

TOWN HALL MONTHLY: February

At their last 2024 meeting the Board of Selectmen approved their proposed 2025 budget for review by the Budget Committee. That Committee will meet weekly on Wednesday nights in January to develop the budget which will be voted on at the Town Meeting in March. All meetings are open to the public.

The Selectboard budget including the capital reserve funds deposits came in with an estimated tax rate of \$8.37 which is 51 cents lower than the 2024 rate. The Board budget includes non-flood road projects for the first time since the 2021 flood and will repair drainage on Forest and Cold Pond Roads. The Board was able to do that because the Town has received enough in FEMA reimbursements for past completed flood work to use to cover flood related repairs which are still ongoing. We are finally making some headway.

Ground work for the 2025 property revaluation has started and you may see assessor vehicles in Town as that work progresses. As we've noted, this reval is coming a year sooner than would normally happen because of recommendations by the Department of Revenue (DRA). DRA looks annually at how the Town's assessed values compare to actual sales and when the ratio slips too far below 100% they become concerned. By DRA standards, assessed values should reflect market value and the market has changed since our last revaluation in 2021.

One more assessing note, the assessing year is considered to begin April 1 annually. If you feel you are eligible for an elderly exemption or veterans' credit please see Charlotte about filing an application before April.

You may also be seeing notices for Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) meetings. An update of our HMP started in January and will continue in February. Federal and State guidelines require towns to have current HMPs to be eligible for emergency funding in the event of a disaster. The group working on the update includes representatives from Highway, Conservation, Planning and Select Boards, citizens, the United Church, Acworth Volunteer Fire and Rescue and Acworth Primary School. If you have concerns about public safety and preparedness this is a place to share them.

The Planning Board will be finalizing their 2025 update of the Town Master Plan during their January 27 meeting and airing it for the public at their February 24 meeting. A town's master plan is the vision statement on which all other regulations and ordinances are based. If you are interested in Acworth's future this is a place to share your thoughts or concerns.

Town Meeting will be here before you know it; a whole day devoted to planning for the year, meeting neighbors you haven't seen all winter and eating some good food. See you there.

Kathi