

TOWN HALL MONTHLY: September

As of the 8/17/24, the Town received \$1,471,071 from FEMA in reimbursements for the 2021 flood. As we've noted, that allowed us to repay the two million dollar loan taken out by Special Town Meeting in 2021. There are still 3 unreimbursed 2021 projects. As we've also noted, funds for one of the 3, Nye Road, are being considered for use on Derry Hill. Those details are still be finalized. In addition, the Town has received \$333,915 from FEMA in reimbursement for the 2023 flood. Those funds will be applied to fronting the costs for remaining 2023 work including repairing Crane Brook and Thayer Brook Roads.

During our last meeting with FEMA we discussed repairs to Crane Brook Road. This year the Town is funding engineering for those repairs. Because Crane Brook has been the site of repeated FEMA repairs over the years, the current engineering will consider alternatives to restoring the road to pre-disaster condition. That moves the Crane Brook project from FEMA's public assistance category to its mitigation category. This is necessary because FEMA will no longer cover repeated repairs. Crane Brook has a number of stream crossings and mitigation of conditions there will involve environmental assessments and wetlands permitting. During our discussion we were told to expect that process to extend into 2026. That would put actual reconstruction off to 2027. The Town will be exploring, with FEMA, ways to support the temporary access road which was built earlier this year. Anything that is done will need FEMA approval in order not to jeopardize FEMA's long term financial commitment to Crane Brook which is currently estimated at over three million dollars.

State Rep Judy Aron has been diligent in the pursuit of over \$100,000 owed to the Town by the State for the State's coverage of 5% of FEMA reimbursements for the 2021 flood. That coverage was voted by the State Legislature for that flood specifically and does not apply to the 2023 reimbursements. Just a note that neither the Governor's office or Homeland Security and Emergency Management have responded directly to Select board requests for payment. We are lucky we have Judy working for us.

We made it through July without any major inundations. Channel restoration at Bowers Brook and Highway Department seasonal work are holding despite some locally heavy rains.

At this time of year, the construction season, both the Select and Planning Board are asked to review applications for buildings and driveways. Building permits are governed by the Town's Zoning Ordinance adopted in 1970 and amended over subsequent decades. Driveway permitting is governed by the Town's Driveway Regulations adopted in 2005. Town regulations and ordinances (regs and ords) are posted on the website along with the application forms. The forms are devised to cover the basic requirements outlined in the regs and ords such as asbestos, setback and septic information for building permits and site lines on an existing Town right of way for driveway permits. Town boards do their best to see that all applications provide that basic information and fulfill the requirements. It can be time consuming and uncomfortable particularly when a project is on a schedule. It's also necessary if we want Acworth to continue to be the kind of place we've all voted for.

In September the Planning Board will begin discussing the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This is where the Town's annual budget begins. All Planning Board meetings are open to the public and posted on our website.

See you soon, Kathi