Manager

Katie Williams  
Human Resources Director

Ellen Bullion  
Finance/Admin Services Director

UMass Boston's Edward J Collins Center  
for Public Management

Mary Flanders Aicardi  
HR Practice Leader

Becca Meekins  
Public Service Manager

Jennifer Romboldi  
Management Analyst

## Market Data

Based on employee feedback, data was gathered from 18 municipal governments, including comparable towns in other states, as well as numerous private sector employers where possible.

\*We would like to collect more data from fewer employers (rather than less data from more employers) in the future to get more comprehensive comparisons.

## Analysis

Comparing Hanover against best practices, initial findings include, for example, that:

1. Current pay ranges per position are too large (52%)
2. Grades/steps were numerous and arbitrary
3. Max pay for most positions is highly competitive
4. Starting pay for a number of positions under market
5. Advancement pathways somewhat unclear
6. And more

## 1. Needs & Goals

**Transparency, trust, and buy-in.** Discussing some of the driving priorities from six-months of intensive meetings with staff

R&R Study Initial  
Takeaways



## 2. Market Updates



For example, these positions in Fire:

**Orange** - Hanover's pay range

**Blue** - median **Green** - mean

Many positions in Hanover produced a similar comparison to the example above. In this, you can easily see that although Hanover's ending pay rate is higher than the market averages, **it takes over twenty years to reach that point**, and the starting and lower pay rates are significantly under the market averages in many cases.

## 3. Better approach to cost of living



No more costly and time consuming debate, or falling behind inflation with new proposed automatically indexed COLA's based on prior year CPI

## 4. Merit based raises that invest in staff's success



With COLA taken care of, we can roll out a comprehensive and human-centered approach to supporting the personal, interpersonal, and professional development of our greatest asset - staff

## 5. Overhaul of benefits and personnel policies



Providing better dental benefits, expanding paid family leave, instituting flexible schedules, easing new employee onboarding, allowing PTO sell-backs, rewarding longevity, and fixing on-call pay are just the start.

## 1. Needs & Goals

**Transparency, trust, and buy-in.** Discussing some of the driving priorities from six-months of intensive meetings with staff

R&R Study Initial  
Takeaways



**Core takeaway:** For the Town to rebuild trust among staff through fair, transparent policies that involve and invest in them, and which help the Town catch up on compensation and benefits that have fallen behind the market in key areas, especially for lower paid employees. **We have many passionate, dedicated and high-performing employees, and we want them to feel supported by their employer.**

## Key values

### Transparency

New policies and practices need to be accessible, and proactively communicated

### Consistency/equity

New policies and practices must be uniform, fair, and applied equitably across pay grades, departments, and classifications.

### Employees as assets

Employees are the Town organization's greatest asset - we should approach everything through that lens

## 2. Improved Compensation and Pay Matrix

An **new compensation structure** based on key feedback from staff and based on regional and nationwide best practices

R&R Study Initial  
Takeaways



For example, these positions in Fire:

Orange - Hanover's pay range

Data: Blue - median Green - mean

### Evaluating Market Competition

Although the market data left some to be desired and the process can be improved in the future, there were a few clear takeaways. The primary one was that our range is very large and the lower end of our pay scale was often more than 10% below the market averages. Add the cost of housing/living in the Upper Valley, and it further challenges an already challenging municipal labor market.

### Grades -> Bands

Instead of 25 grades, we have 8-10 bands that represents a classifications of positions with similar levels of operational responsibilities, experience required and pay.

### Steps -> Points

Every employee will earn points in four available categories. These points have no "max," helping employees add to their compensation through things that support them, others, and the organization and community.

Longevity      Development & Education  
Performance      Health & Wellness

## 2. Improved Compensation and Pay Matrix

An **new compensation structure** based on key feedback from staff and based on regional and nationwide best practices

R&R Study Initial  
Takeaways



Each year, more and more employees are living farther away, which has disrupted our on-call departments and created other challenging dynamics. Beyond the need for workforce housing, this creates a budget impact because of the need to increase pay and prevent people leaving.

## 3. A better approach to cost of living

No more costly and time consuming debate, or falling behind inflation with new proposed automatic COLA's based on prior year CPI

R&R Study Initial  
Takeaways



For better or worse, we live in an economic system that "requires growth." The inflation this creates reduces purchasing power over time throughout our society. It's easy to fall behind incrementally over time.

To illustrate, falling behind by only 1% a year for 15 years on a \$100,000 salary means that in 15 years, that person's pay will have been cut by ~ \$14,000!

Instead of debating and spending enormous energy each year on determining "COLA" increases, we are proposing to adjust employee's wages automatically indexed to ensure they are not being undercut by inflation. Like staying on top of re-evaluations, doing this more regularly will also reduce the need for larger more extreme re-adjustments and minimize future morale and cost issues.

We anticipate using the prior year's CPI-New England for indexing.

#### 4. Merit based raises that invest in staff

A comprehensive and human-centered approach to supporting the personal, interpersonal, and professional development of our staff

R&R Study Initial  
Takeaways



The proposed MAPS - Merit Aligned Pay Steps helps shift the Town's existing "step" system to a model that is based on employee performance and participating in constructive health and wellness and professional development activities. The evaluations will be based on best practices aimed at supporting personal, interpersonal, and professional development of employees.

To minimize creating unintentional pay inequity, we are proposing a flat-rate, instead of percentage, system.

All employees will get their "2%," now \$.75/hour, in FY25, and after the evaluation and points system is completed, in FY26, we'll begin using that to determine Merit Step increases.



#### 5. Overhaul of benefits and personnel policies

Providing better vision/dental benefits, creating unified PTO, instituting flexible schedules, easing new employee onboarding, allowing PTO sell-backs, rewarding longevity, and fixing on-call pay are just the start

R&R Study Initial  
Takeaways



Hanover's benefits have fallen behind what is needed to be a true "employer of choice" in this challenging labor market. Many of our personnel policies/practices need to be updated to better promote a positive workplace that will help retain and recruit the best staff.

**Actual full health coverage.** We will cover dental at the same rate as we cover health.

**New employees.** Hourly employees will start with more time off.

**Flex schedules.** We had widespread positive feedback from "SummerHours" and have implemented flexible schedules

**PTO sell backs.** Employees will be eligible to sell back certain amounts of PTO annually.

**Berevment leave.** Being expanded to be broader than traditional family definitions.

**On-call pay.** Affecting several departments, some on-call payment amounts have not been updated in twenty years.

**Uniforms/clothes.** All employees will receive free Town clothes that they can keep, and be able to purchase additional with Town subsidies.

**Midnight Shift Differentials.** Additional pay for employees with overnight shifts to make up for the health and life strain placed by those.

**And much more!**

**Fire Chief Search.** Candidates are working through the interview process. The rigorous "assessment center" was recently administered and we are hoping to have finalists identified in the next month who will participate again in in-person final interviews. The hope is to have someone in place by maybe end of May.

**Employee recognition:** As part of our succession planning in the Assessing Department we have been focused on getting Jerry Roberts certified at levels where more training is required and responsibilities increase. I am happy to report that Jerry has been elevated to the certification level of Assistant Assessor as dictated by the State of New Hampshire Office of Professional Licensure and Certification. This has been accomplished through accelerated training events this last year and a half. This effort is expected to continue to accomplish the goals of the Assessing Department succession planning. Congratulations Jerry!

Budget & Finance	<p>In our budget presentations we agreed to follow up on specific topics. We have a few things as updates and for this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. A list of all questions from the Selectboard, Finance Committee, and public that were asked at the presentations or before our deadline two weeks ago and staff responses and more information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>See attached memo.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>B. The six bigger picture topics that we determined were the highest priority, and which we reviewed with the Chair before the meeting, to be listed on the agenda for discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>See attached memo</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>C. An additional memo breaking down some of the background behind the Town's Retention and Recruitment study and personnel cost increases. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>See attached memo.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>ARPA.</b> Additionally, we have about \$15,000 leftover in ARPA funds that we can still allocate. We got one suggestion from one SB member for a project that we are not able to spend ARPA funds on, but once we get our head above water a bit, we'll come back in April or May with some ideas of what to do. If anyone has questions or ideas in the meantime, please do reach out to me or Ellen and we'll look into the rules and requirements!</p>
Housing, redevelopment & planning	<p><b>Mink Brook Community Workforce Housing Project.</b> Myself, Rob Houseman our Planning Director and Twin Pines are meeting with officials from NH Housing at the end of the month. There has been some challenge in regards to funding needed to make the project viable to be built, which is the majority of what's been happening outside of the Town's hands over the last few months. Once we have met with the state officials from NH Housing we will be able to report back with more information and hopefully a timeline on next steps. There have been one or two other letters received that do not require any action at this time, but have been placed in the OneDrive folder I shared with you all to keep correspondence in one place.</p> <p><b>Rental Registration.</b> We are holding off on mailing out the postcards until we have a more clear timeline on when a person would start as the Rental Housing Inspector and be able to take over the program. We have had trouble finding applicants for the position so far, however, we have recently interviewed some good candidates and hope to have an update soon.</p> <p><b>TIF District.</b> See explanation above in agenda.</p>
Transportation & Mobility	<p><b>Expanding capacity with Regional Planning Commission.</b> As reported on previously, we needed to expand our capacity to work on transportation and</p>

mobility issues based on the increase in activity in this area. We explored staffing options, but decided that was one of the goals that our budget could not support in FY25, and instead worked out an exciting arrangement with the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission. This agreement that we have begun includes the following scope:

The professional planner provided by the Commission will, within the time constraints of this agreement, perform services in any combination of the following areas as directed by the Planning Department and Town Manager. The Planner will not act as staff of the Town, but as an advisor under the direction of the Town Manager and Planning Department.

The Commission will assist the Town in the routine performance of its transportation planning related duties.

These can include but are not limited to:

- Reviewing resident transportation concerns
- Collecting relevant data to determine feasibility and need improvements to the transportation network
- Support and facilitate public outreach regarding transportation improvements and events
- Support Town committees and attend meetings as needed
- Organize and facilitate Town Safety Staff Working Group
- Identify and apply for transportation-related funding opportunities
- Review transportation related regulations, policies, and procedures for consistency and advise on improvements based on research and case studies
- Assistance with specific needs such as capital improvement programs, planning research, and drafting and updating ordinances;
- Other transportation planning-related duties as assigned by the Planning Department or Town Manager.

Our point person for this agreement will be the RPC’s Tim Josephson. Here is a short bio about his background. He will be supported by Meghan Butts and other staff as well.

Tim Josephson has been an Associate Planner with UVLSRPC since 2021. Prior to this position, he capped off 15 years in the restaurant industry by helping to open Lucky's Coffee Garage in Lebanon while also serving two terms as a NH State Representative on the Municipal and County Government Committee. He holds a Master of Public Administration from Norwich University and a Bachelor of Liberal Arts in American Studies from VTSU-Johnson. His areas of expertise at the RPC include economic development; traffic, transit and transportation; grant administration and management; and public outreach. He lives in Canaan with his wife and two daughters where he serves on the Mascoma Valley Regional School Board.

	<p><b>Lane closure pilots.</b> The Town has been reviewing East Wheelock &amp; College intersection crossing improvements to address pedestrians from being obscured from through traffic by turning traffic. One of the concepts proposed is to eliminate the east bound left turn lane onto College Street. A pilot will be run between March 19<sup>th</sup> and April 26<sup>th</sup> to determine if the lane drop will cause unacceptable traffic delays at the South Main and Wheelock intersection and cause significant backups on West Wheelock and South Main Streets. The period of the pilot will encompass Dartmouth and the schools breaks as well as when both are in session and provide adequate time for traffic to develop a routine. The town is requiring the pilot use readily removable barricades that would allow the pilot to be terminated early if the lane drop is causing unacceptable delays and safety issues, as determined by the Police and Public Works Departments.</p> <p>At the same time the town will run a pilot on South Main temporarily eliminating the north bound left turn lane onto Lebanon Street (in front of the Post Office), which is proposed in the South Main Street bicycle and sidewalk improvements.</p> <p>Attached in the packet are plans for both pilots. Once the data is collected, staff would like to take the results and get input from stakeholders such as Bike/Walk to help determine what our next steps might be. This is another area where the new agreement with the Regional Planning Commission will help provide additional capacity to help us evaluate data and make recommendations as well.</p> <p><b>W. Wheelock Crossing/bridge.</b> NHDOT is aware of our request and has responded that they agree with using paint, instead of thermoplastic so that nothing permanent is done until we have a better sense of the West Wheelock Corridor. NHDOT reported that they are coordinating with VTrans and will get back to us.</p> <p><b>Dunster Crosswalk.</b> We have checked in with NHDOT twice and not heard back yet.</p> <p><b>Etna Speeding.</b> We have checked in with NHDOT twice and not heard back yet.</p>
Downtown Hanover	<p><b>Reporting out and formalizing future.</b> For a few months I have been reporting to the Selectboard that there was an upcoming presentation from the working group in the works. We are ready to give that presentation on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and you can find the PDF attached.</p> <p>The goal of this discussion is to provide a more formal and detailed update than the monthly reports for the Selectboard on the status of this initiative, solicit questions and ideas and discuss any of that before we move into more community engagement in the next few months. There is no commitment or decision to be made on the 18<sup>th</sup>, just continuing to move through the plan of evaluating the proposed options.</p>

**Top 10 best college towns.** Hanover has been nominated by USA Today as one of the 10 best small college towns in the US!

Before March 31<sup>st</sup>, you can vote once per day at the following link to promote Hanover and see if we can't get to first place! We are at number seven at the time of this writing.

Vote once per day here: <https://10best.usatoday.com/awards/travel/best-small-college-town-2024/hanover-new-hampshire/>



**Summer events.** Hanover Parks and Rec is getting ready to plan out a series of continuing and new events this year downtown, starting with the music series on April 19<sup>th</sup> in collaboration with the Dartmouth Music Department!

**Allen Street.** The Master Plan identifies a need for more public spaces and better pedestrian access in the downtown. This is part of the reason we started last year piloting a few “Block Parties” on Allen Street, where we closed the street for the weekend. Although we got very positive feedback from many different community groups, we decided to slow down our proposed idea for a more permanent closing and instead try a longer pilot this year of closing the street for a longer period of time, but still temporarily.

We will be talking with stakeholders on Allen Street about this and report back within 1-2 months with the results of that, so we can make a determination about the best next steps to expand creating some better public spaces downtown.

Additionally, along with the closure of Allen Street we will be studying making some other improvements, such as piloting a change of where delivery trucks can park, which may make the parking lot safer and easier to navigate at peak delivery times.

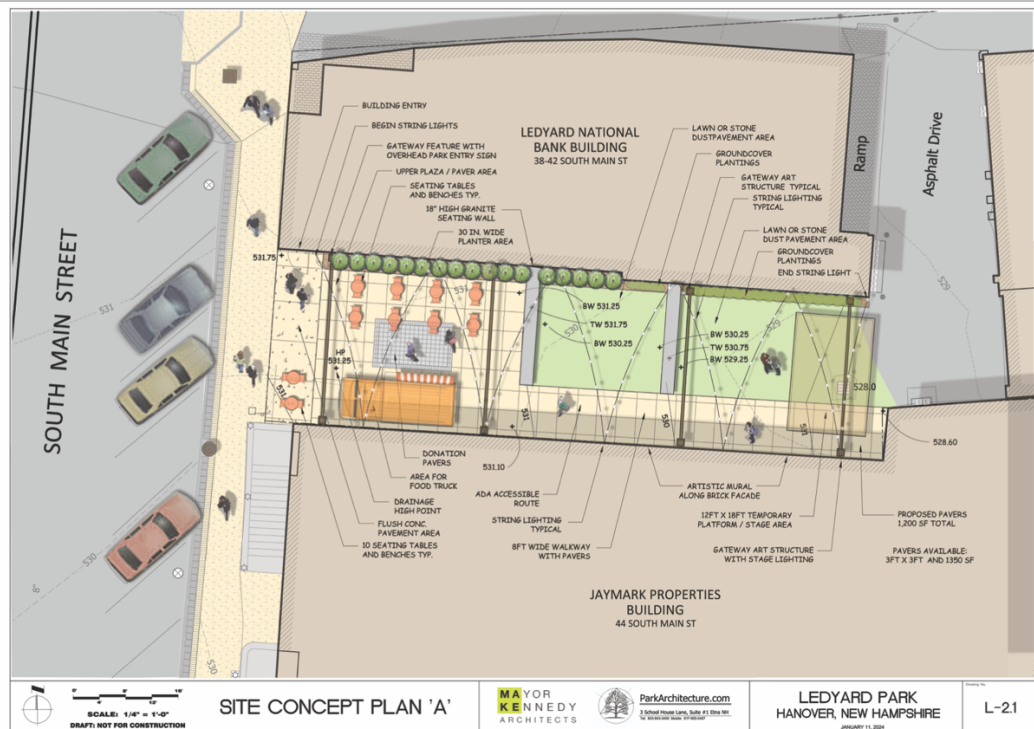
We'll report back with a more detailed plan after we continue the stakeholder engagement.

**Public Spaces.** In alignment with the Master Plan, Selectboard's goals and the feedback from the Downtown working group, we have been working on ways to expand gathering, public, and event spaces in the downtown.

We plan to make some upgrades to the space in front of Town Hall with more tables and seating area, and landscaping and ADA improvements, largely supported by ARPA funds and some of the money in the FY24 and FY25 budget.

"Ledyard Park," I noted this during the budget presentations, but wanted to refresh peoples' attention to it here as well. This is a very exciting multi-party public/private initiative that would aim to make the currently unused but privately owned space accessible to the public. The Town has been working with several stakeholders including Dartmouth, Ledyard Bank, the Downtown Working Group and others in evaluating options and we are now working with Ledyard on understanding costs and over the next weeks/month starting to plan out an agreement that combines various funding sources, including Ledyard, Dartmouth, Town, downtown property owners, and potentially community contributions, to bring a really great public space to the public with no large capital costs, such as purchasing property etc. We will report back on the status of these conversations to the Selectboard, and have been working on it in the Downtown Working Group.

Here is a concept that was developed in large part thanks to donated time by Hanover residents and professional architects Paul Simon and Chris Kennedy:



College &  
Town

**Nihonmatsu Sister City.** This join Town/College project since 1999 is described more under Items for Discussion above.

Other Updates

**Public records.** We had a RTK/91a request for some older minutes, and through that, ended up placing several decades of past Selectboard minutes on the website. Unfortunately our website platform can't place them in the minutes folder, so they are under "Town Manager," with minutes available online now going back to 1978.

**Hanover's Town Meeting/Election.** We are meeting with SAU officials to talk about HHS and upcoming Town Meeting. We are looking at doing a few new things ahead of time this year, but also looking at any potential improvements we can make to how the business meeting is held based on some feedback discussed at prior meetings. We'll report back to the SB and may have some questions in future meetings.

**Town Meeting and Civic Engagement.** I worked with a number of local officials, NHMA, and various state agencies to create a free nonpartisan handbook that outlines some best practices about how to spur more engagement at Town Meeting.

Some of the ideas have already been in put into practice in towns in NH and VT and we will be trying several out in Hanover this year.

NHPR spotlighted this project as well: <https://www.nhpr.org/nh-news/2024-03-11/call-to-order-this-nh-town-manager-created-a-practical-guide-to-town-meeting>



You can read or download the free nonpartisan guide by clicking below or visiting [nhtownmeeting.com](https://nhtownmeeting.com).

A big thanks to NHMA, the NH DRA, NH SOS, the Municipal Management Association of NH, the NH City and Town Clerks Association, and nearly two dozen local officials from New Hampshire and Vermont who contributed their expertise, ideas, and review to this helpful guide!

